



PROTECTING ★ THE ★ UNPROTECTED



# OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS

2019



**DAVE YOST**  
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

# LETTER FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

## My Fellow Ohioans,

The thing I love about my job is the ability to do good for all 11.7 million residents of the Buckeye State.

I've spent much of my life preparing for the role of Ohio's attorney general. I'm proud, and humbled, that the people of Ohio put their faith in me, and I'm prouder still of the work my team and I have accomplished in our first year.

In 2019, the many dedicated employees in my office and I focused on priorities aimed at protecting Ohioans and making their lives easier. This publication highlights some of those. For example:

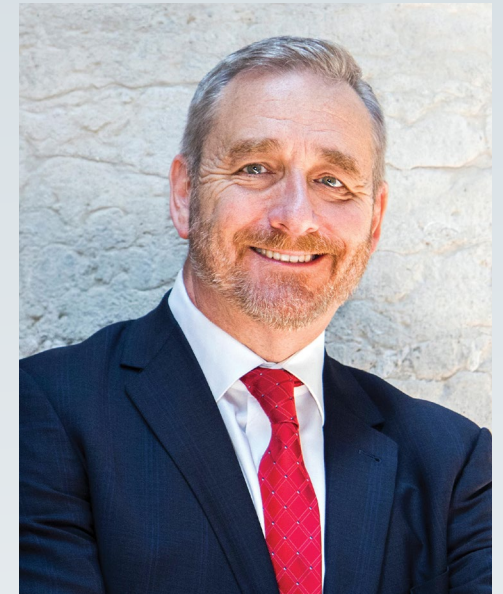
- ★ To curb the number of people who develop an addiction to opioids, we rolled out two scientific initiatives centered on researching genetic markers and prevention strategies.
- ★ To free the modern-day slaves of human trafficking, we launched a full-time initiative to share strategies that produce results with police, courts and advocates across the state. We initiated new legislation to shift the blame from the victims to the pimps and "johns," who are selling and buying other human beings (many of them underage) right on the streets of our communities.
- ★ To push AT&T, Sprint and other cellphone service providers to take action against robocallers, we led a team of states and brokered an agreement to get the companies to employ call-blocking tech and other fixes.
- ★ To ensure that taxpayers aren't cheated into padding profits for private companies, we sued the pharmacy benefits manager for the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation. The PBMs overcharged the state for generic drugs by more than \$16 million, money that should have gone to help injured Ohioans.

Fueled by such efforts — ones that make a real difference in all our lives — I literally can't wait to get up to go to work every morning. Even more energizing is the notion of how much more we can accomplish in 2020 and beyond.

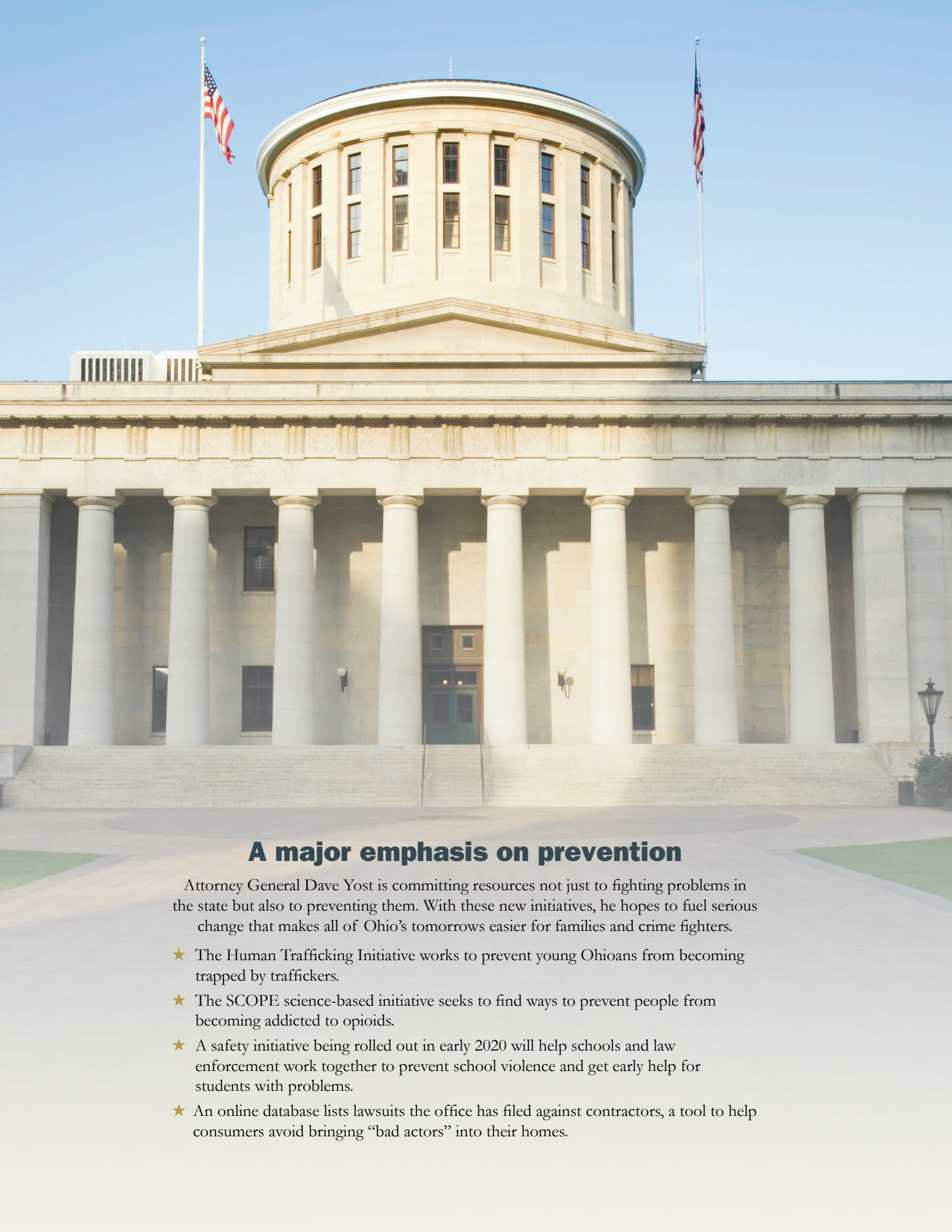
Yours,



Dave Yost  
Ohio Attorney General







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## A major emphasis on prevention

Attorney General Dave Yost is committing resources not just to fighting problems in the state but also to preventing them. With these new initiatives, he hopes to fuel serious change that makes all of Ohio's tomorrows easier for families and crime fighters.

