

# **Byers, Minton and Associates**

This Week at the Statehouse

August 30, 2019

## **Around the Square**

### **Permanent Replacement Housing Program**

This week Representatives Butler, Perales, and J. Todd Smith announced a forthcoming bill to establish the Permanent Replacement Housing Program. If passed, the bill would appropriate \$20 million dollars to the fund. The legislators said that after a natural disaster strikes, renters frequently move away from an area as their home is destroyed. Additionally, the cost of rebuilding causes the price of rent to increase, which locks them out of the market, frequently causing them to never return. Under this plan, those that qualify in areas declared a natural disaster by the Governor, developers would be given incentives to rebuild and do so quickly. Renters would only have to pay the rate of rent that they paid prior to the natural disaster. Additionally, renters receive half off their rent for six months to offset the cost of moving.

## **Political News and Notes**

### **Voter Registration Rolls**

On Thursday, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) settled a lawsuit regarding individuals purged from Ohio's voter rolls. The settlement will allow those that were purged from voter rolls for inactivity between 2011 and this year to cast a provisional ballot in any election through 2022. This settlement is a continuation of a deal previously reached to allow purged, inactive voters to cast provisional ballots in 2016 and 2018. This will not impact the upcoming removal of 235,000 voters from the rolls in September.

### **House Bill 6 Referendum**

On Thursday, Attorney General Dave Yost approved the ballot language for a statewide referendum to overturn House Bill 6, the recently passed legislation to bailout two nuclear plants in Ohio. Previously, Yost rejected previously submitted ballot language on the issue, saying it was misleading and missing key details. Next the group responsible for the referendum, Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts, must collect 265,774 valid signatures from registered Ohio voters by October 21 to appear on this year's November 2020 ballot. A group that opposes the referendum on HB 6 has already launched a seven-figure TV and radio advertisement campaign to urge voters to not sign the referendum petition.

### **Drug Overdose Decline**

For the first time since 2009, Ohio's fatal drug overdoses saw a decline. The rate of fatal drug overdoses dropped by 22 percent in Ohio in the last year, a promising sign that Ohio may be beginning to emerge from the drug epidemic. The country saw an average decline of five percent in fatal drug overdoses in the last year. While Ohio had the third-largest drop among states, it still ranks highly for fatal overdoses in the nation. However, both Franklin County and Lucas County saw increases in deaths in the last year, while Montgomery County saw a 47 percent drop in their fatal overdose rates.

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### **This Week's Bills**

**HB 322 - Teacher Residency:** To revise the Ohio Teacher Residency Program.

**HB 323 - Psychologist Prescriptions:** To authorize certain psychologists to prescribe drugs and therapeutic devices as part of the practice of psychology.

**HB 324 - Tort Actions:** To raise the limitations on damages for noneconomic loss and punitive damages in certain tort actions based on adjustments for inflation from the year 2005 to 2019.

**HB 325 - Day Designation:** To designate February 18 as "Toni Morrison Day."

**HB 326 - Disability Benefits:** To allow a Public Employees Retirement System or School Employees Retirement System disability benefit recipient elected to certain offices to continue receiving a disability benefit during the term of office.

**HB 327 - Package Delivery:** To prohibit a business from using an unmanned aerial vehicle to deliver packages.

**SB 187 - Suggestive Performances:** To prohibit a sexually suggestive performance by a minor and, if the offender is a D liquor permit holder, to require the court to order the revocation of the permit.

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