

### House Activity

The House considered the amendments made by the Senate to [House Bill \(HB\) 250](#) and voted 87-0 in favor of the amendments. The bill, sponsored by Reps. Jessica E. Miranda (D-Forest Park) and Tracy M. Richardson (R-Marysville), would originally revise the “military enlistment seal” and rename it the “military seal.” The amendments adopted by the Senate included:

- Adding vans to the list of vehicles that can be used in the transportation pilot program that was created in HB 33, the biennial budget;
- Requiring each public school to adopt a policy governing the use of cell phones by students during school hours;
- Requiring that districts make their cell phone usage policy publicly available and post it on their website; and
- Requiring the Department of Education and Workforce to adopt a model cell phone policy that could be used by districts.

**HB 250 is now headed to the Governor for his signature.**

The Ohio House passed [HB 70](#), sponsored by Reps. Sarah Fowler Arthur (R-Rock Creek) and Jennifer Gross (R-West Chester), with a vote of 92-1. This bill would require schools to adopt a policy regarding the administration of over-the-counter drugs.

The House also passed [HB 230](#), sponsored by Reps. Cindy Abrams (R-Hamilton) and D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron), with a vote of 80-13. The bill would require districts to provide age appropriate, research-based instruction on the dangers of fentanyl to students in grades K-12 beginning in the 24-25 school year. The bill also requires districts to designate a week during the school year as “Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Week” as part of these education efforts.

Both of these bills are now headed to the Senate for consideration.

### Senate Activity

The Ohio Senate passed House Bill ([HB](#)) 250, sponsored by Reps. Jessica Miranda (D-Forest Park) and Tracy Richardson (R-Marysville), which would revise the “military enlistment seal” and rename it the “military seal”, with a vote of 32-0. The bill now heads to the Ohio House where they will consider the amendments made by the Senate.

The Senate passed [HB 50](#), sponsored by Reps. Latyna Humphrey (D-Columbus) and Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), with a vote of 29-1. This bill would create a mechanism by which an individual who is subject to a collateral sanction for housing may obtain a certificate of qualification for housing that may provide relief from certain bars on housing. The bill contains provisions that would:

- Modify a property tax exemption for improvements to certain residential development property by requiring that property owners apply for the exemption with the county auditor, rather than the Tax Commissioner.
- Remove requirements that the board of education to be notified of an application for such an exemption and allowance for a board to participate in any hearing on an application.
- Prohibit the filing of property tax complaints by third parties challenging a residential development property exemption.

HB 50 now heads to the House for a concurrence vote on the Senate amendments.

The Senate also passed [Senate Bill \(SB\) 179](#), sponsored by Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard), by a vote of 31-0. This bill would create the “Hilliard Davidson Wildcats” license plate.

### House Ways and Means Committee

The committee held a hearing on [HB 344](#), sponsored by Reps. Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon) and Thomas Hall (R-Madison Township), which would eliminate replacement property tax levies and makes changes regarding property tax complaints. No witnesses were present to testify on the bill. The committee accepted an amendment to the bill that does the following (passed by 10-6 vote):

- Removes the bill's penalty on subdivisions that fail to comply with property tax complaint filing requirements, instead requiring that if a subdivision, or a third party acting on a subdivision's behalf, files a complaint that does not comply with those requirements, the subdivision or third party must pay the property owner's costs and attorney's fees.
- Requires a third-party complainant to file an affidavit, with a board of revision complaint, stating whether the complainant is or is not acting on behalf of a subdivision. Falsification of such an affidavit is a first-degree misdemeanor.
- Removes a provision of the bill that specifically allows third parties acting on behalf of a school board to file counter-complaints. Current law only specifically allows the property owner or a school board to file counter-complaints.
- Limits the application of the bill's complaint-related changes only to complaints, counter-complaints and appeals filed on or after the provision's effective date.

The committee held a hearing on [HB 378](#), sponsored by Reps. Nick Santucci (R-Howland Twp.) and Brian Lorenz (R-Powell), which would create an enhanced homestead exemption for the surviving spouses of uniformed service members killed in the line of duty equal to all taxes imposed on the homestead. The bill would reimburse

local taxing units for the resulting reduction in taxes like other homestead exemptions. No witnesses were present to testify on the bill.

