

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

7/1/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; effective 7/1/21

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

9/21/2021 - Senate Ways and Means, (Second 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

6/23/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing)

HB157

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

To amend 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

6/2/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means

HB267

LIMIT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS (JORDAN K)

To limit the duration of public health orders and to allow the General Assembly to act via concurrent resolution in response to a public health emergency if the Governor or Department of Health does not.

CURRENT STATUS

5/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

HB275

EXPAND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION JOINT PURCHASING AUTHORITY (LAMPTON B)

To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services.

CURRENT STATUS

5/12/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)

HB283

EXPAND DISTRACTED DRIVING LAWS (ABRAMS C, LAMPTON B)

To expand the texting while driving prohibition to a general prohibition against using an electronic wireless communications device while driving, with certain exceptions, and to create data collection requirements based on associated violations of the distracted driving laws.

CURRENT STATUS

9/23/2021 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Criminal Justice, (Third Hearing)

HB350 PROHIBIT MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINE *(CUTRONA A)*

To prohibit mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations, requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination, and certain other actions relating to an individual's COVID-19 vaccination or health status and to declare an emergency.

CURRENT STATUS

6/22/2021 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing)

HB388 REGARDING VACCINE REFUSAL *(JORDAN K)*

To prohibit taking certain actions against an individual because the individual refuses to be vaccinated against a disease.

CURRENT STATUS

8/12/2021 - Introduced

HB401 EMPLOYER-MANDATED COVID VACCINATION INJURY *(EDWARDS J)*

To exempt an injury or disability caused by an employer-mandated COVID-19 vaccination from the Workers' Compensation Law and to allow the employee to sue the employer for damages.

CURRENT STATUS

8/24/2021 - Introduced

HB435 VACCINE REQUIREMENTS *(CARFAGNA R, SEITZ B)*

To address COVID-19 vaccine requirements for employees and students; to extend certain timelines for qualified civil immunity and expand immunity to include hearing aid dealers and hearing aid fitters; to authorize emergency medical technicians to administer COVID-19 tests; to expressly cover COVID-19 vaccine injuries under the workers' compensation system; and to repeal sections 3792.05, 3792.06, 3792.07, and 3792.08 of the Revised Code on June 30, 2023.

CURRENT STATUS

10/13/2021 - Bills for Third Consideration; (Pending Committee Report)

HB472 POLITICAL SUBDIVISION LIABILITY *(INGRAM C)*

To eliminate certain defenses to political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle and to reduce damages recoverable against a political subdivision in such actions by the contributory fault of the plaintiff or other parties.

CURRENT STATUS

11/2/2021 - Referred to Committee House Civil Justice

HB477 EXPULSION, TERMINATION BASED ON VACCINATION STATUS *(RICHARDSON T)*

To prevent expulsion from school and termination from employment based on COVID-19 vaccination status.

CURRENT STATUS

11/1/2021 - Introduced

HB481 COVID VACCINE, PASSPORT PROTECTION ACT *(JORDAN K)*

To enact the COVID-19 Vaccination and Passport Protection Act to prohibit schools, institutions of higher education, employers, and places of public accommodation from requiring COVID-19 vaccines or proof of vaccination.

CURRENT STATUS

11/8/2021 - Introduced

HB489 INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE ACT *(CLICK G)*

To enact the Inalienable Rights of Conscience Act regarding students and employees who object to certain vaccines and other treatments based on reasons of conscience, including religious convictions.

CURRENT STATUS

11/16/2021 - Introduced

HB491 PAID BEREAVEMENT LEAVE FOR DEATH OF CHILD *(BOYD J, RUSSO A)*

To establish family and medical leave insurance benefits and to require employers to provide an employee with paid bereavement leave on a stillbirth or death of a child.

CURRENT STATUS

11/17/2021 - Referred to Committee House Families, Aging and Human Services

HCR30 OPPOSE VACCINE MANDATES *(KOEHLER K)*

To urge the Congress of the United States to oppose any COVID-19 vaccine mandates made by government entities and to prohibit discrimination based on COVID-19 vaccination status.

CURRENT STATUS

10/26/2021 - Referred to Committee House Government Oversight

SB4 EXEMPT EMS LINE OPERATORS-PUBLIC RECORDS *(ROEGNER K)*

To include emergency service telecommunicators, protective services workers, certain Ohio National Guard members, and certain mental health care providers as individuals whose residential and familial information is exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law.

CURRENT STATUS

6/8/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 9/7/21

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

11/17/2021 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

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

SB19 REGARDING PROPERTY TAXATION (SCHAFFER T)

To modify the law regarding property taxation and sales and use tax.

