

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

August 3, 2018

Around the Square

Lending, Voting Machine Measures Become Law

The governor signed several bills into law on Monday, including legislation that capped payday loan interest rates and funded the purchase of new voting machines for the 2019 election. The nine bills that the Governor signed this past week also enacted consumer protections, gave community control alternatives to prison sentencing and established a process for the selection of voting machines.

Political News and Notes

Election Update- Special Election

Voters in Ohio's 12th Congressional District are just 4 days away from deciding who will serve as their Representative. The special election between Republican State Senator Troy Balderson and Democrat Danny O'Connor will take place on August 7th and has become increasingly close in the past few weeks. Balderson is currently at polling 44 percent, with O'Connor narrowly trailing at 43 percent. The race has garnered national attention, even bringing the President and Vice President of the United States to central-Ohio venues for campaign rallies.

Governor Signs Bill Increasing Drug Penalties

Governor Kasich signed a bill increasing penalties for drug offenses on Wednesday. The law will go into effect after 90 days and enforces harsher punishments for drug trafficking, drug possession and aggravated funding of trafficking in instances involving a fentanyl-related compound. The bill also offers rehabilitation treatment rather than jail time for offenders carrying small amounts of specific drugs. Individuals convicted of serious crimes involving fentanyl may have their sentences increased by 8 years. The bill was sponsored by State Senator Frank LaRose, and is intended to combat the opioid epidemic in Ohio.

Great Lakes Initiative Receives Funding

On Wednesday, the U.S. Senate voted to appropriate \$300 million to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative through a 2019 funding bill. The U.S. House of Representatives passed their version of the funding bill last month and also provided \$300 million to the program. While the Trump administration proposed the budget be cut down to \$30 million earlier this year, Ohio Senators Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown advocated for increased funding. The senators cited more than 3,000 projects throughout the Great Lakes Region, including combating harmful invasive species and loss of wildlife habitats, that were made possible by over \$1.6 billion from Congress since the initiative's beginning in 2010.

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