

THIS WEEK AT THE STATEHOUSE OCTOBER 1, 2021



CURRENT COVID STATS

Ohio:

- 1,413,972 confirmed cases
- 73,083 hospitalizations
- 21,945 confirmed fatalities

United States:

- 43.5 million cases
- 698,000 fatalities

World:

- 219 million cases
- 4.55 million fatalities

NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

- Senate Session

Thursday:

Friday:

Vaccine Legislation Lacks Consensus

On Wednesday of this week House Bill 435, a newly introduced vaccine bill supported by House leadership, failed to receive a floor vote. The legislation was touted as a compromise between conservative lawmakers who expressed concerns surrounding vaccine mandates and businesses/health groups who are circumspect of government intervention in their operations. The measure was introduced on Monday and reported out of committee on Tuesday after receiving only one hearing. HB 435 was re-referred to the House Rules and Reference Committee during session instead of calling the bill for a vote – presumably so that further issues could be addressed. Speaker Bob Cupp stated "there are a few additional issues our members would like more time to explore. I think it's important that we have a consensus within our caucus on how we move forward, so we're going to take time to do that." House leadership will decide in the coming days what form of additional action the bill will receive, and whether or not additional committee hearings will take place.

Justice DeWine Weighs in on Redistricting

Ohio Supreme Court Justice Pat DeWine released a statement that he will not be recusing himself from reviewing the new state House and Senate legislative district maps. His father, Governor Mike DeWine is a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission and voted to approve the maps. Justice DeWine stated, "there is no

basis for me to do so," explaining that the governor was one of seven members of the commission which drew maps for Ohio Statehouse districts. Therefore, Mike DeWine had "considerably less influence" over the maps than he would over a state department. Since approval of the maps three lawsuits have been filed, each accusing the redistricting commission of violating anti-gerrymandering principles. Those cases are pending before the Court and are expected to be heard in December.

New Unemployment Reimbursement Program Unveiled

Beginning October 1st, Ohioans who have been victims of unemployment account theft will be able to request repayment. The state has launched a new program for reimbursement through Job & Family Services. The department is also proactively reaching out to individuals whose accounts may be at risk.

Bill Introductions

HB 433 – Natural Hair Stylists (Gross): To enact the Provider of Boutique Services Opportunity Act regarding natural hair stylists and boutique services registrants.

HB 434 – Nuclear Technology (Stein): To enact the Advanced Nuclear Technology Helping Energize Mankind (ANTHEM) Act by establishing the Ohio Nuclear Development Authority.

HB 435 – Vaccinations (Carfagna, Seitz): To address COVID-19 vaccine requirements for employees and students; to extend certain timelines for qualified civil immunity and expand immunity to include hearing aid dealers and hearing aid fitters; to authorize emergency medical technicians to administer COVID-19 tests; to expressly cover COVID-19 vaccine injuries under the workers' compensation system; and to repeal sections 3792.05, 3792.06, 3792.07, and 3792.08 of the Revised Code on June 30, 2023.

HB 436 – Port Authorities (Jordan, Carfagna): Narrows the purposes for which a port authority that was created prior to July 9, 1982, may issue revenue bonds beyond the limit of bonded indebtedness and to exempt from sales and use tax sales of tangible personal property or services used in fulfilling a public contract with a port authority.

HB 437 – Postal Theft (Crossman): To create the offense of postal package theft.

HB 438 – Date Designation (Ingram): To designate May 13 as "Nathaniel R. Jones Day."

HB 439 – Mental Illness (Galonski, Hillyer): To make changes to the law regarding involuntary treatment for mentally ill persons subject to a court order.

HB 440 – Agricultural Linked Deposit Program (Swearingen, White): To expand the Agricultural Linked Deposit Program and the types of obligations in which the Treasurer of State may invest interim funds.

SB 236 – Insurers (Wilson, Lang): To enable insurers using an online platform to automatically enroll purchasers in digital communications.

SB 237 – Congressional Districts (Yuko, Sykes): To establish congressional district boundaries for the state based on the 2020 decennial census.

SB 238 – License Plate (Romanchuk): To create the "Ohio Bird Sanctuary" license plate.

SB 239 – Adoption/Foster Care (Blessing): Regards qualifications for adoption and foster care home assessors and professional treatment staff.

SB 240 – Community School Network (Peterson): Authorizes the merger of one or more community schools and a nonprofit operator into a community school network.

SB 241 – Agricultural Linked Deposit Program (Cirino, Rulli): To expand the Agricultural Linked Deposit Program and the types of obligations in which the Treasurer of State may invest interim funds.

SB 242 – Retail Merchants (Blessing): To require retail merchants to give customers the option to pay by cash.