- ★ The Human Trafficking Initiative works to prevent young Ohioans from becoming trapped by traffickers.
- ★ The SCOPE science-based initiative seeks to find ways to prevent people from becoming addicted to opioids.
- ★ A safety initiative being rolled out in early 2020 will help schools and law enforcement work together to prevent school violence and get early help for students with problems.
- ★ An online database lists lawsuits the office has filed against contractors, a tool to help consumers avoid bringing “bad actors” into their homes.



# PROTECTING THE UNPROTECTED

**RIGHTING  
WRONGS**



**REPAIRING  
DAMAGE**



**ENDING  
INJUSTICE**

**INCREASING  
KNOWLEDGE**



**BUILDING  
STRENGTH**



**SAFEGUARDING  
OHIO**

**D**ave Yost entered the Ohio Attorney General's Office on Jan. 14, 2019, pledging to give a voice to the powerless and to champion state residents who don't have lobbyists and/or can't afford to take part in government.

"The single mom who struggles to pay both child care and rent," Yost said in his inauguration speech. "The senior whose medicine costs more every year but whose income does not rise ... the unprotected."

"Protecting the Unprotected," then, became a natural choice for the theme of his administration.

The slogan covers the vast services provided by the office — from putting away criminals to safeguarding small-business owners and consumers. But it also reflects the office's commitment to justice, opportunity and equal treatment under the law, regardless of one's hometown, race, religion, political party, occupation or means.

"I am here to serve the 11 million people of Ohio," Yost said at his inauguration. "Each of them — so help me, God."

## About the office

- ★ The attorney general is the chief law officer for the state of Ohio.
- ★ The office has a proud history stretching back to 1846.
- ★ Throughout Ohio, almost 1,500 employees work in the office's 13 locations, including **Rhodes Tower (shown at right)**, which houses the administration in Columbus.
- ★ The office consists of roughly 30 "sections," including Consumer Protection, Health Care Fraud, Special Prosecutions and the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). **See more on Pages 19-21.**
- ★ Every month, more than 150,000 people visit [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov) to find Webcheck locations, check the database of missing Ohioans, pay debts owed to the state, etc.

## Dave Yost ...

- ★ Is Ohio's 51st attorney general.
- ★ Served as Ohio auditor from 2011 through 2018.
- ★ Served as Delaware County prosecutor from 2003 to 2011.
- ★ Started his career as a newspaper journalist.
- ★ Earned his law degree from Capital University and his undergraduate degree from The Ohio State University.
- ★ Has been married for 39 years, and he and his wife, Darlene, have three grown children and three grandchildren.
- ★ Has dedicated himself to doing the right thing, without regard for friend or foe, politics or personality.



## MISSION STATEMENT

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE PROTECTS OHIO  
AND ITS FAMILIES.



OUR ACTIONS ARE DRIVEN BY THEIR INTERESTS,  
GUIDED BY THE RULE OF LAW  
AND THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF JUSTICE.



WE WORK TO CONSTRAIN EVIL AND  
EMPOWER GOOD, WITHOUT PARTISAN PREFERENCE  
OR SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENT, AS DEFINED  
BY THE LAW AND BY THE CONSTITUTIONS OF  
THE UNITED STATES AND OHIO.



# BATTLING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**VICTIMS RESCUED: 120 ★ PEOPLE ARRESTED: 219**

“The fact that you don’t see human trafficking doesn’t mean it’s not happening,” Attorney General Yost says. “It means that it’s happening in the shadows. Criminals don’t want it to be seen, and, for decades, our society was blind to the scale of the problem and blind to those trapped in it.”

In 2019, law enforcement task forces operating under the authority of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission encountered more than 360 human trafficking victims, and the number represents only the tip of the iceberg. Ohio ranks as the fourth-worst state in the nation for human trafficking.

Vowing to end the scourge in Ohio, Attorney General Yost has created a plan of attack focused on fighting traffickers, decreasing demand and helping victims.



## Human Trafficking Initiative

One of the attorney general’s high-priority new programs is the Human Trafficking Initiative, established in 2019 with two full-time experts in prosecuting traffickers and assisting victims. The two **(shown at right with the attorney general)** have been meeting with coalitions, prosecutors and other stakeholders throughout Ohio to establish best practices, share resources, and encourage new advocacy groups and specialty court dockets.

Extensive late-year planning brought to life the inaugural Ohio Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Summit, presented in January 2020.

## Legislative push

With key legislative partners, General Yost has proposed laws that would:

- ★ Split the offense of “soliciting,” which currently encompasses the buying and selling of sexual activity, into two offenses, with buyers facing tougher penalties than victims. “This is long overdue,” said Sen. Tim Schaffer, sponsor of the legislation in the Ohio Senate.
- ★ Make it a crime to knowingly receive proceeds from a prostitute, with escalating penalties for each subsequent offense building up to three years in prison.
- ★ Establish an online registry of pimps, human traffickers and sex-buying “johns,” to be maintained by BCI.
- ★ Increase prison time for those convicted of buying sex.

“I know when Dave Yost says additional legislation is important for his office to rescue victims of human trafficking and stem the demand in Ohio,” Schaffer said, “he means it.”

## Trafficking stings

The Attorney General’s Office, including OOCIC task forces and BCI, partners with law enforcement agencies and social services agencies to arrest traffickers and johns, share their names and connect victims to services.



For example:

- ★ In September, Operation Fourth and Goal resulted in the arrests of 104 people in central Ohio, including 24 men trying to arrange sex with children. Thirty-two agencies partnered in the sting.
- ★ In July, Operations Homerun and Triple Play led to the arrests of 49 men in two stings run by the Mahoning Valley and Central Ohio human trafficking task forces.
- ★ In March, April and May, 32 men were arrested in Canfield, Warren and Youngstown by the Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force and other agencies.

“We could probably do a sting every night of the week and still arrest more johns,” Attorney General Yost said. “And they deserve it. They’re satiating their own appetites at the expense of another human being, predators who take what they want without regard to the costs of their feeding.”

In investigating human trafficking throughout 2019, OOCIC task forces arrested 219\* people and fielded 393 tips.

## Victim assistance

OOCIC task forces help connect victims to services. In 2019, they rescued 120 victims and referred 247 others to services.

“The victims of human trafficking might be one of the most difficult populations to build trust with,” Yost said. “Folks who have been trafficked usually start out vulnerable to begin with — it’s how they get enticed into the life. And the trust they have given away has been abused.”

In general, it can take up to 10 contacts from advocates or law enforcement officers before victims of trafficking will reach out and accept help.

