

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 - **BILL AMENDED**, 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

9/22/2020 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (Third Hearing)

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB299 REQUIRE PAID LEAVE (CRAIG H)

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

CURRENT STATUS

5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

SB307 SALES TAX EXEMPTION-PPE (GAVARONE T)

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB308 CIVIL LIABILITY-EMERGENCY SERVICES (HUFFMAN M)

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB310 FEDERAL COVID FUNDING (DOLAN M)

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB322 NON-RECOURSE CIVIL LITIGATION ADVANCES (WILSON S)

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

CURRENT STATUS

6/10/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB350 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VOUCHERS FOR STUDENTS (BRENNER A)

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

CURRENT STATUS

9/23/2020 - 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, October 2, 2020

ATTORNEY GENERAL

The capital area leads the state in new crime victim awards from the Ohio Attorney General's Office, which announced \$59 million in grants to 531 organizations ranging from sheriffs' and prosecutors' offices to domestic violence and rape crisis centers. The \$58,989,280 for FY21 breaks down into roughly \$55.5 million from the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund and \$3.5 million from the State Victim Assistance Act (SVAA) fund.

As part of a joint national crackdown with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and law enforcement groups to snuff out harmful debt collection practices, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost recently filed suit against a debt collection company based in Canton, Advanced Capital Solutions. The complaint, filed in the Stark County Court of Common Pleas, alleges its debt collection practices violate the Ohio Consumer Sales Practices Act and the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

Yost announced Wednesday that Ohio has signed off on a \$39.5 million settlement with health insurer Anthem over its 2014 data breach of nearly 80 million American's personal information.

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

General Motors will be required to invest \$12 million in the Mahoning Valley by the end of 2022 and return \$28 million to the state for closing its Lordstown assembly plant despite receiving \$60.3 million in job creation and retention tax credits, according to the Development Services Agency (DSA).

While 80 percent of respondents in a recent Ohio Restaurants Association (ORA) poll said they've reopened dine-in service, 56 percent expect to close within nine months if their level of business does not improve. The ORA released the findings Sunday from its poll, which was conducted from Aug. 31 - Sept. 13.

CENSUS

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced a target date of this Monday, Oct. 5, 2020, to conclude 2020 Census self-response and field data collection operations, according to a tweet from the U.S. Census Bureau. The counting deadline for the census has been subject to major shifts in recent weeks, with litigation ongoing over the matter.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

The Children Services Transformation Advisory Council met Wednesday to discuss potential recommendations for the justice system drafted by workgroups the previous week. Kristi Burre, director of the Office of Children's Services Transformation, led the meeting and said an official report of recommendations would hopefully be released by mid-November.

CORONAVIRUS

Gov. Mike DeWine's office said Friday that Interim Health Director Lance Himes signed an updated health order on athletics that rescinds the rule limiting teams to one game per calendar day.

Gov. DeWine committed offenses of terrorism, inducing panic, bribery and engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity among other misdeeds as part of his coronavirus response, Rep. John Becker (R-Cincinnati) said Monday in an affidavit seeking to have charges filed against him. DeWine's office brushed off Becker's accusations. "If this were serious, I would have a comment. Because it is patently absurd, I do not," said DeWine spokesman Dan Tierney.

Though not exact, results of antibody testing have found that hundreds of thousands of Ohioans have already contracted COVID-19 and millions more remain susceptible, Ohio State University (OSU) Associate Professor Abby Norris Turner told reporters Thursday during Gov. DeWine's update.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force began its second round of webinar training sessions by focusing on the intersection of trauma, substance use disorders, and human trafficking. The 90-minute webinars are hosted in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCASAO).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Fewer than three months after introducing its inclusion initiative, JobsOhio is working with 60 companies that are owned by underrepresented populations or in distressed areas to create 225 jobs and retain 1,219 jobs, JobsOhio Vice President of Sites and Infrastructure Terry Slaybaugh told the economic development nonprofit's Board of Directors.

Gov. Mike DeWine's administration announced Monday the approval of assistance for nine projects expected to create 1,700 new jobs and retain 923 jobs statewide. The Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA) reviewed economic development proposals brought by JobsOhio and its regional partners. The new projects are expected to collectively result in more than \$87 million in new payroll and spur more than \$1.5 billion in investments across Ohio.