The committee heard sponsor testimony from Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) on [HB 496](#). This bill would revise the law governing property taxes and county auditors.

### **House Primary & Secondary Education Committee**

The committee heard sponsor testimony on [HB 407](#) from Reps. Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) and Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati). This legislation would:

- Establish new reporting requirements for chartered nonpublic schools that enroll students participating in a general scholarship program (either the Ed Choice Scholarship Program or the Cleveland Scholarship Program).
- Expressly require public money held by a chartered nonpublic school that enrolls general scholarship students to be accounted for separately from other funds.
- Require the Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) to issue a state report card for qualifying chartered nonpublic schools that enroll general scholarship students and to report other specified student performance and family adjusted gross income data.
- Eliminate exceptions that permit general scholarship students to take alternative assessments instead of state assessments and qualify for a high school diploma based on alternative assessments.
- Establish or modify reporting requirements regarding the Ed Choice Scholarship Program for chartered nonpublic schools and ODEW.
- Require each public and chartered nonpublic school to maintain student disciplinary records and to transmit a transfer student's disciplinary record with the student's school records upon request of the student's new school.

The committee also heard sponsor testimony on [HB 445](#), sponsored by Reps. Al Cutrona (R-Canfield) and Gary Click (R-Vickery). This legislation would require school districts to adopt a policy authorizing students to be excused from school to attend a released time course in religious instruction.

The committee heard proponent and opponent testimony on [HB 432](#), sponsored by Rep. Don Jones (R-Freeport), which would do the following:

- Permit an applicant to apply for an initial career-technical workforce development educator license instead of only permitting an employing school district to apply on behalf of the applicant.

- Permit an applicant that has received an offer of employment to enroll in one of two alternative educator preparation programs in lieu of a career-technical workforce development educator preparation program offered by a higher education institution.
- Require the State Board of Education to issue a career-technical educator license to certain individuals who are already validly licensed educators.

OSBA and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) gave [proponent testimony](#). The following individuals also provided proponent testimony on HB 432:

- [Jon Graft, superintendent of Butler Technology and Career Development Schools](#);
- [Rick Smith, superintendent of Ohio Hi-Point Career Center](#);
- [Jeff Berk, Career Tech Director for Mad River Local \(Montgomery\)](#);
- [Matt Sheridan, superintendent of Mid-East Career and Technology Center](#);
- [Kevin Kratzer, superintendent of Southern Hills Career and Technical Center](#);
- [Keith Horner, superintendent of Apollo Career Center](#);
- [Connie Altier, superintendent of Tri-County Career Center](#); and
- [Bob Alsept, superintendent of the Buckeye Career Center](#).

The committee heard opponent testimony on [SB 168](#), sponsored by Sen. Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester), which would:

- Allow school districts to develop and use their own frameworks for teacher evaluation, instead of using a framework developed by the State Board of Education;
- Clarify that a school district is not required to hold a separate, individual public hearing on a proposed school calendar, but that the calendar may be addressed as part of another public hearing or meeting;
- Modify license or certificate qualifications for senior or lead professional educators, holders of professional administrator or alternative superintendent licenses, and nonteachers employed as teachers;
- Eliminate seniority as a preference when making reductions in nonteaching staff positions; and
- Clarify when non-licensed individuals working in a school must be entered into the RAPback system and that the RAPback provision will be overseen by the State Board of Education (SBOE).

For a full listing of the provisions included in this bill, please see the [bill analysis](#).

### **[Senate Education Committee](#)**

The committee amended and passed [HB 250](#), sponsored by Reps. Jessica E. Miranda

(D-Forest Park) and Tracy M. Richardson (R-Marysville), which would revise the “military enlistment seal” and would rename it the “military seal.” The amendment adopted by the committee would:

- Add vans to the list of vehicles that can be used in the transportation pilot program that was created in HB 33, the biennial budget;
- Require each public school to adopt a policy governing the use of cell phones by students during school hours;
- Require that districts make their cell phone usage policy publicly available and post it on their website; and
- Require the Department of Education and Workforce to adopt a model cell phone policy that could be used by districts.

The committee continued hearing from districts about the programs they have implemented to overcome learning lags resulting from the pandemic and share their students’ progress. Individuals providing updates this week included:

- [Jeffery S. Talbert, superintendent of Canton City Schools;](#)
  - [Monte Bainter, superintendent of Logan Hocking Local \(Hocking\) Schools;](#)
  - [Trina Barrell, curriculum director at Logan Hocking Local \(Hocking\) Schools;](#)
- and
- [Dr. Cameron Ryba, superintendent of Strongsville City Schools.](#)

The committee also heard proponent and opponent testimony on [HB 8](#), sponsored by Reps. D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron) and Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton). This bill would enact the Parents Bill of Rights, requiring public schools to adopt a policy on parental notification regarding student health and well-being as well as any instructional materials with sexuality content. The committee adopted an amendment to the bill that does the following:

- Require districts to adopt notification policies no later than 120 days after the bill’s effective date.
- Require that districts receive consent from a parent or guardian prior to providing students with any physical, mental or behavioral health care.
- Require disclosure of any health service or care a school seeks to provide that could be provided outside of school and require the school to notify parents whether it is required by state law.
- Prohibit “sexuality content” from being taught in grades K-3.

The committee amended [SB 208](#), sponsored by Sen. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson). This bill would require a city, exempted village or local school district to include in its open

enrollment policy an exception for military children. The amendment to the bill was a technical correction. No witnesses were present to testify on the bill.

The committee heard sponsor testimony from Sen. Catherine Ingram (D-Cincinnati) on [SB 128](#). This bill would require disclosure of the for-profit status of community school operators and post-secondary educational institutions on various promotional materials and contracts for employment.

The committee heard proponent testimony on [SB 219](#), sponsored by Ingram. The bill would make changes to the educator licensure grade bands.

The committee held a hearing on [HB 147](#), sponsored by Reps. Sarah Fowler-Arthur (R-Ashtabula) and Adam Miller (D-Columbus), with no witnesses present to testify. This bill would make changes regarding teacher licensure revocation, teacher hiring practices, and conduct unbecoming to the teaching profession.

#### **House Higher Education Committee**

The House Higher Education Committee met and heard sponsor testimony on [HB 219](#) from Reps. Adam Bird (R-New Richmond) and Sean Brennan (D-Parma). This legislation would revise and make changes to the college credit plus program. OSBA offered [proponent testimony](#) alongside the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials. The committee also heard [proponent testimony](#) from the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools offered by Marc Kreischer, superintendent of Bloom Vernon Local Schools (Scioto).

#### **House Behavioral Health Committee**

The House Behavioral Health Committee met and heard proponent testimony on [HB 352](#), sponsored by Reps. Rachel Baker (D-Cincinnati) and Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton), that would establish the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study Commission. The committee accepted an amendment that would add five additional members to the commission representing the Ohio School Psychologists Association, the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, the Department of Medicaid and the Medicaid Managed Care Organization. The committee unanimously passed HB 352.

#### **Senate Community Revitalization Committee**

The Senate Community Revitalization Committee unanimously passed [HB 50](#), sponsored by Reps. Latyna Humphrey (D-Columbus) and Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati). This bill would

create a mechanism by which an individual who is subject to a collateral sanction for housing may obtain a certificate of qualification for housing that may provide relief from certain bars on housing. The committee accepted an amendment to the bill that would:

- Modify a property tax exemption for improvements to certain residential development property by requiring that property owners apply for the exemption with the county auditor, rather than the Tax Commissioner.
- Remove provisions that require the board of education to be notified of an application for such an exemption and that allow a board to participate in any hearing on an application.
- Prohibit the filing of property tax complaints by third parties challenging a residential development property exemption.

OSBA, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials offered [opponent testimony](#) on the bill.

### **House Economic and Workforce Development Committee**

The House Economic and Workforce Development Committee met and heard testimony on [House Bill \(HB\) 349](#), sponsored by Reps. Tim Barhorst (R-Fort Loramie) and Don Jones (R-Freeport). This bill would create several incentives for the development of natural gas pipelines and related infrastructure within locally designated EnergizeOhio zones. HB 349 would also modify the valuation formula for natural gas company personal property that is placed into service in an Energize Ohio zone, with the effect of reducing the property's taxable value.

### **Rules Activity**

The Department of Education and Workforce has the following proposed rules open for public comment:

- OAC Chapter 83 Pupil Transportation
  - OAC 3301-83-01 Calculation of pupil transportation operation payments
  - OAC 3301-83-04 Scope and definition
  - OAC 3301-83-05 Administration
  - OAC 3301-83-06 Personnel qualifications
  - OAC 3301-83-07 School transportation driver physical qualifications rule
  - OAC 3301-83-08 Pupil transportation management policies
  - OAC 3301-83-09 Pupil instruction
  - OAC 3301-83-10 Personnel training program
  - OAC 3301-83-11 School bus inspections
  - OAC 3301-83-12 Safety procedures

- OAC 3301-83-13 School bus routes and stops
- OAC 3301-83-14 Records and reports
- OAC 3301-83-15 Emergency and evacuation procedures
- OAC 3301-83-16 Non-routine use of school buses
- OAC 3301-83-17 Authorized and unauthorized passengers
- OAC 3301-83-18 Passenger capacity
- OAC 3301-83-19 Authorized vehicles for transportation of pupils to and from school and school-related events
- OAC 3301-83-20 General rules
- OAC 3301-83-21 Supplementary provisions for county boards of developmental disabilities
- OAC 3301-83-22 Vehicle maintenance
- OAC 3301-83-24 School transportation fees
- OAC 3301-83-25 Transportation collaboration grant

### **House Committee Changes**

Speaker Stephens recently made changes to the leadership of several House committees. Speaker Stephens expressed disdain for members of the House Republican Caucus who contributed to candidates who ran against incumbent members of the caucus. Committee chairs who were removed include:

- Rep. Rodney Creech (R-W. Alexandra) from the House Agriculture Committee
- Rep. Phil Plummer (R-Dayton) from the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee
- Rep. Darrell Kick (R-Loudonville) from the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
- Rep. Adam Bird (R-New Richmond) from the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
- Rep. Scott Lipps (R-Franklin) from the House Public Health Policy Committee
- Rep. Marilyn John (R-Shelby) from the House State and Local Government Committee.

Earlier this week, Speaker Stephens filled those committees with the following individuals:

- Rep. Don Jones (R-Freeport) as chair of the House Agriculture Committee
- Rep. Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) as chair of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
- Rep. Scott Wiggam (R-Wooster) as the chair of the House State and Local Government Committee
- Rep. Thomas Hall (R-Middletown) as chair of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
- Rep. Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon) as chair of the House Public Health Policy Committee.



### **Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform**

The Joint Committee met and heard invited testimony focusing on property taxes from the perspective of education professionals. The committee heard testimony from the following individuals:

- [Mike Sobul, retired Research Administrator with the Ohio Department of Taxation and former treasurer for the Granville Exempted Village School District](#)
- [Dr. Michael Barnes, superintendent of Mayfield City School District](#)
- [Tony Thomas, superintendent of Northmont City School District](#)
- [Ann Ferraro, treasurer of Northmont City School District](#)
- [Matt Bunting, treasurer of Athens City School District](#)
- [Dr. Philip Wagner, superintendent of Johnstown-Monroe Local \(Licking\) School Districts](#)
- Howard Fleeter with the Ohio Education Policy Institute
- [Jenni Logan, treasurer Sycamore Community School District](#)
- Ohio Townships Association;
- County Commissioners Association of Ohio;
- Ohio Municipal League;
- Ohio Mayors Alliance.

### **Senate Ways and Means Committee**

The committee held a hearing on [SB 186](#), sponsored by Sens. Bill Blessing (R-Colerain Township) and Catherine Ingram (D-Cincinnati). The bill would require payment of property taxes and assessments when a lot is split or transferred and to prohibit tax-delinquent property owners from purchasing tax-foreclosed property. No witnesses were present. Chair Blessing said it is his intent to pass this bill out of committee during their next meeting.

The committee heard sponsor testimony from Sens. Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester) and Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) on [SB 244](#). This bill would authorize local governments to create residential stability zones where homeowners may qualify for a partial property tax exemption.

### **Senate Select Committee on Housing**

The committee held sponsor testimony on [SB 245](#), sponsored by Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester) and Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus), which would revise the law governing eviction, real estate representation agreements, residential building code enforcement and real property transfers.

### **House Government Oversight Committee**

The committee heard sponsor testimony on [HB 499](#) from Reps. Dani Isaacsohn (D-Cincinnati) and Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon). This legislation would create grant programs for housing developments near megaprojects and for townships and municipalities that adopt pro-housing policies. HB 499 would also modify the community reinvestment area law relating to residential property and limit the ten percent nonbusiness property tax credit.

