STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Budget Advocacy Update

Amendment Legislative Alerts

As the calendar rolls into March, the House is approaching its first major deadline: budget amendments are due on March 14. CCAO is working with legislators on amendments for the indigent defense reimbursement appropriation, the Next Generation 9-1-1 user fee, and other county issues.

Please watch your inbox for legislative alerts over the next two weeks. You must share the specific amendment number with your representatives. The numbers (formatted as "HC-####") will be shared in the legislative alerts.

Victim Services Funding Survey

One of the amendments that CCAO is working on, in conjunction with the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association (OPAA), is an appropriation increase for victim services funding. Legislators have advised CCAO and OPAA that advancing the amendment would be aided by knowing how much counties have spent on victim services out of the general fund in recent years.

CCAO has put a survey in the field, available here, to gather this information.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4.

Advocacy Task Force

As a reminder, the CCAO Advocacy Task Force is holding its biweekly meeting on Monday at 2:30 p.m. If you would like to attend and do not already have an invite, please contact Managing Director of Policy Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org.

Commissioner Everson testifies before House Children and Human Services Committee

On Thursday, CCAO Board Member and Ross County Commissioner Jack Everson testified before the House Children and Human Services Committee on House Bill 96, the state operating budget. Commissioner Everson participated in a panel focused on the child welfare placement crisis with Highland County JFS Director Jeremy Ratcliff and Public Children Services Association of Ohio Executive Director Angela Sausser.

Commissioner Everson's testimony highlighted the rising placement costs in his county, an increase from $2.3 million in 2015 to $6.3 million in 2024. He emphasized the need for cost stabilization, as these increases are not sustainable, and expressed CCAO's support for the increased investment in children services in HB 96.

The budget includes a $55 million increase over the biennium in the State Child Protection Allocation, which comes directly to counties for placement costs. The bill also includes cost transparency and stability language that would allow the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for providers to share their rates for specific services. CCAO supports this policy change.

If you have questions regarding CCAO's child welfare priorities in the state operating budget, please contact Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org.

Earlier in the week, DCY Director Kara Wente testified before the same committee on the department's budget, including child welfare, child care, and infant mortality initiatives.

These provisions are summarized in the following article.

Committee members asked Director Wente about the sustainability of the Child Care Choice Voucher program, which expands eligibility for publicly funded child care (PFCC) to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). The director shared that the department's goal is to share the return on investment in two years and secure additional state investment to continue the program. When asked about the consequences of not continuing this program, Director Wente noted that many in-demand jobs, including home health, truck drivers, teacher assistants, and medical assistants, were in this eligibility group.

Committee members were also interested in capacity-building efforts. Director Wente shared that the previous access grants added 5,000 new center spots and 800 family child care spots and acknowledged that more work still needs to be done.

Vice Chair Jodi Salvo asked Director Wente several questions about the proposed regional child wellness campuses, an investment of $30 million that CCAO supports. Director Wente shared that her department would work with the communities and the state Children Services Placement Crisis Working Group to determine what is needed when drafting the RFP for the campuses. The goal is to target short-term stays (45 days) and establish campuses around the state to keep kids within 60-90 minutes of their families. While the campuses would not be licensed as treatment providers, the youth staying at the campuses could receive contracted treatment services.

Chair Andrea White asked Director Wente to describe the proposed RFP for children services placement providers included in HB 96. The director shared that today, providers have to negotiate rates with 88 individual counties, but the RFP would allow them to report their rates to the state and provide administrative efficiency.

Overview of Human Services and Health budget provisions

The following is a synopsis of the human services and health provisions in the introduced version of House Bill 96, the state operating budget.

<u>Children Services</u>
Placement Costs: Counties have faced many challenges with rising children services placement costs. Between 2020 and 2024, the number of youth in custody in paid placements decreased by 9%, but the placement costs for these youth rose by 68%. You can read more about placement costs in our previous Issue Spotlight.

HB 96 includes a $25 million increase in the State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) for FY 2026 and a $30 million increase in FY 2027. These funds go directly to county public children services agencies for placement costs of children in foster care. This investment will help counties meet the challenge of paying appropriate placements.

