



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Big Final Push by the Legislature for 2015

The last session day of the year was an eventful one. The two chambers worked to advance eleven pieces of legislation to be sent to Governor Kasich for his signature.

Bills heading to the governor include the budget corrections bill ([HB 340](#)). Originally drafted as an extension of the Local Government Innovation Fund, Rep. Ron Amstutz's (R-Wooster) bill became the vehicle of choice for a number of [Senate riders](#).

The substitute bill adopted by the Senate Finance Committee added provisions requested by the administration dealing with Workforce Investment Act changes. CCAO's review of the language in the substitute bill raised some initial questions and concerns that the language may be inconsistent with federal law. Representative Amstutz, the bill's sponsor, however, chose to remove the language from the substitute due to his own concerns that the issue had not been properly vetted.

Finalized Bills being sent to the Governor:

- [HB56](#) PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT-CRIMINAL RECORDS (Rep. Kirk Schuring, Rep. Stephen Slesnick) To limit the use of criminal records in the hiring and employment practices of public employers. (see related story)
- [HB71](#) TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS (Rep. Kristina Roegner) To prohibit certain indemnity agreements in motor vehicle carrier transportation contracts.
- [HB142](#) ENDOMETRIOSIS AWARENESS MONTH (Rep. Christina Hagan) To designate the month of March as "Endometriosis Awareness Month."
- [HB188](#) PHARMACIST CONSULT AGREEMENTS (Rep. Nathan Manning, Rep. Stephen Huffman) To revise the laws governing pharmacist consult agreements and the laws governing the circumstances under which a pharmacist may dispense or sell a drug without a prescription.
- [HB237](#) TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES (Rep. Mike Duffey, Rep. Robert Hackett) To regulate transportation network companies and transportation network company services.
- [HB259](#) CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE (Rep. Scott Ryan) To regulate certificates of insurance

- prepared or issued to verify the purchase of property or casualty insurance coverage.
- [HB340](#) LOCAL GOVERNMENT INNOVATION COUNCIL (Rep. Ron Amstutz) To extend the operation of the Local Government Innovation Council until December 31, 2019, and to declare an emergency.
 - [SB10](#) MILITARY HEALTH CARE BENEFITS (Sen. Dave Burke, Sen. Frank LaRose) To establish a process for identifying individuals who are medical assistance recipients that may be eligible to receive federal military-related health care benefits.
 - [SB161](#) PROBATE JUDGE-WARRANT ISSUE (Sen. Scott Oelslager) To authorize probate judges to issue search warrants.
 - [SB190](#) HIGHWAY NAME DESIGNATION (Sen. Randy Gardner) To designate a portion of United States Route 6 within the city of Sandusky as the "Army Specialist Charles E. Odums II Memorial Highway."
 - [SB223](#) HEALTH COVERAGE LIMITS-EXCLUSIONS (Sen. Kevin Bacon) To make changes to the health coverage benefit limits and coverage exclusions for life and health insurance guaranty associations.

Wednesday marked the Senate's final full session for the year, as Sen. President Keith Faber (R-Celina) said remaining if-needed sessions would be canceled. He told colleagues, however, that the chamber will be busy in 2016, when many members will stand for election. "We're going to have a fairly aggressive legislative agenda throughout the year," he said.

Among top priorities for the new year are ways to expedite public record disputes. Further, he said the Senate plans on "taking on efficiency in state agencies," possibly through a state agency sunset review process.

For additional information on these legislative topics, please contact a member of the CCAO Policy Staff at 614-221-5627.

Ohio's Grace Commission begins work to make State Government more efficient

A provision in the state budget has created an Ohio "Grace Commission" to help the state save money and become more efficient. Named after J. Peter Grace, famed industrialist appointed by President Ronald Reagan to chair the original Grace Commission to root out waste and inefficiency in the Federal Government during the 1980's, Ohio's Grace Commission has a similar mandate to recommend changes to improve efficiency and reduce costs.



Representative Schuring

The commission held its first official meeting on December 10th. The commission has eight months from Sept. 29 to have a report ready for the General Assembly and the governor, according to Representative Kirk Schuring (R-Canton), who co-chairs the commission with Senator Bill Coley (R-Liberty Twp.)

