



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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President Painter provides budget testimony to Senate Government Oversight

On Wednesday, CCAO President and Clermont County Commissioner David Painter provided testimony for the Association regarding House Bill 96, the state operating budget, to the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

[President Painter's testimony](#) discussed the Association's five areas of emphasis during the budget process: bolstering the child welfare system, reforming and robustly funding indigent defense, continuing the state-county partnership on county jail projects and seeking an 1115 Medicaid Waiver to alleviate county costs of detainee medical costs, strengthening the Next Generation 9-1-1 system, and improving access to child care. He also discussed local government changes made during the House of Representatives phase of the budget process.

His testimony reiterated CCAO's support for key amendments that would do the following:

- SC-0832-1: Increase funding for indigent defense reimbursement by \$49 million over the biennium and remove a cap on hourly rate reimbursement.
- SC-0207: Increase the monthly user fee that supports the NG 9-1-1 system to \$1.25.
- SC-0459: Appropriates an additional \$25 million in SFY 2027 for the Child Care Choice Voucher Program.
- SC-0460: Increases the eligibility for publicly funded child care to 160% of the federal poverty level.
- SC-0315: Removes language from the bill that allows counties to abolish their Family and Children First Council.

After his testimony, President Painter received questions from Senator Andrew Brenner about the NG 9-1-1 fee. President Painter said that CCAO is appreciative of the House increase in the fee (from \$0.40 per month to \$0.60 per month) but that the Association believes the \$50 million revenue shortfall shows the rate much be adjusted further to at

least \$1.00 per month to fully fund county implementation. The \$1.25 per month level provides a cushion in case revenue falls short of projections again.

Senator Brenner also asked if CCAO had considered utilizing Starlink, a satellite internet constellation system, for emergency service dispatching instead of the NG 9-1-1 system. President Painter replied by noting Starlink may be a possibility down the road, but currently counties are statutory required to come online to the statewide NG 9-1-1 system by the end of 2029.

CCAO members, other county associations also discuss budget with Senate committee

Wednesday was “Local Government Day” in the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee. In addition to President David Painter’s testimony on behalf of CCAO, three other commissioners testified to the committee on issues important to their county and on CCAO priorities.

First, [Seneca County Commissioner Bill Frankart](#) provided testimony urging the Senate maintain language requiring the Department of Medicaid seek the 1115 Medicaid Waiver to allow federal Medicaid dollars be used to cover individuals held in jails who are pre-trial and unconvicted and urged the Senate to maintain funding for brownfield remediation. He also requested the chamber incorporate Senate Bill 147 (Senator Bill Reineke) into the budget. The bill modifies the withdrawal process from a joint solid waste management district.

Commissioner Frankart also asked the committee to restore state support for jail construction and to address an issue that Seneca County has experienced with delays on reimbursement from the Department of Medicaid for county emergency medical service runs.

Following Commissioner Frankart was [Lucas County Commissioner Lisa Sobecki](#). Commissioner Sobecki shared with the committee a request for a one-time appropriation of \$20 million to assist counties in removing fallen ash trees from rivers, creeks, and drainage channels. An infestation of an invasive beetle species called the emerald ash borer has caused ash trees across the state to die and fall into vulnerable waterways. Removing these trees is expensive and typically fall entirely on the property owner or local government. The CCAO Board of Directors will discuss whether or not to support this amendment at its May 16 meeting.

Commissioner Sobecki also called for the Senate to maintain the 1115 Medicaid Waiver language, the renewal of brownfield remediation funding, the increase of the Local Government Fund to 1.75% of state GRF tax revenue, and for strong reimbursement for indigent defense. She also called for the return of state funding for county jail projects and an increase in the funding available for local government cybersecurity grants.

Finally, [Erie County Commissioner Matt Old](#) and [Erie County Treasurer Caleb Stidham](#) testified seeking the inclusion of SC-0197 into the budget, which would allow certain

counties to use up to two-thirds of their lodging tax revenue to be used for public safety services, economic development, or public infrastructure. This mirrors, but still remains more narrow, similar language that municipalities and townships have regarding their sales tax revenue. CCAO supports this amendment and a further extension to apply it statewide.

Other county officials or associations that provided testimony were:

- [Buckeye State Sheriffs Association](#): Discussed the elected official pay increase, funding for MARCS user fees, the NG 9-1-1 user fee, and requested restoration of funding for county jail projects.
- [Seneca County Sheriff Fredrick Stevens](#): Discussed the 1115 Medicaid Waiver and the restoration of funding for county jail projects.
- County Engineers Association of Ohio: In three separate pieces of testimony, discussed language [eliminating township zoning referenda on megaprojects](#), the prohibition on state and local entities [regulating broadband providers](#), and the prohibition of use of eminent domain for the purposes of [recreational trails](#).
- [Ohio State Coroners Association](#): Discussed the language turning the county coroner into an appointed position.
- [Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association](#): Discussed the elected official pay increase, the removal of the prosecutor from the county budget commission, and language regarding the prosecutor's duties in property tax challenges.