In addition to funding, CCAO has asked for transparency and stability in placement costs. The budget includes language that authorizes DCY to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to establish statewide rate cards for placement and care of children eligible for foster care maintenance payments. Providers would report to DCY the rates for various services provided, and counties would then pay those rates when placing youth. CCAO supports this approach to provide transparency and predictability regarding costs.

Crisis Stabilization – Child Wellness Campuses: In certain situations, county children services agencies cannot find an appropriate placement promptly, and a youth in custody will have to spend a night, or several nights, at the county agency. HB 96 includes $20 million in SFY 2026 and $10 million in SFY 2027 to assist communities in establishing regional child wellness campuses. The child wellness campuses would provide assessment and diagnostic services, as well as short-term treatment and care for multi-system youth unable to access timely, appropriate placements. CCAO supports this investment.

Additional Investments: In the introduced version of HB 96, the following investments are flat-funded: multi-system youth funding, the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program, the Kinship Care Navigator Program, children services best practices funding, and family and children first councils.

Benefits for Children in Custody: HB 96 includes new language that requires a PCSA to determine, when a child comes into custody, if the child is eligible for or receives benefits administered by any of the following:

- The Social Security Administration
- The US Department of Veterans Affair

- The Ohio Public Employee Retirement System
- The Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund
- The State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
- The School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
- The Ohio Highway Patrol Retirement System

If the child is eligible, the PCSA is not permitted to use those benefits to pay for or reimburse itself for any cost of care, including placement costs.

Currently, some PCSAs use these funds to pay for a portion of a child's placement costs. If PCSAs do not currently have this practice, an administrative change will be required to ensure the statute's requirements are met.

<u>Child Care</u>
Eligibility: The budget proposes increasing the eligibility for publicly funded child care from 145% of the FPL to 160% of the FPL. Additionally, the Child Care Choice Voucher program will continue to provide publicly funded child care to families between 161% and 200% FPL. The Child Care Choice Voucher program was implemented last spring following Governor DeWine's State of the State address.

Federal Requirements: DCY is also implementing several federal child care requirements during this biennium, including:

- Capping parent co-pays at 7%;
- Paying providers by enrollment;
- Paying at the 50th percentile of the 2024 market rate; and
- Allowing families who are homeless to be eligible for publicly funded child care for twelve months.

<u>Public Assistance</u>
County JFS administrative dollars: Operations dollars that county JFS agencies receive for public assistance operations are largely flat-funded.

Benefit Bridge: The Benefit Bridge Program continues to be funded in HB 96. In the last operating budget, the legislature included an Employer Benefit Bridge Program, run through the employers rather than JFS agencies. This program is not funded in HB 96.

Transfer of assistance programs: HB 96 proposes transferring five assistance programs from the Ohio Department of Development to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services:

- Home Energy Assistance Program
- Percentage of Income Payment Plan
- Electric Partnership Program
- Home Weatherization Assistance Program
- Community Services Block Grant

The first four eligibility-based programs help Ohioans with energy bills, home weatherization, minor repairs, and energy usage. The Community Services Block Grant program provides federal funding for local Community Action Agencies.

<u>Medicaid</u>

Multi-System Youth Custody Relinquishment: Funding through the Department of Medicaid (ODM) for these purposes decreased by $7.5 million each year of the biennium.

Medicaid Expansion: The budget includes a provision that requires ODM to immediately discontinue medical assistance for the Medicaid expansion population if the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for that group is set below 90%.

Work Requirements: The last state operating budget required ODM to submit a waiver to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services for a work requirement for the expansion population. HB 96 includes language allowing ODM to transfer money to counties via JFS to implement a work requirement if one is established. Counties would submit allowable expenses, and ODM would make rules around these dollars.

<u>Behavioral Health</u>

Department Name Change: HB 96 proposes to change the name of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to the Department of Behavioral Health.

