

OHIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Bill Information

HB74 ENACT FY22-23 TRANSPORTATION BUDGET *(OELSLAGER S)*

To make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs.

CURRENT STATUS

3/31/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. immediately

HB110 OPERATING BUDGET *(OELSLAGER S)*

To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.

CURRENT STATUS

6/28/2021 - Consideration of Conference Committee Report; House Accepts Conference Committee Report, Vote 82-13

HB140 MODIFY ELECTION NOTICES, BALLOT LANGUAGE FOR PROPERTY TAX LEVIES *(MERRIN D)*

To enact the "Ballot Uniformity and Transparency Act" to modify the form of election notices and ballot language for property tax levies.

CURRENT STATUS

4/28/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means

HB141 MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS *(SKINDELL M, UPCHURCH T)*

To make appropriations related to public transportation.

CURRENT STATUS

2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB146

REGARDS APPLYING PREVAILING WAGE LAW TO PUBLIC PROJECTS (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

6/23/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing)

HB157

MODIFY MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX RULES - COVID WFH (JORDAN K, EDWARDS J)

To amend Section 29 of H.B. 197 of the 133rd General Assembly to modify municipal income tax employer withholding rules for COVID-19-related work-from-home employees.

CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means

HB267

LIMIT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS (JORDAN K)

To limit the duration of public health orders and to allow the General Assembly to act via concurrent resolution in response to a public health emergency if the Governor or Department of Health does not.

CURRENT STATUS

5/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

HB275

EXPAND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION JOINT PURCHASING AUTHORITY (LAMPTON B)

To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services.

CURRENT STATUS

5/12/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)

HB283

EXPAND DISTRACTED DRIVING LAWS (ABRAMS C, LAMPTON B)

To expand the texting while driving prohibition to a general prohibition against using an electronic wireless communications device while driving, with certain exceptions, and to create data collection requirements based on associated violations of the distracted driving laws.

CURRENT STATUS

6/10/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Criminal Justice, (Second Hearing)

HB350 PROHIBIT MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINE *(CUTRONA A)*

To prohibit mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations, requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination, and certain other actions relating to an individual's COVID-19 vaccination or health status and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

6/22/2021 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing)

SB4 EXEMPT EMS LINE OPERATORS-PUBLIC RECORDS *(ROEGNER K)*

To include emergency service telecommunicators, protective services workers, certain Ohio National Guard members, and certain mental health care providers as individuals whose residential and familial information is exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law.

CURRENT STATUS

6/8/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 9/7/21

SB15 FISCAL OFFICERS-LIABILITY *(WILSON S)*

To change the circumstances in which certain fiscal officers may be held liable for a loss of public funds.

CURRENT STATUS

3/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

SB18 INTERNAL REVENUE CODE *(ROEGNER K, SCHAFFER T)*

To expressly incorporate changes in the Internal Revenue Code since March 27, 2020, into Ohio law, to exclude certain loan amounts forgiven under federal law from the commercial activity tax, to authorize a commercial activity tax exclusion for Bureau of Workers' Compensation dividends paid to employers, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

3/31/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. immediately

SB32 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION *(RULLI M)*

To require the Director of Transportation to establish an electric vehicle charging station grant rebate program and to make an appropriation.

CURRENT STATUS

2/17/2021 - Senate Transportation, (First Hearing)

SB56 INDEMNITY-DESIGN CONTRACTS *(BLESSING III L)*

To regulate the use of indemnity provisions in professional design contracts related to public improvements.

CURRENT STATUS

6/22/2021 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing)

SB67 STUDY PROGRESS / CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS *(WILLIAMS S)*

To establish a committee to study the progress and challenges of African Americans in Ohio and to make an appropriation.

CURRENT STATUS

3/16/2021 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing)

SB93 REQUIRE VOTE-COUNTY SALES TAX INCREASE *(ANTANI N)*

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

CURRENT STATUS

3/3/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means

SB97 MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX-WORK FROM HOME *(ROEGNER K)*

To modify municipal income tax employer withholding rules for COVID-19-related work-from-home employees

CURRENT STATUS

5/12/2021 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

SB152 FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE TASK FORCE *(HOAGLAND F)*

To establish the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Task Force in the office of the Attorney General and to make an appropriation.

