

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
January 4, 2019

Political News and Notes

Speaker Remains To Be Confirmed

Current House Speaker Ryan Smith was selected to retain his position in an informal caucus vote last Thursday. Supporters of rival Representative Larry Householder boycotted the meeting, preventing Speaker Smith from getting the 50 votes necessary to win the majority. Out of 61 total Republican legislators, 34 members supported Speaker Smith and 26 members did not attend the caucus (one member outstanding due to a vacancy). A formal vote will take place on the first day of session next Monday. If no one wins the majority in the first ten rounds of voting, the individual with the highest number of votes in the 11th round will be declared Speaker. Neither Smith nor Householder has an outright majority amongst their Republican colleagues. House Democrats are scheduled to meet to determine a plan for Monday's session, but many are undecided as to who they will support.

New Ballot Signature Requirements

Ohio's chief of elections announced new signature requirements for statewide ballot issues this Wednesday. The number of signatures now required to propose a ballot initiative will be based on total voter turnout for the November 2018 gubernatorial election. Issue committees will need to follow these new requirements until a new signature requirement is made based on the next gubernatorial general election in 2022. Under these new guidelines, a constitutional amendment would need 442,958 signatures, a referendum would require 265,774 signatures and a proposal for a new law would require 132,887 signatures before being submitted to lawmakers.

Around the Square

Speaker Announces Legislative Priorities

House Speaker Ryan Smith was joined by Representative Rick Carfagna as he laid out plans to begin the new year's legislative session with an expansion of broadband services. He expressed his hope that the incoming DeWine administration be more supportive of embracing policies than past administrations- especially due to the governor-elect's workforce transformation platform that includes expanding this infrastructure. Two proposals concerning broadband development were passed in the House last year but received no hearings in the Senate. Legislators anticipate combining elements of these two bills into a revised measure.

State Board of Education Members Added

In his final days as Governor, John Kasich has named four individuals to serve on the State Board of Education. The appointments, each four year terms, serve to fill the four open seats on the 19-member board. The new members include a realtor and three managers of manufacturing companies, signaling the outgoing Governor's intention to tie in workforce preparation to state education efforts. The DeWine administration also sees this as a top priority, and supported Kasich's appointments just days before the inauguration in order for the board to successfully transition on January 15.

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