CURRENT STATUS

11/10/2021 - Consideration of House Amendments; Senate Does Not Concur, Vote 1-32

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**

11/16/2021 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Civil Justice, (Fourth 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**

9/21/2021 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

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**

5/12/2021 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

SB152 **FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE TASK FORCE** *(HOAGLAND F)*

To establish the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Task Force in the office of the Attorney General and to make an appropriation.

📌 **CURRENT STATUS**

11/9/2021 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing)

SB169 **PROHIBIT MANDATORY VACCINATIONS** *(BRENNER A)*

To prohibit mandatory vaccinations against the coronavirus, to prohibit requiring proof of vaccinations generally, and to declare an emergency.

📌 **CURRENT STATUS**

5/26/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate Health, (First Hearing)

SB209 MASK MANDATES (BRENNER A)

With regard to mask mandates and facial covering requirements for public schools, state institutions of higher education, and businesses.

CURRENT STATUS

9/8/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate General Government Budget

SB260 LOCAL PURCHASING AUTHORITY-CONSTRUCTION (LANG G)

To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services.

CURRENT STATUS

11/10/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government and Elections

SB261 LAW CHANGES-MEDICAL MARIJUANA (HUFFMAN S)

To amend the law related to medical marijuana.

CURRENT STATUS

11/17/2021 - Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity, (First Hearing)

Week in Review

ABORTION

While the "Born Alive Infant Protection Act" might not be needed in Ohio's current environment, anti-abortion lawmakers must act now to implement the law while they're in power, Sen. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott) said Thursday. "This bill doesn't only apply to today. It applies to the future," Johnson told Rep. Beth Liston (D-Dublin) during the House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee's hearing on SB157 (S. Huffman-Johnson). Liston had said no fetus is viable before 20 weeks' gestation, and elective abortions are already illegal after 20 weeks in Ohio, so any procedures covered by the bill would likely occur in hospitals to protect the life of the mother.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

There is enough room for two "Guardians" teams in Cleveland after all, according to the city's Major League Baseball (MLB) team and its Men's Roller Derby Association (MRDA) team. "The Cleveland Guardians Baseball Company LLC and Guardians Roller Derby are pleased to announce an amicable

resolution of the lawsuit filed by Guardians Roller Derby, whereby both organizations will continue to use the Guardians name," the teams announced in a joint statement on Tuesday.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Dave Yost announced a massive class action lawsuit Monday amid Facebook employee revelations of "misinformation, toxicity and violent content" aimed at vulnerable users -- an alleged cover-up costing the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) a major chunk of more than \$100 billion in lost Facebook stock value since a company whistleblower went public in September. Yost filed *OPERS v. Meta Platforms, Inc., f/k/a Facebook, Inc., Mark Zuckerberg, David M. Wehner and Nick Clegg* in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California Friday with the assistance of Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann counsel from Los Angeles and New York. The class action targets the company along with its well-known CEO and chief financial officer and vice president of global affairs and communications, respectively.

Ohio Attorney Dave Yost has joined attorneys general across the U.S. in calling on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to shore up new measures against robo-call "spoofing" with additional tools to prevent the selling or renting of otherwise-legitimate phone numbers to circumvent state and federal enforcement. Attorneys general from all 50 states and the District of Columbia have submitted 11 pages of comments under four FCC robo-call enforcement dockets as part of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG).

CORONAVIRUS

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff, in a Friday briefing on efforts to combat COVID-19 in the state, said he was optimistic not only because of the progress in vaccinating children ages 5-11 -- which began a week ago -- but also because of promising reports coming from Merck and Pfizer regarding oral treatment for those who have contracted the virus. However, he again stressed that the best approach is to get vaccinated and avoid becoming sick in the first place, noting that even when those medications are approved, they will initially be in short supply and only used for those who are the sickest. In that regard, he referenced the increased numbers of new COVID cases in the last few days.

He again urged those eligible to receive a booster to do so. He reiterated this message again on Thursday.

Vanderhoff reminded Ohioans between 5-25 that they can win one of 150 awards worth \$10,000 or one of five \$100,000 grand prize scholarships. Vax-2-School scholarships will be issued under Ohio 529 College Advantage plans and can be used at winners' choice of Ohio college, university, technical/trade school or career program. Youth, their parents or guardians can enter at www.ohiofax2school.com or 833-4-ASK-ODH if they have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Vax-2-School deadlines are as follows:

Sunday, Nov. 21, 11:59 p.m. - eligible for all drawings.

Sunday, Nov. 28, 11:59 p.m. - eligible for the second drawing (75 scholarships of \$10,000) and the grand prize drawing.

Wednesday, Dec. 1, 11:59 p.m. - eligible for the grand prize drawing.