CURRENT STATUS

4/21/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

SB169 PROHIBIT MANDATORY VACCINATIONS *(BRENNER A)*

To prohibit mandatory vaccinations against the coronavirus, to prohibit requiring proof of vaccinations generally, and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

5/26/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate Health, (First Hearing)

Week in Review

Friday, June 25, 2021

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

A new survey of the arts industry shows continued financial losses that are significant and widespread, according to Ohio Citizens for the Arts (OCA). OCA Executive Director Angela Meleca said her organization conducted a survey of its members in June to see where the industry currently stands, noting the results foreshadow a slow recovery compared to other industries.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost marked "World Elder Abuse Awareness Month" Monday by noting the 456 cases of alleged senior neglect and abuse investigated by his office between 2019-2020 in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Medicaid and Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Yost says those cases resulted in 106 indictments, 86 convictions and \$113.5 million of restitution. Investigated abuse ranged from minor injuries from being moved improperly to death from gross neglect.

The Ohio Attorney General's Office announced a settlement Thursday with Frontier Communications to increase its Internet quality in underserved areas and to stop overbilling for unreliable service. The agreement follows an AG investigation into Frontier's sales and advertising practices for Internet services to Ohio consumers. Collaborating with outside counsel, the attorney general's Consumer Protection Section negotiated the settlement after finding the telecom company, based in Norwalk, CT, was charging customers for Internet speeds it knew could not be reached.

FY22-23 BUDGET

Superintendents and labor leaders from Ohio's largest school districts made a final push Monday for lawmakers to choose the House school funding formula in settling their budget differences, while also pressing their positions on other key provisions. The Ohio 8 Coalition called a virtual press conference to highlight their top issues for the HB110 (Oelslager) Conference Committee. The organization is led by the superintendents, and teacher union presidents of Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown schools.

In a letter addressed to members of the conference committee on budget bill HB110 (Oelslager), Cleveland-based think tank the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) has recommended that the state make changes to the bill's human services provisions including those around Medicaid, aging services and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) reported substantial progress Thursday on House-Senate school funding negotiations as part of the budget conference process on HB110 (Oelslager) but said other issues will take longer. Huffman added he and Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) talked again directly Wednesday night, with school funding on the agenda. "I simply said I'd like for my folks and his folks to get together and try to resolve that, and I think they have. A lot of the devil there is in the drafting and details," he said. "I think we're going to have a resolution about that by the end of this evening or by tomorrow. There are some other outstanding issues that are circling which may prevent us from getting [the budget] done completely by Friday. I think we'll probably be back next week," he said. Cupp however, held out more hope for a Friday deal in comments after Thursday's House session. "Overall there's been a really good working relationship between the House and Senate conferees," he said. "It's been a spirit of 'Let's work together to get this done.' And I think that's a very refreshing sort of thing. I am hopeful that most of these issues will be resolved in a very positive way," he said.

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

Lordstown Motors Corporation (LMC) announced that John Whitcomb had joined the company in the new position of vice president for global commercial operations, effective Monday. A press release said he will oversee "the company's overall go-to-market strategy ahead of the start of production of the Lordstown Endurance in late-September 2021." This follows the resignations of CEO Steve Burns and CFO Julio Rodriguez, both of whom were replaced with interim officials amid a search for permanent leaders.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and President Joe Biden both discussed expansion of the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Monday, in observance of "Child Tax Credit Awareness Day." Brown held a virtual roundtable with U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Ohio and Colorado parents who will benefit from the changes effective Thursday, July 15. Earlier, advocates including Rep. Janine Boyd (D-Cleveland Heights) had praised the changes as well, estimating 92 percent of Ohio children will benefit.

