

info@oesca.org • May 11, 2020

This May 11, 2020, Legislative e-Update is provided by OESCA to Ohio's ESCs, their client school districts, and other key education stakeholders. The e-Update provides information on the education bills of interest to Ohio's public education community introduced during the 133rd General Assembly. Only pending bills that have received any activity in the past 60 days are included. Bills are organized in order of last action date with the most recent activities listed in descending order. There are also links to the state bill page for users to download any bills, analyses or fiscal notes. The document concludes with the latest news from Capitol Square.

Legislative Tracking Report

The following education bill of interest are monitored by OESCA on behalf of the membership and client districts. Bills are organized according to last action date:

- HB620** **HEALTH IMPACT STATEMENTS, INTERAGENCY TEAM (CRAWLEY E)** To require the Legislative Service Commission to create health impact statements for introduced bills and to create the Health and Equity Interagency Team.
Current Status: 5/7/2020 - Introduced
Categories: General Assembly
ORC Sections: 103.13, 103.132, 3701.35
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-620>
- HB619** **ODH PUBLISH INFECTIOUS DISEASE INFORMATION (JORDAN K, HILLYER B)** To require the Department of Health to compile and publish certain information on its web site during a state of emergency relating to infectious disease.
Current Status: 5/7/2020 - Introduced
Categories: Health Care
ORC Sections: 3701.147
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-619>
- HB618** **NOW ACT (BECKER J)** To limit the authority of the Governor and the Department of Health to issue orders regarding contagious or infectious diseases, to prohibit any order from affecting the conduct of an election, to designate its provisions as the "Need Ohio Working (NOW) Act," and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 5/6/2020 - Introduced
Categories: Administration - Governor
ORC Sections: 107.22, 161.09, 3701.13, 3701.14, 3707.04, 3707.05, 3707.26, 3709.20, 3709.21
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-618>
- 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: 5/6/2020 - Introduced
Categories: Education

ORC Sections: 4511.773

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-615>

SB294 **ABSENTEE VOTING (HUFFMAN M)** To extend absent voting by mail for the March 17, 2020, primary election to April 28, 2020, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight and Reform

All Bill Status: 3/24/2020 - Introduced

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-294>

HB617 **LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL PROCEDURES - SHUTDOWN ORDERS (JORDAN K)** To establish certain time frames and legislative approval procedures as conditions governing the authority of the Department of Health to issue statewide shelter-in-place or stay-at-home orders for preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases, to invalidate existing statewide shelter-in-place or stay-at-home orders issued by the Department, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/6/2020 - Introduced

Categories: General Assembly

ORC Sections: 3701.13

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-617>

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

All Bill Status: 3/25/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Health Care

ORC Sections: 4143.01, 4143.02, 4143.03, 4143.04, 4143.05, 4143.06, 4143.07, 4143.08, 4143.09, 4143.99

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-299>

SCR12 **DENOUNCE DISCRIMINATION-COVID-19 (MAHARATH T)** To denounce all forms of stigmatization, racism, and discrimination occurring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current Status: 5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary

All Bill Status: 4/8/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Civil and Human Rights, Health Care

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SCR-12>

SB181 **WORKFORCE-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS (COLEY W)** To require the Chancellor of Higher Education to create a template for workforce-education partnership programs.

Current Status: 5/12/2020 - House Higher Education, (First Hearing)

All Bill Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Higher Education

11/6/2019 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 33-0

11/6/2019 - Bills for Third Consideration

10/30/2019 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Higher Education , (Third Hearing)

10/2/2019 - Senate Higher Education , (Second Hearing)

9/18/2019 - Senate Higher Education , (First Hearing)

9/11/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Higher Education

8/9/2019 - Introduced

Categories: Economic & Workforce Development, Higher Education

ORC Sections: 3333.93

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-181>

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

All Bill Status: 3/23/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Health Care

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-581>

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

All Bill Status: 3/23/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Budget and Appropriations

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-582>

HB569 **EXTEND CHILDCARE RATING DEADLINE (SMITH K)** To extend the date by which publicly funded child care providers must be rated through the Step Up to Quality Program and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Health

All Bill Status: 3/23/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Children and Family Issues

ORC Sections: 5104.31

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-569>

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: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Criminal Justice

All Bill Status: 2/5/2020 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 32-0

2/5/2020 - Bills for Third Consideration

1/22/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Fourth Hearing)

10/9/2019 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Third Hearing)

10/2/2019 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Second Hearing)

9/17/2019 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing)

