



**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 GAC  
Legislative Activities Report  
October 2019**

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, Governor DeWine announced his Ohio STRONG legislation in response to the Dayton shootings in August. The STRONG Ohio bill stands for safety protection orders, thorough background checks, rigorous due process, ongoing help to those in crisis, new state background checks and greater penalties for gun crimes. The governor said he had three overriding goals in crafting the legislation: that it be constitutional, save lives and be able to pass in the General Assembly. He believes the STRONG bill meets all three goals; Senator Matt Dolan from Cleveland will sponsor it.

HB 243 had sponsor testimony on October 1, 2019. Sponsors Weinstein and Russo provided data to the committee regarding why the legislation is needed and the cost to implement in other states that have already passed hearing aid mandate legislation. The substitute version of the bill that was offered on October 1<sup>st</sup> would require insurers to cover hearing aids up to \$2500/aid every 48 months up to age 21. The sponsors received questions about how many kids this would impact (22% of Ohio kids on private, non-self-insured, plans) and about the impact on insurance premiums (average of .25¢ per member/per month increase). The Ohio office of the National Federation of Independent Businesses has already come out in opposition to the bill on the grounds that it will increase healthcare premiums.

Proponent testimony on HB 243 is expected in the next several weeks. Carrie Spangler has agreed to testify in person at that hearing, along with several other witnesses. Thus far, I have received and submitted written testimony in support of the bill from:

- Evan Murphy, 4<sup>th</sup> year AuD intern, Cincinnati Children's;

- Carlin Culbertson, parent;
- Christan Craft, parent;
- Carrie Block, parent;
- Teresa Farnham, M.A., CCC/SLP; and
- Holle Anugst, President, OAA.

Also, on the legislative front, GAC was contacted by ASHA to ask for official support to seek passage of the Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC). You will recall that GAC participated in a few calls with ASHA on this topic early in 2019. Gregg Thornton of the OSHPB was a member of the work group that led to the ASLP-IC proposal. The compact would grant qualified audiologists and speech-language pathologists the right to practice in ASLP-IC states. It would also allow telehealth services in ASLP-IC states, allowing for increased access to care. It would be a big help to military members and spouses who want to maintain their profession when relocating. The concept of an interstate compact is not new, as there are more than 200 active interstate compacts, 22 of which are national in scope. No state has yet adopted the ASLP-IC.

A similar bill, HB 133, is pending in the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee. HB 133 would require state occupational licensing agencies, under certain circumstances, to issue temporary licenses or certificates to members of the military (and their spouses) who are licensed in another jurisdiction and have moved to Ohio for military duty. The licensing agency, at least annually, would be required to verify the standing of a license or certificate that was issued by another state or jurisdiction for each individual to whom it has issued a temporary license or certificate. Finally, HB 133 requires a licensing agency to prepare an annual report regarding the number and type of temporary licenses or certificates the agency issued.

We have not yet seen introduction of any art therapy or music therapy legislation. We understand that the art therapy bill could be introduced as early as this week. Senator Andy Brenner (R-Delaware) has circulated a co-sponsor request for that legislation. Senator Kenny Yuko (D-Euclid) is again interested in introducing music therapy licensure legislation.

The time is right to gather your capital budget requests and begin discussions with your legislators and community leaders. We expect a capital budget to be interested in early 2020; however, leaders are gathering proposals now for the bill. The State of Ohio's biennial capital budget, enacted in each even-numbered year, provides appropriations for the repair, reconstruction, and construction of capital assets of state agencies, colleges, universities and school districts. In some years, funds may also be allocated for community projects of local or regional interest. The process of enacting a capital improvements bill is typically simpler and shorter than that of enacting the main operating budget like the one passed in July (HB 166).

Like the operating budget, OBM distributes guidelines to individual state agencies for the preparation of the capital budget. As with the operating budget, OBM will review the agencies' submissions and will send its preliminary recommendations to the Governor. The Governor's office will then make the final recommendations, which will be drafted into a bill.

Lawmakers swore in Sen. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott) to the 14th Senate District to replace Joe Uecker, who took a position at the Department of Transportation's Office of Jobs and Commerce. The Senate GOP also announced it has selected Rep. Louis "Bill" Blessing III to fill the vacant 8th Senate District following the departure of Louis Terhar, who resigned last month for health reasons.

Rep. Blessing's House seat is being filled by Harrison City Councilwoman Cindy Abrams. Ms. Abrams has served on Council since 2016 and was a Cincinnati police officer from 1996 – 2003. The House also just named a replacement for Rep. Ryan Smith, who resigned October 3<sup>rd</sup> to accept a position as president of the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College. Smith's replacement is Lawrence County Auditor, Jason Stephens. Before becoming auditor, Mr Stephens was a county commissioner.

