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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: 11/16/2022 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & AMENDED**, House Families, Aging and Human Services, (Fifth 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: 11/15/2022 - Referred to Committee House Government Oversight
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: 11/15/2022 - Referred to Committee House Health
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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Friday, Nov. 18, 2022

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Senate Addiction and Community Revitalization Committee heard Wednesday from more than a half dozen representatives of the drug rehabilitation community, who addressed everything from workforce shortages, lack of data, siloed providers and challenges to alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services (ADAMHS) boards. Witnesses agreed COVID-19 had set back progress in Ohio's opioid battle.

ALCOHOL/LIQUOR

Representatives of Ohio micro-distillery businesses testified in the House Commerce and Labor Committee Tuesday, seeking passage of HB629 (LaRe), which would increase their production limits. Passage could mean more jobs at their locations, while continuation of current limits may push them to other states, they said. Those appearing in person included Doug Hall, co-founder and CEO of Brain Brew Custom Whiskey in Newtown; Jen Kearney, director of administration at Watershed Distillery in Columbus; and Tom Lix, founder and CEO of Cleveland Whiskey.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Google has given Attorney General Dave Yost its word that it will no longer conceal location-tracking technology from consumers and will instead provide pop-up disclosures and instructions on disabling these features. Monday's agreement includes a \$13.4 million settlement payment to the state of Ohio. Most of the legal "assurance of voluntary compliance" signed by Google recently and approved by the attorney general is good for only five years, however. Yost also has agreed not to publicize company admissions included in its annual compliance reports unless he receives a public records request and the company does not take legal action to enforce the confidentiality agreement.

Attorney General Dave Yost says Ohio and 15 other states have a preliminary deal with Walmart for a \$3.1 billion settlement of opioid claims, though another 27 states must join the agreement by year's end for it to go through. Ohio's take, according to Yost, would be at least \$114 million. Under the tentative deal, all of the \$3.1 billion would be used for treatment of and recovery from opioid addiction. The agreement requires 43 state signatories to take effect. Local governments, including counties,



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cities and other jurisdictions, would have until the end of 2023's first quarter to join. Other participating states so far include North Carolina, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, New York, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Texas.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

The House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee accepted a substitute version of HB454 (Click-Grendell) on Wednesday, with bill co-sponsor Rep. Gary Click (R-Vickery) saying it includes "quite a few concessions to bring this to a middle ground." The sub bill continues to ban "gender reassignment surgery" for minors, but does allow for the use of puberty-blocking drugs or cross-sex hormones to assist with a minor's gender transition under a number of certain conditions. However, opponents said the conditions in the sub bill are unrealistic and will continue to effectively ban the use of puberty-blocking drugs and cross-sex hormones. Among those testifying was 40-day "Jeopardy" champion Amy Schneider. "It's so important that LGBTQ+ Ohioans and those who love them fight to protect the children whose health and safety would be endangered by this misguided legislation," said Schneider, an Ohio native and transgender woman.

CORONAVIRUS/MONKEYPOX

Over 1.25 million people have now received the COVID-19 bivalent booster shot in Ohio, with 103,603 new shots given in the past week according to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). The overall total includes 16,296 in the age 5 to 11 range and 32,131 in the age 12 to 17 range. Ohio's other vaccination rates are 64.37 percent or 7.53 million started and 59.67 percent or 6.98 million completed, along with 3.9 million people who received first boosters and 1.49 million second booster shots. In the past week, there have been 6,493 initial vaccinations, 5,907 completed vaccinations, 13,047 first booster shots and 56,883 second booster shots. ODH data also showed 10,170 new cases, 414 hospitalizations and 37 ICU admissions were reported in the past week. That compares to 10,865 cases, 521 hospitalizations and 33 ICU admissions in the seven days ending Nov. 10. The Ohio Hospital Association reported there were 891 hospital patients and 132 ICU patients currently testing positive for COVID-19, compared to 899 and 121 on Nov. 10.

DISABILITIES

After another two hours of testimony regarding the work of Disability Rights Ohio (DRO), the Joint Committee to Examine Protection and Advocacy System for the State of Ohio will now move on to write its report for submission to legislative



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leaders. Tuesday's hearing was the second held by the committee to hear testimony from a whole range of individuals involved in the disabilities arena who both support the work of DRO and who oppose how it operates.

