



STATEHOUSE REPORT

Published by: County Commissioners Association of Ohio

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April 7, 2023

Thank you for reaching out to lawmakers; reminder of budget amendments

CCAO would like to extend a thank you to all our members who have advocated for county issues during the last week of budget negotiations. Personal outreach to members of the legislature goes a long way and is a very effective form of advocacy. Members of the legislature respond best to fellow elected officials since you serve the same people and they know you have intimate knowledge of the impacts that policies will have on your communities. Your tireless effort and dedicated outreach to legislators has strengthened the argument surrounding our potential budget amendments and we believe we are in a great place following the amendment submission deadline on April 5.

CCAO expects the House Finance Committee to adopt its substitute bill during the week of April 17. As a reminder, the Association has worked with partners in the House of Representatives to introduce several amendments that advance county priorities for consideration for the substitute bill. These amendments have broad bipartisan support, with more than 90 individual amendment submissions coming from legislators in both parties.

- Local Government Fund (submitted in partnership with the Ohio Township Association)
 - Increase the share of state GRF tax revenue that flows into the LGF from 1.66% to 2.50%.
 - Increase the county LGF distribution floor from \$750,000 to the greater of \$850,000 or the amount the county received in 2013.
 - Increase the Township and Small Village Fund from \$12 million annually to \$24 million annually.
 - Support a requirement for each county budget commission to convene a meeting with the county jurisdictions regarding the alternate distribution formula at least once every five years.
- Jail Construction/Renovation Funding
 - Increase the amount allocated for county jail construction and renovation from \$25 million in each fiscal year to \$100 million in each fiscal year.
- Indigent Defense (1)
 - Increases the total amount allocated for county indigent defense reimbursement by an additional \$20 million in each fiscal year.

- Creates a permissive pilot program for counties to opt-in to a state administered indigent defense program.
 - Freezes the reimbursement rate for counties at \$75 an hour.
- Indigent Defense (2)
 - Add statutory language to specify that the state “shall” fully fund counties indigent defense service costs.
- Next Generation 9-1-1 Funding
 - Enact a universal \$0.70 user fee on 9-1-1 capable devices to operate the Next Generation 9-1-1 system.
 - More than 70% of the funding generated from the user fee goes to local governments to upgrade equipment and operate the NG 9-1-1 system.

CCAO has also partnered with other local government associations, contractor associations, and construction trade unions to reach an agreement on increasing competitive bidding thresholds for local government. An amendment is being drafted with the goal of having it included in the House version of the budget. The new competitive bidding threshold for counties, county airports, and regional water and sewer districts will be \$75,000. Starting in 2025, the threshold would be increased automatically by 3% per year. The amendment also allows commissioners to accept construction bids up to 20% over the architect’s cost estimate, instead of the current law specification of 10%.

It is never too late to engage with your legislators!

If you have any questions regarding the budget or budget provisions, please reach out to a member of the [Policy Team](#).

Legislative Activity

Bill Signings

This week, Governor Mike DeWine signed the following bills into law:

- [House Bill 52](#) (Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur and Representative Marilyn John): Generally restores provisions of law pertaining to emergency medical services training and continuing education programs to ensure that rural communities maintain access to training.

Committee Hearings

With the legislature on its spring break, there were no committee hearings this week.

Bill Introductions

The following bills that may be of interest to counties were introduced:

- [House Bill 145](#) (Representative Thomas Hall and Representative Brian Lampton): To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services.
 - *This bill is identical to [Senate Bill 23](#) (Senator George Lang) for which CCAO has testified as a proponent.*
- [Senate Bill 105](#) (Senator Terry Johnson and Senator Vernon Sykes): Regards the composition of boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services; the authority of the boards; and the requirements for operation of recovery housing residences.
 - Generally, this bill would allow ADAMHS boards to be comprised of nine, twelve, fourteen, fifteen, or eighteen members and change requirements that board

members hold certain qualifications from a number of members to a proportion of members.