ECONOMY

The week ending Sept. 26 saw the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) report 17,944 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), an increase of around 500 claims compared to the previous week's number. The week ending Sept. 19 had 17,435 initial claims, while the week ending Sept. 12 had 16,294 and reflected several weeks of declining numbers.

EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education included 16 Ohio schools among 367 nationally recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools for 2020. Schools are recognized in two award categories: Exemplary High Performing Schools, the top performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests; and Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools, which show the best performance in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria announced Tuesday that 37 Ohio schools will receive the Purple Star Award for the 2020-21 school year. The award recognizes a school's demonstrated commitment to serving students and families connected to the United States armed forces and Ohio National Guard.

Education and workforce officials issued five recommendations Thursday for ways to assist students who haven't qualified for graduation by the end of 12th grade to earn their diplomas. The biennial budget, HB166 (Oelslager), required the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) and Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) to convene a committee to study the topic. At least one million adults in Ohio left school without a diploma, the report notes.

Citing a recent decreasing emphasis on civics education in lieu of increased testing, the League of Women Voters in a webinar Thursday released a free civics education curriculum for use in online learning designed to reenergize interest in civics by being tailored to "Generation Z." The curriculum, titled "Voting and Civics: Know Your Ohio Government," is designed for use in middle and

high school classrooms, but its framework is flexible enough to work for elementary through college level classes. Instructors will be able to pull the individual resources they like from the program for use in their lesson. To view the full, free curriculum, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y2cpjxnn>.

STEM education group "Believe in Ohio" announced recently the creation of a statewide scholarship program to recognize Ohio high school students for their contributions to innovation and entrepreneurship in STEM fields. The program was collaboratively developed by the Ohio Academy of Science (OAS) and Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio (EEO) and is funded by the state through the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE). An online application for the scholarship is available at <https://form.jotform.com/OhioScience/STEM-scholarship>.

ELECTIONS 2020

Gov. Mike DeWine opened his Thursday briefing with comments on the upcoming election and the recent presidential debate in Cleveland Tuesday, congratulating the local leaders involved and saying that "as Ohioans we were certainly very proud to host this debate." Regarding the content of the debate itself, however, DeWine said it was "not the country's finest hour" and added that he hoped the next one will "focus on the future" and the substantive issues the country faces.

DeWine also spoke at length to denounce hate groups that have "no place in America." That includes "fringe groups from both the right and the left who do not share our common values." DeWine noted some of those groups "hate Jews, Muslims, African-Americans, and we could go on." There are also those "who believe that violence is the way to achieve political ends," and DeWine also denounced them and white supremacists who he said sickened him.

Regarding the "sanctity" of the election process in Ohio, DeWine said there is a long history of bipartisan efforts by secretaries of state, legislators and local election officials to provide fair elections. That will continue in November, DeWine went on, and the will of the people will be respected. He also said the flags marking 100 feet outside voting places on Election Day are a sign that "this is truly a special place" in which the vote is safe and campaigning is not allowed.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose Friday announced partnerships with Ohio companies to assist in the upcoming election. LaRose attended an event in Columbus to announce a collaboration with Anheuser-Busch and the Columbus Distributing Company to provide close to 3,000 gallons of hand sanitizer to Ohio polling locations and voters during the Nov. 3 election. The secretary of state said at the event that partnerships like the one he was announcing will mean elections officials will have the supplies they need for the election, and said voters who are comfortable going to the grocery store should be comfortable going to the polls.

A U.S. District Court judge Sunday rejected a motion from voting rights groups seeking to stop enforcement of certain parts of Ohio's law requiring signatures on absentee ballot applications to match records on file, saying that while the requirements may provide a moderate burden on voters, it is not enough to change Ohio law so close to the election.

Despite the 2020 presidential election being two months away, a Pew Research Center survey of adult social media users found that 55 percent say they're already "worn out" by how many political posts and discussions they see on social media.

President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden met in Ohio Tuesday night for the first of the presidential campaign's general election debates of 2020. Cleveland secured the debate in July after the University of Notre Dame withdrew as host. Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Clinic hosted the event at the Health Education Campus in Cleveland.

Ohio political leaders Tuesday evening and Wednesday stuck by their candidate after the first presidential debate between Trump and Biden, giving praise and predicting their side would carry the Buckeye State in November. Meanwhile, after a wild debate where the candidates talked over each other and called each other names, the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), which organizes the events and sets the guidelines, said it was considering changes for the next debates between the candidates "to ensure a more orderly discussion of the issues."

