

OHIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Bill Information

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

HB110 OPERATING BUDGET *(OELSLAGER S)*

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

CURRENT STATUS

3/11/2021 - House Finance, (Seventh Hearing)

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

3/23/2021 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)

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

To make appropriations related to public transportation.

CURRENT STATUS

2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB146

REGARDS APPLYING PREVAILING WAGE LAW TO PUBLIC PROJECTS (RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER

S)

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

■ **CURRENT STATUS**

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

HB157

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

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

■ **CURRENT STATUS**

3/16/2021 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)

SB4

EXEMPT EMS LINE OPERATORS-PUBLIC RECORDS (ROEGNER K)

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

■ **CURRENT STATUS**

3/23/2021 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing)

SB15

FISCAL OFFICERS-LIABILITY (WILSON S)

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

■ **CURRENT STATUS**

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

SB18

INTERNAL REVENUE CODE (ROEGNER K, SCHAFFER T)

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

■ **CURRENT STATUS**

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

SB32 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION *(RULLI M)*

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

3/2/2021 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing)

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

 **Week in Review**

Friday, April 2, 2021

ABORTION

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio joined with other affiliates Thursday in filing a lawsuit challenging 133-SB260, which bans the use of telehealth in medication abortion. The lawsuit, which names the Ohio Department of Health as a defendant, was filed in the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio, Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio, and Sharon Liner seeking an injunction to keep the bill from taking effect on Monday, April 12. It argues that the bill violates Ohio's Constitution, saying it "irrationally prohibits abortion providers from using telemedicine to provide medication abortions to Ohioans."

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Gov. Mike DeWine, RecoveryOhio and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Thursday announced \$13 million in State Opioid Response (SOR) 2.0 grants to help Ohio communities to fight against opioid addiction and prevent overdose deaths. OhioMHAS said there are a total of 57 awards, including nearly \$4.9 million to 36 community organizations under the "Use of Community Partners" program, and \$8.3 million to 21 recipients of the "Use of Innovation" program.

AGRICULTURE

Bill Patterson of Chesterland is the 25th president of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF), the agricultural organization announced Thursday. Patterson was elected by OFBF's Board of Trustees upon the resignation of Frank Burkett of Massillon, who left OFBF to stand for election to the Nationwide Board of Directors. Burkett was elected to the Nationwide Board of Directors on Thursday as well.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Governor's Awards for the Arts in Ohio will be held virtually on Monday, May 10 at noon, according to Ohio Arts Council (OAC) Operations and Public Affairs Director Justin Nigro. Providing an update during Wednesday's OAC meeting, Nigro said Gov. Mike DeWine and Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) will participate in the event, but hasn't confirmed whether House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) will be available.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Ohio Attorney General's (AG) Office has opened the nomination process for 2021's state law enforcement awards. The awards will recognize Ohio Distinguished Law Enforcement Lifetime Achievement, Service, Group Achievement, Civilian Leadership, Training, Valor, and Community Service. They will be presented during the AG's 2021 Law Enforcement Conference, Oct. 18-19 at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus. Forms and procedures for award nominations can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/5b63wz6x>.

FY22-23 BUDGET

The Ohio Council of Churches (OCC) and the Hunger Network of Ohio (HNO) outlined their priorities for the biennial budget during their annual advocacy day. The groups are focused on three major areas: hunger, housing and education. The organizations said the state should increase funding for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks to \$45 million to respond to the rising need caused by the pandemic. Within the budget, the governor proposed flat funding of the foodbanks at \$25 million.

CORONAVIRUS

Ohio's centralized scheduling website for the COVID-19 vaccination removed most screening criteria Friday to allow anyone age 16 and up to start looking for appointments, as the state made all adults and older teenagers eligible starting Monday, March 29.