House Republicans succeeded Thursday in approving a bill to create exemptions for workers and students to cite in the face of mandates to be vaccinated against COVID-19, after lack of agreement on the issue thwarted prior attempts at a floor vote on the matter. The floor vote on the bill, HB218 (Cutrona), was 58-32, with Reps. Laura Lanese (R-Grove City) and Nino Vitale (R-Urbana) joining the Democrats present to vote no. Business and health care groups strongly condemned the measure.

DEATH PENALTY

Witnesses on both sides of the debate to eliminate the death penalty in Ohio testified Thursday before the House Criminal Justice Committee, with proponents of a bill to eliminate capital punishment arguing that it does not prevent crime. The Fraternal Order of Police testified the death penalty should remain an option for the worst of the worst offenders in the state. Thursday was the fourth hearing on HB183 (Schmidt), with the committee hearing nearly two hours of testimony on the bill. Witnesses included the ex-wife of a man who was exonerated in the killing of his 68-year-old mother-in-law in June 1998, who told of her fight to have her then-husband freed.

ECONOMY

Statistics released recently by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts show that personal and business bankruptcy filings nationally fell 29.1 percent for the 12-month period ending Sept. 30. Filings have steadily declined since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

EDUCATION

Charlotte McGuire rose from vice president to president of the State Board of Education (SBOE) with the support of most of her colleagues Monday, besting board member Antoinette Miranda in a 14-3 vote, while Steve Dackin was elected to succeed McGuire as vice president in an 11-7 vote over Jenny Kilgore. The unusual mid-term leadership election followed the resignation of former President Laura Kohler, whose appointment by Gov. Mike DeWine to a second term faced challenges in the Senate, where leadership expressed displeasure with her vote against repealing a 2020 resolution on racism and equity and her decision to limit public comments before the board on those topics. Eric Poklar also resigned, facing similar legislative resistance.

Ohio Department of Education (ODE) staff provided an overview Monday of the upcoming work to implement conversion of the state report card from an A-F system to five-star ratings, which also entails reconfiguration of many of the underlying components and measures. The State Board of Education's (SBOE) Performance and Impact Committee reviewed the topic during its monthly meeting. ODE's Shelby Robertson said the board will be working against a statutory deadline of March 31, 2022 to complete administrative rules laying out the new report card structure. The law reforming the system, enacted via 134-HB82 (Jones-Cross), also requires the department and board to present the rules to the education committees of the House and Senate.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) voted Thursday to approve nearly \$130 million worth of school construction projects in two districts. The commission approved projects through its signature Classroom Facilities Assistance Program for \$106 million worth of work in Celina Schools and \$20.9 million for a segment of Massillon Schools' building plans.

ELECTIONS 2022

Respondents in a new Quinnipiac University Poll give the edge to Republicans in expressing who they want to win control of Congress next year, with independent voters swinging to the GOP by 10 points. But neither party has a positive approval rating, and the majority of respondents said both parties do not care about their needs or problems. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden's approval rating continued to sink in the poll. But two of his signature initiatives enjoy fairly strongly support. The survey of 1,378 adults from Nov. 11-15 has a margin of error of 2.6 percent.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

For the week ending Nov. 13, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 7,913 initial traditional unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). That number is lower than last week, when the state reported 11,232 traditional jobless claims.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation's (OFBF) director of energy development told the Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) Governing Board Tuesday that the expansion of solar, wind and natural gas generation statewide is providing a growing number of local officials, residents and businesses with the opportunity to participate in the siting of energy infrastructure.

House members gave an early thumbs-up to energy efficiency (EE) reboot HB389 (Leland-Seitz) Wednesday despite the Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) and Ohio Manufacturers' Association's (OMA) continued opposition to its narrow opt-out requirement on all but the largest commercial customers and a peak energy savings program they say should be governed by the free market, among other concerns. The House Public Utilities Committee passed the bill 12-0 with several changes, including one requested by OMA, after final opponent testimony from OCC. Speaking on behalf of the consumers' counsel, former Sen. Jeff Jacobson said most of the agency's problems with HB389 remain after "minor improvements" in late October. He reaffirmed that the benefits of EE are readily available in the free market, and without government-mandated subsidies.

The Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) cleared six more solar fields planned for 15 square miles of rural Ohio Thursday along with a wind farm destined for another 50 square miles in Huron and Erie counties. OPSB approved applications filed by Cadence Solar Energy, Marion County Solar Project, Sycamore Creek Solar and Juliet Energy Project to construct photo-voltaic farms in Union, Wood, Crawford and Marion counties, respectively.

ENVIRONMENT

Ohio EPA's experience with litigation over listings of brownfield sites prompted the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee Wednesday to revise a proposal to catalog such sites, instead directing the attached funding toward a voluntary program to assess the potential for contamination. Under SB83 (Rulli-Williams), Ohio EPA was to use \$150,000 to conduct a study of where brownfield sites are throughout the state, in conjunction with public universities. The legislation was paired with SB84 (Rulli-Williams), which is meant to provide additional funding for brownfield remediation, but lawmakers instead put funding toward that purpose in the biennial budget, HB110 (Oelslager). Under an amendment adopted Wednesday, Ohio EPA will instead use the funding for Phase I property assessments, a no-cost service to communities that can help them determine what's wrong with a site. This includes historical record searches, interviews with neighbors and past owners and site visits that can help to identify areas that might require sampling.

FEDERAL

Department stores across the country are expected to be ready for the holiday shopping season despite widespread supply chain issues caused by the pandemic, according to shipping industry experts. "Christmas is not cancelled," Georgia Ports Authority Director Susan Gardner said during a panel discussion recently hosted by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Tampa, FL. "We are doing everything we can to get cargo moving." Gardner was joined on the panel by former U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Ray LaHood, Florida Economic Advisors President Chris Jones and Wisconsin State Assembly Speaker Robin Vos. LaHood, a Republican who served in the cabinet of former President Barack Obama, praised President Joe Biden for appointing John Porcari as port envoy to the Biden administration's Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force, saying the former deputy transportation secretary is the best person to address the issue.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Both the House and Senate Tuesday released their tentative legislative calendar for 2022, the second year of the 134th General Assembly. Both plan to resume voting sessions in January on Wednesday, Jan. 19. The final session day of the 134th General Assembly is projected to be Wednesday, Dec. 21. All Senate sessions are on Wednesdays and begin at 1:30 p.m. House sessions, for the most part, dovetail the Senate calendar, although it has the possibility of two additional session days. There are no sessions set for July, August and October.

The Ohio Senate Tuesday unanimously passed legislation that will allow businesses to stay open during a pandemic after state health orders during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic forced many to close. HB215 (Wilkin), dubbed the Business Fairness Act, would permit any business that would otherwise be ordered to close under a statewide health order to remain open as long as the business can demonstrate it is following the same safety protocols that are required of businesses allowed to stay open because they were deemed essential. The bill passed 31-0 and now heads to Gov. Mike DeWine for his signature.

The Senate also overwhelmingly passed SB210 (Gavarone), which allows married couples in Ohio to enter into a postnuptial

agreement or terminate a prenuptial agreement.

The House Wednesday passed two gun-related bills: HB99 (Hall) would change the requirements for training if a school staff member wants to carry a firearm at a K-12 school. An Ohio Supreme Court ruling essentially made the training requirement on par with what peace officers are currently required to have in order to be certified in the state. The bill drops the requirement down to about 18 hours of training plus an additional two hours of firearms training. The bill passed 58 to 33. The second gun bill, HB227 (Brinkman-Jordan), would eliminate the need to have a concealed carry permit, with the sponsors saying the bill gets rid of bureaucratic barriers to Ohioans exercising their Second Amendment rights. It passed 60-32.

In other action, the House passed a resolution urging the U.S. government to secure the Southern border. The sponsors of HCR22 (T. Young-Plummer) cited a surge in migrants, an increase in overdoses, and the potential for COVID-19 spread among migrants, among the reasons for the resolution. The resolution passed 59-26.

The House also overwhelmingly passed six other bills Wednesday. They included:

- **HB116** (Baldrige), which allows the state to prosecute computer crimes.
- **HB165** (McClain), creating a temporary nonrefundable tax credit for the retail sale of high-ethanol blend motor fuel. Rep. Riordan McClain (R-Upper Sandusky) said the bill helps correct forces that are acting against a free market and allows ethanol to be widely available.
- **HB230** (Ray-Hall), to review the state's information technology systems.
- **HB314** (Swearingen-Click), exempting certain watercraft that are seasonally stored or repaired in Ohio from state and local use taxes.
- **SB54** (Gavarone), allowing the attorney general to prosecute telecommunications fraud offenses and adding providing misleading or inaccurate caller identification information to the offense of telecommunications fraud.
- **SB59** (Schaffer), prohibiting the sale of certain war relics located on public property or cemetery association property.

Aside from votes on vaccine mandate exemptions and a new congressional map, Thursday's House session included passage of HCR36 (B. Young), expressing opposition to a federal financial institution reporting proposal; SB229 (Blessing), regarding pandemic flexibility for schools; HB292 (Sobecki-Cutrona), regarding a sales tax exemption for electric vehicle production; HB371 (Schmidt-Denson), regarding breast cancer screenings; SB58 (Antonio-Brenner), regarding electronic monitoring in long-term care facility residents' rooms; SB115 (Schuring), regarding the Ohio Pooled Collateral Program; and HR147 (Stoltzfus), urging federal action to recover missionaries taken hostage in Haiti. The chamber also insisted on its amendments to SB19 (Schaffer), a taxation measure.

The Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC) Friday approved its capital budget package with additional dollars to update aging audio equipment throughout the Ohio Statehouse. The commission's total FY23-24 request amounts to \$4.4 million, including \$1.1 million for audio updates that will improve

the broadcast quality in all Statehouse hearing rooms as well as audio improvements for the Ohio Channel. Dan Shellenbarger, executive director of the Ohio Channel, said a study conducted two years ago showed that incremental improvements to the audio systems in committee rooms would actually be more expensive than fixing all the equipment at once.

The Ohio Legislative Children's Caucus heard presentations Monday on paid family and medical leave, including its importance to both families and businesses and state and federal legislative efforts. Rep. Allison Russo (D-Columbus) opened the virtual discussion by calling the topic important and "very timely." She said these leave policies "strengthen women and families" and reduce "gender and economic disparities." They also improve health outcomes, particularly for women, parents and new babies, and benefit the local economy.

The House State and Local Government Committee received testimony on occupational licensing from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), Board of Building Standards (BBS) and Board of Emergency Medical, Fire and Transportation Services (EMFTS Board) Wednesday. The Common Sense Initiative (CSI) also submitted testimony on the three state entities. Due to time constraints, it was taken as written-only.

A couple hundred people turned out Wednesday evening to mark the 25th anniversary of the \$128 million renovation of the Ohio Statehouse completed in 1996. They were treated to two panels of former Statehouse regulars reminiscing about the Statehouse before, during and after the renovations. The first panel was composed of former reporters: Lee Leonard, Bill Cohen, Alan Johnson and Tim Miller, and moderated by WOSU's Ann Fisher. They recalled how, before the renovations, not only did legislators have offices in the Statehouse but so did the statewide officeholders, making it easy to grab them to talk with, either in the halls or in Mary's, the basement cafeteria. One of the trials of the renovation time was how the offices were scattered across state office buildings downtown. The second panel was headed by former Gov. Richard Celeste and former Senate President Richard Finan -- much like they led the renovation efforts that went on for five years. They described how this came after first the Rhodes Tower and the Riffe Center were constructed so some offices could be moved out of the Statehouse proper, making the renovation physically easier to accomplish. They were joined by Capitol Architect Robert Loversidge, Peter Crusse, who oversaw the construction crews, and Brian Perera, representing Statehouse staff. Former *Columbus Dispatch* Editor and former Rep. Mike Curtin moderated that panel.

In other action, the House Civil Justice Committee reported out HB352 (Crawley-Ray), which prohibits using a disability as basis for denying custody; and SB56 (Blessing), which regulates the use of indemnity provisions in professional design contracts; the House

Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out HB469 (Grendell) and HB384 (Cutrona), highway naming bills; HB338 (Hoops), which revises motorcycle laws; and SB162 (Reineke), which addresses evasion of turnpike tolls; the House Ways and Means Committee reported out HB45 (West-Roemer), which sets up a temporary tax amnesty program; the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee reported out HB321 (Kick-B. Young), which revises laws governing auctions; the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee reported out SB105 (Sykes-Schuring), which requires recognition of state certification of minority business enterprises; and SB166 (Reineke), which deals with vocational schools; the House Financial Institutions Committee reported out HCR36 (B. Young), which opposes a federal proposal on reporting by financial institutions; the House Public Utilities Committee reported out HB389 (Leland-Seitz), which addresses energy efficiency; the House State and Local Government Committee reported out HR147 (Stoltzfus), which urges the federal government to bring the missionaries home from Haiti; the Senate Insurance Committee reported out HB184 (Carfagna), which revises Police and Fire Pension Fund disability determination procedures; and House Criminal Justice Committee reported out SB217 (Schaffer), regarding background checks in long-term care.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Sandra C. Doyle-Ahern of Blacklick (Franklin County) to the Columbus State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Nov. 22, 2021 and ending Aug. 31, 2027.
- John Ammendola of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Columbus State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Dec. 6, 2021 and ending Aug. 31, 2027.
- Mickey C. Schwarzbek of Sherwood (Defiance County) to the Northwest State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending June 9, 2027.
- Ryan D. Burgess of Bexley (Franklin County) to the Miami University Board of Trustees for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Feb. 28, 2030.
- Michelle A. Gillis of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the University of Cincinnati Board of Trustees for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Jan. 1, 2023.
- John Terrence Patton of Spencer (Medina County) reappointed to the Ohio Athletic Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Sept. 2, 2024.
- Karen McIntyre of Avon (Lorain County), Gary W. Lake of Wadsworth (Medina County) and Anthony Ganim of Hilliard (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers Board for terms beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Aug. 27, 2024.
- Mickey Eugene Frame of Sylvania (Lucas County) reappointed to the State Chiropractic Board for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Nov. 1, 2025.
- Melody Lynne Siska of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Medical Quality Foundation Board for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending July 20, 2022.
- Craig Warren Anderson of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Medical Quality Foundation Board for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending July 20, 2024.
- Robert Friedman of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Nov. 11, 2024.
- Richard Courtney Hylant of Ottawa Hills (Lucas County) reappointed to the Great Lakes Protection Fund Board for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 10, 2023.
- Amy Weiskittel of New Richmond (Clermont County) and Mark Kenneth Papke of Parma Heights (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the Environmental Education Council for terms beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 1, 2023.
- Anthony P. Debevc of Madison (Lake County) to the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending June 30, 2024.
- Juan Manuel Rivera of Youngstown (Mahoning County), Maria Sylvia Martinez of Hamler (Henry County), V. Anthony Simms-Howell of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) and Michael G. Florez of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) reappointed to the Commission on Hispanic-Latino Affairs for terms beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 7, 2024.
- Samantha Shafer of Lancaster (Fairfield County) to the Children's Trust Fund Board for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending July 2, 2024.
- Rhonda Jane Rich of Troy (Miami County) and Matthew Allan Harrison of Greenville (Darke County) reappointed to the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council for terms beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Dec. 31, 2023.
- Kari Dykes Jones of Columbus (Franklin County), Monica Antoinette McCain of Toledo (Lucas County), Timothy John Newell of Springfield (Clark County), Javan Nicholas Brown of Columbus (Franklin County), Molly E. Dible of Findlay (Hancock County) and Isabel Ganz of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) appointed to the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council for terms beginning Nov. 12, 2021

