



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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The importance of relationships, looking forward to 2023, and a thank you to counties

With the 134th General Assembly having concluded its business last week, the streets of Capitol Square are quieter than they have been since October. The advocacy process, however, never ends.

As the state government shifts its focus from *Lame Duck* to the transportation and main operating budgets, it is vital to remain in contact with [your local legislators](#) to keep them informed about the issues facing your (and their) counties.

Some issues are high-profile and statewide, such as keeping reimbursement for indigent defense services at 100% or the need for increased revenue sharing between the state and local governments through restoration of the Local Government Fund. We urge you to engage with your legislators about these CCAO priorities, which you can re-familiarize yourself with through the [Candidates Briefing Guide](#) and the Association's [Legislative Platform](#) (in plain-text, a formal publication will be published in January).

But no issue is too small to discuss with your legislators. If your county is experiencing issues with competitive bidding thresholds, its likely others are as well. As the old Chinese proverb stays, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." One could say something similar about important policy changes. Transformative policy begins with a single phone call.

Whether that phone call is to stress the strain on the county general fund that indigent defense causes, to invite your legislators to visit the county jail to see first-hand the funding needs, to invite them to a ride along with your county children services workers, or even just to say hello, maintaining relationships with your representatives and senators is more important than just about anything the CCAO policy team can accomplish.

These relationships should not just be transactional. So, wish your legislators a Merry Christmas (the 25th), a Happy Chanukah (began the 18th, concludes the 26th), a Happy Kwanzaa (begins the 26th and concludes on January 1), and a Happy New Year. Invite them to courthouse events, barbeques, anything you think they would enjoy. Even if they do not accept, they'll appreciate the invitations.

Strong personal relationships with legislators helped the Association save good policy and stave off bad policy more than once over the past two years. That is something only you can accomplish.

By now you're likely well-familiar with the CCAO motto over the past few years, "Stronger Counties, Stronger Ohio." But there is an unsaid third component that we hope you take to heart. Stronger Relationships, Stronger Counties, Stronger Ohio.

CCAO thanks our members and the near-countless county officials and staff who make Ohio function. Some, namely the elected officials, are high profile and recognizable in the community. But others are more anonymous. Children services case workers, county IT staff, budget analysts, sanitation workers, and too many more to enumerate. We thank each and every one of you for your hard work and dedication to serving your community and making Ohio a better place.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not also thank Governor Mike DeWine, the other statewide elected executive officials, members of Governor DeWine's cabinet, Speaker of the House Bob Cupp, Senate President Matt Huffman, and each member of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It was with their help and your outreach efforts that counties were able to secure funding for several priorities, such as county jail funding in the capital budget, funding for the upcoming Medicaid redeterminations, and more. Not only did they help bring counties victories, but they also helped counties avoid burdensome policy changes that would have put increased financial and administrative strain on county staff.

CCAO wishes all of you a happy and safe holiday season.

Scheduling note: If Governor Mike DeWine vetoes any legislation passed during Lane Duck, Statehouse Report will publish another issue next week. If he does not, Statehouse Report will return on January 6th.