Funding for ADAMH boards: HB 96 proposes changing the funding structure for many funding streams that flow through ADAMH boards. Currently, ADAMH boards receive funding for several programs, each with specific criteria for how the funds will be spent. HB 96 proposes structuring this funding through six block grants designed to provide the boards more flexibility in spending the funds.

The six block grants are Prevention, Crisis Services, Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, Recovery Supports, and Criminal Justice Services. The funding for these individual block grants is below.

The Director of Behavioral Health shall adopt guidelines on the eligible uses of these block grants and create a uniform reporting structure related to the expenditures, uses, and outcomes of the state block grants described in this section to ensure that thorough and accurate data is reported with a focus on transparency, accountability, process improvement, outcomes, and return on investment.

Prevention State Block Grant: HB 96 funds this grant at $3 million per year. Allowable uses for the Prevention State Block Grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Prevention across the lifespan;
2. Suicide prevention across the lifespan;
3. Early intervention;
4. Cross-system collaborative effort to address prevention needs in the community.

Crisis Services State Block Grant: HB 96 funds the Crisis Services and Stabilization line item at $17 million in SFY 2026 and $22 million in SFY 2027. A portion of this will fund the Crisis Services State Block Grant. Allowable uses for the Crisis Services State Block Grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Substance use and mental health crisis stabilization centers;
2. Crisis stabilization and crisis prevention services and supports;
3. Cross-systems collaborative efforts to address crisis services needs in the community.

Mental Health State Block Grant: HB 96 funds this grant at $69.5 million per year. Allowable uses for the Mental Health State Block Grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Mental health services, including the treatment of indigent mentally ill persons subject to court order in hospitals or inpatient units licensed by the Department of Behavioral Health under R.C. 5119.33;
2. Cross-system collaborative efforts to serve adults with serious mental illness who are involved in multiple human services or criminal justice systems;
3. Other initiatives designed to address mental health needs.

Substance Use Disorder State Block Grant: HB 96 funds this grant at $9.5 million per year. Allowable uses for the Substance Use Disorder State Block Grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Initiatives concerning alcohol and drug addiction services;
2. Substance use stabilization centers;
3. Cross-system collaborative efforts to address substance use disorder needs in the community.

Recovery Supports State Block Grant: HB 96 funds this grant at $19.5 million per year. Allowable uses for the Recovery Supports State Block Grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Subsidized support for psychotropic and substance use disorder treatment medication needs of indigent citizens in the community to reduce unnecessary hospitalization due to lack of medication;
2. Peer support;
3. Operational expenses and minor facility improvements to class two and class three residential facilities licensed under R.C. 5119.34 and recovery housing residences;
4. Community reintegration supports;
5. Cross-system collaborative efforts to address recovery support needs in the community.

Criminal Justice Services State Block Grant: HB 96 funds this grant at $6.8 million per year. Allowable uses for the Criminal Justice State Block Grant include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

1. Medication-assisted treatment and treatment involving drugs used in withdrawal management or detoxification;
2. Community reintegration supports;

3. Substance use disorder treatment and mental health treatment, including the provision of such treatment as an alternative to incarceration, as well as recovery supports;
4. Forensic monitoring and tracking of individuals on conditional release;
5. Forensic and crisis response training;
6. Projects that assist courts and law enforcement in identifying and developing appropriate alternative services to incarceration for nonviolent offenders with mental illness;
7. The provision of services to incarcerated individuals in jails with a substance use disorder, severe mental illness, or both, including screening and clinically appropriate treatment;
8. Linkages to, and the provision of, substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, recovery supports, and specialized re-entry services for incarcerated individuals leaving prisons and jails;
9. The support of specialized dockets, including the expansion of existing medication-assisted treatment drug court programs, the creation of new medication-assisted treatment drug court programs, and assistance with the administrative expenses of participating courts, community addiction services providers, and community mental health services providers;
10. Cross-system collaborative efforts to address the needs of individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

Behavioral Health Drug Reimbursement Program: HB 96 appropriates $5.25 million each fiscal year for this program.