and ending Dec. 31, 2023.

- Thomas Paige Webb of Dayton (Montgomery County) and Nichole LaJune Davis of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 26, 2024.

- Eric S. Richter of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Rail Development Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 20, 2027.

- Frank Lewis Gallucci III of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County), Philip John Fulton of Columbus (Franklin County) and Roger Richard Geiger of Dublin (Franklin County) reappointed to the Industrial Commission Nominating Council for terms beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 20, 2025.

- Peter Jerome Gibson of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Industrial Commission Nominating Council for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 20, 2023.

- Ryan Richard Augsburger of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Industrial Commission Nominating Council for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Oct. 20, 2025.

- Scott R. Everett of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) reappointed to the Credit Union Council for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Sept. 22, 2024.

- David George Enstone of Perrysburg (Wood County) to the Third Frontier Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending April 1, 2022.

- Lauren O. Bakaletz of Hilliard (Franklin County) to the Third Frontier Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending April 1, 2023.

- Jonathan Kent Stock of Westerville (Delaware County) to the Third Frontier Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Sept. 28, 2024.

- Jeffrey Paul Kruihthoff of Lebanon (Warren County) and Victor Viglucci of Rootstown (Portage County) reappointed to the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission for a term beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and ending Sept. 3, 2024.

- Mark K. Milligan of Upper Arlington (Franklin County), Matthew David Rule of Upper Arlington (Franklin County), Jeffrey J. Woda of Columbus (Franklin County), Michael W. Gordon of New Albany (Franklin County), Thomas Anthony Applegate of Dublin (Franklin County), Matthew Patrick Nolan of Lebanon (Warren County), Jeffrey J. Dornbusch of Oak Harbor (Ottawa County), Anthony J. Bornhorst of Fort Loramie (Shelby County), Richard Harold Hoffman of Findlay (Hancock County) and Todd Martin Fentress of Westerville (Delaware County) to the Federally Subsidized Housing Study Committee for terms

beginning Nov. 12, 2021 and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The University of Dayton Research Institute (UDRI) has been awarded an \$88 million contract from the Air Force Research Laboratory for research and development to advance, evaluate and mature Air Force autonomous capabilities. The contract was awarded with initial funding of \$1.8 million. Through the five-year program, dubbed "Soaring Otter," researchers will support the Air Force in its quest to increase its

capabilities in autonomy by maturing autonomy technologies -- including machine learning, artificial intelligence, neural networks, neuromorphic computing and data exploitation -- from lab to field use.

Youngstown State University (YSU) formally announced Monday nine faculty layoffs and the deactivation of 26 programs as part of a long-term strategy "to ensure academic vitality and financial sustainability."

The 26 programs will be deactivated starting in fall 2022. The university said 10 of the programs have no students and three others have just one. At the most, two of the programs have 12 students.

The Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS) and the Alpaugh Family Economics Center released new research showing career technical education and training in Ohio generates \$1.4 billion in economic activity (FY19), supports more than 15,000 jobs, and provides an average return on investment for program graduates of 2,071 percent after 20 years. The center's research team studied the economic and fiscal benefits generated by the operations and capital expenditures of Ohio's 49 career centers, as well as the benefits that programs offered by Ohio's 51 Ohio Technical Centers (OTCs) afford students. OTCs, located throughout the state, serve adult students with career technical education. During the 2018-2019 academic year, a total of 10,773 adult students were enrolled.