6/11/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce

4/22/2019 - Introduced

Categories: Transportation & Infrastructure

ORC Sections: 2743.51, 2903.06, 2903.08, 2929.14, 4510.17, 4511.181, 4511.75, 4511.751, 4511.76, 5.501

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-134>

HB606 **CIVIL IMMUNITY - COVID-19 TRANSMISSION (GRENDSELL 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, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/12/2020 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing)

All Bill Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Civil Justice
4/10/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Health Care

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-606>

HB587 **SUSPEND ED-CHOICE PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIPS** (ROBINSON P, PATTERSON J) To suspend all performance-based Educational Choice scholarships for the 2020-2021 school year, to make changes to the Educational Choice Scholarship Program and the expansion of that program for the 2021-2022 school year and each school year thereafter, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Primary and Secondary Education

All Bill Status: 3/24/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Education

ORC Sections: 3310.02, 3310.03, 3310.032, 3310.08, 3310.16

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-587>

HB573 **COVID-19 - OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE** (SOBECKI L, BOGGS K) To make COVID-19 an occupational disease under the Workers' Compensation Law under certain circumstances and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/12/2020 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)

All Bill Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Insurance
3/23/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Health Care

ORC Sections: 4123.68

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-573>

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

All Bill Status: 3/25/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Economic & Workforce Development

ORC Sections: 4143.01, 4143.02, 4143.03, 4143.04, 4143.05, 4143.06, 4143.07, 4143.08, 4143.09, 4143.99

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-593>

HB585 **EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS WAIVER - COVID-19** (PATTERSON J, ROBINSON P) To waive certain primary and secondary education requirements to account for school closings in compliance with the Director of Health's order due to the implications of COVID-19 and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Primary and Secondary Education

All Bill Status: 3/24/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Education

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-585>

HB577 **DISSOLVE ACADEMIC DISTRESS COMMISSIONS** (MILLER J, LIGHTBODY M) To dissolve existing academic distress commissions, to place a moratorium on the creation of academic distress commissions, to establish the School Transformation Board, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Primary and Secondary Education

All Bill Status: 3/23/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Education

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-577>

HB603

INTEREST RATE WAIVER - STUDENT LOANS (INGRAM C, LIGHTBODY M) To require the Chancellor of Higher Education to waive interest rates and suspend payments on state student loan programs for up to sixty days, to require the Chancellor to conduct a study to assist institutions of higher education and students during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/12/2020 - House Higher Education, (First Hearing)

All Bill Status: 5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Higher Education
4/6/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Higher Education

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-603>

HB612

DELAY FIVE-YEAR PROJECTION PLANS (SOBECKI L, MILLER J) To delay the requirement for public schools to submit a new five-year projection of operational revenues and expenditures and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 5/4/2020 - Introduced

Categories: Education

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-612>

Capitol Square in Review

Friday, May 8, 2020

FY 20-21 BUDGET

Sales taxes have been a relatively stable source of revenue for states when the economy has turned downward previously, according to the Pew Charitable Trust's state fiscal health project, but the COVID-19 is presenting new challenges to state budgets that are already stressed from higher unemployment as businesses close and furlough workers.

Gov. Mike DeWine announced during his daily briefing Tuesday that his administration will be reducing General Revenue Fund spending by \$775 million for the remainder of FY20 as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect state revenues. Preliminary April revenue data released by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) on Wednesday showed the state finished the month \$866.5 million, or about 35.3 percent, below estimates. While the state was running ahead of estimates throughout the fiscal year into February, with that month exceeding estimates by \$100 million, OBM Director Kim Murnieks told reporters on a call Wednesday that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to nearly \$1 billion swing in the opposite direction over the last two months.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

Groundwork Ohio recently released "guiding principles" meant to be used as a lens for policy decisions affecting young children and their families during the coronavirus pandemic. The guidelines are based on research gathered by the advocacy group.

CORONAVIRUS

Over the week, coronavirus case statistics increased from 18,743 cases and 1,002 deaths reported Friday, May 1 to 22,131 total cases and 1,271 deaths reported on Thursday, May 7.

Gov. Mike DeWine's new order outlining restrictions in the COVID-19 pandemic took effect on Friday, but DeWine said not to pay attention to the expiration date as he plans to release new orders opening up parts of the economy throughout the month that will supersede it. Calling the order "Stay Safe Ohio" instead of a stay-at-home order, DeWine said he picked Friday, May 29 as an expiration date because he had to name one, but he expects to open up more of the state throughout the month. While much of the order remains the same as the previous stay-at-home order, provisions will allow some retail businesses to open sooner than Tuesday, May 12 for curbside pick-up and appointment-only service.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will now provide 21-day trend data at coronavirus.ohio.gov so the public can better understand COVID-19 developments, Gov. Mike DeWine announced during his daily coronavirus briefing Monday. "We've asked the folks who do the chart and do the data to give us a 21-day trend, because a 21-day trend gives you a fairly good idea of how we are doing. Are we doing better? Are we doing worse? Are we doing the same?" DeWine said. "There are a lot of things to look at, but I always look at hospitalizations, because hospitalization is a real figure. These are people who go in because they know they have COVID-19."

Calling it "a gamble," Gov. Mike DeWine outlined the reopening plan for restaurants, bars and personal services such as barbershops, salons, spas and massage parlors while also stressing the importance of collective responsibility. Restaurants and bars can reopen for outdoor seating on Friday, May 15, he said, and for indoor seating on Thursday, May 21. Personal services will also be able to reopen on May 15. He said an announcement on child care services is expected Monday.

On the House changes to and passage of SB1 (McColley-Roegner), DeWine pledged to veto the bill should the Senate pass it, explaining that the current law regarding the health director's authority has been in statute for around

100 years and has been used before, he said, noting Ohio currently faces an emergency unlike anything since the 1918 influenza pandemic. In light of that, DeWine told reporters he did not understand why there was an effort to change the law to require legislative approval of health orders extending beyond 14 days. The nature of health emergencies is that they require "quick action," he continued, and the only reason the state is in a position to reopen businesses now is because of "highly successful" orders under that authority.

Cincinnati Children's Hospital announced Tuesday that it had become one of four U.S. participants in a clinical trial for vaccine candidates to prevent COVID-19. The trial, part of a global effort, started in Germany where the first participants completed dosing last week. The other U.S. testing sites are the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and the University of Rochester Medical Center/Rochester Regional Health. Vaccine candidates were developed jointly by BioNTech SE and Pfizer Inc.

Small businesses would be considered "essential" during a pandemic if they sell products similar to large retailers deemed "essential" by a public health order under new legislation from Reps. Jon Cross (R-Kenton) and Shane Wilkin (R-Hillsboro). The "Ohio Business Fairness Act", HB621, would allow for any business selling items similar to those found in Walmart, for example, to continue operating as long as they also comply with health and safety protocols required for essential businesses under the order.

ECONOMY

Many of Ohio's "essential" workers lack employer-provided health care and receive such low wages that they need food stamps to help feed their families, according to a new report from left-leaning think tank Policy Matters Ohio (PMO). "In the face of a pandemic, many working people who are paid low wages are risking their lives to care for patients in nursing homes and to keep the grocery stores stocked. Many have lost their jobs and are still waiting for unemployment support to arrive," PMO Communications Director Caitlin Johnson said during a press call announcing the release of the report, "Working for Less 2020."

EDUCATION

School disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic are bringing to the fore inequities that predate the crisis, as well as the necessity of tailoring instruction to meet individual needs, State Board of Education President Laura Kohler told *Hannah News*. In a phone interview, Kohler said it's important for the General Assembly to set a clear policy direction on remote learning, which will then help the board and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) assist local schools with implementation.

The attorney appointed by a court to supervise assets of the defunct Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) is seeking to use most of the school's remaining cash to pay its debt to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) for unemployment compensation benefits. That proposal drew an objection from former ECOT Treasurer Michele Smith, who says the law and the court's established protocols on claims against the school hold her and other creditors' claims should be reviewed before any such distributions happens.

ODE continues to share new guidance as students and schools grapple with disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic, which has shuttered all school buildings in Ohio and shifted education online. All of ODE's pandemic guidance is posted at www.education.ohio.gov/coronavirus.

ELECTIONS 2020

Secretary of State Frank LaRose Friday issued a directive ordering county boards of elections to count only provisional ballots of those who cast them in-person last Tuesday if they had applied for an absentee ballot by the deadline, or if they met the qualifications under HB197 (Powell-Merrin).

U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan's (D-Niles) re-election campaign announced that Kimberly Padilla will lead its fundraising efforts for the 2020 cycle. Padilla also works with U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and helped raise millions of dollars in contributions during his three U.S. Senate campaigns.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Ohio's forecasted March 2020 annualized employment growth rate is -2.25 percent. The following metropolitan service areas (MSAs) are also predicted to decline: the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA at -8.10 percent; the Columbus MSA at -4.76 percent; the Akron MSA at -4.62 percent; the Cleveland-Elyria MSA at -3.52 percent; the Cincinnati MSA at -2.40 percent; the Dayton MSA at -1.09 percent; and the Canton-Massillon MSA at -0.46 percent. The Toledo MSA is predicted to increase by 0.08 percent.

