

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

January 24, 2020

Around the Square

Public Utilities Commission Appointment

This week the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Nominating Council announced a list of finalists for the upcoming appointments to the commission. The Council, which consists of 12 members, interviewed five candidates out of ten applications for the appointment. They passed along four finalists to Governor DeWine, who has 30 days to make the appointment or request new applicants. His selection is subject to Senate approval. Among the finalists is an incumbent, Commissioner Lawrence Friedman. He is a Democrat whose current term ends in April. The other finalists include Ronald Russo, a Democratic real estate and land use lawyer, Stephen Serraino, and Independent who is general counsel and chief of compliance and ethics for Upper Peninsula Power Company, and Gerardo Torres, a finance manager and supervising management analyst for Cincinnati's IT department.

Political News and Notes

House Bill 6 Referendum

On Tuesday, Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts, the group that pushed for a referendum on House Bill 6, which will give \$150 million-per-year from taxpayers to FirstEnergy Solutions, announced that they have ended their efforts. The group filed a motion with the 6th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to drop a previously filed appeal that sought more time to gather signatures to in order to have their measure on the November 2020 ballot. The group previously failed to gather the 265,774 needed signatures from registered voters in Ohio within the 90 day timeframe. After filing their newest motion, spokesman Gene Pierce said that there was no path forward. The group previously argued that they needed more time to gather signatures due to altercations with pro-House Bill 6 groups that hired individuals to work as "blockers" to petition collectors.

Voter Registration

On Wednesday Ohioans for Secure and Fair Elections announced that they delivered initial paperwork to the Ohio Attorney General's Office to create a ballot measure that, if passed by voters, would automatically register individuals to vote when they conduct business at and Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Additionally, it would require early voting locations to be open two weekends prior to Election Day and would allow eligible voters to register and vote on the same day. A similar proposal that requires voters to be registered at the BMV, unless they opt-out, is pending in both the Ohio House and Ohio Senate. The groups goal is to have the proposal on the November 2020 ballot.

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

This Week's Bills

HB 474 - Road Naming: To designate U.S. Route 224 in Putnam County as the "Putnam County Veterans Memorial Highway."

HB 475 - Presidential Candidates: To require a candidate for President or Vice-President of the United States to submit copies of the candidate's five most recent federal income tax returns for publication on the Secretary of State's official web site.

HB 476 - Eminent Domain: To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency.

HB 477 - Child Support: To alter the procedures and requirements governing the granting of limited driving privileges in certain criminal cases and cases involving failure to pay child support, to authorize a court in any proceeding to submit a report to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles regarding whether the defendant is competent to operate a motor vehicle, to alter the reinstatement fees related to failure to provide proof of financial responsibility and vehicle immobilization, and to impose community service sanctions on persons who are the subject of child support order default determinations under specified circumstances.

HB 478 - School Vouchers: To make changes regarding the eligibility criteria for the Educational Choice scholarship program.

HB 479 - Protective Netting: To require certain baseball stadiums to install protective netting.

HB 480 - Natural Disasters: To make an appropriation to compensate school districts for property tax losses due to certain natural disasters.

SB 260 - Abortion Drugs: Regarding abortion-inducing drugs.

SB 261 - Eastern European Affairs: To create the Commission on Eastern European Affairs and the Office of Eastern European Affairs and to make an appropriation.

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