



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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House includes SNAP funding for counties in capital reappropriations bill

This week, the House Finance Committee adopted a substitute bill to [House Bill 730](#), the biennial capital reappropriations bill to include an additional \$10 million in SNAP administrative funding for counties. The need for additional administrative funding comes following the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which will decrease the federal share of SNAP administrative costs from 50% to 25% beginning October 1, 2026.

The estimated county loss in SFY 2027 is \$38 million. The \$10 million state appropriation, and the \$2.5 million federal match, will assist counties in filling this budget hole.

The funding will be distributed to all county JFS agencies. Each agency will receive either \$226,486 or the amount equal to their full loss, whichever is less. [This table](#) shows the estimated amount each county JFS will receive, including federal match.

CCAO President and Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus [testified](#) before the House Finance Committee on Tuesday and thanked committee members for the investment in county SNAP administration efforts. President Driehaus noted that the funding is critical to help counties achieve a sub-6% error rate. States that have an error rate above 6% will, beginning in October 2027, be responsible for paying a share of SNAP benefits.

President Driehaus' testimony also spoke to the distribution method's variance from the traditional SNAP administrative funding allocation formula which takes caseloads into account.

Cuyahoga, Lucas, and Summit counties submitted written testimonies regarding the distribution formula as well.

On Wednesday, the House passed House Bill 730 by a vote of 66 to 29. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration. The capital reappropriations bill must pass by the end of

March to become effective by the beginning of SFY 2027. The Senate is expected to consider the bill next week.

Members with questions on SNAP funding should contact Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org.

Counties, CCAO testify on nuisance abatement and tax deferral bills

HB 676, Wolfdog hybrid registration and animal nuisance abatement

[House Bill 676](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Rodney Creech) received proponent testimony from Ashtabula County this week. The bill requires registration of wolfdog hybrids and allows boards of county commissioners to recoup costs incurred in abating, controlling, and/or removing animal(s) if the board determines they are a nuisance.

[Commissioner Casey Kozlowski](#), testifying on behalf of Ashtabula County in conjunction with David Britton, one of the county's dog wardens, explained that the bill arose out of an incident in Ashtabula County in late 2024. The owner of a fur and urine collection operation in the county died and when authorities arrived at the property there were more than 400 animals caged, confined in makeshift structures, or roaming free.

The county received assistance from national nonprofits to help feed and treat the animals. Commissioner Kozlowski shared that, if the nonprofits had not stepped in to help, the cost to the county would have been, at minimum, more than \$200,000. Had the provisions of the bill been in law at the time, the county would have been able to abate those costs in the form of a lien on the property.

HB 483, Property Tax Deferral Program

This week, [House Bill 483](#) (Representatives Adam Mathews and Josh Williams) received its second hearing. The bill creates a pilot program where homeowners who meet certain criteria can defer a portion of their property taxes (up to 10% of their home's market value). The deferred taxes will be charged interest of no greater than 3% and can be paid voluntarily, but payment must be made upon sale of the property or upon the homeowner's death.

If the home is transferred to the owner's surviving spouse, the deferred taxes are not required to be paid immediately. Additionally, if the property is transferred to a land bank, the taxes and interest are forgiven.

[CCAO Research Analyst Nick Ciolli](#) provided proponent testimony for the bill. His testimony highlighted the importance of the targeted relief measure and, crucially, that the bill keeps local governments whole.

The bill does this by creating a revolving fund which interest on deferred taxes, and the payments on the taxes itself, will be deposited into and then distributed out to local governments by the Department of Taxation. While the bill does not appropriate any starting funds to the revolving fund, it does require the state to transfer money from the state General Revenue Fund to the revolving fund as needed to make the necessary payments.

Property tax reform, SNAP security bills receive hearings

In addition to the bills listed above that received testimony from counties and the Association, these bills of note to counties also received hearings.

HB 420, Elimination of Continuous Levies

[House Bill 420](#) (Representatives Gary Click and Bernard Willis) is one of three property tax reform bills sponsored by Representative Click, collectively the Taxpayers Freedom Trilogy. To date, HB 420 is the only of the three to receive hearings.

HB 420 would eliminate the authority for local governments to levy a property tax for a continuing period of time (CPT). CPT levies do not expire and do not need to be renewed but do continue to accrue property tax reduction factors. In addition to removing the authority to levy CPTs, the bill also sunsets all existing CPT levies after TY 2029.

