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| **GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.**  17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245  COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413  PHONE: 614-461-9335  FAX: 614-461-9336  **Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts**  Legislative Activities Report  **April 2020**  Legislative activity came to a halt in March as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across Ohio and the entire country. Both the House and Senate implemented work from home policies in an effort to mitigate the spread of the virus and lessen exposure to legislators and staff. Similarly, Governor DeWine announced work from home protocol for other state employees, which will be in place until May 1st. Ohio’s K-12 schools were also closed until May 1st. The Governor also ordered a hiring freeze in state government and up to a 20 percent cut at state agencies as he looks to shore up state finances in the wake of a coronavirus outbreak. Governor DeWine said that with the loss of commercial activity in the state as businesses are ordered closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a consequence is that state revenues will go down dramatically, and it is important to take action.  Governor Mike DeWine on March 21st announced an Ohio Department of Health “Stay at Home” order in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the state. Following the lead of other states, DeWine said the order, signed by Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton, would be in effect from Monday, March 23rd at 11:59 p.m. through at least Monday, April 6th. It requires citizens to remain in their homes with certain exceptions for what the Administration has deemed “essential” services and activities. Those exceptions include activities involving health and safety, gathering necessary supplies and services, outdoor activities except for closed playgrounds, certain types of work deemed essential, or to take care of others. The order also lists essential businesses that will be allowed to stay open and provides guidelines for their operations. Exceptions include the operations and maintenance of utilities including water and sewer treatment facilities. Additional essential business operations include: groceries; pharmacies; charitable and social service groups, food, beverage and licensed marijuana and agriculture businesses; religious entities; media; gas stations and transportation-related entities; financial and insurance businesses; hardware and supply stores; mail and logistics operations; critical trades; educational institutions and laundry services. Restaurants are still allowed to provide take-out food. Local health departments and law enforcement have been tasked with enforcing the order.  What originally began as a bill to make technical corrections to Ohio’s tax code (HB 197) ultimately became the legislative vehicle to address the initial and pressing concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. In an unprecedented session, which required legislators to maintain social distancing standards, the Senate added over a dozen changes in an omnibus amendment to the bill before House concurrence and ultimately delivering the legislation to the governor. The House unanimously concurred with the Senate amendments, with some members voting from the gallery or traveling from committee rooms to voice support for the measure. Among the changes in the amendment were the extensions of the state's income tax deadline to July 15 and the March 17 primary election to April 28 through mail-in voting. Language was also inserted into the bill to allow a transfer from the Budget Stabilization Fund to balance the Fiscal Year 2020 books. However, the transfer requires Controlling Board approval, with at least two "yes" votes from each chamber. Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) said the bill is likely the end of legislative action in the state for the near future.  HB 197 also gave the Ohio EPA director the authority to issue orders during the state of emergency that would prevent water shutoffs and require service reconnections. Those orders were issued shortly after the passage of HB 197. The Ohio EPA announced that customers would be required to request service reconnection, and that only those customers who had their service shut off since the beginning of the year would be eligible. Additional information about the order and more information about the Ohio EPA’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak can be found on the following website: <https://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/covid19#187665330-operations>  The Senate Ways & Means Committee held the first hearing for SB 273, sponsored by Senator Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland). The legislation would put a cap on annual property tax increases at 10% for qualifying households and prohibit utilities from putting liens on properties based on overdue water bills. The bill, which is expected to involve numerous stakeholders, comes after complaints by customers of unfair billing practices by systems throughout Ohio. Senator Vernon Sykes (D-Akron), who serves on committee, suggested that lawmakers could consider a fix that would allow utilities to pursue liens but prevent them from leading to foreclosures. CORD has been in contact with the Chairwoman of the Committee, Senator Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson), and while she does intend to have additional hearings on the bill, she understands the severe impact such legislation could have on systems. CORD is working with stakeholders to develop a response and are prepared to testify in opposition before the committee.  Rep. Don Manning (R-New Middletown), a first-term lawmaker, died at the age of 54 on Friday March 20th after going to the hospital while suffering chest pains. Manning had previously worked as a truancy, detention and probation officer where he was involved with juvenile offenders, sex offenders and Ohioans with mental health and addition issues. Manning was elected in 2018 by just a few hundred votes over Rep. John Boccieri (D-Poland), flipping the traditionally Democratic Mahoning Valley seat to Republicans. Rep. Manning was vice chair of the House Health Committee and was a member of the standing committees on Agriculture & Rural Development and Criminal Justice. |

Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking during the 133rd Ohio General Assembly:

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| **HB7** | **H2OHIO PROGRAM** (GHANBARI H, PATTERSON J) To create the H2Ohio Trust Fund for the protection and preservation of Ohio's water quality, to create the H2Ohio Advisory Council to establish priorities for use of the Fund for water quality programs, and to authorize the Ohio Water Development Authority to invest the money in the Fund and to make recommendations to the Treasurer of State regarding the issuance of securities to pay for costs related to the purposes of the Fund. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/22/2019 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB27** | **PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY** (INGRAM C) To modify political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/19/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB46** | **STATE GOVT EXPENDITURE DATABASE** (GREENSPAN D) To require the Treasurer of State to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/22/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate General Government and Agency Review , (Seventh Hearing) |
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| **HB62** | **TRANSPORTATION BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To increase the rate of and modify the distribution of revenue from motor fuel excise taxes, to make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/3/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days, Taxes eff. 7/1/19 |
