

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

4/15/2021 - House Finance, (Tenth Hearing)

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

4/13/2021 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)

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

To make appropriations related to public transportation.

CURRENT STATUS

2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance

HB146

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

HB157

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

4/13/2021 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)

SB4

EXEMPT EMS LINE OPERATORS-PUBLIC RECORDS (ROEGNER K)

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

CURRENT STATUS

4/13/2021 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing)

SB15

FISCAL OFFICERS-LIABILITY (WILSON S)

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB18

INTERNAL REVENUE CODE (ROEGNER K, SCHAFFER T)

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

SB32 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION *(RULLI M)*

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

CURRENT STATUS

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

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

4/6/2021 - Introduced

Week in Review

ABORTION

Implementation of the Ohio law requiring fetal remains from surgical abortions to be cremated or buried has been temporarily blocked in court. Hamilton County Common Pleas Court Judge Alison Hatheway granted a preliminary injunction on Monday, blocking 133- SB27 (Uecker) from going into effect. The law was scheduled to go into effect on Tuesday, April 6.

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Residents of senior housing will receive disposal kits for unused prescription drugs as part of an effort by the state, the Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Rx Abuse Leadership Initiative (RALI). More than 22,000 kits have been sent to a dozen regional area agency on aging locations at no cost. The kits can hold pills, liquids or patches; adding water and sealing the pouch deactivates the medicines inside and allows for safe disposal in a household trash can, according to RALI.

AGING

The Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) announced Wednesday additional funding to support Older Americans Act home-delivered meal services during the pandemic. On Monday, April 5, the Ohio Controlling Board approved the department's request to invest \$6.14 million received from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. These funds will be distributed to Ohio's area agencies on aging to provide home-delivered meals to eligible older Ohioans.

AGRICULTURE

The 2021 Ohio State Fair will not feature rides, concerts or other normal fair activities as the state continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, General Manager Virgil Strickler said Thursday, citing staffing and revenue issues as the main reasons for the decision. The Ohio Expositions Commission unanimously approved Strickler's recommendation to limit the fair to agricultural and educational competitions for exhibitors, their families and guests. The general public will not be allowed to attend unless public health circumstances change, Strickler said.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

A total of 19,180 fans will be allowed to attend Ohio State University's (OSU) spring football game at Ohio Stadium, the university announced Thursday. The intersquad scrimmage is scheduled for noon on Saturday, April 17, according to a news release from OSU.

FY20-21 BUDGET

Ohio is three quarters of a billion dollars ahead after three quarters of FY21, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) said Tuesday in its preliminary revenue report for March. OBM Director Kim Murnieks told *Hannah News* variations from estimates in tax categories for the month represent issues of timing or continuation of trends seen throughout the pandemic. For example, a March miss on personal income tax payments of 6.8 percent of \$38.4 million compensates for overages in January and February resulting from the delayed opening of the federal income tax filing system. "Robust" performance in the auto sales tax -- up \$32.3 million or 23.5 percent -- is in line with past months, driven by pandemic era trends, including shifting consumer demand and a constrained supply of vehicles that drives up per unit pricing.

FY22-23 BUDGET

Think tank Policy Matters Ohio (PMO) offered its "People's Budget" in response to the recent state biennial budget bill, saying that the official state budget mostly benefits the wealthiest Ohioans and big corporations while the group's proposal offers more government support for working class Ohioans and minority groups. PMO Communications Director Caitlin Johnson said the executive budget recommendations from the DeWine administration continue the "failed trickle-down policies of the past 15 years," and she lauded the recent American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress for its broad financial support of government assistance programs.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

The DeWine administration announced Aetna won the contract to assist with the OhioRISE program, a specialized managed care initiative for Medicaid-eligible children with significant behavioral health needs.

CORONAVIRUS

Gov. Mike DeWine Monday said his administration is issuing a new health order that will consolidate some previous health orders and repeal others, moving to what he called a "back to basics approach" that emphasizes mask wearing, hand washing and social distancing. Most of all, he said the order will make it clear that events such as proms, graduations and festivals can be held this year, but those attending need to take "common sense" precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Ohio is getting \$105.6 million from the federal government to help expand efforts to distribute COVID-19 vaccinations, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced Tuesday. Ohio's share is part of \$3 billion in awards across the U.S. with funding from the recently enacted American Rescue Plan and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