Local governments that have existing CPT levies set to expire can renew the levy for specific terms. An amendment added to the bill this week ensures that property tax credits will continue to apply to those renewed, specific-term levies if they applied to the CPT levy.

The Sandusky Auditor and Americans for Prosperity both provided proponent testimony at this week's hearing on HB 420.

At its March meeting, the CCAO Board of Directors voted to be an interested party to the bill.

HB 163, SNAP EBT Cards

[House Bill 163](#) (Representatives Tristian Rader and Kellie Deeter) would require the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to transition all SNAP EBT cards to chip cards, determine rules for cybersecurity of the cards, and ensure that the ODJFS website contains a mechanism for SNAP benefit recipients to report fraud. The bill also appropriates approximately \$10 million to make the transition.

The House Agriculture Committee held its fourth hearing on HB 163 this week. Providing proponent testimony were the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Cuyahoga County JFS, and the Center for Community Solutions.

[Senate Bill 315](#) (Senators Tim Schaffer and Hearcel Craig) is companion legislation but does not include the website requirement.

At its March meeting, the CCAO Board of Directors voted to support HB 163 and SB 315.

HB 261, Homestead Exemption Changes

This week, [House Bill 261](#) (Representatives Tracy Richardson and Brian Lorenz) received its first hearing in House Ways and Means. At the first hearing, the bill was amended significantly.

The bill was originally a simple increase to the standard homestead exemption amount, from the current level of \$29,700 to \$50,000. The amount would have continued to be indexed to inflation.

The bill was amended to instead increase the income threshold for eligibility for the homestead exemption from \$41,000 to \$55,000 and, of particular note for counties, to require the state provide 50% reimbursement for the foregone revenue caused by the enactment of a piggyback homestead exemption.

Nine counties opted to create the piggyback homestead exemption for TY 2025. Anecdotally, a common concern among the counties that didn't enact the piggyback homestead exemption was the impact the foregone revenue would have on other taxing entities, such as schools.

The sponsors indicated during their testimony that the 50% reimbursement provision is intended to encourage additional counties to enact the piggyback option going forward.

The bill does not make any changes to reimbursement concerning the piggyback owner-occupancy credit.

Legislative Activity

Floor Votes

The following bill(s) of note to counties received a floor vote in one of the two chambers of the General Assembly.

House of Representatives

- [House Bill 646](#) (Representatives Gary Click and Kellie Deeter): To create the Data Center Study Commission.
 - **PASSED 93-0**

Committee Hearings

The following committees held hearings this week regarding bills that may interest counties.

House Children and Human Services

- [House Bill 647](#) (Representatives Phil Plummer and Tom Young): To revise the law governing the publicly funded child care program, modify an appropriation for the Child Care Cred Program, and to make an appropriation for a data analytics project.
 - Fifth hearing, no testimony
 - **AMENDED** to limit backdating of attendance records and to modify the data analytics project appropriation.
- [House Bill 649](#) (Representatives Josh Williams and D.J. Swearingen): To require video surveillance of child care centers, to establish an online portal for tracking child care center attendance, and to require investigations of waste, fraud, and abuse allegations relating to providers of publicly funded child care.

- Third hearing, opponent testimony from the Franklin County Prosecutor, the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, and many child care organizations and private individuals; proponent testimony from the Ohio Christian Alliance.
- **AMENDED** to codify attendance procedures instead of setting them in rule.

House Development

- [House Bill 109](#) (Representative Justin Pizzuli): To limit the authority of local governments to regulate short-term rental properties, to extend local lodging taxes to short-term rentals, to require collection of those taxes by short-term rental platforms, and to require real estate licenses to be issued electronically.
 - Third hearing, proponent testimony from the Portsmouth-Scioto County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Adams County Travel and Visitors Bureau; and interested party testimony from Ohio REALTORS.
- [House Bill 161](#) (Representatives Adam Bird and Jim Thomas): To extend sales and use taxes and local lodging taxes to short-term rentals and to require collection of those taxes by short-term rental platforms.
 - Third hearing, interested party testimony from the Buckeye Institute, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and AirBNB; and opponent testimony from Ohio REALTORS, Americans for Prosperity, and eleven other organizations or short-term renters.

