



**GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.**

17 SOUTH HIGH STREET - SUITE 245

COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413

PHONE: 614-461-9335

FAX: 614-461-9336

**Ohio Speech & Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition  
Legislative Activities Report  
May 2017**

After months of debate the members of the House of Representatives finally had the opportunity to put their mark on the state's biennial budget bill (HB 49). After hearing from hundreds of witnesses, the House Finance Committee accepted hundreds of changes that removed much of Governor John Kasich's ambitious tax reforms, added money for schools, diverted more funding to fight the opioid epidemic, and made adjustments to Ohio's Medicaid program. It was approved on a 58-36 vote, with 12 Republicans voting no.

Prior to the House making changes to the bill, Governor Kasich and legislative leaders held a press conference announcing that the revenue projections for the operating budget were off by \$400 million per fiscal year. House members were forced to adjust for these new revenue projections as they developed their version of the massive spending bill. The House contends that, with its changes, they were able to make up for \$630M of the \$800M shortfall. They have left it to the Senate to now find \$170M in savings.

The Senate began informal hearings on the bill in April, but now officially has the bill before it for review. They will hold hearings through the beginning of June, when a substitute bill and omnibus amendment will be offered. The Senate plans to vote on the measure the week of June 19<sup>th</sup>. That leaves very little time for a conference committee to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions. The bill must then go to Governor Kasich for consideration of vetoes and a signature prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

One of the more controversial issues during the budget process was the debate over Ohio's Medicaid expansion population. There was a push by the conservative members in the Ohio House to completely freeze expansion enrollment, which would have dramatically lowered Medicaid rolls over time. House leaders rejected that plan; however, they did accept an amendment that would create "legislative guardrails" around the Medicaid expansion spending.

The final proposal would require approval from the Controlling Board before money is spent to insure the Medicaid expansion population. By refusing to appropriate the money tied to the Medicaid expansion and in essence placing it in a holding fund contingent on Controlling Board action, the House shaved a whopping \$10 billion from the all-funds budget. The only way to actually save that money over the two years, however, would be to completely repeal expansion.

The House also included a provision directing ODM to seek a waiver from CMS to limit the expansion population going forward. The language states that eligibility for the expansion population under that waiver would only be for individuals who are:

- Over age 55, or;
- Employed, or;
- In school, or;
- In drug or alcohol treatment, or
- “Medically fragile.”

In addition to these Medicaid provisions, the budget bill also proposes to continue funding for the Ohio Hearing Aid Assistance Program, which provides coverage for children whose family commercial health insurance does not cover hearing aids. This program is funded at \$250,000/year in each year of the biennium and is administered by the Ohio Department of Health.

The House version of HB 49 also creates a school related services provider shortage study committee. This was done in response to the work group that GAC led and which included ODE, the Department of Higher Ed, ESCs, Superintendents, OTs, PTs, School psychs and many others. We presented our proposal to the Ohio House, who now wishes to formalize the dialog with a mandated work group led by ODE. More to come on this important issue.

Finally, HB 49 as passed by the House consolidates the Ohio Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology with the Hearing Aid Dealers Board. The new board would be called the Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board. The membership of the new Board would be as follows: 2 SLPS; 3 AuDs; 2 HADs and 2 public members. Again, it remains to be seen how the Senate plans to address this issue now that the bill is before them for deliberations.

Also of note, a House Democratic Caucus screening panel on recommended Tavia Galonski, a magistrate at the Summit County Court of Common Pleas, to replace former Rep. Greta Johnson in the 35<sup>th</sup> House District. Ms. Galonski is a magistrate in the county's juvenile court, and also held the same role in Summit County's Domestic Relations court. She served as a Summit County judicial attorney before becoming a magistrate. She earned the recommendation over seven other applicants for the job.

The House Democratic Caucus will also need to find a replacement for Columbus-area state Rep. Heather Bishoff, who recently stepped down from the Ohio House. The Blacklick

Democrat was in her third term in the House and some had indicated was a potential candidate for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Senate District race in 2018. Bishoff said she and her husband are moving to California where they and their children will be closer to her oldest son who is a Marine stationed in the area. The House Democratic Caucus will announce a screening panel in the coming weeks to select a replacement for Bishoff who, in 2016, won the closest House race in the state.

The Senate Democratic Caucus also announced changes recently, as Senator Joe Schiavoni stepped down as minority leader. Senate Democrats unanimously elected state Senator Kenny Yuko of Richmond Heights as his replacement. Schiavoni, who is running for governor in 2018, said he will continue to serve on legislative committees. Yuko was elected to the Senate in 2014. He previously served four terms in the House before being term limited and worked for 25 years as a union organizer.

We have been tracking the following legislation during the 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly:

**HB49**      **OPERATING BUDGET (SMITH R)** Creates FY 2018-2019 main operating budget.

*Current Status:* 5/18/2017 - Senate Finance General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee, (Sixth Hearing)

**HB51**      **DEPARTMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE (FABER K)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.

*Current Status:* 5/16/2017 - House State and Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)

**HB75**      **PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE-ARMED FORCES (GAVARONE T, MERRIN D)** To establish an expedited process to grant a professional license to an individual who is on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, or is the spouse of such an individual, and holds a valid license in another state.

*Current Status:* 3/15/2017 - House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security, (Second Hearing)

**HB85**      **ENTER HEALTH CARE COMPACT (RETFERFORD W)** To enter into the Health Care Compact.

*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - House Federalism and Interstate Relations, (First Hearing)

- HB98**      **CAREER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS** (DUFFEY M, BOGGS K) Regarding the presentation of career information to students.  
*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - House Education and Career Readiness, (Second Hearing)
- HB115**      **DATABASE-PERSONS WITH COMMUNICATION DISABILITY** (GAVARONE T, WIGGAM S) To establish a database of persons who voluntarily register as being diagnosed with a communication disability or who voluntarily register a minor child or ward as the parents or guardians of such persons for purposes of law enforcement notification.  
*Current Status:* 4/26/2017 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT**, House Community and Family Advancement, (Third Hearing)
- HB131**      **PHYSICAL THERAPY LAWS** (GAVARONE T, REINEKE W) To modify the laws governing the practice of physical therapy.  
*Current Status:* 5/10/2017 - House Health , (First Hearing)
- HB150**      **LICENSE PLATE CREATION** (PATMON B) To create a special license plate for hearing-impaired individuals.  
*Current Status:* 5/17/2017 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)
- HCR5**      **SUPPORT AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** (SYKES E) To urge the Congress of the United States, and in particular the Ohio Congressional delegation, to support the preservation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.  
*Current Status:* 2/28/2017 - Referred to Committee House Insurance
- HCR6**      **REPEAL AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** (GOODMAN W, FABER K) To urge congress to continue its efforts to fully repeal the affordable care act and to recommend that future federal health care policies restore power to the states, fund the Medicaid program through block grants to individual states, and permit the sale of health insurance across state lines.  
*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight
- SB3**      **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (BEAGLE B, BALDERSON T) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for

employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week.

*Current Status:* 5/17/2017 - House Higher Education and Workforce Development, (First Hearing)

**SB27 DEAF HISTORY MONTH DESIGNATION (BEAGLE B)** To designate the period beginning March 13 and ending April 15 as "Ohio Deaf History Month."

*Current Status:* 4/25/2017 - **REPORTED OUT**, House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing)

**SB48 HEARING IMPAIRED-DRIVING (WILLIAMS S)** To create a special license plate for hearing-impaired individuals and to require the registrar to include an identifying symbol on a driver's license, commercial driver's license, or state-issued identification card of a hearing-impaired individual, if requested.

*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing)

**SB59 BICYCLE USE-HELMETS (SKINDELL M)** To require bicycle operators and passengers under 18 years of age to wear protective helmets when the bicycle is operated on a roadway and to establish the Bicycle Safety Fund to be used by the Department of Public Safety to assist low-income families in the purchase of bicycle helmets.

*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing)

**SB79 STATE DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE (JORDAN K)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.

*Current Status:* 3/29/2017 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Second Hearing)

**SB91 OHIO HEALTH CARE PLAN (SKINDELL M, TAVARES C)** To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.

*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions, (First Hearing)

**SB93 HEALTH INSURANCE-HEARING AIDS (BROWN E)** To require health

insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids.

*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions,  
(First Hearing)

**SB99**      **MEDICAID EXPANSION-NEW ENROLLMENT (COLEY W)** To prohibit the Medicaid program from newly enrolling individuals as part of the expansion eligibility group.

*Current Status:* 3/21/2017 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid,  
(First Hearing)

**SB110**      **HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS-IDENTIFICATION (TAVARES C)** To require a health care professional to wear identification when providing care or treatment in the presence of a patient.

*Current Status:* 4/26/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid