

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
December 21, 2018

Political News and Notes

Chambers Prepare for Vetoes and Overrides

Despite several lengthy legislative sessions last week and the Senate continuing deliberations on Wednesday of this week, the two chambers are scheduled to reconvene in a rare post-Christmas session. These additional year-end sessions would be to examine any items that currently sit below the black line in the Senate and potentially override any vetoes from Governor Kasich. Vetoes that the chambers will likely consider include a firearm bill, two abortion measures and legislation increasing the pay of state and local elected officials.

Inspector General Details Prison Fraud

A report issued on Thursday by the state watchdog alleged widespread fraud throughout multiple facets of Ohio Penal Industries. The agency granted employees prohibited freebies and discounts on prisoner work, allowed the illegal construction of a smoke break building and improperly gave a state legislator furniture valued over \$9,000. The Inspector General's report also faulted the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction for inadequate use of buildings. The report is currently under review by the prisons agency.

Around the Square

Autonomous Vehicle Study Released

A new report authored by Representative Doug Green, Chair of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, recommends policy changes to position Ohio as the frontrunner of automated driving system technology. The report was intended to be a continuation of the stakeholder meeting and committee hearing process. It calls for data protections, short and long-term infrastructure habits and support for broadband infrastructure. The report will serve as a preliminary informational guide on autonomous vehicles for the General Assembly next year.

Board Approves Medical Marijuana Costs

Ohio's Controlling board authorized a loan of \$2.1 million to aid state agencies running the medical marijuana program with legal costs. The funds were directed from the state emergency fund. The Ohio Department of Commerce stated that the funds were an increase needed to cover legal costs from lawsuits brought on by those that did not receive certification for medical marijuana cultivation licenses. As the program begins receiving fees for services, the money will be repaid to the state's emergency fund. The registry has received around 3,5000 patient recommendations to date.

Secretary of State's Office Transfers Funds

Secretary of State Jon Husted announced earlier this week that his office will be transferring \$10 million to the state's General Revenue Fund. The secretary of state's office saved this large sum of money through a series of cost-cutting moves, including putting many office functions, forms and informational details online. Voters can now register to vote or change their address online- saving the public time and the administration's office money.

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