DISASTERS

Gov. Mike DeWine authorized the use of the State Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) to help several counties affected by severe storms in February, May, June and July of 2022. The SDRP is a reimbursement program that can be used in instances where storm damage amounts do not meet the threshold for federal assistance. The program is intended to provide supplemental state assistance to local governments and eligible nonprofit organizations for costs associated with debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent work. Counties affected by flooding that occurred on Feb. 17 and Feb. 18 that may qualify for assistance include Gallia, Harrison and Jefferson counties. Counties affected by severe storms that occurred from May 6 to May 8 that may qualify for assistance include Monroe and Muskingum counties. Counties affected by the derecho that occurred from June 13 to June 17 that may qualify for assistance include Ashland, Coshocton, Guernsey, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Logan, Meigs, Monroe, Morrow, Noble, Richland, Tuscarawas, Vinton, Washington and Wayne counties. Clermont County, affected by tornadoes on July 6, may also qualify for assistance under the program.

EDUCATION

Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware), chair of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, suggested Tuesday he may be looking to fast track a bill that would make significant changes to the operations of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the State Board of Education (SBOE) when Sen. Bill Reineke's (R-Tiffin) SB178 had its first hearing. Brenner said he plans to hold "several" hearings on the bill over the next several weeks "with a potential vote later this year in the session." While a substitute version of the bill has not been officially introduced, Reineke provided some details of the sub bill in his sponsor testimony: "SB178 restructures the Department of Education to create a state cabinet-level agency called the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) that will have a dual focus on primary and secondary education as well as preparing students for the workforce. This cabinet-level agency will be led by a director appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. This creates a system similar to other states that have found world-class talent to lead their states into the 21st century and develop structures that have significantly increased student achievement through state-level actions."



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The full State Board of Education (SBOE) will take up a heavily debated resolution about draft Title IX regulations and gender identity in December, after supporters of the resolution fell short of the votes needed to act on it this month. Under board procedures, resolutions cannot come up for a full board vote at the same meeting in which they clear committee unless the board president and vice president agree to grant emergency consideration; their ruling can be overridden by a majority of the board. The board's Executive Committee had approved member Brendan Shea's resolution opposing Biden administration Title IX regulations Monday after accepting amendments suggested by member Mike Toal. On Tuesday, the board heard another few hours of public testimony on the resolution, with numerous witnesses from prior months' meetings making return trips to speak on the issue. President Charlotte McGuire and Vice President Martha Manchester declined to grant emergency consideration, prompting board member Jenny Kilgore to request an override vote, which ultimately failed 9-10.

The SBOE voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to recommend lawmakers repeal the provision of the third grade reading guarantee law that requires struggling readers to be retained in third grade if they can't meet testing benchmarks. The resolution, approved in October by the board's Legislative Committee, cites data showing relatively few retained third graders end up achieving proficiency on subsequent tests. "As the results show, mandating third grade retention has not achieved the desired result," the resolution states. Before adopting the resolution, members accepted amendments from Brandon Kern, chair of the Legislative Committee, and Tim Miller, that urge provision of additional resources and supports for literacy and reference the board's FY24-25 operating budget request, which includes tens of millions of dollars in increased funding for literacy. Ahead of the votes, board members heard public testimony on the retention mandate resolution, both from education reform groups who defended the mandate and education practitioners who support its repeal.

A pilot program using an online education and life skills game showed improvement in test scores among students who spent the most time playing the game -- Heroes League Game Day. Thomas Reed, director of data, research and grants advancement at the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, spoke on the success of the platform used in pilot programs at Canal Winchester, Chesapeake Union Exempted Village and one other Northeast Ohio school district that was not named during Monday's press conference at the Statehouse. Heroes League Game Day is an online skills game where students learn 20 skills meant to help them to succeed in education and in life.



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The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) Delegate Assembly established its leadership succession Monday with a vote to elect Sally S. Green of the Tuscarawas Valley Local Schools Board of Education as 2023 president-elect. That puts Green in line to become president in 2024. OSBA President-elect Christine Varwig of Toledo City Schools is set to become president in the new year.

At this week's Capital Conference, the OSBA recognized members from its five regions with its highest honor, naming them 2022 All-Ohio School Board Members. Regional honorees are the following:

- **Central:** Jennifer Best, Worthington City Schools board member.
- **Northeast:** Albert Haberstroh, Trumbull County Educational Service Center and Trumbull Career & Technical Center board member, former member of the Southington Local Schools board.
- **Northwest:** Christine Varwig, Toledo City Schools board member and 2022 OSBA president-elect.
- **Southeast:** Lynn Angell, Gallipolis City Schools and Buckeye Hills Career Center board member.
- **Southwest:** Beverly D. Rhoads, Hillsboro City Schools and Great Oaks Career Campuses board member, a former employee and district treasurer for Hillsboro.

