

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

August 9, 2019

Around the Square

Statehouse Resignation

On Thursday Senator Joe Uecker (R - Loveland) announced his resignation from the 14th Senate District effective August 31. Uecker is leaving for a position at the Ohio Department of Transportation. He previously served eight years in the Ohio House and is in his second term at the Senate. Representatives John Becker (R - Union Township) and Doug Green (R - Mt. Orab) are expected to seek the appointment, as well as former Representative Terry Johnson.

Political News and Notes

Gun Reform

On Tuesday, following the shooting in Dayton over the weekend, Governor Mike DeWine unveiled several proposals that he would like to see passed by the Ohio Legislature to curb gun violence in the state. Notably, he unveiled a “red flag” law, which allows a court to temporarily confiscate the firearms of an individual that is determined to be a great risk to themselves or others. Additionally, he would like to require that a background check be required for most firearms purchases, and provide greater access to mental health treatment. He also proposed increasing the penalties for this that illegally possess a firearm and for straw purchases. His proposals received mixed reactions, with some saying the proposals go too far and others who feel the measures do not go far enough.

FirstEnergy Solutions

This week many Ohio lawmakers were outraged to find out that FirstEnergy Solutions (FES) may not honor existing union contracts after emerging from bankruptcy. The company, which asked for the passage of House Bill 6 in order to avoid bankruptcy and save jobs, had previously assured legislators during HB 6 hearings that union contracts would stay intact if the bill was passed. The bill, which provides financial relief to FES through a fee for all Ohio utility customers, was passed in July. FES says that they have been negotiating new union contracts since March and hope to reach an agreement.

Hemp Regulation

Last week Governor DeWine signed a bill into law, legalizing the cultivation of hemp in Ohio. This week, the Ohio Department of Agriculture is working out a licensing system for hemp cultivation, which they hope to have in place by the spring. Additionally, farmers and researchers are examining the best planting dates, strategies, and soil fertility for growing hemp in Ohio's soil, which varies from nearby states like Kentucky that already grow hemp.

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

This Week's Bills

HB 315 - Suicide Prevention: To require federally licensed firearms dealers to provide suicide prevention information to the purchaser of a firearm.

HB 316 - Firearm Orders: To enact the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act to allow family members, household members, and law enforcement officers to obtain a court order that temporarily restricts a person's access to firearms if that person poses a danger to themselves or others.

HB 317 - Firearm Sales: To enact the Protect Law Enforcement Act to require a firearm transfer to be made through a dealer, through a law enforcement agency, or pursuant to a specified exception, and to require a background check when a firearm is transferred.

SB 180 - Development Bonds: To authorize the issuance of industrial development bonds by a township and to authorize counties, townships, and municipal corporations to issue industrial development bonds without requiring the county, township, or municipal corporation to designate a community improvement corporation as its agency for industrial, commercial, distribution, and research development.

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