

OHIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Bill Information

HB3 AISHA'S LAW - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE *(BOYD J, CARRUTHERS S)*

To add domestic violence circumstances to the offenses of aggravated murder and endangering children, to establish local domestic violence high risk teams, and to require law enforcement officers to utilize a qualified lethality assessment screening tool to refer high risk victims to a local team.

CURRENT STATUS

9/16/2020 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing)

HB27 PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY *(INGRAM C)*

To modify political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

CURRENT STATUS

3/19/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing)

HB48 LOCAL GOVT ROAD IMPROVEMENT FUND *(GREENSPAN D)*

To provide for a new Local Government Road Improvement Fund for local governments to fund road improvements.

CURRENT STATUS

2/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB51 UNDIVIDED HIGHWAY RUMBLE STRIPS *(GINTER T)*

To require the Ohio Department of Transportation to install rumble strips along the center line for all two-way, undivided state highways with a speed limit exceeding 45 miles per hour, as a part of specified highway projects.

CURRENT STATUS

12/11/2019 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Second Hearing)

HB54 LGF TAX REVENUE INCREASE *(CERA J, ROGERS J)*

To increase the proportion of state tax revenue allocated to the Local Government Fund from 1.66% to 3.53% beginning July 1, 2019.

CURRENT STATUS

2/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

HB78 PREVAILING WAGE-PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS *(RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER S)*

To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects.

CURRENT STATUS

12/11/2019 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)

HB92 VOTE ON COUNTY SALES TAX *(ANTANI N, SMITH J)*

To require voter approval of any increase in the rate of a county sales tax.

CURRENT STATUS

3/13/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

HB93 PUBLIC TRANSIT INVESTMENT *(SKINDELL M, UPCHURCH T)*

To make appropriations related to public transportation.

CURRENT STATUS

3/5/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB116 TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH *(BRINKMAN T)*

To make an appropriation related to transportation planning and research.

CURRENT STATUS

3/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB148 YIELD TO PARALLEL PARKERS *(BRINKMAN T)*

To require drivers to yield the right of way to any other vehicle that is parking in or exiting an angled or parallel parking space on a public road.

CURRENT STATUS

4/2/2019 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

HB187 TAX ISSUES-AUGUST *(MERRIN D, WIGGAM S)*

To prohibit local tax-related proposals from appearing on an August special election ballot.

📌 CURRENT STATUS

4/10/2019 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

HB202 ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE *(SMITH K, WEINSTEIN C)*

To establish the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Study Committee.

📌 CURRENT STATUS

10/1/2019 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Fourth Hearing)

HB295 ELECTRIC SCOOTERS *(HOOPS J)*

To establish requirements governing low-speed electric scooters.

📌 CURRENT STATUS

2/12/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Sixth Hearing)

HB309 ASSAULT-TRANSIT OPERATOR *(DENSON S, PERALES R)*

To increase the penalty for assault when the victim is an operator of an Ohio transit system bus or rail car; to authorize Ohio transit systems to post a sign regarding abuse or assault of staff; and to increase the penalty for evading payment of the known fares of a public transportation system.

📌 CURRENT STATUS

2/20/2020 - House Criminal Justice, (First Hearing)

HB369 SEXUAL, GENDER DISCRIMINATION *(HILLYER B, SKINDELL M)*

To enact the Ohio Fairness Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, to add mediation as an informal method that the Ohio Civil Rights Commission may use, and to uphold existing religious exemptions under Ohio's Civil Rights Law.

📌 CURRENT STATUS

2/4/2020 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing)

HB382 PROHIBIT INCOME TAX-MUNICIPAL NONRESIDENTS *(JORDAN K)*

To prohibit municipal corporations from levying an income tax on nonresidents' compensation for personal services or on net profits from a sole proprietorship owned by a nonresident.

🚩 CURRENT STATUS

11/6/2019 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

HB384 PERMITTING STOP SIGN REQUESTS *(BOGGS K, LELAND D)*

To permit a local resident, neighborhood association, or neighborhood organization to request the erection of a stop sign at an intersection and to support a request for a lower prima-facie speed limit on certain streets and highways.

🚩 CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

HB468 HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICE WHILE DRIVING *(LIGHTBODY M)*

To alter the law governing the use of a handheld electronic wireless communications device while driving.

🚩 CURRENT STATUS

5/19/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

HB499 MOTOR FUEL TESTING PROGRAM *(KELLY B, LANG G)*

To authorize a county to implement a motor fuel quality testing program.

🚩 CURRENT STATUS

5/19/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

HB501 ANIMAL-DRAWN VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS *(WIGGAM S, KICK D)*

To clarify the law governing slow-moving vehicles and to revise the lighting and reflective material requirements applicable to animal-drawn vehicles.

🚩 CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

HB510 CRIMINAL PENALTIES - VEHICLE SAFETY *(PATTON T)*

To increase the criminal penalties associated with failing to secure a load on a vehicle.

