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**Ohio Association of Ambulatory Surgery Centers
Legislative Update**

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- HB90** **OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNOR'S AND HEALTH ORDERS** (WIGGAM S, EDWARDS J) To establish legislative oversight of the Governor's executive orders, certain public health orders, and emergency rules, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.
Current Status: 2/24/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-90>
- HB110** **OPERATING BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.
Current Status: 7/1/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; effective 7/1/21
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-110>
- HB122** **TELEHEALTH SERVICES** (FRAIZER M, HOLMES A) To establish and modify requirements regarding the provision of telehealth services, to establish a provider credentialing program within the Medicaid program, to revise the law governing the State Medical Board's One-Bite Program, and to extend the suspension of certain programs and requirements under the state's insurance laws until January 1, 2026.
Current Status: 12/22/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/23/22
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-122>
- HB160** **HEALTH CARE COST ESTIMATES** (HOLMES A) Regarding the provision of health care cost estimates.
Current Status: 3/10/2021 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-160>
- HB196** **REGULATE SURGICAL ASSISTANTS** (KELLY B, CARRUTHERS S) To regulate the practice of surgical assistants.
Current Status: 5/24/2022 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Health, (Seventh Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-196>



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- HB218 COVID-19 VACCINE - QUALIFIED IMMUNITIES** (CUTRONA A) To address medical requirements for employees and students; to address qualified civil immunity regarding certain coronaviruses; 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, 3792.07, and 3792.08 of the Revised Code on September 30, 2025.
Current Status: 12/7/2021 - Senate General Government Budget, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-218>
- HB267 LIMIT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JORDAN K) To limit the duration of public health orders and to allow the General Assembly to act via concurrent resolution in response to a public health emergency if the Governor or Department of Health does not.
Current Status: 5/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-267>
- HB356 REDUCE ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS** (LOYCHIK M, BIRD A) Regarding a proposal to reduce the abuse of prescription opioids, to establish addiction treatment facilities, to increase penalties for drug trafficking violations, to modify penalties for drug possession, to require an offender convicted of a drug possession or drug trafficking offense involving certain drugs to be subject to ten years of post-release control, to allow a criminal defendant who has a severe substance use disorder involving certain drugs to be confined by a state detoxification provider while awaiting trial, to create restitution work programs, and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 4/6/2022 - House Criminal Justice, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-356>
- HB388 REGARDING VACCINE REFUSAL** (JORDAN K) To prohibit taking certain actions against an individual because the individual refuses to be vaccinated against a disease.
Current Status: 8/12/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-388>



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- HB401 EMPLOYER-MANDATED COVID VACCINATION INJURY** (EDWARDS J) To exempt an injury or disability caused by an employer-mandated COVID-19 vaccination from the Workers' Compensation Law and to allow the employee to sue the employer for damages.
Current Status: 8/24/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-401>
- HB411 INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT** (CLICK G, GRENDALL D) To prohibit mandatory disclosures related to an individual's COVID-19 vaccination status, to name the act the Individual Privacy and Anti-Discrimination Act, and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 9/8/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-411>
- HB424 COVID-19 VACCINE - QUALIFIED IMMUNITIES** (KOEHLER K) To prohibit a political subdivision, public official, public school, state agency, or state institution of higher education from taking certain actions related to the COVID-19 vaccine, to codify the qualified civil immunities under H.B. 606 of the 133rd General Assembly permanently, to repeal section 3792.05 of the Revised Code on the date that is two years after the effective date of that section, and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 9/20/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-424>
- HB425 COVID-19 - GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES** (WIGGAM S, HALL T) To prohibit certain actions related to COVID-19 and genetic technologies.
Current Status: 9/20/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-425>
- HB435 VACCINE REQUIREMENTS** (CARFAGNA R, SEITZ B) 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.
Current Status: 10/13/2021 - Bills for Third Consideration; (Pending Committee Report)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-435>



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- HB454 **SAFE ACT** (CLICK G, GRENDALL D) To prohibit certain procedures to alter a minor child's sex and to designate this act as the Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.**
- Current Status:** 6/1/2022 - House Families, Aging and Human Services, (Fourth Hearing)
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-454>
- HB477 **EXPULSION, TERMINATION BASED ON VACCINATION STATUS** (RICHARDSON T) To prevent expulsion from school and termination from employment based on COVID-19 vaccination status.**
- Current Status:** 11/1/2021 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-477>
- HB481 **COVID VACCINE, PASSPORT PROTECTION ACT** (JORDAN K) To enact the COVID-19 Vaccination and Passport Protection Act to prohibit schools, institutions of higher education, employers, and places of public accommodation from requiring COVID-19 vaccines or proof of vaccination.**
- Current Status:** 11/8/2021 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-481>
- HB489 **INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE ACT** (CLICK G) To enact the Inalienable Rights of Conscience Act regarding students and employees who object to certain vaccines and other treatments based on reasons of conscience, including religious convictions.**
- Current Status:** 11/16/2021 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-489>
- HB598 **PROHIBIT ABORTIONS BASED ON CONDITION** (SCHMIDT J) To enact the Human Life Protection Act to prohibit abortions based upon a condition precedent.**
- Current Status:** 5/26/2022 - House Government Oversight, (Third Hearing)
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-598>
- HB704 **DESIGNATE PERSONHOOD FROM CONCEPTION** (CLICK G) To enact The Personhood Act to recognize the personhood of an unborn human individual from conception.**
- Current Status:** 7/11/2022 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-704>