That means that, although almost 250 people refused services, the outreach by OOCIC task force members can still change those lives — down the road.

\* Charges might have included crimes unrelated to human trafficking, such as if the suspect was carrying illegal drugs or had a warrant out for his or her arrest.



# PREVENTING OPIOID ADDICTION

Ohio is being pounded by the opioid crisis. In 2018, the latest year for which final figures are available, there were 3,764 overdose deaths in the state — 22% fewer than in the previous year.

Without our first responders and social services, the state’s opioid-related deaths would surely be significantly higher and the damage to families and communities far worse. But their work alone can’t solve this crisis.

The solution requires a holistic approach. In response, Attorney General Yost has launched two science-focused projects to reduce the number of people who succumb to substance use disorder. The \$1.6 million efforts are being funded by lawsuit settlements, not taxpayer money.



## Genetic study

An unprecedented study will seek to identify the genetic factors that make a person more susceptible to opioid addiction, information that could guide physicians in how to manage patients’ pain.

“Genetics and addiction often go hand in hand, but we need to find out how and translate this knowledge into clinical practice,” Yost said.

The study aims to recruit a total of 1,500 emergency department patients from the University of Cincinnati and The Ohio State University to give cheek-swab DNA samples and share their medical history. Scientists from the Attorney General’s Office, UC, OSU, Bowling Green State University and Case Western Reserve University will use “machine-learning algorithm processing” to compare the samples from addicted patients and non-addicted patients.

If successful, the study could help doctors choose the right pain therapy based on a patient’s unique DNA. Patients thought to be susceptible to addiction would be prescribed other pain treatments; those who aren’t could, with more confidence, be prescribed opioid medication.



## NOTABLE SEIZURES BY OOCIC TASK FORCES:

**FENTANYL: 104 POUNDS**  
(WORTH \$4.7 MILLION)

**HEROIN: 170 POUNDS**  
(WORTH \$7.8 MILLION)

**COCAINE: 229 POUNDS**  
(WORTH \$19.4 MILLION)

**METH: 302 POUNDS**  
(WORTH \$13.7 MILLION)

## Scientific committee

The Attorney General’s Office has assembled a team of experts (**shown meeting with the attorney general**) in medicine and pharmacy practices, nursing, behavioral economics, data analysis, epidemiology and medical anthropology to develop innovative prevention strategies.

The new panel — called the Scientific Committee on Opioid Prevention & Education (SCOPE) — will look for the circumstantial, environmental, social, behavioral and psychological factors that predispose some people to substance use disorder.

## DART grants

Attorney General Yost has expanded a program that sends grants to hometown teams that connect survivors of opioid addiction to treatment and recovery. The Drug Abuse Response Team Grant Program sent new awards totaling \$1.3 million to 30 local agencies throughout Ohio that operate such quick-response teams. The per-agency grants ranged from \$8,710 to \$62,500.

“When an overdose tears the fabric of our communities, these are the people who begin the mending,” Yost said. “They bring the first principle of compassion to the first response.”

## Fentanyl classification

In December, AG Yost and his counterpart in Michigan, Democrat Dana Nessel, led a coalition of 56 attorneys general from U.S. states, territories and Washington, D.C., in urging Congress to permanently classify fentanyl as a Schedule I drug.

“Fentanyl is a catastrophic killer that warrants a spot in the top tier of deadly drugs,” Yost said.

Schedule I drugs are those with no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. Also, federal authorities can bring criminal action against those who manufacture, sell or handle such drugs. The DEA had temporarily made fentanyl and related substances Schedule I drugs, but that classification was due to expire in February.

Yost acted to support a bill by Sen. Rob Portman that would make the classification permanent.





## PBMs

Pharmacy benefit managers contract with state agencies, such as the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Department of Medicaid, to — in theory — obtain better prices for prescription drugs. But the process has not worked that way in Ohio, where the state has been overcharged millions of dollars.

One month after taking office, Attorney General Yost started the process of recovering nearly \$16 million that the Ohio BWC paid to OptumRx in secretly inflated bills for generic drugs. Required mediation led to months of unsuccessful discussions and little effort by the PBM to make things right.

"It's time for the feet-dragging to stop," Yost said in November. "We'll see you in court."

The AGO filed an amended complaint, adding breach of contract allegations and addressing significantly more than the original \$16 million. Yost also called on the General Assembly to pass his four-point plan to bring transparency and fairness to the PBM process, without adding new bureaucracy.

He continues to examine all of the state's and pension funds' contracts with PBMs, a push to hold them accountable and ensure that taxpayers aren't cheated into padding profits for private companies.

## Antitrust lawsuit

In May, Attorney General Yost joined 44 other states in suing 20 of the nation's largest generic drug manufacturers, accusing them of rigging prices for more than 100 generic drugs.

The medications account for billions of dollars in U.S. sales. Suffering the consequences were the health insurance market, taxpayer-funded programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, and individual patients.

## Case files

- ★ **Drug distributor** Reckitt Benckiser Group agreed to pay Ohio \$39.4 million, part of a \$700 million settlement in October, over allegations that its marketing downplayed the risks of Suboxone, a drug that helps alleviate withdrawal symptoms for people addicted to opioids.
- ★ **Walgreens Boots Alliance** agreed to pay Ohio \$6.9 million, part of a \$269 million settlement in February, over allegations of overbilling Medicaid and overdispensing insulin pens.
- ★ **Johnson & Johnson** and subsidiary Ethicon Inc. agreed to pay Ohio \$6.3 million, part of a \$116 million settlement in October, over marketing for transvaginal surgical mesh devices.
- ★ **Johnson & Johnson** and associated companies agreed to pay Ohio \$4.4 million, part of a \$120 million settlement in January, over the promotion of metal-on-metal hip replacements.
- ★ **Avanir Pharmaceuticals** agreed to pay Ohio \$3.7 million, part of a \$103 million settlement in September, over allegations that the company paid kickbacks to doctors and engaged in off-label marketing tactics for Neudexta, a medication approved to treat pseudobulbar affect.



## Case files

- ★ **A Hamilton County man** was indicted in September after investigators discovered that he had been impersonating a nurse for almost four years, caring for patients, including children.
- ★ **A woman pretending** to be a medical worker in Wilmington pleaded guilty in April after she stole more than \$50,000 from an elderly man with cerebral palsy.
- ★ **A home hospice nurse** was sentenced in March for trying to hide evidence after accidentally killing a patient.
- ★ **An owner** of three addiction treatment centers in Portsmouth and Ironton was indicted in March on 34 felony charges, including drug trafficking and overbilling for Medicaid services.
- ★ **Six employees** of a Columbus nursing facility were indicted in February, accused of forging patient records and neglecting two patients under their care, including one man who "literally rotted to death," the attorney general said.