CURRENT STATUS

3/10/2020 - Referred to Committee House Criminal Justice

HB546 REGISTRATION FEES - ELECTRIC VEHICLES (MILLER J, WEINSTEIN C)

To alter the definitions of "plug-in electric motor vehicle" and "hybrid motor vehicle" under the motor vehicle law and to halve the additional registration fees for those two types of motor vehicles.

CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

HB550 MOTORCYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION (HOOPS J)

To make changes to the laws related to the motorcycle safety and education program.

CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

HB566 INCREASE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND DISTRIBUTION (ROGERS J, CROSSMAN J)

To increase the percentage of revenue to the General Revenue Fund distributed to the Local Government Fund and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB570 OPEN BIDDING DURING COVID-19 (BOGGS K)

To allow a county to purchase public health-related items and communication equipment without competitive bidding, solicit bids electronically, and open bids during a meeting held electronically during the period of the emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

HB581 ADDRESS COVID-19 CONCERNS (CALLENDER J)

To address immediate concerns related to COVID-19.

CURRENT STATUS

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Health

HB582 MAKE APPROPRIATIONS, REAPPROPRIATIONS *(CALLENDER J)*

To make appropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2021, and capital reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2022.

CURRENT STATUS

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB593 REQUIRED PAID LEAVE - COVID-19 *(BOYD J, BOGGS K)*

To require paid leave for an employee who is unable to work due to quarantine or mandatory isolation, to create a grant program to compensate contract workers who cannot perform services during public health emergencies, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor

HB600 AMBULANCE LICENSE EXPANSION *(BLAIR G, O'BRIEN M)*

To authorize a person who has had a valid commercial driver's license to drive an ambulance during the state of emergency due to COVID-19 and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Transportation and Public Safety

HB601 MATHEW'S LAW *(PERALES R)*

To enact Matthew's Law, requiring public buildings to have at least one rest room facility with an adult changing station and authorizing an income tax credit for installation.

CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

HB606 CIVIL IMMUNITY - COVID-19 TRANSMISSION *(GRENDALL D)*

To grant civil immunity to a person who provides services for essential businesses and operations for injury, death, or loss that was caused by the transmission of COVID-19 during the period of emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

9/14/2020 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**

HB609 TEMPORARY TAX AMNESTY PROGRAM *(WEST T)*

To require the Tax Commissioner to administer a temporary amnesty program from August 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, with respect to delinquent state taxes and fees, and to repeal Section 1 of this act on January 1, 2021.

CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

HB615 PROTECTIVE BARRIERS - SCHOOL BUSES *(SOBECKI L, MILLER J)*

To authorize the installation of protective barriers in school buses, to require the Director of Public Safety to adopt rules related to the barriers, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/26/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

HB671 PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER LIMITS *(ABRAMS C, STEPHENS J)*

To establish limits on certain public health orders issued by boards of health and the Department of Health, to prohibit a licensing authority from taking disciplinary action against a licensee for engaging in permitted activities during a pandemic, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - House State and Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)

HCR17 EXPAND SNAP TO STRIKERS *(SOBECKI L, RUSSO A)*

Urging Congress to expand Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility to include the households of striking workers.

CURRENT STATUS

2/11/2020 - House Health, (First Hearing)

HCR21 OHIO LOVES TRANSIT DAY *(LEPORE-HAGAN M, GREENSPAN D)*

To declare February 14, 2020, as "Ohio Loves Transit Day" and encourage all Ohioans to participate in the events taking place across Ohio during the week of and on February 14, 2020, to celebrate the importance of public transit in Ohio.

CURRENT STATUS

1/28/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

HCR31 DECLARE RACISM PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS *(HOWSE S, CRAWLEY E)*

To declare racism a public health crisis and to ask the Governor to establish a working group to promote racial equity in Ohio.

CURRENT STATUS

6/3/2020 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

SB132 GAS TAX-LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALLOCATION *(WILLIAMS S)*

To modify the amount of revenue derived from any increase in the motor fuel tax rate that is allocated to local governments and to change the manner in which that revenue is divided between municipal corporations, counties, and townships.

CURRENT STATUS

5/1/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce

SB134 PASSING SCHOOL BUSES *(GAVARONE T)*

To make changes to the law governing passing a school bus, to create a new offense for vehicular homicide and vehicular assault related to improperly passing a stopped school bus, to make an appropriation, and to designate this the School Bus Safety Act.

CURRENT STATUS

5/19/2020 - House Criminal Justice, (First Hearing)

SB285 DISTRACTED DRIVING *(O'BRIEN S, KUNZE S)*

To revise the laws relative to distracted driving and the use of an electronic wireless communications device while driving.

