



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
IRISH • CATHOLIC • AMERICAN

Ohio State Board

Newsletter

June 2025

Volume 7 Issue 6

President's Message



Brothers,

Welcome to June. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you later this month in Akron. The preparations for the State Convention have been well underway for over a year and a half. I know the host committee

has a great event planned.

To all State Committee Chairman and Division President's, make sure to get your reports into State Secretary Pete Chrystal asap and be prepared to report at convention. I am looking forward to hearing about all the good work that has been done over the course of the past two years. As I've stated at past State Board meetings, the purpose of your report is to not only share your successes but to give ideas to other Divisions about recruitment, fundraising and retention. When we collaborate, we all win.

The AOH Easter appeal is now in full swing. This is an opportune time to honor your Division Chaplain with a gift of a scholarship in his name to a local seminarian. Between June and August, send in your Division Diocese Form. This will let the National Project St. Patrick Chairman Kevin Delaney know where to send your donation. You can send in your Project St. Patrick donation form until October 17, 2025. Both forms are located at aoh.com/forms under Project St. Patrick forms. This would also be a good way to honor past Ohio State Chaplain now Bishop John Keehner of the Diocese of Sioux City.

Continued on Page 2

Chaplain's Comments



Brothers, the state convention is this month in Akron, Ohio. This is a chance to not only experience our deliberations at the state level, but it is a chance to come together, meet brothers from

different divisions and share the good news about your division and what you and your brothers are doing in your neck of the woods in Unity, Friendship and Christian Charity.

Not only do you get the chance to share your good news, but they will share their good news with you. And this, my brothers, is the opportunity to learn different ways to breath life into your divisions.

Sometimes we find our selves doing the same things in our divisions from one year to the next. Either out of a lack of active participants, falling into a comfort zone, or we find the same few brothers in our division who are the only ones who are making things happen, we find ourselves trying to think of ways to get more brothers involved and more potential brothers to join the AOH. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Well, one way to rekindle the flame of life into our divisions is to try something different! One thing that I can share from my workplace is the idea of best practices. For Quality Management Systems in the automotive and aerospace industries, there is a requirement to record and share best practices. These can be procedures, work instructions, or methods of doing things the best way possible to yield the most effective way to increase throughput,

Continued on Page 2

President's Message, cont.

Thank you again brothers for all your hard work. I look forward to our convention as we set the course of the Ohio AOH for the next two years.

In Motto,
Denny



Chaplain's Comments, cont.

better quality, improve delivery or reduce cost. It's like when you are struggling at something and someone stops you and shows you an easier way to do it. They are sharing what they know works better to help you do what you are doing.

This is what I have seen happen when we meet for the state board meetings. Each division reports out on what they have been up to since the last time we met. Usually, every division shares their success stories, and occasionally stories of things that did not go so well. That's okay, because we all learn from one another what works and what doesn't. Many times, I hear, "Oh, we want to do something like that in our division", or "Hey, we never thought of that", or "I bet we could do something like that". These are the best practices being shared between our divisions.

The state convention affords us the opportunity to share our best practices with one another. I encourage every brother who is able to make the convention this year to do so. Come and share your best practices with your brother Hibernians from around the state. This is how we will put a spark into the life of our divisions. This is how we will find potential brothers to bring into our divisions.

We need to have divisions that people look to and say, "Hey, those guys are really doing great things; I think I would like to do that too".

Our ancestry and our faith provide best practices that are a part of our character and make us who we are. What we say and do together as Hibernians can show others what Unity, Friendship and Christian Charity looks like in practice. If we all take advantage of the opportunity to come together, learn from one another and grow as an organization and as individuals, we can show others so much more. Please come to the state convention and share some of your best practices with your brothers from around the state so we can be the best Hibernians we can be as we come together in Unity and Friendship as we give glory to the Lord by our lives in Christian Charity.