Specific instructions for the commission outlined in the temporary law provisions of the state budget include:

- Identify opportunities for increased efficiency and reduced costs achievable by executive action or legislation
- Determine areas where managerial accountability can be enhanced and administrative controls improved
- Suggest short term and long term managerial operating improvements, and
- Specify areas where further study can be justified by potential savings

"The goal is to come up with some ideas so that we can get some real cost savings and efficiencies," Sen. Coley said after the meeting.

The commission, with 10 appointed members, will meet at least once a month to develop the report by the end of May. Rep. Schuring suggested the commission set a tentative next meeting date for the third Thursday of January.



Senator Coley

Sen. Coley said he and Rep. Schuring will work with other members to develop a schedule and set up some presentations for the first meeting.

"We'll try to get some low-hanging fruit out of the way and then go after some not-so-low-hanging fruit," he said.

Sen. Coley said after the meeting the group, which includes more non-legislators than active legislators, will provide a different perspective on improving government efficiency. The commission will also be able to look at ways to save money without having to consider actual legislation.

"The whole idea is to get some people who have different experiences with government together," he said. "It's kind of more a fact-finding body than a body working on a specific piece of legislation."

He said he expects the commission to continue to work after its initial report is filed.

Besides the co-chairs, the commission includes:

- Senator Dave Burke (R-Marysville)
- Representative Nathan Manning (R-N. Ridgeville)
- Lynn Wachtmann and Mark Wagoner, both former lawmakers
- Alex Fischer, President and CEO of the Columbus Partnership
- Jared Ebbing, Mercer County Economic Development director
- Eric Burkland of the Ohio Manufacturers' Association
- David Johnson, CEO of Summitville Tiles, and Bret Dixon, Director of Economic and Business Development for Clinton County

For additional information regarding this story contact Brad Cole of the CCAO staff at bcole@ccao.org.

Legislature passes “ban the box” bill

The General Assembly on Wednesday passed [HB 56](#) (Schuring, Slesnick) which will ban boxes indicating criminal history on public employer job applications in Ohio. The bill passed the

Senate 32-1 and then the House concurred in the Senate's amendments by a 90-1 vote, sending the bill on to the governor for his consideration. The bill essentially codifies an executive order Gov. Kasich issued earlier this year for state employment applications. The current ability of a public employer to inquire about past criminal history during an employment interview or to conduct a background check are not impacted by the bill.

The Senate amended the bill to clarify that the bill does not prohibit a public employer from placing a statement on the application making it clear who is and is not eligible for the position. Proponents of the legislation urged its adoption and indicated that employment is a key factor in reducing recidivism and that a criminal offender, once they have passed the 36-month mark without reoffending, has the same odds of reoffending as someone without a criminal record. The proponents noted that the bill does not preclude due diligence nor does it preclude common sense, but what it does do is say that the threshold stage of the employment application is no longer going to be used to deny the one in three Americans who have a criminal record of some form the opportunity to apply for that job.

For additional information on this piece of legislation, please contact CCAO staffer John Leutz at jleutz@ccao.org or 614-220-7994.

Bills Introduced



SB 251 DRONES ([Skindell, M.](#), [Seitz, B.](#)) To regulate the use of drones for gathering evidence and information by law enforcement officers in Ohio. Am. 2933.67, 2933.68, 2933.69, and 2933.70

HB 407 BODY CAMERAS ([Boyce, K.](#), [Grossman, C.](#)) To require law enforcement agencies that use body cameras to adopt written policies for operation of the cameras and to require agencies to make the adopted policies available to the public. Am. 2935.034

HB 408 REPRODUCTIVE CARE ([Howse, S.](#), [Lepore-Hagan, M.](#)) To criminalize impeding access to reproductive health care and to create a cause of action for harassment or intimidation of one or more employees of a health care facility. Am. 2307.48, 2307.481, 2307.482, and 2919.20

HB 409 TAX EXEMPTION ([Green, D.](#)) To exempt from property taxation any retail store operated by a nonprofit housing organization that sells donated items suitable for residential housing purposes. Am. 5709.12

Hearing Schedule



No new schedule this week