



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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County voices at the statehouse

There was an incredible county turnout at the statehouse this week! Both days that the Senate Finance Committee met, we had counties testifying, meeting with senators and observing the committee proceedings.



Included in this photo: Commissioner Stacy, Clerk of Courts Jean Eckelberry and Sheriff Eckelberry (Seneca), Commissioner Stahl (Ottawa), Commissioner Schwochow (Sandusky), Commissioners John, Banks and Vero, Prosecutor Bishop, Judge Robinson (Richland), Commissioner Christian-Bennett, Budget Director Todd Bragg (Portage), Commissioner Amstutz (Wayne)

On Wednesday Commissioners Gary Lee (Union) and Dan Troy (Lake) testified on the need to fund new voting equipment.

Commissioner Lee outlined the process that CCAO has gone through with the Secretary of State's office and other interested parties to get a plan in place that spells out what the state/county partnership will be on this important issue. "We fully realize that this is a multi-year effort to get all counties up-graded. Our preference is to start to seed the program in this year's operating budget coupled with a description of what the state/county purchasing partnership may look like in the future" he told the committee members.



Union County Commissioner
Gary Lee



Lake County Commissioner
Daniel Troy

Commissioner Troy highlighted the process that was used to purchase electronic poll books and our desire to replicate that program. "We in county government, commissioners and elections boards, have found the electronic poll book purchasing program to be quite successful and wish to thank the Legislature for crafting this program of partnership. We are asking the Legislature to replicate this program to provide for the upgrading of Ohio's voting equipment. Specifically, the state took the lead in targeting an 85 state/15 local percent split in purchase costs".

Both expressed appreciation to the House for including election equipment language in their version of the budget bill. They asked the Senate to further refine that language to create a partnership that provides counties 85% of their acquisition cost of elections equipment in the future, and reimburses counties who have already had to replace their voting equipment.

You can read their full testimony here: [Lee](#) and [Troy](#).

On Thursday, Commissioners Ron Amstutz (Wayne) and Marilyn John (Richland) testified on the Medicaid managed care organization (MCO) sales tax and county budget pressures.

Commissioner Amstutz asked the committee to find a path forward that keeps both state and county parties whole. He highlighted Wayne County's revenue picture stating, " from 2007 through 2015 our total revenue growth across eight full years was a net total of one percent. Last year was a better recovery year so that our nine-year net growth has been 3.6 percent. And we have the same revenue storm clouds over us thus far in this calendar year that the state is currently facing".



Wayne County Commissioner
Ron Amstutz



Richland County Commissioner Marilyn John

Commissioner John spoke about the pressure that the opiate epidemic is placing on her county's budget citing, "Richland County's reliance on sales tax revenues has increased by 12 percentage points due to the decrease in all other revenue streams from Local Government Funds (a reduction of over \$1.7 million in the last 10 years) and Investment Income to Real Estate tax and Conveyance fees. Our General Fund expenses in

2016 were \$270,000 below 2007 expenses as evidence of our commitment to fiscal responsibility”.

You can read their full testimony here: [Amstutz](#) and [John](#).

Seneca County Sheriff William Eckelberry also testified before the committee, calling out the increasing needs of the justice system as they continue to fight the effects that opiates are having on his community. “The Sheriff’s Office utilizes 33% of the General Fund. I anticipate the Sheriff’s Office financial needs for 2018 will exceed this year’s request, and while we have the Opiate Task Force, the predictions are that we are not out of the storm on this epidemic yet, and when we are, what will the next one be?”



Seneca County Sheriff Eckelberry

You can read his full testimony [here](#).



Left: Richland County Judge Robinson, Commissioners John, Banks, Vero, and Prosecutor Gary Bishop



Vinton County Commissioner Fout

In addition to those testifying, we had Commissioners and other county officials from Ottawa, Portage, Sandusky, Shelby and Vinton counties attended the committee hearings.

There is one more week of Senate Finance Committee public hearings, and we’d love to have even more counties walking the halls of the statehouse. Please consider taking a day to visit Columbus to be part of this important process.