God Bless,

Deacon Bruce



2023 - 2025 Officers

Chaplain	Deacon Bruce Dobbins brunomusarra@yahoo.com
President	Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com
Vice President	Bruce McPherson hilliardmcperson@gmail.com
Secretary	Pete Chrystal pvchrystal59@gmail.com
Treasurer	Greg Brown Gbrownshamrock@yahoo.com
Director	John Myers johnmyers216@gmail.com
Director	Chris Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com
Past President	Bob Harper harper.bg@pg.com
National President	Sean Pender paddyspeed@yahoo.com
National Oversight Committee Chairman	Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com

OHIO DIVISIONS

County/Division Presidents

Clermont	Douglas Gerrard dpgerrard@aol.com
Cuyahoga Board	Tom Ginley tgbigbass@gmail.com
Cuyahoga #2	Jim Kilbane jjk5755@hotmail.com
Cuyahoga #3	Robert Mullin bobbymulls@yahoo.co
Franklin #1	Jerry Tracy Gbtracyjr@sbcglobal.net
Hamilton #1	Tim Oliver toliver33@live.com
Lucas	Robert McMahon aohjohnpkellydivision@gmail.com
Mahoning #6	Joe McCormick macman23.jm@gmail.com
Medina	Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com
Montgomery	Art Gannon artgannon@aol.com
Stark #1	Tom Wolf tomwolfcpa@msn.com
Summit Board	Jim Meszaros meszi01@neo.rr.com
Summit #2	Ed Morrison edwardcmorrison@outlook.com
Summit #3	Michael Namsick mpnamsick@gmail.com
Trumbull	Marty McQuaide emcqu@aol.com
Washington	Patrick Kelly pkelly03@sprynet.com

Appointed Officers

Catholic Action	Patrick Lally lally8404@hotmail.com
Pro Life	Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com
FFAI	Patrick Williams karimcwilly@gmail.com
PEC	Mike Cosgrove irish.mick213@gmail.com
Project St. Patrick	Chris Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com
Missions & Charities	Chris Konik chriskonik@mindspring.com
Organizer	Joe Casey qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com
Historian	Mike Finn FCoolavin@aol.com
Veterans Affairs	Doug Gerrard dpgerrard@aol.com
Hibernian Hunger	Dave McLaughlin dmclaug106@sbcglobal.net
Immigration	John Myers johnmyers216@gmail.com

Jim Casey's New Email Address

jjcasey973@icloud.com

Newsletter News

Just a reminder. If you have information for our monthly newsletter, please send it as an attachment to an e-mail to Editor, Jim Casey at

jjcasey973@icloud.com

The **deadline** for articles is the **24th of the month**.

AOH-LAOH Ohio 2025 State Convention

June 26th-29th, 2025

Sheraton Suites Akron - Cuyahoga Falls

1989 Front Street Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, USA, 44221-3811

Welcome to the AOH/LAOH Ohio 2025 Convention.

This is your one stop shop for important information about our convention.

You'll be able to find out about the hotel, register for our event, and other announcements as they come up.

We've got a lot of GREAT things planned and we hope you will enjoy coming to Summit County.

So as to comply with our State President's requests:

ALL delegates must have their own accounts and pay the appropriate delegate fees.

Everybody, regardless of being a delegate or not, is encouraged to set up their own accounts.

First order of business:

Our hotel, the [Sheraton & Suites - Akron/Cuyahoga Falls](#) has a special room rate of **\$145.00** for us!

Yes, there is a catch, you need to book your room reservation by **May 26th, 2025!**

Also, our registration is now **OPEN!**

A verified login is required to complete the registration.

Last day to register: June 11th, 2025.

Sheraton Inn & Suites Room Booking Special

[Click here for hotel booking.](#)

**Registration is now
open**

[Click here to register.](#)



Ancient Order of Hibernians
&
Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians
2025 Convention Program Book Request



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Ad Size Desired _____ Amount Paid _____

Ad details and requirements are listed below. Please state the name of the buyer within your correspondence and submission form **MUST** be included with your ad, either mailed or e-mailed (electronic).

E-MAIL ALL FILES TO: Jim Meszaros at meszi01@neo.rr.com

Deadline for Submission:
June 9, 2025

AD Rates

Premium Add Space:

Outside Back Cover (color) \$150.00

Inside Front Cover (color) \$125.00 (sold)

Inside Back Cover (color) \$125.00

Full Page (B/W) (4.5w x 7h) \$80.00

½ Page (B/W) (4.5w x 3.5h) \$50.00

Business Card (B/W) (2w x 3.5h) \$25.00

One(single) line text on Patron name page \$10.00

Measurements are in inches.