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- HB714 ADVANCED PRACTICE RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS** (YOUNG T, JOHN M) To license advanced practice respiratory therapists and to amend the version of section 4761.01 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect September 30, 2024, to continue the change on and after that date.
Current Status: 8/31/2022 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-714>
- SB22 LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JOHNSON T, MCCOLLEY R) To establish legislative oversight of orders issued by the executive branch, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.
Current Status: 3/24/2021 - Consideration of Governor's Veto; House Overrides Veto, Vote 62-35
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-22>
- SB150 NONCOMPETE PROVISIONS-PHYSICIANS** (JOHNSON T, WILLIAMS S) To prohibit the use of noncompete provisions in physician employment contracts.
Current Status: 10/27/2021 - Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-150>
- SB157 ATTEMPTED ABORTIONS** (JOHNSON T, HUFFMAN S) To require reports to be made after a child is born alive following an abortion or attempted abortion, to establish certain civil or criminal penalties for failing to preserve the health or life of such a child, and to make changes regarding variances from written transfer agreements.
Current Status: 12/22/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/23/22
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-157>
- SB161 SURGICAL SMOKE** (BRENNER A) Regarding surgical smoke.
Current Status: 3/16/2022 - Senate Health, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-161>



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SB321 **REGARDING APRN AUTHORITY** (ROMANCHUK M) Regarding the authority of advanced practice registered nurses, and to amend the versions of sections 3701.5010, 3705.30, and 3929.67 of the Revised Code that are scheduled to take effect on September 30, 2024, to continue the changes to those sections on and after that date.

Current Status: 5/18/2022 - Referred to Committee Senate Health

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-321>

SB322 **SEX OFFENSES, MEDICAL PROFESSIONS** (HACKETT R) Regarding sex offenses and individuals regulated by the State Medical Board.

Current Status: 5/18/2022 - Referred to Committee Senate Health

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-322>



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Week of October 28, 2022

AGRICULTURE

More Ohio farmland will remain Ohio farmland, according to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg), which announced that 139 acres have been added to the Farmland Preservation Program. The William Rowe Farm in Highland County becomes the 27th Ohio farm to join the program this year. According to ODAg, since the Office of Farmland Preservation began in 1998, 678 farms totaling 102,713 acres have entered into agreements.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

According to Ohio Arts Council (OAC) budget documents, the agency's request for the FY24-25 biennium is nearly \$51.4 million, compared to nearly \$40.1 million in FY22-23. Most of the requested additional money (\$4.56 million in each fiscal year) would be used for sustainability operating support grants, Executive Director Donna Collins said.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Ohio Supreme Court is weighing the potential stay of an appeals court decision that reversed a freeze of more \$8 million in assets which the Ohio Attorney General's Office is seeking to recover from former Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Chairman Sam Randazzo. FirstEnergy has admitted to bribing Randazzo in connection with energy subsidy legislation, 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin). The Franklin County Common Pleas Court had granted Attorney General Dave Yost's request to attach millions of dollars of Randazzo's assets before he could shield them from litigation, but the 10th District reversed that order in September. Yost turned to the Ohio Supreme Court, asking justices to stay the 10th District decision to free up Randazzo's assets.

The AG's office said Tuesday that OptumRx will pay \$15 million to settle a lawsuit alleging it overcharged the Bureau of Workers' Compensation while acting as its pharmacy benefit manager (PBM). Yost sued on behalf of BWC in 2019. The lawsuit alleged that OptumRx failed to meet its contractual obligation to reimburse claims for multi-source generic drugs at the lesser of four amounts: the "maximum allowable cost" (MAC) set by OptumRx; the federal upper limit set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); the average wholesale price (AWP) minus 9 percent; or the pharmacy provider's "usual and customary charge." The litigation also alleged OptumRx failed to fulfill a requirement that, starting in November 2016, it manage MAC pricing to achieve an effective rate of at least AWP minus 73.5 percent. Further, the attorney



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general said the PBM didn't fulfill the contractual requirement to make "timely" changes to its MAC list, and it committed all the alleged breaches "in bad faith," constituting "breaches of good faith and fair dealing implied in every contract under Ohio law." Failure to pay the lesser amount cost BWC millions of dollars over the term of the contract, the state argued. Optum did not admit any wrongdoing as part of the settlement.

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Youngstown State University and Hon Hai Technology Group (Foxconn) Wednesday announced their intention to establish a partnership to design and launch a national electric vehicle (EV) workforce training and innovation center. The center will focus on helping the emerging electric vehicle industry build and scale a sustainable workforce around advanced manufacturing, energy storage and other integrated technology solutions, such as artificial intelligence, 5G and cybersecurity. The parties intend for the center to have national reach and to generate a strong economic effect on the region and beyond, YSU President Jim Tressel said at a news conference. YSU and Foxconn will develop short and long-term strategies that include locating the training and innovation facility in the area of Lordstown, where Foxconn owns a factory for electric vehicle manufacturing. YSU and Foxconn also intend to execute a formal memorandum of understanding and partnership within the next few months.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

As Ohio struggles to improve its infant and maternal mortality rates, the City Club of Cleveland Friday hosted a forum with the leader of one Ohio organization solely dedicated to improving the health of Black mothers and babies. Jazmin Long, who was named CEO of Cleveland-based nonprofit Birthing Beautiful Communities (BBC) in 2021, discussed the organization's work to support mothers and families. According to the Ohio Department Health (ODH), Black infants in Ohio are about 2.7 times more likely to die before their first birthday than White infants. Ohio's overall infant mortality rate in 2020 fell to 6.7 per 1,000 live births; meanwhile the infant mortality rate for Black babies fell to 13.6 per 1,000 live births.