CURRENT STATUS

5/27/2020 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (Second Hearing)

SB291 ELECTRIC VEHICLE FEES *(LEHNER P, HOTTINGER J)*

To provide for the proration of the plug-in electric and hybrid motor vehicle registration fees.

CURRENT STATUS

5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce

SB293 OPEN MEETINGS LAW COMPLAINTS *(MANNING N, BLESSING III L)*

To create a procedure within the Court of Claims to hear complaints alleging a violation of the Open Meetings Law.

CURRENT STATUS

8/31/2020 - Referred to Committee House Civil Justice

SB299 REQUIRE PAID LEAVE (CRAIG H)

To require paid leave for an employee who is unable to work due to quarantine or mandatory isolation, to create a grant program to compensate contract workers who cannot perform services during public health emergencies, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

SB307 SALES TAX EXEMPTION-PPE (GAVARONE T)

To authorize a temporary sales and use tax exemption for personal protective equipment and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)

SB308 CIVIL LIABILITY-EMERGENCY SERVICES (HUFFMAN M)

To revise the law governing immunity from civil liability and professional discipline for health care providers during disasters or emergencies, to provide qualified civil immunity to service providers providing services during and after a government-declared disaster, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

6/10/2020 - Referred to Committee House Civil Justice

SB310 FEDERAL COVID FUNDING (DOLAN M)

To provide for the distribution of some federal coronavirus relief funding to local subdivisions, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

6/10/2020 - Consideration of House Amendments; Senate Does Not Concur, Vote on Emergency Clause 10-22

SB322 NON-RECOURSE CIVIL LITIGATION ADVANCES (WILSON S)

To amend the law regarding the non-recourse civil litigation advance business.

CURRENT STATUS

6/10/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary

SB348 LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH (SCHAFFER T, ROEGNER K)

To prohibit local boards of health from using certain threatening words in notifications to the public, to allow local boards of health to reject Department of Health orders during an emergency, to allow health care professionals who serve on a board of health to receive continuing education credit, and to change the makeup of local boards of health.

CURRENT STATUS

9/1/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid

SB350 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VOUCHERS FOR STUDENTS (BRENNER A)

To prohibit school districts from providing vouchers for public transportation to students enrolled in grades kindergarten through eight for the 2020-2021 school year.

CURRENT STATUS

9/16/2020 - Senate Education, (Second Hearing)

SJR3 REQUIRE SUPERMAJORITY-INCOME TAX INCREASE (BURKE D)

Proposing to enact Section 7 of Article XII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require that any increase in income tax rates be approved by a supermajority of the membership of each house of the General Assembly.

CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Ways and Means, (Sixth Hearing)

Week in Review

AGRICULTURE

A "tremendous response" to the recently-launched Victory Gardens campaign has resulted in an immediate expansion of the program, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) announced Thursday. Demand was so high for seed packets that four more counties were added -- Fairfield, Licking, Mahoning and Summit, the department said in a news release. Seed pick-up days and times for each office are available at <https://u.osu.edu/ohiovictorygardens>.

FY20-21 BUDGET

The Office of Budget and Management (OBM) Tuesday released August 2020 preliminary revenue data showing that total General Revenue Fund tax receipts finished the month \$69.0 million or 3.2 percent above the budgeted estimate. Specifically, the auto sales tax collections were \$14 million or 9.9 percent above estimate for August, but down \$26 million from July. The non-auto sales tax collections were also above estimates for August, coming in \$23 million or 2.9 percent above estimate for the month, but were down \$147 million from July's record revenues.

CENSUS

All of the panelists at the Columbus Metropolitan Club's (CMC) Wednesday forum, which included Tracy Najera, executive director at Children's Defense Fund-Ohio; Erin Scott, executive director of Ohio Women's Alliance; and Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce, were hopeful the census count would be extended, noting that the importance of the census cannot be overstated. The coronavirus pandemic has drastically changed the operations of the census, which was originally scheduled to be completed by July 31. For a time, it seemed counting operations would be extended until the end of next month, Saturday, Oct. 31, but after statutory

relief which would have allowed for this extension stalled in the U.S. Senate, the deadline was set for a month earlier, Wednesday, Sept. 30. However, that date may be changing again as a federal district court for the Northern District of California has issued a temporary restraining order in the case of *National Urban League v. Ross*, which prevents the Census Bureau from winding down or altering any field operations until the court conducts a hearing on the plaintiffs' request for a court order that would require counting through the end of October. That hearing is expected next week.

CORONAVIRUS

Gov. Mike DeWine was joined by new Ohio State University (OSU) President Kristina M. Johnson at his Tuesday briefing, in which she explained how the university is handling COVID-19. DeWine also addressed ongoing gun violence across the state and false conspiracy theories about federal aid which have recently garnered attention on social media.