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE DATES:

Tuesday, June 6th at 11am

Wednesday June 7th at 11am

If you'd like more information, call Kate Neithammer at 614-220-7996.

Senate budget amendments

There are several amendments that have been drafted in the Senate that pertain to CCAO's top budget priorities. Here is an update on a few that we're following:

Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO's) sales tax revenue replacement –

As reported in last week's Statehouse Report, Senator Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) has taken the lead in the Senate on this very serious and complex issue. He submitted an amendment much like what CCAO worked with Representative Hambley (R-Brunswick) to draft for consideration in the House, with a couple changes. His amendment would require the proposed state health insuring corporation (HIC) franchise fee to be reset to generate enough revenue to address the state, counties and transit authorities' loss from the Medicaid MCO sales tax. Specifically, it would require the state Office of Budget and Management (OBM) to calculate a new fee rate that would cover the state's needs and generate an additional \$207 million annually for counties and transit authorities. These dollars would be redistributed to the local entities based on the amount of Medicaid MCO sales tax revenue they received in 2015 and 2016. Senator Dolan's amendment, however, would not recalibrate the franchise fee until July 2018, and would maintain the Administration's Transitional Aid to counties and transit authorities in SFY 18, which starts July 1, 2017.

A few additional senators submitted a similar amendment that would recalibrate the franchise fee this year and, thus, remove the need for the proposed Transitional Aid.

Last Friday the Administration released a white paper expressing concerns about resetting the proposed state franchise fee as described above. They contend the approach would be a tax increase. In addition, they point out that federal regulators have not issued approval for this level of fees/taxes on a health insuring corporation. You can review a copy of their arguments by [clicking here](#).

Of course, CCAO does not view these proposals as a tax increase since counties and transit authorities are simply asking to maintain the same amount of revenue they have been receiving. Moreover, counties are seeking parity with how the state's foregone revenue is being addressed in the pending budget bill.

Indigent Defense reimbursement – The Senate amendment offered by Senator Uecker

(R-Miami Township) would provide an additional \$8.5 million in FY 18 and \$9.4 million in FY 19. This funding, along with the \$7.1 million in SFY18 and \$7.9 million in SFY19 added by the House, would take the total general fund appropriations to approximately 45.1 million in FY 18 and \$47.4 million in FY 19. There is also \$32.8 million each year

provided for reimbursement from the non-GRF revenues deposited into the Indigent Defense Support Fund. The total appropriations contained in the amendment are designed to provide 50% reimbursement to the counties for general cases and 100% reimbursement for capital case expenses and also contemplate making up for a continual decline in the IDSF revenue receipts which now appear to be almost \$200,000 a month below the initial budget estimates the governor used when preparing the Administration's budget. Senators Thomas (D-Cincinnati) and Williams (D-Cleveland) also offered indigent defense amendments.

Psychotropic drug reimbursement program for county jails – The Senate amendment offered by Senators Uecker (R-Miami Township) and Gardner (R-Bowling Green) would fund the third part of our three-part program proposed to assist jails in the treatment of their mentally ill/addicted population. Under the program the state would reimburse the counties for the total cost of the psychotropic drugs that are prescribed and dispensed to inmates of the county jail. \$4 million would be appropriated for each year of the biennium to provide the funds for the reimbursement program. Reimbursement would be made biannually for the periods of January through June and July through December with the sheriff submitting the request to the ADAMH Board or Recovery Board serving the county. The funds reimbursed would be deposited into the county general fund. The House funded the first two parts of the program that establish 6 mental health crisis centers and 9 withdrawal management centers (detox) at \$15 million each year and provide direct client services to jail inmates at \$12 million in each year.

Felony 5 offenders T-CAP program – as explained to CCAO, the Senate will relax the mandatory participation of all counties in the program beginning the second year and instead require only the 10 most populated counties to participate in the program. The program remains a Community Corrections Act grant funded program with DRC awarding grants to the participating county common pleas courts. The counties will be reimbursed from the T-CAP grant funds awarded to the county for their average daily jail cost for any felony 5 offender the common pleas court sentences to serve time in the county jail. A memorandum of understanding will be required to be entered into by the commissioners, sheriff and common pleas court that outlines how the T-CAP grant funds will be utilized and establishes the average daily jail cost that will be reimbursed to the county.

