



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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President Painter, Commissioner Everson testify to House Finance on CCAO budget priorities

This week, the House Finance Committee heard three days of public testimony on [House Bill 96](#), the state operating budget. CCAO testified to the committee twice, as CCAO Board Member and Ross County Commissioner Jack Everson testified on Tuesday about child welfare issues and CCAO President and Clermont County Commissioner David Painter testified about the Association's full priorities on Thursday.

On Tuesday, 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.

Committee members asked Commissioner Everson about the impact of the complex needs of children entering care on costs, and roadblocks counties have in building their own facilities to keep these children closer to home. Commissioner Everson discussed the cost of facility upgrades as well as staffing challenges.

On Thursday, President Painter provided [testimony](#) and requested the committee support two key CCAO amendment requests: one would provide an additional \$93 million over the biennium for indigent defense reimbursement and the other would increase the user fee that supports the Next Generation 9-1-1 system to \$1.00 per device per month. Without these amendments, the indigent defense reimbursement rate will likely remain near 70% and counties implementing the NG 9-1-1 system may have to rely more on property taxes.

After a question from Representative Kevin Ritter, a former Washington County Commissioner who is one of the sponsors of the NG 9-1-1 amendment that CCAO supports, President Painter explained that the \$0.40 per month user fee has generated less than half the revenue it was projected to, so a \$1.00 per month fee would bring in the revenue that was originally anticipated.

House Amendment Deadline Passes, Thank You to our members for their advocacy efforts

The deadline for representatives to submit budget amendments for the substitute bill was noon today. House leadership will review the submitted amendments and begin putting together the substitute bill beginning on late next week. It is important to emphasize the importance of our budget amendment priorities, which [can be found here](#). CCAO believes that we had at least 25 legislators between both political parties submit our two priority amendments. The Policy Team would like to thank all of our members for their hard work and outreach with legislators, it is greatly appreciated.

The substitute bill will be released on April 1, and amendments to the House Substitute Bill will be due on April 3. CCAO will communicate with membership on key provisions of the substitute bill when it becomes available. We will also quickly communicate any amendments that we are proposing to the substitute bill. With the tight timeframe for substitute bill amendments, it will be important to quickly advocate for CCAO priorities.

Upcoming CCAO Advocacy Task Force Meeting

The CCAO advocacy task force will have its next meeting on Monday March 17th at 2:30pm. At the next meeting, we will recap our budget amendment advocacy efforts and items we are hoping to protect in HB 96. If you are interested in attending the meeting or have any questions, please contact the policy team at policy@ccao.org.

Senate adopts substitute Transportation Budget, eliminates General Revenue Fund provisions

On Wednesday, the Senate Transportation Committee adopted its substitute bill for House Bill 54, the Transportation Budget. The substitute bill makes a number of changes, including the following:

- Eliminates the Private Transit Voucher Pilot Program and the Workforce Mobility Partnership Program, both of which would have awarded grants to transit authorities for various purposes.
- Prohibits counties and townships from operating traffic camera programs
- Continues an existing Public Works Commission program that provides \$15 million of bond funding for emergency community road slips for locally-maintained roads.
- Eliminates the requirement that regional transit authorities with six or more service lines contract with local law enforcement.
- Provides \$5 million each year for regional transportation planning organizations.

The substitute bill also eliminates the Ohio Airport Improvement Fund, which would have provided grant funds for runway and safety improvements at publicly owned, public-use airports. It is CCAO's understanding that this was removed from the Transportation Budget

because it uses General Revenue Fund money and that it instead will be included in the Operating Budget.

Amendment requests for the Senate omnibus amendment are due on Monday. The Senate is expected to vote on the Transportation Budget on March 19, with the conference committee report expected to be adopted and voted on by both chambers by March 26.

House energy bill amended to change tax provisions

The House Energy Committee accepted a substitute bill for [House Bill 15](#) (Representative Roy Klopfenstein) which amends the competitive electric service law. While the bill is a substantial rewrite of the current law, the only the components that deal with local taxation or are otherwise directly relevant are discussed below.

The introduced version of the bill exempted electric and energy company generation property from the local public utility tangible personal property (PUTPP) tax and increased the assessment rate for PUTPP used for electric transmission and distribution from 85% to 89%. The substitute bill removed both of these provisions, leaving current law in place for the PUTPP rates on existing electric property.

