

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

4/29/2021 - Senate Health, (Sixth Hearing)

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

4/22/2021 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 60-33

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

3/3/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)

HB157

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

To repeal 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

4/20/2021 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)

SB4

EXEMPT EMS LINE OPERATORS-PUBLIC RECORDS (ROEGNER K)

To include emergency service telecommunicators and certain Ohio National Guard members as individuals whose residential and familial information is exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law.

CURRENT STATUS

4/20/2021 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Civil Justice, (Fourth Hearing)

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

4/20/2021 - Senate Judiciary, (Second 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

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

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

Week in Review

ABORTION

The Ohio law prohibiting doctors from providing abortion-inducing drugs via telemedicine will not go into effect while the lawsuit challenging 133-SB260 (S. Huffman) moves forward. Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas Judge Alison Hatheway granted a preliminary injunction at the request of Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio and other affiliates, and the law will remain enjoined until the case is resolved by the court. Earlier this month, the same judge blocked implementation of 133-SB260 until Monday's hearing. The law was originally scheduled to go into effect on April 12.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Ohio Attorney General's Office is now accepting nominations for the 2021 Ohio Distinguished Law Enforcement Awards to be announced during the AG's October Law Enforcement Conference. Awards recognize professional efforts including Distinguished Law Enforcement Lifetime Achievement, Service, Group Achievement, Civilian Leadership, Training, Valor, and Community Service. The nomination form, with instructions, is available at <https://tinyurl.com/nbfn8xbu>.

FY22-23 BUDGET

The biennial budget, HB110 (Oelslager), passed the House Wednesday after a final round of changes Tuesday in the House Finance Committee, including police training funds, a venture capital gains income tax deduction, restructuring of the Oil and Gas Leasing Commission and the provisions of broadband expansion measure HB2 (Carfagna-Stewart). "This is a balanced plan that supports Ohio's schools and students, funds important programs to continue Ohio's economic recovery, invests in families and individuals, and protects Ohio's most vulnerable citizens," said House Finance Committee Chairman Scott Oelslager (R-North Canton). "It is a budget bill we can be proud of." Ranking Democrat Erica Crawley (D-Columbus) saw the bill differently. "Democrats wanted to see a bold blueprint for Ohio's future. That's not what this budget is. It's disappointing that Republicans didn't want to work with us to invest in the working people and families who have faced unprecedented uncertainty over the past year amid the worst public health and economic crisis in our lifetimes. Instead of making the necessary investments to ensure our recovery benefits all Ohioans, Republicans prioritized another round of tax giveaways to the wealthy that we can't afford right now -- not while so many Ohioans are hurting," she said. The bill passed the House 70-27, with bipartisan support and opposition.

In addition to the budget, the House on Wednesday passed HB35 (LaRe-Click), expanding the ability of mayors to solemnize marriages.

Wednesday's Senate session included passage of SB80 (Gavarone-Cirino), to add partisan identification on the ballot for appellate court and Supreme Court races; SB26 (Roegner-S. Huffman), regarding the Interstate Medical License Compact; SB31 (Craig), designating Columbus' Poindexter Village a historic site; SB43 (Schaffer), designating July as Sarcoma Awareness Month; and concurrence with House amendments to SB2 (Gavarone), regarding competency evaluations and mental health treatment in criminal cases; and SB56 (Hackett-Antonio), regarding tax exemptions for permanent supportive housing.

The Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC) and affiliated organizations like the Ohio Channel are seeking a budget increase over the executive proposal, emphasizing the role they played informing the public and facilitating virtual gatherings during the pandemic. Alina Gage, chief financial officer for BEMC, and Dan Shellenbarger, executive director of Ohio Government Television (OGT) and the Ohio Channel, testified Tuesday on the BEMC budget before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee during a hearing on HB110 (Oelslager).

CORONAVIRUS

At a Wednesday COVID-19 briefing, Gov. Mike DeWine acknowledged that the state is seeing a number of vaccination sites decline shipments of the first dose of the vaccines for next week, saying they have doses leftover. With 27.5 percent of the state having received both doses and 38 percent, one, both DeWine and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff stressed the need for Ohioans to get vaccinated. Vanderhoff commented how well the vaccination is working -- at almost 99 percent effectiveness -- and it is holding up very well against the variants.

Legislation that would nullify all violations of COVID-19 public health orders and reimburse businesses that have been fined for breaking the rules was reported out of the House State and Local Government Committee on Wednesday. HB127 (Merrin) was reported out on a party-line vote. There was no discussion, and no witnesses testified.

Even as the state continues to grapple with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly should act to remove Gov. Mike DeWine's mask mandate as soon as possible, Rep. Jena Powell (R-Arcanum) said Thursday. "Wearing a face mask should be a personal choice for Ohioans. In this country, and in this state, we believe in the importance of self-government, and of individual liberty and

responsibility. These principles require us to remove Gov. Mike DeWine's statewide mask mandate, and prohibit him from issuing future statewide mask mandate orders unless approved by the General Assembly," Powell told the House Government Oversight Committee during sponsor testimony on HB202.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

A recent capital area human trafficking sting encompassed more than 20 local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and netted 93 arrests in Central Ohio, where authorities also referred 53 victims to intervention services, the Ohio Attorney General's Office announced Friday. The attorney general's Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission coordinated the April 14-15 "Operation 614" -- named after the local area code often used to arrange sex for hire -- with its Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, comprising the AG's Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), Ohio Adult Parole Authority (APA), Franklin and Delaware counties sheriffs' offices, Columbus Division of Police, Powell Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, Salvation Army, Southeast Mental Health Addiction Services and Franklin County Hope Task Force.

After a Minnesota jury delivered guilty verdicts Tuesday on charges of second- and third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter against former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd, Ohio officials including Gov. Mike DeWine and Congressional Black Caucus Chair Joyce Beatty (D-Columbus) issued statements on the case.

Gov. Mike DeWine touched on a wide variety of topics at his Wednesday briefing, starting by echoing his statement from Tuesday evening when he said, "Our system of justice worked," in reaction to the guilty verdicts in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin's for the death of George Floyd. However, almost concurrently with the release of that verdict Tuesday, Columbus saw the shooting of a 16-year-old Black teen girl by a Columbus police officer, thus sending this community back to the streets to protest. Asked what message he would send to the parents, DeWine said, "There is nothing worse than losing a child. I am sorry for their loss. Very sorry."

Opponents of expanded penalties for obstructing justice in HB22 (LaRe-Wilkin) were grateful for a substitute bill and second amendment Thursday to address citizen concerns but generally maintained their opposition to greater police protections they said would chill peaceful protests and disproportionately harm minorities. The House Criminal Justice Committee heard testimony on HB22 as well as HB109 (Abrams-Carruthers), the latter enhancing penalties for riots that injure people or damage property. Members accepted submitted testimony from nearly 150 witnesses -- all but one in opposition in addition to one interested party -- along with a sub bill that removes "annoy" and "harass" as forms of obstruction and -- after a long recess for House session -- an amendment specifying that bystanders may use smart phones, i.e., "video or audio recording equipment to record a law enforcement officer in the performance of the law enforcement officer's duties."

Edward "Jake" Wagner pleaded guilty to aggravated murder charges Thursday in the five-year-old case -- to the day -- of the discovery of the Rhoden family murders in Pike County. Prosecutors highlighted Wagner's custody dispute with Hannah Rhoden, one of the eight victims, as a factor in the killings for which George "Billy" Wagner III, Angela Wagner and George Wagner IV were also charged. According to media reports, Jake Wagner has agreed to testify against his co-defendant family members and will be spared from a potential death penalty.

EDUCATION

The state Controlling Board granted a last-minute request by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Monday to add \$50.8 million in appropriation authority to the final months of FY21 so that the agency can draw federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for K-12 needs "critical to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response."