Voting equipment – Amendments were submitted by the following senators and would institute a state/county partnership in updating Ohio's voting equipment. Senator LaRose (R-Hudson) submitted an amendment similar to his Senate Bill 135 which would establish a state/county partnership with the state picking up 80 percent of the equipment and services costs and counties being responsible for the remaining 20 percent. His amendment also would appropriate \$82 million in capital funds and \$7 million in operating funds to finance the state/county partnership. Senator Yuko (D-Richmond Heights) offered an amendment that provides an 85/15 split between the state and counties for acquiring new voting equipment and services. It also would appropriate \$7 million in operating funds to reimburse counties that have acquired

equipment since 2014. It also includes a statement of intent for the General Assembly to continue to partner with counties in funding voting equipment purchases in a similar manner by FY 2019.

Multi-county health district levies – HB 49 creates a levy process for multi-county health districts that authorizes the multi-county health district board to propose a property tax levy directly to the voters to pay for its expenses. An amendment offered by Senator Burke (R-Marysville) will give the Board of County Commissioners/Council Members discretion over these levies.

Reminder: Voting equipment “statement of need” is due to the Secretary of State

The Secretary of State has issued [ADVISORY 2017-04](#) to all county board of elections directing them to hold a meeting with their county commissioners or county council prior to **June 1st** to discuss the county’s need for new voting equipment. The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) and the Ohio Association of Elections Officials (OAEO) joint committee on elections administration recommended to the Secretary that a meeting of this type be held and fully supports the Secretary’s Advisory.

As you are aware, the joint committee has been working together for several years seeking to plan for the replacement of all of Ohio’s voting equipment. When talking to members of the General Assembly and the Administration about this issue, we are continually asked the same question: What will be the cost? This meeting is a critical step in helping us answer that question for the General Assembly and the Administration.

We are seeking to incorporate language in the current state budget bill (HB 49) that prescribes the plan that will be followed for acquisition of the new voting equipment and may provide some seed money for the program. Because the budget bill needs to be adopted before July 1st, it is critically important for the Secretary to provide a state-wide cost estimate to the General Assembly and Administration as soon as possible. Therefore, it is imperative that your board of elections and county council respond to the Secretary with their “Statement of Need” as outlined in the Advisory absolutely **no later than June 13, 2017.**

Please be aware that the information you provide on your “Statement of Need” form in no way obligates your county to purchase any equipment nor does it commit your county to any particular vendor or system. This information is being collected to provide a good faith estimate to the Administration and General Assembly of the total cost for replacing Ohio’ voting equipment.

Your committed participation and timely report to the Secretary, we believe, will have a direct impact upon our ability to establish a program and secure the necessary state funding to implement that program to maintain the integrity of Ohio's elections process well into the future.

Bills Introduced



SB 160

LICENSE FEES ([WILLIAMS, S.](#))

To allow a court to authorize completion of a community service program in lieu of payment of driver's license reinstatement fees when the court determines that an offender cannot reasonably pay the fees.

HB 251

SUBDIVISION INVESTMENTS ([GREENSPAN, D.](#))

To increase from five to ten years the maturity period of other political subdivision's bonds and obligations eligible for investment of a subdivision's interim moneys.

HB 253

CONCEALED WEAPONS ([HOUSEHOLDER, L.](#), [LANESE, L.](#))

To permit law enforcement officers to carry firearms off duty in places otherwise prohibited for concealed handgun licensees.

HB 255

TOWNSHIP OFFICERS ([HAMBLEY, S.](#))

To authorize a township officer who serves a population of greater than 5,000 to make arrests for specified traffic offenses on interstate highways within and adjacent to the officer's territory and to prohibit townships from using traffic law photo-monitoring devices on interstate highways.