Gov. Mike DeWine, First Lady Fran DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted all received flu shots at the Thursday COVID-19 briefing and encouraged Ohioans to do the same this fall. DeWine said he worries about the dual threat of coronavirus and the flu this season, particularly for more vulnerable populations.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Rep. Kristin Boggs (D-Columbus) said Tuesday she's facing pushback from Republicans on her HB518, co-sponsored with Rep. Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington), a bill that would remove the cap on damages that can be awarded to victims of sexual assault. Boggs was joined on a video conference by Jessica Simpkins, who was raped at age 15 by her pastor in 2008 and was awarded \$3.5 million in non-economic damages by a jury; however, that amount was reduced to \$250,000, which included attorney fees and litigation expenses, because of damage caps under Ohio's 2005 tort reform law.

DEATH PENALTY

Gov. Mike DeWine, citing "ongoing problems involving the willingness of pharmaceutical suppliers

to provide drugs to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC)," Friday issued the following three reprieves of execution:

- Cleveland Jackson, who was scheduled to be executed on Jan. 13, 2021, until June 15, 2023.
- James O'Neal, who was scheduled to be executed on Feb. 18, 2021, until Aug. 16, 2023.
- Melvin Bonnell, who was scheduled to be executed on March 18, 2021, until Oct. 18, 2023.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A ranking of how well Midwestern cities can support startup companies published by venture capital firm M25 found Columbus has risen to seventh place after being ranked ninth in 2019, though other Ohio cities fell in the latest numbers. There were 59 cities ranked in the report and Ohio had the most with eight, followed by six each for Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin; five each for Iowa and Missouri; three each for Kentucky, Minnesota and Pennsylvania; two each for Kansas, North Dakota and Nebraska; and one each for South Dakota and West Virginia. The report focuses specifically on Midwestern companies.

ECONOMY

Recent surveys of downtown Columbus business and property owners found that nearly 40 percent of employees are not expected to return to fully working in offices until Jan. 1, 2021, or the rollout of a vaccine. Seventy percent of first-floor tenants also reported losses due to unrest and protests in the area.

The surveys were conducted by Capital Crossroads and Discovery Special Improvement Districts staff. Among the key findings, the report summary said that "there is a tremendous amount of uncertainty about staffing projections among office users and that uncertainty grows the longer the time frame."

EDUCATION

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria on Sept. 3 surprised Ohio School for the Deaf teacher Anthony Coy-Gonzalez by naming him the "2021 Ohio Teacher of the Year." Coy-Gonzalez teaches upper elementary students at the school located in Columbus. DeMaria made an unannounced appearance during a video conference staff meeting to share the news with Coy-Gonzalez and several of his colleagues. He is the first Ohio School for the Deaf teacher so honored.

Doug Ute has been selected as the next executive director of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), the organization's Board of Directors announced Tuesday. Ute is taking the OHSAA post after spending the last 20 years as a school superintendent, including nine years at Marion Elgin Local Schools and the last 11 years at Newark City Schools. He also coached and taught at Noble Local Schools in

Eastern Ohio and Buckeye Central High School, which is near his hometown of Bellville in North Central Ohio.

The Broadcast Education Media Commission (BEMC) approved a budget request Thursday that it said would provide "optimum" funding for support of the radio and television broadcasters it works with, in light of their warnings that large cuts would be "catastrophic" at a time when public broadcasting services are seeing high demand but fewer resources.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) said licenses for education professionals that had been set to expire July 1 will be extended

until Tuesday, Dec. 1 because of the pandemic.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) recently expanded the number of projects listed in its School Facilities Portfolio, an online repository of photos, locations and other information on more than 350 school construction and renovation projects. The portfolio includes information on projects including building specifications, project budgets, state and local funding shares, completion date, project contractors and more. The portfolio is available at <https://ofcc.ohio.gov/Portfolios/K-12-Portfolio>.

ELECTIONS 2020

Speaking to reporters Tuesday while giving an update on preparations for the upcoming Tuesday, Nov. 3, election, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said that he has not heard a valid reason to not allow his office to pay for postage for returned absentee ballots. LaRose's office is expected to appear before the Controlling Board on Monday, Sept. 14, to ask for the panel's approval of a request to allow him to use \$3 million from his office's budget to pay for return postage on absentee ballots for November. Lawmakers, however, have expressed concerns, pointing to a provision in Ohio law that bars county boards of elections from paying for postage on returned ballots. Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) had said that he continues to have concerns over LaRose's proposal and whether it runs afoul of state law.

The Ohio Debate Commission (ODC) announced Tuesday that all four of the candidates for the 2020 Ohio Supreme Court races have agreed to participate in a virtual forum that will be held next month. The virtual event will feature Justice Sharon Kennedy and challenger Judge John P. O'Donnell, and Justice Judith French and challenger Judge Jennifer Brunner. It will be held Friday, Oct. 9.