AD REQUIREMENTS

Premium Ad should be submitted as CMYK color -OR- black and white for all others.

All ads must be camera-ready, no bleed, in PDF or .png format (high resolution). There will be an additional \$10 charge if artwork is not sent to specifications. Do not staple artwork to this form.

Make checks payable to:

AOH of America

Mail Ad Requests to:

AOH State Convention Program Ad

Attn: Jim Meszaros

2000 Brown St.

Akron, OH 44319

State Organizer's Report

I hope everyone who can, are planning on attending our State Convention this month. It should be a lot of fun and a good time to continue the business of our Order. Remember, you must log-in to be a voting delegate.

We learned in May that we have three At-Large brothers residing in Ohio. I have invited them to our convention and hope to introduce them at that time. These brothers are Austin Talbott of Paulding, Steve Talbott of Hicksville and Patrick Boylan of Concord Township. We welcome you, brothers; please reach out if you have any questions or if you think a division might be able to be formed nearby.

We are doing well in closing out our open applications. I need to report back to the National Organizer when an application is closed out, so be sure to send me that information. I do want to give a "shout-out" to Pat Kelly, president of the Msgr. Donal O'Carroll Division in Washington County. Within an hour of my emailing an application to him, he replied saying contact had been made and they would (if voted in) be installing him as a new member at their June meeting. Thank you, Patrick; that's how the process should work!

Remember, if your division has a Facebook page or other social media outlets, make sure you keep them up to date and giving the right information so potential applicants would be able to contact you. Social media has proven to be a helpful tool with recruitment, something we should all be thinking about. We will discuss this further at our convention.

Joe Casey, State Organizer, qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com

Ohio State Board Fundraiser

The following items will be available at the State Convention.

Commodore Barry Medal \$30.00 ea (you save the \$5.00 shipping fee)

Ohio Hibernian patch \$10 ea

See State Vice President Bruce McPherson for purchase. Cash or check.



State Historian's Report

J. Michael Finn, State Historian

Chaplains and the U.S. Military



The early U.S. Military adopted the custom of having military chaplains. This custom, however, meant Protestant chaplains only. Members of the Catholic faith in the Continental Army were often forced to rely on French military chaplains. Although there were very few Catholic priests available in America, their absence from the Continental forces was due more to anti-Catholic discrimination than availability of priests.

The surviving records from the War of 1812 indicate that there were 12 regular army chaplains during this war and that none of them were Catholic.

The man most often with being the first Catholic priest commissioned as a chaplain and officer in the armed forces of the United States was Father Adam Marshall, S.J. He served aboard the USS North Carolina from December 22, 1824 until his death on board ship, September 20, 1825.

In 1846 the United States declared war on Mexico. The number of Catholics in the military had dramatically increased due to increases in Irish and German immigration to the U.S. With few exceptions, the vast majority of the U.S. officer corps remained Protestant. These Protestant officers had little use for their Catholic soldiers and singled them out for cruel and often unjust punishments. As a result hundreds, possibly thousands, of Irish and German soldiers deserted to Mexico where they formed the San Patricio or St. Patrick's Battalion in the Mexican Army. Catholic bishops formally complained to President James K. Polk about Protestant officers forcing Catholic soldiers to attend Protestant services and about the generally cruel and unusual punishments applied to Catholic troops.

In Washington, President Polk was concerned about the increasing number of Catholic desertions and he was also concerned that the war was being perceived in Mexico as an anti-Catholic crusade. Polk secretly contacted New York Bishop John Joseph Hughes and requested a meeting. Secrecy was necessary because if Polk's political allies had discovered that he was meeting with a Catholic bishop, Polk would surely have been driven from office.

