

- 1 Estate Planning and the OBBBA
- 2 Understanding Pipeline Easements
- 3 Attorney Spotlight: Daniel L. Mathie
- 4 In the Community

Contents

Updates to Estate Planning from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)

On July 4, 2025, the OBBBA was signed into law introducing several significant changes that may impact estate and tax planning strategies. Below are key highlights of the new provisions.

Higher, Permanent Estate and Gift Tax Exemptions

One of the most consequential changes under the OBBBA is the establishment of higher, permanent federal estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer (GST) tax exemptions. Effective January 1, 2026, the exemption amounts will increase to **\$15 million per individual** (\$30 million for married couples), indexed for inflation. This is permanent under the law,

meaning the looming rollback to much lower thresholds (around \$7 million, as the current federal estate tax exemption was scheduled to “sunset” on December 31, 2025) has been avoided.

Elimination of Certain Deductions for Estates & Trusts

The Act permanently disallows miscellaneous itemized deductions

Continued on page 3



ORIGINAL THINKING

KNOWLEDGE. SOPHISTICATION. COLLABORATION.

Understanding Pipeline Easements



Even if there is no oil and gas well on your property, a pipeline easement may already burden your land or could be proposed in the future. Understanding the basics of pipeline easements can help protect your rights as a landowner.

What is a Pipeline Easement?

An easement is a legal right allowing someone else to use part of your land for a specific purpose. Pipeline easements allow the holder to install, operate, and maintain a pipeline on your property. These agreements often last for decades and can affect land use and property value.

Types of Pipeline Easements

Pipeline easements generally fall into two categories:

Specific Easements: These describe the exact location and width of the pipeline. They provide clarity because placement and size are agreed upon in advance.

Blanket Easements: These allow the pipeline anywhere on the property without a defined route or width. This grants broad rights to the easement holder and can limit your future use. Width is generally interpreted as what is “reasonable and necessary” for construction, operation, and maintenance—a broad standard that often leads to disputes.

Issues for New Pipeline Easements

Companies may offer signing bonuses and downplay the impact. Key terms to review include the scope of use, surface restoration and maintenance responsibilities, and compensation for damages. Negotiating these terms up front can prevent future problems.

How Can Critchfield Help?

We assist landowners in reviewing, negotiating, and enforcing pipeline easements to ensure fair compensation and protection of property rights.

ORIGINAL THINKING

KNOWLEDGE. SOPHISTICATION. COLLABORATION.

Estate Planning and the OBBBA Continued from page 1

for estates and trusts, such as certain investment management fees and trustee commissions, depending on how they are structured. This is retroactive to December 31, 2017. However, estates and trusts may continue to deduct expenses that are unique to their administration, including legal, accounting, and tax preparation fees necessary for proper fiduciary management.

No Change in Top Rates or Fundamental Structure

The OBBBA does not alter the top federal estate, gift, or GST tax rate, which remains at 40%. The portability of unused estate tax exemption between spouses also continues under existing law. Notably, the GST exemption remains non-portable, consistent with prior rules.

Planning Implications for Estate and Tax Planning

In the estate and tax planning context, these updates mean that fewer estates will face federal estate tax under the new thresholds. Trusts and estate documents may need to be updated to reflect new exemption amounts, especially those with formula clauses that depend on thresholds. For high-net-worth individuals, this is a good opportunity to consider lifetime gifts or use of trusts to move appreciation out of taxable estates, taking advantage of these higher exemption amounts before future uncertainty. It is important to note that, although these higher exemption amounts are to be “permanent,” this simply means they are not scheduled to sunset. A future Congress could pass new legislation to reduce the exemption amounts.

Attorney Spotlight



DANIEL L. MATHIE

Member

Daniel Mathie is a veteran attorney of nearly 40 years experience in real estate, banking and finance, taxation, business entity formation and governance, as well as oil and gas matters.

Dan is also a licensed Ohio Title Insurance Agent with Critchfield’s wholly-owned subsidiary, Heartland Title Agency. In this capacity, Dan oversees hundreds of real estate transactions across Northeast and North Central Ohio every year..

Contact Dan at 330.674.3055
or email mathie@ccj.com

Critchfield in the community



Nicole Hawks and a delivery of fresh-baked cookies.

Attorney and Member Nicole Hawks is active in the Ashland Community, particularly serving on the United Way of Ashland County Board and multiple United Way committees. In her spare time, Nicole bakes and has brought many cookies over the years to show appreciation to United Way donors and volunteers and has even held cookie fundraisers to benefit United Way of Ashland County. That was well-received and so she decided to launch the **United Way Cookie Tracker**.

The Cookie Tracker includes the number of cookies baked each month and a general description of where those cookies went. From time to time, Nicole provides the community with updates. These updates might be through social media posts, blogs, or live videos. Some months Nicole is focused on showing appreciation to donors and volunteers while other months Nicole will have actual fundraisers. Cookie fundraisers will generally be shared via social media. At the end of the United Way campaign year at the Annual Meeting in Spring 2026, Nicole will share the full Cookie Tracker with the public and provide a summary with exactly how many cookies were baked to raise awareness, promote community camaraderie, and raise funds.

Since Nicole began the Cookie Tracker on May 21, 2025, she has baked **3,755** cookies for the Ashland community. In all of her involvement with the community, she has seen that United Way of Ashland County provides crucial funding for so many different programs in Ashland County. Most of these programs are run by Partner Agencies—local nonprofit organizations that provide essential services for those in need.