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Ohio above average on immigration denials

Fewer people in state get asylum, data shows

Danae King
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohio’s only immigration court has a higher rate of denying asylum claims than the nation’s average, according to data recently released.

The Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a data-driven

research institute at Syracuse University, released new information this week showing that 88% of asylum cases decided in Cleveland’s immigration court from October 2020 to September 2021 were denied.

That means that only 12% of applicants were granted asylum or another form of relief from deportation.

Nationally, 63% of asylum cases are denied on average, according to data from TRAC.

This statistic comes as no surprise to some Ohio immigration attorneys.

“It’s very disheartening going into the Cleveland court on our cases knowing the deck is stacked against us,” said Jessica Rodriguez Bell, a Columbus-based immigration attorney. “We’re going in and already preparing our clients for appeals the same day.”

As for why Cleveland’s denial rate is so high, Julie Nemecek, a Columbus immigration attorney, suggested that there’s a lack of cultural sensitivity to the plight of immigrants.

Some of her clients have been tortured in their countries and have

traveled from Africa through Central America and to the border for safety. The judges, she said, don’t understand where immigrants are coming from.

“They don’t have a fair shot when they go in court and go in front of judges to present their case,” she said. “They come through the border and have lived in places that don’t have electricity and they land in Cleveland, Ohio in immigration court.”

During an asylum hearing,

See IMMIGRATION, Page 4B



Connie Coutellier, director of Camp Wyandot, looks out after hiking through the future Cline Farm Preserve on Wednesday. JOSHUA A. BICKEL/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Nonprofit partners to save nature preserve

Arc of Appalachia joins with Camp Wyandot in Hocking County

Céilí Doyle Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

ROCKBRIDGE – In the basin of an ancient rock formation, a few miles from Route 33, Kris Cline-Strawser points toward a boulder where you can still spot her name and a year, 1974, firmly traced into the limestone.

When Cline-Strawser was a young girl, she would escape into the beauty of her family’s land – a sprawling 250-acre spread of forest, farmland and creeks about 45 minutes outside of Columbus in Hocking County – and trek to Salt Peter, a natural

rock formation carpeted by gnarled tree roots and bright, green moss.

At 10 years old she made dozens of trips to that particular rock, etching her name visit after visit, much like her parents, Jack and Helen Cline, did decades before, and similar to the generations of Salt Peter’s visitors before them, who have been carving their names into rock since the 1800s.

See WYANDOT, Page 14B

Ohio doles out 34K COVID-19 shots to kids 5 to 11

Laura A. Bischoff
Cincinnati Enquirer | USA TODAY NETWORK

Schools, pediatric hospitals and public health clinics will be at the epicenter of Ohio’s push to vaccinate children ages 5 to 11 against COVID-19.

A week into the effort, more than 34,000 Ohio children ages 5 to 11 have

started the vaccination series by getting the first of two shots.

“Kids are used to getting vaccinations. They know the process and what to expect,” said Dr. Sara Bode, medical director of Nationwide Children’s Hospital’s school-based health and mobile clinics.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administra-

tion recently authorized the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 17. Those ages 12 and older receive a 30 microgram dose while children 5 to 11 receive a 10 microgram dose. The vaccine still requires two shots taken three weeks apart.

See COVID-19, Page 4B



Governor candidate Nan Whaley pitches universal pre-K at South Side Early Learning in Columbus. JESSIE BALMERT/CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Officials pitching universal pre-K plans

Brown, Whaley ready to invest in children

Jessie Balmert
Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Access to quality prekindergarten programs help children with learning later in life, but Ohio and the nation don’t offer free, universal pre-K.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown and Mayor Nan Whaley, who is running for Ohio governor, say it’s time to change that and invest in pre-K for Ohio’s youngest residents. The change is part of President Joe Biden’s “Build Back Better” plan, which is tied up in Congress.

Several of Ohio’s largest cities have free or subsidized prekindergarten, but there is no statewide or national program. Nationwide, 49% of three- and four-year-old were enrolled in school in 2019, compared to 86% of five-year-olds, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Whaley said she would expand universal pre-K in Ohio if elected, either by accepting federal money to expand universal prekindergarten or by including it in her first budget. Her campaign didn’t have a price tag for that proposal.

“I don’t think that this is that expensive,” Whaley said at Columbus’ South Side Early Learning. “If we can do this in Dayton, we can do this across Ohio and across the country. Kids are, by far, the most important investment we can make in our state.”

In 2016, Dayton voters approved free preschool for every family with a four-year-old, paid for with a 0.25% income tax hike. The program recently expanded to three-year-olds.

Cincinnati and Columbus offer

See PRE-K, Page 4B

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TODAY'S WEATHER

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ASHLEE BARACY
DOPPLER 10 CHIEF METEOROLOGIST
For a more detailed forecast, visit 10TV.com.



