

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

April 26, 2019

Around the Square

Executive Appointment

On Thursday, Representative Sarah LaTourette, a Chagrin Falls Republican, announced her resignation from the Ohio House of Representatives. She has accepted an appointment from Governor DeWine to serve as the Executive Director of Ohio Family and Children First. This council is comprised of several state agencies, and, as director, LaTourette will be tasked with streamlining and coordinating government services of children and families. Her resignation from the House is effective May 6. A replacement will be selected in early June.

Political News and Notes

Voter Registration

This week Secretary of State Frank LaRose and a group of bipartisan legislators announced forthcoming legislation to automate voter registration for Ohioians when they renew their driver's license, fishing license, or file their taxes. Currently, Ohioans "opt-in" to vote, but if this new legislation were to take effect, individuals would have the opportunity to opt-out of automated registration. Furthermore, LaRose is in favor of requiring state agencies to tell his office when citizens update their address. LaRose does not plan to end the state practice of cancelling voter registrations after six-years of inactivity, but feels automated registration would make that practice almost unnecessary. The legislation is expected to be introduced within a few months.

Distracted Driving

On Thursday, Governor Mike DeWine unveiled recommendations from the Ohio Distracted Driving Task Force, a group of law enforcement officials, advocates, and state officials that was assembled in 2018 to study the issue. Currently, texting while driving is only a primary offense if a driver is under 18. The task force recommended changing state law to make touching a mobile electronic device a primary offense, increasing penalties for those convicted of distracted driving, and increasing focus in driver's ed on distracted driving. DeWine did not endorse the groups proposals but did call for tougher action to discourage distracted driving and said that Ohio needs make it "as culturally unacceptable as drunk driving is today."

Energy Legislation

This week the debate over House Bill 6, legislation to bailout two Ohio nuclear plants, heated up. On Tuesday, dozens of opponents testified during a daylong committee hearing. Wednesday, HB 6 had its third hearing, and more than three dozen opponents, three proponents, and a small group of interested parties testified. Furthermore, another 34 individuals, mostly opponents, submitted written testimony. Now, a newly formed organization, the Ohio Consumers Power Alliance, which is focused on keeping energy rates low and energy portfolios diversified, is running radio adds in opposition to HB 6.

We encourage you to follow BMA (@ByersMinton) on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for continued updates throughout the week.