

# Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse  
September 6, 2019

## Around the Square

### Statehouse Appointment

On Wednesday Senate President Larry Obhof recommended Dr. Terry Johnson, a former Scioto County state representative and practicing physician, to fill the 14th Senate District. The seat, which includes portions of Adams, Brown, Clermont, Scioto and Lawrence counties, is open after Senator Joe Uecker resigned to take a position at the Ohio Department of Transportation. Prior to joining the state legislature, Johnson was the Scioto County Coroner for ten years, and is a veteran of the Ohio Army National Guard. He served multiple tours overseas and worked as a senior flight surgeon. The full Republican caucus will meet later this month to vote on the recommendation.

### Statehouse Resignation

On Tuesday Senator Louis Terhar announced that he is planning to retire from the Ohio Senate at the end of September. He has served eight years in the Ohio General Assembly, and is currently the senator for Ohio's 8th Senate District, which includes the Cincinnati area. His resignation is a result of a medical issue, but did not disclose what health issues he is dealing with. Representative Louis Blessing, who is term limited in the House, has already announced that he will seek appointment for the 8th Senate District seat. President Obhof will announce a process to fill the vacancy this week.

## Political News and Notes

### Voter Registration Rolls

This week U.S. District Judge James Graham ruled that Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose can proceed with removing 200,000 voters from the voter rolls on September 6, as planned. Graham said that the Ohio Democratic Party failed to provide sufficient evidence to support its claims that there are thousands of eligible voters on the list due to mistakes involving vendors that gave election data to counties. LaRose confirmed that they will continue with the purge.

### House Bill 6 Referendum

FirstEnergy Solutions (FES) on Wednesday filed a lawsuit, asking the Ohio Supreme Court to rule that a proposed statewide referendum to overturn House Bill 6 is illegal because the legislation imposes a tax. Ohio's constitution prohibits a tax levy from being overturned through a referendum. House Bill 6 places an 85 cent per month charge on Ohio ratepayer bills, and it benefits FirstEnergy Solutions, as they are set to receive \$150 million from it. FES argues that this monthly charge is a tax, and therefore not subject to referendum. Gene Pierce, the spokesman for Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts, which is leading the referendum effort, called FirstEnergy Solutions' case "a ridiculous argument" as many legislators specifically argued during the bills passage that not a single word of the legislation imposed a tax.

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

### **This Week's Bills**

**HB 328 - Firefighting Foam:** To prohibit the use of class B firefighting foam containing intentionally added PFAS chemicals for testing and training purposes beginning January 1, 2020.

**SB 191 - Absentee Ballots:** To authorize the Secretary of State to establish a secure online process for applying to vote by absent voter's ballots.

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