Polk requested that Bishop Hughes assign Catholic priests to the Army. As a result, two Jesuit priests were assigned to General Zachary Taylor's army. They were, Father John McElroy, S.J. and Father Anthony Rey, S.J. Their duties were to minister to the Catholic Irish and German soldiers. Father Rey was killed in Mexico during the war. The records are unclear whether his death was due to military action or if he was killed by Mexican rancheros that often espoused hatred for Jesuits. Father McElroy served one year with the Army then returned east where in 1863 he founded Boston College.

In the years prior to the Civil War, records indicate that Catholic chaplains served in remote forts of the western territories of the United States. Father Ignacio Ramirez, Father Michael Sheehan and Father Peter DeSmet, S.J. were three priests who served with distinction at these remote forts as military chaplains.

Continued on Page 8

State Historian's Report, cont.

The Civil War – With the beginning of the Civil War the number of Catholic immigrants in this country had quadrupled. Irish and German units were common in the Federal and the Confederate armies. About 40 Catholic priests served the Union Army and about 28 served the Confederacy. Many chaplains, particularly in the Confederacy, served without any official recognition or pay. As many volunteer units were formed from Catholic parishes, the parish priest often joined the unit. Catholic chaplains most often served at the front lines, exposing themselves to enemy fire in order to provide both medical and sacramental care for the troops.

Noteworthy Union Army chaplains were: Father William Corby, chaplain of the Union Irish Brigade. Father Corby is noted for administering absolution to Catholic troops at the Battle of Gettysburg. He was later served as president of Notre Dame University. Father John Ireland was chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota Regiment and later was Archbishop of St. Paul.

Noteworthy Confederate Army chaplains were: Father John Bannon who was chaplain to the Missouri Irish Brigade and later in the war served as Jefferson Davis' emissary to the Vatican. Father Abram J. Ryan served as chaplain and later became known as the Poet-Priest of the Confederacy.

World War I – At the beginning of World War I there were only sixteen priests serving as chaplains in the Regular Army, eight in the Navy and another ten in the National Guard. This was not enough to meet the anticipated number of Catholics in service. The U.S. bishops formed the National Catholic War Council and appealed to all dioceses and religious communities to contribute what religious personnel they could. Many responded.

Records compiled by the Military Archdiocese report that by the end of the war a total of 1,026 priests (762 diocesan and 264 from religious orders) were serving with the armed forces. There were also 165 priests serving without commission as civilians paid directly by the Knights of Columbus. About 30% of all chaplains in World War I were Catholic priests. Seventeen priests died in service during the war. While most of these deaths were due to military action, several died as a result of tending to sick soldiers during the 1918 flu pandemic. The most famous Catholic chaplain of the war was **"Fighting" Father Francis P. Duffy (pictured)** of the 69th New York and Rainbow Division. Father Duffy was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Croix de Guerre. There is a statue of Father Duffy in New York City near Times Square.

Given that this war saw the largest number of Catholic chaplains in any U.S. military operation, it was natural that questions and conflicts of authority arose. Did the chaplains report to their own bishop or to the bishop where they were stationed? This vast military congregation, officially, had no head. On November 24, 1917 the Pope appointed Bishop Patrick Hayes, Auxiliary Bishop of New York, to be "Ordinary of all Catholics who fight in the Army and the Navy during the present war..." All Catholic chaplains now had Bishop Hayes as their Ordinary for the duration of their military career and the organization was run from New York. This organization was called the Military Vicariate. In 1985 the vicariate was made a separate archdiocese and the headquarters moved to Washington, D.C. Archbishop Joseph Ryan was the first Ordinary of the vicariate. In 1987 the title of the vicariate was officially adopted as The Archdiocese for the Military Services, U.S.A.

Of course, chaplains continued to serve nobly and bravely in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

J. Michael Finn

Catholic Action

The Easter season comes to an end this year in June. In the liturgical calendar for this year, all of the Sundays of this month are marked by special solemnities: June 1, The Ascension (a holy day of obligation transferred from the preceding Thursday in most U.S. dioceses); June 8, Pentecost; June 15, Trinity Sunday; June 22, The Solemnity of Corpus Christi; and June 29, the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul.

