



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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House version of budget expected to be unveiled next week

The House Finance Committee is expected to unveil its first revision of the administration's proposed biennial budget bill ([HB 64](#)) on Tuesday of next week. The version will come as a substitute bill and the committee is scheduled to take testimony on the substitute bill on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Early next week, there will be an omnibus amendment to the substitute bill and a committee vote on the bill.

CCAO's amendment to increase reimbursement to counties for providing indigent defense was offered with the bipartisan support of 55 members of the House. Current reimbursement is at 40 percent, and the amendment would restore the rate to 50 percent, which would require an additional \$12 million a year.

CCAO is most grateful for these members' support, and encourages counties to thank their legislator(s) who signed-on. Moreover, CCAO staff appreciates all the grassroots efforts by county commissioners, county executives and county council members along with staff to lobby for this amendment! If you have any questions on this amendment or have secured an additional legislative supporter of it, please contact CCAO staffer John Leutz at jleutz@ccao.org or at 614-220-7994.

Separately, CCAO is continuing conversations with the Administration, legislators and advocate groups around language in the bill regarding adult protective services (APS). Current law in ORC Sec 5101.62 sets forth that counties are to provide or arrange for protective services to the extent of available funds. The bill removes the duty to provide but maintains the responsibility to arrange protective services, and removes "to the extent of available funds." It also would provide \$30/k per year, per county, for APS. The CCAO Health and Human Services Committee has raised questions around the definition of "arrange," particularly in light of "to the extent of available funds" being stricken. If you would like further information about this issue, please contact CCAO staffer Laura Abu-Absi at labu-absi@ccao.org or at 614-220-7996.

Mandel pushing for gov't entities to post finances online

Treasurer Josh Mandel's office on Tuesday stuffed its mailbox with 18,000 letters penned to local government leaders.

The content of the letters is a request that the state's 3,900 local government entities - such as counties, cities and school districts - agree to post their finances online. The treasurer's office plans to contract with [OpenGov](#), a Silicon Valley-based tech company, to help local governments upload and format their checkbooks onto the state's [OhioCheckbook.com](#) website - at no cost to the locals.

Because the contract has not been finalized, Mandel was unable to say what the endeavor will cost the state, but said it would be "a fraction" of the \$6 million his office managed to cut from its own budget during his first term.

"We are doing this because I believe very strongly the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent, and I think one of the best ways to make government limited in size and scope and more efficient is to empower taxpayers to hold politicians and government workers accountable," he said at a Columbus press conference.

Zac Bookman, CEO of OpenGov, said he thinks this effort is the first time in the country that the finances of local governments across an entire state would be posted online.

Mandel said the entities being contacted range from cities down to library districts and sewer districts. As for schools, only traditional districts and joint vocational school districts were sent letters. He said his office has not discussed asking community schools to participate.

He said he thinks once a certain number of governments sign on to the voluntary effort, others will be pressured to participate. He does not, however, intend to seek legislation that would mandate participation and called the effort a "friendly, cooperative partnership."

"We're hoping that this will change behavior when it comes to spending at the local government level," he said. "We're hoping that certain local government officials that may have in the past gone to the conference in Hawaii, instead they'll think about going to the conference in Cincinnati."

Mandel was joined in the announcement by a few local government leaders and statewide organizations representing school interests and local governments.

Sue Cave, Ohio Municipal League executive director, said the checkbook would show the public just how expensive it is to run the state's largest cities and smallest villages.



Treasurer Josh Mandel

Matthew DeTemple, Ohio Township Association executive director, said he supports the website because townships have a good story to tell about small, efficient government.

Dave Varda, executive director of the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, said tech-savvy citizens expect to have easy access to their governments.

"This is one more tool to show our citizens that ability to be transparent to them," he said. "It will not only be easy and efficient for school districts to upload their information, but it will be very user-friendly so that the citizens can then view that."

Auditor Dave Yost also lent support to the endeavor. He said he thinks all taxpayers can support the initiative.

"I don't think it's too much to say that if local governments will accept this invitation, this could be the most important initiative for transparency and public access since the Public Records Act itself," he said.

Yost said he also thinks the effort could restore trust in government when citizens can see how money is being spent.

Findlay Mayor Lydia Mihalik similarly said she sought out the treasurer's office to partake in OhioCheckbook.com because she wants her constituents to know and understand what the city does with their money and to "feel good about it."

Dan Unger, Northwest Local Schools board president, said he expects his Hamilton County school districts to be the first to have its information posted. He anticipated the effort could "dispel misinformation," while "a thousand sets of eyes" would promote good spending behavior.

Mandel said it took his office 18 months and \$814,000 to build the state's checkbook website and there have been 150,000 searches since its launch in December. He anticipates the new system for local governments will be in place by June 30.

He said in the future he wants to ask higher education institutions and the state's pension funds to put their checkbooks online.

Constitutional Modernization Commission Committee recommends proposals extending term limits to the full commission

The Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission's Legislative Branch & Executive Branch Committee voted 8-1 this week to forward two versions of a term limits extension recommendation to the full commission. The only difference between the two [term limit proposals](#) is whether or not they would take effect before current members' terms expire.

The committee also included in its recommendation that the legislature delay placing a term limit issue on the ballot until 2016 or later. Supporters of the delay suggested that placing a controversial term limits proposal on the same ballot with the reapportionment overhaul already slated for the 2015 general election could jeopardize passage of the latter. Others, however, felt that the timing question was an issue for the legislature to debate and outside the purview of the commission's charge. The lone "No" vote on the committee's recommendation came from Sen. Bill Coley, who indicated that, as a sitting member of the legislature, he did not want to support something that had the appearance of benefiting him.

The committee also heard testimony from Tony Seegers, director of state policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, who said the organization has adopted a policy position in favor of extending term limits to 12 years. In addition, the Farm Bureau would support adding two years to legislators' terms to give House members four-year terms and senators six-year terms, he said, adding that the aggregate limit would still be restricted to 12 years.

"Our overall support for increasing term limits to 12 years is based on the recognition that limiting the number of years of service reduces the expertise that is developed with longevity in the House and Senate," he said.

"It is more difficult for members to become subject matter experts under our current constitutional framework. The General Assembly, and ultimately the public, has lost the institutional memory that years of service brought," he said.

Last month, the committee heard opposition testimony from Rob Walgate, of the American Policy Roundtable, who said the plan to extend term limits was born out of self-interest and lacked any significant public support outside Capitol Square.

The term limit extension recommendations will go before the OCMC's Coordinating Committee next month to ensure proper formatting before they come before the full commission, which won't likely take up the measure until its June meeting due to the panel's rules for processing motions.

Bill to extend foster care to age 21 under revision

Legislation that would extend foster care to 21 is currently under revision. [HB 50](#), jointly sponsored by Representatives Cheryl Grossman (R – Grove City) and Dorothy Pelanda (R - Marysville), would extend the age limit for foster care services and adoption assistance payments until the age of 21, and provides ODJFS will pay for the non-Federal share of such costs.

Rep. Pelanda, who serves as Assistant Majority Whip for the House Republican caucus, has indicated that a substitute version of the bill is currently being drafted by the Legislative Service Commission. The primary change is increasing the appropriation in the bill to help fund the costs of the program, which is designed to be funded by state dollars that can then draw down federal match.

A fiscal note released in mid-March estimated those costs to be between \$3.2 – 9.7 million in SFY17, \$6.1 – 9.7 million in SFY18, and about \$13.9 million in SFY19/20. As currently written, however, the bill calls for \$1.7 million in FY 2016 to implement the program and \$2.5 million in FY 2017 continue it.

As noted by Gongwer News Service, Rep. Pelanda said county agencies have raised concerns that any funding shortfalls at the state level will shift the proposed state-run extension responsibilities onto them, so it's important that the appropriation is accurately estimated.

"There should not be any cost for them unless they chose on their own to try to revamp their program," she said. "We're working so hard and diligently to figure out what the cost of this program is going to be, at least in the first year."

Rep. Pelanda expects the substitute measure to be drafted next week. The bill has received three hearings to date in the House Community and Family Advancement Committee.



Rep. Dorothy Pelanda

Governor signs Algae Bill; possible water quality bond issue in the works

Late last week Gov. John Kasich visited Maumee Bay State Park to sign Senate Bill 1, a bill designed to reduce harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie.

The main provisions of the legislation would:

- Prohibit spreading manure or fertilizer on frozen or rain soaked ground.
- Restrict the disposal of dredging material in open Lake Erie by 2020.
- Require wastewater treatment plants to monitor phosphorus discharge.
- Create a new coordinator of harmful algal bloom management and response position to help organize local response efforts.
- Update the Healthy Lake Erie Fund to advance soil testing, tributary testing, animal waste abatement initiatives and other conservation measures for farmers.



Water Quality Bond issue

Rep. Dave Hall (R-Millersburg) is considering a potential voter-approved bond issue to finance upgrades for public wastewater systems and address failing home septic systems. Additionally, it may include funds to help farmers purchase manure storage facilities.

Hall has indicated that he is in the very early stages of working on the measure, but has gotten positive reaction from the handful of stakeholder groups he's discussed it with so far. An actual proposal is unlikely to be ready for this November's ballot, but one could be potentially ready to go to voters in 2016.

For additional information on water quality issues, please contact CCAO staffer Brian Mead at bmead@ccao.org or 614-220-7982.

Statehouse Etc.

Some legislators questioning Medicaid expansion in budget - Members of the House Republican caucus are not in agreement on how to best move forward on the continuation of current Medicaid eligibility policies that cover the expansion group, Gongwer News Service reported last week. While some members support revisiting the policy and associated costs in legislation separate from the budget bill, House Republican Majority Floor Leader and Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee Chair Barbara Sears (R-Moncolva Twp.) has stated that Ohio is "starting to see some good things happen with people getting up and off" the program.

Bills Introduced

HB 147 **CONCEALED FIREARMS (Hood, R.)** To allow a person who has a concealed handgun license to carry concealed all firearms other than dangerous ordnance or firearms that state or federal law prohibits the person from possessing and to provide that a person 21 years of age or older and not legally prohibited from possessing or receiving a firearm by federal law does not need a concealed handgun license in order to carry or have concealed on the person's person or ready at hand a firearm and is subject to the same laws regarding carrying a concealed firearm as a person who has a concealed handgun license. Am. 109.69, 109.731, 1547.69, 2923.11, 2923.12, 2923.121, 2923.122, 2923.123, 2923.124, 2923.125, 2923.126, 2923.128, 2923.129, 2923.1213, 2923.16, and 4749.10 and to enact section 2923.111

Hearing Schedule



Senate State & Local Government ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [LaRose, F.](#), 466-4823), North Hearing Rm., 9:45 am
HB 47 **REFRESHMENT AREAS** ([Blessing, L.](#), [Driehaus, D.](#)) To allow municipal corporations and townships with a population of more than 25,000 to create outdoor refreshment areas, to exempt persons within such an area from the open container law, and to declare an emergency. --**Informal hearing-Sponsor**

SB 95 **REFRESHMENT AREAS** ([Seitz, B.](#), [Thomas, C.](#)) To allow municipal corporations and townships with a population of more than 35,000 to create outdoor refreshment areas, to exempt persons within such an area from the open container law, to create the Outdoor Refreshment Area Study Committee, and to declare an emergency. --**4th Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments & vote**

SB 112 **CHANGING STATIONS** ([Lehner, P.](#)) To require public buildings to have at least one rest room facility with an adult changing station. --**1st Hearing-Sponsor**

SB 123 **TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS** ([Hughes, J.](#)) To allow emergency personnel in public safety vehicles to report traffic law violations under certain circumstances. --**1st Hearing-Sponsor**

House Transportation & Infrastructure ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Boose, T.](#), 466-9628), Rm. 018, 2:30 pm
Remaining previous agenda:

HB 58 **WASTE VEHICLES** ([Cera, J.](#), [Rogers, J.](#)) To require motor vehicle operators to take certain actions upon approaching a stationary waste collection vehicle collecting refuse on a roadside. --**3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments**

Senate Finance ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Oelslager, S.](#), 466-0626), Finance Hearing Rm., 2:30 pm
SB 5 **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS** ([Patton, T.](#), [Brown, E.](#)) To make peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury eligible for compensation and benefits under Ohio's Workers' Compensation Law. --**4th Hearing-All testimony**

House Finance & Appropriations ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Smith, R.](#), 466-1366), Rm. 313, 3:00 pm
HB 64 **BIENNIAL BUDGET** ([Smith, R.](#)) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.--**8th Hearing-Possible substitute**

House Judiciary ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Butler, J.](#), 644-6008), Rm. 116, 3:30 pm
HB 110 **FAILURE TO STOP** ([Hill, B.](#)) To increase the penalty for failure to stop after a traffic accident that results in the death of a person or serious physical harm to a person and to name this act Brandon's Law. --**2nd Hearing-Proponent**

House Community & Family Advancement ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Derickson, T.](#), 644-5094), Rm. 114, 4:00 pm

- Panel on mentoring programs including Gavin McGuire, Usher's New Look; Carolyn Winslow, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butler County; Susanna Krey, Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood and Cyndy Rees, Shepherding the Next Generation

Wednesday, April 15

Senate Health & Human Services ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Jones, S.](#), 466-9737), North Hearing Rm., 8:45 am
HB 4 **OVERDOSE DRUGS** ([Sprague, R.](#), [Rezabek, J.](#)) Regarding authority to furnish or dispense naloxone to a person who may be at risk of an opioid overdose or a person who may be in a position to assist a person who is at risk. --**2nd Hearing-Proponent**

House Finance & Appropriations ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Smith, R.](#), 466-1366), Rm. 313, 9:00 am
HB 64 **BIENNIAL BUDGET** ([Smith, R.](#)) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.--**9th Hearing-All testimony**

Senate Ways & Means ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Peterson, B.](#), 466-8156), South Hearing Rm., 9:30 am

- Review of all sections of the Ohio Tax Expenditure Report

House Public Utilities ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Schaffer, T.](#), 466-8100), Rm. 121, 10:00 am
HCR 9 **ENERGY PLAN** ([Baker, N.](#), [Boose, T.](#)) To establish a sustainable energy abundance plan for Ohio to meet future Ohio energy needs with affordable, abundant and environmentally-friendly energy. --
3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments & vote

Senate Transportation, Commerce & Labor ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Manning, G.](#), 644-7613), North Hearing Rm., 10:15 am

HB 51 **INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET** ([Hackett, B.](#)) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operations of Commission programs. --**1st Hearing-All testimony**

HB 52 **BWC BUDGET** ([Hackett, B.](#)) To make changes to the Workers' Compensation Law, to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs. --**1st Hearing-All testimony**

Senate Criminal Justice ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Eklund, J.](#), 644-7718), Finance Hearing Rm., 11:15 am
SB 97 **FIREARM PENALTIES** ([Hughes, J.](#), [LaRose, F.](#)) To increase by 50% the mandatory prison term for an offender who is convicted of a firearm specification and previously has been convicted of a firearm specification; to prohibit violent career criminals from knowingly acquiring, having, carrying, or using any firearm or dangerous ordnance; to require a mandatory prison term for a violent career criminal convicted of committing a violent felony offense while armed with a firearm; to correct a provision regarding delinquent child dispositions for specifications; to provide certain prisoners credit for time spent in jail in determining eligibility to apply for judicial releases; and to specify that no presentence investigation report is required for shock probation to be granted to an offender convicted of an offense before July 1, 1996. --**3rd Hearing-All testimony**

Senate Session, (Chr. [Faber, K.](#), 466-4900), Senate Chamber, 1:30 pm

House Session, (Chr. [Rosenberger, C.](#), 466-3357), House Chamber, 1:30 pm

Senate Civil Justice ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Bacon, K.](#), 466-8064), Finance Hearing Rm., 2:30 pm or after session
SB 134 **ATTORNEY FEES** ([Seitz, B.](#)) To make permissive actual damages and attorney's fees, to limit certain civil penalties, to allow respondents to recover attorney's fees in certain instances, and to exempt certain landlords from the housing provisions of the Ohio Civil Rights law. --**1st Hearing-Sponsor**

HB 11 **DELAWARE COURT** ([Brenner, A.](#), [Ruhl, M.](#)) To create a domestic relations division of the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas and to create a judgeship for that division. --**1st Hearing-Sponsor**

Thursday, April 16

House Finance & Appropriations ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Smith, R.](#), 466-1366), Rm. 313, 9:00 am
HB 64 **BIENNIAL BUDGET** ([Smith, R.](#)) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.--**10th Hearing-All testimony**

Energy Mandates Study Committee, (Chr. [Balderson, T.](#), 466-8076), Senate Finance Hearing Rm., 10:00 am

- Presentations by Dr. Joseph Bowring of Monitoring Analytics; Sean Gallagher of Solar Energy Industries Association; a panel on combined heat and power and Stephen Bennett of Retail Energy Supply Association.

Friday, April 17

House Finance & Appropriations ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Smith, R.](#), 466-1366), Rm. 313, 9:00 am

- 11th Hearing-All testimony on budget bill (HB64)

HB 64 **BIENNIAL BUDGET** ([Smith, R.](#)) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.--**11th Hearing-All testimony**