The state saw an increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations Tuesday that was well above the 21-day average, according to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

Rep. Al Cutrona (R-Canfield) said Tuesday that he will be introducing legislation to prohibit "vaccine passports," the term given to documentation to show that a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19 that could be used to access certain services not otherwise available. Rep. Mike Loychik (R-Bazetta) said he plans to join the legislation as a cosponsor.

Recent research from Ohio State University (OSU) shows how the politicization of the COVID-19 pandemic influenced people to follow, or not follow, social distancing guidelines. Researchers at OSU said the analysis boiled down to whom study participants trusted most: scientists or former President Donald Trump.

All public and private institutions of higher education will be able to provide the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine to students on campus starting next week, according to Gov. Mike DeWine. The governor discussed the idea of vaccinating college students before summer break with reporters earlier this week, but provided more details on the program during his coronavirus briefing on Thursday.

DeWine and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Chief Medical Officer Bruce Vanderhoff said Ohio's COVID-19 case count, positivity rate and hospitalization numbers have been increasing over the last week, making efforts to vaccinate as many people as quickly and efficiently as possible even more critical. About 30 percent of all Ohioans have received at least one dose of the vaccine so far, according to ODH.

Turning to the numbers, DeWine Thursday said there have been 2,475 COVID-19 cases reported in the last 24 hours, higher than the 21-day average of 1,672. ODH reported 93 COVID-19 hospitalizations in the last 24 hours, slightly higher than the 21-day average of 88. The number of intensive care unit (ICU) admissions reported in the last 24 hours was nine, which matches the three-week average. The governor said the state is now clearly moving in the wrong direction when it comes to cases per 100,000 population, with the

statewide average increasing to 167 cases per 100,000 on Thursday. That number was 147 last week, and 143 the week before that. DeWine has said all public health orders can be lifted when Ohio reaches a statewide average of 50 cases per 100,000 population.

CORRECTIONS

It's too early to say whether allegations lodged by two Ohio Supreme Court appellants against Madison Correctional Institution could be systemic to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) as a whole, says incoming Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) Chairman Nathan Manning (R-N. Ridgeville), but he assures CIIC will exercise full statutory authority in response to inmate complaints. Manning says CIIC will meet in the coming weeks to address Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor's letter of concern to him following the Court's dismissal of several inmate petitions on procedural grounds alone. One alleges a series of random beatings, racial slurs, inmate rape, a flawed grievance process, falsified reports and lax oversight by Madison Correctional Institution's (MACI) higher-ups.

DISABILITIES

The Ohio Development Disabilities Council is accepting applications until Sunday, April 18, 2021 for new members in the following categories:

- Individuals with a developmental disability,
- Parents or guardians of a child with a developmental disability
- An immediate relative or guardian of an institutionalized or previously institutionalized individual with a developmental disability or an individual with a developmental disability who resides or previously resided in an institution

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gov. Mike DeWine's administration announced Monday the approval of assistance for seven projects expected to create 992 new jobs and retain 1,047 jobs statewide. During its monthly meeting, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA) reviewed economic development proposals brought by JobsOhio and its regional partners. The projects are expected to collectively result in more than \$64 million in new payroll and spur more than \$778 million in investments across Ohio.

As part of an effort to keep startup companies in the state, JobsOhio recently announced that it will be expanding a pandemic response effort into a pilot program that will invest up to \$50 million per year as growth capital in collaboration with other private market sponsors. During a virtual discussion Monday, JobsOhio President and CEO J.P. Nauseef said that Ohio has lagged peer states in growth and venture capital funding, which led to "many" successful startups leaving the state.

ECONOMY

The Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky African American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) recently released a study on the economic benefits of Black-owned businesses in the region, saying they employ 8,680 workers and provide \$540 million in earnings. The analysis, developed in partnership with the University of Cincinnati's (UC) Economics Center, also found the businesses support more than \$1.4 billion in operations expenditures and \$6.2 million in state sales tax revenue for Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. The five Ohio counties in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) -- Brown, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren counties -- receive \$1.2 million in tax revenue as well.

For the week ending March 27, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 54,343 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). That number is lower than last week's, when the department reported 69,368 jobless claims. ODJFS said potentially fraudulent claims are likely inflating the totals from this week and recent weeks.

EDUCATION

Education experts told the City Club of Cleveland during a virtual meeting Tuesday that students have experienced negative learning outcomes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning provisions, and the best way to bring students back up to speed is through a series of intensive remediations, including tutoring, extra school hours and other methods.

The chair of the Senate's Primary and Secondary Education Committee unveiled a report card reform measure Wednesday that would convert the A-F grading system to a five-star scale and make other modifications to how school performance is measured and reported. Sen. Andrew Brenner's (R-Powell) SB145 drew initial support Wednesday in testimony from Ohio Excels, a business coalition focused on education issues, as well as the Alliance for High Quality Education (AHQE), an association representing dozens of districts. Brenner said the legislation represents input from numerous stakeholders beyond AHQE and Ohio Excels, with work starting a few years ago. He said more groups are expected to testify in the coming weeks.

ELECTIONS 2022

U.S. Rep. Mike Turner (R-Centerville) moved closer to running for the U.S. Senate in 2022 this week, releasing a new video touting his accomplishments and saying he will be traveling the state to hear what Ohioans want in their next U.S. senator.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment rate dropped to 5 percent in February, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Friday, even though nonagricultural wage and salary employment decreased 8,400 over the month, from a revised 5,304,300 in January to

5,295,900 in February 2021.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

Wind energy's six-turbine demonstration project planned one mile from Cleveland in Lake Erie has intervened in the appeal of the Ohio Power Siting Board's (OPSB) October 2020 decision to certify Icebreaker Windpower's application without the overnight shutdown originally imposed by the board.

Gov. Mike DeWine on Wednesday signed HB128 (Hoops-Stein), which partially repeals 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), the controversial energy subsidy law linked to a federal corruption probe. It eliminates the decoupling mechanism in HB6 going forward and requires the refund of all decoupled revenues.

FirstEnergy Corp. announced Wednesday that its Ohio utilities -- Ohio Edison, The Illuminating Company and Toledo Edison -- will collectively credit customers approximately \$26 million in revenues previously collected through a decoupling mechanism authorized under Ohio law -- and repealed in HB128 (Hoops-Stein).

Sitting Commissioner Dennis Deters of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) survived Senate President Matt Huffman's (R-Lima) new advice-and-consent protocol for gubernatorial appointments Wednesday -- at least at the committee level -- drawing unanimous support for his reappointment and providing a valuable lens into the commission's emerging concern for the "average ratepayer." Chairman Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee invited Deters to address members on his qualifications and vision for PUCO in advance of the scheduled vote -- a rare occurrence for gubernatorial appointments prior to Huffman's recently announced overhaul of the Senate process for advice and consent.

ENVIRONMENT

While the members of the General Assembly and Gov. Mike DeWine should be commended for their work to improve water quality, their actions on energy issues were harmful to the state, according to a recent scorecard released by the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC). On a scale of zero to 10, the House received a score of 4.3, the Senate got a 7.1 and DeWine earned a 6.6, OEC announced. The 133rd General Assembly Scorecard was created to hold Ohio lawmakers accountable for votes that damage the environment, as well as to celebrate lawmakers who have championed pro-environmental legislation, OEC President Heather Taylor-Miesle said.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) honored long-time water quality and conservation advocates Alicia Smith and Joy Mulinex with the 2021 Ohio Women in Conservation Award. Smith and Mulinex were recognized for their work reducing carbon emissions, promoting clean energy, advocating for environmental justice and protecting communities and wildlife in Ohio and across the nation, according to NWF.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Buffalo District has awarded a \$6.5 million contract to the Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company for the construction of a beneficial use of dredged material placement area. The area will be designed to handle approximately 400,000 cubic yards of dredged material, USACE said. The contractor has been given the approval to immediately start construction of a 1,500-linear-feet-of-stone placement off the west and south portions of the Ashtabula Harbor East Breakwater.

FEDERAL

From direct assistance to state and local governments, schools and households to funding for child care providers to a host of grants available to restaurants, arts venues and others, the recent federal COVID relief package -- the American Rescue Plan (ARP) -- stands to bring tens of billions of dollars to Ohio. Ohio does not yet have direct guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury on specific funding amounts to the state, Ohio's Office of Budget and Management notes.

GAMING/GAMBLING

The state agency currently charged with regulating gambling on horse racing should oversee Ohio's "expansion of sports betting," Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) Executive Director Renee Mancino told the Senate Select Committee on Gaming on Wednesday. "Sports wagering in Ohio has been regulated and permitted since 1975, with horse racing. Sports betting should be viewed as an expansion on the existing sports wagering in Ohio," Mancino said, noting the Ohio State Racing Commission (OSRC) currently regulates the activity. She said that neither the Ohio Lottery Commission (OLC) nor the Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) would be appropriate regulators of sports gambling under the Ohio Constitution.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) Chairman Rep. Jamie Callender (R-Concord) said at the panel's Monday meeting it will be considering actions taken by state agencies that did not go through the rulemaking process but should have received legislative oversight. Per 132-SB221 (Uecker), a law reforming rulemaking that was vetoed by the governor and subsequently overridden by the General Assembly, JCARR can ask state agencies to come before the panel to explain their rationale for why an agency made a policy change without going through rulemaking, and if necessary, JCARR can then ask the agency to submit the policy change through the JCARR rulemaking process.

Utilizing the emergency response training he's received over the years, Rep. Haraz Ghanbari (R-Perrysburg) helped a driver escape a vehicle following an accident over the weekend. "Saturday evening while traveling on State Route 25 in Wood County, I came across a two-vehicle accident with injuries," Ghanbari posted on social media, saying he assessed the scene and then communicated with a Wood County Sheriff's Office 9-1-1 dispatcher, who connected him with Perrysburg Township first responders.

Hannah News' interview series with freshman legislators featured Rep. Sarah Fowler Arthur (R-Rock Creek), who spent eight years on the State Board of Education and now seeks to continue affecting education policy on the state level and maintaining what she sees as necessary boundaries between the state and Ohio families.

In other legislation action, Senate Judiciary Committee reported out SB54 (Gavarone), regarding telecommunications fraud.

GOVERNOR

In addition to the transportation budget and a partial repeal of 133-HB6, Gov. Mike DeWine this week signed SB5 (Roegner-Blessing), to enter Ohio into the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact; SB7 (Roegner), to enter Ohio into the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact; and SB18 (Roegner-Schaffer), a tax conformity bill.

Gov. Mike DeWine appointed Stephanie M. Bishop to the Findlay Municipal Court. Bishop, of Findlay, will assume office on Friday, April 9, replacing Judge Mark C. Miller, who was elected to a different bench. Bishop will need to run for election in November 2021 for the unexpired term ending Dec. 31, 2023.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Shawnee State University violated the free speech rights of one of its philosophy professors when it disciplined him for refusing to refer to a transgender student by her preferred pronouns, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Friday.

Ohio University (OU) announced Thursday it is collaborating with 16 other Ohio colleges on a letter-writing campaign in support of SB126 (Kunze-Gavarone), otherwise known as Collin's Law. The campaign kicked off Monday, March 29, at 8 p.m. with a Zoom program to provide participants with background on the bill. It featured Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard) and Kathleen Wiant, mother of Collin Wiant, who was a freshman member of Sigma Pi at OU when he lost his life in connection with a hazing incident.

David DeVillers, former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, will investigate the death of Bowling Green State University (BGSU) student Stone Foltz as the result of alleged hazing. Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost approved the appointment of DeVillers to investigate the death.