MAJOR SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS OF JUNE

The Ascension of the Lord	Solemnity	June 1
Charles Lwanga & Companions, Martyrs	Memorial	June 3
Boniface, Bishop and Martyr	Memorial	June 5
Pentecost Sunday	Solemnity	June 8
Mary, Mother of the Church	Memorial	June 9
Barnabas, Apostle	Memorial	June 11
Anthony of Padua	Memorial	June 13
The Most Holy Trinity	Solemnity	June 15
Aloysius Gonzaga	Memorial	June 21
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Solemnity	June 22
The Nativity of John the Baptist	Solemnity	June 24
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus	Solemnity	June 27
Irenaeus, Bishop and Martyr	Memorial	June 28
Peter and Paul, Apostles	Solemnity	June 29

IRISH SAINTS OF JUNE

Kevin, Abbot of Glendalough (d.c. 618) June 3

Though Kevin, also known as Coemgen, is one of Ireland's most popular saints, it is difficult to disentangle his real story from the mass of legends which have grown up around him. He may have been of royal blood, was born in Leinster, and was baptized by St. Cronan. He was an oblate to a community of monks at a young age, and after his ordination sought out a solitary life, finding what he desired in Glendalough. As was so often the case, the holy hermit attracted disciples to his location, and eventually Kevin established a community, which grew into the abbey of Glendalough, of which he was the abbot. Many stories about Kevin testify to his close affinity to the natural world around him and are reminiscent of stories about Francis of Assisi. St. Kevin is one of the patrons of Dublin.

Continued on Page 10

Catholic Action, cont.**Jarlath, Bishop of Tuam (d.c. 550)**

June 6

St. Jarlath is not to be confused with an earlier namesake who was a disciple of St. Patrick. Jarlath was said to come from a prominent Galway family. Like many early Irish holy men, he was sent at an early age to be trained by monastic mentors. After ordination, Jarlath founded a monastic community near Tuam and became its abbot and bishop. He was the first bishop of Tuam. Among his pupils were supposedly Sts. Brendan of Clonfert and Colman, son of Lenine.

Columba, Abbot of Iona (c. 521-597)

June 9

Columba, one of the greatest of Irish saints, came of royalty from both parents. His father was a great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and his mother traced descent from both the kings of Leinster and the Scottish Dalriada. He was also known as Colmcille, a name etymologically derived from the fact that he established many religious cells or foundations. At an early age, he was sent to St. Finnian's school at Moville, where he was ordained a deacon. From there he went to Leinster to study the bardic arts. Still later, he went to the school of another St. Finnian, that of Clonard. Columba was one of the so-called Twelve Apostles of Ireland who emerged from that school. At some point, Columba was ordained a priest. He was associated for a time with another famous monastic school, that of St. Mobhi at Glasnevin, which was dispersed by an outbreak of the plague in 543. For about fifteen years, Columba went about Ireland preaching and making monastic foundations, the best known being Derry, Durrow, and Kells. Columba must have made a striking presentation to his contemporaries; he was said to be very tall and athletic, with a great speaking voice which carried quite a distance.

Columba became involved in a legal dispute with his mentor, Finnian of Clonard. Finnian was in possession of a copy of Jerome's Psalter, the first one to reach Ireland. Columba borrowed it and made a copy. Finnian heard of this and demanded that the copy be surrendered to him. Columba refused. The case made its way to King Diarmaid, overlord of Ireland, who ruled in favor of Finnian. Soon after, Columba found himself in greater difficulty. He provided sanctuary to a man who had fatally injured a follower of Diarmaid in a hurling match. Diarmaid's followers violated sanctuary and killed the man, touching off a war between Columba's clan and Diarmaid's followers, a war in which many men were slain. Columba felt some responsibility for this and there were others who agreed, even asserting that Columba had instigated the war. A local synod censured him, and he only escaped excommunication due to the intervention of St. Brendan. Columba vowed to exile himself from Ireland and seek to win at least as many men for Christ as had perished in the feud. In 563, Columba left Ireland in a coracle, with twelve relatives. His wandering brought him to Iona, where he founded a monastery on land given to him by his mother's kinsmen.