According to a poll by Your Voice Ohio, a collaboration of more than 50 Ohio news outlets, and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, COVID-19 ranks as the top issue among Ohioans this year. The data was collected from a random sample of 1,037 registered voters in Ohio conducted online between June 24 and July 13, according to the *Warren Tribune Chronicle*, which reported on the results for the Your Voice Ohio collaborative. Participants were asked to rank 16 issues in order of importance, and the largest percentage of respondents selected COVID-19. The economy and health care followed, with sustainable income and racism after that. Access to adequate food, education, criminal justice, and housing were mid-level concerns. Mental health, international peace and security, environmental protections, infrastructure, public services, drug addiction, and immigration reform ranked near the bottom, according to the newspaper.

A new poll by Rasmussen Reports gives Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden a 4-percentage point lead over President Donald Trump in Ohio. The poll showed Biden leading Trump 49 to 45 percent, with 3 percent choosing another candidate, and 3 percent undecided.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose said Wednesday that with 55 days to go until Election Day, 1,000,579 absentee ballot applications have been received by county boards of elections statewide, double the pace of ballot requests in 2016. That number includes 14,253 requests from military and overseas voters whose absentee ballots will be mailed beginning Friday, Sept. 18. All other ballots will be mailed beginning Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Vice President Mike Pence will hold a campaign event on Tuesday, Sept. 15, in Zanesville, President Donald Trump's campaign announced. According to the campaign, Pence will host a "Workers for Trump" event at the Muskingum County Fairgrounds. Doors open at 9 a.m.

A unanimous Ohio Supreme Court Thursday ruled that the nominating petitions of rapper Kanye West and running mate Michelle Tidball to appear as independent candidates for president and vice president, respectively, on the November ballot did not substantially comply with Ohio law and Secretary of State Frank LaRose did not abuse his discretion in rejecting the petitions.

Ohio elections officials Thursday were told about the importance of communications going into the November election, and how being able to communicate with the public will help ensure the public has trust in the elections systems going forward. The advice on the importance of clear and consistent communications was given by Shibon Gorman, a partner at Brunswick Group, and Preston Golson, a director at Brunswick Group, to Secretary of State Frank LaRose's Ready for November Task Force. Both focused on steps elections officials can take to address issues ranging from a cyber disruption before or on Election Day, as well as responding to disinformation.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio endorsed Jennifer Brunner for Ohio Supreme Court; Joel O'Dorsio, Kathy Wyenandt, Mark Fogel, Dan Brown, Charlie Ballard, Ken Poling, Crystal Lett, Betsy Rader, Tom Jackson, Vern Sykes, and Michael Fletcher for Ohio Senate; Alison Theiss, Laurel Johnson, Phil Robinson, Joan Sweeny, Kent Smith, Janine Boyd, Stephanie Howse, Juanita Brent, Michael Skindell, Bride Rose Sweeney, Monique Smith, Adam Miller, Kristin Boggs, Mary Lightbody, David Leland, Allison Russo, Dontavius Jarrells, Erica Crawley, Jessica Miranda, Brigid Kelly, Catherine Ingram, Emilia Sykes, Tavia

Galonski, Matt Shaughnessy, Casey Weinstein, Joe Campbell, Willis Blackshear Jr., Cate Berger, Amy Cox, Paula Hicks-Hudson, Lisa Sobocki, Michael Sheehy, Nancy Larson, Morgan Showen, Zach Stepp, Dara Atkinson, Michele Lepore-Hagan, Chris Stanley, Adam Dudziak, Erin Rosiello, Alan Darnowsky, Rachel Morocco, Donna Beheydt, Kevin Barnet, Mark Carr, Kim McCarthy, Randi Clites, Garrett Westhoven, Cynthia Richards, Joe Monbeck, Tiffanie Roberts, Scott Dailey, Katie O'Neill, Alaina Swope, and Richard Dana for Ohio House; and Kate Schroder, Joyce Beatty, Desiree Tims, Marcia Fudge, and Tim Ryan for Congress.

- The campaign of U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Youngstown) reports that the Ohio Association of Public School

Employees/American Federation of State and Municipal Employees (OAPSE AFSCME) Local 4 has endorsed his re-election.

- The re-election campaign of Rep. Dave Greenspan announced the endorsement of ACT OHIO - Affiliated Construction Trades.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

For the week ending Sept. 5, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 17,893 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Last week, ODJFS reported 18,719 new jobless claims. "Ohioans filed 328,515 continued jobless claims last week, which was 447,787 fewer than -- or less than half (42.3 percent) -- of the peak earlier this year," the department said in a news release.

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), if the July employment rebound after the initial COVID-19 disruptions continue throughout 2020 in a similar magnitude, total employment is predicted to increase at an annual rate of 5.44 percent for the next six months in Ohio. ODJFS said the following Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are also predicted to grow: the Dayton MSA at 0.06 percent; the Akron MSA at 0.11 percent; the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA at 0.18 percent; the Cincinnati MSA at 1.61 percent; the Canton-Massillon MSA at 2.01 percent; the Cleveland-Elyria MSA at 2.08 percent; the Columbus MSA at 2.66 percent; and the Toledo MSA at 12.30 percent.