988 Suicide and Crisis Response: HB 96 primarily uses recreational marijuana revenue to fund the operation of the 988 line. The total appropriations to support the operations are $34 million in SFY 2026 and $41 million in SFY 2027.

<u>Child Support</u>
The administrative dollars for county child support enforcement agencies are flat-funded in HB 96.

<u>Prenatal to Five</u>
Home Visiting: HB 96 includes an additional $7.6 million in SFY 2026 and $29.5 million in SFY 2027 to increase home visiting to more than 25,000 additional children over the biennium. DCY plans to spread and scale the Cradle to Cincinnati model.

Early Intervention: HB 96 includes $7 million in SFY 2026 and $9 million in SFY 2027 to be used by DCY to subgrant or contract with county boards of developmental disabilities to provide early intervention evaluations, assessments, and service coordination. The bill requires boards that accept these funds to maintain the local funding level for early intervention at the same level as the prior fiscal year.

Child Tax Credit: HB 96 creates a refundable child tax credit of up to $1,000 per child under six years old. The credit, funded by an increase in the cigarette excise tax, is intended to aid parents who work or are in education.

Older Ohioans

Adult Protective Services: State funding for adult protective services (APS) operations is flat-funded. Each county would continue to receive $80,000 per year. HB 96 proposes allocating the remainder of the county APS funds via a new funding formula based on previous allocations, the percentage of adults aged 60 and older in the county, and the percentage of county residents in poverty. Currently, the formula is based on adults aged 18 and older.

Senior Community Services: These funds provide community-based services to assist seniors in living independently in their own homes and communities as long as possible. They flow through the local Area Agencies on Aging through a population-based formula. HB 96 funds these services at $10.6 million annually.

Healthy Aging Grants: These were one-time federal ARPA dollars, so this line item is zeroed out in the budget.

Developmental Disabilities

County Board Waiver Match: The line items for the county boards of developmental disabilities waiver match, which is the county's nonfederal share of home and community-based services, include a 21% increase. This reflects the increase the department anticipates based on various factors in service delivery.

Multi-system youth: Multi-system youth funding for county boards of developmental disabilities is flat-funded at $5 million per year.

Health

Health Department Funding: Funds for health department operations are flat-funded.

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (formerly BCMH): This program's county assessments line item is flat-funded at $24 million per year.

Lead Abatement: The Ohio Department of Health's lead abatement funding decreased by 6% in HB 96 to just over $7 million each fiscal year. The Lead-Safe Home Fund Program is flat-funded at $1 million per year.

Unemployment

The Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) proposes a technology and customer service fee to support the modernization of the unemployment system technology. This fee will not be assessed on counties as employers. The proposed fee is no more than 0.15% of wages paid per covered employee from each contributory employer and a fee of no more than $13.50 whenever a nonprofit organization, or group of such organizations, that has elected to reimburse the unemployment system files or renews a surety bond required under continuing law.

Solid Waste

Solid Waste Fees: HB 96 proposes altering where the $4.75/ton solid waste transfer and disposal fee is allocated. The changes are summarized in the table below.

Distribution of Solid Waste Transfer & Disposal Fee Current Law and HB 96 Proposal		
Purpose	**Current Law**	**HB 96 Proposal**
Hazardous Waste Facility Management Fund *(Ohio EPA-Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization)*	$0.20	$0.09
Hazardous Waste Clean-up Fund *(Ohio EPA-Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization)*	$0.70	$0.46
Waste Management Fund *(Ohio EPA-Division of Materials and Waste Management)*	$0.75	$0.90
Environmental Protection Fund *(Ohio EPA)*	$2.85	$2.15
Soil and Water Conservation District Assistance Fund *(Department of Agriculture)*	$0.25	$0.25
Applicable Board of Health	$0.00	$0.45
National Priority List Remedial Fund	$0.00	$0.06
Recycling and Litter Prevention Fund	$0.00	$0.18
Environmental Protection Remediation Fund	$0.00	$0.21
TOTAL	***$4.75***	***$4.75***

These changes could result in the boards of health receiving a collective revenue increase of $7.1 million annually.