TODAY'S FORECAST

MORNING

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AFTERNOON

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OVERNIGHT

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SEVEN-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST

SUNDAY

43 32

MONDAY

42 32

TUESDAY

49 28

WEDNESDAY

60 39

THURSDAY

54 46

FRIDAY

48 37

SATURDAY

47 32

CENTRAL OHIO ROUNDUP

FRIDAY'S OBSERVATIONS

From midnight to 3 p.m. at Port Columbus

TEMP	TIME	NORM	REC.	YEAR
Hi	55	2:00 p.m.	54	75 1849
Lo	40	5:25 a.m.	36	15 2019

Relative humidity 95%
Time 3 a.m. 2 p.m.

DAY	MO.	YEAR
0.66	0.66	34.66
Change from norm	+0.57	-0.45 -2.10

Snowfall 0.0 0.0 0.0
Change from norm +0.0 -0.3 -0.5
Heating degree days 17 220 411
Season's departure from normal -194

Degree days are an indicator of energy needs. The more the total degree days, the more energy is necessary to heat.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Today's UV Index

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0	0	1	1	0	0
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The higher the **AccuWeather.com UV Index™** number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection. 0-2 Low; 3-5 Moderate; 6-7 High; 8-10 Very High; 11+ Extreme

Today's air quality index
29 Good

Main pollutant: Particulates
Source: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

WEATHER TRIVIA™

Q: Snow can be wet or dry; which is hardest to shovel?

Wet snow because it contains more water.

THURSDAY'S OBSERVATIONS

TEMP	TIME	NORM	REC.	YEAR
Hi	69	3:04 p.m.	54	74 1927
Lo	47	11:00 p.m.	36	20 1957

TEMPERATURE TRENDS

Actual and Forecast Normal Range Today Record High Record Low





Lake Erie forecast: Winds: WSW at 20-30 knots Waves: 1-3 ft.

Ohio summary: Get ready for a chilly and breezy weekend. Saturday will be mostly cloudy with a little patch drizzle at times. Highs will be in the low 40s. It will drop to near freezing at night. Temperatures will rise into the low 40s Sunday. Some rain and wet snowflakes will move in late Sunday.

City name Today's high/low Sunday's high/low

Toledo	46/32 41/31	Findlay	45/33 42/31	Cleveland	43/33 41/35
Fort Wayne	41/31 41/26	Lima	42/32 41/31	Akron	43/32 39/33
Dayton	42/32 43/32	Marion	41/34 40/30	Mansfield	40/31 39/30
Cincinnati	42/33 46/30	Wilmington	40/34 41/30	Columbus	43/32 43/32
Portsmouth	43/32 47/31	Athens	43/33 45/32	Zanesville	43/32 42/33
		Marietta	43/33 45/33	Youngstown	41/31 39/31
		Pittsburgh	42/31 39/31	Wheeling	42/32 40/32

SKYCLOCK

	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	7:15 a.m.	5:17 p.m.
Sun.	7:17 a.m.	5:16 p.m.

MOONRISE MOONSET

Today	2:59 p.m.	1:23 a.m.
Sun.	3:23 p.m.	2:28 a.m.

Full

Last

New

First

	Nov 19	Nov 27	Dec 4	Dec 10
Nov 19				
Nov 27				
Dec 4				
Dec 10				

PLANET RISE SET

Mercury	6:29 a.m.	4:54 p.m.
Venus	11:12 a.m.	7:56 p.m.
Mars	6:16 a.m.	4:43 p.m.
Jupiter	1:32 p.m.	11:56 p.m.
Saturn	12:46 p.m.	10:37 p.m.
Uranus	4:47 p.m.	6:39 a.m.
Neptune	2:43 p.m.	2:16 a.m.

WORLD CITIES		
CITY	TODAY	SUN.
Acapulco	86/70ts	87/71s
Amsterdam	56/46r	51/41c
Athens	64/52pc	66/55c
Baghdad	76/50s	77/54pc
Beijing	57/31pc	55/32s
Berlin	50/40c	50/38c
Bogota	67/49ts	68/50sh
Buenos Aires	80/65s	79/64s
Cape Town	74/61pc	78/61pc
Cairo	82/64s	82/66s
Copenhagen	48/45r	48/43c
Hong Kong	77/68pc	77/69s
Jerusalem	72/56pc	69/53pc
Lima	67/62c	68/61c
London	56/49c	56/46c
Madrid	64/38s	64/39pc
Mexico City	66/46s	67/45s
Moscow	38/32c	37/29sf
Mumbai	93/80pc	92/79c
Nassau	82/73sh	82/71c
Oslo	40/31r	38/35c
Paris	56/47sh	54/42sh
Rio de Janeiro	70/64pc	74/64pc
Rome	66/53c	65/54r
Seoul	57/41s	62/36pc
Singapore	84/78sh	88/78pc
Sydney	65/56s	71/54pc
Tokyo	62/52s	63/54pc
Toronto	45/34c	42/33sn

Forecast abbreviations: s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, ts-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, t-ice.

