

# THIS WEEK AT THE STATEHOUSE SEPTEMBER 18, 2020



## **CURRENT COVID STATS**

### Ohio:

- 134,001 confirmed cases
- 14,625 hospitalizations
- 4,580 confirmed fatalities

### United States:

- 6.61 million cases
- 196,277 fatalities

### World:

- 30.06 million cases
- 943,433 fatalities

## **NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE**

### Monday:

- Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review

### Tuesday:

- House Session (If Needed)
- Senate Session (If Needed)
- Senate Rules and Reference Committee
- House Finance Committee

### Wednesday:

- House Session (If Needed)
- Senate Session
- Senate Rules and Reference Committee

### Thursday:

- House Session (If Needed)

### Friday:

## **Return Postage Request Rejected**

On Monday, Secretary of State Frank LaRose was denied his request to the Controlling Board to approve up to \$3 million to prepay postage for voters to return absentee ballots, with the board citing that the decision should lay in the hands of the legislature. Secretary LaRose continues to advocate for voters to utilize mail-in ballots and early voting options to remain civically engaged during the pandemic.

## **COVID Liability Immunity Bill Enacted**

Governor Mike DeWine sign HB 606 on Monday to provide broad civil immunity during the public health crisis. The bill will take 90 days to take effect after an emergency clause was removed in conference committee; additionally, the end date was extended from December 31, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

The legislation applies to businesses, schools, health-care providers, and other employees against lawsuits claiming that they transmitted COVID-19. The bill allows lawsuits for circumstances related to “reckless disregard of the consequences or intentional or willful or wanton misconduct.”

## **Senate Moves Forward with COVID Education Bill**

During Wednesday's Senate Education Committee, SB 358 was continued for further consideration. The bill will allow schools to cancel state end-of-course exams for the 2020-21 school year and require the Department of Education to request a waiver of federal testing requirements. Additionally, it will prohibit ODE from publishing report card grades for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, freezing the EdChoice list.

## **New Virus Data Tools Unveiled**

On Thursday, Governor Mike DeWine unveiled two new COVID data dashboards that focus on cases reported in schools, and among Ohioans under 18. This dashboard was developed in conjunction with the Ohio

Children's Hospital Association, and features information on cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities.

## **Introduced Bills**

**HB 759 – Volunteer Officer Benefits:** To create the Volunteer Peace Officer and Firefighter Benefit Study Committee to examine disability and survivor benefits paid to volunteer and part-time peace officers and firefighters and their dependents.

**HB 760 – College Tuition:** To enact the "Anthony Dia Act" to modify the in-state residency requirement for a college tuition waiver granted to the child, spouse, or qualified former spouse of a public service officer or U.S. armed service member killed in the line of duty.

**HB 761 – Marriage Ceremonies:** To permit mayors to solemnize marriages anywhere within Ohio.

**SB 364 – Medical Licensure:** To enter into the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact.

**SB 365 – Remote Meetings:** To extend the authorization for members of a public body to hold and attend meetings or hearings via electronic technology, during the period of the emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-01D on March 9, 2020, until the declared emergency is terminated.

**SB 366 – Assault:** To prohibit assault by a law enforcement officer.

**SB 367 – Campus Housing:** To prohibit state institutions of higher education from requiring any student to reside in on-campus housing for the 2020-2021 school year and to declare an emergency.

**SB 368 – Phonics Instruction:** To require the use of phonics as the primary technique for teaching reading and writing in grades kindergarten through five and to make an appropriation.

**SR 552 – College Athletics:** To urge the Big Ten Athletic Conference Commissioner to allow Big Ten member institutions to participate in athletic competitions for the 2020 fall season.