



GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC. & RH RESOURCES

Ohio Speech & Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition Legislative Activities Report May 2023

Voters can go to the polls on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 to decide whether the Ohio Constitution should be more difficult to amend under a joint resolution recently adopted by Republicans in the House and Senate. While there were questions about whether the House had the 60 votes necessary to adopt SJR2 (McColley) heading into session, the measure ultimately passed 62-37 after several passionate speeches from lawmakers and demonstrations by protesters in the gallery. Reps. Jamie Callender (R-Concord), Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville), Brett Hillyer (R-Dennison), Jeff LaRe (R- Canal Winchester) and Tom Patton (R-Strongsville) joined Democrats in voting against SJR2. After the House approved SJR2, the Senate concurred with House amendments by a vote of 26-7. Secretary of State Frank LaRose tweeted that he had instructed county boards of elections to begin preparing for an election on Aug. 8.

SJR2 (McColley-Gavarone), the 60 percent constitutional amendment, was officially designated as State Issue 1 by the Ohio Ballot Board. The board also approved the ballot language and explanation of the proposed amendment. The ballot language was adopted on a 3-2 vote, with Democrats voting against it. It was written by staff of Secretary of State Frank LaRose, the chair of the Ballot Board. The amendment is titled "Elevating the Standards to Qualify for and to Pass Any Constitutional Amendment." The amendment would do the following:

- Require that any proposed amendment to the constitution of the state of Ohio receive the approval of at least 60 percent of eligible voters voting on the proposed amendment.
- Require that any initiative petition filed on or after Jan. 1, 2024 with the secretary of state proposing to amend the constitution of the state of Ohio be signed by at least 5 percent of the eligible voters of each county in the state.
- Specify that additional signatures may not be added to an initiative petition filed with the secretary of state on or after Jan. 1, 2024, proposing to amend the constitution of the state of Ohio.

A large, bipartisan majority of the House voted to approve a two-year budget plan that advances implementation of the new school funding formula, boosts pay for direct service providers caring for older Ohioans and those with disabilities, and moves Ohio closer to a flat income tax structure. The chamber ducked consideration of any floor amendments to HB33 (Edwards) when, after several representatives favoring passage had spoken, Rep. Jon Cross (R-Kenton) rose to call the previous question, triggering a vote to end debate, which passed 74-23. The bill itself then passed 77-19. During breaks in floor remarks, several Republicans repeatedly stood to call for recognition or move amendments, but Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) instead recognized others who were urging passage of the bill. Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville), chair of the House Finance Committee, touted the bill's investments in economic development via the All Ohio Future Fund, support for families via increases in child care and preschool funding and a sales tax exemption on baby products, and growth in direct care workers' wages from \$13 per hour now to \$18 per hour by the end of the coming biennium -- this after the full committee accepted close to 200 additional changes to the operating budget before passing it with only one dissenting vote. Changes to the HB33 (Edwards) adopted via an omnibus amendment address a state Next Generation 9-1-1 system, an expanded state role and funding for indigent defense, \$15

million in additional support per year for foodbanks, and home purchase savings accounts supported by Gov. Mike DeWine and Treasurer Robert Sprague.

Legislation that would make changes to a number of programs aimed at bringing down the state's infant mortality rate was officially unveiled in April as the House Families and Aging Committee accepted a substitute version of HB7 (White-Humphrey), also dubbed the "Strong Foundations Act," replacing the legislative intent statement of the introduced bill with the full text of the proposal. White said the bill would help to address Ohio's infant and maternal mortality problems and is sharply focused on improving health and developmental outcomes for babies, mothers and families by expanding prenatal, postnatal and infant and toddler services and supports.

In the May State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting, members voted to appoint Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Chief Program Officer Chris Woolard (no relation to Kelsey Woolard at GPG!) as the next interim state superintendent following the departure of current Interim Superintendent Stephanie Siddens. In other action, the board voted to award a contract to the search firm Ray & Associates in their hunt for a permanent leader of the state education department.

Kelley Long, executive director of Ohio Professionals Health Program (OhioPHP), highlighted the services her agency provides to health care providers in need of mental health and addiction services for the Senate Community Revitalization Committee. Noting the thinning ranks of health care providers, she said it is important to help them -- who were already stressed before the pandemic and even more so now because of the pandemic. She said her association surveyed licensees of 13 health care licensing boards in the state in 2021, receiving nearly 14,000 responses. She said they found that 23 percent of Ohio's health care workers said they had an increase or significant increase in substance use as a result of the pandemic. There was a 70 percent increase in health care workers who said they felt down, depressed or hopeless nearly every day. And there was an 88 percent increase in thoughts of suicide among Ohio's health care workers.

Republicans Justin Pizzulli and Brian Lorenz were seated on Wednesday, May 10: the House Republican Caucus voted 35-30 to appoint Pizzulli to replace Brian Baldrige, who resigned to become director of the Department of Agriculture, and 66-0 to appoint Lorenz to replace Kris Jordan, who died.



Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking during the 135th Ohio General Assembly:

HB7 **ADDRESS INFANT, MATERNAL MORTALITY (WHITE A, HUMPHREY L)** To support strong foundations for Ohio mothers and babies in their first one thousand days to address maternal and infant mortality, to improve health, developmental, and learning outcomes for babies and mothers through expanded prenatal, postnatal, infant, and toddler health care and early intervention and



wraparound services and supports; to name this act the Strong Foundations Act; and to make appropriations.

Current Status: 5/9/2023 - House Families and Aging, (Third Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-7>

HB12 REFORM OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (JONES D, DOBOS D) To rename the Department of Education as the Department of Education and Workforce; to create the position of Director of Education and Workforce; and to reform the functions and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Current Status: 4/18/2023 - House Primary and Secondary Education, (Fifth Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-12>

HB33 FY24-25 OPERATING BUDGET (EDWARDS J) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.

Current Status: 5/31/2023 - Senate Finance, (Seventh Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-33>

HB68 GENDER SERVICES FOR MINORS (CLICK G) Regarding gender transition services for minors and to name this act the Ohio Saving Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.

Current Status: 5/24/2023 - House Public Health Policy, (Third Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-68>

HB96 INCREASE MINIMUM WAGE (JARRELLS D, MOHAMED I) To increase the state minimum wage.

Current Status: 3/14/2023 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-96>

HB105 MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX RETURNS EXTENSIONS (THOMAS J) To modify the law regarding extensions for filing municipal income tax returns and to limit penalties for late filings.

Current Status: 4/25/2023 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)



State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-105>

HB106 PAY STUB PROTECTION ACT (JARRELLS D, LIPPS S) To enact the Pay Stub Protection Act requiring employers to provide earnings and deductions statements to each of the employer's employees.
Current Status: 5/23/2023 - House Commerce and Labor, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-106>

HB115 EQUAL PAY ACT (MIRANDA J, BRENT J) To address wage disparities in public and private employment and to name this act the Ohio Equal Pay Act.
Current Status: 3/22/2023 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-115>

HB116 TAXPAYER DEDUCTIONS (PETERSON B, CLAGGETT T) To allow taxpayers to deduct in a single year the full bonus depreciation and enhanced expensing allowances the taxpayer deducts for federal income tax purposes.
Current Status: 5/2/2023 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-116>

HB121 REMOTE WORKERS - MODIFIED MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX (ROBB BLASDEL M, MATHEWS A) To allow businesses with remote workers to use a modified municipal income tax apportionment formula.
Current Status: 5/16/2023 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-121>

HB126 TAX EXEMPTION - MILITARY PAY (MATHEWS A, MILLER A) To expand a municipal income tax exemption for military pay.
Current Status: 5/23/2023 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-126>

HB130 EXEMPTION - PRIOR AUTHORIZATION (MILLER K) To establish an exemption to prior authorization requirements.
Current Status: 4/19/2023 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-130>



- HB141** **COST-SHARING REQUIREMENTS - PHYSICAL THERAPISTS** (LARE J, ROBB BLASDEL M) To restrict cost-sharing requirements with regard to occupational and physical therapists and chiropractors.
Current Status: 5/3/2023 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-141>
- HB146** **SERS BENEFIT CAP** (BIRD A) To establish a contribution based benefit cap in calculating a School Employees Retirement System member's retirement benefit.
Current Status: 5/16/2023 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Pensions, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-146>
- HB151** **STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION** (DEMETRIOU S, WILLIAMS J) To enact the Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act regarding the operation of state institutions of higher education and to revise the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.
Current Status: 5/17/2023 - House Higher Education, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-151>
- HB152** **HEARING AID COVERAGE** (WEINSTEIN C, YOUNG B) To require health plan issuers to cover hearing aids and related services for persons twenty-one years of age and younger and to name this act Madeline's Law.
Current Status: 5/10/2023 - House Insurance, (Second Hearing)
Comments: 5/10/2023 - Gina Hounam (on behalf of OSHGAC), Proponent, House Insurance Committee
5/10/2023 - Maggie Kettler (on behalf of Cincinnati Children's Hospital), Proponent, House Insurance Committee
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-152>
- HB159** **AUTISM REPORTING** (LIPPS S) To require data collection, reporting, and outreach regarding applied behavior analysis for children with autism who are Medicaid enrollees.
Current Status: 5/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Behavioral Health
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-159>



- HB174** **UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE** (SKINDELL M, GRIM M) To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.
Current Status: 5/16/2023 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-174>
- HJR1** **REQUIRE 60 PERCENT VOTE-CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT** (STEWART B) Proposing to amend Sections 1b, 1e, and 1g of Article II and Sections 1 and 3 of Article XVI of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require a vote of at least 60% of the electors to approve any constitutional amendment and to modify the procedures for an initiative petition proposing a constitutional amendment.
Current Status: 4/19/2023 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Constitutional Resolutions, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HJR-1>
- SB1** **REFORM OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION** (REINEKE W) To rename the Department of Education as the Department of Education and Workforce; to create the position of Director of Education and Workforce; and to reform the functions and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Current Status: 5/9/2023 - House Economic and Workforce Development, (Fourth Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-1>
- SB33** **MEDICAID ESTATE RECOVERY-INFORMED CONSENT** (SCHAFFER T) To require Medicaid applicants to certify that they have been notified about the Medicaid estate recovery program.
Current Status: 3/7/2023 - Senate Medicaid, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-33>
- SB44** **ELECTRONIC LICENSING APPLICATION REQUIREMENT** (BRENNER A) To require a state occupational licensing agency to accept electronic license applications.
Current Status: 3/22/2023 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Government Oversight, (Fourth Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-44>



- SB50** **911 SERVICE LAW CHANGES** (WILSON S, SMITH K) To make changes to the law governing 9-1-1 service and to repeal program requirements for emergency-service-telecommunicator training.
Current Status: 5/23/2023 - Senate Financial Institutions and Technology, (Seventh Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-50>
- SB83** **HIGHER EDUCATION OPERATIONS ENHANCEMENT** (CIRINO J) To enact the Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act regarding the operation of state institutions of higher education and to revise the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.
Current Status: 5/24/2023 - House Higher Education, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-83>
- SB96** **LABOR LAW NOTICES-POSTING** (LANG G, WILSON S) To allow employers to post certain labor law notices on the internet.
Current Status: 3/29/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Workforce and Higher Education
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-96>
- SJR2** **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE-60 PERCENT REQUIREMENT** (MCCOLLEY R, GAVARONE T) Proposing to amend Sections 1b, 1e, and 1g of Article II and Sections 1 and 3 of Article XVI of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require a vote of at least 60% of the electors to approve any constitutional amendment.
Current Status: 5/10/2023 - Consideration of House Amendments; Senate Does Concur, Vote 26-7
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SJR-2>