The coalition of Ohio school districts looking to sue the state over the effects of vouchers on education funding is hoping to file its litigation "in the near future," said William Phillis of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, a central figure in the landmark DeRolph school funding cases. Phillis said the Vouchers Hurt Ohio coalition now has 70 member districts and has picked the law firm of Walter Haverfield for the lawsuit.

Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee heard from both proponents and opponents of one proposal for state report card reform, HB200 (Jones-Robinson), during their Tuesday meeting.

The Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee posed numerous questions Wednesday to Superintendent Paolo DeMaria on the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) budget and the state of K-12 education amid the pandemic. Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell), the committee chairman, said the panel also plans to bring DeMaria back in early May for further testimony on the effects of the House changes to HB110 (Oelslager), which now includes the Cupp-Patterson school funding plan previously introduced this session as HB1 (Callender-Sweeney).

Ohio teachers unions and organizations representing local school district officials urged a Senate committee to maintain the House's school funding plan in the budget Thursday, though with some tweaks. The Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee continued hearings on HB110 (Oelslager) with a witness lineup including Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) President Melissa Cropper; Ohio Education Association (OEA) President Scott DiMauro; Will Schwartz of the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA); Kevin Miller of the Buckeye Association of School Administrations (BASA); Katie Johnson of the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO); Anthony Podojil of the Alliance for High Quality Education (AHQE); and Craig Burford of the Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA).

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) approved more than \$336 million for six school construction projects at its Thursday meeting, bringing \$155 million in state funds together with \$181 million in local funding for the projects. Six projects receiving local and state funding include \$88 million for Cuyahoga Falls City Schools, \$26 million for Manchester Local Schools, \$43 million for Rolling Hills Local Schools, \$62 million for Triway Local Schools, \$49 million for United Local Schools and \$65 million for Valley View Local Schools.

ELECTIONS

As Congress and numerous other states debate voting access, a recent analysis from the Pew Research Center shows the share of Americans who say "everything possible" should be done to make voting easy has declined since 2018 -- with the decrease coming entirely among Republicans. The survey, conducted from March 1 to March 7, 2021, showed a majority of U.S. adults (59 percent) said that "everything possible should be done to make it easy for every citizen to vote." A smaller share (39 percent) said that "citizens should have to prove they really want to vote by registering ahead of time.

The Ohio Elections Commission Thursday ruled that Rep. Nino Vitale (R-Urbana) improperly combined a business and campaign account and had taken funds out of that account for personal use, fining him \$500 for the violations.

Vitale appeared before the commission to argue his case, saying he had been told multiple times by representatives of the Ohio Ethics Commission, the secretary of state's office, and Ohio House attorneys that what he was doing was allowed as long as he kept detailed records.

ELECTIONS 2021

U.S. Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Hilliard) announced Monday he will resign his 15th District congressional seat in mid-May to become president and CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. The decision sets up a second special congressional election for Ohio, following former U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge's departure to join President Joe Biden's cabinet as secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Candidates quickly started to line up with bids to replace Stivers, with formal candidacy announcements from Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) and Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina).

Former Ohio Sen. Nina Turner has far outpaced all other Democratic rivals in fundraising for the 11th House District seat formerly held by Marcia Fudge, now the secretary of housing and urban development (HUD), according to quarterly campaign reports filed with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC).

ELECTIONS 2022

Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley announced her campaign for governor Monday, releasing a two-minute video saying Dayton has made her tough and able to take on the state's problems. Later in the week she announced that John Hagner will serve as her gubernatorial campaign manager, and named other top positions as well.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The gubernatorial campaign of Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley announced the endorsement of the following legislators: Sens. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) and Tina Maharath (D-Canal Winchester); and Reps. Richard Brown (D-Canal Winchester), Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo), Kristin Boggs (D-Columbus), Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson), Janine Boyd (D-Cleveland Heights), Phil Robinson (D-Solon), Joe Miller (D-Amherst), Bride Sweeney (D-Cleveland), Monique Smith (D-Fairview Park), Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood), Kent Smith (D-Euclid), Juanita Brent (D-Cleveland), Adam Miller (D-Columbus), Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington), Dave Leland (D-Columbus), Beth Liston (D-Dublin), Mary Lightbody (D-Westerville), Willis Blackshear Jr., Lisa Sobbecki (D-Toledo), Michael Sheehy (D-Oregon), and Michelle Leopore-Hagan (D-Youngstown). Former Reps. Randi Clites and Dan Ramos also endorsed Whaley.

Sen. Bob Peterson's (R-Sabina) congressional campaign announced the endorsement of Pickaway County Commissioner and former state Rep. Gary Scherer.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment rate dropped to 4.7 percent in March, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Friday, and nonagricultural wage and salary employment rose by 12,700 over the month, from a revised 5,302,200 in February to 5,314,900 in March.

The Unemployment Compensation Modernization and Improvement Council received general testimony during its Thursday hearing, including Mason Pesek, staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland; Joe Horvath, visiting fellow at the Opportunity Solutions Project; and eight public witnesses who sent written testimony on their struggles with the unemployment compensation system during the pandemic. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) interim Director Matt Damschroder also provided an update to the council, and was joined by Deputy Director Julie Smith. He said there has been "significant progress" on improving Ohioans' experience with unemployment insurance (UI), including at the department call center.

For the week ending April 17, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 22,098 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). That number is slightly lower than last week's, when the department reported 23,117 jobless claims. ODJFS said potentially fraudulent claims are likely inflating the totals from this week and recent weeks.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) has approved bond financing for up to \$125,400 and a grant of up to \$20,000 to support a Fulton County manufacturer's implementation of new air quality technology. The financing for Lincoln Center Manufacturing is being provided through OAQDA's Clean Air Resource Center (CARC).

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is planning construction on Martin's Run Wetland and Stream Restoration in Lorain County as part of the DeWine administration's H2Ohio water quality initiative. "We are proud of the progress H2Ohio continues to make to improve Ohio's waters," Gov. Mike DeWine said in a news release. "The Martin's Run project is another important step in our commitment to protecting Lake Erie, the fish and wildlife that live there, and the millions of people who rely on the lake for drinking water."

Ohioans should commit to quit littering this Earth Day, Gov. Mike DeWine said Thursday. "Litter is ugly and costly," DeWine said in a news release. "Earth Day is a great opportunity to recognize what each of us can do to help protect our planet. One of the things we can all do is help clean up litter -- because a little bit of litter is a big problem."

GAMING/GAMBLING

Legislation legalizing sports gambling should be signed into law by Summer 2021, the Ohio Professional Sports Coalition said in a new position statement on Tuesday. The group also urged lawmakers to make the Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) the designated regulator of sports gambling. The coalition includes the Cleveland Browns and Cincinnati Bengals of the National Football League (NFL); Cincinnati Reds and Cleveland Indians of Major League Baseball (MLB); Columbus Crew SC and FC Cincinnati of Major League Soccer (MLS); Cleveland Cavaliers of the National Basketball Association (NBA); Columbus Blue Jackets of the National Hockey League (NHL); and the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour's Memorial Tournament.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

A deluge of bills in the House Health Committee in the height of the pandemic has led to a new approach in this General Assembly (GA). The new Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee, chaired by Rep. Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton), is part of an effort by Ohio House leadership to take some of the load off the Health Committee, Carruthers told *Hannah News*. The House Health Committee had 99 bills at one point during the 133rd GA, which was difficult for legislators to work through.

The Senate announced this week the creation of another standing committee -- the General Government Budget Committee -- as part of its initial release on the FY22-23 budget hearing schedule. It is chaired by Sen. Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster). Other members include Sens. Steve Wilson (R-Maineville), vice chair; Bob Hackett (R-London), Frank Hoagland (R-Adena), George Lang (R-West Chester), Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) and Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights).

Hannah News' interview series with freshman legislators featured Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Chillicothe), who while in his first year as a legislator is very familiar with the Riffe Tower -- he oversaw its construction, as well as that of the William Green Building. Also featured was Rep. Brian Lampton (R-Fairborn), who has owned insurance and financial services firm Lampton/Engle & Associates since 1990, and he has led the Fairborn and Beavercreek chambers of commerce in the past.