Members of the Legislature's Ohio Black Maternal Health Caucus (OBMHC) met virtually Thursday to hear representatives of ROOTT -- Restoring Our Own Through Transformation -- describe their efforts "to restore the wellbeing of Black women and infants" Executive Officer Jessica Roach and Chief Operating Officer Dorian Wingard described the various services offered through their agency including doula services, noting that the agency has seen a zero percent infant mortality rate since they began in 2017. They stressed that issues around infant mortality cross the entire population; it is not just a problem among low-income families. In addition, based on the data they



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presented for Franklin County and despite a focus on the issue, the numbers have not stayed down since 2011 when it stood at 17.1 deaths per 1,000.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The Ohio capital's Columbus Metropolitan Club (CMC) hosted "The Long March to Equality" Wednesday as four generations of LGBTQ+ voices sounded the alarm over legislation addressing transsexuality and youth. Panelists shared their experiences recovering from childhood trauma and discovering a "safe" space to express themselves and travel the road from queer activism to advocacy. The discussion highlighted what has changed and what has remained from the gay rights movement of the late 1960s through the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* LGBTQ+ marriage decision up to the present.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Ohio Third Frontier Commission recently approved \$3.6 million in funding to help entrepreneurs develop innovative products and move them toward the marketplace through the Technology Validation and Start-up Fund. "We are investing in promising research and innovation to build our economy and improve the quality of life for Ohioans." Ohio Department of Development (DOD) Director and chair of the commission Lydia Mihalik said the funding "will enable entrepreneurs to push innovative ideas forward" and the startup companies "are building the companies and jobs of tomorrow."

EDUCATION

Scores on the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) -- aka the Nation's Report Card -- quantify learning loss from the pandemic years, showing drops in both math and reading performance for fourth and eighth grade students nationally and in Ohio. The average fourth grade math score for Ohio students was 238, lower than the average of 241 in the 2019 administration of the NAEP, but higher than this year's national average of 235. The average fourth grade reading score for Ohio was 219, lower than the 2019 average of 222; the national average for 2022 was 216. The average eighth grade math score for Ohio was 276, lower than the 2019 average of 286; the national average was 273. The average eighth grade reading score for Ohio was 262, lower than the 2019 average of 267; the national average for 259.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) said Friday that the state's school vaccine requirement will not change following a vote by the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to recommend adding the COVID-19 vaccine to the recommended immunization schedule for children and adults.



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ACIP meets annually to review the vaccination schedule and make updates in an effort to help doctors in determining when to administer a number of vaccinations, particularly for children, including for polio, measles, whooping cough and tetanus. The committee's decision to add the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters to the schedule does not change that state and local jurisdictions have their own rules about which vaccines are required for school attendance. ODH Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff said, "The CDC's ... ACIP recommendation for the COVID-19 vaccine to be added to the formulary or schedule of vaccines for children does not mandate this vaccine for school children. Ohio law determines required vaccines for school attendance. See the Ohio Revised Code [Sec.] 3313.671."

Ohio has the unfortunate distinction of being the only state in the country without health education standards for K-12 schools, experts told the Ohio Legislative Children's Caucus on Monday. "Our current message in legislation has been more about addressing topics rather than skills, and it really hampers our ability to align our efforts across the whole school, whole community to promote healthy behaviors," Wright State University Health and Physical Education Program Director Kevin Lorson said. "Not only are we the only state without health education standards, we're the only content area in Ohio without academic content standards," Lorson continued. "The General Assembly has oversight of health education, not the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). ... Last year, the General Assembly banned ODE from publishing model curriculum in health education." Budget law HB110 (Oelslager) includes the following language: "The State Board of Education shall not adopt a separate model education program for health education."

A Franklin County judge declined Attorney General Dave Yost's request to issue a final judgement against companies found to have wrongly profited from the defunct Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT), delaying his bid to initiate collections proceedings against them while further proceedings against school founder William Lager continue. In May, Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Kimberly Cocroft ruled that Lager illegally profited from contracts with ECOT and breached his fiduciary duty to the school. She issued partial summary judgement against ECOT vendor companies affiliated with Lager: \$28.8 million against AltairLearning Management; \$128.4 million against IQ Innovations; and \$4.3 million against Third Wave Communications. The judge wrote that a trial is needed to determine the amount of Lager's own liability. Last month, Yost's office had filed a motion asking Cocroft to enter a final judgement against the three vendor companies, saying claims against the three "have been fully litigated, liability has been found, and damages fixed."

Attorneys for the state and families using EdChoice scholarships argued Tuesday that school districts challenging the voucher program lack grounds to sue and cannot get past precedent upholding the constitutionality of vouchers. The plaintiff districts said motions



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for dismissal and judgement filed by the state and families rest on a variety of factual assumptions yet to be reviewed by the court. In January, several school districts and a group of families enrolled in them sued to challenge the constitutionality of EdChoice, arguing it violates constitutional provisions requiring a system of "common" schools and forbidding the state to give control of educational funding to religious groups. Tuesday's oral argument session in Franklin County Common Pleas Court focused on a motion to dismiss the case filed by the state, and a motion for judgement on the pleadings filed by EdChoice families, who were granted status as intervening parties in the case. A separate group of families attending Catholic schools with EdChoice scholarships was also represented in the courtroom Tuesday but did not present additional arguments.

ELECTIONS

Two men pleaded guilty Monday in Cuyahoga County to felony charges involving thousands of robocalls to minority voters during the 2020 election that involved voter intimidation. John Burkman, 56, of Virginia, and Jacob Wohl, 24, of California, each pleaded guilty to a fifth-degree felony charge of telecommunications fraud and face a maximum one-year prison sentence. Both were indicted in 2020 on charges of telecommunications fraud and bribery, and had been accused by the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office of using a voice broadcasting service provider to place more than 67,000 calls across multiple states in the Midwest, including 8,100 calls sent to telephone numbers located in Cleveland and East Cleveland. The prerecorded messages had falsely warned people that if they voted by mail that their information could be used by law enforcement, collection agencies, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the purposes of pursuing old warrants, collecting outstanding debts and tracking people for mandatory vaccines.