Ohio State University (OSU) announced Tuesday Jamie Dimon, chairman and CEO of JPMorgan Chase, as the spring commencement speaker. The commencement will be held in-person, though Dimon's remarks will be delivered virtually.

Betty Jo Licata, dean of Youngstown State University's (YSU) Williamson College of Business Administration, is retiring after more than 26 years in the role effective Dec. 31, 2021. A nationwide search for a replacement will begin soon.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) announced an expansion of the pause on federal student loan interest and collections to all defaulted loans in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program this week.

INSURANCE

The Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) highlighted recent changes to health care premium assistance in federal legislation available starting Thursday, April 1. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) included 100 percent financial assistance for COBRA premiums to eligible individuals from Thursday, April 1 through Thursday, Sept. 30 of this year. COBRA allows certain people to temporarily continue employer provided health care coverage.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court Friday refused to reconsider its decision issued a week ago rejecting a lawsuit seeking to force Secretary of State Frank LaRose to rewrite a local issue on the Tuesday, May 4, primary ballot to the plaintiff's satisfaction. The lawsuit was filed last month by a group challenging the certification of a local ordinance by the Medina County Board of Elections and LaRose in a dispute over the city of Medina's efforts to move the Medina Municipal Court to the Medina County courthouse building.

The Ohio Supreme Court unveiled new domestic violence, stalking and juvenile protection order forms Wednesday for an official rollout on Wednesday, April 15. Last updated in 2014, the 10 revised forms incorporate amendments to old laws and passage of new laws, recognize best practices and simplify wording.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

During the question-and-answer portion of Thursday's briefing, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted was asked to respond to a letter from members of Upper Arlington's Asian and Asian-American community, who took issue with his recent tweet calling the coronavirus the "Wuhan Virus." Husted and his family live in Upper Arlington. Husted said he hadn't yet read the letter, but will respond to it after he does. He explained that he was criticizing the Chinese government for its handling of the virus, not Chinese-Americans. He said there is "no justification" for violence against Asian-Americans or anybody else, noting he has spoken with his Asian-American friends about these issues.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Former Pike County Sheriff Charlie Reader, once the national face for law enforcement in the Rhoden family massacre, has begun a three-year sentence on one count of theft in office (fourth-degree felony) and a concurrent three-year sentence on two counts of tampering with records (third-degree felony) at the Correctional Reception Center in Orient. Visiting Judge Patricia Cosgrove, who Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor appointed for the sentencing phase after retired Fairfield County Judge Chris Martin accepted

Reader's plea deal last September, imposed a minimum prison term of at least three years, plus six months of jail time for conflict of interest (1st degree misdemeanor) Wednesday, despite his pleas for leniency.

The Ohio Mayors Alliance Monday announced it has brought together a former governor with the former mayors of Ohio's two largest cities to create a spin-off foundation that will provide research support for the coalition of mayors. The Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation will feature a board with former Gov. Bob Taft along with former Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman and former Cleveland Mayor Jane Campbell. It will be an affiliated 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the Ohio Mayors Alliance, a 501(c)(4) advocacy coalition of the mayors of Ohio's 30 largest cities. According to the group, the foundation will "serve as the policy and research arm for the mayors, focusing on innovative local policy solutions."

NATURAL RESOURCES

The declining population of yellow perch in the Lake Erie Central Basin has prompted a reduction in the daily limit to 10 from Huron to Fairport Harbor beginning Saturday, May 1, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. The current limit of 30 will remain in effect until Friday, April 30, ODNR said.

Ohio is now at the start of prime tree planting season, according to the ODNR Division of Forestry. Tree roots begin to lengthen as the buds break in the spring when soil moisture is typically the highest, ODNR said. This allows the growing roots to move through the soil to find water and nutrients needed for the tree to grow in its new home.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced his office's Charitable Law Section had opened an investigation following *Columbus Dispatch* reporting that alleged former Columbus Zoo President and CEO Tom Stalf and former CFO Greg Bell had received improper benefits. The pair resigned Monday after the reporting and a subsequent independent investigation ordered by the zoo board. The AG noted that the zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which receives levy funds from Franklin County taxpayers and said the Charitable Law Section "ensures trust in the nonprofit sector through transparency and accountability."

PENSIONS

The federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) will be able to make payments to help the troubled Central States Teamsters Pension Plan and other struggling multi-employer pension plans under recently enacted federal COVID relief legislation. A version of legislation U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) sponsored, the Butch Lewis Act, was included in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) pandemic relief package. His legislation was named for a late Cincinnati teamster.

PEOPLE

Former long-time Statehouse lobbyist William Selsam died Sunday, March 28. Selsam, 81, had worked for the Ohio State Automobile Association (AAA) as director of public affairs and public relations and then became president of the Ohio Conference of AAA Clubs, providing governmental representation for AAA in Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) last week announced the appointment of Sara Lawson as interim deputy director of the Division of Residential Resources. The division oversees the operation of Ohio's eight developmental centers, public and private intermediate care facilities, capital projects, housing, and nurse delegation. In addition, Ginnie Whisman has accepted a new policy specialist position reporting to DODD Director Jeff Davis

PUBLIC SAFETY

U.S. Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Novelty) joined G2G Consulting founder Liz Powell and a panel of security consultants Monday for a discussion on improving safety at the U.S. Capitol Building. The panel also discussed similar efforts to better protect statehouses.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) announced Monday that it had completed the sale of the long-empty state-owned building at 145 S. Front St. to the Columbus Partnership for \$3 million. The building had most recently housed parts of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) but has been empty since 2008. The building contains 200,000 square feet and is situated on 1.71 acres. The sale also includes an underground parking garage.

TECHNOLOGY

Members of the InnovateOhio Executive Committee are leading efforts on increasing digital literacy, coding education and data privacy, as those were all discussed during a Tuesday meeting. The committee also received updates from Lt. Gov. Jon Husted and BroadbandOhio Director Peter Voderberg.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

Gov. Mike DeWine signed the \$8.3 billion transportation budget Wednesday, opting to hand out no vetoes on the proposal. While the appropriations sections of HB74 (Oelslager) can take effect immediately, the language provisions must wait the usual 90 days, thus driving the need for the bill to pass by April 1 so those sections become effective by the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1.

That transportation budget contains a host of new policy changes that will take effect on July 1, including allowing Ohioans to renew their driver's license or identification cards online. Under the bill, the state registrar at the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) is

authorized to allow online renewal. The registrar may require applicants to submit digital copies of any identification or supporting documents as required by state federal or law. Applicants still must comply with all other related driver's license and identification card laws, such as paying any necessary fees. Other provisions in the transportation bill include changes to specialty license plate requirements, teen driver's ed, bridge inspections and commercial vehicle requirements such as where to park on state highways.

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) launched a newly redesigned website that state officials said will be more user friendly and give customers a faster, easier and more streamlined experience. The redesign of the new website -- www.BMV.Ohio.gov -- was announced by Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, whose InnovateOhio collaborated with the Ohio BMV and the Citizens Interactions Workgroup made up of stakeholders and interested parties on the InnovateOhio executive committee, which helped to provide guidance and feedback on improving customer experience.

WORKFORCE

During his remarks at Thursday's briefing, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced that "In-Demand Jobs Week" will officially take place Monday, May 3 through Friday, May 7. Husted encouraged individuals and organizations to visit the state's new website, TopJobs.Ohio.gov, to add their event to the official In-Demand Jobs Week map. Individuals interested in attending an event can use this map to find events near them.

Husted also announced that the next round of TechCred launched on Thursday, and will close on Friday, April 30 at 3 p.m.

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