

# Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

June 21, 2019

## Around the Square

### State Budget

On Thursday the Senate unanimously passed its \$69 million budget proposal with Senators from both parties noting the bipartisan effort and compromises included in the budget. The as-passed Senate version of the budget eliminates the bottom two tax brackets and decreases the personal income tax rate for the other brackets by eight percent over two years. It maintains the House provision to raise the smoking age from 18 to 21, but it goes a step further by adding a tax to vaping products. Unlike the House, the Senate budget does not eliminate state takeovers of school districts and changes the high school graduation requirements beginning in 2023. The Senate allocated \$500 million for educational wraparound services compared to the House, which allocated \$675 million for such services. The Senate chose to spend the other \$125 million on education-related spending including private-school scholarships and funding for fast-growing school districts whose funding has been capped by the state formula. The differences in the budget will now be worked out in a joint conference committee.

## Political News and Notes

### Licensing Reciprocity

This week the Ohio House voted unanimously to pass House Bill 133, which requires occupational licensing agencies to give temporary certificates to members of the military and their spouses when they move to Ohio for military duty and already hold a license in another state. This will apply to occupations in the medical field, such as nursing, as well as to teachers and realtors. The bipartisan legislation was introduced by Representative Rick Perales and Representative Casey Weinstein. License reciprocity will allow military families to ensure that spouses are able to continue working in their field when moving their family to Ohio for the military.

### FirstEnergy Supreme Court Case

On Wednesday the Ohio Supreme Court ruled in a 4-3 decision that the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) erred in granting FirstEnergy permission to charge customers an additional fee for grid modernization without any requirements for the use of the money, particularly requiring that FirstEnergy use the money to upgrade the distribution system. FirstEnergy has been charging customers a rider since January 2017 and raising between \$168 million to \$204 million a year for the company, costing the average homeowner thirty dollars a year. Customers will not be reimbursed for these fees, but FirstEnergy must immediately stop charging the fee. The company feels the rider benefited customers by giving FirstEnergy the ability to modernize their system and invest in advanced technologies.

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

## **Bills Introduced This Week**

**HB 286 - License Plate:** To make changes to the “Freemason” license plates.

**HB 287 - Military Waiver Services:** Regarding Medicaid home and community-based waiver services for relatives of active duty military.

**HB 288 - Eminent Domain:** To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency.

**HB 289 - Elevator Law:** To revise the Elevator Law.

**HB 290 - Sexual Contact:** To prohibit unlawful sexual contact between health care professionals and patients and to revoke professional licenses for criminal misconduct.

**HB 291 - Privileged Communications:** To provide privileged testimonial communications between a peer recovery supporter and a fellow first responder exhibiting signs of distress.

**HB 292 - Health Care:** To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.

**HB 293 - Overpass Naming:** To designate the overpass on State Route 37 that spans State Route 15 in Hancock County as the “Patrolman David L. Sterner Memorial Overpass.”

**HB 294 - Bullying:** To modify the definition of school harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

**HB 295 - Electric Scooters:** To establish requirements governing low-speed electric scooters.

**HB 296 - License Plate:** To create the “Healthy New Albany” license plate.

**HB 297 - Tax Credits:** To authorize a refundable income tax credit for a taxpayer’s cash contributions to a qualifying pregnancy resource center.

**HB 298 - Child Abuse:** To modify the period of limitation for prosecutions of offenses involving child abuse and neglect.

**HB 299 - Criminal Penalties:** To enhance penalties for certain crimes against corrections officers, parole officers, probation officers, and parole board members.

**SB 164 - Awareness Month:** To designate July as “Hank Kabel Sarcoma Awareness Month.”

**SB 165 - Benefit Cards:** To establish requirements for electronic benefit transfer cards issued under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

**SB 166 - Sexual Contact:** To prohibit unlawful sexual contact between health care professions and patients and to revoke professional licenses for criminal misconduct

**SB 167 - Domestic Animals:** To prohibit the destruction of a domestic animal by use of a gas chamber.

**SB 168 - Student Meals** To enact the “Hunger-Free Students’ Bill of Rights Act” to require schools to provide certain services to students who are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

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