ELECTIONS

Secretary of State Frank LaRose and Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) Thursday announced a proposed change to the Ohio Constitution that would require proposed constitutional amendments put before voters through the citizen initiative process to get at least 60 percent of the vote in order to be adopted. LaRose said that the Constitution has become "a tool of special interests" that he said "seek to permanently change our form of government to their liking and into their own self-interest." Under the proposal, any constitutional issue brought to the ballot through the initiated process requiring the collection of voter signatures in order to qualify would need to hit the 60 percent threshold to pass. Constitutional amendments proposed to the ballot by the state Legislature would still only need a simple majority, as would initiated statutes brought by the public. LaRose said other states, including Massachusetts, Illinois, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Nebraska, Mississippi, and Wyoming, have 60 percent thresholds.



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LaRose appeared in person before the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee on Tuesday to support HB458 (Hall), legislation eliminating the August special election, saying he has yet to hear a good reason for holding one. Noting that the state held a special election for General Assembly primary candidates last August due to legal battles over redistricting, LaRose said overall turnout for that election was at 8 percent. In contrast, turnout for the Nov. 8 General Election was 51 percent.

The newest version of election omnibus HB294 (Seitz-Ray) accepted Thursday met concerted opposition from a half dozen voter and political action groups. They panned the removal of automated voter registration (AVR), fewer ballot drop-boxes, and shorter periods to request and mail absentee ballots in the sub bill, also reiterating concerns with other provisions including an end to voting on Mondays before election day and a ban on pre-paid postage for absentee ballots. Among other changes, the substitute version adopted in the House Government Oversight Committee provides \$7.5 million for electronic poll books, as requested by the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO); inserts HB458 (Hall) to eliminate August special elections and HB487 (T. Young) to overhaul the bid process for printed ballots; reallocates cancelled early voting hours from the Monday prior to election day to the previous week; rescinds free state I.D. for indigents and electronic utility bills or bank statements as a form of voter identification in anticipation of Senate legislation with free I.D. for all Ohioans; reduces the period to request an absentee ballot from 10 to seven days prior to an election; and reduces the period for a board of elections to receive an absentee ballot from 10 to seven days from the postmark, "in the interest of getting an accurate count without having to wait forever like we are waiting on the U.S. House of Representatives," Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) said.

ELECTIONS 2022

The following are the results for a number of local levies on the Nov. 8 ballot: 87 of 120 or 73 percent of local school levies were approved; 85 percent of parks and recreation levies passed; 18 of 19 library levies passed; all 19 senior services levies passed; all seven of the children's services levies passed; and all five of the mental health levies passed.

ELECTIONS 2024

Ohio Sen. Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls), who came in third in a Republican primary for U.S. Senate earlier this year, sent a letter to county Republican Party chairs this week seeking to discuss the 2024 U.S. Senate campaign for the seat currently held



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by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH). "In recent days, I've been encouraged by the calls, emails, and texts I have received from some of your colleagues, along with Republican donors and grassroots activists across our state," Dolan said in the letter. "I too am proud of the substantive, issue-focused campaign I ran in 2022, and also my team's post-primary efforts to raise and channel resources to conservative candidates up and down the ballot that were successful on Nov. 8."

ENERGY/UTILITIES

House members accepted a substitute version of utility ratemaking overhaul HB317 (Wilkin) Tuesday that a leading representative of commercial electric consumers said improves but does not go far enough to provide refunds of charges declared "illegal" by the Ohio Supreme Court. The House Public Utilities Committee heard HB317 as the single item on its agenda, beginning with a breakdown of the sub bill by Rep. Shane Wilkin (R-Hillsboro). One of its major provisions includes replacing the previously proposed alternative regulation plan (ARP) with an equally prosaic "interim distribution mechanism" (IDM), both of which substitute for billing riders in current law and continue single-issue ratemaking between across-the-board, five-year rate cases.

ENVIRONMENT

Local governments across the state are receiving \$9.1 million in low interest loans from the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA), according to the agency. The loans will help pay for improvements to water quality, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, OWDA said.

The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) has approved bond financing for up to \$6.7 million for Upper Arlington Center LLC through the Clean Air Improvement Program (CAIP). Upper Arlington Center LLC, a suburban office building located at 5000 Arlington Center Blvd., is set to be renovated and incorporate energy conservation and renewable energy generation measures, according to OAQDA.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen.-elect J.D. Vance Friday announced his chief of staff and state director, saying both bring tenured government and political experience at the federal, state and local levels and strong ties to the state of Ohio. Jacob Reses will serve from Washington, D.C. as chief of staff. Reses previously served as senior policy advisor to U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO), advising on a broad range of legislative issues



