

THIS WEEK AT THE STATEHOUSE JULY 23, 2021



CURRENT COVID STATS

Ohio:

- 934,555 confirmed cases
- 61,377 hospitalizations
- 20,446 confirmed fatalities

United States:

- 34.25 million cases
- 607,684 fatalities

World:

- 192.29 million cases
- 4.14 million fatalities

NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

FirstEnergy Federally Charged

Akron-based FirstEnergy Corporation, the company at the center of the HB 6 scandal, signed a deferred prosecution agreement that could result in the dismissal of the charge of conspiring to commit honest service wire fraud. Under the deal, the company will pay a \$230 million penalty. \$115 million of that will be paid to the federal government, and \$115 million will go to the Ohio Development Service Agency's Percentage of Income Payment Plus Plan. Following this announcement, Governor Mike DeWine reiterated that he or his staff were not aware of the motives of Sam Randazzo (former PUCO chairman, who stepped down the day after the allegations came out), and will be donating money to the Boys and Girls Clubs in the amount FirstEnergy gave to his campaign. The FirstEnergy news has renewed the charge from many legislators to repeal the entirety of HB 6.

State to Receive Federal Funds for Mental Health, Addiction Efforts

Ohio will receive \$86 million in one-time funding for community mental health and substance abuse prevention efforts as a part of a COVID-19 relief strategy from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. \$25.8 million will go toward Community Mental Health Services Block Grant funds, which allow states to support community mental health services and address gaps in existing services. Another \$60.5 million come from the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, which allows states to plan, implement, and evaluate efforts to prevent and treat substance abuse.

K-12 Mask Mandate Restriction Legislation Introduced

SB 209 was introduced by Senator Andrew Brenner last week, which would prevent school boards, the State Board of Education, and state institutions of higher education from requiring facial coverings. The legislation also requires businesses with mask mandates to post notice "in a conspicuous place" and exempt people with certain medical conditions. The bill does not prevent local health boards from taking action to slow the spread of communicable diseases.

Bill Introductions

HB 379 - License Plate (Robinson, P.): To create the "Weirdo Cat Lovers of Cleveland" license plate.