Reps. Thomas West (D-Canton) and Rodney Creech (R-West Alexandria) Tuesday announced a bipartisan bill that they said would

establish a presumption in Ohio law that equal shared parenting is in the best interest of a child, unless a court determines that such an arrangement would be detrimental. In announcing the bill, the sponsors and supporting speakers at Tuesday's press conference pointed to what they said are 40 years of research that shows it is best for children to have both parents sharing parental duties, rather than having what West called one parent "marginalized" while the other parent is overburdened with parenting responsibilities.

CORONAVIRUS

Gov. Mike DeWine Friday held a press conference at Thomas Worthington High School to encourage student athletes and their coaches to get vaccinated, but later told reporters that his administration won't be issuing any state orders requiring it for students to participate in extracurricular activities this year. Instead DeWine, joined by coaches and students from the Columbus area, focused on the challenges of the previous year as schools and the state tried to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hispanic Americans have died of COVID-19 at a disproportionately high rate compared to Whites because of workplace exposure to the virus, according to a recent study from Ohio State University (OSU). Hispanics are overrepresented among workers in essential industries and occupations ranging from warehousing and grocery stores to health care and construction, much of which kept operating when most of the country shut down in spring 2020. An analysis of federal data showed that, considering their representation in the U.S. population, far higher percentages of Hispanics of working age -- 30 to 69 years old -- have died of COVID-19 than Whites in the same age groups.

Prior to visiting with the final winners of the \$1 million prize and the college scholarship, Gov. Mike DeWine Thursday declared the Vax-a-Million a "great success," noting the numbers vaccinated over the first three weeks of the five-week program. He said the first week saw 92,365 vaccinated; 187,238 the second week; and 142,713 the third week. For this fifth and final drawing, a total of 3,469,542 vaccinated adults were entered for a chance to win \$1 million and 154,889 vaccinated youth entered for a chance to win a college scholarship. This was an increase of 41,028 adult entries and 4,702 youth entries over last week, according to the governor's office.

CORRECTIONS

The Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) reconvened after a four-month break Wednesday to welcome new members and hear an update on the agency's oversight of 28 Ohio prisons. The committee did not discuss Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor's March letter urging Chairman Nathan Manning (R-N. Ridgeville) to investigate inmate complaints against staff and supervisors at Madison Correctional Institution (MACI), as had been expected.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Development Services Agency (DSA) announced Wednesday that it had selected seven partners to operate Minority Business Assistance Centers (MBACs) to serve minority and disadvantaged businesses in every county in Ohio. The request for proposals was made in April.

ECONOMY

U.S. retail sales are expected to grow by 5.5 percent in the back-to-school spending period of July 15 to Sept. 6, according to a recent Mastercard "Spending Pulse" report. Forecasted shopping also represents a 6.7 percent increase over the 2019 period. The report noted that this spending does not include automobile-related sales such as gas purchases. Spending through e-commerce is expected to fall by 6.6 percent as a year-over-year figure, but will increase by 53.2 percent over 2019.

EDUCATION

High performing school districts with diverse populations were invited to Friday's meeting of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Task Force on Best Practice Models for Black Students to share with the group what's working in their schools. State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria reminded members that the purpose of the task force is to close achievement gaps, to identify academic best practice models, to create a grading rubric and self-assessment tool, and to examine the best ways to create expectations for students and systems.

Education legislation pending in the House would allow families to take a student's share of state funding to their school of choice, a concept supporters call "the backpack bill." Rep. Marilyn John (R-Shelby), joint sponsor of HB290 with Rep. Riordan McClain (R-Upper Sandusky), told *Hannah News* they're awaiting the new funding formula likely to be developed in the final version of the budget bill before filling in details and determining how the bill could complement a new formula. For now, the bill is just a two-page, 19-line statement of intent to develop a system "that allows families to choose the option for all computed funding amounts associated with students' education to follow them to the schools they attend."

Susie Lawson, a Northeast Ohio school board member will serve as the Ohio School Boards Association's (OSBA) interim 2021 president-elect. OSBA's Board of Trustees recently approved the nomination of Lawson, a member of the Tri-County Educational Service Center (ESC) and Wayne County Schools Career Center boards of education.

The Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee rolled out reforms to the school report card system Tuesday and reported out of committee on Wednesday. Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell), chairman of the committee, said the changes included in a substitute bill for HB82 (Jones-Cross) represent a compromise between his SB145 and HB200 (Jones-Robinson), worked out with numerous organizations representing school management, teachers and business interests along with the Ohio Department of Education. Brenner said the bill uses the framework of a five-star rating system, including half-star increments, as proposed in SB145. Schools would receive an overall rating, although not until the 2022-2023 school year, as well as ratings on five components. A sixth

component on career, college and military readiness would be reported but not graded for at least three years. The amended bill passed the full Senate later on Wednesday.

State law requiring basic peace officer training in order to be "armed while on duty" at schools applies to teachers and other non-security staff given authorization to carry concealed guns by local boards of education, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Wednesday. The ruling arises from a lawsuit filed by several parents in Butler County's Madison Local Schools, whose local board passed a resolution authorizing staff to go armed in the wake of a shooting at the junior-senior high school.

Proponents of HB61 (Powell-Stoltzfus), which would prohibit trans-women from competing in women's sports, told the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee Thursday that there are biological differences between men and women that result in competitive advantages in sports for men, and those differences are not mitigated through hormone treatments. The issue was later amended into SB187 (Antani) on the House floor.

ELECTIONS

The Ohio Elections Commission Thursday again delayed review of a number of campaign finance complaints forwarded by the secretary of state's office against former Speaker Larry Householder despite a push from Attorney General Dave Yost's office to handle the cases now. The commission cited the ongoing investigation into the scandal surrounding 133-HB6.

A voting rights rally was held on Thursday at the Statehouse, organized by a coalition of community-based organizations, labor unions, and member-based associations. The organizers said the rally "for state and federal pro-voter legislation" supported bills including the For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act as well as automated voter registration, multiple offsite drop boxes and early vote centers, online absentee ballot applications, and adequately funded elections and robust voter education. The groups also protested against HB294 (Seitz-Ray).

ELECTIONS 2021

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The Ohio AFL-CIO endorsed Allison Russo for the 15th Congressional District.
- The congressional campaign of Stephanie Kunze announced the endorsement of the Franklin County Republican Party.
- Ohio Right to Life endorsed Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) for the 15th Congressional District.

ELECTIONS 2022

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) announced plans to campaign with Republican U.S. Senate candidate Mike Gibbons in Cleveland.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Monday that Ohio's unemployment rate was 5.0 percent in May, up from 4.7 percent in April, as the state saw a decrease of 14,800 nonagricultural wage and salary jobs over the month.

For the week ending June 19, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 12,953 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). That number is lower than last week, when the department reported 15,866 jobless claims.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

A substitute version of legislation modifying the process for wind and solar development was accepted in the House Public Utilities Committee on Wednesday, with Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) calling the latest iteration of SB52 (Reineke-McColley) a "compromise" that has resulted in some business groups dropping their opposition. "The substitute bill ... is a product of a four-plus hour IP meeting that we had last week with many of the interested parties ... that ended up working out pretty well," McColley told the committee, saying the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Business Roundtable and the Utility Scale Solar Energy Coalition are now "neutral" on the bill. "We appear to have struck a compromise here."

In a hearing with some pointed exchanges, the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee continued testimony Thursday on oil-gas unitization proposal HB152 (Stewart-Ginter) and reversed course on a previous change to the bill.

The Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) gave a green light to wind generation in Erie and Huron counties and two solar projects in Preble County Thursday but shot down a second wind installation targeted for Seneca and Sandusky counties, drawing praise from Sen. Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin), joint sponsor of local controls on renewable energy in SB52 (Reineke-McColley), and other lawmakers in the affected area.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) has been awarded a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to help administer the H2Ohio initiative across the Maumee River Watershed. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) program project will run through October 2024 to support H2Ohio's long-term work to improve water quality, according to ODAg.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) is now accepting applications for 2021 Diesel Mitigation Trust Fund grants through Friday, Aug. 13. Grants are available for off-road equipment operating in 26 priority counties, according to the agency. First priority counties include Clermont, Hamilton, Warren, Butler, Madison, Franklin, Fairfield, Licking, Delaware, Lorain, Medina, Cuyahoga, Summit, Portage, Geauga and Lake. Second priority counties include Montgomery, Greene, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Erie, Stark,

Mahoning, Trumbull and Ashtabula. The application deadline is 3 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 13. Applications must be submitted online within Ohio EPA's Customer Support Center. Application guidelines are posted on the "DMTF 2021 Request for Applications to Replace Diesel Off-road Equipment" link. For assistance, contact the Office of Environmental Education online, or call 614-644-2873.