## Affordable Care Act

Attorney General Yost was one of two Republicans to defend the Affordable Care Act as the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals was considering whether to declare it unconstitutional.

Hanging in the balance: medical coverage for at least 1.9 million Ohioans with pre-existing conditions.

The case hinged on whether the law can exist without the "individual mandate," the penalty that uninsured people pay, which Congress zeroed out in 2017.

Yost argued that the provision could be removed without throwing out the law's other protections for Americans. "If a patient has a tumor," he said, "you don't kill the patient; you cut the tumor out. And that's what should happen here."

In December 2019, the court agreed.



# FIGHTING CRIME

A good portion of the Attorney General's Office is dedicated to fighting crime in Ohio, including investigating crimes, testing evidence and prosecuting cases. It is a responsibility that all office employees take seriously, as it helps make Ohioans safer.

## A push for more time

In June, Attorney General Yost and former Ohio Attorneys General Richard Cordray, Nancy Rogers, Jim Petro, Betty Montgomery and Lee Fisher urged the General Assembly to eliminate Ohio's statute of limitations on rape.

"We can't let a rapist run out the clock on justice," Yost said. Senate Bill 162 is pending in the Senate.

## Case files

- ★ **A special DNA test** at BCI led investigators to link a man to a rape in 1997 and the deaths decades earlier of at least four women. Samuel Legg III was arrested in February. He has so far been found incompetent in Mahoning and Medina counties, but he is undergoing treatment that could let him stand trial.
- ★ **After a years-long investigation**, agents from BCI and the Columbiana County Prosecutor's Office found evidence that led to the October indictment of Kevin Kirby in the 2012 death of a Salem grandmother and the near-fatal beating of her 5-year-old grandson.
- ★ **In a case prosecuted** by the AG's team in April, Joshua Carpenter, aka Brittney Leanna Carpenter, was convicted of raping two children under the age of 10. Carpenter was classified as a "sexually violent predator" and sentenced to life in prison.
- ★ **A sentence of 48 years** to life in prison was handed down to Arturo Novoa in June for the murder and dismemberment of his ex-girlfriend, whose remains were found in a freezer in the Youngstown area. Novoa had entered into an agreement with AGO prosecutors, pleading guilty in May to 47 felony counts.
- ★ **In a November case** that AGO prosecutors helped with, Brittany Pilkington, 27, was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole until she is 64 years old after she pleaded guilty to killing her three young sons over 13 months.
- ★ **In the ongoing prosecutions** stemming from the 2016 slayings of eight members of the Rhoden family in Pike County, Rita Newcomb, mother of one of the four murder suspects, agreed to a plea deal after being charged with forgery in an attempt to help protect her relatives. AGO prosecutors are leading the cases against Newcomb's daughter, Angela Wagner; her husband, George "Billy" Wagner III; and the couple's sons, Edward "Jake" Wagner and George Wagner IV.



## State crime lab

Through BCI, the Attorney General's Office offers free forensic services to local and state law enforcement agencies. In 2019, law enforcement agencies submitted 173,590 items for testing. BCI tested 49,963 DNA samples and 26,232 chemistry assignments, identifying fentanyl 5,782 times and carfentanil 782 times. Methamphetamine was the most frequently identified drug, at 11,547 times.

When Ohio legalized hemp in July, speculation abounded that state officials had accidentally legalized marijuana. The problem was that law enforcement agencies didn't have the ability to quantify THC levels, which distinguish the drug marijuana from hemp. BCI scientists spent months testing and calibrating new machines that can do just that. They were expected to come online in early 2020.

## INVESTIGATIVE HELP

CRIME SCENES INVESTIGATED:

407



CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

CASES OPENED:

441



CYBERCRIME CASES OPENED:

779



NARCOTICS CASES OPENED/  
REQUESTS FOR AID:

737



Ohioans can check whether a registered sex offender lives near them, search unsolved crimes and missing-persons cases, and submit a tip to law enforcement at [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov).





## Accountability check

Public officials have a duty to do right by all Ohioans, and Attorney General Yost holds them to that. Public officials prosecuted in 2019:

### Cleveland

#### SENTENCED:

Associate Warden Eric Ivey, received probation for ordering a guard to turn off his body camera during an emergency event in which an inmate died

#### CONVICTED:

Corrections Officer Timothy Dugan, beat a restrained inmate

Corrections Officer Nicholas Evans, beat a restrained inmate

#### INDICTED:

Corrections Officer Stephen A. Thomas, accused of smuggling drugs into jail

Corrections Officer Marvella Sullivan, accused of smuggling drugs into prison

Corrections Officer Idris-Farid

Clark, accused of spraying a restrained inmate with pepper spray and extorting and intimidating fellow guards to help defend him

Corrections Officer Robert P. Marsh, accused of assaulting a restrained inmate

Corrections Officer John Wilson, accused of beating an inmate, who required surgery and facial reconstruction

Corrections Officer Jason Jozwiak, accused of refusing care to a restrained inmate who had been beaten by a guard

Corrections Officer Martin Devring, accused of falsifying logs to say a unit was secure when an inmate was really in medical distress

### Put-in-Bay

#### SENTENCED:

Mayor Bernard "Mack" McCann, received a suspended sentence and probation for conflict of interest in a public contract, helping a business associate and his family

Village Councilman Bernard Michael McCann (the mayor's son), received a suspended sentence and probation for conflict of interest in a public contract in the same case

### Eaton

#### CONVICTED:

State Highway Patrol Trooper Christopher Ward, faces eight years to life in prison for sexual battery and gross sexual imposition against, in most of the cases, women he pulled over

### Pomeroy

#### CONVICTED:

Corrections Officer Larry Tucker, found guilty of kidnapping, sexual battery, gross sexual imposition and other crimes committed against 11 inmates/probationers

### Steubenville

#### SENTENCED:

Police Officer Nathan Cline, 24 months in prison for an illegal poaching scheme in Jefferson County

