

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.

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

9/22/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (Second 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 (SCHAFER 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

9/23/2020 - Senate Education, (Third 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

Friday, Sept. 18, 2020

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Addiction Policy Forum recently launched a national initiative to help families navigate the complexities of addiction and find treatment for a loved one. The project includes a free 100-page resource workbook, "Navigating Addiction and Treatment: A Guide for Families"; a national awareness campaign; and online resources to help families. The workbook can be downloaded from <https://tinyurl.com/yxfufzhh>, while the resources can be found at <https://www.addictionpolicy.org/navigating-addiction>.

AGING

The Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) announced the "10 BIG Steps to Prevent Falls" campaign in advance of Falls Prevention Awareness Week. The campaign is part of STEADY U, the agency's broader falls prevention initiative. The campaign combines five free, daily online learning opportunities with five personal action steps for participants. Registration for the online learning opportunities and more information about the campaign and STEADY U are available at www.steadyu.ohio.gov.

AGRICULTURE

Because of revenue shortfalls and other problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) has scaled back its efforts to help Northwest Ohio farmers finance best management practices (BMPs) to reduce harmful algal blooms, according to Ohio Lake Erie Commission Director Joy Mulinex and the recently-released H2Ohio annual report.

State and federal laws and regulations on cannabis -- including both hemp and marijuana -- are stifling the fledgling hemp industry in

Ohio, according to the leader of the Ohio Hemp Farmers Cooperative. Julie Doran -- a hemp farmer, cannabis reform advocate and owner of Meigs Fertilizer Company -- invited journalists, state officials and other interested parties to her family farm in Westerville, where she and five full-time employees have been busy cultivating roughly 4,000 hemp plants -- nine different varieties -- on five acres during Ohio's first legal growing season since World War II.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Independent music and entertainment venues across the country would be eligible to receive millions of dollars in grants under the "Save Our Stages Act," which is co-sponsored by both U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Rob Portman (R-OH). The bill, introduced by U.S. Sens. John Cornyn (R-TX) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in July, includes a \$10 billion appropriation, and eligible recipients can receive up to \$12 million. The bill has been referred to committee but hasn't moved.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Dave Yost announced Friday that his office is forming a unit aimed at helping to solve cold case homicides and unsolved sexual assault cases. The unit, which will be known as the Cold Case Unit (CCU), will be housed in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). Yost's office said the unit will "utilize a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses proven investigative resources and techniques. By using state-of-the-art criminal intelligence gathering and laboratory analysis, as well as expertise in forensic disciplines such as crime scene and cybercrimes, CCU will work with law enforcement departments where cases originated to enhance their investigations."

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost answered the "defund" movement Monday by saying Ohio needs better police practices rather than reduced police presence. Addressing the state's annual Law Enforcement Conference, Yost said it is "patently absurd" to treat George Floyd's tragic death at the hands of Minneapolis police as a larger indictment of day-to-day policing in the state and nation. "Make no mistake about it -- and while I'm proud to say I'm involved in law enforcement -- I have never seen a time that is as awful as this, the invective that is put out toward people who protect us every day," he stated, saying officers who signed up to protect and serve probably did not know "putting a badge on their chest maybe meant putting a target on their backs."

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost has joined other Republican attorneys general in pressing Netflix to remove the French film "*Cuties*" because they see it as providing aid and comfort to human traffickers and their would-be patrons. Yost and his colleagues say the film's purported goal of exposing the "hypersexualization of young girls" would be laudable if its depiction of children did not do more harm than good.

This week's annual law enforcement awards honor the six officers who responded to last year's mass shooting in Dayton's Oregon District, which killed nine people and wounded 27 others, along with 10 other professionals recognized for excellence in policing and public safety. Attorney General Dave Yost acknowledged their service at Monday's annual Law Enforcement Conference, held remotely this year due to COVID-19. "In these trying times it has been the men and women within our public safety ranks who continue to provide us with a safe and healthy society," Yost said. "These brave officers protect the unprotected. They are heroes as soon as they put on the badge. I'm very proud to honor the 'best of the best' of those who always have our backs."

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

The Children's Services Transformation Advisory Council discussed draft recommendations Monday for changes to the adoption system, spending much of its hour-long virtual meeting on a proposal to eliminate "planned permanent living arrangements (PPLA)," a status that leaves children without the prospect of adoption or reunification with their biological family.