GAMING/GAMBLING

Leaders of the Ohio Veterans and Fraternal Charitable Coalition (OVFCC) are calling on the General Assembly to pass charitable gaming reforms as part of the budget, HB110 (Oelslager).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

A series of high-profile measures got intertwined and shifted among various bills this week as the House and Senate tried to secure key priorities and parry late-breaking amendments. Two federal COVID funding measures already enacted via their companion bills were converted wholesale to new purposes and passed out of the General Assembly's finance committees Tuesday. The Senate Finance Committee passed legislation to use approximately \$1.5 billion in federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act money to pay off Ohio's unemployment compensation debt to the federal government. The committee amended HB168 (Fraizer-Loychik), originally a federal COVID relief measure for small businesses, fairs, child care providers and veterans homes, to strip its original language and insert the payoff plan. [That earlier language had been approved in HB168's companion bill SB109 (Manning-Rulli).] The House Finance Committee followed suit, except that committee gutted SB111 (Blessing-Brenner), substituting the original funding for pandemic relief for schools with nearly \$422 million in ARP funds for FY22 "for non-entitlement units of local governments" including "cities, villages and townships, on a population basis" The original provisions of SB111 had already been passed in companion bill HB170 (Bird-Richardson) and signed into law by the governor. But on the House floor Thursday, Republicans amended SB111 to include a prohibition on employer mandates involving any vaccine not fully approved by the FDA. They also amended a Senate bill on college athletes' name, image and likeness (NIL) rights, SB187 (Antani), to include a ban on transgender girls' participation in girls' sports.

The Senate balked, putting the local government funding from SB111 into HB168, and amending HB29 (Wiggam), a veterans ID bill, to include the NIL legislation, as well as an attempted compromise on the Senate's sports gambling bill, SB176 (Antani-Manning). House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) maintained Thursday the skepticism he expressed about a sports gambling deal earlier this week, calling it "an extremely high lift" and saying the House hasn't yet had hearings on the measure. He said Reps. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) and Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville) monitored Senate action on the bill, and said the House has heard from interested parties who have raised concerns.

Wednesday's House session included passage of HB149 (Swearingen-Stewart), to include partisan identifiers on the ballot for appellate and Supreme Court judicial candidates; SB3 (Roegner), to have Ohio join the Nurse Licensure Compact; SB6 (Roegner-S. Huffman), to have Ohio join the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact; HB184 (Carfagna), regarding disability determinations for the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund; and HB193 (Cutrona-Pavliga), regarding electronic prescriptions for Schedule II substances.

Perry County Commissioner Derek Householder, son of ousted Rep. Larry Householder (R-Glenford), applied to fill his father's vacant House seat, according to applicant resumes provided Wednesday by the House. The House received 19 additional applications from the following:

- Ryan Rantz, an operations manager from Coshocton
- Randal Almendinger, a trustee for St. Alban's Township in Licking County and business owner
- David Snider, president of Somerset Village Council
- Travis Post, a trustee for Monroe Township in Perry County and campus recreation official at Ohio University
- Brittany Misner, vice president of the Licking County Chamber of Commerce
- Patrick Simpson, a human resources consultant from Newark
- Glenn Mishler, an at-large member on Coshocton City Council
- Robert Leist, a maintenance coordinator with Kraft-Heinz from Coshocton
- Marci McCaulay of Thornville, a retired psychologist and former director of the Center for Women and Gender Action at Denison University.
- Tyler Maple, a Rite Aid manager and Ohio University-Zanesville student from Coshocton.
- Melinda Henderson Bradley of Newark, safety and training coordinator for MPW Industrial Services
- Rozland McKee, a former state IT professional
- Kevin Miller of Newark, legislative liaison for the Ohio State Highway Patrol and former commander of the patrol's Granville Post.
- Zoey Stenson, a clerk in the Perry County Treasurer's Office
- Justin Martin of Coshocton, an Amazon fulfillment center employee
- Grant Daugherty, a farmer and former Coshocton County commissioner

- Kevin Black, a financial adviser from Glenford
- Chris McNeil, director of marketing for Pinnacle Metal Products and a social media personality who organized the "perfect season" parade for the Cleveland Browns' winless 2017 run.
- Sherry Truex, who did not submit a resume.