Administration of Solid Waste and C&DD Fees: HB 96 applies the above $4.75/ton fee to construction and demolition debris (C&DD) transferred or disposed of at a solid waste transfer facility or solid waste disposal facility. Consequently, it eliminates the requirement that these solid waste facilities collect C&DD disposal fees.

The bill also revises the remittance procedures for fees collected on the disposal of C&DD and asbestos or asbestos-containing material at a C&DD facility as follows:

- Allows a board of health and the Ohio EPA Director to enter into an agreement for Ohio EPA to collect C&DD disposal fees on behalf of the board.

- Requires a municipal corporation, township, or county that appropriates money from C&DD disposal fees to mail a certified copy of the ordinance or resolution providing for the appropriation to the Ohio EPA Director and the applicable board of health, as in current law.

Solid Waste - Community Impact Analysis and Meetings: HB 96 adds a new requirement for a person proposing to open a new solid waste facility or to modify an existing solid waste facility. During the application for the permit to open or modify, the person must submit a community impact analysis that evaluates the impact of the proposed solid waste disposal facility on the local economy and considers mitigation measures to minimize adverse impact on the host community.

The applicant must have a publicly accessible website that includes the application, community impact analysis, and opportunities for public involvement in the process. The Ohio EPA Director may notify the public of the public hearing regarding a solid waste facility permit application or infectious waste treatment facility permit application via newspaper publication or publication on the Ohio EPA website.

Overview of General Government and Operations budget provisions

Suspension of Programs: HB 96 proposes if the federal government reduces, discontinues, pauses, or otherwise suspends any federal program that provides federal funds for any corresponding state program, such program may be reduced, discontinued, paused, or suspended. This would include any contract, agreement, memorandum of understanding, or any other covenant entered into by the state that is dependent on federal funding.

Procurement Law and Public Records: HB 96 includes language that clarifies that all documents related to a competitive selection (including competitive sealed bidding, competitive sealed proposals, reverse auctions, and electronic procurement) are not public records until after the contract has been awarded. It also eliminates a provision that specifies such documents as public records after a competitive selection is cancelled.

Notice of Open Meeting on a Public Body's Website: HB 96 includes a provision that requires a public body to establish a method for announcing all scheduled and special meetings on its website instead of requiring that the method be established by rule. Any advance notification could include electronically mailing the agenda of meetings to all subscribers on an electronic mailing list. The language removes the reference to making an advance notification using self-addressed, stamped envelopes provided by a person requesting an advance notice.

Designation of a Public Records Officer: The budget bill expressly authorizes a public office or person responsible for public records to designate one or more officials or employees to act as its public records officer or officers, and specifies that the public office may require that a person requesting a public record address the request to the designated public records officer or officers. It requires a public office to include the designation of the public records officer or officers and operative contact information for the public records officer or officers in its public records policy, and it also posts this information on any website of the public office.

House passes transportation budget with fully realized airport grant program

This week, the House Finance Committee adopted an omnibus amendment to House Bill 54, the Transportation Budget. The committee then voted the bill out, and on Wednesday, the

House unanimously passed it 97-0. It now goes to the Senate, which has already begun holding informal hearings.

The omnibus amendment included three changes of note to counties. First, it renames the newly recreated Airport Grant Program Fund to the Ohio Airport Improvement Program Fund and provides a dedicated funding stream. The funding will come from petroleum activities tax revenue attributable to aviation fuel sales. The budget appropriates $4.65 million for the program each fiscal year. The creation of a fund for this purpose, supported by aviation fuel sales revenue, has been a long-standing CCAO platform position, and the Association is glad to see it fully incorporated into the transportation budget.

Second, the amendment removes the prohibition on ODOT using funds from withheld LGF allocations due to the use of traffic cameras for projects in the jurisdiction from which the funds were withheld.

Finally, the amendment modifies the requirement that RTAs with a hub of six or more service lines contract with local law enforcement entities to provide safety services, exempting RTAs that maintain their own transit police department from having to contract with other law enforcement agencies.