CORONAVIRUS

A committee within the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NAEM) recently released a discussion draft of its "Preliminary Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine." Although a vaccine has not yet been approved to protect against the novel coronavirus, several are currently undergoing development. The report states that even if one or more vaccines is deemed safe and effective, "they are unlikely to be available immediately in amounts sufficient to vaccinate the whole population, despite plans to begin large-scale production of promising vaccines even before trials are completed." Therefore the framework seeks to establish an ethical method of allocating of vaccines, given the high likelihood of limited supplies.

Gov. Mike DeWine unveiled a new employment coaching and training initiative and discussed testing in long-term care facilities during his COVID-19 briefing Tuesday. Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) Director Ursel McElroy, invited to the briefing to discuss coronavirus testing protocols at nursing, assisted living, adult day care and senior centers, said she's hoping the state will soon be able to announce an indoor visitation policy at long-term care facilities. She said the agency is mindful of the changing weather and wants to make sure facility residents can maintain the personal connections enabled by outdoor visitation. "It is not our plan to do anything to disrupt those connections," she said.

Following up on the announcement Tuesday from Gov. DeWine and ODA Director McElroy, the administration said ODA and MAKO Medical -- the company the state has partnered with to provide supported testing services for the state's adult day service (ADS) and senior center facilities -- would hold a webinar Friday, Sept. 18 to discuss the logistics of testing. Additional information, including webinar slides from Sept. 11, 2020, testing information, and more is available online at <https://tinyurl.com/yxvuj2tp>.

A cardiac MRI is effective in identifying inflammation of the heart muscle in athletes and can help determine when those who have recovered from COVID-19 can safely return to play in competitive sports, according to a new study by researchers at the Ohio State

University (OSU) Wexner Medical Center. The research is published online in *JAMA Cardiology*.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The state of Ohio could save between \$199 million and \$264 million every year by implementing "common-sense" reforms to the cash bail system, according to a new report from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio. The organization hired economist Michael Wilson to examine court and jail data in four Ohio counties -- Athens, Cuyahoga, Franklin and Vinton -- to determine how much money could be saved if "wealth-based detention" was eliminated, ACLU of Ohio Policy Counsel Claire Chevrier said. The report, "Ohio Could Save Big by Implementing Bail Reform: A Fiscal Impact Analysis," is the culmination of two years of work, according to ACLU of Ohio Policy Director Jocelyn Rosnick and Chevrier.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ohio has jumped to second place in a recent PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report on aerospace manufacturing, after being ranked eighth in PwC's 2019 report. Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, who has led on overall economic development and workforce matters, discussed the improved standing in an interview with *Hannah News* recently. The report highlighted Ohio's work in becoming a "hub" for development of urban air mobility and autonomous aviation systems, which have been frequent topics of discussion at Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee (OAATC) meetings.

ECONOMY

A survey published Monday by Scioto Analysis found only eight of 36 Ohio economists believe legislation that shields businesses and organizations from liability relating to injury and death resulting from COVID-19 will be effective in speeding up the state's economic recovery. This came as Gov. Mike DeWine signed HB606 (Grendell), which grants civil immunity to individuals and other entities from lawsuits arising from exposure, transmission, or contraction of COVID-19 as long as they were not showing reckless, intentional or willful misconduct.

EDUCATION

Report cards the state issued Tuesday for local school districts lack grades and much of the underlying data that would be needed to calculate them, though some performance comparisons are available for measures based on lagged statistics. Lawmakers are considering whether to extend the testing suspension and report card safe harbor. Gov. Mike DeWine weighed in, saying on Tuesday he has stronger feelings on the former. He said parents need information on students' performance in this unusual situation, but as to ratings or sanctions of schools based on those tests, "I'm not sure that's really important."

Bipartisan Senate legislation on granting flexibility to schools during the pandemic drew some pushback Wednesday for its suggestion to cancel state testing this school year, with witnesses saying data on student learning would be important while agreeing with the bill's call not to impose any sanctions based on test data. Meanwhile, Chairwoman Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) shared with the Senate Education Committee a series of amendments in search of a legislative vehicle to address additional concerns posed by the pandemic that have been identified by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Wednesday was the second hearing for SB358, the proposal from Sens. Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville) and Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) to continue suspension of academic testing and state report card grades, among other provisions.

