

# Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

October 4, 2019

## Around the Square

### Statehouse Appointment

On Wednesday Cincinnati-area Representative Louis “Bill” Blessing II was recommended by a screening committee to fill the 8th Senate District Vacancy, which was previously held by Lou Terhar. Terhar resigned last month due to health issues. Blessing is a licensed professional engineer who currently works at Super Systems Inc. He previously worked at Duke Energy and Nova Engineering, and holds degrees in mathematics and electrical engineering from the University of Cincinnati. Blessing, whose father is a former State Senator, was among three candidates seeking the appointment. Former representative Jonathan Dever and attorney Judith Boyce also sought the appointment.

### Committee Chairs

On Thursday Speaker Larry Householder appointed three new committee chairs as the result of a number of members leaving the legislature in the last few months. Representative Scott Lipps will now serve as the Health Committee chair, which was previously chaired by Representative Derek Merrin. Merrin will now chair the Ways & Means Committee. Senator Tim Schaffer was previously the chair of this committee but left the House to fill a Senate vacancy. Representative Tim Ginter will serve as the chair for Aging & Long-Term Care committee, which was previously chaired by former representative Steven Arndt. More committee changes are expected moving forward with Representative Louis Blessing headed to the Senate. He is currently the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee chairman.

## Political News and Notes

### Violence Prevention

This week the Ohio House passed House Bill 123, which is known as the Safety and Violence Education For Students Act (SAVE Students Act). If it becomes law, it will require all Ohio public middle- and high-school students to take an annual class in suicide and violence prevention. The class must be at least one hour or one class period. Additionally, it requires all public schools to have a student-led anti-violence club, as well as a threat assessment team composed of school staff. The assessment team would also have a program to field anonymous tips about potential safety threats.

### Opioid Addiction Study

Attorney General Dave Yost announce that the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) will be at the helm of a study that seeks to identify genetic markers that can identify people that are more likely to become addicted to opioids and opiates. The study will include patient swaps collected from emergency rooms, and the effort will cost \$1.6 million over the course of 18 months. The scientists will seek to identify circumstantial, environmental, social, behavioral, and psychological factors that make someone more prone to substance use disorder.

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## **This Week's Bills**

**HB 352 - Employment Laws:** To modify Ohio civil rights laws related to employment.

**HB 353 - Road Naming:** To designate a portion of State Route 7 in Mahoning County as the "Clarence "Sonny" Smith, Jr. Highway."

**HB 354 - Firearms:** To require the juvenile court to expunge all records sealed pursuant to the juvenile sealing law upon the person's twenty-eighth birthday, to expand the circumstances under which a person has a weapon under disability, to specify that moderate or severe substance use disorder is a mental illness for purposes of the law governing civil commitments, to require the Director of Public Safety to create and maintain the weapons disability data portal, to impose certain consequences on specified entities that fail to comply with data submission requirements, and to make an appropriation.

**HB 355 - Camp Operators:** To provide a qualified immunity to camp operators for harm arising from a risk inherent to camping.

**SB 204 - Airport Districts:** To authorize the creation of an airport development district for the purpose of funding public infrastructure improvements and attracting airlines and additional flights to a qualifying airport.

**SB 205 - Companion Animals:** To increase the penalties for serious acts of cruelty towards or the killing of a companion animal.

**SB 206 - Municipal Taxes:** To require municipal corporations with more than \$100 million in annual income tax collections to provide a tax credit to nonresident taxpayers.

**SB 207 - Drugs Tests:** To require unemployment benefit applicants to take a drug test under certain circumstances, to create the Ohio Works First drug testing pilot program, and to make an appropriation.

**SB 208 - Abortion:** To require reports to be made after a child is born alive following an abortion or attempted abortion and to establish certain civil or criminal penalties for failing to preserve the health or life of such a child.

**SB 209 - Capital Appropriation:** To modify the purpose of a capital appropriation.

**SR 376 - Trade Agreement:** To urge the United States Congress to ratify the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

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