NATIONAL CITIES

CITY	TODAY	SUN.
Albuquerque	66/41s	66/41s
Anchorage, AK	21/16pc	20/13s
Atlanta	56/35s	60/40s
Atlantic City, NJ	62/34pc	51/40pc
Austin, TX	69/44s	76/47s
Baltimore	58/33pc	52/39pc
Birmingham, AL	53/32s	60/39pc
Bismarck, ND	47/27sn	46/32pc
Boise, ID	58/43c	61/47pc
Boston	57/40pc	51/42pc
Brownsville, TX	78/56s	81/63s
Buffalo, NY	44/35sh	43/35sn
Burlington, VT	52/35sh	46/34sh
Casper, WY	58/31c	58/43c
Charleston, SC	72/42s	65/42s
Charleston, WV	45/30c	49/32c
Charlotte, NC	63/32pc	59/39pc
Chicago	40/32c	38/26sn
Columbia, SC	69/34s	62/40s
Concord, NH	57/33pc	50/32pc
Dallas	65/49s	69/47pc
Denver	67/32pc	64/45pc
Des Moines, IA	43/34c	42/28c
Detroit	45/32c	38/30sn
Duluth, MN	33/24sn	34/19sf
El Paso, TX	74/45s	76/44s
Fairbanks, AK	4/-3c	0/-5c
Fargo, ND	32/20sn	30/20c
Flagstaff, AZ	65/27s	65/28s
Fort Myers, FL	82/63ts	75/57s
Hartford, CT	59/33sh	52/35c
Helena, MT	50/38c	55/46c
Honolulu	84/71pc	84/72sh
Houston	68/45s	75/51pc
Indianapolis	40/32c	42/26sh
Intl. Falls, MN	31/19sn	30/9c
Jackson, MS	55/33s	67/39s
Jacksonville, FL	73/41s	65/41s
Juneau, AK	40/26sf	37/22c
Kansas City, MO	48/40pc	50/37c
Las Vegas	79/57s	79/56s
Little Rock, AR	53/37s	63/35pc
Los Angeles	89/63s	87/60s
Louisville, KY	46/34c	52/31c
Madison, WI	39/30c	36/22sn
Memphis, TN	51/37s	62/36pc
Miami	83/69ts	80/64c
Milwaukee	42/33c	40/28sn
Minneapolis	36/28sn	35/23sf
Myrtle Bch, SC	70/43s	62/44s
Nashville, TN	50/33s	58/33pc
New Orleans	62/44s	66/49s
New York	60/39sh	50/42pc
Norfolk, VA	66/39s	57/42c
Oklahoma City	62/44s	61/39pc
Omaha, NE	48/37pc	49/34pc
Orlando, FL	81/56sh	72/50s
Philadelphia	59/37sh	50/39pc
Phoenix	88/58s	86/59s
Pittsburgh	42/31sn	39/31sh
Portland, ME	54/35pc	51/36pc
Portland, OR	57/53r	62/55sh
Providence, RI	61/37pc	52/40pc
Raleigh, NC	65/33pc	57/38pc
Richmond, VA	63/33pc	55/40pc
Sacramento, CA	67/47pc	66/49pc
St. Louis	46/39pc	51/30c
Salt Lake City	59/41pc	61/44pc
San Antonio	70/50s	77/54s
San Diego	79/59s	80/58s
San Francisco	67/54s	68/55pc
San Jose	75/53s	76/54s
Santa Fe, NM	64/33s	63/35pc
Sault Ste. Marie	40/30sf	38/28sf
Seattle	52/47r	59/53r
Sioux Falls, SD	40/30c	42/30pc
Spokane, WA	47/41c	57/49c
Tallahassee, FL	70/37s	65/40s
Tampa, FL	78/56pc	71/55s
Tucson, AZ	87/50s	85/52s
Tulsa, OK	56/44s	60/39pc
Washington, DC	57/36pc	53/40pc
Wichita, KS	57/42s	59/38pc
Wilmington, DE	56/33sh	49/37pc

Friday's national extremes: High: 98° Santa Ana, Calif. Low: 5° Valentine, Mont.

Wyandot

Continued from Page 1B

Named after the potassium nitrate, also known as saltpeter, visitors mined from its limestone walls to make gunpowder in preparation for the Civil War, the rock formation is a hidden gem.

“I spent a lot of time crying over the sale,” Cline-Strawser said, referring to her family’s decision to part with their land. “But I wanted to ensure the property was saved (from development).”

