

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

11/17/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second 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

11/19/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Civil Justice, (Third 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

11/17/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Fourth 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

11/17/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

HB550 MOTORCYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION (HOOPS J)

To make changes to the laws related to the motorcycle safety and education program.

CURRENT STATUS

11/10/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Third 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

11/10/2020 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing)

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

11/12/2020 - Senate Appoints Managers; M. Dolan, D. Burke & V. Sykes Named as Senate Conferees

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

11/17/2020 - Senate Education, (Fourth 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

AGRICULTURE

After receiving its first hearing on Tuesday, the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee voted to report legislation voiding Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Interim Director Lance Himes' July 30 order limiting county fair activities to control the spread of the coronavirus.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Secretary of State Frank LaRose outlined his priorities for the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) at the Tuesday meeting. SB318 (Kunze-Williams), the bill to extend the life of the commission to the end of 2021, passed the House later in the week.

The House Civil Justice Committee heard a mix of testimony Thursday on the latest proposal to add protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to Ohio's civil rights laws. Dozens of opponents spoke or submitted remarks, while a smaller group of proponents urged passage, following a February hearing where hundreds of witnesses had urged support of HB369 (Hillyer-Skindell). The committee led off by accepting a substitute bill that pared the legislation from 100-plus pages to seven, seeking to reflect the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, a 6-3 ruling written by Justice Neil Gorsuch that found federal civil rights law protects employees against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

CORONAVIRUS

The Ohio Court of Claims ordered the state health department to release hospital data about daily bed capacity, medical supplies, and staffing levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ruling rejected the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) position that the data are security records exempted from disclosure to the public under the state's public records law. Eye on Ohio, Ohio Center for

Investigative Journalism, had requested the records in late March in the early days of the pandemic in the U.S.

A new system developed at Ohio State University (OSU) is being used to give schools and public health officials an early warning sign of potential COVID-19 outbreaks, the university said in a release. Health information from schools and districts is entered into a system called the COVID-19 Analytics and Targeted Surveillance System (CATS). School district staff and the local public health department monitor the system, watching for signs of coronavirus outbreaks.

Responding to Gov. Mike DeWine's comments on the possibility of a second closure order for restaurants and bars, the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) said they have been in contact with him and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted on how that would "devastate the industry."

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Gov. Mike DeWine's office offered additional details Monday on the revised health order limiting gatherings in Ohio, following its initial announcement in DeWine's address to Ohioans Wednesday evening. Another ODH order regarding retail and business compliance with facial covering mandates that was announced Wednesday went into effect at 12:01 a.m. Monday.

Gov. Mike DeWine Tuesday announced a three-week curfew for all residents instead of the anticipated closing of certain businesses such as restaurants and gyms. The curfew, which will run from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., begins Thursday, Nov. 19 and will run for three weeks. At the end of that time, DeWine said he will see where the state stands in regard to the spread of COVID-19 to determine what else might be done.

Expressing concern over side effects of pandemic-related measures such as the stay-at-home order, Sens. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) and Robert McColley (R-Napoleon) offered sponsor testimony to the House State and Local Government Committee on SB311, which would modify the law on public health orders, quarantine and isolation. The committee also received testimony from dozens of public witnesses in support of HB618 (Becker), the "Need Ohio Working (NOW) Act" which would limit the governor's and ODH's authority to issue orders regarding contagious or infectious diseases and prohibit any order from affecting the conduct of an election.

Public health agencies from three of the largest metropolitan areas in Ohio issued stay-at-home advisories on Wednesday as the state continues to grapple with rapid increases in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and positivity rates. Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) and Columbus Public Health (CPH) were the first to announce the move, joined by health authorities for Cuyahoga County, Montgomery County and the city of Dayton.

Former Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton issued a video message Friday, Nov. 13, in which she encouraged Ohioans to spread kindness and simultaneously warned that she believes the nation is reaching a "critical inflection point" in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "I know many of you are feeling the strain of this deeply challenging time, and I want you to know I feel it too," Acton told followers on Twitter, speaking from her position as director of Kind Columbus, which is a division of the Columbus Foundation nonprofit.

Ohio hospitals are dangerously close to being forced to ration health care like Italy did at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, health officials said Thursday. "We are on the doorstep of that," Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Medical Director Bruce Vanderhoff said during Gov. Mike DeWine's coronavirus briefing, responding to a reporter's question.

