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# STATEHOUSE REPORT

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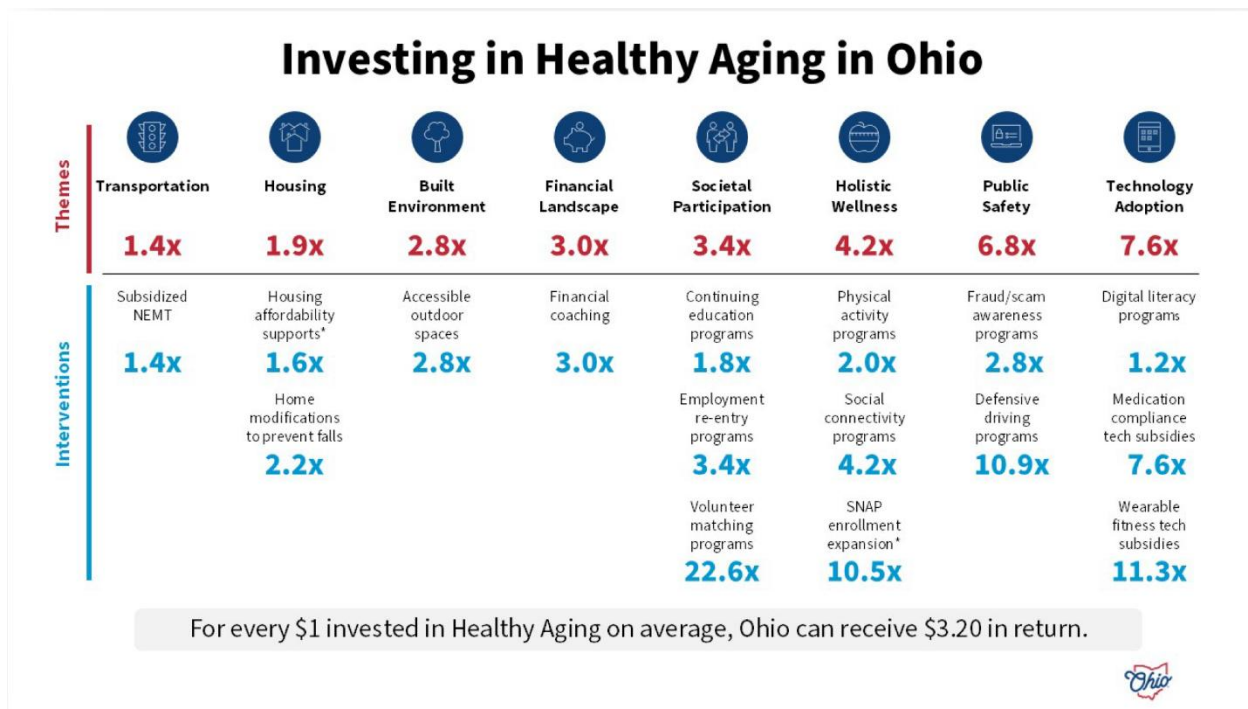
**February 21, 2025**

## **Children & Human Services Committee hears budget testimony from ODJFS, Aging**

This week, the House Children & Human Services Committee heard state operating budget (HB 96) testimony from Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder. The Committee asked Director Damschroder about the unemployment system upgrade, a proposed assessment on employers that would pay for the upgrade and the transfer of several programs from the Department of Development to ODJFS. The proposed assessment on employers would not apply to county governments. Chair Andrea White asked Director Damschroder about the history behind counties administering the JFS system, as Ohio is one of a handful of states that operates this way. The director responded that, which Larry Long (former CCAO Executive Director) would be best able to answer the full history, Ohio has a strong history of local operations and the community is well served by the local approach at the local agencies. Chair White also asked about the intersection of JFS departments and the public workforce system.

The Committee also heard from Ohio Department of Aging Director Ursel McElroy. In her testimony, Director McElroy discussed the success of the Healthy Aging Grants program from the last biennium. This program provided almost \$39 million in flexible dollars to counties, through the county commissioners, to support various initiatives to help older Ohioans age in place. The department conducted a study on the ROI of Healthy Aging initiatives through the grants, Older Americans Act funding, and Senior Community Services state funding. The study concluded that for every \$1 spent on Healthy Aging, the state receives \$3 in return.

Unfortunately, the Healthy Aging Grants were funded using one-time ARPA dollars and were not supplanted with a different funding source in this budget cycle. Chair White asked if anything in the budget replaces these one-time funds. Director McElroy stated that the Senior Community Services dollars are the most flexible funding source that flow to the communities and can be used for these purposes. This line item did not receive an increase in the introduced version of HB 96.



## House adopts substitute Transportation Budget, vote expected next week

Along with the main operating budget, the Governor unveiled his proposal for the transportation budget in February. The budget request totals around \$10 billion, which is a \$3 billion decrease from the previous budget request.

ODOT expects to receive around \$1.6 billion dollars from the State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax, \$20 million each year for electric vehicle registrations, around \$300 million from other miscellaneous revenue sources and the remainder of their budget is made up of federal dollars. The majority of ODOT's proposed funding will be spent on maintenance and preservation of existing road and other transportation structures.