### York Township

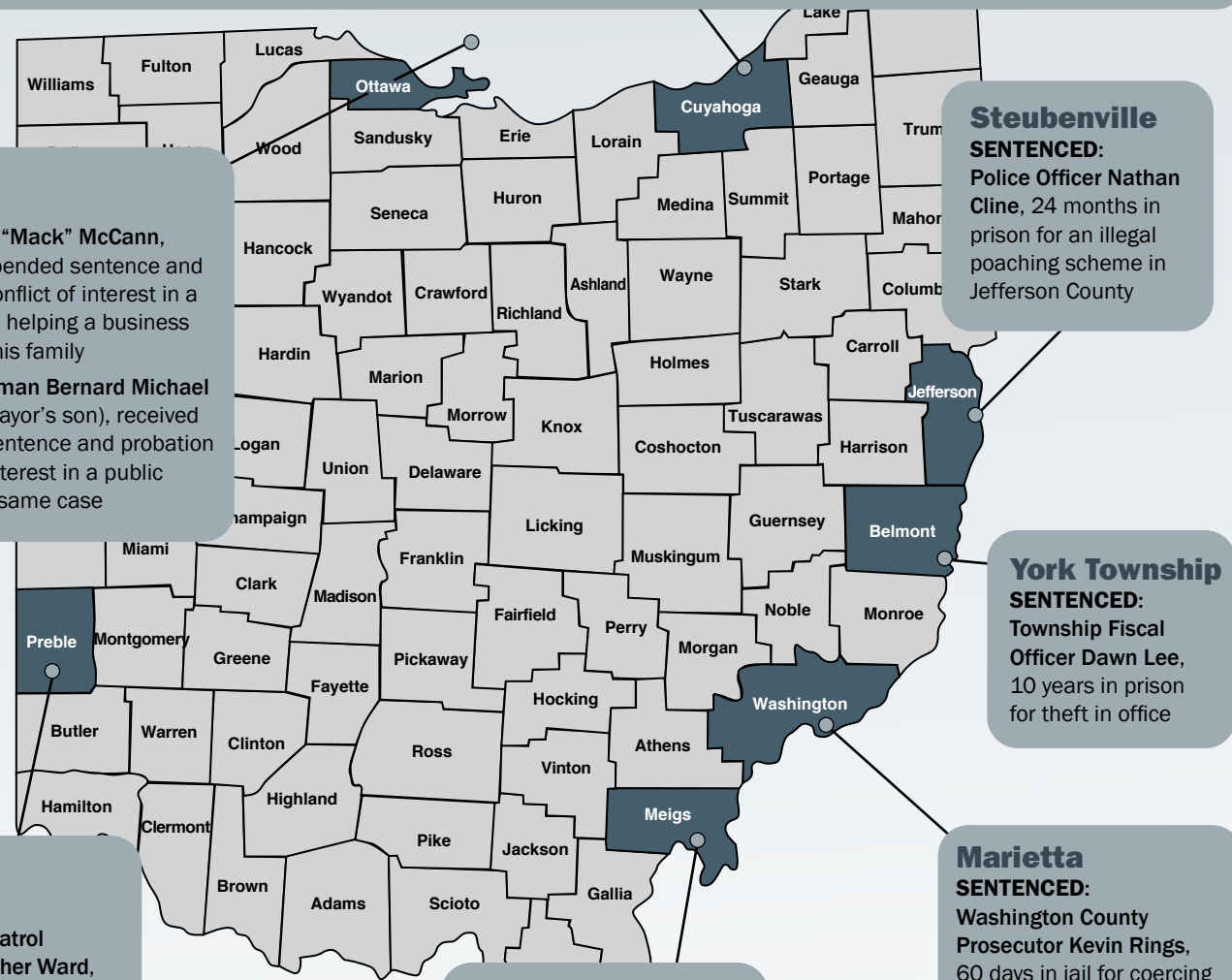
#### SENTENCED:

Township Fiscal Officer Dawn Lee, 10 years in prison for theft in office

### Marietta

#### SENTENCED:

Washington County Prosecutor Kevin Rings, 60 days in jail for coercing a woman into a sexual relationship in exchange for help on cases in which she was a victim and defendant



The Attorney General's Office helps victims of crime move forward with their lives, in part by reimbursing them and their families for costs such as medical expenses, lost wages, counseling and crime-scene cleanup.



## VICTIM COMPENSATION

**\$6.5 MILLION**  
TOTAL PAID  
IN VICTIM  
COMPENSATION

**2,310**  
NUMBER OF  
CLAIMS PAID

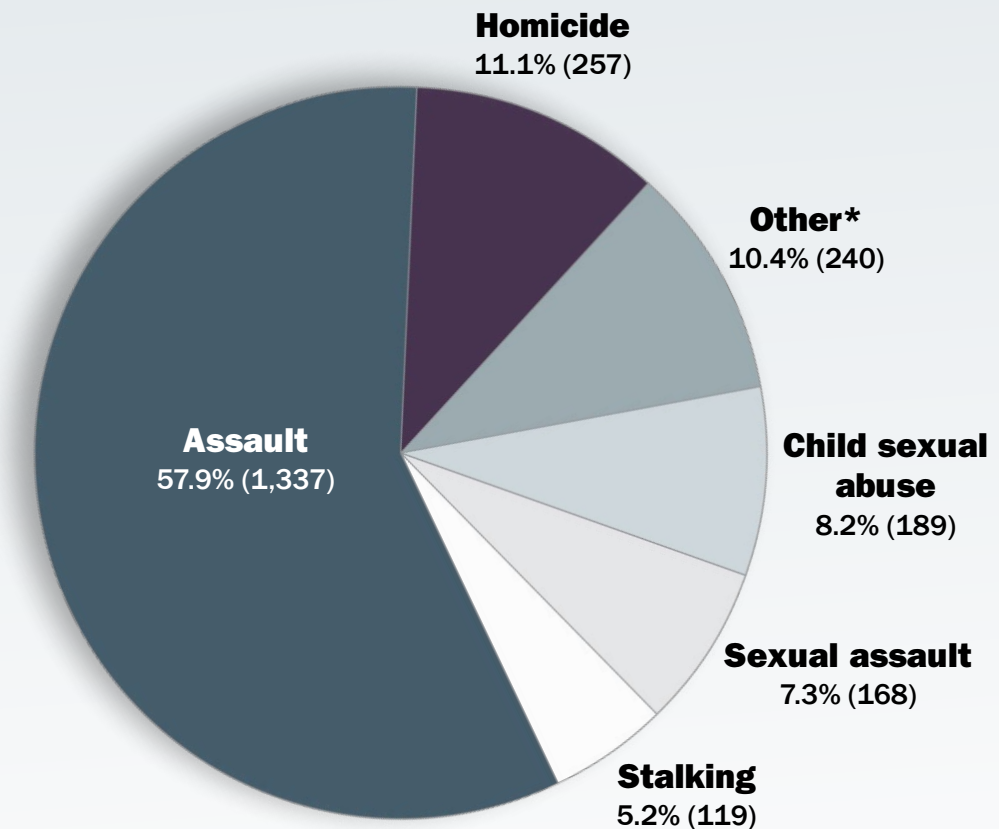
**\$2,850**  
AVERAGE  
CLAIM PAID

**\$6.39 MILLION**  
BALANCE IN OHIO  
VICTIMS OF CRIME  
COMPENSATION FUND

**93 DAYS**  
AVERAGE TIME  
TO PROCESS A  
CLAIM



## VICTIMS' CLAIMS PAID BY CRIME TYPE



\* "Other" includes robbery, child abuse, burglary, arson, kidnapping, driving under the influence and other motor vehicle crimes.