The Ohio Elections Commission again delayed action against former Rep. Clayton Luckie, though the secretary of state's office asked the commission to address the matter sooner rather than later. The secretary of state's office had referred Luckie's campaign committee to the commission for failure to file finance reports, but Luckie has argued that these matters should have been closed in 2013. Luckie pleaded guilty to charges that he had used his campaign funds for personal use and was sentenced to eight years in prison. Part of that plea agreement was to close out the campaign committee, though the complaint against him said it appeared to still be active. The commission also continued a complaint against Rep. Terrence Upchurch (D-Cleveland) that had been referred by the secretary of state's office. Both the Upchurch and Luckie cases were rescheduled for Thursday, Dec. 22. In other action, the commission combined a complaint against former Rep. Stephanie Howse over her campaign finance filings with a previous case decided in June, when it found a violation and fined her committee \$50. The commission decided the \$50 fine was proper for the combined case and did not take further action.



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ELECTIONS 2022

The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) said Monday that limited copies of its biennial election guide, the **2022 Ohio Election Guide** created with the assistance of *Hannah News*, are still available to purchase. The cost of the guides is \$20 each. Copies can be obtained by calling 800-662-4463 or emailing oma@ohiomfg.com. At nearly 200 pages, this non-partisan publication -- published every election year -- serves as a resource for all Ohio voters.

The judicial philosophy of the Ohio Supreme Court could shift on Nov. 8 -- depending whether one believes partisan convictions influence judges -- but not because of Justices Sharon Kennedy (R) and Jennifer Brunner's (D) battle for chief justice. That will not change the high court's primary ideology, if any, leaving it to the two down-ballot justice elections to move the Court to the left or farther to the right. Democrats likely have given up one seat on the Court already by running former Secretary of State Brunner rather than a non-incumbent for chief justice, as Gov. Mike DeWine is almost certain to appoint a Republican to Kennedy or Brunner's vacated spot as associate justice. A Chief Justice Brunner might exercise some sway over a Republican majority or a Chief Justice Kennedy over a Democratic majority. But the deciding vote could be the one for seats currently held by Republican Justices Patrick Fischer and R. Patrick DeWine, who are challenged by Democratic Judges Terri Jamison of the 10th District Court of Appeals and Marilyn Zayas of the 1st District, respectively. Regardless of who is chief, a win for Jamison or Zayas or both would tilt the Court left, whether on paper or in substance.

Fox News Channel will hold a town hall featuring U.S. Senate candidates Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance on Tuesday, Nov. 1 from 6 to 7 p.m. The candidates will not appear face to face, but instead will take questions separately from a live audience and moderators Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum in Columbus.

New polls released Monday show Democratic U.S. Senate nominee Tim Ryan and Republican U.S. Senate nominee J.D. Vance virtually tied with just over two weeks to go until Election Day, while Gov. Mike DeWine continues to hold a wide margin over Democrat Nan Whaley. Siena College released a poll conducted in conjunction with Spectrum News that surveyed 644 likely Ohio voters from Friday, Oct. 14 through Tuesday, Oct. 19, and showed Ryan and Vance tied at 46 percent. Ryan is getting 92 percent of Democratic support and 45 percent of independent voter support, while Vance has 90 percent of Republican support and 40 percent of independent voter support. A September survey by the same group showed Ryan with a 3 percentage point lead. In the



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governor's race, DeWine holds a 58 percent to 34 percent lead over Whaley, up from Siena College/Spectrum News' September survey, where DeWine led 55 to 32 percent. DeWine is getting support of 89 percent of Republicans in the survey and 62 percent of independent voters, while Whaley only has 76 percent support of Democrats and 30 percent of independent voters.

In a separate poll, Marist College surveyed 1,141 registered voters from Monday, Oct. 17 through Thursday, Oct. 20, and found Vance leading 46 percent to Ryan's 45 percent with 8 percent undecided. The pollster said the results are unchanged from its September poll. Among those who say they definitely plan to vote, Vance and Ryan are tied at 47 percent. Among independent voters, Vance and Ryan are also tied at 41 percent, with 16 percent of independent respondents undecided. On their views of the candidates, respondents have a split view of Ryan with 37 percent favorable and 36 percent unfavorable, up from 25 percent unfavorable in September, with 27 percent having not heard of or are unsure of how to rate Ryan. Views of Vance remain negative, with 41 percent having an unfavorable view, up from 36 percent, and 34 percent with an unfavorable view, with 26 percent having never heard of him or are unsure of how to rate Vance.

Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) has created a new program, "Plan Your Vote," that helps to ensure all voters, including those living with disabilities, can easily cast their ballot. DRO said it is reminding voters that they have the right to get help from a poll worker; to vote curbside if they cannot enter a polling location due to a disability; and to take as long as needed to vote. DRO's voting hotline is open on Election Day from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The number is 800-282-9181. Voters can also call DRO's intake line at 614-466-7264. Voting information can be found on DRO's website at <https://tinyurl.com/yckej94b>.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Nan Whaley talked about her efforts to develop a mass-shooting response protocol for other mayors and heard from a Columbus pastor focused on stopping shootings in his neighborhood during a campaign event Wednesday. Whaley met with pastors, volunteers with Moms Demand Action and other anti-violence organizations as well as Rep. Dontavius Jarrells (D-Columbus) at the Columbus Urban League's Huntington Empowerment Center. Whaley again hammered on her characterization of Republican incumbent Gov. Mike DeWine as unwilling to stand up to "extreme" lawmakers looking to loosen gun laws, through his signing of stand-your-ground legislation and measures to enact permitless concealed carry and authority for school employees to carry firearms on campus. Those actions, she said, stand in contrast to his promise to "do something" after the mass shooting in Dayton's Oregon District.

Ohio voters will see 121 school funding issues on their local ballots in the November election, according to a levy database maintained by the Ohio School Boards Association. The number of issues is very similar to the count in the last statewide general election in



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2020, when voters faced 123 issues and approved 83 of them, a 67 percent passage rate. The issues include 26 additional levies, 70 renewal levies, one replacement/increase levy, nine substitute levies and 15 bond issues.

