

Vivek Ramaswamy said he wants to consolidate Ohio colleges and universities.

Ohio has 14 state universities and 22 state-supported community and technical colleges, as well as a substantial number of private colleges and universities. No doubt Mr. Ramaswamy was referring to the 36 public tax-supported institutions of higher education when he issued his statement about consolidation.

Every resident of Ohio is within about 35 miles of at least one public or private higher education institution. This is an important consideration in terms of affordability for and accessibility to higher education. What might seem efficient and effective on paper is not necessarily practical, efficient or effective. Consolidation of public higher education institutions would most assuredly reduce college admissions and graduates.

Consolidation of public higher education institutions would create a firestorm of opposition, and rightly so.

The 14 state higher education universities were created over time as follows:

- Ohio University: 1804
- Miami University: 1809
- Ohio State University: 1870
- Central State University: 1890
- Kent State University: 1910
- Bowling Green State University: 1935
- Cleveland State University: 1964
- University of Toledo: 1967
- University of Akron: 1967
- Wright State University: 1967
- Youngstown State University: 1967
- University of Cincinnati: 1977
- Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED): 1973
- Shawnee State University: 1986

This state system of 14 universities was created thoughtfully over a 75-year period. The 22 state-supported community and technical colleges, likewise, were carefully planned and established in recent years.

With this history in view, it would be irresponsible to just start a consolidation movement without considering the historical landscape. Ohio has a population of 11 million people. Are 14 universities too many institutions scattered throughout the state?

The state appropriation for higher education covers a very small percentage of the total cost of a college education in the state-supported universities.

Vivek Ramaswamy said Ohio colleges, universities need to be consolidated: 'We have too many of them'

By: [Megan Henry](#)-

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Ohio Republican governor candidate Vivek Ramaswamy said he wants to consolidate Ohio colleges and universities.

In a recent [video posted on Ramaswamy's Threads account](#), he is seen being asked if it's possible to eliminate state income tax.

“The reason it’s possible is that you look at certain areas of excess spending where we can not just cut cost but improve effectiveness,” Ramaswamy said in the less than a minute video clip.

“Look at the number of universities in our state. I love universities in Ohio. I want us to have the best universities. We have too many of them. They need to be consolidated. And when you consolidate them, they can actually be centers of excellence who are actually the best in their respective domains, instead of trying to create replicas and clones of one another throughout the state.”

More than 313,000 undergraduate students were enrolled at Ohio’s public universities during the most recent fall semester, according to preliminary data from the [Ohio Department of Higher Education](#).

Ohio has 36 public two-year and four-year colleges and universities, 74 independent institutions, and 49 technical colleges, [according to the department](#).

“Vivek is obviously not going to eliminate Ohio’s great universities, but he will cut the bureaucracy that burdens them,” Ramaswamy campaign spokesperson Evan Machan said in an email.

“College tuition costs are more unaffordable than ever, and Vivek won’t apologize for delivering solutions to fix that problem for Ohio families.”

Ramaswamy, who is from the Cincinnati area, graduated from Harvard University and Yale Law School.

Ohio Democratic governor candidate Amy Acton was quick to respond to Ramaswamy’s comments in a couple of posts on X.

“In Ohio, we’re proud of our world class colleges and universities that are centers of community, our economy, create jobs, and produce world class athletes,” Acton said [in one of her posts](#). “It’s March Madness, and I’m rooting for our Ohio colleges while my opponent wants to eliminate the teams on your bracket.”

Acton has degrees from Youngstown State University, Northeast Ohio Medical University, and Ohio State University.

“I paid my way through Youngstown State and went on to teach at OSU,” Acton said in [her other post](#). “Ohio has the best colleges in the country, and Vivek Ramaswamy plans to get rid of them.”

“Vivek Ramaswamy’s plan to eliminate an untold number of Ohio colleges and universities will devastate local communities across our state who depend on them for jobs, healthcare and quality of life,” said Acton’s campaign spokeswoman Addie Bullock.

Former Ohio Republican Gov. Jim Rhodes said while he was running for office he wanted a public college or university within 30 miles of every Ohioan.

Rhodes became governor in 1963 and Cleveland State University opened in 1964, Wright State University opened in 1967, Northeast Ohio Medical University opened in 1972, and Shawnee State University opened in 1986.

Several associate colleges, regional university branches and technical colleges were also founded after Rhodes took office.

Colleges and universities, however, are feeling the [ramifications of declining birth rates](#), rising tuition costs, and student loan debt.

The national [birth rate fell nearly 23%](#) from 2007 to 2022, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, meaning the traditional college-age population started dwindling last year through 2037, according to [data](#) from the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education.

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Both Ohio university main and regional campuses and community colleges saw a 12% [decrease in enrollment from Fall 2012 to Fall 2022](#), according to the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

During that time, Ohio public institutions of higher education overall saw a 12% decline from 527,190 to 462,949.

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