



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Governor DeWine convenes first meeting of Work Group on Competency Restoration and Diversion

In early March, Governor Mike DeWine announced the creation of a work group made up of stakeholders, practitioners, and other experts to address the pressing challenges of heightened demand for forensic competency restoration and its effects on our local justice systems and state-run psychiatric hospitals. CCAO will be represented on the work group by Jackson County Commissioner Donnie Willis, and we are thankful for the Governor's partnership on this important issue. A full list of the task force members and additional information about the work group can be found [here](#).

On April 3, the work group held its initial meeting and several Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services staff members [gave a presentation](#) that provided information on the current state of Ohio's state-run psychiatric hospitals and forensic competency restoration system. Additionally, the work group outlined the following mission tenets:

- Prioritize timely treatment and services;
- Ensure treatment recommendations are appropriate for the individual served and include a least restrictive setting;
- Make recommendations which enhance our ability to sustain a safe milieu for patients and staff; and
- Provide recommendations to our various stakeholders on data-driven decisions to optimize the competency restoration process.

The work group has a quick timeline to provide recommendations to the Governor, in case the recommendations need to be included in the upcoming executive budget proposal. To that end, the work group plans to meet every two weeks and future meetings will have a virtual attendance option.

If you are interested in attending the workgroup meeting in person or virtually, please contact CCAO Managing Director of Policy Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org or 740-503-6088.

Commissioner Hofstetter provides proponent testimony on designated public service worker public records exemption bill

On Tuesday, the House Civil Justice Committee hearing proponent testimony on [House Bill 265](#) (Representative Scott Wiggam and Representative Thomas Hall). The bill generally exempts the work schedules of designated public service workers from disclosure and exempts redaction request forms and affidavits requesting the removal of such a worker's or their spouse's name from publicly available documents from the Public Records law.

The bill uses the existing definition of "designated public service worker" which is broad, but for county purposes includes peace officers, the prosecuting attorney and assistant prosecuting attorneys, correctional employees, corrections officers, and emergency service telecommunicator. The full list can be found in [R.C. 149.43\(A\)\(7\)](#).

During the hearing, the committee adopted an amendment to the bill that limits the time a designated public worker's work schedule can be exempt from disclosure to three years after the record was created, as well as waiving the five-year service requirement for a former designated public service worker who also served as an elected official.

[Wayne County Commissioner Jon Hofstetter provided proponent testimony](#) on behalf of CCAO during the meeting. Commissioner Hofstetter cited in increase in public records request for public safety employees' work schedules which has led to the workers' families being harassed while the worker is on duty. He also indicated that the peace of mind the bill would provide could help alleviate difficulties that public safety departments are facing in recruitment and retention.

After a question from Representative Dani Isaacsohn, Commissioner Hofstetter informed the committee that public records can be requested with little identifying information as to who requested the information, which can cause additional distress for public safety workers' families.

You can view Commissioner Hofstetter's testimony on the [Ohio Channel recording of the committee](#). His testimony begins at the 2:50 mark.

Also providing proponent testimony during the committee were the [Ohio Judicial Conference](#) and the [Medway Drug Enforcement Agency](#).

Indigent Defense Task Force releases recommendations

Earlier this week, the Indigent Defense Study Task Force released its [recommendations regarding Ohio's indigent defense system](#). The task force issued six recommendations:

1. The legislature should continue to explore and analyze the recommendations of the informal Future of Indigent Defense Task Force, convened by the Ohio State Bar Association.

2. The General Assembly should pursue a full fiscal analysis regarding the indigent defense system, the results of which could be used to construct a consistent and reliable financial forecast for the purpose of Ohio's biennial budget.
3. Engage with the State Public Defender and counties regarding delivery systems, such as establishing regional offices to assist with delivery of services in underserved areas and permitting part-time public defenders.
4. Consider a centralized system in which the State Public Defender oversees the administration of the court appointed attorney payment process.
5. Preserve the court appointed counsel system in counties where the legal community finds it effective and beneficial.
6. Be cognizant of potential unintended consequences of expanded state government that may affect counties, municipalities, and small business.

Created in House Bill 150 of the 134th General Assembly, the task force was instructed to review current practices, delivery models, and consider alternatives to existing structures and practices in order to ensure a cost-effective system while maintaining the right to counsel and preserving local input.

The task force consisted of 17 members, including Fairfield County Commissioner Steven Davis, who served as CCAO's designee. During the hearing process, Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan provided testimony.

Speaker indicates House won't act on cannabis legislation, retaining status quo

Earlier this week, Speaker of the House Jason Stephens told reporters that the House would not take up any legislation amending the adult-use cannabis initiated statute in the near future. This leaves the current structure, that which voters approved in November, in place.

