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| **GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.**17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413PHONE: 614-461-9335FAX: 614-461-9336**Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts** Legislative Activities Report**January 2018**  |

Both the House and Senate concluded their work for the year after using their final session day in December to act on numerous pieces of legislation. Neither chamber is expected to resume session until the middle of January. The House is scheduled to meet as many as 32 times between January and June, although 20 of those session days are listed as “if needed.” The Senate has scheduled 24 session days during that same time; however, 13 of those days are listed as “if needed.” Legislators will then recess of the summer and much of the fall to prepare for the 2018 election in November.

In legislative news, the House Criminal Justice Committee accepted a substitute version of HB 276 prior to breaking for the holiday recess. The legislation, introduced by Reps. Rezabek and Greenspan, is designed to better protect utility workers who are threatened while performing their work. The substitute bill adds a provision related to the use of deadly weapons, removes an enhancement to a fourth-degree felony menacing and provides additional clarifying definitions.

Also on the legislative front, a bill creating guardrails around political subdivisions’ use of credit and debit cards was unanimously passed in December. The proposal, HB 312, was developed after a report by Auditor Dave Yost’s office found $1.2 million in public funds had been misspent through credit card abuse. Auditor Yost’s office also found that nearly 10% of all public entities operating in Ohio did not have a credit card policy in place. HB 312 would require political subdivisions throughout the state to adopt a credit card policy with a minimum set of guidelines. The bill has been reported to the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

In election news, two current state senators have announced their intentions to run for the 12th Congressional District, which will be vacated by U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi, who announced his plans earlier this year to leave office. Senator Kevin Bacon (R-Minerva Park) and Senator Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville) are joined by Delaware County Prosecutor Carol O’Brien who has also announced she is seeking the Republican nomination. On the Democrat side, former Franklin County Sheriff Zach Scott is seeking his party’s nomination. As sheriff, Scott warred with the local Democratic establishment in unsuccessfully running against Democrat Andrew Ginther for mayor of Columbus in 2015. Scott then sought re-election in 2016 but was defeated in a primary by Dallas Baldwin, who now serves as sheriff. The Republican-leaning 12th District spans northern Franklin County suburbs and runs northeast to Richland County and east to take in Licking County and part of Muskingum County.

In other campaign news, gubernatorial candidate U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci announced that Cincinnati City Councilwoman Amy Murray will joint his ticket to run as lieutenant governor. Ms. Murray, 53, was first elected to council in 2013 and was reelected in 2017. She was appointed to council in 2011. Since 2000, Ms. Murray has served as president of Japan Consulting Group. Prior to that, she was the global business development manager for Procter & Gamble. Mr. Renacci's announcement of a running mate came less than two weeks after Attorney General Mike DeWine and Secretary of State Jon Husted shook up the GOP race by joining forces.

 Also on the campaign front, after months of speculation, Richard Cordray announced his candidacy for governor. The former state attorney general and treasurer, who most recently served as director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, kicked off his campaign by vowing to focus on "kitchen table issues that keep families up at night." Mr. Cordray enters a crowded primary field for the Democrats; however, if he were to win in the primary, it would result in a potential rematch of the 2010 attorney general election, where Cordray was narrowly defeated by Mike DeWine.

Former State Representative Rob McColley was formally sworn-in as senator of the 1st Senate District on December 5th. The Senate seat was vacated by Cliff Hite, who abruptly resigned his position earlier this year. McColley previously served as the House’s assistant majority whip and was in his second term representing northwest Ohio’s 81st House District. McColley was appointed to the following committees: Agriculture, Education, Public Utilities, and Transportation, Commerce and Workforce.

Ohio's unemployment rate fell to 4.8% in November from 5.1% the month before, but the total number of jobs declined by 5,600 over the month, the Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) reported. The number of unemployed workers decreased by 17,000 to 279,000 in November, the latest data show. Over the past 12 months, the unemployed total has dropped by 6,000, ODJFS said. The unemployment rate was 5% in November 2016. The U.S. unemployment rate for November was 4.1%, which was unchanged from October and down from 4.6% in November 2016.