Iona was to be one of the most renowned and influential monastic foundations of early medieval Europe. From Iona, Columba and his disciples evangelized the Picts and Scots, and later the English as well as continental Europeans. Columba, always noted for saintly habits, certainly progressed in those over time, with many of the rough edges seen in his earlier life being transformed. He and his disciples became identified, even after his death, with many of the unique practices of the Celtic Church. The monastic rule which he composed for his followers was used throughout Europe, until it was largely replaced by that of St. Benedict.

Continued on Page 11

Catholic Action, cont.**Moling, Bishop of Ferns (d. 697)**

June 17

The Welshman Giraldus Cambrensis noted that books written by Patrick, Columba, Broccan, and Moling, whom he called The Prophets of Ireland, were extant in his day. Unfortunately, at least for Moling, these have vanished. Moling is said to have come from County Wexford, and to have been related to Leinster's royalty. After some time at Glendalough, where he took the monastic habit, Moling founded an abbey at Achad Cainigb. Moling is said to have lived for a while in a hollow tree and endured lengthy fasts. Later he succeeded St. Aidan as bishop of Ferns.

Goban, Martyr (d.c. 670)

June 20

Goban, or Gobain, was a disciple of St. Fursey, accompanying him to East Anglia. Later, he went with St. Ultan to Gaul. After some wanderings, Goban established a hermitage on what is now Mont d'Ermitage, at the town of Saint-Gobain. The saint was beheaded by barbarian raiders.

NEWS OF INTEREST

As they have for many years, members of Youngstown's Joseph Nalley Division took time on May 10 to spruce up the resting place of many of our deceased Ursuline sisters in the diocesan cemetery. The Ursulines educated several generations of Catholics in the Youngstown area, including many of our Hibernians.

That same day, the Youngstown Division teamed up with The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Golden Rose, to raise money for the local Pregnancy Help Center in its annual Walk for Life. The ladies outdid the men both in money raised through sponsorship pledges and the number of walkers.

Do you have local news? Please send it for inclusion in this report.

Fraternally,

Patrick J. Lally, lally8404@hotmail.com 330-792-7135

Mark Your Calendars**2025 State Convention****June 26 - 29****Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls OH****2026 National Convention, Omaha NE****July 16 - 19**

The Good Friday Agreement: Its History, Provisions, and Where We go From Here, cont.

“Schedule 1 of Annex A (specifying when a unification poll may be called), is the key provision necessary to initiate the unification process. It provides that, for purposes of section 1 of the Annex that,

1. The Secretary of State [of Northern Ireland] may by order direct the holding of a poll for the purposes of section 1 [unification] on a date specified in the order.

2. ... the Secretary of State shall exercise the power under paragraph 1 if at any time it appears likely to him [or her] that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland.”

Additionally, the Republic amended the Irish Constitution to recognize, “...that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island.”

With the GFA in place, the question now turns to British-Irish adherence to its provisions, and thoughtful planning for unification in the future.

The GFA, Unification, and where we go from here

Understanding the key provisions to the GFA allows our focus to be drawn down on what is expected from

the British and Irish governments on unification. Questions still remain on how the respective governments will conduct anticipatory planning for unification.

Issues such as funding and planning to address how infrastructure, social services, healthcare, pensions, political representation, and multiple other contingencies will be implemented presently remain unaddressed. To this point, once a border poll is called, absent existing planning, it will likely be too late to implement any meaningful planning without delay or chaos ensuing.

Regardless of one’s present position on the question of unification, it behooves the British and Irish governments to fund for and implement planning now, so the island is prepared for the day a border poll is called.

*Judge Michael C. Mentel is an appellate court judge on the Ohio Court of Appeals for the Tenth District. He is a member of The Ancient Order of Hibernians, Patrick Pearse Division 1, Franklin County, Ohio, The Shamrock Club of Columbus, Ohio, The Irish American Club East Side, Euclid/Cleveland, Ohio, The Irish National Caucus, and The Brehon Law Society of New York.

FFAI Report

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023

Legacy litigation in Northern Ireland remains a highly contentious and evolving issue, largely dominated by the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 and ongoing efforts to address its implications.