The state's dashboard on COVID-19 cases in schools went live Thursday, with Gov. DeWine saying it provides parents with another source of information but cautioning that positive cases may not reflect a failure on the part of school officials given the level of community spread around Ohio. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) also has a dashboard on general cases involving children, and both are available at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards/overview>.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) called for an increase in support from the federal government for schools Wednesday, charging President Donald Trump and U.S. Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) with "abandoning" parents, students, and educators at a time of national crisis. During a news conference with reporters, Brown said that as many schools are beginning to reopen, they do not have adequate funding to keep students and teachers safe while delivering a quality education. Brown has called for at least \$175 billion to help support K-12 students and schools during the pandemic. He also urged Republicans in the U.S. Senate to pass the Heroes Act, which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in May and includes approximately \$90 billion for public K-12 schools and higher education institutions.

The recently enacted law under which residents of a Stark County village sought to transfer school districts is unconstitutional because it was inserted into the state budget in violation of the Ohio Constitution's single-subject rule, a U.S. District Court judge ruled. In HB166 (Oelslager), lawmakers created a new territory transfer process by which residents of a township split between two or more districts can petition for transfer to another by gathering signatures for at least 10 percent of voters in the territory to be transferred. The proposal would then be placed on the ballot for approval of voters living in the territory. If the issue passes, the State Board of Education would then approve the proposal, and unlike in other territory transfers does not have any discretion in the matter.

ELECTIONS 2020

Franklin County Judge Steve McIntosh Friday sided with the Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) and ordered Secretary of State Frank LaRose to allow voters to submit absentee ballot applications to county boards of elections via email or fax. ODP had filed its lawsuit earlier this year seeking to allow voters to file a request for a ballot electronically, arguing that Ohio law does not strictly forbid it.

LaRose quickly appealed, and the 10th District Court of Appeals soon issued a stay of McIntosh's ruling while it considers the challenge.

The Ohio Republican Party Thursday announced it had filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) against the Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) and two congressional candidates, alleging that the state party paid candidates to run for Congress. The complaint states that publicly available reports indicate that ODP paid Alaina Shearer and Desiree Tims "tens of thousands of dollars in combined salary payments in violation of federal law."

Despite his best efforts to convince them otherwise, all four Republicans on the Controlling Board Monday voted down a request from Secretary of State Frank LaRose that would allow him to use funds from his own office to pay for postage on absentee ballots. This came after Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) switched out a Senate Republican who supported the LaRose proposal with one who did not. LaRose appeared himself at the meeting, which was held through video conference, and stressed that he has the authority to pay for postage, he just needed the authorization to transfer the funds to do so. He also argued that doing so will get voters to send back their ballots to boards more promptly, which is more important this year because of the pandemic.

Franklin County Judge Richard Frye Tuesday ruled that Secretary of State Frank LaRose's directive limiting the number of secure dropboxes for absentee ballots to one per county is "arbitrary and unreasonable" and that Ohio law does not forbid multiple dropboxes. Frye's ruling came in a lawsuit filed by the Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) against LaRose challenging his Directive 2020-16, which limited the dropboxes to one per county. A separate lawsuit has been filed by voting groups on the issue in federal court. Frye Wednesday granted ODP's motion to prevent LaRose from enforcing his directive limiting counties to only one drop box for absentee ballots. Frye had ordered LaRose earlier in the day to explain why his office indicated he would not follow Frye's ruling issued Tuesday finding that Ohio law allows for multiple dropboxes of absentee ballots. In response, LaRose's office noted that Frye had not officially ordered it to do so, and asked the judge to rule so that the secretary could appeal it.

Meanwhile, Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor issued a statement condemning the Ohio Republican Party after it sent an email to supporters in response to Frye's decision questioning the judge's motivation and saying he "colluded" with ODP. "Every one of Ohio's 722 judges, 800 magistrates, and numerous active-retired judges should be greatly concerned and voice their dismay at the irresponsible Republican Party allegation that politics controlled the judge's decision. This is a blatant and unfounded attack on the independence of the Ohio judiciary," O'Connor said in a statement.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose joined representatives of veterans' groups Wednesday at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus to promote his statewide poll worker recruitment campaign known as "Second Call to Duty." LaRose, a former Green Beret, said the program was one of the initiatives a working group came up with when he took office knowing the need to recruit more poll workers even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. His office is looking to recruit more than 55,000 poll workers for the November election, and LaRose said they have about 40,000 Ohioans committed already.

