

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
September 7, 2018

Political News and Notes

Panel Reviews Voting Machine Language

The Voting Machine Acquisition Advisory Committee is in the process of reviewing potential changes to the bid proposal process, including a request to remove the “most favored nation” clause. The committee’s review process was brought on by a memo released by The Ohio Association of Election Officials detailing proposed changes and specifically calling out the clause as disadvantaging counties’ ability to negotiate better machine prices. The committee will continue to review these proposals in preparation for the \$104.5 million capital funding allotted expenditure.

State Streamlines Benefit Programs

The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services has consolidated the online eligibility system for various benefit programs. The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program will now use the same system as Medicaid, saving applicants time, money and paperwork. The new system will not only make it easier on applicants, but will also allow different county agencies to streamline eligibility decisions. The change follows a successful six-month pilot program tested by five counties last year, and will be immediately available to benefit applicants.

Graduation Requirements Proposal

State Board of Education Representative Stephanie Dodd (District 9) has proposed actions to ease high school graduation requirements for the class of 2021 and beyond. The board recommended extended class options for graduates in January but the legislature has not yet decided whether or not they will adopt them. Dodd recommended short-term solutions in case lawmakers do not decide on the matter in time, as well as a long-term plan that includes multiple ways for students to demonstrate competency in critical subjects. Other proposed changes include relaxing attendance standards and differentiating career-readiness tests for career-tech students.

Campaign Finance Update

Campaign finance reports submitted at the end of August gave insight to the race ahead for Ohio’s executive and federal elections. A political consulting firm estimated the predicted cost of Ohio’s governor’s race to be around \$28.7 million, of the \$240.39 million total predicted political spending within the state. Mike DeWine and Richard Cordray raised a combined \$3.8 million in August, with DeWine adding \$2 million to his war chest and Cordray finishing close behind at \$1.84 million. DeWine has reported more than \$11 million cash on hand while Cordray’s campaign has around \$7.1 million. With the exception of DeWine and Supreme Court Justice Mary DeGenaro, Democrats out-raised Republicans in statewide races for August. In the fundraising race following the August 7th special election, Danny O’Connor has reported taking in almost \$4 million. Newly minted Congressman Troy Balderson raised \$500,000.

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