Wednesday's Senate session included passage of HCR5 (Hall), which urges Congress to reject congressional Democrats' HR1, the "For The People Act" on federal elections reforms; HB82 (Cross-Jones), an overhaul of state report cards; HB9 (Koehler), creating age restrictions for the sale of dextromethorphan, often used in cold medicine; HB137 (Upchurch-Blackshear), designating March 29 as Ohio Tuskegee Airmen Day; HB252 (White-Plummer), which would have Ohio enter the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact; and SB162 (Reineke), regarding turnpike tolls; and concurred with House amendments to SB49 (Hottinger-Sykes), regarding payment protections for design professionals.

At the first House hearing of fireworks legalization bill SB113 (Rulli-Johnson) on Wednesday, the House Commerce and Labor Committee reported the bill out after hearing testimony from the bill's sponsor, from opponents and fireworks industry proponents of the measure. Bill sponsor Sen. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott) noted that 48 states have legalized 1.4G "consumer grade" fireworks, and while they're currently illegal in Ohio, people still set them off. He further said legalizing fireworks allows for greater regulation and safety education around them, stating that the bill would require retailers to sell safety glasses along with the explosives.

Aside from the passage of SB111 and SB187 with contentious amendments, Thursday's House session included approval of SB113 (Rulli-Johnson), regarding fireworks laws; HB131 (Wiggam), regarding accessible parking; HB81 (Plummer-Manchester), regarding massage establishments and massage therapy; HB291 (Callender-Troy), an omnibus road and bridge naming bill; and SB40 (Schaffer), regarding cigarette minimum pricing.

Aside from passage of HB169 and HB29 with amendments to thwart House action on SB111 and SB187, Thursday's Senate session included Senate concurrence on licensure compact measures SB3 (Roegner) and SB6 (Roegner-S. Huffman), and on fireworks bill SB113 (Rulli-Johnson); and passage of the workers' compensation budget conference report on HB75 (Oelslager); HB191 (Cutrona), naming a Mahoning County bridge after the late Rep. Don Manning; HB201 (Stephens), prohibiting municipal bans on natural gas use; HB5 (Manning), regarding chemical dependency counselor licensing; HB106 (Cross), designating January as Radon Awareness Month; HB132 (Hillyer-Jones), regarding towing and self-storage facilities; and HB222 (Wilkin-Upchurch), regarding nonprofits formed by hospitals.

In other legislative action, House Civil Justice Committee reported out HB286 (Seitz), regarding appeals of agency orders; HB279 (Brown-Oelslager), regarding wrongful death claims; House Commerce and Labor Committee reported out HB107 (Baldrige), regarding elevators; House Financial Institutions Committee reported out HCR19 (Jordan), urging Congress to pass the Federal Reserve Transparency Act of 2021; House Ways and Means Committee reported out HB165 (McClain), regarding tax credits for high-ethanol fuel sales; and SB19 (Schaffer), regarding property and sales tax; House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee reported out SB59 (Schaffer), regarding war relics; House Insurance Committee reported out HB188 (Lampton-Cross), barring insurer discrimination against organ donors; House Criminal Justice Committee reported out HB44 (Roemer), regarding penalties for assault against sports officials; HB22 (LaRe-Wilkin), regarding obstructing justice; and SB126 (Kunze-Gavarone), regarding hazing prohibitions; and House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee reported out HB265 (Manning-Patton), regarding children's crisis care.