Voters in 19 library districts across Ohio will face ballot funding questions in November, most of them seeking renewals of existing property tax levies, according to the Ohio Library Council. The 19 issues mark an increase from the last statewide general election in 2020, when there were 17, and from the 2021 general election, when there were 15. Six library levies were on the May primary ballot, while none appeared on the special election ballot in August.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose said late Tuesday that requests for early in-person and absentee ballots now total 1,076,049, a 1.8 percent increase over the same point in the 2018 statewide gubernatorial election. Of the more than 1 million requests, 135,889 Ohioans have cast a ballot early in-person and 940,160 have requested an absentee ballot by mail. "With two weeks until Election Day, any eligible Ohio voter still planning to vote absentee should mail their request in as soon as possible," said LaRose. "Our bipartisan county boards of elections are working hard to conduct the proper checks and get ballots mailed out as quickly as possible. Ohioans choosing to vote by mail can always track their ballot at VoteOhio.gov/Track."

Democratic secretary of state nominee Chelsea Clark Wednesday outlined her agenda to make voting more accessible and to encourage more voter participation. Clark said her administration would prioritize protecting every citizen's right to vote; stop unnecessary voter purges; increase voter participation by expanding automatic voter registration; expand early voting days and hours; and introduce same day voter registration.

The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network (WPPN) announced it has launched a 2022 midterm election voter guide, which it said provides voters with "a nonpartisan, unbiased tool to understand where candidates for the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate stand on policy issues affecting women and families." The guide provides voters with a nonpartisan, unbiased tool to understand where candidates for the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate stand on policy issues affecting women and families. More information about the project and the full voter guide are available online at <http://WomensPublicPolicyNetwork.org/voter-guide>.

Republicans continued to show dominant fundraising and spending in the final stretch for the Nov. 8 General Election, led by Gov. Mike DeWine, who still has \$7 million in his campaign chest. Meanwhile, Democratic U.S. Senate nominee Tim Ryan reported raising \$8.6 million in October. Thursday was the deadline for both state and federal candidates who will be on the Nov. 8 ballot to report their fundraising since their last reporting period in pre-general election reports. DeWine reported raising \$1.3 million over the



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period, and has spent \$6.8 million, with \$7 million on hand. Democrat Nan Whaley reported \$645,999 in contributions, \$3.8 million in expenditures, and \$745,393 on hand.

The Ohio State Bar Association's (OSBA) Judicial Election Advertising Monitoring Committee Thursday sent a letter to a group behind a series of attack ads against the three Democrats running for seats on the Ohio Supreme Court asking for the ads to be removed from the airwaves, saying they "erode public trust and confidence in the judiciary." The particular ad targeted by the committee, titled "Bail", criticizes Justice Jennifer Brunner and Democrats Marilyn Zayas and Terri Jamison as being "reckless" and "soft on crime" for their opinions in select criminal cases. The committee said the ad violates its standards for judicial advertising.

The third and final midterm poll released by Baldwin Wallace University's (BW) Community Research Institute (CRI) shows Democratic U.S. Senate nominee Tim Ryan holding a 4-point lead over Republican J.D. Vance, while Gov. Mike DeWine has a nearly 17-point lead over Democratic challenger Nan Whaley. In the Supreme Court races, Republicans are leading their respective Democratic opponents by 7 points or more.

Republicans voting for Gov. Mike DeWine should vote for Democrat Tim Ryan in the U.S. Senate race, according to a new advertising campaign from moderate political organization WelcomePAC. "We are doing something that I think is unique among PACs working here in Ohio, in that we are explicitly targeting ticket splitters," WelcomePAC Ohio Campaign Director Irene Lin said during a Zoom press conference on Thursday. The "Why No J.D.?" campaign will include radio, newspaper, digital and mail ads, as well as on-the-ground events, Lin said. "We know the polls have shown that one in five folks voting Republican for governor are not voting for J.D. Vance," she said. "We know the conventional wisdom is that, 'Everyone is so polarized, and there's no persuasion needed, or there's no ticket splitting left.' I think that's simply not true here in Ohio. We've done it before, and hopefully we'll do it again."

Former President Donald Trump will hold a rally in support of U.S. Senate nominee J.D. Vance and other endorsed candidates in Ohio on the day before Election Day. Doors for the event, which will be held on Monday, Nov. 7, at Wright Bros. Aero Inc. at Dayton International Airport, 3700 McCauley Drive, in Vandalia, will open at 3 p.m. Speakers begin giving remarks at 5 p.m. and Trump is scheduled to speak at 8 p.m.

With less than two weeks to go before the Tuesday, Nov. 8 General Election, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said Thursday that 39,304 Ohioans have signed up to serve as a poll worker, exceeding his statewide goal by nearly 10 percent. LaRose said his goal for poll workers, which is 115 percent of the minimum number of poll workers necessary to execute a successful election, was 35,653 for this election.



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The following endorsement was made over the week:

- The Supreme Court campaign of Democrat Terri Jamison announced the endorsement of the Laborers' District Council of Ohio.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

According to new figures released Friday by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the state's unemployment rate remained at 4 percent in September. The state lost 7,600 nonagricultural wage and salary jobs over the month. The number of workers unemployed in Ohio in September was 232,000, up from 229,000 in August. The number of unemployed has decreased by 38,000 in the past 12 months from 270,000. The September unemployment rate for Ohio decreased 0.7 percent from 4.7 percent in September 2021. The U.S. unemployment rate for September 2022 was 3.5 percent, down from 3.7 percent in August 2022, and down from 4.7 percent in September 2021.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

The Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) continues to push for documents and testimony on June 2022 outages affecting tens of thousands of American Electric Power (AEP) of Ohio customers in the capital area. AEP says OCC is merely seeking to conduct its own investigation into potential causes three months after the consumers' counsel asked the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to do so. OCC is redoubling its argument for discovery and depositions from AEP officials stemming from June 14-15 blackouts, which the company has attributed to heat-related consumption and forced outages to prevent a worse problem.