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) approved all items on its agenda Monday without questions from members or the public. In addition, Chairman Jamie Callender (R-Concord) said at JCARR's next meeting the committee will hear from state agencies that enacted policies which should have been subject to legislative oversight through the rulemaking process but were not.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) last week directed its staff to conduct a comprehensive assessment of security at the Statehouse. Mike Rupert, spokesman for CSRAB, said the board made the decision following a closed-door executive session on security and emergency response at its Thursday April 15 meeting.

The House Economic and Workforce Development Committee heard from officials with land banks and other local government entities Tuesday, as they appeared in support of HB155 (Upchurch-M. Smith). The bill would create the Land Reutilization Nuisance Abatement Program and provide funding for it.

House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and House Finance Committee Chair Rep. Scott Oelslager (R-North Canton) addressed a range of topics Thursday in a sit-down with Statehouse reporters, including the House's school funding plan, a budget amendment on same-sex adoptive couples and prospects of passing a law making gender identity and sexual orientation protected classes for housing and employment.

Thursday's House session included passage of HB140 (Merrin), regarding levy ballot language; SB28 (Hoagland), allowing the use of owls in falconry; HB106 (Cross), to designate January as "Radon Awareness Month; and HCR7 (John-Kick), urging the federal government to maintain the C-130 fleet.

In other legislative action, House Civil Justice Committee reported out HB222 (Wilkin-Upchurch), regarding nonprofit hospitals; and SB4 (Roegner), exempting personal information of emergency service telecommunicators and certain National Guard members from public disclosure; House Health Committee reported out SB42 (Schaffer), designating the second week of November as Ohio Diabetes Awareness-Heart Connection Week; House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out road naming bills HB246 (Dean) and HB250 (Bird); House Ways and Means Committee reported out HB123 (Fraizer-Cross), regarding community reinvestment areas; Senate Judiciary Committee reported out SB49 (Hottinger-Sykes), regarding payment assurance for registered design professionals; House Commerce and Labor Committee reported out HB163 (Cutrona-Sweeney), regarding overtime for nurses; and HB172 (Baldrige-O'Brien), regarding fireworks; House State and Local Government Committee reported out HB127 (Merrin), to refund fines

incurred by businesses under COVID-19 orders; Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee reported out SB128 (Peterson), regarding Ohio State University's Farm Financial Management institute; and House Criminal Justice Committee reported out HB150 (Hillyer-Leland), to establish a loan repayment program for public defenders.

GOVERNOR

Gov. Mike DeWine appointed Nathan Hudak to Cleveland Municipal Court to replace Judge Emanuella Groves, who was elected to a different bench. He also appointed Judge Lisa Sadler to the 10th District Court of Appeals to replace now-Justice Jennifer Brunner of the Ohio Supreme Court; Sadler already held a seat on the appellate court but was defeated for re-election in November.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Gregory A. Moon of Upper Sandusky (Wyandot County) reappointed to the Marion Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning April 30, 2021 and ending April 29, 2024.
- Paul J. Dolan of Chagrin Falls (Geauga County) to the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning June 1, 2021 and ending May 1, 2030.
- Sarah Ladipo of Pickerington (Fairfield County) as a student member on the Ohio University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 14, 2021 and ending May 13, 2023.
- Brent L. Currence of Carroll (Fairfield County) reappointed to the Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee for a term beginning April 16, 2021 and ending Feb. 6, 2023.
- Elwin C. Robison of Kent (Portage County) reappointed to the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board for a term beginning April 16, 2021 and ending Jan. 14, 2024.
- Lee Ann Schrader of Washington Court House (Fayette County) to the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board for a term beginning April 16, 2021 and ending Jan. 15, 2024.
- Peter J. Gibson of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Industrial Commission Nominating Council for a term beginning April 14, 2021 and ending Oct. 20, 2021.
- William G. Brantingham of Winona (Columbiana County) and David K. Whiting of Grove City (Franklin County) reappointed to the State Emergency Response Commission for terms beginning April 16, 2021 and ending Jan. 13, 2023.
- Michael Paul Taylor of Steubenville (Jefferson County), Kenneth M. Haffey of Chesterland (Geauga County) and Tracie Jo Sanchez of Lima (Allen County) reappointed to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors for terms beginning June 12, 2021 and ending June 11, 2024.
- David Scott Currier of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors for a term beginning June 12, 2021 and ending June 11, 2024.
- Daniel John Massey of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Industrial Commission of Ohio for a term beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2027.
- Mary Therese Hankner of Milford (Clermont County) to the Ohio Real Estate Commission for a term beginning April 22, 2021 and ending June 30, 2025.
- Ernest J. Thode of Marietta (Washington County) and John Michael Dewees of Toledo (Lucas County) to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for a term beginning April 22, 2021 and ending March 31, 2024.

