

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

February 28, 2020

Around the Square

Term Limits

This week Attorney General Dave Yost certified language for a ballot proposal that, if approved by voters, will implement a lifetime term limit for Ohio lawmakers of sixteen years in either chamber of the Ohio General Assembly. Now the ballot language goes to the Ballot Board for determination that the proposed constitutional amendment is limited to a single issue. If approved, the group will then need to collect 443,000 valid signatures for the proposal to appear on the November 2020 ballot. Current term limit law for the Ohio General Assembly prevents lawmakers from spending more than 8 years in either chamber, but with no lifetime limit they are able to alternate between the House and Senate.

Political News and Notes

Governor's Coronavirus Plan

On Thursday Governor Mike DeWine announced his plan for preventing the spread of the flu as well as potential cases of coronavirus. DeWine emphasized that the threat in Ohio is low, with no cases yet identified and all those tested in Ohio having a negative result. However, he did emphasize the sense of urgency in being prepared as the low risk Ohio faces could change. He ordered state agencies to implement several policies that prevent the spread of illnesses, such as having the Department of Transportation to post information on hand washing at all rest areas and Departments of Rehabilitation and Correction and Youth Services to increase the use of disinfectants. Furthermore, all state facilities will receive more regular cleanings and hand sanitizer will be placed in all common areas. He urged individuals to take the same precautions.

Human Trafficking Awareness Day

On Thursday Ohio legislators hosted the 11th annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day with promises from Representative Galonski and Senator Fedor, the hosts of the event, to introduce legislation in both the House and Senate that mandates educational curriculum to make students aware of the signs of human trafficking. Additionally, Senator Schaffer discussed his legislation, Senate Bill 247, which would bifurcate buying and selling sex into separate offenses in order to tackle the demand side of the issue. Event attendees heard from a number of legislators working to reduce human trafficking in Ohio as well as from expert panelists discussing the scale of the problem and solutions to identify and end trafficking.

School Vouchers

This week Governor DeWine, Senate President Obhof, and Speaker Householder met to discuss a solution for Ohio's school voucher program after the two chambers have failed to come to an agreement over the EdChoice Scholarship Program. Obhof stated that he felt the meeting was productive and he was optimistic that the House and Senate would come to a solution, but he would not speculate on a timeline. The General Assembly has to come to an agreement by April 1, and both Householder and Obhof have stated they are not in favor of another extension.

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

This Week's Bills

HB 524 - Funeral Laws: To make changes to the laws that impact funeral homes, funeral professionals, funeral hearses, funeral escort vehicles, and pre-need funeral contracts.

HB 525 - Road Naming: To designate a portion of State Route 60 in Washington County as the "U.S. Army Specialist Christian D. Ward Memorial Highway."

HB 526 - Month Designation: To designate September 15 to October 15 each year as "Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month."

HB 527 - Women's Sports: To enact the "Save Women's Sports Act" to require schools, state institutions of higher education, and private colleges to designate separate single-sex teams and sports for each sex.

SB 286 - Tax Credit: To authorize an income tax credit for volunteer firefighters who purchase firefighting-related safety or protective items.

SB 287: Military Service: To permit state employees to receive longevity and vacation credit for prior military service.

SB 288: Religious Expression: Regarding student religious expression in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities

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