GOVERNOR

Gov. Mike DeWine signed two bills into law Tuesday: SB21 (Antonio-Manning), which requires the Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services to adopt guidelines for the assessment, triage, and transport of stroke patients to hospitals; and SB42 (Schaffer), which establishes the second week of November as Ohio Diabetes Awareness-Heart Connection Week in an effort to raise public awareness about the connection between diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Gov. Mike DeWine announced Wednesday the appointment of Linda Knepp to the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas' Juvenile Division, replacing Judge Connie Zimmelman. Knepp will assume the office on Tuesday, July 6 and must run in November 2022 in order to complete the term ending Jan. 4, 2025.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Anita G. Rice of St. Clairsville (Belmont County) reappointed to the Belmont College Board of Trustees for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending May 12, 2024.
- Larry L. Macon, Sr. of Richfield (Summit County) reappointed to the Advisory Board of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending May 4, 2022.
- Rita N. A. Mansour of Toledo (Lucas County) to the Ohio Arts Council for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending July 1, 2024.
- C. Hull of Wooster (Wayne County) reappointed to the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending Jan. 14, 2024.
- Rachel E. Bankowitz of Dayton (Montgomery County) reappointed to the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending Jan. 14, 2024.

- Lynn Terry Holtzman of Bremen (Fairfield County) to the TourismOhio Advisory Board for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending Sept. 27, 2021.
- Linda Stickney of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Commercial Dog Breeding Advisory Board for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending March 12, 2024.
- Natasha Meinert of Rocky River (Cuyahoga County) to the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending Nov. 12, 2021.
- Michele Marie Chizever of Powell (Columbus) to the Unemployment Compensation Modernization and Improvement Council for a term beginning June 16, 2021 and ending Jan. 28, 2023.
- Jeffrey D. Quayle of New Albany (Franklin County) to the Ohio Housing Finance Agency for a term beginning June 21, 2021 and ending Jan. 31, 2024.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The House Health Committee heard opponent testimony from groups including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Manufacturers' Association on vaccine mandate ban bill HB248 (Gross) Tuesday, with the groups saying that prohibiting employers and businesses from mandating vaccines for their employees infringes on employer rights to maintain safe workplaces.

The final set of Vax-a-Million winners were announced Wednesday evening, with Cincinnati resident Esperanza Diaz winning the \$1 million prize and Sydney Daum of Brecksville (Cuyahoga County) winning the full-ride scholarship to an Ohio public college or university. Nearly 3.4 million Ohioans entered for the cash prize, according to the state, while 154,889 entered the scholarship drawing. This included an increase of 41,028 adults and 4,702 students in the past week.

HIGHER EDUCATION

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced Tuesday that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has awarded over \$1 million in scholarship funding to Central State University.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) cannot enforce rules prohibiting institutions of higher education from providing student-athletes "education-related" benefits such as paid academic tutoring, post-eligibility paid internships and equipment like computers, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled on Monday.

Sports programs at Ohio institutions of higher education would be at a significant competitive disadvantage if the General Assembly and Gov. Mike DeWine fail to enact SB187 (Antani) by Thursday, July 1, according to Ohio State University (OSU) Athletics Director Gene Smith and OSU head football coach Ryan Day.

JUDICIAL

Apart from the best system for selecting judges, a reform to which former Ohio Chief Justice Tom Moyer devoted many unsuccessful years, sitting Justice R. Patrick DeWine and 11th District Appeal Court Presiding Judge Cynthia Westcott Rice apparently agree on one thing: current partisan realities warrant an "R" or "D" by the name of every general election candidate for the Ohio Supreme Court. In a debate sponsored by the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBBA) and League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater Cleveland, DeWine said the same political calculus should apply to all appeals court races in Ohio, as supported by standalone legislation amended into the HB110 (Oelslager) budget.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) refused this week to reconsider its decision not to award a new contract to incumbent managed care plan Paramount Advantage. No decision has been made on the separate protest of Buckeye Community Health Plan, whose bid is in "deferred status" over recently settled litigation versus parent company Centene regarding pharmacy overbilling allegations. Paramount hinted at further action in response. "ODM finds Paramount's protest is without merit. The MCO award process followed the law, the results will benefit Ohioans, and ODM did not abuse its discretion or act arbitrarily. The process and people involved were not biased and ODM harbors no ill will toward Paramount, despite Paramount's lawyer's allegations to the contrary," wrote Mark Landes, outside counsel for ODM from the firm of Isaac Wiles.

