

Greenbook

LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget

Ohio Elections Commission

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Ohio Elections Commission

Quick look...

- The Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) oversees political party spending, campaign finance, and corporate political contributions to ensure compliance with the Ohio Elections Law.
- The Commission consists of seven members appointed for five-year terms: three democrats, three republicans, and one unaffiliated with any political party. It is staffed by a full-time executive director, one administrative professional, and a part-time administrative aide.
- H.B. 96 abolishes the ELC on January 1, 2026, and replaces it with the five-member Ohio Election Integrity Commission (OEIC) to be located within the Office of the Secretary of State (SOS).

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
GRF ALI 051321, Operating Expenses					
\$398,454	\$404,044	\$414,998	\$429,746	\$214,400	\$0
% change	1.4%	2.7%	3.6%	-50.1%	-100.0%
Fund 4P20 ALI 051601, Operating Support					
\$233,135	\$204,077	\$285,002	\$260,093	\$225,600	\$0
% change	-12.5%	39.7%	-8.7%	-13.3%	-100.0%
Total funding:					
\$631,589	\$608,121	\$700,001	\$689,839	\$440,000	\$0
% change	-3.7%	15.1%	-1.5%	-36.2%	-100.0%

Agency overview

The Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) issues advisory opinions on campaign finance questions, responds to questions about campaign activities, and enforces the elections laws relating to campaign activity. Hearings before the Commission typically entail complaints brought against individual candidates, campaign committees, political action committees, or corporations that are required to file financial reports. The Commission also handles cases dealing with various nondisclosure issues. The Commission consists of seven appointed members including three republicans, three democrats, and one independent serving five-year terms. The Commission employs a staff of three people, including an executive director, administrative professional, and a part-time administrative aide. As of January 1, 2026, the ELC is abolished. The funding provided for the ELC under H.B. 96 provides funding for operations until the Commission is abolished.

Abolishment

H.B. 96 abolishes the Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) on January 1, 2026, and replaces it with the five-member Ohio Election Integrity Commission (OEIC), which the act creates within the Office of the Secretary of State (SOS). Under H.B. 96, the salary for members of the new Commission would be \$25,000. Until January 1, 2026, the ELC must continue to operate under the prior law. Upon abolishment, ELC employees, records, assets, and liabilities are all transferred to the OEIC.

Any complaint that is still pending before the ELC on January 1, 2026, along with all records regarding the complaint, is transferred to the OEIC for hearing and disposition. Additionally, the act transfers the ELC's authority to render advisory opinions to the OEIC. The OEIC may render opinions interpreting any law over which it has jurisdiction. However, any ELC advisory opinion in effect is considered an advisory opinion of the OEIC, unless and until the OEIC amends or rescinds it.

Finally, the act replaces the Ohio Elections Commission Fund (Fund 4P20) with the Ohio Election Integrity Commission Fund (Fund 5CS1) administered by the SOS, which has the same funding sources, namely candidate filing fees. However, note that H.B. 96 eliminates filing fees for State Board of Education candidates.