In essence, legacy litigation in Northern Ireland is currently in a state of flux, with the controversial Legacy Act at its heart. The Labour government's efforts to repeal and replace it, coupled with ongoing legal challenges and bilateral discussions with the Irish government, are shaping the future of how the past is addressed. The overriding concern for victims' families and human rights organizations remains access to truth, justice, and accountability for Troubles-related deaths and serious injuries.

State of Ohio FFAI Chairman

Patrick Williams

Veteran Affairs

1. VA suspends DOGE related cuts :

<https://veteranlife.com/veteran-benefits/doge-cuts-va-contracts>

2. Department of Veterans Affairs streamlines process for how eligible survivors and dependents apply for and receive VA benefits:

<https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-announces-major-survivor-benefits-reforms/>

3. Access to non-VA care no longer needs secondary approval by a second VA doctor, making it easier for Veterans to use community care:

<https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-makes-it-easier-for-veterans-to-use-community-care/>

4. VA disability claims backlog below 200,000 (a 25% reduction since January/ new administration taking office: 264,717 down to 198,378)

A claim is considered backlogged after it has been 'pending' for more than 125 days:

<https://news.va.gov/press-room/record-breaking-va-claims-production-brings-backlog-under-200k/>

5. VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare announces summer VetFest dates:

[https://www.va.gov/northeast-ohio-health-care/news-releases/va-northeast-ohio-healthcare-system-announces-](https://www.va.gov/northeast-ohio-health-care/news-releases/va-northeast-ohio-healthcare-system-announces-summer-vetfest-2025-dates/)

[summer-vetfest-2025-dates/](https://www.va.gov/northeast-ohio-health-care/news-releases/va-northeast-ohio-healthcare-system-announces-summer-vetfest-2025-dates/)

6. VA says its job cuts will limit deferred resignation of doctors and nurses:

<https://www.npr.org/2025/05/10/nx-s1-5391962/va-job-cuts-limit-doctor-nurse-resignations-veterans>

Doug Gerrard

513-615-7469

Dpgerrard@aol.com

Pro Life Report

With our new Pope, Leo XIV, I thought I would talk some about his support for the sanctity of human life. In the 1970s, he helped start a campus pro life activism group at Villanova, which is one of the oldest in the country. Pope Leo has continued to support the right to life throughout his entire priesthood both in the US and abroad. From a homily in 2019 he stated that “we cannot build a just society if we discard the weakest, whether the child in the womb or the elderly in frailty, for they are both gifts from God”. Pope Leo has passionately shared Christ's message of the dignity of every human being from the unborn, to the elderly and disabled. Let his witness challenge us to see every person as a gift and to stand strong for the most vulnerable. Please join me in praying for our new Holy Father.

“Lord, source of eternal life and truth, give to your shepherd a spirit of courage and right judgment, a spirit of knowledge and love. By governing with fidelity those entrusted to his care, may he, as successor to the Apostle Peter and Vicar of Christ, build your Church into a sacrament of unity, love and peace for all the world. Amen”.

Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com

Division News

Patrick Pearse Div. #1, Franklin Co.

To honor the sacrifices of our Veterans, made to ensure our freedom and way of life, brothers of the Patrick Pearse Division 1 in Columbus, along with family members, placed over 400 flags on Veterans' graves in St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery. We're proud to help continue this Memorial Day tradition.



L to R: Gerry Curran, Ally Bremer, Tom Flynn, Reagan Bremer, (unknown), Ken Stebleton, Ed Norris, Bruce McPherson, Tom Motika

Boland/Berry Div. #2, Cuyahoga Co.

Summer 2025 Division News

Ohio State AOH/LAOH Convention June 26-29, 2005.

Boland/Berry Family Day Lake Erie Crushers Game. Tuesday, July 8, 7:05 pm,
Tickets only \$14. For tickets contact Duffy O'Neill at 440-666-7022.

The Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival is July 18, 19, 20 at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds.

Join us as we celebrate our Irish Heritage. There will be music, food, an Irish history museum and many vendors.

Boland/Berry Annual Golf Outing, Friday, August 22. We will tee off at the Bob -O- Links golf course at 4141 Center Rd, Avon, Ohio 44011. Tickets are \$95, Hole sponsors are \$100. Contact Ray McGann at 440-887-0216.