

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

February 1, 2019

Around the Square

Transportation Infrastructure Panel

On Monday, Governor Mike DeWine established the new Governor's Advisory Committee on Transportation Infrastructure. The task force is charged with offering suggestions on how the state's infrastructure can be preserved and enhanced by mid-February. The committee includes executives from various infrastructure stakeholder groups, ranging from city/local government officials to automotive corporations to engineering groups. The group was announced shortly before the new administration prepares to deliver its transportation budget to the 133rd General Assembly.

Political News and Notes

House Majority Caucus Retreat

As is tradition every biennium, members of the House Majority Caucus met last week for a three-day long retreat. Members gathered at the retreat to discuss future legislation, contemplate budget challenges, hear from esteemed speakers including Governor Mike DeWine and Senate President Larry Obhof, and bridge the gap that formed during the Speaker's race in the past few months. Several members, even some of those who supported rival Representative Ryan Smith, stated they felt optimistic going forward under Speaker Larry Householder's leadership. The members discussed DeWine's budget proposal and the transportation budget, as well as priority areas of legislative interest including education, mental health, addiction, long-term care and Lake Erie protections.

Senate Priorities Outlines

Senate President Larry Obhof announced that the top priority bills for the Ohio Senate will be unveiled next Wednesday during the first session since opening day. Along with the announcement of new legislation, the chamber is expected to elect new leadership and to seat a new member to replace former Senator and current Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education Randy Gardner. Following the leadership election, President Obhof has stated his intention to appoint committee chairs and assign memberships in addition to formally adopting rules for the new chamber. Priority bills expected to be introduced next week include regulation cuts, criminal justice initiatives, legislative oversight modifications and water quality efforts relating to Lake Erie.

Rule Changes Accepted

The House Special Committee on Rules voted to adopt proposed changes from Representative Emilia Sykes concerning additional standing committee memberships for Democrats. The rules offered by Representative Sykes, who is expected to be elected minority leader next week, focused on giving Democrats more power on committees, removing barriers to testimony, and allowing for greater public access/input into committee hearings and discussions.

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