ENERGY

Less than three weeks after joining the Coalition to Restore Public Trust (CRPT), Ohio's top petroleum lobby is leaving the HB6-repeal group to launch a separate campaign to overturn the energy subsidy bill and replace it with a "comprehensive" energy portfolio. The Ohio Oil & Gas Association (OOGA) was a prominent piece of CRPT's "broad-based" launch to cancel HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) in August. Members include the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF), combined-cycle investor Rockland Capital and other members of the natural gas industry, in addition to wind and renewable advocates. CRPT had identified OOGA as a coalition "funder," but the association corrected that claim this week.

Members of energy efficiency advocacy groups came together Wednesday to call for the immediate repeal of HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) -- the day before the House Energy Policy and Oversight Select Committee was scheduled to meet to hear testimony on three bills addressing what to do about the energy bailout law at the center of the \$60 million bribery scheme involving former Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford). Chris Neme, principal at Energy Futures Group, Trish Demeter, chief of staff for the Ohio Environmental Council, and Tom Bullock, executive director of Citizens Utility Board of Ohio, focused on debunking the cost savings arguments that helped pass HB6 and that are cited by supporters of the legislation.

Bipartisan sponsors of companion House bills urging the immediate repeal of HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) told the opening meeting of Speaker Bob Cupp's (R-Lima) House Select Committee on Energy Policy and Oversight Thursday that concerns emerging before and after the legislation's passage show FirstEnergy, former FirstEnergy Solutions (FES) and its successor, Energy Harbor, did not need billions of dollars in collective subsidies to survive the sale of nuclear- and coal-fired plants and continue operation in a competitive market. Chaired by Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon), a veteran of energy deregulation bill 123-SB3, the committee heard "clean repeal" legislation HB746 (Lanese-Greenspan) and HB738 (Skindell-O'Brien) as well as HB740 (Skindell-Denson), an effort to limit utilities' "significantly excessive earnings." Republican and Democratic joint sponsors attacked the idea that certain HB6 provisions could be retained as "good policy" while rejecting the legislative "process" that enacted it.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) recently announced the approval of \$5 million to fund additional wetlands efforts by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) as part of the H2Ohio water quality initiative. "This partnership [between OWDA and ODNR] will help us magnify H2Ohio's impact as we work to ensure safe and clean water in Ohio," Gov. Mike DeWine said. "The funds will be used specifically to help ODNR naturally reduce nutrient runoff and prevent algal blooms over the long term." ODNR's H2Ohio projects create, restore and enhance wetlands to filter water and reduce the phosphorus and nitrogen that feed harmful algal blooms and fuel hypoxia.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Rob Portman (R-OH) offered differing perspectives on the Senate's most recent COVID-19 relief package, but neither one was fully satisfied with the proposal. Brown called the bill, dubbed the "Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act," a non-starter for its cuts to federal unemployment bonuses and silence on evictions, while Portman said he would have preferred to see additional tax credits for businesses to incentivize rehiring and ensure safe workplaces. In his criticism of the proposal from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Brown called the bill "pathetic," while Portman said, "Nothing's perfect around here ... but we've got a responsibility to act."

GAMING/GAMBLING

Ohioans gambled more in the state's four casinos in August than the same month in 2019, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to new revenue reports from the Ohio Casino Control Commission. The four casinos earned a total of \$77.4 million in August, up from \$71.4 million in August 2019, but down from the record \$86 million earned in July 2020.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Just a month after taking the gavel, House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) said in a one-on-one interview with *Hannah News* the biggest

surprise to him is how much legislation had stalled as relations between the House and Senate had deteriorated. Cupp was elevated to speaker after former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) was hit with multiple federal charges alleging a bribery scheme surrounding the passage of energy legislation HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), charges that Householder denies. After the House Republican Caucus agreed to remove Householder from the dais, it held a closed door vote to choose a new speaker in which Cupp emerged as the winner over Rep. Jim Butler (R-Dayton), the House Speaker

Pro Tempore, in what was reportedly a close vote. A long-time member of the Senate and former Ohio Supreme Court justice, Cupp said that the leadership role is nothing new to him, having served in the number two position in the Senate. "It has been interesting, and of course, I always like learning new things," Cupp said of taking the gavel. "One of the pleasures of serving in the Legislature is you're always learning new things, and it's been quite enjoyable in that regard."

Columbus Police arrested a man charged with a May murder at Rep. Kristin Boggs' (D-Columbus) residence Wednesday morning. Cameron Bowen, age 24, was wanted on a warrant for a murder charge. He is accused in the shooting death of 29-year-old Harry Williams in Linden on May 29. According to a statement from Boggs' office, the suspect is the boyfriend of the Boggs family's child care provider, who

lived in an apartment above the detached garage behind Boggs' home in Italian Village.