With 49 days to go until Election Day, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced Tuesday that 1,398,347 absentee ballot applications had been received by county boards of elections statewide. This includes 15,806 requests from military and overseas voters whose absentee ballots will be mailed beginning this Friday, Sept. 18.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) said Tuesday that it will add seven staff members to its Ohio office, bringing the total number of staff for its efforts to mobilize voters in the state to nine. HRC said it is working to turn out "Equality Voters" who will make the difference in elections for Joe Biden, Ohio Supreme Court candidates, U.S. House candidates, and state legislative candidates.

Ohio Democrats and union leaders cited a "betrayal of workers" and empty promises from President Donald Trump ahead of Vice President Mike Pence's scheduled visit to Zanesville Wednesday evening. U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan said Trump not only started a trade war that hurt the manufacturing and agricultural sectors in Ohio but he also "ignored" workers who faced job losses in Lordstown following the closure of a General Motors auto plant, and encouraged a boycott of Akron-based Goodyear Tires.

Voting in the 2020 presidential election will begin on Friday, Sept. 18 as Ohioans who are serving in the military or are overseas will be sent their absentee ballots. All Ohio voters can cast absentee ballots beginning on Tuesday, Oct. 6. *Hannah News* also published other important dates in this election cycle.

A Thursday morning video conference hosted by the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation featured a conversation with Secretary of State Frank LaRose, who touted Ohio's voting accessibility, while Black political leaders, including Al Sharpton, emphasized the importance of the 2020 presidential election and encouraged voter engagement. Event moderator and former Ohio Rep. Alicia Reece said Black voter turnout in 2012 was the highest in history, at 66 percent, but that number decreased to 59 percent in 2016 -- the first time it had fallen in 20 years. She said that seven percentage point decline amounted to 765,000 votes, a fact she said further highlighted the importance of voter engagement.

ProgressOhio, a left-leaning policy group, released a number of polls in Ohio House districts that it said show close races in several swing districts. The polling was conducted by Democratic pollster Public Policy Polling on Wednesday, Sept 9, and Thursday, Sept. 10. It was conducted with a combination of landline and texts.

A new nonpartisan coalition said Thursday that it is launching a new initiative that aims to boost voter participation by registering high school students and giving them the resources needed to become informed voters with the help of government teachers, new online tools, and a contest for the best podcast. More information can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/y5xqh8ag>.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund PAC endorsed Reps. Emilia Sykes (D-Akron), Kent Smith (D-Euclid), Michael Skindell (D-Lakewood), Kristin Boggs (D-Columbus), Beth Liston (D-Dublin), and Erica Crawley (D-Columbus) for reelection; Sara Bitter, Matt Shaugnessy, Amy Cox, Chris Stanley and Rachael Morocco for their respective races in the Ohio House; and Joel O'Dorisio for Ohio Senate.
- The Ohio Right to Life Political Action Committee endorsed Diana Fessler, Alice Nicks, Ron Hood, and Brendan Shey for the State Board of Education.
- The re-election campaign of Rep. Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) announced the endorsement of Teamsters Ohio D.R.I.V.E and Teamsters Local 407.
- NARAL Pro-Choice America endorsed Hillary O'Connor Mueri for the 14th Congressional District.
- U.S. Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Novelty) endorsed George Phillips for the 60th Ohio House District.
- The *Newark Advocate* endorsed write-in candidate Jay Conrad for the 72nd House District.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

JobsOhio Chief Investment Officer J.P. Nauseef joined Gov. Mike DeWine's Tuesday briefing to describe the new Ohio To Work initiative, which will match out-of-work people with a career coach to help identify their skills and direct them toward new careers and the training they'll need to get a job. The effort will launch in Cuyahoga County, with more than 30 employers participating at the outset, and DeWine said he hopes to expand the program statewide. The initiative will also coordinate virtual career fairs. More information is available at www.ohiotowork.com.

For the week ending Sept. 12, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 16,294 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Last week, ODJFS reported 17,893 new jobless claims. "Ohioans filed 320,532 continued jobless claims last week, which was 455,770 fewer than -- or less than half (about 41 percent) -- of the peak earlier this year," the department said.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) has initiated a review of recent "political and charitable" spending by FirstEnergy utilities, ordering the companies to show that they didn't use ratepayer charges to fund their activities on energy subsidy bill HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) or the subsequent referendum effort. PUCO Chairman Sam Randazzo testified to the House Select Committee on Energy Policy and Oversight on Wednesday, facing questions about the investigation and other matters related to HB6.

New polling data released Tuesday by the Coalition to Restore Public Trust shows overwhelming support for the repeal of HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) -- the nuclear bailout bill at the center of Ohio's largest bribery scandal -- among Ohioans who are likely to vote. The poll also found dismal favorability numbers for former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford). An overwhelming majority, about 80 percent, of respondents said they wanted their state lawmakers to repeal HB6. Ohioans were about split on whether they wanted the bill repealed and replaced (35.7 percent) or repealed without replacement (43.9 percent), but only 20.4 percent said they wanted lawmakers to leave the law in place as is.

A former Senate pro tempore and legislative leader on energy and utilities lauded Speaker Bob Cupp's (R-Lima) integrity Tuesday during extended remarks to the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) Governing Board but said it's too early to tell which member or which party will control the House in 2021, or what Cupp or his replacement's posture will be on HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) and utility policy generally -- if, that is, the energy subsidy bill has not been repealed and possibly replaced with new language by Dec. 31. Former Republican Sen. Jeff Jacobson has been advising OCC and delivering legislative testimony on its behalf for several years and provided its board an update on the current state of the General Assembly as Ohio approaches a watershed election, not only in the presidential race but in state legislative campaigns following HB6 and related criminal indictments against former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and cohorts.

Duke Energy was not acting as a public utility in managing meter data for an electric supplier and thus is not subject to state regulators' jurisdiction when facing a complaint over a mistake in calculating meter data for a large industrial user, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled unanimously Thursday in *Direct Energy v. Duke Energy*. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) lacked jurisdiction to hear the complaint by electric supplier Direct Energy against Duke over a mistake that cost the supplier, wrote Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor.

ENVIRONMENT

Gallia and Meigs counties will be in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) latest proposal regarding the Southeast Ohio counties is finalized. Recently, USEPA proposed to find that areas in Ohio, Missouri, Nebraska and Texas are meeting the 2010 federal air quality standards for sulfur dioxide (SO2). Attaining the standard means cleaner air, improved health outcomes, and greater economic opportunities for cities and communities, USEPA said.

FEDERAL

After Democrats blocked debate on a recent Senate coronavirus response package, U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) said he was disappointed the bill did not receive the supermajority of votes required to move the bill forward. Portman said there was bipartisan agreement on some of the bill's provisions, including about \$70 billion for K-12 schools, \$30 billion for public universities, \$16 billion

to bolster coronavirus testing, \$31 billion toward development of a vaccine protecting against COVID-19, and a second round of loans for businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

GAMING/GAMBLING

The Ohio Casino Control Commission on Wednesday approved a license for a new fantasy contest operator in the state, also agreeing to two variances to the company's three-year license. Commission staff said it found no issues with the application of Master Fantasy Leagues.com, LLC and recommended the licensure, but noted the two variances requested by the company. The first extends the processing time for fantasy contest payments to players from five to 10 business days. The other variance would have the commission conduct the required compliance audit during the licensure period for the company. The staff recommended the adoption of the variances, which the commission approved.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Senate President Pro Tempore Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) tested positive for COVID-19, though a Senate spokesman said he's doing well and he was able to participate in the remote meeting of the Controlling Board Monday. Peterson's test result prompted Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) to quarantine at home because of his interaction with Peterson at an outdoor event recently.

With House sessions for the week cancelled, House Democrats Tuesday held a virtual press conference calling for the chamber to return to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and racial inequalities. Democrats have been pushing majority Republicans to take action on issues such as unemployment compensation, evictions, and the repeal of nuclear bailout bill HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), which has been tied to an alleged bribery scheme that led to federal charges against former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford).

In other legislative action, the Senate Judiciary Committee reported out SB256 (Manning-Lehner), to bar life sentences without parole when the offender was younger than 18 at the time of the offense.

GOVERNOR

Gov. Mike DeWine signed HB606 (Grendell) into law Monday during a virtual event. The legislation grants civil immunity to individuals, schools, health care providers, businesses, and other entities from lawsuits arising from exposure, transmission, or contraction of COVID-19 as long as they were not showing reckless, intentional, or willful misconduct.

Gov. Mike DeWine signed the following three bills into law on Wednesday, Sept. 16. Each bill will take effect in 90 days.

- HB203 (Lipps), which specifies requirements for mobile dental facility operations.
- HB272 (Oelslager-Hillyer), which expands court jurisdiction to any constitutional basis.
- HB341 (Ginter), which details the administration of addiction treatment drugs.

GREAT LAKES

With the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee chairman weighing in on behalf of Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina), the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) unanimously approved a draft recommendation proposed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Thursday that would allow Lake Erie Energy Development Corp.'s (LEEDCo) offshore Icebreaker Wind project to commence without the board's previously ordered nighttime shut-down nine months out of the year. The six Lake Erie turbines planned one mile from Cleveland still require a final settlement order and, following that, a final "risk mitigation protocol" for birds and bats, with both proposals going back before OPSB at later dates.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Forty-nine Ohio community health centers are among more than 1,300 nationwide receiving a combined \$117 million in Quality Improvement Awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). According to the Ohio Association of Community Health Centers (OACHC), the awards from HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recognize the highest performing centers and those showing significant gains in quality improvement from the previous year. Total funding to Ohio centers was more than \$4.6 million.

Dr. Joan Duwve, who quit as Ohio's next health director hours after Gov. Mike DeWine announced her hiring, told *The State* in South Carolina that she declined the job after finding out how former Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Amy Acton was treated during her tenure.

Wednesday's meeting of the Commission on Infant Mortality saw leaders of Ohio Department of Health (ODH) maternal health programs reporting to the panel that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has required home visiting programs to expand into telehealth to maintain adequate service delivery. Alicia Leatherman, program administrator for the ODH Early Childhood Home Visiting and Maternal and Infant Wellness Program, said the department's reimbursement policies now encompass services delivered through texting, video phone calls and other video calls.

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) said it received proposals from six vendors interested in serving as the pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) for the state's Medicaid program, following the close of bidding Friday. Change Health Care, DXC Technology, Express Scripts, MagellanRx Management, Navitus Health Solutions and RxAdvance are the six bidders, according to a statement from ODM Director Maureen Corcoran.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Marion Technical College (Marion Tech) received its first grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for \$477,868. The grant is to fund a new Smart Manufacturing program.

Ohio State University (OSU) recently announced it will cancel spring break next semester in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. The university is spending approximately \$2 million per week on coronavirus tests. Classes for the spring 2021 semester will begin as scheduled on Monday, Jan. 11, but will take place online for the first week to give OSU community members time to quarantine before returning to the mix of in-person, online and blended teaching that the university is currently using.

The Big 10 Council of Presidents and Chancellors unanimously voted to start the football season the weekend of Friday, Oct. 23 and Saturday, Oct. 24, the conference announced Wednesday. Newly adopted medical protocols include daily antigen testing, enhanced cardiac screening and requiring a "data-driven approach" when making decisions about practice and games, the Big 10 Conference said.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a temporary national moratorium on most evictions for nonpayment of rent, local housing advocates said Tuesday that tenants still have to qualify and tandem measures to provide emergency rental assistance are needed as well. Those currently unable to pay rent will face even greater challenges to make payments in full plus additional fees once the moratorium ends, they said, and individual landlords and those providing affordable housing are especially in need of support in the interim. Housing insecurity and homelessness leads to poor health outcomes even under normal conditions, Coalition on Housing and Homelessness in Ohio (COHHIO) Executive Director Bill Faith told reporters.

INSURANCE

The Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) is holding a series of Medicare information sessions now through Wednesday, Oct. 14 to educate Ohioans on how to navigate applying for health insurance coverage through the state. Open enrollment in the state's Medicaid program starts Thursday, Oct. 15 and ends Monday, Dec. 7. A full list of webinars and registration information is available at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/4987248812118591502>.

LIQUOR/ALCOHOL

The Ohio State Highway Patrol's (OSHP) Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) has continued to identify and cite "egregious" violations of health orders regarding liquor establishments, with news releases Saturday and Sunday detailing the latest round of alleged activity.

LOBBYISTS

The Governmental Policy Group (GPG) announced Monday that Senior Director of Governmental Affairs Kelly O'Reilly will be resigning effective Wednesday, Sept. 30 to serve as president and CEO of the Ohio Association of Health Plans (OAHP). O'Reilly replaces Miranda Motter, who earlier this year joined America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) as senior vice president.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced Monday that the city of Columbus, the county of Santa Clara and Public Rights Project have filed an amicus curiae brief on behalf of a nationwide coalition of 32 local and tribal governments opposing recent U.S. Postal Service (USPS) changes that they maintain have slowed mail delivery. Other Ohio jurisdictions participating include the cities of Cincinnati and Dayton.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Twelve Ohio wildlife officers from the 30th Wildlife Officer Pre-Service Training Academy were recently sworn in during a virtual graduation ceremony, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Graduation requirements included completing seven months of training in a multitude of wildlife, law enforcement and conservation topics. Ohio's newest wildlife officers were hired from a pool of more than 900 applicants, ODNR said.

PENSIONS

The School Employees Retirement System (SERS) Board of Trustees voted Thursday to approve a 0.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for beneficiaries in 2021, matching the increase in the inflation benchmark spelled out in law. The board had previously frozen COLAs from 2018 through 2020 to shore up long-term finances, following enactment of new law in the FY18-19 budget bill, 132-HB49 (R. Smith), that made COLAs discretionary rather than mandatory and tied them to the growth in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W), with a cap of 2.5 percent. The CPI-W growth for the fiscal year that ended June 30 was 0.5 percent, SERS Executive Director Richard Stensrud noted.

POVERTY

Data released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau show Cleveland is the poorest large city in the country, overtaking Detroit, MI. Cleveland also ranks number one for the share of children living in poverty. The data, part of the Census Bureau's American Community Survey results, reflect poverty rates from 2019, before the pandemic hit. It shows that last year, 30.8 percent of Cleveland's population (more than 114,000 people) lived in poverty, meaning a family of three makes no more than \$21,330 per year.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

In recent written testimony submitted to the Road to Our Future Joint Legislative Study Committee, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) outlined the current ways it leverages its assets to bring more revenue for road projects, but said there are obstacles to going beyond those. The committee was created in HB62 (Oelslager), the transportation budget, and is scheduled to submit a report on various study topics regarding ODT by Dec. 1, but has not held hearings because of the pandemic. Instead, ODOT submitted written testimony recently on the exploration of innovative financing techniques and asset leverage and conditions.

TREASURER OF STATE

Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague Thursday said the state should direct at least \$100 million from its remaining federal CARES Act allocation to provide grants for small businesses, calling that "much-needed support and relief" given the effects of the pandemic. Several leading business associations, including the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) of Ohio and the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA), have already backed the proposal. Sprague's office noted restaurants "continue to be adversely impacted by the challenges and uncertainty" of the pandemic.

UNIONS

The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling that allowed non-members to forego paying union fees did not end the ability for an Ohio public-sector union to be deemed the exclusive bargaining representative for employees, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled recently. While the "take-it-or-leave-it" exclusive bargaining arrangement "is in direct conflict" with the principles of the union fee case, *Janus v. AFSCME*, that ruling did not override separate Supreme Court precedent on bargaining representation, Judge Amul Thapar wrote for the three-judge panel including Judges Julia Smith Gibbons and Richard Griffin. Jade Thompson, a Spanish teacher at Marietta High School and widow of the late Rep. Andy Thompson, sued over the district's recognition of the Marietta Education Association as exclusive bargaining representative for the district's teachers. She alleged it violated her First Amendment rights.

WORKFORCE

Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced Thursday that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) had approved a \$5 million grant to help Ohio entities with improving defense manufacturing processes and training workers for next-generation jobs. The DoD previously designated Ohio as a "Defense Manufacturing Community (DMC)" as part of the process toward securing the grant. The DMC designation and grant are part of "a program designed to support long-term community investments that strengthen national security innovation and expand the capabilities of defense manufacturing," according to a DeWine administration.