A contractor for ODM suffered a data breach in May that might have included personal information of Medicaid providers, including names, dates of birth, and Social Security numbers. ODM said it was notified by Maximus, which provides data management for providers, of a breach that occurred May 17-19. "Ohio Medicaid is monitoring the progress of the investigation and will continue working with Maximus as they remedy the situation," the department said.

NATURAL RESOURCES

As tours resume at Malabar Farm State Park, visitors will be greeted by a variety of renovations that have restored the beauty of the park and its auxiliary buildings, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). "It's not just the new paint that visitors will immediately notice," ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft Chief Glen Cobb said. "A number of buildings have been renovated inside and out, including the historic Malabar Restaurant and the park's youth hostel."

The ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management is celebrating the completion of a new trailhead and the elimination of abandoned mine land (AML) hazards in Nelsonville. The Doanville trailhead, part of the Baileys Trail System in Athens County,

provides access to the new 88-mile single track mountain bike trail in the Wayne National Forest.

To increase visitor safety, the gates to Alum Creek State Park's beach area will be closed daily at 9 p.m., according to ODNR. The gate closure will also affect the large public parking lot and access to the park's Storybook Trail, ODNR said.

The ODNR Division of Wildlife is encouraging hunters, anglers, birders and all outdoor enthusiasts to use caution and take steps to avoid contact with Ohio's tick species while exploring the outdoors this summer. "Ticks are found throughout Ohio and sometimes carry potentially dangerous diseases," ODNR said.

OHIO HISTORY

Preservation Ohio announced its official list of the most endangered historic sites for 2021 recently, picking 11 properties after receiving what it said was the most nominations it had ever received. The group, Ohio's oldest statewide historic preservation organization, said it chose the properties based on the ones its board decided are most at risk. Circumstances that contribute to the endangered status and result in sites being named to the list typically include one or more of the following factors: demolition threat, abandonment, neglectful owner, deterioration, obsolete use, lack of funding for repairs, location or development.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Gov. Mike DeWine Wednesday announced a new pilot program meant to help tackle the dwindling number of law enforcement recruits. During a briefing at the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS), the governor introduced the College to Law Enforcement Pathway Program. The new program will link criminal justice students with mentors at local law enforcement agencies to "help equip them with the skills needed for a successful law enforcement career before they graduate." DeWine described the program model as a "co-op" in which students will "go out and be with these law enforcement mentors."

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

It is human nature for those in power to do whatever they can to stay in power, voting rights advocates said during a recently City Club of Cleveland forum, and given that, new reforms adopted by voters are no guarantee that Republicans won't still try to give themselves an advantage in drawing new congressional and state legislative maps this year. The forum featured David Daley, a senior fellow at FairVote; Jen Miller, the executive director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio; and Alora Thomas-Lundborg, senior staff attorney at the Voting Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission Monday approved the purchase of nearly \$9 million in hardware and software to upgrade the commission's networks as it takes the next steps to modernize its toll collection system. The commission adopted the resolution that would purchase Cisco data network hardware and software and maintenance services necessary to upgrade the fiber network and ethernet to better support turnpike operations and the new toll collection system.

TREASURER OF STATE

Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague announced Monday that the city of Kirtland and village of Newton Falls (Trumbull County) had achieved cost savings through refinancing in the Ohio Market Access Program (OMAP) administered by his office. "Our local governments are always working to complete important infrastructure projects, and OMAP helps them to do so at a lower cost," Sprague said. "Kirtland has been one of our longstanding partners in the program, and we're proud to provide this ongoing support."

WORKFORCE

A new OhioMeansJobs.com resource called "SkillsMatch" can connect those seeking employment with potential opportunities by using resume information, Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted said during a Tuesday meeting of the Governor's Executive Workforce Board.