

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

February 21, 2020

Around the Square

John Glenn Statue

Supporters of late astronaut and U.S. Senator John Glenn are working to bring a statue of Glenn to the Statehouse, with the effort being led by State Representative Adam Holmes. Glenn passed away in 2016, and while the rules for Statehouse grounds state that a person's statue cannot be permanently placed on Statehouse grounds until a person has been dead for 25 years, supporters are seeking to have his statue up on special occasions. For example, Rep. Holmes has proposed that the statue first go up on what would have been John Glenn's 100th birthday, July 18, 2021, and again on February 20, 2020 for the 60th anniversary of his orbital flight in Friendship 7.

Political News and Notes

Term Limits

This week a group seeking to change term limits for Ohio lawmakers took the first steps in getting their proposal on the ballot by filing initial paperwork with the Ohio Attorney General's office. Under the groups' proposal, elected individuals serving in the Ohio General Assembly would have a lifetime limit of sixteen years that they could serve in either the House or Senate. There is currently no lifetime cap on serving in Ohio's legislature, but rather lawmakers cannot serve more than eight consecutive years in either chamber. If the current language is approved by Attorney General Yost and later passed by voters, the term limits would go into effect beginning January 1, 2021.

Phosphorous Limits

After years of pressure, the Ohio EPA will begin to limit the amount of fertilizer and manure that can flow into Lake Erie on a daily basis to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the lake that causes harmful algal blooms. The limit has not been announced, but it will be developed over the next 2 to 3 years. Ohio is part of a pact that aims to reduce phosphorus by 40 percent by 2025, but the state has failed to show any progress toward that goal so far.

Interrogation Recordings

On Thursday the Ohio House voted unanimously to pass legislation that will require the recording of police interrogations for those accused of major felonies. The legislation, introduced by Representatives Plummer and West, was passed despite concerns from prosecutors. Offenses that will now require interrogation recordings include murder, aggravated murder, voluntary manslaughter, a 1st or 2nd degree felony violation of involuntary manslaughter or vehicular homicide, rape, attempted rape, and sexual battery. The legislation allows for six exceptions in which a recording is not required. For example, no recording is required if a law enforcement officer has no reason to think an individual committed a crime that would fall under one of the aforementioned categories prior to interrogation.

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This Week's Bills

HB 510 - Vehicle Loads: To increase the criminal penalties associated with failing to secure a load on a vehicle.

HB 511 - Glucagon: To permit schools and camps to procure and use injectable or nasally administered glucagon in accordance with prescribed policies and to exempt them from licensing requirements related to the possession of glucagon.

HB 512 - Medication Coverage: Regarding insurance and Medicaid coverage of epinephrine and glucagon.

HB 513 - Sexuality Counseling: To enact the "Vulnerable Child Protection Act" regarding sexuality and identity counseling and prohibiting certain procedures and activities intended to change, reinforce, or affirm a minor's perception of his or her own sexual attraction, sexual behaviors, or identity.

HB 514 - Retirement Boards: To require the state retirement systems to publicly broadcast board meetings.

HB 515 - Retirement Investments: To require the boards of the state retirement systems to disclose certain financial information regarding alternative investments.

HB 516 - Retirement Systems: Regarding the prohibition against the state retirement systems doing business with a former state retirement system employee, officer, or board member.

HB 517 - Rule Reviews: To explicitly exempt building and fire codes from certain rule review requirements.

HB 518 - Noneconomic Damages: To remove the cap on damages for noneconomic loss when a victim of rape or assault brings a tort action.

HB 519 - Month Designation: To designate April as "Financial Literacy Month" in Ohio.

HB 520 - Public Service Employees: To establish a pilot program to assist public service employees in applying for the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and to make an appropriation.

HB 521 - Public Service Loans: To require the Chancellor of Higher Education and public service organizations to disseminate information regarding the federal public service loan forgiveness programs.

SB 280 - Credit Service Organizations: To exempt certain contracts between a credit services organization and a buyer from the time limit to perform services.

SB 281: School Funding: To support the New Richmond Exempted Village School District and to make an appropriation.

SB 282: Unemployment Compensation: To require the Director of Job and Family Services to establish a process for employers to make complaints regarding unemployment compensation benefits.

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