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including technology, antitrust, trade and economic policy. Bryan Gray will serve as state director, overseeing Vance's Ohio offices. Gray was Vance's political director for the primary and general elections.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) joined four other senators Monday to announce a bipartisan agreement on the Respect for Marriage Act that they said would protect gay marriage while also protecting religious beliefs. Portman, along with Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), and Thom Tillis (R-NC) said in a statement, "The Respect for Marriage Act is a needed step to provide millions of loving couples in same-sex and interracial marriages the certainty that they will continue to enjoy the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities afforded to all other marriages. Through bipartisan collaboration, we've crafted commonsense language to confirm that this legislation fully respects and protects Americans' religious liberties and diverse beliefs, while leaving intact the core mission of the legislation to protect marriage equality. We look forward to this legislation coming to the floor and are confident that this amendment has helped earn the broad, bipartisan support needed to pass our commonsense legislation into law."

GAMING/GAMBLING

Revenues at Ohio's four casinos were slightly higher in October 2022 than the same month last year, according to data from the Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC). Casinos raked in \$83.1 million in October 2022, up from \$81 million in October 2021. However, the state's seven racinos saw a slight drop in revenue in October 2022 when compared to October 2021, the Ohio Lottery Commission (OLC) said in its video lottery terminal (VLT) revenue report. Racinos pulled in \$109.1 million in October 2022, down from \$111.8 million in October 2021.

The Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) on Wednesday established a set of wagers and events that are approved for sports gambling. "This initial set of wagers and events is just that -- the initial set. Proprietors and services providers can continue to request additional items for inclusion in the catalogue," OCCC said in an email. The sports betting catalogue is available at <https://tinyurl.com/u7b5dhyr>. "Proprietors and services providers will also be able to see pending requests from others, alleviating the need for the industry to make multiple requests for the same item. Additionally, sports governing bodies may request prohibitions or restrictions on wager or event types, pursuant to OAC 3775-16-11, by submitting a [request in] writing to the commission at compliance@casinocontrol.ohio.gov," OCCC said.



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Members of the Senate Republican Caucus on Tuesday unanimously elected Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) to once again serve as president of the Senate for the 135th General Assembly. First elected to the Senate in 2016, Huffman was re-elected in 2020 to his second term. He has served as Senate president during the 134th General Assembly, and prior to that he was majority floor leader. Huffman previously served four terms in the House, culminating in his election as speaker pro tempore. Other leadership members for the 135th General Assembly elected by the caucus include Sen. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) as president pro tempore, Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) as majority floor leader and Sen. Theresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green) as majority whip.

Also on Tuesday, the Senate Democratic Caucus elected Sen. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) as Senate minority leader for the 135th General Assembly. Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus), who currently serves as assistant minority whip, was elected assistant minority leader. Sen.-Elect Kent Smith (D-Euclid) was selected to serve as minority whip. Completing the 135th General Assembly minority leadership team is Sen.-Elect Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo), who will serve as assistant minority whip.

Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Monclova) will be the next House speaker after a 90-minute closed-door meeting Wednesday evening held by members of the 135th General Assembly Republican Caucus. Rep. Phil Plummer (R-Dayton) will serve as speaker pro-tempore; Rep. Scott Wiggam (R-Wooster) will serve as majority floor leader; Rep. Susan Manchester (R-Waynesfield) will serve as assistant majority floor leader; Rep. Brian Baldrige (R-Winchester) will serve as majority whip; and Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) will serve as assistant majority whip. The 36-year-old Merrin, a realtor and real estate investor, is entering his final term in the Ohio House after he was re-elected in the Nov. 8 election. Plummer and Stephens do not face term limits until after the 136th General Assembly. House Democrats expect to hold their leadership election after Thanksgiving.

Both Sen.-elect Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo) and Rep.-elect Elgin Rogers (D-Toledo) started their new jobs early Wednesday when Hicks-Hudson was elected to serve out the unexpired term of Sen. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo), who retired from the Legislature on Oct. 31. In turn, Rogers was elected to fill Hicks-Hudson's seat in the House.



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Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) said, beginning after Thanksgiving, his chamber plans hearing abortion law changes that would clarify the existing heartbeat statute. He said Sens. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City), who chairs the Senate Health Committee, and Terry Johnson (R-McDermott) are working on "tightening up the definitions regarding health of the mother, things like that, addressing a lot of the medical questions that the medical community has raised." Huffman also said the legislation will include foster care, adoption and crisis pregnancy center provisions. The caucus also will discuss whether to move on further limitations to abortion, Huffman said.

The House Democratic Caucus Tuesday held a press conference to outline their priorities for the lame duck session, saying they are willing to work with Republicans on bipartisan legislation to help working families, but will oppose any efforts to use the end of the session to "fight cultural war issues." House Minority Leader Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington) said there is bipartisan legislation they can pass to address rising costs, keep families and communities safe, and continue to cement Ohio as a top manufacturing hub for the technologies of the future. She also noted that there are "billions" left over in federal COVID relief funding waiting to be spent, and said it should be spent on programs that improve career opportunities as well as elevate services for caregivers, mental health and addiction support services.