The bill does, however, create new rates for new PUTPP put into service after the bill takes effect:

- 7% for new generation and energy conversion PUTPP and other generation property repowered or converted to produce electricity in a new manner placed into service on or after the last day of the year in which the bill takes effect.
 - The assessment rate for existing PUTPP of this type is 25% for rural electric companies and 24% for electric and energy companies; for energy conversion 85% for electric and energy companies and 50% for rural electric companies.
- 25% for transmission and distribution property of an electric company, energy company or rural electric company property placed into service after the bill takes effect.
 - The rate for existing PUTPP of this type is 85% for electric and energy company, and 50% on rural electric company.
- 25% on pipe-line company property placed into service after the bill take effect.
 - The rate for existing PUTPP of this type is 88%.

The substitute bill also clarifies that PUTPP capable of storing or releasing energy, e.g. batteries, as production equipment and energy conversion equipment and may qualify for the rate reduction, and that PUTPP tax exemptions, including PILOTs, continue to apply.

The bill also specifies that amendments to existing certificates issued after September 15, 2014, are subject to the setback distance of 1,125 feet and that the current county commission review provisions for the establishment of restricted areas for certain wind and solar projects are not affected.

The committee plans to vote on HB 15 next week.

Legislative Activity

Committee Hearings

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

House Ways and Means

- [House Bill 28](#) (Representatives Adam Mathews and Thomas Hall): To eliminate the authority to levy replacement property tax levies.
 - Third hearing, opponent testimony from the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD, the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities, the Ohio Township Association, the Ohio Municipal League, the Ohio Library Council, the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, and a group representing three school administrative associations.
- [House Bill 22](#) (Representatives Brian Lorenz and David Thomas): To authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty.
 - Third hearing, no witnesses.
- [House Bill 40](#) (Representatives Tracey Richardson and Mike Dovilla): To increase the enhanced homestead exemption for certain disabled veterans.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the American Legion, AMVETs, Disabled American Veterans, and the Dayton Development Coalition.

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.
 - Third hearing, opponent testimony from numerous municipalities, townships, and tourism boards.

House Children and Human Services

- [House Bill 7](#) (Representatives Andrea White and Sharon Ray) To make foster caregivers and kinship caregivers eligible for publicly funded child care.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services, Summit County Children Services, Belmont County Department of Job and Family Services, and numerous other organizations and private individuals.

House Government Oversight

- [House Bill 42](#) (Representatives Tex Fischer and Josh Williams): To require certain agencies to collect and report data concerning the citizenship or immigration status of persons with whom they come into contact.
 - 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.
 - Fifth hearing, opponent testimony from two private individuals, and interested party testimony from ten witnesses including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Manufacturers' Association.
 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ADOPTED** to make several changes, none of which directly pertain to taxation.

Introduction of Bills

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

- [House Bill 161](#) (Representatives Adam Bird and Jim Thomas): To extend sales and use taxes and local lodging taxes to short-term rentals and to require collection of those taxes by short-term rental platforms.
- [House Bill 163](#) (Representatives Tristan Rader and Kellie Deeter): To require Ohio's SNAP program to begin using chip enabled EBT cards, to name this act the Enhanced Cybersecurity for SNAP Act of 2025, and to make an appropriation.
- [House Bill 167](#) (Representative Andrea White): To authorize nonrefundable tax credits for certain employer-provided child care expenditures.
- [House Bill 174](#) (Representatives Tristan Rader and Desiree Tims): To establish a program to refund SNAP recipients who have been victims of electronic theft or fraud, to name this act the No Hungry Families Act, and to make an appropriation.
- [Senate Bill 137](#) (Senator Terry Johnson): To modify various laws regarding boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services and to impose penalties for not registering recovery housing residences.
- [Senate Bill 141](#) (Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson): To authorize counties and other political subdivisions to place on the ballot tax levies supporting pre-kindergarten programs and to establish conditions on a county's use of moneys derived from the levied tax.
- [Senate Bill 145](#) (Senators Michele Reynolds and Hearcel Craig): To rename the Department of Development to the Department of Housing and Development and to otherwise modify the law related to housing.

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 18

House Energy (9:30 a.m.)

- 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.
 - Fifth hearing, opponent testimony and interested party testimony
 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL**

House Children and Human Services (11:00 a.m.)

- House Bill 2 (Representative Mark Johnson): To establish the Child Care Cred Program and to make an appropriation.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony and interested party testimony
- House Bill 41 (Representatives Andrea White and Bill Roemer): To establish certain child care grant programs, including those related to child care capacity and learning labs, and to make an appropriation.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony and interested party testimony

Wednesday, March 19

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

- House Bill 124 (Representatives David Thomas and Thomas Hall): To modify the process for making property tax sales-assessment ratio studies.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- House Bill 137 (Representative Brian Lorenz): To authorize a taxing authority to decline to submit a requested library levy or general health district levy to voters.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Energy (3:00 p.m.)

- 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.
 - Seventh hearing, proponent testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**