GUNS

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) and other members of the House Democratic Caucus detailed a "common sense gun safety package" Monday that includes some already introduced bills and further legislation that is forthcoming. Sykes contrasted it from Gov. Mike DeWine's Strong Ohio proposal, and said this package responds to "the failure" of Republican leaders to pass new laws.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

"This is one time where talking about something matters," Gov. Mike DeWine said in recognition of "Donation Decision Day" Friday to urge more Ohioans to become organ, eye and tissue donors. "Talking is doing it," he said, reiterating Attorney General Dave Yost's point from preceding comments at Lifeline of Ohio in Columbus, later taking questions on budget bill HB110 (Oelslager), school funding, and legal options for legislative-executive override SB22 (Johnson-McColley).

HIGHER EDUCATION

Randale I. Richmond has been selected as the new athletics director at Kent State University. Kent State President Todd Diacon and Vice President for Student Affairs Lamar Hylton formally introduced Richmond during a virtual press conference Thursday. He will begin in the role on Saturday, May 1.

U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Marcia Fudge is the keynote speaker for Cleveland State University's (CSU) spring 2021 commencement ceremony.

Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) is the commencement speaker for Rhodes State College, formerly Lima Technical College.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is asking lawmakers to add about \$1.6 million per fiscal year to executive budget appropriations requests so it can use federal funding to administer the mortgage assistance program created under the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The massive federal COVID relief legislation includes a Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) of nearly \$10 billion to send to states to prevent mortgage delinquencies, defaults, foreclosures, loss of utilities and displacements.

JUDICIAL

Ohio attorneys can shift interest and other charges to clients as part of a contingent fee agreement secured by loan rather than absorbing the costs of litigation and waiting to recoup any earnings from an eventual tort settlement or damage award, the Board of Professional Conduct says. The board issued Advisory Opinion 2021-02 last week in response to the following question submitted by an Ohio-licensed attorney: "Is a law firm permitted to obtain a loan from a financial institution, use the money to advance costs and expenses of litigation in a personal injury matter accepted on a contingent fee basis, and then deduct the interest, fees and costs of the loan from a client's settlement or judgment as an expense of litigation?"

MARIJUANA/HEMP

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) is proposing to allow 73 more medical marijuana dispensaries to operate in Ohio, taking the state's total number to 130. During its meeting on Monday, the board voted unanimously to move the proposal forward after hearing remarks from OBP Executive Director Steven Schierholt and OBP Medical Marijuana Operations Director Sharon Maerten-Moore. The board hopes the administrative rules expanding the program will be finalized by the end of May or early June, OBP Communications and Policy Director Cameron McNamee told reporters following the board vote.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has announced the formation of the Ohio State Parks Foundation (OSPF), a nonprofit group focused on enhancing and protecting Ohio's 75 state parks. The foundation will work to enhance visitor experience at parks across the state by partnering with individuals, corporations and other entities to support unique and innovative projects in the parks, according to a news release from ODNR.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit leaders who spoke Wednesday at the Columbus Metropolitan Club's (CMC) Annual State of Nonprofits forum highlighted the workforce challenges facing the industry. Michael Corey, executive director of the Human Service Chamber, moderated the event which featured the following panelists: Denise Robinson, president and CEO of Alvis Inc., Colin Page McGinnis, CEO of South Side Early Learning, and Isi Ikharebha Green, president of Physicians CareConnection.