The Reimagine Main Street (RMS) project -- part of Public Private Strategies (PPS) -- hosted a discussion Tuesday on what small businesses are doing to promote COVID-19 vaccination, with a Springfield hair salon owner among those answering questions. The discussion focused on minority-owned businesses in particular and also featured Kristina Schake, who handles public education efforts regarding the vaccine at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The 1851 Center for Constitutional Law this week touted a judge's opinion that the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) does not have the authority to issue or enforce mandatory mask or social distancing orders, though the judge said the case does not give him the authority to address that issue judicially. Ashland County Court of Common Pleas Judge Ronald Forsthoefel issued the opinion essentially ending a lawsuit filed by the 1851 Center on behalf of Cattlemans Restaurant in Savannah, OH, against the Ashland County Department of Health, after the local agency suspended the restaurant's operating license for noncompliance with ODH's "Dine Safe Ohio Order" last July.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA) said in a release recently that it is seeking partners to help Ohio's small, minority-owned and socially- or economically-disadvantaged businesses "develop and grow" through the Minority Business Assistance Centers (MBAC) Program. The MBAC program offers no-cost counseling, state certification support and training focused on creating jobs and increasing sales to Ohio minority-owned and economically-disadvantaged businesses.

EDUCATION

The State Board of Education's (SBOE) Legislative Committee met Monday to review two proposals for reforming the school report card system. Both staff with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) as well as board members repeatedly referenced the importance of viewing the proposals through an equity lens. Marjorie Yano, legislative director for ODE, gave a review of HB200 (Jones-Robinson) and SB145 (Brenner), highlighting the similarities and differences between the two bills.

The State Board of Education's (SBOE) Budget Committee met virtually Monday to hear an overview of education funding in the state budget. Monday's inaugural meeting also included a review of the goals for the panel, chaired by board member Mike Toal, including providing for greater understanding of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) budget, allowing the board to have meaningful input into development of the budget, and providing oversight of budget implementation and resource utilization.

As part of its RemotEDx initiative, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) recently awarded subgrants to nonprofit and community-based organizations partnering with schools to help improve remote caring, teaching and learning opportunities for underserved students in Ohio.

At the virtual 41st Governor's Annual Holocaust Commemoration, Gov. Mike DeWine and legislative leadership emphasized the importance of keeping the memories of the Holocaust alive by passing them on to Ohio children to ensure that such an event never happens again. DeWine, House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima), and Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) said the state's newly formed Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission created through 133-SB372 (Rulli) will be an important measure to fund and send educational resources to Ohio schools and Holocaust museums and memorials.

The State Board of Education's (SBOE) Legislative Committee met for the second time this week to approve a resolution that makes recommendations about provisions in two pending legislative proposals for school report card reform. The resolution states the committee supports eliminating the current A-F letter grade rating system used in the school report card and replacing it with a new rating system "that is clear and easy for families to understand." Both bills do away with the A-F letter grade rating system and propose new systems.

The Ohio departments of higher education (ODHE) and education (ODE) Thursday announced funding awards totaling nearly \$1 million as part of a state initiative to increase the number of students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). As part of the recently launched FAFSA 21 initiative, awards totaling \$966,772 will be shared among 23 recipients, including college access groups, educational service centers, and colleges and universities. The awards are part of \$2.85 million in the federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding that will be invested for FAFSA completion projects over the next year and a half. These funds will be used to support direct intervention, data system upgrades and professional development.

ELECTIONS

The Stark County Board of Elections has filed a lawsuit in the Ohio Supreme Court against its own county commissioners after the commissioners rejected a request from the elections board to purchase voting machines made by Dominion Voting Systems for use in the county.

ELECTIONS 2021

Early voting started Tuesday for the Tuesday, May 4 primary election.

ELECTIONS 2022

Former Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton said Tuesday that while she is honored by the support for a possible run for

the U.S. Senate in 2022, she will not be entering the race for the Democratic nomination. Her announcement came on the same day a third Republican -- Cleveland businessman Bernie Moreno -- announced he was running for the seat now held by U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH).

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 6.0 percent in March, down from 6.2 percent in February (see *The Hannah Report*, 3/5/21), according to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Non-farm payroll employment increased by 916,000, BLS said in a news release, reflecting "continued resumption of economic activity that had been curtailed" by the pandemic.

Gov. Mike DeWine announced Thursday that he is recommending Ohio use some of the federal funds received under the American Rescue Plan to pay back the \$1.46 billion loaned to the state to cover unemployment compensation (UC) costs. He discussed the proposal with House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) Thursday morning, saying that they agree with it.

