

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

April 3, 2020

Around the Square

Stay-At-Home Order Extended

Ohio's executive shelter in place order will be extended through the month of April, Governor Mike DeWine announced Thursday. The current order will expire this coming Monday, April 6th. While the Governor is confident that the state has been effective in social distancing so far, the practices will be continued into the foreseeable future. Additional provisions of the new order include establishing crowd size provisions for businesses that remain open, prohibiting all organized sport, and asking that all individuals traveling into Ohio quarantine for 14 days.

As of Thursday night, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases rose to 2,902. Of those, 802 have resulted in hospitalization, and 81 have become fatal. 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 and statistics can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Political News and Notes

Battelle Joins Fight Against Coronavirus

Battelle, a Columbus-based science and technology firm, has begun to implement their new "Critical Care Decontamination System" to healthcare facilities around the country. The technology uses hydrogen peroxide to cleanse up to 80,000 N95 masks per day without degrading the mask, allowing them to be reused up to 20 times.

The firm also announced new rapid, in-house testing for hospital systems. The Wexner Medical Center at Ohio State will institute the new tests, which deliver results in mere hours. Abbott Laboratories has also announced their version of a rapid test that can detect a positive result in under 10 minutes. Gov. DeWine urges that test samples be sent to hospitals with rapid testing or the Ohio Department of Health in lieu of outside labs, which can take days to process results.

Unemployment Records Shattered

The Department of Job and Family Services has received upwards of 468,000 unemployment claims in the last two weeks, more than the 360,000 received in all of 2019. Over \$45 million in checks has been issued during that two week period. As the current stay-at-home order has been renewed, some businesses that were retaining employees in hopes of reopening have furloughed massive amounts of workers this week and into the weekend. However, the Office of Workforce Transformation established a new [website](#) containing over 12,000 job postings at remaining essential businesses like Amazon, Kroger, and OhioHealth, where the demand has skyrocketed amidst the pandemic.

Nationally, the Department of Labor reported that 6.6 million claims were filed last week alone, in addition to the 3.3 million the week prior. Behind only Pennsylvania, Ohio had second-highest increase in initial claims filed over the one week period. Ohio urges individuals to file using the [website](#). 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, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and 9 a.m to 1 p.m. on Sundays.

This Week's Bills

HB 596 - Debt Collection: To halt the collection of debts and to declare an emergency.

HB 597 - Debt Collection: To halt the collection of all debt owed to any state institution of higher education or hospital operated by a state institution of higher education, to freeze the accrual of interest and collection of fees on all outstanding debt owed to those entities, and to declare an emergency.