### **House Transportation Committee**

The committee heard sponsor testimony on [HB 380](#) from Reps. Brett Hillyer (R-Uhrichsville) and Kevin Miller (R-Newark). This legislation would designate a portion of Interstate 70 in Licking County as the "Tuscarawas Valley Memorial Highway." The committee unanimously passed HB 380.

### **Senate Judiciary Committee**

The committee heard sponsor testimony on [HB 139](#) from Reps. Bill Roemer (R-Richfield) and Joseph Miller (D-Amherst). This bill would increase the penalties for assault if the victim is acting as a sports official or the assault is committed in retaliation for the victim's actions as a sports official.

### **Sunset Review Committee**

The committee met and heard presentations from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce requesting the retention of the following entities:

- Educational Management Information Systems Advisory Council;
- Advisory Board to Assist and Advise in the Operation of the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence;
- Ohio Dyslexia Committee;
- STEM Committee of the Department of Education;
- College Credit Plus Advisory Committee;
- Credential Review Board;
- Educator Standards Board.

### **House Finance Committee**

The committee heard sponsor testimony on [HB 71](#) from Rep. Nick Santucci (R-Howland Township.) This bill would establish the Community Connectors Workforce Program and make an appropriation.

The committee also heard sponsor testimony on [HB 312](#) from Reps. Andrea White (R-Kettering) and Tom Young (R-Dayton). This bill would establish the Regional Partnerships Program and make an appropriation. The committee also heard proponent testimony from the following:

- [Matt Sheridan, superintendent, Mid-East Career and Technology Centers;](#)
- [Shannon Cox, superintendent, Montgomery County Educational Service Center.](#)

### **Senate Insurance Committee**

The committee heard sponsor testimony on [HB 78](#) from Reps. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) and Joseph Miller (D-Amherst). This bill would make changes regarding the State Teachers Retirement Board elections and membership requirements.

### **New Bills Introduced**

- [HB 496](#), sponsored by Reps. James Hoops (R-Napoleon), to revise the law governing property taxes and county auditors.
- [HB 499](#), sponsored by Reps. Dani Isaacsohn (D-Cincinnati) and Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon), to create grant programs for housing developments near megaprojects and for townships and municipalities that adopt pro-housing policy. The bill would also modify the community reinvestment area law relating to residential property and limit the ten percent nonbusiness property tax credit.
- [HB 506](#), sponsored by Rep. Dontavius Jarrells (D-Columbus), regarding school policies on the administration of overdose reversal drugs.
- [HB 507](#), sponsored by Rep. Brett Hillyer (R-Uhrichsville), to extend legal safe harbor to political subdivisions that implement a specified cybersecurity program.
- [SB 248](#), sponsored by Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London), to create the “Blanchester Wildcats” license plate.
- [SB 249](#), sponsored by Sens. Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester) and Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus), to provide grants to qualifying applicants for mortgage, property tax and utility bill assistance.
- [HB 515](#), sponsored by Rep. Bill Roemer (R-Richfield), would create the “Norton Music Boosters” license plate
- [HB 516](#), sponsored by Rep. Joseph Miller (D-Amherst), would annually require the Director of Budget and Management to transfer funds to the State Board of Education licensure fund.
- [HB 518](#), sponsored by Rep. Jon Cross (R-Kenton), would authorize a civil penalty related to drivers who illegally pass a school bus but cannot be identified. The bill

would also designate the month of October as "School Bus Safety Awareness Month," and to designate this act as the School Bus Safety Act.

- [HB 520](#), sponsored by Reps. Tom Young (R-Dayton) and Melanie Miller (R-Ashland), would permit students to use club sports or other athletic activity to fulfill the high school physical education requirements.
- [SB 259](#), sponsored by Sen. Teresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green), would make changes regarding participation in interscholastic athletics for students subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying or other offenses.
- [SB 261](#), sponsored by Sen. Ingram (D-Cincinnati), would make changes regarding the auditing of chartered nonpublic schools.
- [SB 265](#), sponsored by Sen. Ingram (D-Cincinnati), would eliminate the right of first refusal for certain school district real property.

Submitted by John Skerl 5/14/2024