Odds of an earlier break in legislative activity in December increased this week when both the House and Senate added an additional voting session for Tuesday, Dec. 13, while converting planned sessions for Wednesday, Dec. 21 into if-needed sessions. Each chamber has five voting sessions left for 2022, not counting the if-needed sessions.

Senators bid farewell to former Sen. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) on Wednesday. Fedor resigned her seat early amid a campaign for election to the State Board of Education, a contest she won last week. Fedor did not seek re-election to the Senate because she was former Cincinnati John Cranley's running mate in the Democratic primary for governor, which prompted Hicks-Hudson to run to succeed her.

The Senate cleared all bills on its calendar unanimously Wednesday. Among them was SB33 (Hottinger), which will enable Ohioans to claim a state income tax deduction for contributions to 529 college savings plans offered by any state, not just Ohio's CollegeAdvantage program. Under SB300 (Wilson), all notaries will be allowed to offer e-notarization. In addition, the chamber passed SB338 (Lang), which changes assessments for environmental health specialists who do inspections



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of restaurants and retail food establishments. Additional legislation passed by the Senate Wednesday included the following:

- SB238 (Romanchuk), to create the Ohio Bird Sanctuary License Plate.
- SB285 (Yuko-Dolan), to create the Playhouse Square License Plate.
- SB337 (Brenner-Reineke), to designate Oct. 4 as "Rutherford B. Hayes Day."

The Ohio House Wednesday passed legislation that makes distracted driving a primary offense, joining Ohio with 47 other states that have enacted distracted driving laws. But Ohio is not one of the 26 states that have a hand-held ban, something that was noted by a number of lawmakers during the floor debate. Rep. Cindy Abrams (R-Harrison), one of the sponsors of HB283 (Abrams-Lampton), said Ohio must take the next step in battling distracted driving. She said the sponsors have heard numerous stories from families who have lost loved ones due to the use of a cell phone while driving.

The House also unanimously passed HB403 (Fowler Arthur-A. Miller), legislation that would require school districts file a report with the Ohio Department of Education regarding a teacher who retired under threat of disciplinary investigation; HB150 (Hillyer), establishing the Rural Practice Incentive Program and a task force to study Ohio's indigent defense system; and HB419 (Troy-Seitz) to increase the penalty for failure to report adult abuse. Votes on two other bills -- HB433 (Gross) enacting the Provider of Boutique Services Opportunity Act, and HB349 (Galonski-Hillyer), to make changes to the law regarding involuntary treatment for mentally ill persons subject to a court order -- were more split, but both bills cleared the chamber with bipartisan support. HB389 (Leland-Seitz) was informally passed as House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) said they were giving members more time to review the energy efficiency bill.

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) took no action against any of the rules on its Monday agenda, with its short meeting consisting of a reading of the agendas before it. Before the meeting, JCARR staff had not identified any prong violations, and there were no witnesses on any of the rule packages.

Speaker of the House Bob Cupp Monday announced that Reps. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), Al Cutrona (R-Canfield) and Tavia Galonski (D-Akron) will serve as members of the conference committee on SB56 (Blessing). Senate conferees, who were named last April, include chief sponsor, Sen. Lou Blessing (R-Cincinnati), and Sens. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) and Cecil Thomas (D-Cincinnati). According to the



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Legislative Service Commission (LSC) analysis, the bill addresses public improvement contracts and indemnification by professional design firms as well as immunity for acts of hospital police officers, with this latter provision removed before the conference committee reported the bill.

In other action, the House Criminal Justice Committee reported out HB419 (Troy-Seitz) which addresses the reporting of adult abuse; the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out highway naming bills HB503 (Jones), SB283 (Oâ€™Brien), HB444 (Patton), HB543 (Ginter), SB289 (Schaffer) and HB603 (Galonski), and license plate bill HB686 (Lanese-Richardson); the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee reported out SB338 (Lang) which deals with health inspections of restaurants; Senate Finance Committee reported out SB219 (Craig) which renames the Commission on African American Males the Commission on African-Americans; the Conference Committee on SB56 reported SB56 after removing language regarding police sovereign immunity; the House Financial Institutions Committee reported out SB249 (Wilson) which creates regulatory sandbox program for novel financial products; the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee reported out SB251 (Schaffer-Maharath) which addresses youth evening employment; and the House Government Oversight Committee reported out HB593 (Humphrey-Seitz) which deals with the use of campaign funds.

GUNS

At the request of Attorney General Dave Yost's office, Franklin County Judge Stephen McIntosh Thursday, Nov. 10 put a hold on court hearings in a lawsuit challenging a state law that preempts local gun regulations while the state appeals a preliminary injunction enjoining enforcement of the law. McIntosh had issued the preliminary injunction earlier this month against 132-HB228 (Johnson), which would preempt "further license, permission, restriction, delay or process" local gun laws that would interfere with the "fundamental individual right" to have and carry firearms. The city of Columbus had filed a lawsuit challenging the law, but McIntosh did not take action on the lawsuit until the city sued to compel him to rule. The judge said that the law likely violates home rule provisions of the Ohio Constitution in his ruling.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Children's hospitals across Ohio are experiencing high patient volumes as the state deals with surges in RSV and influenza cases, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff said Tuesday. "We've been saying that we were likely to see a very busy respiratory virus season this fall and winter, and it appears that busy season is now underway, having started in October with a significant increase



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in RSV here in Ohio," Vanderhoff said during a virtual press conference. "But RSV isn't our only concern. Unlike last year -- a year in which we saw very little flu -- we are also now witnessing a significant increase in influenza-related hospitalizations here in Ohio," he continued. "The result of an early and dramatic spike in RSV, and now an overlapping rise in influenza, is high demands on our hospitals -- and right now, most especially, on our children's hospitals." Vanderhoff said it's important for Ohioans to be aware of the situation and to do what they can to control the spread of respiratory illnesses.

The Biden-Harris administration has outlined a blueprint for addressing the maternal health crisis in the United States where the maternal mortality rate is the highest of any developed nation in the world and more than double the rate of peer countries, according to the report. The blueprint was released after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, overturning *Roe v. Wade* and ending the federal constitutional right to an abortion. The report states that as fewer women have access to abortion, "experts anticipate that maternal mortality crisis will only worsen, particularly for women of color and low-income women. The compounding of these crises -- the rising maternal mortality rate and lack of access to abortion -- is undermining women's ability to be safe and healthy."

High employee turnover and a lack of resources strain local job and family services (JFS) agencies' ability to combat fraud, according to officials who testified at Tuesday's Public Assistance Benefits Accountability Task Force meeting. Created in HB110 (Oelslager), the 15-member task force is charged with studying various fraud prevention topics related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Ohio Works First and publicly funded child care. Sen. Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster) and Rep. Kyle Koehler (R-Springfield) co-chair the committee. Task force members heard from both state and local officials about efforts to prevent fraud in public benefits systems. Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Director of Program Integrity Allan Showalter and Director of Legislative Affairs Steve Alexander said county JFS offices employ the "frontline" workers who operate the Medicaid application process and who deal "disproportionately" with the administrative burden. Mindy Kowalski, assistant director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), also emphasized the role of county officials in preventing and investigating fraud.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) was awarded reaccreditation status and five local health departments in Ohio gained initial accreditation status, the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) announced Wednesday. Accreditation or reaccreditation is achieved after PHAB performs a systematic review process



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against national standards. PHAB considers this status a demonstration of the health departments' commitment to building and maintaining a strong infrastructure to better serve their communities. To demonstrate accountability, promote transparency, and adopt cultures that promote continuous performance improvement, many health departments strive to achieve national accreditation, ODH said. The status is awarded or renewed for a five-year period. The five local health departments to earn initial accreditation are the Ashtabula County Health Department, city of Middletown Health Department, Morrow County Health District, Noble County Health Department and Washington County Health Department.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The son of Ohio State University law school namesake Mike Moritz hoped his House testimony Tuesday would hasten a legislative amendment to correct OSU's use of his father's \$30 million endowment, but members held back after input from the Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) and Philanthropy Ohio. Investment banker Jeff Moritz told the House Civil Justice Committee that his father had executed an agreement with OSU to donate the \$33.3 million in 2001, nine months before a hit-and-run driver killed Mr. and Mrs. Moritz, with the explicit understanding that it would be split into three equal shares to support the dean's fund, endowed chairs and fully paid scholarships and stipends for 30 promising law students each year. OSU's Moritz College of Law has instead provided between 12-15 scholarships each year instead of the agreed 30, he said, and had shrunk the fund to \$21.9 million by 2016 rather than overseeing its growth to an anticipated \$50 million.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) recently released its annual Economic Impact Report, showing that the agency's programs and operations create or sustain 27,128 jobs annually and generate \$432.2 million in annual tax revenue. OHFA facilitates the development, rehabilitation and financing of low- to moderate-income housing. The agency's programs are meant to help first-time homebuyers, renters, senior citizens and others find quality affordable housing. Formerly a division of the Ohio Department of Development, OHFA became an independent state agency in 2005.