Policy Matters Ohio (PMO) and the Ohio Poverty Law Center (OPLC) released a joint letter to Gov. Mike DeWine Tuesday, asking him to issue an executive order to provide good cause exemptions to maintain unemployment insurance benefits for working people with "real, justifiable reasons for not returning to work, including those susceptible to COVID-19."

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) told reporters Tuesday he was "delighted" by Gov. Mike DeWine's plan to begin reopening Ohio, crediting it to the increased testing capability. He also discussed reforms he believes are needed for the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), including making it inclusive of those with past criminal records and ensuring business support is given in "the most targeted way possible."

Ohio businesses received the 10th-highest share of loans and payment amounts during the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), according to data released by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Between April 27 and May 1, Buckeye State companies were approved for 58,834 PPP loans totalling \$4.71 billion, out of a national count of 2.2 million loans worth \$175.7 billion. The top states for most loans were California, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Michigan, while the order of highest funding levels was California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Washington.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The General Assembly isn't back to normal but moved in that direction this week with sessions and a handful of committee hearings, including on bills unrelated to the coronavirus pandemic.

Several Republicans in the General Assembly have apparently lost patience with Gov. Mike DeWine's approach to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, as some lawmakers publicly expressed their intentions to rescind Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Amy Acton's new "Stay Safe Ohio" order.

In a string of tweets, House 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force Chair Rep. Paul Zeltwanger (R-Mason) criticized Acton for "not sufficiently taking into account ... current and future detrimental impacts to our overall hospitals and health systems" and questioned the science behind wearing face coverings to reduce the spread of the disease. He also expressed support for House Majority Floor Leader Bill Seitz's (R-Cincinnati) statements to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* criticizing the governor for leaning too heavily on Acton's expertise during the pandemic, and seconded the following tweet from Rep. Scott Wiggam's (R-Wooster) account: "Ohioans crushed the curve and met the goal. @DrAmyActon has moved the goal posts. The Ohio House must meet ASAP to rescind the stay at home order. I am ready to meet today. @MikeDeWine @OhioStatehouse."

Then five days later the Ohio House passed two bills that would weaken the administration's authority to enforce public health orders during a pandemic. The House passed SB1 (McColley-Roegner) by a vote of 58-37 after the House State and Local Government Committee amended the bill to limit ODH orders under Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3701.13 to 14 days and require approval from three of the five members of each chamber on the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) to extend such orders. The House also added a pandemic-related floor amendment to SB55 (Gavarone), legislation originally focused on enhancing penalties for individuals committing

drug trafficking offenses near an addiction services provider. That amendment, proposed by Rep. D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron), removed criminal penalties for violating pandemic-related public health orders.

In actions unrelated to the pandemic, the House also passed HB339 (Merrin), dealing with insurance code corrections; and HB365 (Manning), revising the requirements for chemical dependency counselors.

Hearings continued over the week in the House 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force which again heard the frustrations of business owners Friday, with members hearing from a northern Ohio sound production company, a landlord, a gym owner and others. Business owners sought financial relief, expressed fears they might never reopen, and pushed the committee to address what they saw as double standards that allow big box retailers to stay open while small businesses languish. On Monday, testimony was provided by witnesses representing the hair salon, plumbing, building security, restaurant and athletic training industries. Several members, including Chair Paul Zeltwanger (R-Mason), raised questions about the legality of and continued need for restrictions related to the novel coronavirus. Those comments came in response to a question from one of the witnesses, plumber Pete St. Jean, who asked about the "constitutional rights of an entrepreneur" during this time. Zeltwanger said that he believed "unconstitutional measures" were in place but Ohioans had done their part and it was the "right time" to reopen businesses.

The House Democratic Caucus Friday released its priorities as the General Assembly was set to return the week of May 4 to likely pass more legislation to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The caucus said that the legislation it is advocating for will help working families, addressing issues such as parents who have to return to work when they have children at home with no one to care for them with day cares and schools closed; how to keep those high-risk individuals who will remain quarantined safe when workers return home; and what protections exist for workers in and out of the workforce who do get sick with the coronavirus.