The University of Dayton (UD) recently announced Tiffany Taylor Smith as the new vice president for diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the university named Trevor Collier the new dean of the School of Business Administration.

Three new programs to teach telecommunications tower technicians were announced recently as part of the "Strengthening Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce" strategy, with North Central State College (NCSC) in Mansfield, Hocking College in Nelsonville and Vanguard-Sentinel Career and Technology Center in Fremont each planning to offer the 240-hour program. Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced the news during remarks at NCSC, saying the programs represent another way the DeWine administration "is actively

working to eliminate barriers to expanding Ohio's broadband and 5G infrastructure." The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) and BroadbandOhio announced the overall strategy in September.

IMMIGRATION

New policy announced by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) "abandons DHS's duties to enforce or implement entire swaths of immigration law," Attorney General Dave Yost and his counterparts in two other states argued Thursday in a lawsuit. The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio in conjunction with Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich and Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen, targets a policy not to enforce the laws absent aggravating circumstances.

JUDICIAL

A county-operated nursing home says one family's wrongful death claim could threaten the future of all 43 county care facilities in the state if the Ohio Supreme Court does not establish a workable recklessness standard for government immunity. Instead of resolving that question, the Court says it will decide first whether complainants must sue the board of county commissioners rather than the nursing home itself before the judiciary can determine the proper threshold for recklessness in R.C. 2744.02-.03. At the heart of *Estate of Jennings Fleenor v. County of Ottawa dba Ottawa County Riverview Nursing Home* is the death of an octogenarian and double amputee with serious health problems in 2016, six days after he fell in the shower with nurse K.N. and nurse's aide T.M. present. Fleenor denied hitting his head, and the Ottawa County nursing home says no other evidence suggests T.M. "was not paying attention or did anything other than react quickly and do her best to prevent injury."

The Ohio Supreme Court suspended the law licenses of 240 attorneys who failed to register with the Office of Attorney Services for the two years beginning Sept. 1, 2021 and ending Aug. 31, 2023. Suspended lawyers are barred from practicing law in Ohio until they satisfy registration requirements and pay all normal registration fees and a \$300 reinstatement fee.

The Ohio Supreme Court has issued a new administrative order extending its previous directive on remote continuing legal and professional education for guardians ad litem (GAL) through 2022. Citing "ongoing challenges caused by the pandemic," the Court is once again waiving the requirement in Rules 48.04(B)(2) and 48.05(A)(2) of the Ohio Rules of Superintendence for GALs to be physically present for pre-service and continuing education courses currently in place for 2021.

Three Ohio Supreme Court veterans agreed Wednesday that the state's top adjudicatory body holds too important a place in law and public policy to be politicized in its internal workings -- the larger subject of the Columbus Metropolitan Club's (CMC) "In Session: Behind the Curtains of Ohio's Supreme Court." Former Justices Herbert Brown, Mary DeGenaro and Yvette McGee Brown voiced some overlapping views on judicial selection, the impact of "D" and "R" on the ballot, and the importance of oral arguments, however. Justice Patrick Fischer moderated the panel. Among his top questions was the issue of judicial selection.

MARIJUANA/HEMP

Provisions in Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP) "correction" legislation SB261 (S. Huffman) will indirectly lower the state's sky-high weed prices, Sen. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) and cannabis industry leaders said Wednesday. Huffman presented sponsor testimony on the bill before the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The state of Ohio should expeditiously decide how its Medicaid department will pay for "transformative" gene therapies, a fast-growing field of medicine that can change the lives of individuals with serious genetic diseases, according to Infinite Policy Solutions Principal Michael Heifetz in testimony before the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee.

MENTAL HEALTH

The DeWine administration has released a "Mental Health in the Workplace" toolkit to help employers better understand and address workers' potential struggles with drugs and day-to-day life. The Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) has created the eight-page "Employer Toolkit" in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and RecoveryOhio. The "Mental Health in the Workplace Employer Toolkit" can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/kwf7jj6d>.