HUMAN SERVICES

Ohio's state government needs to do something about the public benefits cliff, a barrier that is holding back too many hardworking Ohioans, Rep. Gary Click (R-Vickery) said Thursday during sponsor testimony on HB410 (Click-Jarrells) before



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the House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee. "I grew up in the poverty of a single home with a mother raising three kids. It was not unusual for mom to send me to the store to grab a gallon of milk with a book of food stamps. It was something that I was ashamed of at the time due to the stigma, and not something that she was proud of either. Today, I look back and I'm grateful that it met a need," Click continued. "However, the problem was that my mother was not content being dependent. She wanted the dignity of work. However, she felt trapped. Taking a job meant actually going backwards financially and the loss of important benefits like health care." Click said the problem continues today, noting he's heard about it from the working poor, local employers and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

JUDICIAL

Dover Mayor Richard Homrighausen was found guilty Wednesday on multiple criminal counts following a jury trial in Tuscarawas County prompted by allegations that he pocketed wedding fees that should have been directed to the city, Auditor of State (AOS) Keith Faber had said. Homrighausen was convicted on one felony count of theft in office, four misdemeanor counts of receiving improper compensation, and one misdemeanor count of dereliction of duty, following a four-day trial in Tuscarawas County Common Pleas Court.

LIBRARIES

The Ohioana Library recently announced the winners of the 2022 Ohioana Book Awards. First given in 1942, the annual awards are the second-oldest state literary prizes in the nation and honor outstanding works by Ohio authors and illustrators in five categories: Fiction, Poetry, Juvenile Literature, Middle Grade/Young Adult Literature, and Nonfiction. The sixth category, About Ohio or an Ohioan, may also include books by non-Ohio authors. Six of the Ohioana Award winners were selected by juries. The Ohioana Library also presented the Readers' Choice Award, which was determined by voters in a public online poll. Nearly 2,000 votes were cast for this year's Readers' Choice Award. The winners are as follows:

Fiction: Anthony Doerr for *Cloud Cuckoo Land*

Nonfiction: Hanif Abdurraqib for *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*

About Ohio or an Ohioan: Bran Alexander for *The Hospital: Life, Death, and Dollars in a Small American Town*



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Poetry: Felicia Zamora for *I Always Carry My Bones*

Juvenile Literature: Andrea Wang for *Watercress*. Illus. by Jason Chin

Middle Grade/Young Adult Literature: Jasmine Warga for *The Shape of Thunder*

Readers' Choice: Manuel Iris for *The Parting Present/Lo que se iri*

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The Biden administration signaled another quarterly extension of the federal public health emergency (PHE) declaration related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The administration has promised states 60 days' notice if it plans to allow the PHE to expire; it gave no such notice as that window passed ahead of the current PHE expiration date of Jan. 11, 2023. Among other benefits, the PHE brings with it enhanced federal matching funds for state Medicaid programs. But in exchange, states generally cannot remove anyone from the Medicaid rolls, which is creating a large accumulation of eligibility redetermination cases that will have to be processed when the PHE does end.

The overhaul of Medicaid managed care launched at the outset of Gov. Mike DeWine's administration will spill into his second term with the announcement of another delay in implementation, albeit a much shorter one than those announced previously. The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) announced Thursday that new managed care plans will take over Feb. 1 rather than Jan. 1, 2023. The lineup includes a mix of incumbent companies and new entrants. They will take over under a new managed care structure that includes a single pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), centralized credentialing process and the use of a specialized managed care program, OhioRISE, for children with complex needs.

Soon after he began working on HB572 (Ginter-Carruthers), Rep. Tim Ginter (R-Salem) Thursday told the House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee in sponsor testimony that he received a call about a woman who was being forced out of the assisted living facility she had been living in for years because she had exhausted her finances and was moving onto Medicaid. This bill, for which the committee had accepted a substitute version, would address the reimbursement rates for assisted living facilities which would address this circumstance.



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NATURAL RESOURCES

A newly released report from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) shows the state's mineral resources produced nearly \$1.5 billion worth of geologic commodities in 2021. The total value of all nonfuel industrial minerals exceeded \$1 billion for an eighth straight year. The “2021 Report on Ohio Mineral Industries: An Annual Summary of the State's Economic Geology,” compiled by the ODNR Division of Geological Survey, provides information regarding the production, value and employment totals of Ohio's various mineral industries.

PEOPLE

Individuals who worked in his administration -- or their relatives, lobbyists, reporters who covered his time in Ohio government, others who supported him through the years - often referred to as "Celestials," and others who just followed his career gathered Thursday in the Statehouse Museum Gallery to hear former Ohio Gov. Richard Celeste reprise his career of public service. His recently released memoir, ***In the Heart of It All: An Unvarnished Account of My Life in Public Service***, was the basis of the discussion, prompting questions from former Ohio Rep. Mike Curtin. Now 85, Celeste began by noting that he found in writing the book that memory isn't always that reliable, turning instead to letters and other documents that he has saved over the years.

The National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA) recently elected Shawn Smith, executive director of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), to its Board of Directors. "NCSHA's 2023 Board of Directors represent excellence in their states and leadership nationally in affordable housing finance at a time when it is more necessary than ever," said NCSHA Executive Director Stockton Williams. Smith joined OHFA in 2019 and was named executive director in 2020. He has over two decades of experience as a governmental accounting and public finance professional. Prior to joining OHFA, he served as the chief operating officer at the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Citizen-initiated ballot measures on redistricting and abortion are likely to be issues in forthcoming elections, according to Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Dean Emeritus Steven Steinglass. "I do not know what to say about the outrageous process for redistricting. A lawless Ohio Redistricting Commission abetted by a remarkable and inappropriate decision by a three-judge federal court not only enabled a political result, but in effect, approved the adoption of redistricting lines



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for the General Assembly that were deemed illegal by the Ohio Supreme Court," Steinglass said during a City Club of Cleveland forum on Friday. "It is likely that there will be a ballot issue on that, and it's essentially what Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor predicted in her prescient concurring opinion in the first General Assembly redistricting case on Jan. 12." Asked by an audience member how Ohio Redistricting Commission members could be held accountable for their actions, Steinglass said voters could have voted them out of office on Nov. 8.

STUDIES/POLLS

Recent research out of Ohio State University (OSU) suggests belief that the COVID-19 pandemic was a hoax -- that its severity was exaggerated or that the virus was deliberately released for sinister reasons -- functions as a "gateway" to believing in conspiracy theories generally. In the two-survey study, people who reported greater belief in conspiracy theories about the pandemic were more likely to later report they believed that the 2020 presidential election had been stolen from Donald Trump through widespread voter fraud, which is also not true. Participants' overall inclination to believe in conspiracy theories also increased more among those who reported believing COVID-19 was a hoax. Based on the results, the OSU researchers have proposed the "gateway conspiracy" hypothesis, which argues that conspiracy theory beliefs prompted by a single event lead to increases in conspiratorial thinking over time.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

Holding and looking at a cell phone while driving would be a primary offense under legislation passed by the House Criminal Justice Committee on Tuesday and the House on Wednesday. The bill, HB283 (Abrams-Lampton), was reported out by a unanimous vote of members present after receiving two amendments. "We have to do our part in minimizing traffic-related deaths in Ohio," Rep. Cindy Abrams (R-Harrison) said in a statement. "We have worked diligently with stakeholders and various members of the House Criminal Justice committee to produce a piece of legislation that does just that."

VETERANS

Gov. Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder announced that the OhioMeansJobs website will provide two new services for veterans and military spouses seeking employment. They said veterans registered on the site will now be prompted to complete a brief form asking if they want to receive one-on-one help with their job search. That will



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put them in contact with an employment specialist at their local OhioMeansJobs center. The centers are present in all Ohio counties, and they also provide interview practice. Veterans are given priority of service in referrals to job openings and other services. Military spouses will now have a red and blue "S" mark designated on their resumes so they stand out to "military-friendly" employers, similar to how veterans' resumes were already flagged with a "V." The OhioMeansJob website includes a Military-Friendly Employer Registry of businesses looking to recruit and hire veterans. Over 7,400 employers have the designation to date.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

CareWorks, a managed care organization (MCO), utilized practices to elicit certain responses from injured workers and employers to bolster numbers used to calculate the company's portion of an incentive payment pool share with other MCOs, according to the Office of the Ohio Inspector General (IG). "Through record examination and interviews conducted, investigators determined CareWorks had implemented processes for staff to ask certain questions in a manner that obtained a favorable response for the MCO, contrary to the contract and guidance with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC)," the IG's office said.

WORKFORCE

Monday's meeting of the Governor's Executive Workforce Board included a focus on how Ohio can better attract high school students who don't go on to college so they enter high-paying careers. That will also be a priority for the board's Young Workers Committee, which is slated to hold its first meeting Thursday. Lt. Gov. Jon Husted told *Hannah News* the committee was formed because Ohio has around 50,000 students each year who leave high school but don't go to college and lack a "dedicated career path." Those students could help solve a lot of current workforce challenges but are "falling through the cracks," he continued, and the state should do a better job of connecting with them in high school and providing information on good-paying careers.