JEDI Committee discusses annexation bill

This week, CCAO's Jobs, Economic Development, and Infrastructure (JEDI) Committee hosted Representatives Adam Bird and Rodney Creech to discuss House Bill 113 (Representatives Bird and Johnathan Newman). The bill gives the board of county commissioners (BCC) final authority to approve or disapprove the three types of expedited annexation.

Current law dictates that a BCC must approve the petition for annexation if certain conditions are met. HB 113 would give county commissioners more of a say during the approval process for an expedited annexation.

The bill will authorize a BCC to approve or disapprove an annexation petition based on the general good and benefits of the territory proposed to be annexed, as well as the surrounding area.

The bill also requires a municipal corporation to provide services by the proposed date of annexation if the municipality agrees to provide those services. There has been an issue in Miami County where a city has stated they can provide water and sewer services to the annexed properties, however current law does not address an enforcement mechanism during this situation, thus the agreement to provide services from a municipality satisfies one of the seven requirements when approving a Type-2 expediated annexation.

In Clermont County, a village is using expedited annexation to annex township land up to the boundaries of the local airport to build multi-family housing units. The municipality, in this case, is using a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) to build these units. Under this bill, the school district within the proposed annexation would have the ability to veto the CRA.

CCAO will hold a subcommittee on annexation to help the association navigate this process. The full JEDI committee will meet next Thursday to discuss the subcommittee's findings and recommendations.

Please contact James Kennedy, Policy Analyst, at jkennedy@ccao.org if you have any questions.

Legislative Activity

Committee Hearings

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

House Government Oversight

- House Bill 29 (Representatives Latyna Humphrey and Marilyn John): Regarding inmates' access to feminine hygiene products and showers by municipal and county correctional facilities and state correctional institutions.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Medicaid

- Budget testimony from the Department of Medicaid

House Public Safety

- Budget testimony from the Department of Youth Services

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Senate Bill 80 (Senators Catherine Ingram and Willis Blackshear): To authorize a county to implement a motor fuel quality testing program.
    - 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.
    - Third hearing, proponent testimony from the Ohio Business Energy Partnership, opponent testimony from seven witnesses including AEP Ohio and FirstEnergy Ohio, and interested party testimony from six witnesses including the Cincinnati Regional Chamber and Save Ohio Parks.
    - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ADOPTED** to, among other changes, reduce the assessment rate for new transmission and distribution TPP to 25%.

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.

  - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the Geauga County Auditor, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and Ohio Realtors.

House Children and Human Services

- Public budget testimony from, among others, the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities and the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County

House Development

- Budget testimony from the Department of Development and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, among others

House Energy

- House Bill 15 (Representative Roy Klopfenstein): To amend the competitive retail electric service law, make changes regarding electric company property taxation, and repeal parts of H.B. 6 of the 133rd General Assembly.
  - Third hearing, opponent testimony from 12 witnesses including the Lawrence County Auditor, the Gallia County Auditor, and the Lake County Auditor on behalf of the County Auditors Association, and interested party testimony from six witnesses including Save Ohio Parks and a local school district.

House Health

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

House Judiciary

- Budget testimony from the Ohio Judicial Conference, the Office of the Public Defender, and the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission

House Local Government

- House Bill 92 (Representatives Mark Johnson and Riordan McClain): Regarding limitations on recovery and lien imposition by municipalities against property owners of non-owner-occupied properties for unpaid water, sewer, and disposal services rates and charges.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Natural Resources

- Budget testimony from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

House Ways and Means

- House Bill 28 (Representatives Adam Mathews and Thomas Hall): To eliminate the authority to levy replacement property tax levies.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- House Bill 40 (Representatives Tracey Richardson and Mike Dovilla): To increase the enhanced homestead exemption for certain disabled veterans.
  - First hearing, sponsor testimony

- Budget testimony from the Department of Administrative Services and public budget testimony from several entities.