Mental Health America (MHA) recently launched new resources aimed to help parents and other caregivers work through the challenges of caregiving, start conversations, deal with crises, and address their own mental health. The toolkit was created in recognition of November as National Family Caregivers Month. MHA said it has created new resources for single parents, new fathers -- who may feel left out of parental health conversations -- as well as the "sandwich generation," a term given to people bringing up their own children while caring for aging parents.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) and Ohio Christmas Tree Association (OCTA) are once again sending Ohio-grown Christmas trees to U.S. military members stationed throughout the world. "Operation Evergreen" is an annual event organized by OCTA and held at ODAg's Reynoldsburg facility, according to a news release from ODAg.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has approved more than \$5.2 million through the NatureWorks Grant Program to improve recreation opportunities across the state. ODNR approved a total of 115 projects in 79 counties. Projects include the

acquisition of new park lands and development

of playgrounds, trails, restrooms, baseball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, cornhole play areas, swimming pools, kayak launches and disc golf courses, among other items.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The George Gund Foundation recently named Anthony Richardson its new president, effective January 2022. Richardson has been executive director of The Nord Family Foundation in Amherst, OH since early 2019 and previously served as a program officer at the Gund Foundation. He succeeds David Abbot who is retiring after serving as Gund's president for 19 years, the foundation said.

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) Board of Directors approved the adoption of a new mission statement and appointed the following seven new directors to initial three-year terms at its recent quarterly meeting:

- Dr. Kara Ayers, associate director of the University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and an assistant professor in the University of Cincinnati Department of Pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.
- Chad Brown, health commissioner with the Licking County Health Department.
- Wallace Chambers, deputy director of environmental public health, Cuyahoga County Board of Health.
- Dr. Srinivas Merugu, chief medical officer, United Healthcare Community Plan of Ohio and a clinical assistant professor at Northeast Ohio Medical University.
- Denise Moore, community care liaison for Ohio's Hospice in Dayton.
- Tia Marcel Moretti, associate vice president of behavioral health integration at CareSource.
- Fallon Peterson, program officer for health and social services at the Nord Family Foundation.

PEOPLE

Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish announced Tuesday that he will not seek a third term in office. Budish, a Democrat and former speaker of the Ohio House, made the announcement in a YouTube video.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

Moving expeditiously, the GOP majority in the Ohio General Assembly approved a four-year congressional map over the course of the week, unveiling their agreed upon proposal Monday evening, just prior to a Tuesday committee and floor vote on substitute SB258 (McColley). Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon), the sponsor of SB28, said the map satisfies the General Assembly's obligation to draw new maps, and said the new version of SB258 takes from all of the various maps introduced by the caucuses, as well as the

witnesses who testified during committee hearings. The House took it up on Wednesday in the House Government Oversight Committee and passed it Thursday by a vote of 55-36. It now moves on to the governor for his consideration.

The legal battle over the state legislative map drawn by the Ohio Redistricting Commission will go before the Supreme Court of Ohio on Wednesday, Dec. 8. The high court announced Friday that it was consolidating all three Supreme Court appeals "for oral argument purposes only." *League of Women Voters of Ohio v. Ohio Redistricting Commission, et al.* reached the Court on Sept. 23, followed by *Bennett v. Ohio Redistricting Commission, et al.* on Sept. 24 and *Ohio Organizing Collaborative v. Ohio Redistricting Commission, et al.* on Sept. 27.

TAXATION

Representatives of businesses and schools offered contrasting testimony on HB126 (Merrin) to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, with school officials opposing the bill's changes in how local governments contest property values. The Summit County Land Bank also opposed the bill, while the nonprofit Downtown Cleveland Alliance (DCA) supported it.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission has finished one new toll plaza this year as a part of its new modernized toll collection system and has begun construction on two more, said Commission Director Ferzan Ahmed in an update to commission members on turnpike construction projects during Monday's meeting. He said the bulk of the work was four pavement replacement projects that completed almost 37 miles of replacement in Williams, Fulton, Lucas, Trumbull and Mahoning counties. There were also 40 miles that were resurfaced as a result of other construction projects, with three of those projects continuing into next year.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) issued a reminder Friday that individuals filing claims for unemployment benefits must use an "OH|ID" to access their online account starting Wednesday, Nov. 17. ODJFS began notifying claimants of the changeover in September. That type of account, offered at <https://ohid.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ohid/>, is "a standard used by many state agencies and allows Ohioans to use a single username and password to access state programs and services."

The DeWine administration says as many as 5,000 Ohioans who are refusing employment due to COVID-19 noncompliance in the workplace or who worked for an education provider and are fully or partially unemployed may be eligible to reapply for Pandemic

Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder announced Monday that the administration is contacting approximately 5,000 individuals previously denied PUA before February 2021 who may be due retroactive benefits based on expanded eligibility under the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

WORKFORCE

Ohio ranks first in the Midwest and third nationally for the number of individuals enrolled in state apprenticeship programs, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). Monday marked the beginning of "National Apprenticeship Week." The ApprenticeOhio program has over 19,500 enrolled Ohioans and provides opportunities in 180 occupations, including the fields of health care, advanced manufacturing, energy and computer programming. There are at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 144 hours of classroom training, according to ODJFS, and apprentices are paid while working under mentor supervision. Program completion provides a nationally recognized credential.

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