

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

April 24, 2020

Around the Square

Ohio House Returning to Work

Beginning May 4th, the Ohio House of Representatives will implement a plan to safely resume committee activities. Speaker Larry Householder presented a number of virus containment strategies Thursday, including a commitment to extensive cleaning between every meeting. Social distancing will be maintained by utilizing larger than normal rooms to conduct business, holding witnesses in separate overflow space, and staggering start times to avoid congestion. In addition, staffers will be divided and assigned alternating work days, so that only half of the Statehouse and Riffe Building staff will be present at any given time.

DeWine's Plan for Economy Imminent

Governor Mike DeWine will announce his policy to reopen the Ohio economy this coming Monday. Restrictions will be lifted gradually to prevent a second surge in COVID-19 cases. DeWine has mentioned that among the first of his efforts will be to enable healthcare facilities to reconsider surgeries previously deemed nonessential. The Ohio Department of Health data reveals 14,700 confirmed cases, 3,000 hospitalizations, and 656 deaths due to the novel coronavirus. 577 cases, 78 hospitalizations, and 46 deaths came in the previous 24 hours alone. Follow the latest statistics from the Ohio Department of Health [here](#).

The U.S. Legislature passed a \$484B coronavirus aid package that awaits President Trump's signature. The package includes \$322B to replenish the small business "Paycheck Protection Program," \$75B for hospitals, and \$25B for expanded testing. Facing scrutiny for disseminating funds to large companies, the Small Business Association has issued a statement that public companies are unlikely to receive new coronavirus stimulus.

Political News and Notes

School Buildings Closed for Summer

Ohio's K-12 buildings will remain closed for the academic year. Though children are not high-risk for serious injury from the virus, they are transmission vectors for the community. The Governor announced that the fall term may begin with a blended learning style. Many graduating and higher education students also face uncertain futures due to postponement of standardized testing including the ACT, SAT, MCAT, and GRE.

Ohio Unemployment Claims Approaching 1 Million

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services received over 100,000 initial claims during the week of April 13th, bringing the five week total to nearly 1 million. Over that period, the agency has paid \$926 million in compensation to 376,000 people. Over the previous two years combined, ODJFS received a mere 750,000 claims, a quarter million less than the last five weeks alone. Northeast Ohio has been hit particularly hard, as Cuyahoga, Lorain, Lake, and Geauga counties reported the starkest jumps in unemployment. The highest overall unemployment remains clustered in southeastern counties. Nationally, 26 million have applied for unemployment in the last five weeks, wiping out more jobs than the economy gained over the preceding 10 years (22M).

This Week's Bills

SB 303 - Pharmacist Agreements: Regarding pharmacist consult agreements.