GREAT LAKES

Members of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) on Wednesday voted to create the H2Ohio Technology Assessment Program (TAP) Advisory Council, which will evaluate and validate technology proposals and facilitate demonstration projects to determine their effectiveness in addressing harmful algal blooms (HABs). OLEC selected Tetra Tech as a third-party technology vendor to assist the TAP council in evaluating the most promising technologies. The TAP council will include individuals from non-governmental organizations, private corporations and state agencies. Members will have expertise evaluating technologies to reduce nutrient loading, experience addressing HABs in Lake Erie, or experience evaluating other types innovative technologies.

The Great Lakes Commission (GLC) announced that it will be appointing Erika Jensen to serve as its interim executive director. Jensen joined the commission in 2006 and currently oversees the agency's aquatic invasive species prevention and control program. She will be the first female executive director of the commission since it was established in 1955, according to a news release from GLC. Darren Nichols stepped down from his current role as executive director on Tuesday, Sept. 8 but will provide transition guidance to executive leadership as needed through January 2021, GLC said.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Gov. Mike DeWine's pick to lead the Ohio Department of Health, Dr. Joan Duwve, withdrew from consideration several hours after the governor announced her as the new director at his Thursday coronavirus briefing. Duwve, who is director of public health at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, cited personal reasons for her withdrawal.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The program budget for the Wexner Center for the Arts will be reduced by \$1 million, and the center will also face employee cuts as Ohio State University (OSU) looks to save \$252.2 million due to economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. "While these measures are painful, they are being made with great care and to position the center for the future," OSU spokesperson Ben Johnson said in an email. "COVID-19 has posed significant budgetary challenges for the university. No stream of revenue has remained unaffected, including the Wexner Center for the Arts."

JUDICIAL

New rules for court-appointed child custody evaluators would require behavioral health professionals to conduct culturally sensitive interviews with affected minors, parents, significant others, step-parents, other live-in adults, siblings, child care providers, schools, counselors, hospitals, medical providers, social service agencies and law enforcement, and to review clinical tests of the child and any history of physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse, psychiatric illness and/or family involvement in the legal system. The Ohio Supreme Court opened proposed changes to the Rules of Superintendence for the Court of Ohio for custody evaluators to public comment Wednesday, Sept. 2, and separately announced final amendments Friday for new guardian ad litem rules effective Jan. 1, 2020.

The committee commissioned by Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor to create Ohio's first uniform sentencing entry is calling for a statewide sentencing database developed and maintained by a renamed Ohio Criminal Justice Commission (OCJC) authorized in state law as a new "criminal justice agency." The existing Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission's (OCSC) Uniform Sentencing Entry Ad Hoc Committee has issued final recommendations for an official rollout on Thursday, Sept. 24. The committee convened last October and presented a draft document to O'Connor in February based on a sentencing review of all 88 counties. Members have since added a Method of Conviction Entry and endorsed Intervention in Lieu of Conviction, Diversion, Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity, and Competency Disposition entries as well.

Effective Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2021, the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio will require judges to proactively address underprivileged, underrepresented groups receiving unequal benefits from specialized dockets for veterans and for individuals and families struggling with mental health, domestic violence, drug addiction, OVI, fetal dependency and prison reentry. The Ohio Supreme Court has announced final amendments to the certification process for so-called "drug courts" and other specialty dockets.

Changes allow judges from common pleas, municipal and county courts to seek certification for programs with a "therapeutically oriented judicial approach to providing court supervision and appropriate treatment to individuals" -- the existing language of Rule 36.20 (A).

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address in Columbus Thursday using remote technology. O'Connor used her speech to explain how Ohio's courts have adapted to the pandemic and what changes will still be in place post-coronavirus, while also touching on recent racial unrest and the need for a criminal sentencing database.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA) announced Friday that it would be providing \$9.1 million in grant funding to help local governments with community improvement projects on water and sewer infrastructure, street reconstruction and flood and drainage remediation. The 19 grants are part of the Residential Public Infrastructure and the Critical Infrastructure programs, and will benefit over 33,000 Ohioans. The first program will provide three grants while the second will deliver funds to 15 local governments, including two grants for Preble County.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Ohio History Connection is hosting its "Ohio Open Doors" series of virtual events from Friday, Sept. 11 through Sunday, Sept. 20, consisting of livestreamed virtual tours of historic buildings and livestreamed presentations on Ohio history. Events include the "Statehouse Tour du Jour," where staff will lead five different tours of the Ohio Statehouse from Sept. 14 through 19 at noon, each with a different theme on the artifacts, locations and stories of the building.

PENSIONS

Three of Ohio's five pensions systems -- the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS), the School Employees Retirement System of Ohio (SERS), and the Ohio State Highway Patrol Retirement System (HPRS) -- are now making 2019 salary data available to taxpayers through the treasurer's revamped OhioCheckbook.gov, according to a recent announcement from Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague.