Links to other organizations that testified this week, such as the Ohio Township Association, the Ohio Municipal League, the Ohio Mayors Alliance, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, and various townships and municipalities can be found on the [Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee's website](#).

Licking County Commissioner Bubb provides proponent testimony on alternative vehicle regulation

On Tuesday, Licking County Commissioner Tim Bubb testified in support of [House Bill 199](#) (Representatives Kevin Miller and Phil Plummer) on behalf of CCAO. HB 199 is a reintroduced version of HB 237 from the 135th General Assembly which the Association also supported. The Association appreciates the sponsors' work with our Justice and Public Safety Committee on the bill in the previous general assembly.

The bill updates the Revised Code definition of all purpose vehicles, utility vehicles, and others to reflect their modern manufacturing specifications. The updates also allow for effective titling and registration of vehicles for road use, while preserving existing agricultural exemptions for certain vehicles. Finally, the bill allows counties to regulate the usage of these vehicles on county roads.

Commissioner Bubb gave his testimony and was able to answer questions from committee members, including Representative Dan Troy, a former CCAO President and Lake County

Commissioner. We appreciate Commissioner Bubbs taking time out of his schedule to testify on behalf of CCAO.

We encourage any member who is interested in testifying on a bill to contact the CCAO Policy Team at policy@ccao.org, we would be happy to assist you in the process!

Miami County Commissioner Westfall provides proponent testimony on annexation bill

Last week, [House Bill 113](#) (Representatives Adam Bird and Johnathan Newman) received a second hearing in the House State and Local Government Committee. The bill modifies generally modifies annexation law.

Miami County Commissioner Wade Westfall provided [proponent testimony](#) committee to emphasize the importance of allowing counties to have a voice during the Type 2 and a Type 3 expedited annexation process. Current law requires counties to sign off on all Type 2 and Type 3 expedited annexations if certain criteria is met with no opportunity of feedback or oversight.

Commissioner Westfall emphasized that the current process excludes counties and townships from the planning process, which in turn will lead to poorly coordinated development, as well as straining the school systems.

The commissioner highlighted a specific instance in Miami County where Huber Heights, which is largely in Montgomery County, has been annexing into Bethel Township within Miami County. Current law does not give boards of county commissioners the ability to participate in the annexation process that Huber Heights is utilizing.

Current law allows for a municipality to sign off on a municipal services statement without being required to provide any services. Huber Heights has annexed into Bethel Township and is not providing centralized water to the township. This requires Miami County to be responsible for services the county did not plan for. HB 113 would address this concern by requiring the municipality to provide all services to the annexed property that the municipality already provides within its current boundaries.

During our April meeting, the CCAO Board of Directors approved a list of [changes to HB 113](#) and statements of support for pieces of the bill.

The Association agrees with Commissioner Westfall that a municipality should be required to provide all services to annexed territory if it is currently providing those services within its boundaries. This language will protect counties from having the responsibility to provide services to an area where the county did not participate within the planning process.

CCAO also supports language being added to HB 113 that would require a board of county commissioners to approve or to disapprove any request for all three types of expedited annexation when a municipality annexes across county boundaries.

Another change CCAO would like to see added into HB 113 is to allow a board of county commissioners to veto a community reinvestment area (CRA) with a simple majority. Current language in the bill allows school boards to veto a residential CRA.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to HB 113 or other annexation related issues, please reach out to CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy at jkennedy@ccao.org.

Legislative Activity

Floor Votes

The House and Senate held floor votes this week regarding bills that may interest counties.

House of Representatives

- [House Bill 126](#) (Representatives Adam Mathews and Meredith Craig): To prohibit public nuisance actions concerning product liability.
 - PASSED BY VOTE OF 59-36

Senate

- [Senate Bill 138](#) (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
 - PASSED BY VOTE OF 33-0

Committee Hearings

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

House Community Revitalization

- [Senate Bill 147](#) (Senator Bill Reineke): To make changes to the laws governing the transfer and disposal of solid waste and construction and demolition debris and to provide for new procedures governing a county's withdrawal from a joint solid waste management district.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony and proponent testimony from Seneca County Commissioner Anthony Paradiso, Seneca County Health Commissioner Julie Richards, and a private individual.
- [House Bill 222](#) (Representatives Gary Click and Ty Mathews): To make changes to the laws governing the transfer and disposal of solid waste and construction and demolition debris and to provide for new procedures governing a county's withdrawal from a joint solid waste management district.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from Seneca County Commissioner Anthony Paradiso, Seneca County Health Commissioner Julie Richards, and a private individual.
- [House Bill 58](#) (Representatives Justin Pizzulli and Dontavious Jarrells): To create a certificate of need program for recovery housing residences.
 - Third hearing, opponent testimony from several recovery housing providers and private individuals.

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.
 - Third hearing, no testimony

House Workforce and Higher Education

- [House Bill 98](#) (Representatives Nick Santucci and Josh Williams): To establish the Community Connectors Workforce Program and to make an appropriation.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the Ohio Business Roundtable, the Ohio Workforce Association, the Ohio School Boards Association, the Ohio ESC Association, three individual ESCs, and a STEM school.
 - **AMENDED** to require program directors collaborate with county OhioMeansJobs centers.

Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety

- [Senate Bill 179](#) (Senator Terry Johnson): To verify the veteran status of imprisoned individuals and individuals facing imprisonment.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Senate Housing

- [Senate Bill 145](#) (Senators Michelle 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.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [Senate Bill 184](#) (Senator Michelle Reynolds): To establish residential economic development districts and to create a grant program for housing developments within such districts.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Commerce and Labor

- [House Bill 180](#) (Representatives Roy Klopfenstein and Elgin Rogers): To prohibit adverse employment actions against employees who are absent from work while serving as, or training to be, precinct election officials.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 227](#) (Representatives Monica Robb Blasdel and Mark Johnson): To modify excavation requirements.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 246](#) (Representatives D.J. Swearingen and Tex Fischer): To require certain construction industry employers to use E-verify and to sanction specified hiring practices in the industry.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Judiciary

- [House Bill 126](#) (Representatives Adam Mathews and Meredith Craig): To prohibit public nuisance actions concerning product liability.
 - Fourth hearing, no testimony
 - **FAVORABLY REPORTED**

House Local Government

- [House Bill 124](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Thomas Hall): To modify the process for making property tax sales-assessment ratio studies.
 - Third hearing, no testimony
- [House Bill 154](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Chris Glassburn): To modify the process for making property tax sales-assessment ratio studies.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the Ohio School Boards Association, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, the County Auditors Association of Ohio, and the economic development director for the City of North Olmsted.

House Ways and Means

- [House Bill 103](#) (Representatives Dan Troy and Thomas Hall): To increase the homestead exemption amount and income limit.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from the Franklin County Auditor, Ohio REALTORS, the Ohio Poverty Law Center, the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, and a private individual.
- [House Bill 129](#) (Representative David 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 village floor.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from CCAO, the Geauga County Auditor, Ohio REALTORS, and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Senate Judiciary

- [Senate Bill 185](#) (Senator Bill Blessing, III): To make changes to the laws governing dogs, including dangerous and vicious dogs.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Introduction of Bills

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

- [Senate Bill 190](#) (Senators Bill Blessing, III, and Kent Smith): To modify the law governing property, income, sales and use, severance, and lodging taxes; to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to public and chartered nonpublic school students; to increase the Local Government Fund; to modify funding for the Low- and Moderate-income Housing Trust Fund; and to name this act A Good Deal for Ohio.
- [Senate Bill 192](#) (Senator Michelle Reynolds): To declare the General Assembly's intent to provide funding for the purpose of developing, repairing, or upgrading infrastructure that services housing in rural counties.

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, May 13

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

- [House Bill 240](#) (Representatives Meredith Lawson-Rowe and Cecil Thomas): To make changes to the laws governing dogs and other companion animals and to name this act Avery's Law.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 241](#) (Representatives Cecil Thomas and Meredith Lawson-Rowe): To require a 10-day quarantine period for a dog following an attack and to require a court, under certain circumstances, to hold a hearing to determine a dog's disposition.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 247](#) (Representative Kevin Miller): To make changes to the laws governing dogs, including dangerous and vicious dogs.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Senate Health (9:30 a.m.)

- Budget testimony from the public.

House Government Oversight (2:15 p.m.)

- [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.
 - Fourth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**
- [House Concurrent Resolution 6](#) (Representatives Joe Miller and Adam Holmes): To support and encourage the work of the Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial in celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary.
 - Third hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**
- [House Bill 223](#) (Representatives Ty Mathews and Bernard Willis): To prohibit the state or a political subdivision from purchasing a United States or Ohio flag that was not made in the United States.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Community Revitalization (3:15 p.m.)

- [House Bill 178](#) (Representatives Dan Troy and Josh Williams): To establish a supplemental benefit allotment for certain recipients of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits and to make an appropriation.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony

- [Senate Bill 147](#) (Senator Bill Reineke): To make changes to the laws governing the transfer and disposal of solid waste and construction and demolition debris and to provide for new procedures governing a county's withdrawal from a joint solid waste management district.
 - Second hearing, opponent testimony

Wednesday, May 14

[House Commerce and Labor](#) (11:00 a.m.)

- [House Bill 180](#) (Representatives Roy Klopfenstein and Elgin Rogers): To prohibit adverse employment actions against employees who are absent from work while serving as, or training to be, precinct election officials.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [House Bill 227](#) (Representatives Monica Robb Blasdel and Mark Johnson): To modify excavation requirements.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [House Bill 246](#) (Representatives D.J. Swearingen and Tex Fischer): To require certain construction industry employers to use E-verify and to sanction specified hiring practices in the industry.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony

[Senate Health](#) (2:30 p.m.)

- Budget testimony from the public.

Thursday, May 15

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

- Budget testimony from the public.