Cline-Strawser’s mother, Helen, sold the property to Arc of Appalachia, a regional conservation nonprofit group, and Camp Wyandot, the local children’s summer camp that borders the Cline Farm Reserve.

The organizations collaborated to secure a \$1.44 million grant from the Clean Ohio Fund, a bond issue doled out to applicants whose mission is to conserve natural land.

The Cline family didn’t want their shelter of hickory, oak and eastern hemlock trees with five-plus miles of headwater streams developed into residential housing or overpriced rentals, Camp Wyandot’s director, Connie Coutellier said.

“We’re just elated,” Coutellier said. “We had to keep at it, and it took longer than we thought, but everyone turned out pleased.”

Camp Wyandot’s success to salvage the mosaic of natural wonders neighboring their land was never certain.

Nikki Spretnak is a former camper, board member and still a long-time volunteer. She recalled receiving a text message from a Cline relative, informing her that the family matriarch, Helen, was willing to sell.

It was Aug. 15, 2019, and she immediately sprang into action.

The original deadline to file an application for a grant from the Clean Ohio Fund was April 10, 2020.

Spretnak led the effort to meet its requirements: seeking appraisals for the land and working with a former nature preserve manager at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to catalogue the rare and endangered plants on the property.

Then COVID-19 hit. Folks at Camp Wyandot weren’t sure when they could



Kris Cline-Strawser, daughter of former landowners Jack and Helen Cline, hikes through the future Cline Farm Preserve in Hocking County. The former farmland was recently purchased by Camp Wyandot, a nearby youth camp, and Arc of Appalachia, a nature preserve in Highland County, through a grant from the Clean Ohio Fund. The land will be preserved and Arc of Appalachia will construct a trail system for use by campers at Camp Wyandot and the general public.

PHOTOS BY JOSHUA A. BICKEL/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

apply for the Clean Ohio Fund.

As the pandemic became a part of daily life, it became clear the money would still be available. But in August 2020 they hit another snag.

“We learned we couldn’t apply because our organization is not a conservation agency,” Spretnak said.

Camp Wyandot was not an accredited conservation nonprofit under Ohio Revised Code, and the Ohio Works Public Commission’s director cautioned Spretnak and Coutellier not to apply.

But Spretnak was undeterred. If the camp couldn’t own the Cline Farm Reserve, she would find an organization that could.

“The grant was only weeks away from being due when they came to us,” Nancy Stranahan said. “You have to be willing to work until 1 a.m. for days on end when you take on a project like this at the last minute – but we were willing.”

Stranahan, director and founder of Arc of Appalachia, said it was a no-brainer.

The conservation agency, camp and

Helen Cline signed a tri-party agreement, affirming that the Arc of Appalachia would own the land, but that Camp Wyandot would have permanent access through a conservation easement.

Campers will have private access during the summer, and the Arc of Appalachia is designing a free trail system open to the public via Camp Wyandot by 2023, Stranahan said.

But folks interested in hiking the trails will have to obtain a permit online to reserve their time, she added.

“Hocking Hills is so well-loved, but it’s hard to have an experience in that premiere scenery where you’re not sharing it with hordes of people,” Stranahan said. “With the permit system there’s enough of an investment of effort it will keep the numbers way down and people can have a quiet, contemplative setting.”

Coutellier attended Camp Wyandot as a 7-year-old and believes in its mission to immerse children in nature.

The now-79-year-old is beyond thrilled that the partnership with the



Nikki Spretnak, former Camp Wyandot board member, points out a spot on a map inside the future Cline Farm Preserve.

Arc of Appalachia has fully materialized and that the land will be protected forever and open to the public.

“It’s protection on our back door,” Coutellier added. “If it had gone to a developer the land goes right up to our last cabin.”

The commitment to preservation and education is what ultimately won Stranahan over. She believes that a public trail system through the Cline Farm Reserve will not only boost eco-tourism in the region, but offer a chance for people to break this bubble of isolation that the pandemic has only intensified.

Deep within the forest her family once owned, Kris Cline-Strawser carefully sidesteps through the brush on a recent visit.

Cline-Strawser, the sixth of the eight Cline children, lives on her grandparents’ old property, just outside of the Cline Farm Reserve. She said her father, Jack Cline, a strong proponent of property rights, also understood there is also an enormous responsibility that follows land acquisition.

Gazing at the trees towering above Salt Peter’s “brother” rock formation, Pepper Peter, Cline-Strawser nodded slightly before trudging down toward the creek to find Coutellier and Spretnak – the forest’s new stewards.

She thinks her dad would approve.

Céili Doyle is a Report for America corps member and covers rural issues in Ohio for The Dispatch. Your donation to match our RFA grant helps keep her writing stories like this one. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation at <https://bit.ly/3fNsGaZ>.

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