Counties have little direct involvement in the provisions of [Chapter 3780: Adult Use Cannabis](#). Adult use cannabis sales will be subject to all applicable sales and use taxes, so counties will see some revenue increase, both from their own permissive sales tax levies and from increased revenue to the Local Government Fund.

Generally, criminal penalties for infractions such as selling cannabis to underage individuals (those under the age of 21) and operating a vehicle under the influence of cannabis are the same as the corresponding activities with alcohol. Additionally, selling or giving away cannabis in excess of a set amount is still classified as drug trafficking.

For more information regarding the provisions of [Chapter 3780](#), CCAO issued a [County Advisory Bulletin discussing its provisions](#) last November.

Second Healthy Aging Grants report due next Wednesday, April 10

The second reporting deadline for the Healthy Aging Grants, a program that distributed

money to boards of county commissioner for use in helping Ohioans aged 60 and over age in place, is next Wednesday. The report must cover activity that occurred between January 1 and March 31.

Late last year, the Department of Aging [held a webinar](#) to assist grant applicants on how to file their quarterly reports and program reports. The Department also released a [How-to Guide](#) to provide additional assistance. Reporting must be completed via a specific template, [accessible here](#), prescribed by the Department.

After next week, the grant program has three remaining reporting deadlines: July 10, October 10, and the final report due October 31.

If you have questions concerning Healthy Aging Grants, please contact James Kennedy at jkennedy@ccao.org, or Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org.

Legislative Activity

Committee Hearings

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

House Civil Justice

- [House Bill 338](#) (Representative Andrea White and Representative Bride Rose Sweeney): To allow child support orders to be issued, modified, or extended for children over 18 with a disability.
 - Third hearing, testimony from the Ohio State Bar Association and the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges.

House Criminal Justice

- [House Bill 196](#) (Representative Josh Williams and Representative Bill Seitz): To change the maximum periods of community control sanctions authorized for felonies and misdemeanors and to modify the confinement sanctions authorized for a technical violation of community control sanction conditions.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the Ohio Public Defender, the Alliance for Safety and Justice, the Justice Action Network, and three other organizations.

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 and contact the committee chair's office for instructions on how to submit testimony.

Tuesday, April 9

House Families and Aging (11:00 a.m.)

- [House Bill 288](#) (Representative Latyna Humphrey and Representative Adam Miller): To make an appropriation to continue to fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs, and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children contingent upon a lapse in federal funding.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Civil Justice (11:00 a.m.)

- [House Bill 265](#) (Representative Scott Wiggam and Representative Thomas Hall): To exempt redaction request forms, affidavits, and the records of the work schedules of designated public service workers from disclosure under public records law.
 - Fifth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**

House Government Oversight (1:00 p.m.)

- [House Bill 331](#) (Representative Adam Mathews and Representative Tom Young): Regarding village dissolution.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [House Bill 430](#) (Representative Roy Klopfenstein and Representative Elgin Rogers): To exempt redaction request forms, affidavits, and the records of the work schedules of designated public service workers from disclosure under public records law.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 265](#) (Representative Beth Lear and Representative Brian Lorenz): To require advance political party registration to vote in a primary election.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 265](#) (Representative Gary Click): To modify voter registration procedures for electors who move.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 265](#) (Representative Beryl Piccolantonio and Representative Michele Grim): To create an exemption to candidate disclosure of name change.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Ways and Means (2:30 p.m.)

- [House Bill 378](#) (Representative Brian Lorenz and Representative Nick Santucci): To permit a homestead exemption for surviving spouses of service members.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 386](#) (Representative Adam Mathews and Representative Brian Lampton): To phase-out the state income tax and repeal the commercial activity tax.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 424](#) (Representative Beth Lear): To modify sales and use taxation of delivery network services.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Health Provider Services (3:00 p.m.)

- [House Bill 236](#) (Representative Beth Lear and Representative Melanie Miller): To prohibit a congregate care setting from denying a patient or resident access to an advocate and to name this act the Never Alone Act.
 - Fifth hearing, opponent and interested party testimony

House State and Local Government (3:30 p.m.)

- [House Bill 30](#) (Representative Latyna Humphrey): 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.
 - Fifth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**
- [House Bill 145](#) (Representative Thomas Hall and Representative Brian Lampton): To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services.
 - Fourth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**
- [House Bill 315](#) (Representative Thomas Hall and Representative Bill Seitz): To make various township law changes and to make an appropriation.
 - Third hearing, no testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**

Wednesday, April 10

Senate Government Oversight (10:30 a.m.)

- [House Concurrent Resolution 6](#) (Representative Angela King and Representative Phil Plummer): To urge Congress to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.
 - Third hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**

State of the State Address (12:00 p.m.)