PEOPLE

Former Rep. Patrick Sweeney, who served in the Ohio House from 1967-1997, and in the Ohio Senate from 1997-98, died on Monday, according to Cleveland.com. He had turned 81 on Sept. 2. Sweeney is survived by his wife, Emily, a former U.S. District Attorney for Northern Ohio, and daughter Margaret Sweeney, who is an assistant U.S. attorney. His funeral service is set for Saturday, Sept. 12.

Fran Lesser, executive director of the County Auditors' Association of Ohio (CAAO) for the past 25 years, will retire effective Friday, Oct. 16. She will be succeeded by Thomas Pappas of Thomas P. Pappas and Associates.

Former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Terrence O'Donnell is new of counsel to Akron-based Brouse McDowell, where he will focus on alternative dispute resolution and appellate matters. O'Donnell sat on the high court from 2003 to 2018 after serving on the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court for 14 years and the 8th District Court of Appeals for eight years. He previously practiced at Marshman, Snyder & Corrigan in Cleveland. While on the Court, O'Donnell led Ohio's efforts to create the nationally recognized Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) reported eight fatal traffic crashes which claimed 10 lives over the Labor Day holiday according to provisional data. Troopers arrested 538 drivers for OVI and issued 3,289 safety belt citations. Troopers also made 477 drug arrests and 170 felony apprehensions.

The Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA), in cooperation with the governor's office and the Ohio departments of education, health, and job and family services, is receiving shipments of an additional 9 million face masks for public distribution. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) donated these additional masks to the state of Ohio as part of a new FEMA Mask Program. FEMA provided an initial 2 million face masks for Ohio school districts early in August. The masks are being provided at no cost to Ohio.

The state panel weighing Ohio's response to mass protests deliberated Wednesday on how law enforcement can affirm peaceful aims and deescalate tensions without use of force and crowd arrests.

Addressing the Ohio Community-Police Collaborative Advisory Board, one criminal justice expert said protesters may target police and force their hand; Director Kharlton Moore of the Ohio Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) did not disagree. A Democratic lawmaker stated, however, that law enforcement rose in the U.S. to keep African Americans in line, and that police "defunding" is really a push for a "reallocation" of funds in ways that benefit minority communities. The Ohio Community-Police Collaborative Advisory Board took up Gov. Mike DeWine's call for a state policing model on mass protests in addition to other law enforcement standards adopted by the board.

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Senate Majority Floor Leader Matt Huffman (R-Lima) is one of 10 state lawmakers in the Midwest to ask the Big 10 Conference to "reconsider" its decision to postpone fall sports due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Up to 6,000 fans will be allowed to attend two Cleveland Browns home games and two Cincinnati Bengals home games, Gov. Mike DeWine announced Saturday. The games include the following: The Thursday, Sept. 17 Bengals-Browns game in Cleveland; the Sunday, Sept. 27 matchup between the Washington Football Team and Browns; the Sunday, Oct. 4 matchup between the Jacksonville Jaguars and Bengals; and the Sunday, Oct. 25 Browns-Bengals game in Cincinnati. The DeWine administration's COVID-19 public health orders for sports and "entertainment" generally caps the number of spectators at the lesser of 1,500 individuals or 15 percent of the facility's fixed seating capacity for outdoor events. All schools, businesses and other entities affected by the orders can apply for a variance to be considered by the relevant local health department and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will soon be able to provide an additional \$300 per week to people receiving a minimum of \$100 in unemployment benefits and who self-attest that they are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ODJFS spokesperson Bret Crow told *Hannah News*. The lost wages assistance program utilizes funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced last week that Ohio was approved for a \$717 million grant to support eligible individuals. "Once the funding is programmed into the various systems, it will be retroactive to Aug. 1," Crow said.

The national unemployment rate dropped once again and is down to 8.4 percent for August, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), though the number of new nonfarm jobs declined again. June

saw 4.8 million jobs added, followed by 1.8 million in July and now 1.4 million. BLS also noted that increased government employment in August "largely reflected" temporary hiring for the 2020 Census.

There were also "notable" gains in retail trade, in professional and business services, in leisure and hospitality and in education and health services.

UTILITIES

Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) Bruce Weston says the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) must launch an independent audit of FirstEnergy to ensure the distribution utility and former FirstEnergy Solutions (FES) did not illegally funnel state-approved customer charges to former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and cohorts in an effort to win votes for HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) which provides subsidies to FES nuclear facilities and Ohio Valley Electric Corp. (OVEC) coal-fired plants owned by FES successor Energy Harbor. Weston points to the references to "Company A" and Company A-1" in the 82-page federal indictment of Householder and four others for bribery and racketeering-influenced and corrupt organization (RICO) violations.