

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

January 10, 2020

Around the Square

Human Trafficking Summit

This week Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost hosted an inaugural Human Trafficking Summit at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The aim of the summit was to convene the many Ohio groups working to end Ohio's status as one of the worst states for human trafficking in the nation. Ohio has a high rate of human trafficking due to a large transient population and many immigrants, the demand for sex workers and farm labor, and Ohio's highway connectivity to large states and Canada. At Thursday's summit, attendees joined several educational workshops with the goal of finding gaps in stopping human trafficking and finding solutions to create a "freeway to freedom" for victims of trafficking.

Political News and Notes

Casino Revenue

Ohio's eleven casinos and racinos earned record profits in 2019, bringing in \$1.94 billion. Since Ohio's first casino opened in 2012, gambling revenue in Ohio has reached \$11.9 billion. Ohio's gambling revenues resulted in \$650 million in taxes paid to the state in 2019. Annual revenue at Ohio's gambling facilities has increased each year, with MGM Northfield Park racing, Hollywood Casino Columbus, and JACK Cleveland Casino being the most profitable venues.

Overdose Deaths

County level data for Ohio's overdose deaths has begun to come in, and the reported data clearly shows that fentanyl and carfentanil continued to be major factors in Ohio's overdose deaths in 2019. Many counties saw an increase in overdose deaths, while others saw a decrease or little change compared to other years. For example, Franklin County saw a 15 percent increase in overdose deaths compared to 2018, while Montgomery County saw a significant decrease compared to several years prior. However, all counties saw a major trend of drug dealers beginning to use fentanyl in drugs that the substance has not traditionally been mixed with, such as cocaine, meth, and even marijuana.

Election Cybersecurity

In the wake of mounting tensions between the U.S. and Iran, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose has directed county boards of elections to add a series of computer firewalls with IP addresses linked to Iran. Secretary LaRose stated that the U.S. experienced a higher number of hacking attempts this week than usual, with many originating from Iran. The directive is a preventative measure to ensure there is no Iranian interference in elections.

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

This Week's Bills

HB 457 - Charitable Solicitations: Regarding charitable solicitations.

HB 458 - License Plate: To create the "University of Alabama" license plate.

HB 459 - Extracurricular Activities: To prohibit a coach, director, or supervisor of an extracurricular activity from restricting student participation in other extracurricular activities.

HB 460 - Judicial Candidates: To allow a partisan judicial candidate to appear on the general election ballot with a political party designation.

HB 461 - Electronic Monitoring: To permit a resident of a long-term care facility to conduct electronic monitoring of the resident's room, to designate this act as "Esther's Law," and to make an appropriation.

HB 462 - Health Coverage: Regarding health care coverage for law enforcement and public safety officers who have retired under the Public Employees Retirement System.

HB 463 - Monetary Jurisdiction: To increase the monetary jurisdiction in municipal courts in any action for the recovery of personal property from fifteen thousand dollars to thirty thousand dollars and to require a municipal court to retain jurisdiction in such an action or counterclaim if the later appraised value of the personal property prior to judgment exceeds thirty thousand dollars.

HB 464 - Trust Law: To expand a guardian's authority to create estate plans for their wards, to clarify a surviving spouse's allowance for support upon the spouse's selection of an automobile, to make changes in the Ohio Trust Code, and to make changes in the law pertaining to the referral of actions to a retired judge.

SB 255 - Long-Term Care Monitoring: To permit a resident of a long-term care facility to conduct electronic monitoring of the resident's room, to designate this act as "Esther's Law," and to make an appropriation

SB 256 - Parole: Regarding a bar against a sentence of life without parole, and special parole dates, for offenders who committed the offense when under age 18, and to amend the version of section 2907.02 of the Revised Code that takes effect on March 22, 2020, to continue the provisions of this act on and after that date.

SB 257 - Electric Vehicles: To authorize tax incentives for the purchase of plug-in electric motor vehicles and charging stations.

SB 258 - Psychology Compact: To enter into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT).

SB 259 - Land Conveyance: To authorize the conveyance of state-owned real property.

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