For the week ending April 3, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 44,985 initial unemployment claims to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). That number is lower than last week's, when the department reported 54,343 jobless claims. ODJFS said potentially fraudulent claims are likely inflating the totals from this week and recent weeks.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

FirstEnergy Corp. recently named Antonio Fernandez as the vice president and chief ethics and compliance officer, effective Monday, April 12.

Residents and small businesses in Columbus will have the choice to receive electricity exclusively from renewable energy resources beginning in June 2021 after 76 percent of voters approved the aggregation program Clean Energy Columbus (CEC) in November 2020. It will provide electric consumers 100 percent clean energy from Ohio-based wind and solar fields.

Ohio's shale gas production fell slightly to close out 2020 and by a larger margin compared to its historical high point in the fourth quarter of 2019 as the industry worked to recover from the COVID-19 slowdown. Oil, meanwhile, took a beating in the final months last year as the nation prepared for a new administration, tumbling 33 percent year-over-year since the previous Q4. Michael Chadsey of the Ohio Oil and Gas Association (OOGA) says the first three months of 2021 nevertheless could be a sign of good things to come, at least in the shorter term.

The newly renamed AES Ohio -- formerly Dayton Power & Light (DP&L) -- is proposing a \$11.26 monthly average residential rate hike that would net the utility an additional \$121 million per year if approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). In its first meeting led by newly appointed Chairwoman Jenifer French Wednesday, the commission accepted AES Ohio's application for a rate increase by a 4-0 vote, leaving many months of staff review and stakeholder comments before a final figure is approved.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) is questioning the fitness of Columbia Gas of Ohio's field training program after its third safety breakdown in less than two years in Ohio -- an explosion destroying three homes and vehicles worth more than \$800,000. PUCO blames operator training and failure to follow Columbia's existing guidelines for a Nov. 23, 2020 explosion during gas main repairs at 3764 County Road 15, South Point in Lawrence County, which the agency declared a "total loss." One company employee working at the site also suffered first and second degree burns but was released from the hospital later that day.

FEDERAL

U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) officer William Evans died Friday due to injuries sustained when a suspect hit a barricade with his car, striking Evans and another officer who was injured, and then lunged at them with a knife. The suspect also died after being shot, according to media reports and USCP statements, and the motivations behind the attack are not yet publicly known. Many state and federal officials in Ohio offered their condolences after the death.

At least 17 Ohioans have been charged in federal court regarding the Jan. 6 events in Washington, D.C., according to recent reports from the Associated Press.

A joint project between two universities recently released the latest edition rating members of Congress on their effectiveness, finding five Ohio Republicans exceeded what would be expected of them based on their seniority and status as a member of the majority or the minority, among other metrics. The Center for Effective Lawmaking (CEL) was created in 2017 in a collaboration between the University of Virginia's Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and Vanderbilt University "to advance the generation, communication, and use of new knowledge about the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and legislative institutions in Congress." For Ohio's delegation, five Republican members scored an "exceeding expectations," led by U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Cincinnati), who also scored in the top 10 for House Republicans, coming in at No. 8.

While the American Rescue Plan will provide much-needed support to families struggling during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, that law is just the starting point in rebuilding the country to better serve middle-class, low-income and marginalized communities across the nation, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said Wednesday. "As critical as the rescue plan is -- it's just that, it's a rescue to mobilize our resources to get through an emergency. Returning to the same broken system is simply not acceptable. Hard work hasn't paid off for far too many workers. It's not good enough. This country should be about the dignity of work. If you work hard and you play by the rules -- whether you work for an hourly wage or tips, or whether you're a moderate-income salary worker or whether you're taking care of aging parents or raising children. Hard work isn't paying off," Brown said during his remarks on the final day of

the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) conference.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Statehouse Garage closed the north entrance and exit off of Broad Street, and the north exit to Third Street effective Monday, April 5. Parkers will need to use the south ramps at Third and State streets.

Responding to a newspaper report in which she was identified as the only Democrat in the General Assembly unsure about whether to be vaccinated for COVID, Sen. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland) issued a statement saying she supports vaccinations but has an autoimmune disease, noting a CDC advisory saying there is no data available on the safety of the vaccines for people with autoimmune conditions.

Hannah News interview series with freshman lawmakers featured Rep. Ron Ferguson (R-Wintersville), who said that working as a TV news reporter and then as a grassroots lobbying organizer for Americans for Prosperity, he had people telling him he should consider running for office again, following an unsuccessful first attempt to win the 96th House District in 2014.

Also featured was Rep. Dan Troy (D-Willowick), self-described "perpetual student" who has been examining and influencing public policy for most of four decades and returned to the Ohio General Assembly in 2021 with a "pragmatic" rather than ideological approach to the people's business.

Also featured was Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville), who said after going from high school to the U.S. Army following the 9/11 attacks, he felt a calling to public service when he returned home.

House sponsors of the recently introduced "Madeline's Law" held a virtual news conference Wednesday to highlight the importance of hearing aids for the development of language and academics for children who are hearing-impaired. HB198 (Russo-Manchester) would mandate that insurers cover hearing aids and associated costs for people under 21 years old, with the bill's having previously been introduced as 133-HB243 (Russo-Weinstein), which received hearings and proponent testimony in the House Health Committee but was never voted on.

GOVERNOR

Gov. Mike DeWine Friday announced the appointment of Susan K. Steinhauer to the Summit County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations Division, and Bertha Garcia Helmick to the Hamilton County Municipal Court.

GREAT LAKES

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is now offering \$5 million in Erosion Emergency Assistance Grants. "Ohio's Lake Erie coast is treasured for its natural beauty and unparalleled recreation opportunities," ODNR Director Mary Mertz said in a news release. "These grants will fund vital programs to assist communities in preserving and caring for our coastline." These grant funds, made possible through capital budget bill 133-SB310 (Dolan), will be used for erosion control projects for properties on Lake Erie.

GUNS

Rep. Jessica E. Miranda (D-Forest Park) and Sen. Cecil Thomas (D-Cincinnati) announced the creation of the bicameral Ohio Gun Violence Prevention Caucus. They said an invitation has been sent to all Ohio House and Senate members to participate in this new legislative caucus focused on raising awareness and advocating for gun safety measures in Ohio.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Foundation (OPPF) announced the Ohio CareLine as winner of 2020's Enlightenment Award. The award recognizes outstanding activities or presentations during 2020 that enhance the public's access to treatment; enhance the public's understanding of mental health and substance use disorders; and/or decrease the stigma often associated with these disorders. The Ohio CareLine is a toll-free emotional support call service created by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) and administered in community settings.

Ohio ranks 47th among states in a comparison of its population health outcomes and its health care spending, the same ranking it had when the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) first issued its Health Value Dashboard report in 2014. The 2021 dashboard represents the fourth iteration of the health value rating by HPIO; the state ranked 47th in the 2014 issue and 46th in the 2017 and 2019 editions.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) recently announced a relaunch of a web portal meant to provide a centralized location for businesses and universities to connect. "The Ohio Innovation Exchange (OIEx) ... provides a powerful, centralized web platform that connects business and industry with faculty research, equipment and facilities at Ohio's universities, facilitating partnerships and fostering economic development throughout the state. OIEx consolidates academic resources into a single easily accessible portal, eliminating the need for business professionals to search each university site individually," ODHE explained in a release. The relaunched portal can be found at <https://www.ohioinnovationexchange.org/>.

College Now Greater Cleveland, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, the Ohio Student Association and Policy Matters Ohio have joined together to form a coalition advocating for policies to increase access to higher education for Ohioans.

Kent State University announced Friday the selection of Manfred van Dulmen to serve as the university's associate provost for academic affairs and dean of the Division of Graduate Studies, effective Friday, April 16. Van Dulmen has been serving as interim associate provost for academic affairs since 2019 and interim dean of the Division of Graduate Studies since 2020.

Miami University announced Thursday it will be test optional and not require ACT or SAT test scores of first-year students applying for admission for fall 2022 and spring 2023 in an effort to ensure equitable access for students affected by test cancellations and other implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outlining her view on how the transition from Trump to Biden administrations will affect the future of human spaceflight, former NASA Deputy Administrator Lori Garver recently sat down with Ohio State University's (OSU) John Glenn College of Public Affairs Dean Trevor Brown for the latest episode in a series of videos with "policymakers, influencers and public service professionals."

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The federal government under President Joe Biden will be much more active in addressing the problem of homelessness than the past administration, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Marcia Fudge told Ohio housing advocates on Monday. "My main message to you is this -- help is finally here," Fudge said during the opening session of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio's (COHHIO) three-day virtual conference.

The state of Ohio is expecting to receive about \$90 million from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) to address homelessness, according to Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA) Director Lydia Mihalik.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) should receive a funding increase in the state budget bill, HB110 (Oelslager), Sen. Bill Blessing (R-Cincinnati) and Rep. Erica Crawley (D-Columbus) said Wednesday. Both lawmakers provided remarks and answered questions during a legislative workshop hosted by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) as part of the organization's three-day conference. Blessing said he's hopeful that the House's version will include increased dollars from the General Revenue Fund (GRF) for the OHTF, but emphasized that he will propose it in his chamber regardless of what the House does.

February home sales were about on pace with last year's activity, according to Ohio Realtors, dropping from 9,418 to 9,366, a 0.6 percent difference. Prices, however, rose substantially, with February's average of \$209,945 coming in 12 percent higher than the average of \$187,375 seen a year earlier.

JUDICIAL

Judge Mark E. Repp has led the Tiffin-Fostoria Municipal Court for most of two decades but is now facing disciplinary charges for "abusing his contempt power" and "impatient, undignified, discourteous" conduct in court, according to Ohio Disciplinary Counsel Joseph Caligiuri. His complaint against Repp comes before the Board of Professional Conduct this month.

The overhaul of Ohio's bail system takes effect on July 1 with a major concession to public safety as compared to the original proposal circulated by the Ohio Supreme Court for a statewide switch to personal recognizance versus monetary bonds. New language in Rule. 5.02 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio requires all counties to eliminate cash bail as the first method of holding charged suspects accountable. Counties with more than one municipal and county court also must adopt a uniform bail schedule.

The Ohio Supreme Court has issued its 2021 Pro Bono Survey in partnership with the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation (OAJF) to the state's 44,000 licensed attorneys. The Court and foundation use the information to identify delivery gaps in legal services and to strengthen the network of law-related help available to the one in five Ohioans who qualify for civil legal aid. The online Pro Bono Survey can be found at www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/attysvcs/survey.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Traffic camera restrictions included in the previous transportation budget represent unconstitutional violations of municipal home rule powers, a state appeals court ruled recently. The Second District Court of Appeals partially upheld a Montgomery County Common Pleas Court decision in a lawsuit brought by the city of Dayton over provisions of 133-HB62 (Oelslager). Judge Mary Donovan wrote the recent opinion, joined by Judges Michael Hall and Michael Tucker, that agreed the provisions violate the home rule amendment of the Ohio Constitution, but overturned the trial court determination that provisions also violated the constitution's single subject rule.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The Controlling Board Monday heard a presentation from Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Director Maureen Corcoran regarding the state's shift to a single pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) for all the state's Medicaid managed care organizations (MCO) and also approved all spending requests on the board's agenda.

NATURAL RESOURCES

All four of Ohio's designated all-purpose vehicle (APV) areas are now open, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

An Ohio artist has taken home first place in this year's Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp Design Competition sponsored by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife. Sean Johnson, of Louisville, will have his painting of canvasback ducks displayed on the Ohio wetlands habitat stamp issued in fall 2022.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has approved more than \$6.3 million in Clean Ohio Trails Fund grants, according to the DeWine administration. "Trails bring families together, promote healthy living, and can connect people across the state," Gov. Mike DeWine said in an ODNR news release. "These grants provide communities with more options to help people get outside and enjoy the natural beauty that the Buckeye State has to offer."

Station Road Bridge has been reopened following a major renovation, Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) announced Monday. The bridge had been closed since November 2020.

PEOPLE

Innovation Ohio recently named Rachel Coyle as communications director. She previously worked for Ohio Senate Democrats, among other roles.

Government Technology Magazine recently recognized "Team Ohio" -- Lt. Gov. Jon Husted and State CIO Ervan Rodgers -- among the publication's Top 25 Doers, Dreamers & Drivers of 2021.

The Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) and its small business division, Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE), recognized five state leaders with its 2020 Small Business Advocate of the Year Awards: House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima), Sen. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland), Rep. Stephanie Howse (D-Cleveland), Ohio Department of Health Director and former BWC Administrator Stephanie McCloud, and Treasurer Robert Sprague.

Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) recently received the Dorothy Allison Lifetime Achievement Award from the Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The award recognizes his "lifetime commitment, service, and dedication as an advocate and friend to individuals in Madison County with disabilities and their families."