Hearing Schedule



Tuesday, June 6

House Ways & Means

(Chr. [Schaffer, T.](#), (614) 466-8100), Rm. 121, 9:00 am

SB 131

TAX CREDITS ([DOLAN, M.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor-Pending referral

HB 185

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS ([HAMBLEY, S.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

HB 232

TAX DEDUCTION ([ROGERS, J.](#), [REZABEK, J.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

HB 216

AUTO SALES CREDIT ([HAMBLEY, S.](#), [BRINKMAN, T.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions

(Chr. [Hottinger, J.](#), (614) 466-5838), Finance Hearing Rm., 9:30 am

HB 27

BWC BUDGET ([BRINKMAN, T.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

CANCELED

House Session

~~(Chr. [Rosenberger, C.](#), (614) 466-3357), House Chamber, 11:00 am~~

Senate Finance

(Chr. [Oelslager, S.](#), (614) 466-0626), Finance Hearing Rm., 11:00 am

HB 49

BIENNIAL BUDGET ([SMITH, R.](#))

--4th Hearing-Public testimony

House Criminal Justice

(Chr. [Manning, N.](#), (614) 644-5076), Rm. 114, 1:30 pm

SB 4

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ([KUNZE, S.](#), [OELSLAGER, S.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

SB 32

TRIAL TIMELINES ([EKLUND, J.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

SB 33

LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA ([EKLUND, J.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

HB 215

PAULDING COURTS ([RIEDEL, C.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent-Possible amendment

HB 81

DEATH PENALTY ([SEITZ, B.](#), [ANTONIO, N.](#))

--3rd Hearing-Opponent

House Energy & Natural Resources

(Chr. [Landis, A.](#), (614) 466-8035), Rm. 018, 3:00 pm

HB 225

OIL GAS WELLS ([THOMPSON, A.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor & proponent

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

Wednesday, June 7

House Transportation & Public Safety

(Chr. [Green, D.](#), (614) 644-6034), Rm. 017, 9:00 am

HB 219

SPEED LIMITS ([BOCCIERI, J.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

HB 227

LICENSE PLATE ([LATOURETTE, S.](#))

--1st Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote

HB 71

LICENSE PLATE DISPLAY ([DEVITIS, T.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

HB 150

LICENSE PLATE ([PATMON, B.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

HB 190

RAIL CROSSINGS ([LEPORE-HAGAN, M.](#), [SCHURING, K.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

(Chr. [Eklund, J.](#), (614) 644-7718), South Hearing Rm., 9:00 am

HB 124

TAX LEVIES ([BRENNER, A.](#), [CARFAGNA, R.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor & proponent

SB 113

FUEL TAX ([COLEY, B.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

SB 132

TAX CREDIT ([DOLAN, M.](#))

--1st Hearing-Sponsor

Senate Transportation, Commerce & Workforce

(Chr. [LaRose, F.](#), (614) 466-4823), South Hearing Rm., 10:15 am

HB 28

IC BUDGET ([BRINKMAN, T.](#))

--3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments & vote

Senate Finance

(Chr. [Oelslager, S.](#), (614) 466-0626), Finance Hearing Rm., 11:00 am

HB 49

BIENNIAL BUDGET ([SMITH, R.](#))

--5th Hearing-Public testimony

CURSIVE HANDWRITING ([BRENNER, A.](#), [SLABY, M.](#))

--4th Hearing-Opponent & interested party

HB 166

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ([REINEKE, B.](#), [CUPP, R.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

SB 3

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ([BEAGLE, B.](#), [BALDERSON, T.](#))

--2nd Hearing-Proponent

House State & Local Government (Testimony & Documents)

(Chr. [Anielski, M.](#), (614) 644-6041), Rm. 116, 11:00 am [Add to Calendar](#)

HB 146

DEATH CERTIFICATES ([HOUSEHOLDER, L.](#))

--4th Hearing-All testimony

Senate Session

(Chr. [Obhof, L.](#), (614) 466-4900), Senate Chamber, 1:30 pm

House Session

(Chr. [Rosenberger, C.](#), (614) 466-3357), House Chamber, 1:30 pm

House Civil Justice

(Chr. [Butler, J.](#), (614) 644-6008), Rm. 122, 2:30 pm or after session