### ATTORNEY GENERAL YOST'S OFFICE ALSO SUPPORTS GROUPS THAT PROVIDE HELP TO CRIME VICTIMS:

- ★ The 32 rape crisis centers and agencies in Ohio received \$4.16 million — nearly a threefold funding increase from 2018.
- ★ More than \$105 million in grants from the federal Victims of Crime Act program were sent to 360 groups in the fiscal year. Recipients included domestic violence shelters, prosecutor-based victim programs and child advocacy centers.
- ★ Those organizations served 378,329 people in the calendar year. More than 143,000 were victims of domestic violence, more than 70,000 were victims of child abuse, and more than 5,600 were human trafficking survivors.
- ★ Services provided included shelter, emotional support, criminal justice advocacy and help filing for victim compensation.



# SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Attorney General Yost's office plays an important role in teaching, assisting and honoring law enforcement officers throughout the state. The support, including the work of BCI and its crime lab and OOCIC and its task forces, begins with the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission and Academy, which oversees basic training for would-be officers as well as advanced training for current officers.



## OPOTA TRAINING

**7,731**  
BASIC-TRAINING  
CERTIFICATES ISSUED

**21,463**  
OFFICERS WHO TOOK  
ADVANCED-TRAINING COURSES

### The most popular courses:

Why Teens Kill – Generation Death  
Law Enforcement Investigative Resources  
Judgmental Firearms Simulator (Mobile Academy)



## Facial-recognition review

In 2019, more than 50,000 law enforcement officers were registered users of the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway, a secure online platform that helps agencies statewide share information needed to solve crimes. Tools in OHLEG include a management system that helps agencies store records and issue citations; databases of investigative details and missing people; and a search engine that lets officers check names, vehicle descriptions, tattoos, photo lineups and other details.

After national media questioned whether federal agents were improperly using states' facial-recognition databases, Attorney General Yost initiated a review of that portion of OHLEG. Results found that use of OHLEG is strictly controlled; federal agencies accounted for less than 4% of all facial-recognition searches; and no mass surveillance,

broad dragnets or other illegitimate uses had occurred.

Nonetheless, the attorney general ordered new training to be created so that all users of Ohio's facial-recognition system realize its limitations. He appointed a panel of experts to recommend how best to maintain facial recognition as a tool for law enforcement while protecting individuals' privacy and civil liberties.

## Law Enforcement Conference

The 2019 Law Enforcement Conference, hosted Oct. 8-9 by Attorney General Yost, celebrated the commendable work being done by Ohio's peace officers. The annual event offered 30 workshops to help officers explore fresh ideas, best practices and new trends in policing. Almost 600 people attended.

## Ohio Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony

On May 2, 2019, the Ohio Attorney General's Office and the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy held a solemn ceremony (shown above) to honor the state's fallen officers. About 675 law enforcement officers, officials and members of the public attended. The names added to Ohio's memorial wall included Westerville Officers Eric Joering and Anthony P. Morelli, Mentor Officer Mathew Mazany and Cleveland Officer Vu Nguyen — who all died while on duty in 2018. Along with four historical inductions, those additions brought the total number of names on the wall to 797.



## Center for the Future of Forensic Science

The Ohio Attorney General's Center for the Future of Forensic Science at Bowling Green State University has a two-fold focus: research that helps police become better investigators and the training of students who will become tomorrow's crime solvers. In 2019, the \$1.2 million learning laboratory (shown above) and center offices were opened with BCI donating equipment and providing grants to purchase more. Students work with cutting-edge tools just like those used at BCI's nearby crime lab.

## Grants for police

- ★ **Body armor:** The Attorney General's Office awarded more than \$2.7 million to 324 local departments throughout Ohio to purchase body armor vests for officers.
- ★ **Traffic safety:** OPOTA offered officers \$280,000 in grant funding to pay for courses including identifying impaired drivers and investigating traffic collisions.
- ★ **Marijuana testing:** \$50,000 in grants were offered to local police agencies to help pay for private-lab testing to distinguish marijuana from hemp.



# LOOKING OUT FOR CONSUMERS

By themselves, everyday Ohioans may not be able to do much when a contractor or big business takes advantage of them, but with the power of the Ohio Attorney General's Office behind them, wrongs more often get righted. Protecting Ohioans from predatory and illegal business practices — including false advertising, shoddy workmanship and failure to perform services or deliver goods — is one of the primary focuses of Attorney General Yost's office.



## New tool for consumers

The Consumer Protection Lawsuit Search (available at <https://lawsuitsearch.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/>) lets people check whether businesses and individuals have been taken to court by the attorney general for violating consumer protection laws. Ohioans can use the database to avoid hiring “bad apple” contractors.

## A focus on robocalls

Most of us have endured the frustrating experience of picking up a ringing phone to find an automated message, not a real person, on the other end.

“Most people know to hang up immediately,” Attorney General Yost said. “But these fraudulent calls are a real threat to vulnerable Ohioans who have no reason to doubt the voice on the other end.”

In a combined effort with other states' attorney generals, Yost brokered an agreement with 12 service providers — including AT&T, Sprint and Verizon — to prevent robocalls. In July, the service providers promised to:

- ★ Implement call-blocking technology at the network level at no cost to customers.
- ★ Provide customers with free, easy-to-use call blocking and labeling tools.
- ★ Begin using technology to verify that calls are coming from a valid source.
- ★ Monitor their networks for robocall traffic.

Yost and the Federal Trade Commission also worked together to bring down a telemarketing scheme that cheated 450 Ohioans out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. In July, a federal judge issued a restraining order and froze the assets of Educare Centre Services and Madera Merchant Services, which made big promises about providing relief from credit card debt. The case is ongoing.