The House Finance Committee publicly met for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic on Tuesday, with physically-distanced lawmakers -- some masked and some not -- considering testimony on out-of-network health care billing legislation HB388 (Holmes). Reporters were initially prohibited from entering Statehouse Hearing Room 313, relegated to the overflow room. However, minutes into the hearing, House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) told *Hannah News* and another reporter they could enter the room where lawmakers were meeting. Householder said he believed he found a way to accommodate the Ohio Legislative Correspondents Association's (OLCA) request for at least two reporters to be physically present in the rooms during the committee meetings moving forward.

At Tuesday's meeting of the House State and Local Government Committee, Ohio townships pushed for passage of HB444 (Baldrige-Abrams), an omnibus of township law changes. The bill would open up industrial development bonds to townships; allow a licensed emergency medical responder (EMR) to be a first responder when an emergency medical technician (EMT) is unavailable in a township; and allow townships to file continuous emergency medical services (EMS) and police services levies. It would additionally make changes in the areas of cemetery territory transfers, township nuisance statutes, and housing authority boards.

Speaking in a livestreamed town hall Monday night, House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) and Rep. Beth Liston (D-Dublin) discussed how the novel coronavirus has demonstrated the importance of public health policy at the state level. Liston, a hospital physician, was called a "front line hero" by Sykes, though she expressed discomfort at that title and said many were heroes. Sykes also noted that Liston was completing her work toward a master's in public health and would be the third to obtain one in the House Democratic caucus, along with Rep. Allison Russo (D-Columbus) and Sykes herself.

The Senate voted unanimously Wednesday to approve SB310 (Dolan), which would send out about a quarter of the state's allocation of federal funding for local governments' pandemic expenses, with leaders saying they hoped to convince Congress or the U.S. Treasury to ease restrictions on how the money can be spent before distributing the remainder. While the House considered moves to rein in the administration's power to impose public health restrictions, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said he wants to review those powers but did not speak of it as an urgent matter. Senators had only just seen the language of the House proposals hours earlier, he said.

The Senate also passed SB303 (S. Huffman-Manning), which addresses pharmacist consult agreements, and HB168 (Arndt), regarding liability for hazardous substances on properties.

In the first day of Senate committee hearings since the declared state of emergency, members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee gathered under special accommodations in the South Hearing Room Wednesday to permanently enact Ohio Board of Pharmacy rules expanding "consult agreements" between doctors, pharmacists and chronically ill patients to include advanced practice nurses and physicians assistants (PAs) through SB303 (S. Huffman-Manning).

The Senate Judiciary Committee Wednesday began hearings on two bills related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but lawmakers on the panel suggested that both may need more work before the bills go to the Senate floor. Sens. Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville) and Steve Wilson (R-Maineville) gave sponsor testimony on SB301, which they said would prevent price gouging during a declared emergency, while Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) introduced his SB308, which revises the law governing civil liability for health care providers and service providers during a government-declared disaster.

In keeping with plans to reopen government and businesses, the Statehouse Museum Shop announced it will reopen for business Tuesday, May 12.

In other legislative action, the House State and Local Government Committee reported out HB481 (Fraizer), authorizing land conveyances; and the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee reported out SB259 (Sykes), a land conveyance bill.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Board of Governors recently moved to support rule changes to allow student-athletes to receive compensation for third-party endorsements. The board, chaired by Ohio State University (OSU) President Michael Drake, has directed all three divisions to consider appropriate rule changes based on recommendations from its Federal and State Legislation Working Group, which is co-chaired by OSU Senior Vice President and Athletics Director Gene Smith. The divisions are expected to adopt new name, image and likeness rules by January 2021 to take effect at the start of the 2021-22 academic year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The family fight that escalated three years ago when the General Assembly and former governor followed deep cuts to the Local Government Fund by centralizing municipal tax collection and punishing recalcitrant cities and villages will go before the Ohio Supreme Court on Wednesday, May 13, as some 200 municipalities accuse the legislative and executive branches of a statutory attack on constitutional home rule.

POLLS/STUDIES

As tax returns may be of particular importance to many Americans dealing with the financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial advisory website WalletHub analyzed which states give taxpayers the best return on investment (ROI) for their tax dollars. Ohio ranked among the top 10. According to WalletHub's Taxpayer Survey, 60 percent of U.S. adults feel they pay too much in taxes and 88 percent don't think that the government uses tax revenue wisely. While federal income-tax rates are uniform across the nation, state tax rates differ drastically. WalletHub contrasted state and local tax collections with the quality of the services residents receive in each of the 50 states within five categories: education, **health, safety, economy, and infrastructure and pollution.**

actionTRACK - Hannah News Service, Inc.

This report is intended to provide updated information on the legislative issues of interest to Ohio's Educational Service Centers, their client OESCA members & interested parties.