Secretary of State Frank LaRose said Tuesday that 2,000,489 absentee ballot applications have been received by county boards of elections statewide, more than doubling the number of applications sent by this time in 2016.

A unanimous 10th District Court of Appeals Tuesday evening reversed a Franklin County judge's ruling that the Ohio Revised Code allows voters to submit absentee ballot requests through email or fax, saying the ruling was a "clear abuse of discretion in this case" and finding a lack of harm to the plaintiffs in the case.

The House Democratic leadership team this week sent a letter to Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) seeking assurances that whichever presidential candidate wins Ohio's popular vote will receive the state's 18 Electoral College votes, and that the Republican-led Legislature will not intervene to overturn that result. The leadership team said it based its letter on reports such as one in *The Atlantic* that legislatures in swing states could overturn their state's popular vote and assign electors to the Electoral College regardless of the outcome of that state's popular vote.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose said Wednesday that nine counties have reached their goal for poll workers and more than half of Ohio's counties have fewer than 100 poll workers to recruit before their goal is met. According to LaRose's office, a total of 46,125 Ohioans have signed up to serve as poll workers for the Nov. 3 election, including 19,938 Democrats and 18,282 Republicans.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- Rep. Bernadine Kent (D-Columbus) endorsed Donald Trump for president.

- Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Ohio endorsed Jim Burgess, Beth Bigham, Ron Ferguson, Sarah Fowler Arthur, Scott Wiggam, Tom Brinkman, Paul Zeltwanger, Kris Jordan, Darrell Kick, Bill Dean, Jena Powell, and Craig Riedel for Ohio House; Mark Romanchuk, Matt Huffman, and Tim Schaffer for Ohio Senate; and Sharon Kenney and Judi French for Ohio Supreme Court.
- The Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund endorsed Reps. Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) and Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) for re-election.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) lacks jurisdiction to initiate the kind of probe the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) wants it to launch in response to the HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) saga and moreover fails to show evidence to justify such an investigation, FirstEnergy utilities argued in a commission filing last week. In a second filing this week, the utility says the powers of the PUCO and OCC are limited to ratemaking and utility service and do not encompass "political contributions" or company expenditures generally, including its own. It argues that the "expansive investigation OCC hungers for" falsely suggests the agencies have statutory authority over the "unregulated holding company" FirstEnergy Corp.

Embattled FirstEnergy says it will resume customer disconnections along with service deposits, late fees and reconnection charges in the near future with the recent thumbs-up by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO).

The direction lawmakers take in revisiting the controversial HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) will send important market signals that influence how much renewable energy generation the state will see, wind and solar representatives told the House Select Committee on Energy Policy and Oversight. Hearings in the committee might be on hiatus until after the election, Chairman Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) said after the hearing. The panel has plans to open testimony to all comers, after a string of hearings focused on testimony from invited witnesses, as was the case Wednesday, when members heard from Jason Rafeld, executive director of the Utility Scale Solar Energy Coalition (USSEC); Erin Bowser, director of project management for EDP Renewables North America, a wind farm developer and operator; and Jereme Kent, CEO of One Energy, installer of on-site wind turbines for commercial and industrial facilities.

FirstEnergy Services Company says it is impossible that its affiliated utilities, including Ohio Edison Company, Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and Toledo Edison Company, aka FirstEnergy, could have diverted "political or charitable" payments supporting passage of HB6 to customer base rates or associated billing riders and charges, answering the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's (PUCO) Sept. 15 show-cause order with an abbreviated "no."

Utility refunds of unlawful customer charges are once again before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) in a request by the Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) of Ohio for immediate action on FirstEnergy's "legacy generation resource rider" aka coal-fired power plant subsidy, scheduled to net the Ohio Valley Electric Corp. (OVEC) more than \$132 million through 2030, according to CUB. The group filed two briefs Thursday seeking a "minor modification" to the OVEC rider -- that PUCO subject the estimated \$12 million FirstEnergy is charging residential customers annually for a coal plant in Madison, IN and a second plant in Ohio to a full refund should the Legislature overturn enabling language in energy subsidy bill HB6.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) was selected to receive a \$36,200 P2 Grant to promote pollution prevention in businesses, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) announced. P2 means reducing or eliminating pollutants from entering any waste stream or otherwise being released into the environment prior to recycling, treatment or disposal, according to a news release from USEPA.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) held his regular call with reporters Tuesday, covering topics including legislation he is seeking, President Donald Trump's nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett for the U.S. Supreme Court, recent automotive developments regarding Lordstown and the debate between Trump and Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