PEOPLE

Rob Nichols, a former spokesman under Gov. John Kasich, has joined the communications department for Secretary of State Frank LaRose.

In accordance with the orders issued by the president of the United States of America to honor the life and service of former Vice President Walter Mondale, Gov. DeWine has Wednesday ordered that the flags of the United States and the state of Ohio be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds throughout the state until sunset on the day of Mondale's burial.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) announced results of a joint effort to focus on distracted driving enforcement with the state police in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The initiative ran from Monday, April 5 through Monday, April 12 and resulted in 557 citations by the OSHP, including 59 in Hamilton County, 45 in Cuyahoga County and 27 in Franklin County.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) has sent 100 troopers to help local law enforcement in Minnesota, OSHP Lt. Craig Cvetan told *Hannah News*, as the murder trial of Derek Chauvin concluded and protests have been held over the April 11 death of Daunte Wright in a Minneapolis suburb. Wright was killed by a now-former officer who has been charged with manslaughter even as the Chauvin trial has been going on.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) has added another sheriff to 68 total counties that have been certified under state law enforcement standards for use of force, including deadly force, and agency recruitment and hiring. Tuesday's recognition of the Lawrence County Sheriff's Office leaves 20 counties that have not been certified for the use of force/recruitment standard.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

The Ohio Education Association (OEA) announced that it is extending the deadline for its redistricting contest through June 1. OEA announced its contest, dubbed "Design Ohio's Future," for Ohio middle and high school students, as well as OEA members, to design state and legislative district maps using a free community webtool at <https://districtr.org/>.

TAXATION

Representatives of municipal governments voiced their opposition to the substitute version of HB157 (Jordan-Edwards) Tuesday in

the House Ways and Means Committee, saying its provisions regarding potential retroactive tax refunds could result in "very serious financial implications" for cities. The overall bill would repeal municipal income tax withholding rules regarding the pandemic that were enacted in 133-HB197 (Powell-Merrin).

TECHNOLOGY

OhioX, a statewide technology and innovation nonprofit partnership, will host its inaugural OhioX Tech Policy Summit on Thursday, April 29. The virtual summit will hear from elected officials, policymakers and tech-focused leaders from the public and private sectors. Topics include cybersecurity, emerging technologies, workforce development, innovation hubs, data and analytics, and more. Announced speakers include U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles), Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima), State CIO Ervan Rodgers and others.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission Monday authorized Executive Director Ferzan M. Ahmed to enter into a new three-year collective bargaining agreement with part-time toll collectors. The previous agreement with the employees, who are members of the Teamsters Local Union No. 436, had expired on Dec. 31, 2020, but was continued while a new agreement was negotiated and all dispute settlement procedures were exhausted. The union had voted to approve the agreement earlier this month.

The Joint Committee on Force Accounts convened for the first time Tuesday in an organizational meeting to welcome newly appointed members and to review sections of the Ohio Revised Code addressing a labor force employed by government subdivisions versus a private contractor for construction and maintenance, as required by newly passed transportation budget HB74 (Oelslager).

WORKFORCE

Lt. Gov. Jon Husted Tuesday announced the 12 sites that will participate in a High School Tech Internship Pilot Program, following previous discussion of that effort by the Governor's Executive Workforce Board at its virtual meeting Thursday. The pilot program involves a total of 100 interns who will be hired by up to 35 Ohio companies, and there are hopes to quickly scale up the concept after the pilot program. The program will provide partial wage reimbursement totaling \$1,250 for interns age 17 or younger and \$1,000 for interns who are 18 or 19, and businesses whose interns receive an industry recognized credential will get a \$100 bonus per person.