In other news, Governor John Kasich recently announced he will deliver his next State of the State address from Westerville, Ohio on Tuesday, March 6th. Governor Kasich has deviated from giving the speech at the traditional Statehouse location, and has instead traveled to various cities throughout Ohio to give the speech. The request to hold the State of the State address in Westerville, must be approved by both the House and the Senate.

We have been tracking the following legislation during the 132nd General Assembly:

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| **HB3** | **DATAOHIO BOARD CREATION** (DUFFEY M, HAGAN C) To create the DataOhio Board, to specify requirements for posting public records online, to require the Auditor of State to adopt rules regarding a uniform accounting system for public offices, to establish an online catalog of public data at data.Ohio.gov, to establish the Local Government Information Exchange Grant Program, and to make appropriations. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/12/2017 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Finance, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB26** | **TRANSPORTATION-PUBLIC SAFETY BUDGET** (MCCOLLEY R) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017, and ending June 30, 2019, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/31/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Some provisions line-item vetoed, eff. 6/30/2017 |
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| **HB29** | **MUNICIPAL WATER RESERVOIR BUFFERS** (LELAND D, BOGGS K) To eliminate law authorizing the maintenance of buffers around municipal water reservoirs by contiguous property owners. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 4/25/2017 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB31** | **CONTRACTING ADVISORY COUNCIL-ABOLITION** (CUPP B) To abolish the Government Contracting Advisory Council. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 11/21/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days |
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| **HB40** | **GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE DATABASE** (DEVER J, GREENSPAN D) To require the Treasurer of State to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/28/2017 - House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB49** | **OPERATING BUDGET** (SMITH R) Creates FY 2018-2019 main operating budget. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 8/22/2017 - Consideration of Governor's Veto |
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| **HB51** | **DEPARTMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE** (FABER K) To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 5/16/2017 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House State and Local Government, (Fourth Hearing) |
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| **HB54** | **STATE REVENUE OBLIGATIONS** (BLESSING III L, GAVARONE T) To authorize the Treasurer of State to issue revenue obligations of the state for the purpose of making loans to qualifying public entities for their acquisition of permanent improvements through the Treasurer of State's purchase of public obligations of those qualifying entities. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/26/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Finance, (Fourth Hearing) |
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| **HB69** | **LEVY REVENUE REIMBURSEMENT** (CUPP B) To require reimbursement of certain township fire and emergency medical service levy revenue forgone because of the creation of a municipal tax increment financing district. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/22/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. 90 days |
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| **HB103** | **FISCAL EMERGENCY PROVISIONS** (REINEKE W) To modify the composition and powers of the financial planning and supervision commission of a political subdivision that is in a state of fiscal emergency and to clarify the duties of that political subdivision. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 7/17/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. 10/17/17 |
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| **HB114** | **RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARDS** (BLESSING III L) To revise the provisions governing renewable energy, energy efficiency, and peak demand reduction and to alter funding allocations under the Home Energy Assistance Program. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 10/18/2017 - Senate Energy and Natural Resources, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB121** | **PIPE MATERIAL SPECIFICATIONS** (EDWARDS J) To require a public authority to consider all piping materials that meet the engineering specifications for a state-funded water or waste water project. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 11/1/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, House State and Local Government, (Fifth Hearing) |
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| **HB122** | **ESTABLISH ECONOMIC STUDY COMMITTEE** (HAMBLEY S, ROGERS J) To establish a Regional Economic Development Alliance Study Committee to study the benefits and challenges involved in creating regional economic development alliances. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/12/2017 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB163** | **PREVAILING WAGE PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS** (ROEGNER K, RIEDEL C) To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/19/2017 - House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB180** | **EQUAL PAY ACT** (CLYDE K, HOWSE S) To require a contractor or person submitting a bid or other proposal for a state contract or a business entity applying for a grant or other economic incentive from a state agency to obtain an equal pay certificate, to require state agencies and political subdivisions to establish a job evaluation system to identify and eliminate sex-based wage disparities among classes of employees, and to prohibit an employer from retaliating against an employee who discusses the employee's salary or wage rate with another employee. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 5/1/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight |
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| **HB221** | **PRIVATE PROPERTY SEWER AND WATER** (HOLMES G) To expressly include, as eligible projects under the State Capital Improvements Program administered by the Ohio Public Works Commission, water and sewer laterals located on private property. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 5/23/2017 - Referred to Committee House Finance |
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| **HB249** | **RESIDENTIAL UTILITY RESELLING** (DUFFEY M) To permit the Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules governing residential utility reselling. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 10/17/2017 - House Public Utilities, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB254** | **POW/MIA REMEMBERANCE** (WIGGAM S) To enact the POW/MIA Remembrance Act requiring the POW/MIA flag to be displayed at certain buildings operated by the state on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans' Day. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/13/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs |
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| **HB262** | **INDEPENDENT BUDGET PROCESS** (BUTLER, JR. J, ROMANCHUK M) To provide for the preparation of a state biennial budget independent of that submitted by the Governor and to authorize the Legislative Service Commission, upon the request of the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the President of the Senate, to arrange for an independent actuarial review of a proposed bill, specified analyses of economic policy initiatives and state benchmarking data, and a study of the state's long-range financial outlook. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 6/20/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight |
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| **HB267** | **LOCAL LIABILITY-VEHICLE NEGLIGENCE** (INGRAM C) To eliminate certain defenses to political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle and to reduce damages recoverable against a political subdivision in such actions by the contributory fault of the plaintiff or other parties. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/20/2017 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB271** | **ACCESSIBILITY LAW VIOLATION NOTICE** (MCCOLLEY R, REZABEK J) To authorize an alleged aggrieved party to provide a notice of an alleged accessibility law violation in advance of filing a civil action and to establish the circumstances under which an alleged aggrieved party is entitled to attorney's fees in a civil action based on the violation. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 10/24/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB276** | **THREATENING UTILITY WORKERS** (REZABEK J, GREENSPAN D) To expand the offense of aggravated menacing to prohibit threatening a utility worker with intent to obstruct the operation of a utility. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/12/2017 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Criminal Justice, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB291** | **EMPLOYEE DISHONESTY INSURANCE** (WIGGAM S) To authorize counties, townships, and municipal corporations to purchase an employee dishonesty and faithful performance of duty insurance policy, instead of a bond, for protection from loss due to the fraudulent or dishonest actions of, and the failure to perform a duty prescribed by law by, an officer, official, employee, or appointee for which a bond is required by law. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/13/2017 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 93-0 |
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| **HB303** | **SERVICE ANIMAL USE** (LIPPS S, KELLY B) To prohibit places of public accommodation from preventing the use of a service animal. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 10/10/2017 - House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB312** | **LOCAL GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARDS** (SCHURING K, GREENSPAN D) Regarding use of credit cards and debit cards by political subdivisions. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/13/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight and Reform |
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| **HB342** | **LOCAL TAX ISSUES-ELECTION DATES** (MERRIN D) To permit local tax-related proposals to appear only on general and primary election ballots and not on an August special election ballot and to modify the information conveyed in election notices and ballot language for property tax levies. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 11/1/2017 - House Government Accountability and Oversight, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB371** | **TAXES ON UNSOLD PROPERTY** (MERRIN D) To exempt from property taxation the increased value of land subdivided for residential development until construction commences or the land is sold. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/12/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing) |
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| **HB380** | **WORKERS COMP-ILLEGAL ALIENS** (SEITZ B, HOUSEHOLDER L) To prohibit illegal and unauthorized aliens from receiving compensation and certain benefits under Ohio's Workers' Compensation Law. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/5/2017 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 65-30 |
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| **HB399** | **HEALTH INSURANCE SAVINGS INCENTIVES** (HENNE M, BUTLER, JR. J) To enact the Ohio Right to Shop Act to require health insurers to establish shared savings incentive programs for enrollees. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 11/28/2017 - Referred to Committee House Health  |
