

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
November 16, 2018

Political News and Notes

Federal Politicians Consider Leadership Options

With the midterm election winners determined, Ohio legislators are weighing their options for leadership positions in the coming months. U.S. Representatives Steve Chabot and Jim Jordan may be competing for the top spot on the House Judiciary Committee next year. U.S. Representative Marcia Fudge has stated that she will break with some of her Democratic colleagues and not support California Representative Nancy Pelosi's run for Speaker of the U.S. House, instead considering a run herself. U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown has stated that he is considering a potential run for president in 2020, and former presidential candidate Governor John Kasich has stated that the midterm's results may pave a way for an independent or third-party candidate. Kasich remains undecided as to whether or not he will make another presidential run.

Around the Square

House Debates Contentious Issues

Democrats had hoped to avoid heated partisan issues in the lame duck period, however the House voted on a few contentious pieces of legislation this past week. A divisive firearm bill that would eliminate the duty to retreat in certain self-defense cases was passed along partisan lines with the exception of two Representatives. Eleven months after it was cleared through the House Health Committee and after a long debate on the House floor, a bill banning abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected was cleared by the chamber. The House also concurred with the Senate's override of Governor Kasich's veto to strike down legislation giving increased oversight of rulemaking to lawmakers.

Senate Session and Leadership

In its first session since breaking in September, the Ohio Senate passed four bills this week on topics including pyramid scheme protections, copay requirements and more inclusive signage for handicap access. On Wednesday, they also informally elected Senators to chamber leadership positions. Senate President Larry Obhof, President Pro Tempore Bob Peterson and Majority Floor Leader Randy Gardner will all maintain their leadership positions with the addition of Majority Whip Matt Huffman to replace term-limited Senator Gayle Manning. After the informal election, the Senate President outlined priorities for the next session including a drug sentencing plan, improving the economy and downsizing Ohio's tax brackets.

E-School Funding Proposals

Legislative initiatives proposed by the newly formed Joint Committee on E-School Funding addressed issues associated with the funding of online charter schools in the wake of the ECOT scandal. The committee's goal is to propose a new funding system in time for the next two-year state budget, which will likely be introduced by Governor-elect Mike DeWine in March. Committee members discussed overhauling the current enrollment-based payment system, engagement models and evaluation of underrepresented student populations.

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