ENVIRONMENT

The Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) recently released a white paper on "The Benefit of Brownfields" analyzing the Ohio Department of Development's (DOD) awarding of \$252 million during the first round of the Brownfield Remediation Fund. GOPC is also calling for another \$500 million in remediation funding through the next state operating budget. The paper found that 72 percent of the total \$350 million was awarded during the first round, with funds going to 58 counties for 115 clean-up projects and 74 assessments.

Fifty-three public water systems will receive approximately \$2.4 million to take the first step toward removing and replacing lead water pipes, Gov. Mike DeWine and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Director Laurie Stevenson announced Tuesday. The 53 lead pipe mapping projects will take place in communities in 37 counties. All applicants are receiving their full funding request of up to \$50,000.



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) and the Capitol Square Foundation (CSF) Monday announced that nominations for the 2023 "Great Ohioans Award" are now open. The Great Ohioan Award commemorates Ohioans who have played a significant role in an event or series of events of lasting significance in world, American or Ohio history. To be selected for the Great Ohioan Award, the nominee must have resided in Ohio for a minimum of five years. In addition, at least 25 years must have passed since the event in which the nominee participated is being commemorated. The nomination deadline is Monday, Dec. 5, 2022. More information on the Great Ohioan Award as well as the nomination form can be found online at ohiostatehouse.org and <https://ohcapitolsquarefoundation.org/great-ohioans/>.

The Capitol Square Foundation will present a "Capitol Conversation" with Susan Eisenhower, granddaughter of President Dwight Eisenhower and author of the book *How Ike Led* on Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. at the Ohio Statehouse. Ticket information is forthcoming. Contact Karla Dunbar at 614-221-5825 or karla@assnoffices.com or Lori Overmyer at 614-301-4492 or lori@goettler.com for more information.

HIGHER EDUCATION

President Joe Biden recently launched the application period for federal student loan forgiveness of up to \$20,000. Eligible borrowers must have individual incomes below \$125,000 or below \$250,000 for married couples to receive \$10,000 in forgiveness. People who went to college with a federal Pell Grant are eligible for \$20,000 in forgiveness. The loan forgiveness does not apply to individuals with private loans. Current students are also eligible for the forgiveness, though if they are dependents their debt relief will be based on their parents' income rather than their own. The decision could offer some level of forgiveness to as many as 43 million borrowers, including cancelling the full remaining balance for about 20 million borrowers, according to the White House. Borrowers have until Dec. 31, 2023, to apply for the forgiveness program, though the Biden administration has reportedly recommended that people apply by Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022 to have the form processed before the pause on federal student loan payments ends on Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022.

The University of Cincinnati (UC) Health Board of Directors has announced Cory D. Shaw as the organization's next president and CEO beginning Jan. 9, 2023. Shaw comes to UC Health from Nebraska Medicine, where he most recently served as executive vice president and chief operating officer. He has spent nearly 30 years at Nebraska Medicine,



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during which the health system achieved the Vizient 5-Star health care quality and safety ratings, which UC said is an "aspiration" it is fully invested in achieving by 2027. Shaw also has experience in executive leadership roles within ambulatory settings including the University of Nebraska medical group practice, and payor relations. Additionally, he led the overall establishment of Nebraska Medicine's integrated health system strategic planning process and implementation.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) announced Friday it would distribute \$20 million in funds to 28 communities, improving affordable housing and providing homeownership and rental assistance for low- and moderate-income families. The Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) program partners with communities to preserve and improve Ohio's affordable housing stock through a variety of housing-related initiatives that include home renovation and repair as well as rental assistance. "This funding will support the ongoing work of local communities to strengthen their neighborhoods and give residents access to a variety of housing options." Lt. Gov. Jon Husted added that as communities increase their workforce, housing and homeownership need to increase as well.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) is reviewing a course approved for judges by the Ohio Supreme Court Commission on Continuing Legal Education (CCLE) after the Board of Professional Conduct found the joint training of law enforcement, prosecutors and members of the court runs afoul of the Ohio Rules of Judicial Conduct.

The state is trying to reduce court backlogs in Ohio with \$10.2 million in federal grants to 51 municipal, county and appellate jurisdictions. Backed by \$250 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding related to COVID-19, the Ohio Court Backlog Reduction Program removes barriers to the timely resolution of cases and offers "creative solutions" to improve case flow, the Ohio Supreme Court said. The Ohio Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Office of Criminal Justice Services has partnered with the Court to identify grant criteria and award recipients for one- and two-year backlog reduction projects.

Lawyers for the OneOhio Recovery Foundation and a major naloxone provider, Harm Reduction Ohio, argued in court Thursday over whether transparency language in the nonprofit's founding documents and its establishment by governmental actors make it subject to state laws on open meetings. State and local governments created OneOhio as a means to distribute the bulk of settlement proceeds from litigation against manufacturers



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and distributors of opioids over their role in the addiction crisis. The foundation will distribute the money to eligible addiction recovery efforts across the state.

LOBBYISTS

Hannah News launched its latest feature: JLEC Registration Filing Changes this week. The daily *Hannah Report* will now include a listing of all new and terminated registrations for both legislative and executive agency lobbyists -- if any registration changes occurred that day. As with all *Hannah News* stories, the results are searchable by organization, lobbyist or registration change.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Department of Development (DOD) Friday awarded more than \$10.6 million for Neighborhood Revitalization and Critical Infrastructure grants to 20 Ohio communities. These grants will assist communities with neighborhood improvement projects designed to improve the health, safety, and general welfare of residents. Five communities will receive grants for Neighborhood Revitalization totaling \$3.69 million. Eligible activities include public facility improvements, such as construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of infrastructure, fire protection facilities and community centers in low- to moderate-income target areas.