The House mainly along party lines Thursday voted to send legislation that would allow the General Assembly to overturn orders issued by the director of the Ohio Department of Health and to put other limits on the orders, setting up a showdown with Gov. Mike DeWine, who is strongly opposed to the bill. He said again Thursday that he will veto it. Thursday's debate saw Republicans arguing that SB311 (Roegner-McColley) provides proper checks and balances on the executive branch, while Democrats called it irresponsible legislation that will hamper the state's ability to respond quickly to an out-of-control pandemic.

Gov. Mike DeWine said Thursday that Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Stephanie McCloud had signed the health order he announced Tuesday encouraging people to stay at home during specified hours unless they are working or engaged in an essential activity. "As COVID-19 continues to spread in Ohio, we need a stronger response to minimize the impact on Ohio's health care and hospital capacity and ensure health care is available to those that need it," said DeWine in a prepared statement. "With this order we are discouraging get-togethers and gatherings to minimize the spread of the virus while minimizing the economic impact of a complete shutdown.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Debate on SB369 (Lehner-Manning), which addresses revisions to the eligibility standards and procedures for awarding reparations to crime victims, concluded Wednesday in the Senate Judiciary Committee with an admonition from committee member and incoming Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima). Before the vote on the bill, he told the members, "I support the bill and the removal of this collateral sanction. I'd also like to remind current and future legislators that when they decide they need to pass bills to get tough on crime and create these collateral sanctions, we end up with problems like this."

DEATH PENALTY

Sen. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakeland) joined a coalition including Death Penalty Action and Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE) Friday in an urgent call for lame duck passage of SB296 (Antonio-Lehner) to add Ohio to the 20 states that have abolished capital punishment.

EDUCATION

Local school officials again pressed a House committee Tuesday to advance the Cupp-Patterson school funding proposal with many of the working group members who helped to draft it presenting on the facets addressing special education, gifted education, transportation, choice programs and other elements. They also addressed how Ohio can cover the plan's price tag. Dozens of witnesses delivered or submitted in writing remarks to the House Finance Committee in favor of HB305 (Cupp-Patterson), recently revised to address concerns raised since its introduction last year and now paired with a Senate companion, SB376 (Lehner-Sykes).

The Senate voted Wednesday and the House voted Thursday on the resolution to a yearlong impasse over how to address a looming expansion in the number of schools where students are eligible for EdChoice vouchers, opting for new criteria that consider both poverty and school performance, while also including an incremental bump to the income threshold for the EdChoice expansion program. The new criteria were added Wednesday to SB89 (M. Huffman), a career technical education omnibus, during a conference committee meeting. The conference committee approved its report along party lines.

The Senate Finance Committee gave a first hearing to the Senate version of HB305 (Cupp-Patterson), the school funding overhaul seeking to replace the state's current public school funding structure which has been ruled unconstitutional. Providing invited proponent testimony on SB376 (Sykes-Lehner) Wednesday were former members of the Cupp-Patterson workgroup who designed the plan, as well as the sponsors of the bill. Bill sponsor Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) described the current state of Ohio's school funding as "unpredictable, indecipherable, confusing, but most of all, inadequate and unequitable."

ELECTIONS 2020

Gov. Mike DeWine told CNN's Jake Tapper on Sunday that while President Donald Trump has every right to bring up challenges to the most recent election in court, the president should also begin the transition of administrations to Joe Biden. A day later, Trump suggested in a tweet that someone will challenge DeWine in a primary next year.

Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard) increased her lead of a few dozen votes to 116 when Franklin County elections officials certified the results of her race against Democratic challenger Crystal Lett, although the result is within the margin requiring an automatic recount.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported Friday that initial unemployment claims again rose during the week ending Nov. 7, totaling 21,868. The prior week had 21,263 claims reported to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The total number of initial jobless claims filed in Ohio over the last 34 weeks (1,850,676) was more than the combined total of those filed during the last four years, according to a news release from ODJFS. The weekly data are usually released on Thursdays, but were delayed this week due to the Veterans Day holiday.

