

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

June 9, 2017

Around the Square

ZEN Bill

Senate Public Utilities Committee Chair Bill Beagle announced the fate of the bill to subsidize FirstEnergy's nuclear plans is still unclear. The committee held its fourth hearing on the bill and there is speculation the committee, and even the full Senate, could pass SB 128 before summer break. Senate President Larry Obhof commented the bill will have an uphill climb before receiving caucus support, however. The House Public Utilities Committee Chairman Bill Seitz announced last month there are no plans for additional hearings on the House companion bill, HB 178.

New Bill to Propose Changes to Worker's Comp

Rep. Michael Henne plans to introduce legislation to rebrand the BWC and change the way the agency operates in regard to workplace safety, rehabilitation, health care, and extended benefits. The measure would require standards for safety programs and create a return-to-work plan for every injured employee. Rep. Henne believes that the changes will not result in benefit cuts nor impact current beneficiaries.

Obhof, Rosenberger Talk About Budget Priorities

Senate President Larry Obhof and Speaker Rosenberger addressed their budget priorities at an event hosted by the NFIB Ohio on Wednesday. Obhof emphasized his support for continued tax cuts for small businesses and his desire to seek a waiver of certain mandates under the health care law. Rosenberger added he is supportive of programs that reform entitlements and encourage workforce development.

Political News and Notes

Revenue Update

Tax revenue has fallen below expected in May, marking it as the ninth month in a row revenues have come up short. The state is currently \$840.7 million in arrears according to the Office of Management and Budget. Personal income tax receipts are among one of the biggest shortfalls coming in around \$88.7 million, which is approximately 14% behind expected. OBM Director Tim Keen commented the downfall is consistent with what analysts suspected. Agency member John Charlton added analysts see the state ending FY 2017 in the black. View the full May financial report here: http://www.obm.ohio.gov/Budget/monthlyfinancial/doc/2017-05_mfr.pdf

Wage and Renter Gap

A study from the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio reported an average Ohio renter would have to make \$15 an hour in order to afford a basic, two-bedroom apartment. Their report last year estimated the hourly wage to be \$14.45 an hour. As it stands, the average Ohio renter currently only makes \$12.87 an hour.

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