Internationally known conservationist and Director Emeritus of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium Jack Hanna has been diagnosed with dementia, now believed to be Alzheimer's Disease, wrote his daughters Kathaleen, Suzanne and Julie Hanna in a letter they shared on Twitter Wednesday. "His condition has progressed much faster in the last few months than any of us could have anticipated," reads the letter. "Sadly, Dad is no longer able to participate in public life as he used to, where people all over the world watched, learned and laughed alongside him."

The Ohio Library Council (OLC) announced that it has hired Laurie Miller as its new director of professional development. She currently serves as the senior events manager for the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) and has been on the OSBA staff since 2005. Her experience includes working with subject matter experts to develop and execute educational workshops, webinars and virtual events.

Former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) Thursday announced his resignation as chairman of Ohio's Future Foundation, which he founded. The Board of Directors is scheduled to meet in the upcoming days to elect a new chairman.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) planned to join with other members of the 6-State Trooper Project this week for a distracted driving enforcement blitz. The high-visibility enforcement will include state police from Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, as well as OSHP.

As many 1,250 sheriff's deputies in every region of Ohio fall short of complying with state standards for use of deadly force, bias-free policing, community engagement and the like, and departments employing another 1,250-plus deputies have completed only minimum requirements for certification by the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS). The ODPS Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) has released new numbers on local compliance and non-compliance with state policing standards developed over the last six years by the Ohio Community-Police Collaborative Advisory Board for roughly 900 law enforcement agencies statewide.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

While the Census data that is needed to create new General Assembly and congressional maps may not be available until September, a coalition of voting groups Monday said lawmakers should start the process now and make it more transparent as Ohio implements a new method approved by voters for drawing maps. Fair Districts Ohio, which includes Common Cause Ohio and the League of Women Voters of Ohio, outlined how they believe the process should go, with hearings beginning immediately and the state's running a redistricting process for the General Assembly concurrent with the process for drawing congressional lines.

Ohio students will get a chance to show if they can draw better legislative district lines than state mapmakers thanks to a contest announced by the Ohio Education Association (OEA). OEA said its Design Ohio's Future contest is open to all Ohio middle and high school students as well as all OEA members. Entrants can design their maps using the free community webtool at <https://districtr.org/>, click the 'share' button, and submit their map's URL on the OEA website at <https://www.ohea.org/design-ohios-future-contest/>. Full contest rules are on the submission page. All entries are due no later than May 1, 2021.

TAXATION

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation released a report Wednesday on the economic effects of the state's Business Income Deduction (BID) that included a study conducted by Ernst & Young (EY) on the foundation's behalf. The study is the first comprehensive analysis of the BID in Ohio, according to a release from the foundation. The study suggested the deduction led to a \$5.9 billion increase in economic activity in 2018 and support for the employment of over 59,000 Ohioans, including 14,000 who work

at small businesses. Around 1,200 businesses were able to remain in operation due to benefits of the BID, according to the study.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

More than 1,000 households in East Cleveland will be able to access high speed Internet for \$15/month under a pilot program announced by Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted Wednesday. The program is the result of a public-private partnership, spurred by BroadbandOhio, that includes Case Western Reserve University, Connect, Cuyahoga County, Eaton Corporation, East Cleveland City Schools, GE Lighting - a Savant company, Greater Cleveland Partnership, InnovateOhio, Microsoft, OARnet, PCs for People, University Hospitals and the Urban League of Cleveland.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced this week that orange barrel season is officially underway in Ohio for 2021. The agency has been holding events around the state to highlight the projects it will be undertaking this year, including an event in Columbus along I-71 on Wednesday to outline \$540 million in projects for Central Ohio. That includes 44 pavement improvement projects, 18 bridge projects and 13 safety upgrades.

With the recent proposal of a \$2 trillion infrastructure package from President Joe Biden, the Columbus Metropolitan Club (CMC) Wednesday forum focused on the future of transportation and infrastructure in Ohio. The forum, moderated by Columbus Business First Editor-in-Chief Doug Buchanan, featured Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Director Jack Marchbanks as well as Harvey Miller, director of the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) and professor in the Department of Geography at Ohio State University (OSU), and Kevin Chambers, managing director of logistics, distribution and supply chain at JobsOhio.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced details on its Medical and Health Symposium, which runs from Thursday through Saturday, April 8-10. The year's theme is "Comprehensive Care for an Injured Worker," according to a BWC release, and the event will feature education tracks and credits for health care practitioners, their staff and legal professionals.