For the week ending Nov. 14, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 24,964 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). That number is more than 3,000 higher than last week, when the department reported 21,868 new jobless claims. This is the third straight week that the number of new jobless claims has increased.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

All but predicting victory, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost launched his second legal action in two months Friday to stop FirstEnergy Solutions' (FES) successor from taking advantage of the state's "arcane" ban on utility customer refunds by halting the collection of HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) subsidies from all Ohio ratepayers. Facts alleged in the lawsuit suggest other political operatives and/or lawmakers may have known of the alleged racketeering and corruption deal between former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and FirstEnergy beyond the five individuals already indicted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Ohio.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation searched the home of Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Chairman Sam Randazzo on Monday, and Randazzo did not attend the commission meeting that took place Wednesday. "FBI agents conducted court-authorized law enforcement activity in the area of Grant Avenue in Columbus in relation to a sealed federal search warrant. No arrests have been made and none are planned at this time. Due to this matter being sealed, no further details can be released at this time," Todd Lindgren, spokesman for the FBI's Cincinnati Field Office, said in a statement. The search and seizure at Randazzo's home comes as the U.S. Attorney's Office, Ohio Attorney General's Office, the cities of Columbus and Cincinnati, and PUCO have collectively launched a range of criminal and civil actions and an administrative audit concerning FirstEnergy's alleged funneling of \$61 million to former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and other legislative backers to pass nuclear subsidies and other consumer supports in HB6 (Callender-Wilkin).

PTT Global Chemical (PTTGC) America has cancelled its planned first-quarter 2021 announcement on a final investment decision for the proposed \$10 billion ethane cracker plant in Belmont County, offering no date for a future decision. The Thai company, a subsidiary of PTTGC Public Co. Ltd., blamed COVID-19's impact on the global economy Friday but pulled back from suggestions it is awaiting the final outcome of the U.S. presidential election. Targeted along the Ohio River, the plant would take advantage of Ohio's abundant natural gas supply to "crack" or break down the wet-gas by-product ethane into ethylene, used in plastics, paints, textiles, solvents and other products.

FirstEnergy Corp. told the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Thursday that former CEO Chuck Jones and four other executives' terminations stemmed from a questionable \$4 million payment to an unnamed state utility regulator. FirstEnergy's quarterly filing for the period ending Sept. 30, 2020 says the consulting fee occurred in the early months of the DeWine administration under a longstanding agreement. "[C]ertain former members of senior management violated certain FirstEnergy

policies and its code of conduct related to a payment of approximately \$4 million made in early 2019 in connection with the termination of a purported consulting agreement, as amended, which had been in place since 2013," the SEC filing says.

Rep. Mark Romanchuk (R-Mansfield) told the House Select Committee on Energy Policy and Oversight Thursday that HB772, his "partial" repeal of HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), would remove "bad policy that harms Ohioans." He also said the bill was limited in scope to ensure passage this year. Romanchuk opened with a history of Ohio law regarding electric generation, particularly the 1999 passage of 123-SB3 (B. Johnson). That act was "historic legislation," he said, to "deregulate the electric generation portion of our electric bills and use competitive 'markets' for the purpose of lowering utility bills and improving services."

A survey of economists published recently by the research group Scioto Analysis showed split opinions on the benefits of nuclear subsidies paid for by ratepayers, with many economists uncertain about the issue. Scioto Analysis surveyed members of its Ohio Economic Experts Panel, which has over 40 economists from over 30 Ohio higher educational institutions. The goal of the panel is to promote better policy outcomes by providing policymakers and the public with the analysis of Ohio's economists.

ENVIRONMENT

As a part of Gov. Mike DeWine's H2Ohio initiative, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Crawford Park District plan to transform frequently-flooded farmland into nutrient-reducing wetland. The Sandusky Headwaters Preserve is a 38-acre tract immediately adjacent to the Sandusky River. When complete, 85 acres of off-site drainage will be rerouted into a one-acre wetland before entering the river. Extra filtration will be provided by 18 vernal pools (seasonal pools of water that provide habitat for distinctive plants and animals) that will capture runoff and floodwaters, according to ODNR.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) was unanimously re-elected to serve as speaker for the 134th General Assembly, the House Republican Caucus announced Wednesday. The caucus also announced that Rep. Tim Ginter (R-Salem) will serve as speaker pro tempore; Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) will serve as majority floor leader; Rep. Rick Carfagna (R-Westerville) will serve as assistant majority floor leader; Rep. Don Jones (R-Freepport) will serve as majority whip; and Rep. Cindy Abrams (R-Harrison) will serve as assistant majority whip.

