

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

April 20, 2018

Around the Square

Senate Accomplishes Bulk of Priorities List

Senate President Larry Obhof said Tuesday that the caucus has accomplished most of its short-term goals after a flurry of bills were passed last week. He expects a calmer remainder before the May 8 primary and then a relatively normal schedule when legislators return after the primary election. A few remaining pieces of the Senate leader's top 10 bills that plan to be worked on include SB 1, which addresses drug trafficking offenses and SB 4, relating to human trafficking. Another priority is fixing the state's unemployment compensation system, HB 382.

Medical Marijuana Dollars To Be Requested

The Department of Commerce will go to the Controlling Board on Monday to ask legislators for money to support the state's medical marijuana program. With a launch date planned for September 8, the department seeks to request \$5.16 million for Fiscal Year 2019. The funding will support the need for increased staff, legal services, information projects, e-licensing and video management services. The department expects to issue provisional licenses for testing facilities in early May and processor licenses in June.

Law Enforcement Recording Bill Poses Skepticism

Senator Charleta Tavares (D) gave sponsor testimony Tuesday on legislation that would provide individuals lawfully recording police activity with civil recourse to protect constitutional rights. Under the bill, if an officer interferes with the recording of an incident, destroys it, or seizes it without a warrant, subpoena or consent, civil liability would be imposed on the state or local law enforcement agency. An individual would be eligible up to \$500 in damages to a device and up to \$15,000 in punitive damages. Republican legislators on the committee questioned the balance of the bill, as videos can be edited prior to be provided to the media. Questions also arose if the bill makes an exemption for those who are approached by police with probable cause. The sponsor is looking into the information further.

Political News and Notes

Republicans Outpaced in Early Voting

Secretary of State Jon Husted announced Tuesday that a total of 116,272 absentee ballots were requested for the May 8 Primary. Democrats are outpacing Republicans thus far in the cycle in requesting and casting early ballots. Over 66,000 Democratic ballots were requested, with 4,389 cast in person and 1,395 by mail. On the Republican side, 42,365 ballots were requested as 3,438 were cast in person and 1,395 by mail. A total of 7,581 nonpartisan ballots were requested.

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