

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
June 8, 2018

Around the Square

House Speaker Elected

After nearly two months without a leader, the Ohio House of Representatives finally elected a Speaker. The 11 rounds of voice voting lasted over two hours on Wednesday, culminating in the election of Representative Ryan Smith from Bidwell to serve in the position for the remainder of 2018. No candidate was able to secure the necessary majority of 46 votes in the first 10 rounds. According to state law, the majority was no longer required in round 11, thus Representative Smith won with a final tally of 44 votes. Following him was Representative Strahorn receiving 27 votes, Representative Thompson receiving 13 and Representative Hughes receiving seven. The election signals an end to the ongoing legislative gridlock and the consideration of legislation that has piled up over the past few weeks.

Medical Marijuana Program Delayed

The medical marijuana program launched by the Department of Commerce has been delayed past its originally anticipated start date of September 8. The DOC confirmed that, due to a lack of supply and cultivators still in need of operation certificates, medical marijuana will not be available for purchase by the scheduled deadline. Several cultivators are expected to receive their inspections and certificates in the coming months. The announcement of the program delay has been met with frustration from individuals seeking medical treatment as well as a call for complete marijuana legalization through a potential ballot measure in 2020.

Political News and Notes

Democratic Party Chairman Re-Elected

On Tuesday, David Pepper was unanimously re-elected as the Ohio Democratic Party's chairman for the next four years. Pepper has previously served on the Cincinnati City Council and Hamilton County Board of Commissioners. He was first elected as Ohio Democratic Party chairman in 2015 after an unsuccessful bid for Attorney General against Mike DeWine. His main tasks this year are to help Richard Cordray defeat DeWine in the 2018 election for Ohio Governor, and to help re-elect U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown to his third term.

JobsOhio to be Potentially Audited

The Ohio Senate voted on Wednesday to advance House Bill 10, which includes an amendment authorizing the state auditor to oversee a "performance audit" on organizations such as JobsOhio. The privatized economic development organization created by Governor Kasich in 2011 recruits companies and job development to the state. Though JobsOhio considers themselves to be a private enterprise, Ohio Auditor Dave Yost and several members of the Ohio Senate claim that the state has the right to audit the company due to it being funded through bonds backed by state liquor revenues. JobsOhio has committed to an assessment by an independent firm, which will be publicly shared after completion.

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