House Local Government

- [House Bill 493](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Dan Troy): To sunset the sale of delinquent property tax certificates on January 1, 2027, and to modify the rules governing the priority of liens after a property tax certificate sale.
 - Third hearing, no testimony
 - **AMENDED** to allow tax certificate sales only if the owner consents to the sale.
- [House Bill 139](#) (Representative Thomas Hall): To require certain political subdivisions and operators of public water systems to adopt a fire hydrant maintenance plan.
 - Sixth hearing, proponent testimony from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Rural Water Association.

House Natural Resources

- [Senate Bill 219](#) (Senator Al Landis): To make changes to the law governing oil and gas wells and to address federal mineral royalty payments.
 - Second hearing, opponent testimony from the County Engineers Association of Ohio, the county engineers of Belmont, Jefferson, and Monroe counties, and several other organizations and private individuals; and interested party testimony from the Ohio Township Association and the Ohio Farm Bureau.

House Ways and Means

- [House Bill 330](#) (Representatives Kellie Deeter and Tex Fischer): To authorize a sales tax holiday for four months each year for the sale of firearm safety and storage devices.
 - Second hearing, no testimony

House General Government

- [House Bill 577](#) (Representative Ron Ferguson): To require photo identification to cast absent voter's ballots by mail and to modify the law regarding voter registration.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 609](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Meredith Craig): To require a public body to allow for public commentary and testimony before taking formal action on any item.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from Americans for Prosperity and several private individuals and local elected officials.

House Technology and Innovation

- [House Bill 413](#) (Representatives Tom Young and Bob Peterson): To create the Ohio Local Government Expenditure Database and require political subdivision participation, to require the state retirement systems to participate in the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database, and to make an appropriation.
 - Fifth hearing, no testimony
 - **AMENDED** to require political subdivisions to provide data annually for the first five years and then once every six months thereafter.
 - **FAVORABLY REPORTED**

Introduction of Bills

The following bill(s) that may be of interest to counties were introduced this week:

- [House Bill 761](#) (Representatives Joe Miller and Allison Russo): To allow marked absent voter's ballots to be returned to any polling place in the county.
- [House Bill 762](#) (Representatives Beth Lear and David Thomas): To exempt certain vending machine food purchases from sales and use tax.
- [Senate Bill 382](#) (Senator Bill Blessing, III): To implement a top-two primary election system for elective congressional, state, district, county, and municipal offices.

Upcoming Committee Hearings

The following committees are currently scheduled to meet and discuss bills that may be of interest to counties. Other committees will likely meet as well, but as of press time for Statehouse Report, they have not released agendas. Please note that these schedules are subject to change.

If you would like to offer testimony on any bill, please visit the committee page.

Tuesday, March 24

[House Technology and Innovation](#) (10:00 a.m.)

- [House Bill 317](#) (Representative Ty Mathews): To prohibit the purchase of unmanned aircraft systems manufactured or assembled by a covered foreign entity.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony and interested party testimony

[House Children and Human Services](#) (10:30 a.m.)

- [House Bill 647](#) (Representatives Phil Plummer and Tom Young): To revise the law governing the publicly funded child care program, modify an appropriation for the Child Care Cred Program, and to make an appropriation for a data analytics project.
 - Six hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTE BILL**
- [House Bill 649](#) (Representatives Josh Williams and D.J. Swearingen): To require video surveillance of child care centers, to establish an online portal for tracking child care center attendance, and to require investigations of waste, fraud, and abuse allegations relating to providers of publicly funded child care.
 - Fourth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**

[Joint Meeting of the House and Senate Medicaid Committees](#) (4:00 p.m.)

- Presentations on waste, fraud, and abuse from the Department of Medicaid, the Attorney General, and Auditor of State.

Wednesday, March 25

[House Local Government](#) (9:00 a.m.)

- [House Bill 412](#) (Representative D.J. Swearingen): To allow a village to contract with the county prosecutor for legal services.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony

[House Ways and Means](#) (11:30 a.m.)

- [House Bill 391](#) (Representatives Jack Daniels and Heidi Workman): To require tax rates to be expressed as a percentage of true value on tax bills and ballot language.
 - Third hearing, opponent testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**
- [House Bill 737](#) (Representatives Bill Roemer and Thomas Hall): To require that cash payments to the state and local governments be rounded to the nearest nickel.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 762](#) (Representatives Beth Lear and David Thomas): To exempt certain vending machine food purchases from sales and use tax.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

[Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety](#) (2:30 p.m.)

- [House Bill 297](#) (Representatives Kevin Ritter and Johnathan Newman): To increase the amount a county may provide to military and veterans organizations for Memorial Day expenses.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony