

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

June 7, 2019

Around the Square

Statehouse Appointment

This week the Ohio House Democratic caucus appointed Gil Blair to fill the 63rd House District, which was left vacant by Glenn Holmes who was appointed to the Ohio Parole Board by Governor DeWine. Blair, an attorney, previously served eight years as a Weathersfield Township trustee as was also a municipal court prosecutor for the City of Warren for five years.

Political News and Notes

Workers' Compensation Budget

This week the Ohio House passed the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) biennial budget. The budget, which is financed through employer premiums, totals \$667 million for Fiscal Years 2020 - 2021. The budget includes \$11 million to provide relief money for southern Ohio areas that have been flood-stricken. The bill received bipartisan support prior to a controversial amendment that will require workers filing claims with BWC to indicate whether they are a U.S. citizen, authorized immigrant, or immigrant with legal status to work. Democratic opponents feel the question will deter undocumented workers from filing claims causing workplaces to be less safe.

Foster Care Changes

On Thursday, the Ohio House voted unanimously to add flexibility to foster-care training requirements. House Bill 8, a bipartisan bill introduced by Representatives Manchester and Galonski, allows the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to modify rules regarding foster parents without approval from state lawmakers, and it also allows twenty percent of the training foster parents must undergo to be completed online. Currently, requirements for foster-care parents, such as the maximum number of children a foster home can house and the required number of hours new foster parents receive in training, is set in state law. This legislation was created as a response to the increased need for foster homes amid Ohio's opioid epidemic.

Energy Bill Debate Continues

On Wednesday the Senate held its second informal hearing on House Bill 6, which passed out of the House last week. Sam Randazzo, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Chair, and Asim Haque, the PJM Executive Director for Strategic Policy and External Affairs, both testified as interested parties. Chair Randazzo gave a history of the renewable and energy efficiency standards that the bill eliminates, and said that customers may receive an overall cost reduction on their utilities if the bill is passed as written. Mr. Haque highlighted the findings of a PJM cost analysis of HB 6, which examined several scenarios of the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants remaining open or closing.

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