

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

March 20, 2020

Around the Square

Return to Session

Ohio lawmakers are poised to return to session next week to consider a number of issues related to the novel coronavirus pandemic and prevention measures. The top priority for many legislators is handling the postponement of the primary elections that were originally slated for March 17th. While the Governor has informally suggested a new date of June 2nd, the authority to dictate the date and process in which an election is conducted ultimately rests with the General Assembly. Among their principal considerations will be extending the deadline for absentee voting.

Other issues the legislature may address will include a school voucher fix, tax conformity, re-appropriations, and revising open meetings laws for the duration of the pandemic.

For all COVID-19 updates, follow Gov. DeWine's briefing daily at 2 pm [here](#) or keep an eye out for our daily updates via e-mail. Additionally, many resources can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Political News and Notes

The National Guard

Governor DeWine activated select members of the Ohio National Guard and Military Reserve to provide humanitarian relief assistance during the ongoing pandemic. About 300 Guard members will aid in transporting, packaging, and distributing food in coordination with the Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. The individuals deployed will not carry weapons nor perform any tasks unrelated to humanitarian relief. The Ohio National Guard, which has more than 16,000 soldiers and airmen in its ranks, previously provided humanitarian aid during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, among other emergencies. The Governor also emphasized that there has been no significant disruption in the grocery store supply chain and requested that citizens show patience and respect as workers rush to restock the shelves.

Business Closings and Unemployment

Unemployment claims in Ohio continue to escalate amid the furlough of business operations around the state in an attempt to combat the spread of novel coronavirus. Joining the growing list of closures this week are barber shops, hairdressers, nail salons, tattoo parlors, and Bureau of Motor Vehicle facilities. Last Sunday, Governor DeWine announced that anyone terminated on account of the prevention measures becomes immediately eligible for state benefits, raising concern at the stability of the compensation fund. The number of applicants in the first four days since the Governor's announcement topped 111,000. The state urges individuals to file using the website (unemployment.ohio.gov) **if they can, while those without computer access can call 1-877-644-6562**. The call center hours have been extended to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. He has called upon the federal government to help small businesses by granting access to low-interest loans. Eligible operations can now apply to offset up to \$2 million dollars in lost revenue related to the outbreak after the U.S. The Small Business Administration approved the measure on Thursday. **Apply through disasterloan.sba.gov/ela or 1-800-659-2955**

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

This Week's Bills

HB 553 - Coyote Hunting: To specify that a fur taker permit is not required to hunt or trap coyotes and to specify that there is no closed season for hunting or trapping coyotes.

HB 554 - Health Care: To authorize a pregnant minor to consent to receive health care to maintain or improve her life or the life of the unborn child she is carrying

HB 555 - Child Support: To make changes to child support laws with regard to caretakers.

HB 556 - PTSD Coverage: Concerning compensation, medical benefits, and disability retirement for peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury.

HB 557 - Video Meetings: To authorize public bodies to meet via teleconference and video conference during a public health state of emergency as declared by the Governor, and to declare an emergency.

HB 558 - Child Abuse: To require public children services agencies to report child abuse or neglect in military families to the appropriate military authorities.

HB 559 - Hunting Permits: To generally allow the grandchildren of a landowner to hunt or fish on the landowner's property without obtaining certain hunting or fishing licenses or permits and to allow certain partially disabled veterans to receive free hunting or fishing licenses or permits.

SB 293 - Open Meetings: To create a procedure within the Court of Claims to hear complaints alleging a violation of the Open Meetings Law.

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