

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

February 14, 2020

Around the Square

School Voucher Reform

The Ohio Senate formally rejected the proposal put forth by the Ohio House last week to overhaul the EdChoice Scholarship Program. Instead, the Senate remains dedicated to their version of voucher reform, contained in amendments on HB 9. The Senate proposal would cut the number of schools whose students are eligible for vouchers based on district performance while expanding the eligibility threshold based on family income from 200% to 300% of the federal poverty guidelines. House lawmakers, by contrast, proposed a voucher system based solely on family income, with families earning up to 250% of the federal poverty line qualifying for full tuition. Both versions will head to a conference committee, where the House and Senate will debate over similar issues.

Political News and Notes

State of the City Address

On Thursday evening in the auditorium of West High School, Mayor Andrew Ginther gave his first State of the City address of his second term as Columbus Mayor. The speech focused on the mayor's "Equity Agenda" to address racism, discrimination and disparities throughout the city. Mayor Ginther also touched on other priorities including infant mortality, education, neighborhood redevelopment, addiction services, affordable housing, innovation, and sustainability.

Mental Health Coverage for First Responders

Wednesday evening saw the House passage of a bill that would guarantee state coverage for post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) for first responders. Under this new law, these servicemen and women will no longer need to sustain a traditionally defined physical injury to qualify for workers' compensation. As the bill heads to the Senate, lawmakers will discuss the creation of a separate entity to handle coverage apart from the BWC. Last year, the Senate elected not to include similar language in the BWC budget, but Senate President Larry Obhof has come out in support of the bill.

Distracted Driving Proposal

Governor DeWine unveiled forthcoming legislation (to be sponsored by Senators Stephanie Kunze and Sean O'Brien) that would make using a handheld device while driving a primary offense and increase penalties for distracted driving. The bill specifies various uses of a phone or handheld device that would qualify as distracted driving as well as exceptions for emergencies and outstanding circumstances. The legislation is supported by various travel safety and mobile device related entities. A similar bill in the Ohio House has its first hearing this week.

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

This Week's Bills

HB 498 - Disability Tax Credit: To authorize a refundable income tax credit for disability-related home expenses.

HB 499 - Motor Fuel Testing: To authorize a county to implement a motor fuel quality testing program.

HB 500 - Visitation Petitions: To allow certain persons to petition for visitation with an incompetent or ward if visitation has been interfered with or denied.

HB 501 - Slow-Moving Vehicles: To clarify the law governing slow-moving vehicles and to revise the lighting and reflective material requirements applicable to animal-drawn vehicles.

HB 502 - Jail Standards: To adopt several jail reform procedures related to compliance with the Minimum Standards for Jails in Ohio.

HB 503 - Conversion Therapy: To protect minors by prohibiting certain licensed health care professionals from engaging in conversion therapy when treating minor patients.

HB 504 - School Funding: To prescribe a per pupil funding guarantee for certain school districts and to make an appropriation.

HB 505 - Residential Zoning: To eliminate the specific authority of residential facilities to operate within residential zoning districts.

HB 506 - Child Placement: To prohibit, unless determined to be in a child's best interest, placement of the child with a relative the child does not know or has never met.

HB 507 - Tax Liens: To prohibit enforcement of delinquent property tax liens against owner-occupied homesteads and to require that any delinquent tax be paid before the title to a homestead may be transferred.

HB 508 - Unemployment Compensation: To allow an individual to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits for unemployment due to domestic violence.

HB 509 - Residential Care: Regarding expedited licensure inspection procedures for residential care facilities.

SB 275 - Awareness Day: To designate November 16 as "Sanfilippo Syndrome Awareness Day."

SB 276: LLC Act: To enact the Ohio Revised Limited Liability Company Act.

SB 277: Pooled Collateral: To make changes to the Ohio Pooled Collateral Program.

SB 278: Parole Procedures: To modify parole procedures regarding prisoner access to information and materials, presence of counsel, uniform standards, and appeals of decisions.

SB 279: Distracted Driving: To generally prohibit the use of electronic wireless devices while driving.

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