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| **HB413** | **OPERS COLA ADJUSTMENT** (SCHERER G) Regarding Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) annual cost-of-living adjustments granted to allowance and benefit recipients and PERS service credit for services as a nonteaching school employee of a county board of developmental disabilities. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/13/2017 - House Aging and Long Term Care, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB419** | **EMERGENCY VEHICLE LIGHTS AND SIRENS** (HENNE M) To modify the defense to the liability of a member of a police or fire department or emergency medical service of a political subdivision for the negligent operation of a motor vehicle in response to an emergency by requiring that the vehicle has its lights and sirens simultaneously activated. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/6/2017 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB422** | **MUNICIPAL WATER-WORKS ACQUISITIONS** (GINTER T, ROGERS J) To govern acquisitions of municipal water-works and sewage disposal system companies by certain larger nonmunicipal water-works or sewage disposal system companies. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/5/2017 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB2** | **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS LAWS** (HITE C) To revise specified laws relating to environmental protection. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 7/7/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 10/6/2017 |
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| **SB3** | **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (BEAGLE B, BALDERSON T) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 11/6/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. 90 days |
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| **SB31** | **HEALTH RULE WITHDRAW PROCESS** (EKLUND J) To authorize a board of county commissioners or municipal legislative authority to elect to withdraw the county or municipal corporation from the application of any rule adopted by the Department of Health after January 1, 2014, that governs the design of household sewage treatment systems. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 10/18/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Energy and Natural Resources, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB51** | **LAKE ERIE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT** (SKINDELL M, EKLUND J) To authorize the creation of a special improvement district to facilitate Lake Erie shoreline improvement. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/27/2017 - Senate Energy and Natural Resources, (Fourth Hearing) |
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| **SB72** | **PREVAILING WAGE LAW** (HUFFMAN M) To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |
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| **SB79** | **STATE DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE** (JORDAN K) To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/12/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight |
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| **SB88** | **SUBDIVISION COMMISSIONS-FISCAL EMERGENCY** (TERHAR L) To modify the composition and powers of the financial planning and supervision commission of a political subdivision that is in a state of fiscal emergency and to clarify the duties of that political subdivision. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 5/9/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight |
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| **SB95** | **STATE PROJECTS-PIPING MATERIALS** (TERHAR L) To require a public authority to consider all piping materials that meet the engineering specifications for a state-funded water or waste water project. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 10/25/2017 - Senate Energy and Natural Resources, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB157** | **PUBLIC UTILITY RESELLING REGULATION** (BACON K) To regulate the reselling of public utility service. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 6/28/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Public Utilities, (Fourth Hearing) |
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| **SB168** | **MEDICAID EXPANSION** (JORDAN K) To prohibit the Medicaid program from covering the expansion eligibility group and to require aggregate General Revenue Fund appropriations for state agencies to be reduced by specified amounts for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017, and ending on June 30, 2019. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 6/28/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |
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| **SB174** | **WAGE PROTECTIONS-FAIR ACT** (TAVARES C) To enact the "Fair and Acceptable Income Required (FAIR) Act" and to revise the enforcement of the prohibitions against discrimination in the payment of wages. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/7/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce |
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| **SB239** | **REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS** (DOLAN M) To modify the law concerning regional councils of governments. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 12/5/2017 - Introduced |
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| **SJR4** | **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUNDING** (SCHIAVONI J) Proposing to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to permit the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund sewer and water capital improvements. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 9/6/2017 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing) |