

THE STATEHOUSE REPORT

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CCAO continues to push electronic poll book funding in lame duck

With Election Day on Tuesday, voting is on the minds of millions of Ohioans. A key piece of election infrastructure is electronic poll books (E-poll books) used to check in voters prior to casting ballots. Unfortunately, the existing E-poll books many counties have utilized since 2015 are no longer being supported with the necessary updates, requiring that counties purchase new E-poll books to remain in compliance with the state election security directive.

The CCAO policy team is working hard to help secure state funding so that the cost to procure replacement E-poll books are not borne by counties alone. CCAO is seeking \$7.5 million during the upcoming lame duck session to help all 88 counties pay for replacement poll books.

[House Bill 673](#) would provide the \$7.5 million needed in an 85/15 split between the state and counties, in which the state would pay for 85 percent of the cost for new poll books and counties would cover the remaining 15 percent. This funding ratio reflects the split that was enacted the first time E-poll books were funded by the state in 2015. For those counties that have already purchased replacement E-poll books, those counties would be eligible for reimbursement.

What the CCAO policy team needs most is member outreach to state lawmakers, particularly members of the Ohio Senate, to encourage them to include pollbook funding as part of moving legislation during the lame duck session. This is a great opportunity to lessen election costs, which already are a significant expense for county government.

Some key talking points for your conversation with your lawmakers:

- E-poll books are taxpayer friendly. Voter information can be uploaded in matter of hours as opposed to days using paper poll books, necessitating additional staff time. E-poll books also allow for fewer poll workers when used in multi-precinct voting locations, saving additional taxpayer resources.
- E-poll books support accuracy. E-poll books help ensure that a voter's correct ballot is identified, reducing poll worker error and increasing election administration accuracy.
- E-poll books are voter friendly. They help to reduce check in times for voters, leading to shorter lines on election day.
- E-poll books assist voters, especially those voters who appear at the wrong location, who can be identified and directed to the correct location. E-poll books can even print direction for the voter.
- E-poll books are secure. Upgraded poll books will keep county boards of elections compliant with Secretary of State security directive.

Counties cannot bear the full cost of replacing electronic poll books alone. The policy team has had favorable conversations with a number of lawmakers on this topic, but direct member advocacy is what is needed to get us over the top.

If you have any questions about electronic poll book replacement funding, please feel free to contact any member of the CCAO policy team.

CCAO stresses the need to update competitive bidding thresholds

An issue of increasing importance for many counties and a priority for the CCAO policy team is adjusting competitive bidding thresholds. Ohio's competitive bidding laws require that counties, with some exceptions, must use competitive bidding to purchase any goods and services, including construction, that are expected to cost over \$50,000. The competitive bidding process can be time-consuming and expensive because of notice requirements and time required to prepare bid specifications.

The current \$50,000 competitive bidding threshold has not been adjusted since 2012. Since that time, inflationary costs pressures have raised the cost of nearly all goods and services, requiring that counties competitively bid an increasing number of purchases.

CCAO is seeking an increase in competitive bidding thresholds from \$50,000 to \$100,000 in light of the current inflationary pressures.

CCAO is also seeking greater flexibility regarding construction bidding. Current statute requires a county to reject construction bids with a cost greater than 10 percent of the architect's cost estimate. Once again, inflationary pressures are drastically impacting the marketplace for key construction materials, resulting in many bids coming in over 10 percent above estimates. Thus, counties must rebid the project again, resulting in additional administrative costs and lost time.

CCAO is asking the General Assembly to allow counties to accept bids up to 20 percent over estimate if the contracting authority determines that the bids are otherwise reasonable and in line with market trends.

CCAO encourages members to engage with their state lawmakers to encourage them to adjust competitive bidding thresholds in light of ongoing inflationary pressures.

Any questions about competitive bidding can be addressed to CCAO Senior Policy Analyst [Jon Honeck](#).

Track county election results on Election Day

The CCAO policy team plans to track county election results closely on Tuesday night. To help CCAO members track county-level races across the state, below are two county election results tracker sheets outlining county races. The CCAO policy team will report the unofficial elections results to members shortly after Election Day.

[CCAO Candidate Tracker](#)
[CCAO County Issue Tracker](#)



Proposed lame duck schedule for Ohio House and Senate



With Election Day on Tuesday, attention is quickly turning to the lame duck session of the general assembly to follow. Lame duck sessions are short in duration but filled with legislative activity as lawmakers seek to finish work prior to the close of the General Assembly at the end of the year. It remains to be determined what may all be debated in the General Assembly during this lame duck session, but the CCAO policy team will be following developments closely.

There are currently five voting sessions for the Ohio House and Senate currently scheduled for lame duck. It is unknown if either chamber will utilize all of these sessions or more.

Proposed lame duck calendar:

November

Wednesday, November 16 – House and Senate Sessions
Wednesday, November 30 – House and Senate Sessions

December

Thursday, December 1 – House Session
Wednesday, December 7 – Senate Session
Wednesday, December 14 – House and Senate Sessions
Wednesday, December 21 – House and Senate Sessions

Any questions regarding lame duck developments can be directed to any member of the CCAO policy team.

Bill Introductions

[HB 743](#) (Humphrey, Davis) - To require municipal and county correctional facilities and state correctional institutions to provide inmates experiencing a menstrual cycle with an adequate supply of feminine hygiene products.

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