Speaker Larry Householder announced three new committee chairs – slots that needed to be filled due, directly or indirectly, to previous resignations. The new chair of the House Ways & Means Committee will be Rep. Derek Merrin, who will leave his chair of House Health to take the Ways & Means post. He will be replaced as House Health Committee chair by Rep. Scott Lipps. Rep. Tim Ginter was chosen to lead the House Aging & Long Term Care Committee. Yet another chair will become open upon Rep. Blessing's official departure, as he's currently the chair of the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services released the August leading indicators report, which forecast Ohio's annualized employment growth rate for the month at 1.12%. Among metro areas, Columbus had the highest rate at 1.96%, followed by Cincinnati at 1.57%, Canton-Massillon at 1.41%, Toledo at 1.05%, Akron at 0.90%, Dayton at 0.85%, Cleveland-Elyria at 0.83%, and Youngstown-Warren-Boardman at 0.22%.

The U.S. unemployment rate fell to 3.5% in September as the country added 136,000 jobs, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. The household survey found the unemployment rate dropped 0.2 percentage points to 3.5%, the lowest since December 1969. The number of people unemployed nationwide dropped by 275,000 for the month, to 5.8 million. The 136,000 new jobs found in the establishment survey came in below the average growth of 161,000 per month so far in 2019 and the average of 223,000 in 2018. Health care employers added 39,000 jobs, including 29,000 in ambulatory services and 8,000 in hospitals.

Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking for you during the 133<sup>rd</sup> Ohio General Assembly:

- HB115**      **REGULATOR RESTRICTION REDUCTION** (RIEDEL C, ROEMER B) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulator restrictions and to amend the versions of sections 106.021 and 106.03 of the Revised Code that are scheduled to take effect August 18, 2019, to continue the provision of this act on and after that effective date.  
*Current Status:* 4/10/2019 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing)
- HB129**      **MOTORCYCLE-HEARING PROTECTION** (MCCLAIN R) To permit a person to wear earphones or earplugs for hearing protection while operating a motorcycle.  
*Current Status:* 9/11/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce
- HB133**      **MILITARY-TEMPORARY LICENSURE** (PERALES R, WEINSTEIN C) To require state occupational licensing agencies, under certain circumstances, to issue temporary licenses or certificates to members of the military and spouses who are licensed in another jurisdiction and have moved to Ohio for military duty.  
*Current Status:* 10/2/2019 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing)
- HB166**      **OPERATING BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.  
*Current Status:* 7/18/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. Immediately
- HB243**      **HEARING AIDS COVERAGE** (WEINSTEIN C, RUSSO A) To require health plan issuers to cover hearing aids and related services for persons under twenty-two years of age.  
*Current Status:* 10/1/2019 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Health, (First Hearing)
- HB263**      **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING-CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS** (KOEHLER K) To revise the initial occupational licensing restrictions applicable to individuals convicted of criminal offenses.

*Current Status:* 6/12/2019 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)

**HB290**      **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT-HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS** (BOGGS K, CRAWLEY E) To prohibit unlawful sexual contact between health care professionals and patients and to revoke professional licenses for criminal misconduct.

*Current Status:* 6/25/2019 - Referred to Committee House Criminal Justice

**HB292**      **UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE COVERAGE** (SKINDELL M, KENT B) To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.

*Current Status:* 9/10/2019 - House Health, (First Hearing)

**HB305**      **SCHOOL FINANCING** (CUPP B, PATTERSON J) To create a new school financing system, and to make an appropriation.

*Current Status:* 10/16/2019 - House Finance, (First Hearing)

**SB1**         **REDUCE REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions and to continue the provision of this act on and after August 18, 2019.

*Current Status:* 6/12/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

**SB7**         **TEMP STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES-MILITARY** (LEHNER P, HACKETT R) Regarding temporary state occupational licenses for members of the military and their spouses.

*Current Status:* 10/16/2019 - House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs, (Third Hearing)

**SB14**       **DRUG PRICE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE** (MAHARATH T) Regarding pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacists, and the disclosure to patients of drug price information.

*Current Status:* 4/3/2019 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions, (First Hearing)

**SB25**       **MEDICAID WORK, EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS** (HUFFMAN M) Regarding work and education requirements for the Medicaid program.

*Current Status:* 3/20/2019 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid,  
(Second Hearing)

**SB29**      **MEDICAID COPAYMENTS (DOLAN M)** Regarding Medicaid copayment requirements.

*Current Status:* 2/19/2019 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid,  
(Second Hearing)

**SB60**      **ESTABLISH WAIVER-MEDICAID EXPANSION (BURKE D)** To establish a waiver component for the Medicaid expansion eligibility group and to abolish the Healthy Ohio Program.

*Current Status:* 3/6/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

**SB166**      **UNLAWFUL SEXUAL CONTACT-HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (KUNZE S, CRAIG H)** To prohibit unlawful sexual contact between health care professionals and patients and to revoke professional licenses for criminal misconduct.

*Current Status:* 10/2/2019 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing)

**SB171**      **17-DAY INTERIM BUDGET (DOLAN M, O'BRIEN S)** To enact a 17-day interim budget.

*Current Status:* 6/30/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Effective Immediately

**SB172**      **30 DAY BWC BUDGET (DOLAN M, O'BRIEN S)** To make operating appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending July 31, 2019.

*Current Status:* 6/30/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Effective Immediately