## Case files

- ★ **A home improvement contractor** in northeast Ohio was sued by the Attorney General's Office in December after doing business under more than 10 names and allegedly bilking homeowners out of more than \$150,000.
- ★ **A gravestone business** in Dayton that was accused of ripping off customers in schemes worth \$50,000 was sued in September.
- ★ **A wedding photographer** in Eaton was sued in August after complaints from five newlywed couples who paid for photos and videos but never received them.
- ★ **A landscaping business** in Lorain was sued in July over shoddy work and failure to deliver customers promised services worth \$37,200.
- ★ **A home remodeler** in Cincinnati was indicted on 49 charges of stealing almost \$213,000 from consumers, after an investigation by the AG's office.
- ★ **The Legacy Lofts** on Courtland and developer Scott Call were sued in March, accused of failing to return at least \$30,000 worth of deposits for condos never built in Norwood.
- ★ **Seven used-car dealerships** that failed to deliver vehicle titles to customers across Ohio were sued by the Attorney General's Office in 2019.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**21,646**  
CONSUMER  
COMPLAINTS  
RECEIVED FROM  
INDIVIDUALS,  
SMALL BUSINESSES  
& NONPROFITS

**197**  
CIVIL  
INVESTIGATIONS  
OPENED INTO  
BAD BUSINESS  
PRACTICES

**66**  
JUDGMENTS,  
COMPLIANCE  
AGREEMENTS &  
CONVICTIONS  
OBTAINED

**11,540**  
OHIOANS TRAINED  
AT CONSUMER  
PROTECTION  
EDUCATIONAL  
EVENTS



## Antitrust watchdog

Yost has joined multistate investigations into whether free market competition on the internet has been undermined by the business practices of Google and Facebook, two of the most powerful companies on Earth. Although the companies provide purportedly “free” platforms and information to consumers, they're really making money — loads of it — off data about our lives.

“The consumers Bill and Betty Buckeye, I would suggest to you, are not the consumers,” Yost said. “They are the product.”

Specifically, the Google investigation has begun by looking into the company's hold on online advertising; the Facebook investigation, which remains in the early stages, may examine how the company uses data to stifle would-be competition.



Protecting the environment is about making a safer future for all residents of Ohio, whether they live in cities, rural areas or in between. The Attorney General’s Office works with the Ohio EPA and other partners to ensure that bad actors don’t trash the land that we — and future generations — depend on.

One case from 2019 is about protecting children right now.

In August, Attorney General Yost sued the owners of an earthen dam in Springboro for ignoring state orders to fix the deteriorating structure (**shown below**). If the Remick Lake Dam fails, its spillways would direct floodwater toward a day care center, a strip mall and eight homes.

Multiple safety inspections by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources have found deficiencies.

“The owners of this dam have shrugged off the state’s warnings for over a decade at the expense of the public’s safety,” Yost said. “It’s well past time for them to accept responsibility and make the necessary repairs.”

## Case files

- ★ **Mercury contamination** at a warehouse that stored millions of fluorescent light bulbs caused a Cuyahoga County judge to order a cleanup in December. That came as a result of work by the Attorney General’s Office, as did the others in this list.
- ★ **After illegally dumping** more than 200 scrap tires throughout Highland County, a Hillsboro man was sentenced in October to a prison term of four years.
- ★ **The Crossridge Landfill** in Jefferson County was ordered to close in September after illegally dumping industrial wastewater into the environment.
- ★ **Sunny Farms Landfill** in Fostoria agreed in July to pay \$1.7 million for violations of water pollution, solid waste and air pollution control laws. In addition, the landfill agreed to pay \$2 million more for underreported and mischaracterized fees associated with waste entering landfill facilities. The case was a partnership with the Ohio EPA.
- ★ **After dumping 6 tons** of scrap tires at an abandoned house, a Hamilton man in March was sentenced to prison for two years.
- ★ **Tier Environmental LLC** pleaded guilty in January to recklessly violating a permit by storing too much hazardous waste — to the tune of 130,000 gallons — at its site in Bedford. The landfill was ordered to pay fines and restitution of \$30,000.

The Attorney General’s Office consists of more than 30 sections and other special divisions, each with distinct duties. The teams work hard to fight crime and help victims heal, support law enforcement and consumers, and safeguard those in need. The sections include:



### ANTITRUST

The section promotes competition in the marketplace by enforcing state and federal antitrust laws. It also offers training to government personnel on detecting bid-rigging and safeguarding the procurement process against vendor collusion.

### APPEALS

The section, headed by the state solicitor, represents the state and its agencies on appeals in the U.S. Supreme Court, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and the Ohio Supreme Court. The Appeals Section determines the cases for which the state will seek review and the positions it will take in those cases.

### BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

The state’s official crime lab, BCI serves the criminal justice community and offers expert criminal investigative services to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The bureau has three major divisions: Laboratory, Identification and Investigations. The 4,063 cases investigated in 2019 included 743 sex offenses, 717 drug trafficking offenses, 302 homicides and 209 missing persons.

### CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

At the Ohio Attorney General’s Center for the Future of Forensic Science at Bowling Green State University, forensic science students learn to work with cutting-edge tools that BCI uses at its nearby crime lab and researchers focus on issues that can help solve future crimes in Ohio.

### CHARITABLE LAW

The section regulates charities in the state to ensure that donations are not misappropriated and proceeds are used for charitable purposes. The section encourages sound board governance, oversees a registry of charities and professional solicitors, and licenses bingo operations.

It also represents Ohio’s Liquor Commission, Lottery Commission, Horseracing Commission and Casino Commission.

### CIVIL RIGHTS

The section represents the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, prosecuting cases on its behalf. The Civil Rights Section also conducts free training for employers, HR professionals, landlords, condo associations and businesses throughout Ohio to promote compliance with fair employment and fair housing laws.

### COLLECTIONS ENFORCEMENT

The section collects outstanding debt for state government agencies, boards and commissions as well as all public colleges and universities. It also works with more than 539 local governments and courts to collect their outstanding debts. In 2019, the section collected \$466.5 million, which was returned to its government and school clients.

### CONSTITUENT SERVICES

The section operates the Attorney General’s Help Center, which the public can contact to file a complaint against a business; report tips on illegal gaming, health care fraud and patient abuse; request educational materials; and more. In 2019, the Help Center fielded 78,826 phone calls, handled 12,250 online inquiries and received 11,092 pieces of mail.

### CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICES

The section acts as legal counsel for all elected officials in statewide offices. It includes the Public Records Unit and publishes the annual Sunshine Law Manual and the ‘Open’ Book newsletter.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

The section ensures a safe and strong marketplace for consumers and businesses through education, dispute resolution and enforcement of consumer laws. Eight units within the section are tasked with more specific duties, including investigating and prosecuting violations





# DETAILING THE AGO STRUCTURE

of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, educating Ohioans about their rights, and resolving consumer disputes.

## COURT OF CLAIMS DEFENSE

The section defends the state in cases filed in the Ohio Court of Claims and argues appeals of those cases in the 10th District Court of Appeals and the Ohio Supreme Court. The section's Construction Litigation Unit prosecutes defective construction claims on behalf of the state. For example, in May, a contractor agreed to pay \$415,000 to settle a complaint about defective roof construction on a middle school in the Southeast Local School District. In late 2019, the unit hit a milestone: \$50 million in settlements and verdicts collected for clients since its creation in 2008.

## CRIME VICTIM SERVICES

The section provides funding and services to victims, training to professionals who assist them and crime prevention programs to Ohio communities. It also puts on the annual Two Days in May Conference on Victim Assistance, is responsible for the administration of the federal Victims of Crime Act and State Victims Assistance Act grant programs, and houses the Human Trafficking Initiative.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The section has three units:

- ★ **The Capital Crimes Unit** works to uphold death sentences, which can require years of litigation in federal courts. The unit also aids, by request, county prosecutors trying death penalty cases.
- ★ **The Habeas Unit** works to keep dangerous criminals in prison by opposing litigation brought by inmates who seek to overturn valid convictions.
- ★ **The Corrections Unit** represents Ohio's Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and Department of Youth Services in lawsuits brought by inmates.

## EDUCATION

The section handles litigation for the Ohio Department of Education and the State Board of Education; works to revoke or suspend the licenses of educators who fail to meet professional obligations; and provides legal counsel to universities, community colleges and technical colleges.

## EMPLOYMENT LAW

The section provides legal advice and representation on employment matters to state departments, agencies, commissions, elected officials and public colleges and universities. These services save state resources by protecting against unsupported legal claims, reduce legal fees for outside counsel and help ensure that the state employs people worthy of public trust.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

The section investigates and prosecutes those who violate environmental laws and represents state agencies that safeguard Ohio's natural resources. In 2019, it filed 42 civil cases in state and federal courts and collected almost \$16.1 million in fines and penalties. The section's combined judgments, settlements and restitutions last year totaled more than \$20.2 million.



A BCI worker fingerprints a child at the attorney general's booth at the Ohio State Fair.

## EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

The section provides counsel to seven cabinet agencies and more than 80 state boards and commissions. In 2019, the section successfully represented these clients as plaintiffs and defendants in various administrative, state and federal court proceedings. The section opened 948 matters (643 that were administrative-related and 298 involving litigation) and closed 1,018 matters.

## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The section represents the Department of Aging; Department of Insurance and health-related professional licensing boards; the Department of Health; the Department of Medicaid and Department of Job and Family Services; the Unemployment Compensation Division of ODJFS; and the Department of Developmental Disabilities, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and State Board of Psychology.

## HEALTH CARE FRAUD

The section consists of two units:

- ★ **The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit** investigates and prosecutes health care providers who defraud the state's Medicaid program as well as enforces Ohio's Patient Abuse and Neglect Law, which protects the disabled and elderly in long-term-care facilities. In 2019, the unit logged 215 indictments and 172 convictions and recovered more than \$76.2 million in cases of Medicaid fraud, patient abuse and neglect, and care facility misappropriation.
- ★ **The Workers' Compensation Fraud Unit** prosecutes claimants, employers and health care providers who defraud the Ohio Workers' Compensation Program. In 2019, the unit logged 49 indictments and 39 convictions and recovered nearly \$856,000 in fraud cases.

## LABOR RELATIONS

The section represents the Ohio Department of Commerce in its enforcement of the state's minimum wage and prevailing wage laws; represents the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in collecting unpaid employment compensation pensions; and represents the Employment Relations Board and the Personnel Board of Review. It collects from employers that do not comply with state laws and sends almost all of the money to affected workers.

## OHIO ORGANIZED CRIME INVESTIGATIONS COMMISSION

The commission assists local law enforcement agencies in combating pervasive organized crime — drug dealing and human trafficking, for example — through the creation of task forces composed of law enforcement officers and justice officials. The task forces receive wider jurisdiction and subpoena powers as well as operational help, funding and commission oversight.

## OHIO PEACE OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY

The academy and the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission oversee training and certification requirements

for the 33,000 law officers in the state and private-security, corrections and humane agents. Staff members provide instruction in basic and advanced subjects and put on the annual Fallen Officers Memorial and Law Enforcement Conference.

## POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The section works with state legislators and their staff members to turn ideas into initiatives and laws that better protect Ohioans.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

The section represents the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and the Power Siting Board, which reviews plans for new energy facilities. In 2019, the section helped secure more than \$928,000 in forfeitures from electricity and natural gas suppliers (for violations of marketing and solicitation regulations), from a utility company (after a fire caused by an abandoned service line) and from motor carrier companies and drivers (after PUCO administrative hearings).

## SPECIAL PROSECUTIONS

Upon the request of a local authority, AGO attorneys can serve as lead prosecutors in cases in which a conflict of interest exists. Also, local prosecutors can call upon those in the section to serve as assistant prosecutors in cases that require specialized knowledge or greater resources. In 2019, the section opened 196 criminal matters in more than 57 of Ohio's 88 counties. The section had 10 trials during that time: Seven ended with a guilty verdict or plea; two ended with hung juries and will be retried; and the outcome of one was still pending as of the writing of this report.

## TAXATION

The section represents the tax commissioner of Ohio, who is charged with administering and enforcing the state income tax, sales and use taxes, and several business and excise taxes.

## TRANSPORTATION

The section serves as legal counsel to the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio Rail Development Commission.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The section provides legal counsel and advice to the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation and the Industrial Commission of Ohio. Typically, the cases focus on whether a claimant is entitled to participate in the workers' compensation fund and what type of benefits a claimant may be entitled to receive.



## COMING UP IN 2020

FALLEN OFFICERS MEMORIAL CEREMONY | MAY 7

TWO DAYS IN MAY CONFERENCE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE | MAY 21-22

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE | SEPT. 14-15



LIGHT ARTILLERY  
BATTERY A  
PENNSYLVANIA BATTERY





**DAVE YOST**

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019

## OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

30 E. Broad St. 17th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
800-282-0515

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov)

### Most commonly requested services

#### Reach our Help Center

800-282-0515

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Contact](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Contact)

#### File a consumer complaint

800-282-0515

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/FileAComplaint](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/FileAComplaint)

#### Submit a law enforcement tip

855-224-6446

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/LETips](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/LETips)

#### Report a scam

800-282-0515

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/ReportAScam](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/ReportAScam)

#### Pay a debt to the state

888-301-8885

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/PayOnline](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/PayOnline)