MARIJUANA/HEMP

There are nearly 310,000 patients registered in the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP), according to the Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP). Specifically, there are 309,548 registered patients, OBP said in its September MMCP patient and caregiver numbers update. Of registered patients, 19,144 are military veterans, 20,446 are classified as "indigent" and 1,194 have a terminal illness. Of the 309,548 registered patients, only 161,690 have an active registration and active recommendation.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

With the federal public health emergency (PHE) expected to end in early January, the consumer advocacy nonprofit Families USA detailed how states can prepare for upcoming Medicaid redeterminations, which could affect millions of people's health care coverage. The PHE for COVID-19 was first declared on Jan. 31, 2020, and it has since been renewed 11 times. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra recently issued another 90-day PHE declaration that ends on Jan. 11, 2023. While the health emergency is in effect, Ohio receives about \$300 million in additional federal Medicaid matching funds per quarter and is generally barred from disenrolling anyone from the health care program. While the PHE has been extended many times over the last



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nearly three years, Families USA officials said they expect this latest extension to be the last. The Biden administration has promised states 60 days' notice if it plans not to renew the PHE for another quarter, meaning states will find out in mid-November if another extension is coming.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF) and other suicide prevention advocates Tuesday called on the General Assembly to create a sustainable funding source for the state's federally mandated 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. In 2020, Congress designated the new 9-8-8 dialing code to operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL). The new code is designed to be a nationwide, easy-to-remember number for people experiencing mental health crises. OSPF noted the new number is also expected to reduce calls to 9-1-1 and alleviate some of the call and response burden placed on law enforcement and emergency medical services. The 9-8-8 number went live earlier this year in July, though the existing 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) has remained active during the transition to 9-8-8.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) recently received approximately \$14 million through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) to stabilize the riverbank at eight sites along the Cuyahoga River where erosion threatens the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the tracks for the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. Work was expected to begin in October and continue through early 2025. Updates, including any necessary short-term closures, will be posted on the park website. However, the park closed portions of the tracks used by Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) due to significant erosion from the Cuyahoga River recently. This has affected a number of the fall excursions. "The Cuyahoga River is a dynamic system, and it is constantly changing. The NPS is committed to continually assessing track conditions, especially near the river, and maintaining the tracks for safe train operations."

The vibrant colors of fall are fading in most parts of the Buckeye State, but there are still a few spots of peak color left, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) said Thursday.

PENSIONS

Retirees enrolled in health care plans through the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) will get a \$600 rebate and see lower premiums for 2023 because of lower than expected expenses. The STRS Board of Trustees approved the health care changes at a



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recent meeting. While asset values in the health care fund dropped from about \$4.9 billion to about \$4.6 billion over FY22, the funding ratio improved from 175 percent to 231 percent, according to STRS. A report from actuarial consultant Cheiron showed lower than expected claims and expenses. In addition, system spokesperson Nick Treneff said the system was able to secure savings for its Medicare-eligible retirees for 2023 as part of negotiations on Aetna's remaining its health plan provider for 2024-2028. According to STRS, premiums for Medicare-eligible retirees -- who make up the vast majority of health care enrollees at STRS, Treneff said -- will be \$31 in 2023, \$46 lower than in 2022.

Gloomy expectations for the financial outlook of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund brightened this week with better-than-expected figures in the latest three-year actuarial valuation, but system leaders are still looking to the General Assembly for an employer contribution rate hike. After the fund dropped its long-term investment return assumption from 8 percent to 7.5 percent earlier this year, actuarial firm Cavanaugh McDonald submitted preliminary estimates predicting that OP&F would be on track to pay down its unfunded liabilities within 39 years, outside the statutory requirement of 30 years or less. However, formal estimates reviewed by the OP&F board this week and sent to the Ohio Retirement Study Council put the system on track to pay down liabilities in slightly over 28 years.

PEOPLE

The Center for Christian Virtue (CCV) named Mike Andrews as its new communications director. Andrews serves as the primary media contact at CCV and oversees all aspects of the organization's print, digital, and multimedia marketing and branding. Andrews has more than 20 years of experience in media, communications, and public relations. Most recently, he spent nearly 10 years at Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) in Newark as public relations manager.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ohio Department of Public Safety's (DPS) "Motorcycle Ohio" announced \$2.5 million in 2023 funding Monday for entities wishing to offer motorcycle rider training. Courses include basic rider skills classes for beginners, returning riders and experienced riders and co-riders. The Ohio Revised Code requires DPS to establish a motorcycle safety and education program. Motorcycle Ohio is funded by motorcycle plate fees and class registrations. Governments and nonprofits including career centers and post-secondary institutions can apply by Saturday, Dec. 31 to offer certified motorcycle training. More information is available online at motorcycle.ohio.gov, by phone 800-837-4337 or via email mogen@dps.ohio.gov.



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The Ohio Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) recently announced a new electronic certification program so that firefighters, EMTs and paramedics can access their certification card on their phones. The new electronic certification also includes a QR code specific to an individual's certification. Previously, physical cards have been printed and mailed to individuals. The new process will allow the individual to print his/her own certificate that will reflect all "active" certifications. When the individual files an application, they will receive an email notification advising of how to download the certification.

RACES TO WATCH

Voters in the new 32nd House District will have a choice between two candidates who ran against each other in the previous legislative election, but due to redistricting that was for the prior 36th District. Current Rep. Bob Young (R-North Canton) faces off against Democrat Matt Shaughnessy, an attorney. Both candidates are former members of Green City Council. While Green remained in the area they seek to represent, about 75 percent of the new 32nd District was added from outside the former 36th District. Young said that has meant "a lot of work to get name recognition and introduce myself to people where I've never been on their ballots." Shaughnessy also told *Hannah News* he has been campaigning the way he always has for local office by getting out into the community and talking to potential voters. He also called the new district lines a "mixed bag."