In a Friday web convention hosted by the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, members discussed the importance of voting to achieve positive outcomes in racial justice and urged political participation at the local level in order to gain influence and contribute to policy decision-making. Sen. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland) told attendees to form a "voting plan" in order to ensure their voices are heard in the upcoming November election. Williams said her own plan involves absentee early voting and dropping her ballot off at her county's ballot drop box, as well as subsequently calling her county board of elections to ensure her ballot was received.

House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) Wednesday announced that he has named Christine Morrison as chief of staff for the House of Representatives, removing the "interim" tag he had given her shortly after he was elevated to the dais. Other hires include Chris Albanese as policy director; Sheila Willamowski Boehner as deputy chief of staff and executive counsel; Paul Disantis as chief legal counsel; and Heather Blessing as deputy chief legal counsel.

GOVERNOR

The Ohio Municipal League Friday sent a letter to Gov. Mike DeWine asking him to veto HB242 (Lang-Jones), which prohibits local governments from taxing auxiliary containers such as plastic bags and other single use plastic products. However, DeWine said Tuesday he will sign the bill because it is temporary and the pandemic has increased the need for single-use containers for carryout

meals and grocery shopping.

The "mini" omnibus bill from the recent legislative session, HB614 (Fraizer-Richardson), became law Thursday with the signature of Gov. Mike DeWine in the late afternoon. The bill, which originally started out calling for the study and reform of Ohio's unemployment compensation system, was amended along the way including the addition of SB181 (Coley) which requires the Ohio Department of Higher Education to provide a template for all state universities to implement a work study program similar to one created at Miami University; and SB357 (Dolan) which allocates the remaining \$650 million of CARES Act funds to local communities for pandemic-related expenses.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Vanessa L. Whiting of Cleveland Heights (Cuyahoga County) to the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending May 1, 2029.
- Carly Sobol of Columbus (Franklin County) to serve as the student member on the Ohio State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending May 13, 2022.
- Mike Brooks of Nelsonville (Athens County) reappointed to the Hocking Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Aug. 26, 2023.
- John C. Adams of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Higher Educational Facility Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Jan. 1, 2028.
- William C. Elliott of Worthington (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority Investment Board for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Jan. 30, 2024.
- Dean C. Ringle of Dublin (Franklin County) reappointed to the State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Surveyors for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Sept. 24, 2025.
- Courtney E. Combs of Hamilton (Butler County) reappointed to the Ohio Real Estate Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending June 30, 2025.
- Kirk D. Roberts of Wooster (Wayne County) reappointed to the Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending July 1, 2024.
- Scott Corbitt of Plain City (Union County) to the Ohio Rail Development Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Oct. 20, 2025.
- Daryl Laisure of Pepper Pike (Cuyahoga County) to the Third Frontier Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending April 1, 2023.
- Jennifer R. Bowman of Athens (Athens County) to the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022.
- Angela M. Mingo of New Albany (Franklin County) and James Brady of Shaker Heights (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the State Lottery Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Aug. 1, 2023.
- Matthew A. Szollosi of Columbus (Franklin County) to the State Lottery Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending Aug. 1, 2021.
- Lilia J. Perez-Chavolla of Hilliard (Franklin County) reappointed to the Public Benefits Advisory Board for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023.
- James Hadden of Bexley (Franklin County) to the Ohio History Connection Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending June 26, 2023.
- Nicole D. Vavro of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2020 and ending April 21, 2022.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB) recently announced they'd agreed to a second year of "historic investments" in reimbursement rates for homemaker personal care services. This will increase overall compensation of direct support professionals (DSPs), which they described as "essential" to supporting Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Ohio State University (OSU) Department of Athletics recently announced details of its FY21 budget that include department-wide budget cuts, furloughs and reductions in force, and a focus on mitigating a projected \$107 million deficit as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ohio State's 36-sport program will remain intact and student-athletes will continue to have a fully funded grant-in-aid program, support services, and resources in the \$180 million budget, according to the university.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) was joined by National Fair Housing Alliance President and CEO Lisa Rice in a press call Wednesday to discuss a recent report by his office on how President Donald Trump and administration officials have "systematically undermined fair housing" through their policies, threatening 50 years of progress. Brown is the ranking member on the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

Home sales for the first eight months of 2020 lagged figures for the same period of 2019 by 2 percent, reaching 102,053 compared to the prior year's 104,215 through August, according to the Ohio Realtors. However, sales were up for the month of August compared to a year earlier, as were prices.

INSURANCE

The Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) recently encouraged Ohioans to use an online search tool to determine whether they are due beneficiary proceeds from a missing life insurance policy or annuity contract. The Life Insurance Policy Locator is available to use at <https://eapps.naic.org/life-policy-locator/#/welcome>.

JUDICIAL

Democratic officials and health care access advocates cast President Donald Trump's new nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court as a threat to the existence of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its coverage guarantees, and a way to enable a repeal effort Republicans have failed to achieve in Congress despite repeated attempts. Ohio Right to Life, meanwhile, said the nomination provides a "once-in-a-lifetime" chance to revisit *Roe v. Wade* and announced plans for a key Ohio Republican to sponsor legislation in anticipation of Supreme Court action. On Saturday, Trump had nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett, now sitting on the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Barrett has written academic papers criticizing past court decisions that upheld the ACA.

A Republican appointee of former Govs. Bob Taft and John Kasich has managed a fully stayed suspension of his law license after the Ohio Supreme Court Tuesday upheld the disciplinary recommendations of the Board of Professional Conduct but not the public reprimand agreed to by Lucas County Common Plea Court Judge Michael Goulding and state Disciplinary Counsel Joseph Caligiuri. The Supreme Court said Goulding had minimized his interference in another judge's case without the county prosecutor's knowledge and had denied primary responsibility for several after-hours phone conversations with a young man indicted and jailed on three counts of illegal use of a minor in a nudity-oriented performance involving a "significantly younger" girl.

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled 6-1 Thursday that neither retail giant Amazon nor any other third-party portal is responsible for products "placed in the stream of commerce" without their hands-on involvement. It noted the Legislature had ruled out limited marketing activities from the definition of "supplier" when it excluded common law claims in a 2005 overhaul of the Ohio Product Liability Act (OPLA).

LIQUOR/ALCOHOL

The liquor permit holder for the Cleveland Browns' stadium was among 14 licensees recently cited by the Ohio State Highway Patrol's (OSHP) Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) for allegedly violating pandemic health orders, according to OIU.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Former Pike County Sheriff Charles Reader awaits a Monday, Oct. 5 pre-sentencing hearing after pleading guilty Thursday, Sept. 24 to four felony counts and one misdemeanor from his original 18-count indictment. Reader, who has been suspended from office since 2019, accepted a plea deal for two counts of theft in office (fourth degree felony), two counts of tampering with evidence (third degree felony) and one count of conflict of interest (first degree misdemeanor). Reader has blamed gambling for his misappropriation of seized drug money.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

Gov. Mike DeWine announced Tuesday that his administration will be overhauling the state's Medicaid program, saying it will be the first major update to the program in 15 years. The Ohio Department of Medicaid on Wednesday issued a request for applications (RFA) inviting managed care organizations (MCO) to submit proposals for this next-generation managed care program supporting more than 90 percent of Ohioans receiving health care services through Medicaid.

The framework for Ohio's new Medicaid managed care contracts allows "unbundling" of administrative specialties with the aim of better service and support, Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Director Maureen Corcoran said. Corcoran and Deputy Director Jim Tassie spoke with *Hannah News* about the procurement process Thursday in a phone interview. ODM opened the bidding process Wednesday for the managed care contracts with release of a request for applications (RFA). It represents the largest piece of the procurement, with other efforts already underway to hire a single pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) for Medicaid, a fiscal intermediary to handle non-drug claims and prior authorization requests; and a vendor for centralized credentialing of providers. Still to come is the solicitation for OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence), a specialized program for children with complex needs, an outgrowth of the DeWine administration's children's initiatives.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hunters got their first opportunity to pursue white-tailed deer during the 2020-2021 archery season when it opened Saturday, Sept. 26, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. Approximately 375,000 people hunt deer in

Ohio, making it the most sought-after animal in the state, ODNR said.

