

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

May 5, 2017

Around the Square

Budget Bill Passes House

The House on Tuesday voted out House Bill 49, the biennium budget bill by a vote of 58-37. Compared to Governor John Kasich's introduced version, the House Bill cut spending by \$2.5 billion over the next two years to account for inflation and below expected tax revenue collections. Notable changes include removing Kasich's tax reform package, investing \$170 million to fight Ohio's opioid crisis, increasing K-12 funding, and enhanced legislative oversight for Medicaid expansion funding. The Senate began preliminary hearings this week on the budget amendments and is expected to vote on their version in early June.

PUCO Appointments Clear Committee

The Senate Public Utilities Committee on Thursday approved the Governor's Public Utilities Commission nominees. After answering various questions, the committee unanimously approved the two nominees Republican Daniel Conway and Democrat Lawrence Friedeman. Conway and Friedeman now await the full Senate vote before their official appointment to the Commission.

School Choice Rally

Private and charter school students rallied at the Statehouse on Tuesday to advocate for school choice and Senate Bill 85. SB 85 would provide scholarships for students to attend private schools if families met certain requirements. The bill's sponsor Senator Matt Huffman led the rally and was joined by House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger and Senate President Larry Obhof. Representatives Bill Patmon and Andy Brenner also spoke in support.

Political News and Notes

Tax Revenue Falls Short

Sales tax in April was short approximately \$47.5 million, making the year to date projections down by \$208.4 million. Income tax revenue was additionally below expected coming \$106.7 million short of what was predicted. The income tax is behind year to date expectations by \$554 million. Reasons for the revenue shortfall are speculated to be associated with the small business income tax cut.

Ballot Issues

Voters on Tuesday approved 71 of the 97 school district issues on the ballot with 25 of those approved measures requesting new money. All three local library levies were also approved by voters. The only behavioral health measure on the ballot was voted down. This is the second time the Paint Valley Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board's levy has been denied. Of the two child services issues, only Ashtabula County's children services levy received support.

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