After pulling off one of the biggest upsets of the 2018 election, Sen. Tina Maharath (D-Canal Winchester) is looking to defend her seat against Republican challenger Michele Reynolds. Maharath won the race for Senate District 3 by 705 votes against former Rep. Anne Gonzales (R-Westerville), giving the Democrats a rare pickup in the chamber. The seat had been held by Republican Kevin Bacon for eight years. Maharath is hoping for a similar result in the redrawn district, which retains a slight Democratic lean, according to the **2022 Ohio Election Guide**. In a phone interview with *Hannah News*, Maharath said she expects another competitive race, but believes her hard work and new advantage of being an incumbent will result in her re-election. "[Being an incumbent] helps facilitate my resume easier when I'm at the door talking to voters, versus last time around, where I was trying to convince people to vote for this little girl from Whitehall, OH who came here as a refugee from Laos," Maharath said. Reynolds, a business owner, nonprofit CEO, Madison Township trustee and former director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, also resides in Canal Winchester. "I am what I like to call an 'addictive problem solver.' I'm someone who has actually been uplifting and serving the community for the last 25 years through my nonprofit work providing housing and providing solutions to needs here in Central Ohio and throughout the state of Ohio," Reynolds told *Hannah News*.



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Three races on Ohio ballots could help decide whether Republicans are able to win back control of Congress in November or whether Democrats will be able to hold on to their slim majority. Republicans currently hold a 12-4 advantage in U.S. House seats in Ohio's congressional delegation, but Ohio is losing a seat in the next Congress due to a smaller population increase than other states in the latest Census. Among the 15 seats, Democrats are heavily favored in two seats, while Republicans are heavily favored in nine, leaving three toss-ups. National groups have been pouring money into those three races -- District 1 between Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Cincinnati) and Cincinnati Councilman Greg Landsman, District 9 between Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo) and political newcomer and Trump supporter J.R. Majewski, and District 13 between Ohio Rep. Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) and attorney, author and political commentator Madison Gesiotto Gilbert. The candidates and the groups have focused on many of the same issues in each race, with Democrats focusing on abortion and threats to democracy and Republicans highlighting crime, immigration, inflation and the economy.

Rep. Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) is seeking her third term in the Ohio House of Representatives in a newly drawn district that is a true tossup thanks to redistricting. Manning's opponent is Regan Phillips, an executive administrative assistant with Elyria City Clerk of Council, whom the House Democratic Caucus in the OMA guide called "an emerging leader who currently serves as the second-vice chair of the Elyria NAACP as well as president of the NCNW Lorain Section and president of the Community Foundation of Lorain County - African American Community Fund." In an interview with *Hannah News*, Manning points to her accomplishments as a legislator including making sure businesses are succeeding so they can offer good paying jobs. She noted one of her first bills she worked to pass took away regulations on businesses in her county that would have left otherwise. She also said she has talked to businesses about providing more flexibility for employees and their families. Phillips' campaign did not respond to email requests for an interview. On her website, she touts her work as an advocate for the community on issues such as victim's rights, youth advocacy, mental health and social justice.

After taking over the former Democratic stronghold four years ago, Sen. Michael Rulli (R-Salem) is hoping to fend off a challenge from well-known political veteran Bob Hagan, who represented the Youngstown area in both the House and the Senate for decades. Rulli defeated former Rep. John Bocchieri (D-Poland) in 2018, to replace former Senate Minority Leader Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman), who held the seat for about 10 years. This year's redrawn Senate District 33 now includes Carroll County, in addition to Mahoning and Columbiana counties. Rulli's campaign website focuses on the issues of jobs, energy independence and election integrity. In an interview with *Hannah News*, Hagan said he's running for the seat to continue fighting for working and middle-class families. "I'm also standing up against the attacks on democracy by my extremist opponent, and his party, and their attack on reproductive freedom and a woman's right to



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protect her health care choices. His heartless 'heartbeat' bill that he sponsored sent a 10-year-old that was raped and impregnated by a sexual predator to another state for health care. It was barbaric," Hagan said, also criticizing Rulli's support of permitless concealed carry law SB215 (Johnson), saying it will endanger the state's first responders.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Controlling Board Monday approved a renewal contract with Accenture to provide support for Ohio's benefits system that will take it through the end of the fiscal year as the state negotiates a new contract. Jennifer LeMaster, chief financial officer of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), told the panel that Accenture currently provides ongoing maintenance and operations, software, and hardware support for the Ohio Benefits Integrated Eligibility System, which gives Ohioans the ability to manage or apply for health care, child care, food and cash benefits. She said the contract with Accenture had been signed in 2013 and renewed twice. The renewal of the contract will take Accenture's role in maintaining the system through the end of the fiscal year in June 2023. Meanwhile, she told Rep. Scott Oelslager (R-North Canton), who held the request for questions, that DAS has competitively bid a new contract and is currently in negotiations with the company that provided the leading offer, though she did not say which company the state is negotiating with. She said the state hopes to have the contract finalized in January or February and have the remaining few months of the fiscal year serve as a transition period if needed. The item was approved without objection.

TAXATION

The Ohio Virtual Tax Academy (OVTA), which is open to business owners, tax professionals and any other interested parties who want to learn the latest Ohio tax news and insights from the front-line experts at the Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT), will be held on Thursday, Nov. 17 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. Topics will include the following:

- Personal and School District Income Tax Updates
- Pass-Through Entity Tax Update
- Sales Tax/Applications to Construction Contracts and Exemptions for Motor Vehicles

TECHNOLOGY/AEROSPACE

The Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee (OAATC) finished out the year in a lightly attended meeting that addressed public policy trends for advanced air mobility (AAM) and drones. Members took testimony from Senior Research Fellow Brent Skorup of George Mason University's Mercatus Center, dedicated to "bridging the



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academic ideas and real-world problems." He said the state of Ohio "stands out" nationally in seeking to develop advanced aviation, including AAM. "Ohio is well positioned for the commercial drone and advanced aviation industry," he told committee members.