ODOT will provide roughly 10% of its total budget to aid local governments with their projects, including \$103 million dollars for county bridge and surface projects through the County Engineers Association. The proposal also includes \$12.5 million in each year for roadwork development grants administered by the Department of Development. The purpose of the grants is to improve roadways and infrastructure to support business development. The budget also includes approximately \$66 million in each fiscal year for public transportation.

The House Finance and House Transportation Committees held multiple hearings on the bill during the last several weeks. The agency directors provided testimony on their respective budget proposals, with Development Director Lydia Mihalik urging the committee to support the roadwork development grants and ODOT Director Pamela Boratyn highlighted the revenue shortfall from the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and its impact on her budget.

Public transit agencies provided numerous pieces of public testimony urging the legislature to provide an additional \$100 million dollars for public transit funding, including \$15 million dollars for the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program. The program provides grants to transit agencies to support workforce transit programs and was not included in the Governor's proposed budget. The House Finance Committee adopted a substitute bill on February 18, which restored funding for the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program.

Other changes in the substitute bill include the following:

- Creates the Airport Grant Program Fund to provide money to airports that do not receive federal grants. The fund is supported by "money appropriated to it by the General Assembly." The bill does not appear to appropriate any money to the fund.
  - CCAO's platform calls for the creation of a similar fund, except it would be supported by a portion of state sales tax revenue from the sale of aviation fuel.
- Requires ODOT to notify the board of county commissioners or board of township of trustees when a chip seal or fog seal project is being competitively bid upon or ODOT is starting the project by force account. The notification must take at least 30 days in advance.
- Prohibits ODOT from using funds allocated to it from withheld LGF allocations due to the use of traffic cameras for projects in the jurisdiction from which the funds were withheld.
- Allows RTAs with a hub of six or more service lines to contract with local law enforcement entities to provide safety services.
- Makes an administrative move of Motor Fuel Tax revenue distributions to local governments from the operating budget to the transportation budget.

The House is expected to vote the transportation budget out of the chamber on February 26, and it will then head to the Senate for consideration.

## CCAO to host legislative reception in Statehouse Atrium on Tuesday

As a part of this year's New Member Training event, CCAO is hosting a reception in the Statehouse Atrium on Tuesday, February 25, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. **Registration is not required** for the reception, but we do ask that if you plan on attending the reception, please RSVP to CCAO Board's Liaison and Events Manager Robin Garrett at [rgarrett@ccao.org](mailto:rgarrett@ccao.org).

## Legislative Activity

### Committee Hearings

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

#### **House Community Revitalization**

- [House Bill 58](#) (Representatives Justin Pizzulli and Dontavious Jarrells): To create a certificate of need program for recovery housing residences.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony

#### **Senate Energy**

- [Senate Bill 2](#) (Senator Bill Reineke): Regarding public utilities and competitive retail electric and natural gas services, to make changes regarding electric company property taxation.
  - Second hearing, proponent testimony from 22 witnesses, including the Ohio Farm Bureau, the Ohio Manufacturers Association, and Ohio Oil and Gas Association, and interested party testimony from ten witnesses, including two school districts and the Ohio Business Roundtable.

#### **Senate Finance**

- [Senate Bill 32](#) (Senators Michelle Reynolds and Hearcel Craig): To establish the Child Care Cred Program and to make an appropriation.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony.

#### **Senate Ways and Means**

- [Senate Bill 66](#) (Senators Sandra O'Brien and George Lang): To include emergency levies, substitute levies, all inside millage, and school district income taxes in the calculation of a school district's effective millage floor.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony.
- [Senate Bill 81](#) (Senator Tom Patton): To authorize a property tax freeze for certain owner-occupied homes.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony.
- [Senate Bill 92](#) (Senator Tom Patton): To authorize a total property tax exemption for homesteads of totally disabled veterans and their surviving spouses.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony.

#### **House Ways and Means**

- [House Bill 61](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Jack Daniels): To authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony

#### **Introduction of Bills**

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

- [House Bill 103](#) (Representatives Dan Troy and Thomas Hall): To increase the homestead exemption amount and income limit.
- [House Bill 109](#) (Representative Justin Pizzulli): 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.

- [House Bill 113](#) (Representatives Adam Bird and Johnathan Newman): To modify the law regarding annexation and financial disclosure forms, and to require school district approval of residential community reinvestment area property tax exemptions.

## **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, February 25**

#### **[House Finance](#) (9:00 a.m.)**

- Budget testimony from the Department of Youth Services and Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

#### **[House Medicaid](#) (9:00 a.m.)**

- Budget testimony from the Department of Medicaid

#### **[House Children and Human Services](#) (11:15 a.m.)**

- Budget testimony from the Department of Children and Youth.

### **Wednesday, February 26**

#### **[House Health](#) (10:00 a.m.)**

- Budget testimony from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and the Department of Developmental Disabilities.