Wednesday's Senate session saw passage of SB317 (Coley), permitting school employees to carry concealed weapons on school grounds; SB375 (Hoagland-Schaffer), to overturn Ohio Department of Health orders placing restrictions on county fairs; SB282 (Hoagland), requiring establishment of a process for employers to submit unemployment compensation complaints; HB151 (Carfagna), regarding chiropractors; SB267 (S. Huffman), designating August as "Bone Marrow Donation Awareness Month"; SB312 (McColley), creating a Domestic Relations Division in Hardin County Common Pleas Court; SB369 (Lehner-Manning), regarding crime victim reparations; and the conference report on SB89 (M. Huffman), regarding career-technical education and the EdChoice program. The chamber informally passed HB136 (Hillyer), to prohibit the death penalty for aggravated murder if the offender had a serious mental illness at the time of the crime, but plans to bring it back to the floor after Thanksgiving.

Wednesday's House session saw passage of HB621 (Cross-Wilkin), allowing businesses deemed "non-essential" and ordered shut under pandemic orders to stay open if they can meet the safety requirements of their "essential" counterparts; HB255 (Hoops), regarding review of property tax exemptions; SB318 (Kunze-Williams), to extend the work of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission; HB32 (Stein), describing a ceremonial procedure for retiring an Ohio state flag; HB36 (Kick), which designates the monarch butterfly as the official state butterfly; HB199 (Patton), establishing contractor licensing for commercial roofers; HB208 (Roemer-J. Miller), regarding penalties for assaulting a sports official; HB367 (Manchester-Miranda), regarding school counselors; HB371 (Merrin), expanding the Forever Buckeye in-state tuition program to those who earn a high school equivalency certificate; HB541 (Perales), regarding property valuation adjustments for destroyed or damaged property; SB21 (Dolan), regarding benefit corporations; and SB123 (Dolan-Manning), designating the *Dunkleosteus terrelli* as the official state fossil fish. The chamber tabled an attempt by Democrats to attach an amendment to HB255 to repeal controversial energy subsidy law HB6 (Callender-Wilkin).

Witnesses Wednesday told a Senate committee that they fear an amendment added to a bill addressing commercial credit reporting agencies would create a loophole in Ohio law that could be exploited by payday loan companies to return to high interest rates that the General Assembly closed in the previous session. Though Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) questioned whether the amendment would actually open a loophole, opponents to the change said payday loan companies have a history of finding loopholes in Ohio law. The Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee accepted a lengthy substitute bill for HB38 (Hillyer) during its Wednesday meeting, which led the groups to raise concerns over the bill.

Majority Republicans in the Ohio House refused to vote Thursday on a Democratic resolution that would require face coverings of all members, choosing to instead send it to the Rules and Reference Committee despite objections from the minority party. Rep. Kristin Boggs (D-Columbus) noted that Franklin County became the first county in the state to go into level four purple status under the state's alert system Thursday (see separate story, this issue), and said the landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly changing. She also said she had received a phone call from the largest hospital system in the county, telling her it is suspending elective surgeries starting Thursday because it doesn't have the staff or capacity to deal with the emergency.

Thursday's House session saw passage of SB311 (McColley-Roegner), limiting state health orders; the conference report on SB89 (M. Huffman), regarding career-technical education and EdChoice; HB310 (Greenspan), regarding school bullying and hazing; HB409 (Koehler), regarding student attendance at e-schools; HB352 (Cross-Lang), regarding employment civil rights laws; HB444 (Baldrige-Abrams), regarding townships; HB464 (Cupp-Rogers), regarding guardian authority and trusts; and SB178 (Schuring), allowing

podiatrists to administer flu vaccines; and concurred with Senate amendments to HB123 (Holmes-Manning), regarding school safety; HB151 (Carfagna), regarding chiropractors; and HB404 (Manchester-Sweeney), allowing university trustees to meet electronically and extending certain pandemic policies. The chamber rejected Senate amendments to HB264 (Wilkin-O'Brien), regarding water development loan refinancing.

In other legislative action, the House Civil Justice Committee reported out SB175 (Schaffer), regarding civil immunity for nonprofits and the carrying of handguns, and HB159 (Blessing), regarding indemnity provisions in professional design contracts; House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out HB345 (Jones), regarding unclaimed motor vehicle titles; House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee reported out HB428 (Wiggam-A. Miller), regarding veteran ID cards, and HB406 (J. Miller-Richardson), regarding the Honor and Remember flag; House Economic and Workforce Development Committee reported out SB39 (Schuring), regarding tax credits for mixed use development projects, and SCR15 (Hackett), urging establishing of the U.S. Space Command headquarters in Ohio; House Ways and Means Committee reported out HB419 (Swearingen), regarding season watercraft storage; House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee reported out HB498 (Fraizer), regarding income tax credits for disability-related home expenses, and HB509 (Fraizer), regarding license inspection procedures for residential care facilities; House Commerce and Labor Committee reported out HB360 (Crawley-Hillyer), regarding school drinking water stations, and HB389 (Roger-Becker), regarding alcohol giveaways for nonprofit fundraisers; House Criminal Justice Committee reported out SB140 (Uecker), regarding knives; and House Higher Education Committee reported SB40 (Brenner-McColley), regarding free speech on college campuses.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Wright State University (WSU) has begun the process of laying off some faculty, the school announced last week. WSU is in the early stages of the layoff process and sent a notice Thursday to the faculty union, AAUP-WSU, alerting them that the university expects the need for layoffs, which begins the process.

Ohio State University (OSU) Provost Bruce McPherson recently announced Keesha Mitchell as the new interim associate vice president for the Office of Institutional Equity, effective Monday, Nov. 23. The office deals with how the university responds to forms of harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct, as well as handles the university's compliance with federal Title IX regulations and the Americans with Disabilities Act, among other policies.

INSURANCE

The new leader of Ohio's health insurer trade group is urging passage of surprise medical billing measure HB388 (Holmes) in the lame duck session and says it is emblematic of an approach insurers and providers can use to focus on their shared goals. Kelly O'Reilly took the helm of the Ohio Association of Health Plans (OAHP) as president and CEO in October, succeeding Miranda Motter, now a senior vice president at America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP).

JUDICIAL

Government corporations in Ohio do not qualify as Marsy's Law victims and are not entitled to restitution from their own citizens, even if Ohioans voting on 2017's constitutional amendment would have understood victimized "persons" to include not only private individuals but private corporations, the Ohio Supreme Court announced Thursday in a mixed ruling.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor provided keynote remarks at the recent forum "Black Robes, Black Lives: The Duty of Courts to Understand and Address Systemic Racism," hosted by the University of Cincinnati College of Law's Ohio Innocence Project (OIP). "There is no value in racism," O'Connor told the virtual gathering. "As [the late U.S. Supreme Court] Justice Thurgood Marshall explained, 'Racism separates, but it never liberates. Hatred generates fear. And fear, once given a foothold, blinds, consumes and imprisons. Nothing is gained from prejudice. No one benefits from racism.'"

LIQUOR/ALCOHOL

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced recently that his office had reached a proposed settlement agreement with AWS Hopkins LLC, one of seven out-of-state companies accused of illegally shipping wine and spirits into the state.

The Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) announced eight liquor-permitted establishments received recent citations for violating health orders, including a Cleveland bar that allegedly had "egregious" activity and had been cited twice before. A ninth establishment was cited for health order violations and operations without a liquor permit.

In a rare appearance before a standing legislative committee, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) joined Senate Pro Tem Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) Tuesday to push back on the governor's emergency order cutting off open-container alcohol sales at 10 p.m. and consumption at 11 p.m. After weeks of liquor enforcement citations by the Ohio State Highway Patrol's (OSHP) Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) at numerous bars and restaurants, Obhof and Peterson signaled Senate leadership's concern with the issue by getting personally involved in legislation to overturn emergency Rule 4301:1-1-80, adopted on July 31.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Attorney General Dave Yost said Monday that he has filed a request in the Ohio Supreme Court to force the suspension of Cincinnati City Councilman Jeffrey Pastor, who is facing felony charges of bribery, extortion, wire fraud, money laundering and other crimes.

Cincinnati City Councilman Alexander "P.G." Sittenfeld was arrested and charged Thursday in a federal public corruption case, with U.S. Attorney David DeVillers alleging Sittenfeld took bribes in 2018 and 2019 and said he would "deliver the votes" on a development

project before city council.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The Medicaid eligibility determination process in Ohio suffers from significant errors, including a dysfunctional benefit system and erroneous payments, Auditor of State Keith Faber found in a report released Thursday.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Ohio Military Facilities Commission (OMFC), while still headed for sunset, reconvened Monday to approve a \$500,000 grant for street improvements benefitting Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB). The commission had previously held what was intended to be the final meeting in October 2019, as its duties are largely being absorbed by Gov. Mike DeWine's aerospace and defense advisor Joseph Zeis. The OMFC is among the entities to be eliminated in SB331 (Roegner), which implements recommendations of the Sunset Review Committee.

Two companion concurrent resolutions seeking placement of U.S. Space Command headquarters in Ohio received hearings in the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee Wednesday, with the Senate version reported out unanimously. Rep. Rick Perales (R-Beavercreek) and Sen. Robert Hackett (R-London) both testified on HCR32 and SCR15, with Perales saying the two resolutions were "identical" in nature. He and Hackett took questions together, with Rep. Craig Riedel (R-Defiance) asking about the timeline for a decision on the headquarters location.