Senate General Government

- Senate Bill 63 (Senators Theresa Gavarone and Bill DeMora): To generally prohibit the use of ranked choice voting and to withhold Local Government Fund distributions from a municipality or chartered county that uses ranked choice voting.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- Senate Bill 82 (Senators Bill DeMora and Theresa Gavarone): To specify that certain election officials are designated public service workers for purposes of the public records law.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Senate Government Oversight and Reform

- Senate Bill 8 (Senator Stephen Huffman): To prohibit a public employer from providing paid leave or compensation for a public employee to engage in certain union activities.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Senate Local Government

- Senate Bill 104 (Senator Andrew Brenner): 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.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Senate Transportation

- Transportation budget testimony from the Ohio Public Works Commission, public transportation budget testimony from several entities including the Medina County Commissioners.

House Agriculture

- Public budget testimony from, among others, the Ohio Township Association and the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Introduction of Bills

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

- House Bill 118 (Representatives Steve Demetriou and Jim Thomas): To revise the law governing lead testing, certification, and tax credits.
- House Bill 120 (Representative Darnell Brewer and Jennifer Gross): To exempt from the sales and use tax sales of firearm safety devices.
- House Bill 123 (Representatives Mark Johnson and Dave Thomas): To modify the procedures for filling vacancies in certain local elected offices.
- House Bill 124 (Representatives Dave Thomas and Thomas Hall): To modify the process for making property tax sales-assessment ratio studies.

- House Bill 129 (Representatives Dave Thomas): To limit the ability of school districts to reallocate unvoted property tax millage and to include certain property and school district income taxes in the calculation of a school district's effective millage floor.
- House Bill 137 (Representatives Brian Lorenz): To authorize a taxing authority to decline to submit a requested library levy or general health district levy to voters.
- House Bill 138 (Representatives Mike Dovilla and Nick Santucci): To authorize the creation of tourism promotion districts and the levying of assessments therein.
- Senate Bill 116 (Senator George Lang): To reduce the tangible personal property tax assessment rate for pipeline companies.
- Senate Bill 120 (Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson): Relating to temporary greenhouses and building codes, to establish the Urban Farmer Youth Initiative Pilot Program, to codify certain property tax requirements for agricultural land, and to make an appropriation.
- Senate Bill 122 (Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson): To eliminate the authority of townships and counties to adopt zoning resolutions for agricultural land under certain circumstances.
- Senate Bill 123 (Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson): To prohibit a law enforcement agency for charging a fee for preparing or producing a video public record for a person known or presumed to be depicted in the video.
- Senate Bill 126 (Senators Shane Wilkin and George Lang): To exempt from sales and use tax items purchased by a logistics business to transport manufactured products, general merchandise, and grocery products.

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, March 4

Senate Energy (10:00 a.m.)

- 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.
    - Fourth hearing, all testimony

Senate Ways and Means (11:00 a.m.)

- 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.
    - Third hearing, all testimony
- Senate Bill 43 (Senators Sandra O'Brien and George Lang): To repeal the authorization of a special county lodging tax.

    - Second hearing, proponent testimony and interested party testimony

[Senate General Government](#) (2:00 p.m.)

- [Senate Bill 63](#) (Senators Theresa Gavarone and Bill DeMora): To generally prohibit the use of ranked choice voting and to withhold Local Government Fund distributions from a municipality or chartered county that uses ranked choice voting.
    - Second hearing, proponent testimony

Public budget testimony is being accepted in the following committees:

- **House Public Safety (9:30 a.m.)**
- **Senate Transportation (2:00 p.m.)**
    - *Transportation Budget*
- **House Children and Human Services (11:15 a.m.)**

Wednesday, March 5

House Local Government (9:00 a.m.)

- 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.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- House Bill 123 (Representatives Mark Johnson and Dave Thomas): To modify the procedures for filling vacancies in certain local elected offices.
    - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Public Safety (9:30 a.m.)

- Budget testimony from the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

Public budget testimony is being accepted in the following committees:

- **House Health (10:00 a.m.)**
- **Senate Transportation (10:30 a.m.)**
    - *Transportation Budget*