ODNR expects a "stunning spectrum of colors" to be on display throughout the state, according to the department's "fall color forecast" for 2020. The ODNR Division of Forestry is expecting peak color to arrive in mid-to-late October. More information on the current forecast is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yxsjt65h>.

Preliminary results from surveys in the Western Basin of Lake Erie indicate that 2020's walleye and yellow perch hatches are both above average and continue an exceptional era of fish production in the lake, according to ODNR's Division of Wildlife.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) recently awarded ODNR Division of Wildlife Public Lands Program Administrator Mike Ervin with the Mark J. Reef Memorial Award, ODNR announced.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Wednesday's discussion at the Columbus Metropolitan Club (CMC) featured panelists discussing nonprofit sector efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion on their staffs and boards, with City Year Columbus Executive Director Tasha Booker saying the most meaningful anti-racist work "means going beyond anti-racist statements."

PUBLIC SAFETY

The DeWine administration is working to complete a public database announced in June for incidents involving police use of force (UOF), including deadly force, though the state has much more to do to increase the fraction of Ohio's population served by law enforcement agencies that currently report UOF. The Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) provided the Governor's Task Force on Arrest Warrants a use-of-force update Monday with hard numbers ranging from "no injuries" -- the vast number of police UOF incidents in Ohio -- to major injury and death.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced recently that it would be partnering with the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Aviation Section in a pilot project to enforce work zone violations from the air. According to ODOT, there were more than 6,500 work zone crashes in 2019, and in 2020 there have been about 3,140 as of Sept. 21. The department further explains that it's difficult to enforce traffic laws from the ground inside work zones.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Controlling Board Monday approved three late adds to the agenda without objection, including two requests from the Office of Budget and Management to send CARES Act money to help address mental health issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and to help senior centers and day cares begin operating again.

At Tuesday's meeting of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR), members approved all agenda items without questions nor public comment. This was despite expectations that a rule from the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction would elicit comments.

Ohio's minimum wage is scheduled to increase on Jan. 1, 2021 to \$8.80 per hour for non-tipped employees and to \$4.40 per hour for tipped employees, the Ohio Department of Commerce announced Wednesday. The minimum wage will apply to employees of businesses with annual gross receipts of more than \$323,000 per year.

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) announced it has newly updated rules regarding the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Encouraging Diversity, Growth, and Equity (EDGE) programs. It also now has rules for the new Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) certification program.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

More partners in an illegal robocalling and debt relief scheme have settled with the state of Ohio in what Attorney General Dave Yost calls the first-ever action against a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) provider that colluded in telemarketing fraud. Yost says six telecommunication companies and four illegal operators conspired to facilitate bogus interest rate reduction offers to Ohio credit card holders, prompting a joint complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against Globex Telecom, Inc. in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The East Liberty-based Transportation Research Center (TRC), in partnership with Ohio State University, has been granted eligibility by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to compete for research projects aimed at reducing the number and severity of large truck and motorcoach crashes on U.S. roadways.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced Thursday that its annual "Paint the Plow" contest is going online this year because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The popular program encourages local community groups and schools to showcase their artistic skills on one of ODOT's

snowplows. This year, students can try their hand at decorating one of the plows from home. To participate, individuals can download a coloring page or a graphic design file. They are urged to submit the entry by Friday, Oct. 23. For additional information and for a link to the coloring page, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yannp3xkn>.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Up to \$1.5 billion in premium rebate checks to employers should go out by the end of October after the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Board of Directors voted Friday to approve Gov. Mike DeWine's latest recommendation of a dividend payout to ease the financial strain of the pandemic.

WORKFORCE

Lt. Gov. Jon Husted told the Governor's Executive Workforce Board Friday that the state is in a "precarious position" with its economy as more things open up and federal stimulus starts to wane. Husted, speaking during the virtual meeting, said there will need to be some "organic success" in the marketplace to help the state continue its recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. He said that he believes the federal CARES Act helped to boost consumer spending, but now that stimulus is starting to run out.

Addressing reporters during his portion of the Thursday briefing, Husted announced "record-setting" results of the August TechCred application period in which 288 Ohio employers were approved for funding that will result in workers' earning up to 4,468 industry recognized, technology-focused credentials. This reaches the initial goal to fund over 10,000 credentials in the first year, as they now stand at 11,941. The August period also saw 1,277 more approved credentials than June, which previously had the highest number.