

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

April 19, 2019

Around the Square

JobsOhio Appointment

Governor DeWine this week appointed Robert “Bob” Smith to serve as the chairman of the board for JobsOhio. Smith is currently a partner and Cleveland market leader for the wealth-management firm Cerity Partners. He also serves as the chairman of the board for TeamNEO, a JobsOhio affiliate. In addition, he serves on the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Port Authority board.

Political News and Notes

2020 Census

On Wednesday Governor DeWine issued an executive order to create the Census 2020 Complete Count Commission to ensure a complete count in the 2020 U.S. Census. Advocacy groups, such as the Ohio Census Advocacy Group, say that an undercount of just 0.8% could cost Ohio seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and jeopardize federal funding for highways, Medicaid, low-income housing, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The commission will include up to 51 appointees that include legislators, state and local governments, businesses, academia, community groups, and ethnic and faith-based organizations. The commission will focus on hard-to-reach populations, such as children. Advocacy groups are also asking for \$2.5 million in funding to ensure a complete census count.

School Funding

This week House Speaker Larry Householder stated that the proposed changes to the state’s school funding system will likely have to be addressed separately from the state budget, which must be completed by the end of June. Representatives Patterson and Cupp proposed a complete overhaul to school funding, but Householder and state district leaders have expressed concerns in how the funding proposal would affect poor urban and rural schools. In addition, Governor DeWine’s budget proposed \$550 million in new funding for high-poverty areas. Householder feels that in the budget, legislators should consider lesser funding changes.

Smoking Age

In his budget proposal, Governor DeWine hopes to raise the minimum age to purchase tobacco products in Ohio from 18 to 21. That is because national data shows that 95 percent of tobacco users begin use before the age of 21, and further evidence shows that between the ages of 18 to 21 is when users switch from recreational use to habitual, lifelong use. However, many argue that if someone is old enough to join the military and fight for the country, they are old enough to make their own decision on tobacco use. That is why legislators in Ohio, similarly to Texas, Maryland, and Florida, are considering an exemption for military members. If the proposal remains in the budget, Ohio expects to lose \$17 million in sales and tobacco taxes next year.

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