

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

May 1, 2020

Around the Square

Ohio's Gradual Reversal of Business Closures

Governor DeWine's initial plan to restart economic operations around the state will commence Friday in the healthcare sector—dental and veterinary services will resume along with hospital procedures that do not require an overnight stay. On May 4th, general office operations, along with manufacturing, distribution, and construction outfits will be allowed to proceed. Finally, the Governor announced that consumer, retail, and service industries will be integrated on May 12th. Importantly, numerous industries are to remain shuttered, including schools and daycares, restaurants and bars, beauty services and salons, fitness clubs and spas, and all sites associated with recreation and entertainment. Furthermore, Governor DeWine extended the Stay-at-Home order until May 29. A complete listing of continued closures can be found [here](#).

The Governor announced that a facial covering is strongly recommended whenever possible in all newly opened businesses and that social distancing, extensive cleaning, and limited capacities will be in place, but employees and businesses should make every conceivable effort to continue working from home. Public and private gatherings are still to be limited to 10 individuals. Gov. DeWine warned that “the virus is still out there,” and the state needs to ensure that there is not a secondary spike in cases and hospitalizations. To this point, the state has reported 18,000 cases, 3,500 hospitalizations, and 975 deaths.

Political News and Notes

Ohio's Primaries Tallied

Election officials worked late into the night Tuesday and into Wednesday morning to report on Ohio's primary election conducted almost exclusively by mail. Ohio's Secretary of State reported that a mere 22.6% of registered voters cast ballots as of Tuesday night, but lauded the extraordinary performance of County Boards of Elections amidst extraordinary circumstances. For comparison, the 22.6% represents 1.5 million Ohioans that voted by Tuesday, while nearly 3 million voted in the 2016 primary. As presumed, Joe Biden and Donald Trump were the victors for the presidential race. Ohio's incumbents in the U.S. House of Representatives all secured wide margins of victories in their respective primaries. Legislators seeking to move from the Ohio House to the Ohio Senate also fared well, with House Reps. Bill Reineke, Niraj Antani, and Mark Romanchuk continuing their run for the Senate come November. In Ohio's 4th Senate District, House Rep. George Lang bested House Rep. Candice Keller for the Republican nomination.

Unemployment Claims Beginning to Fall

The latest data from the Ohio Department Job and Family Services indicates that initial claims for unemployment compensation have fallen for the fourth consecutive week since they peaked amidst business closures related to the novel coronavirus. With 92,000 claims made last week, the figure has fallen below six figures for the first time since the pandemic began. Over a six-week period, the agency has received 1.1 million claims and paid out \$1.45 billion to 480,000 of those applicants. The state received 715,500 claims in the previous two years combined. The U.S. Department of Labor also reported a decline in claims nationally; the 3.8 million claims received last week was over half a million less than the preceding week. Over the same six-week period, over 30 million Americans have filed for unemployment nationwide.

This Week's Bills

HB 611 - Doula Services: Related to Medicaid coverage of doula services.

SB 305 - Telemedicine: To require health plan issuers to cover telemedicine services during a state of emergency and to declare an emergency.

SB 306 - Tax Deduction: To allow individuals who rent their primary residence to claim an income tax deduction of up to \$3,000 per year.

SB 307 - Tax Exemption: To authorize a temporary sales and use tax exemption for personal protective equipment and to declare an emergency.