Despite the efforts of Gov. Mike DeWine, the congressional delegation and General Assembly, the permanent headquarters of U.S. Space Command will be outside Ohio, according to a U.S. Air Force announcement late Thursday. The narrowed list announced Thursday evening has six potential locations -- one each in New Mexico, Nebraska, Florida, Colorado, Texas and Alabama. A final decision is expected in early 2021 based on factors related to mission, infrastructure capacity, community support and costs to the Department of Defense.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Saturday announced a \$25 million CARES Act aid program for nonprofit organizations that serve low-income and at-risk Ohioans to assist with their unemployment debt. The deadline to apply is Friday, Nov. 27. The Saturday announcement outlined the process for nonprofit organizations that serve low-income and at-risk Ohioans to follow to apply for federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act grants.

PENSIONS

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) held a proposed rule change from the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) that would end provision of health insurance to retirees under the age of 65 and would instead provide a monthly subsidy for retirees to purchase health insurance on the public marketplace. Ultimately the rule was put under "to-be-refiled" status with an expected hearing at JCARR's January 2021 meeting.

Ohio educators might be better off in retirement if their default benefit choice was a 401(k)-style plan or hybrid defined benefit/defined contribution plan, rather than the traditional pension plan, a new report commissioned by the Fordham Institute suggests. Chad Aldeman of Bellwether Education Partners wrote the report, "Default Settings: How Ohio can nudge teachers toward a more secure retirement."

PEOPLE

U.S. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (D-Columbus) was named the recipient of the Donna A. James Award for her work on behalf of the people, workers, families, and small businesses of Ohio's Third Congressional District, located in Franklin County.

Paul Mechling, a resident of Pierpont Township, was recently presented with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Cardinal Award for conservation. A small group of ODNR representatives traveled to Mechling's 388-acre Snowy Oak Tree Farm in Ashtabula County to recognize the retired veterinarian's achievements and ongoing contributions to the conservation of Ohio's natural resources, ODNR said in a news release.

The Ohio Supreme Court said Thursday it presented its Professional Excellence Awards to three employees during a virtual ceremony for its 16th annual employee recognition event. The Court also recognized 40 employees on reaching five, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service.

Award recipients were as follows:

- Greg Mathews, master commissioner, Office of Legal Resources
- Jason Monroe, database administrator, Office of Information Technology
- Sara Stiffler, manager, Civic Education Section of the Public Information Office

TECHNOLOGY

LGBTQ advocacy organization Stonewall Columbus has received a \$9,000 digital education grant from cable and Internet company Spectrum that will be used to create a mobile computer cart to provide Internet and technology access for community members who can't afford technology.

TOBACCO/SMOKING

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) said Thursday marked the 45th annual "Great American Smokeout" in a release, calling for state lawmakers "to protect the health of our youth, low-income Ohioans, LGBTQ+ communities and communities of color by passing strong tobacco control legislation to counteract Big Tobacco's manipulative tactics that target these community members."

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) announced Friday that the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded a \$12 million grant for emergency repairs to the Brent Spence Bridge connecting Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky following severe damage from a crash involving two semi-trucks last week. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear Monday said an exhaustive examination of the bridge by state inspectors found that while a fiery crash involving two semis last week did not cause damage to the structure of the bridge, it is not expected to open until around Christmas.

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission continues its project to implement new toll collection and customer service center systems, with the latter seeing a delay in going live until next year. The customer service center is being contracted through TransCore, and according to Executive Director Ferzan Ahmed's report to the commission Monday, software development for the system has not been finalized in time for the original launch date of Tuesday, Dec. 8. He said that while TransCore has made significant progress in resolving the backlog of programming issues in recent weeks, some issues were identified in a formal performance test on Oct. 28. The commission instead now plans to go live with the new system in early 2021.

In a short meeting Tuesday, members of the Road to Our Future Joint Legislative Study Committee received a draft report of the committee's work since its establishment by HB62 (Oelslager), the transportation budget. The draft report submitted to the committee collects up all of the testimony that had been presented to the committee. Chair Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) told *Hannah News* that he will be discussing whether the committee will include recommendations with his co-chairman, Sen. Robert McColley (R-Napoleon), when the committee votes on the final version that will be sent to the Legislature on Tuesday, Dec. 1.