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| **HB78** | **PREVAILING WAGE-PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS** (RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER S) 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:*** | 12/11/2019 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB79** | **INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of Commission programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/27/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 6/27/19 |
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| **HB80** | **BWC BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the bureau's programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 7/22/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. Immediately |
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| **HB84** | **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS-SEWER LATERALS** (HOLMES G) To expressly include, as eligible projects under the State Capital Improvements Program, water and sewer laterals located on private property. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/27/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB95** | **BRINE-CONVERSION OF WELLS** (SKINDELL M) To alter the Oil and Gas Law with respect to brine and the conversion of wells. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 9/17/2019 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB115** | **REGULATOR RESTRICTION REDUCTION** (RIEDEL C, ROEMER B) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulator restrictions and to amend the versions of sections 106.021 and 106.03 of the Revised Code that are scheduled to take effect August 18, 2019, to continue the provision of this act on and after that effective date. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/10/2019 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB163** | **WATER AND SEWER PRACTICES** (BRINKMAN T) To create a process for withholding local government funds and state water and sewer assistance from municipal corporations that engage in certain water and sewer practices with respect to extraterritorial service. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Public Utilities, (Sixth Hearing) |
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| **HB166** | **OPERATING BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 7/18/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. Immediately |
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| **HB168** | **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE-HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES** (ARNDT S) To establish an affirmative defense to a release or threatened release of hazardous substances from a facility for certain bona fide prospective purchasers. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/4/2019 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Fourth Hearing) |
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| **HB197** | **OMNIBUS MEASURES ON CORONAVIRUS** (POWELL J, MERRIN D) To continue essential operations of state government and maintain the continuity of the state tax code in response to the declared pandemic and global health emergency related to COVID-19, to make appropriations, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/27/2020 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/27/20 |
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| **HB218** | **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS** (PATTON T) To authorize certain public entities to enter into public-private initiatives with a private party through a public-private agreement regarding public facilities. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/19/2019 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB220** | **GOVERNMENT BLOCKCHAIN USE** (CARFAGNA R) To allow a governmental entity to utilize distributed ledger technology, including blockchain technology. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/12/2019 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB238** | **WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS** (CERA J, SCHERER G) To revise Ohio's whistleblower protection laws. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Civil Justice, (Sixth Hearing) |
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| **HB263** | **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING-CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS** (KOEHLER K) To revise the initial occupational licensing restrictions applicable to individuals convicted of criminal offenses. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/5/2020 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Fifth Hearing) |
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| **HB264** | **WATER DEVELOPMENT-LOAN REFINANCING** (WILKIN S, O'BRIEN M) To allow the Ohio Water Development Authority to provide for the refinancing of loans for certain public water and waste water infrastructure projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/12/2019 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 86-0 |
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| **HB308** | **PTSD COVERAGE - FIRST RESPONDERS** (PATTON T) Concerning workers' compensation and disability retirement for peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate General Government and Agency Review |
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| **HB326** | **PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT-DISABILITY BENEFIT** (MILLER A) To allow a Public Employees Retirement System or School Employees Retirement System disability benefit recipient elected to certain offices to continue receiving a disability benefit during the term of office. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 11/12/2019 - House Insurance, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB340** | **DRAINAGE LAW** (CUPP B) To revise the state's drainage laws. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/11/2020 - House State and Local Government, (Fourth Hearing) |
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| **HB343** | **EMERGENCY WATER AND SEWER** (PATTERSON J) To make an appropriation related to emergency water and sewer system funding. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB368** | **COMPUTER CRIMES** (BALDRIDGE B) To enact the Ohio Computer Crimes Act. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/20/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Criminal Justice, (Fifth Hearing) |
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| **HB370** | **HISTORICAL SYMBOLS, MONUMENTS** (HILLYER B, BALDRIDGE B) To allow the Attorney General to defend political subdivisions in certain actions brought under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or analogous provisions of the Ohio Constitution. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/10/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB380** | **CONTRACTOR PAYMENT DEADLINE** (CROSS J, SWEENEY B) To require owners of construction projects to pay a contractor within thirty-five days of receiving a request for payment. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/5/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB398** | **GENERAL ELECTIONS - LEGAL HOLIDAY** (CRAWLEY E, SWEENEY B) To establish the day of each general election as a legal holiday for which government employees receive paid leave. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 11/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **HB427** | **SAFE DRINKING WATER LAW - CONTAMINANTS** (WIGGAM S) To alter the requirements governing secondary contaminants under the Safe Drinking Water Law. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2020 - House Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB468** | **HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICE WHILE DRIVING** (LIGHTBODY M) To alter the law governing the use of a handheld electronic wireless communications device while driving. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB476** | **EMINENT DOMAIN** (MANNING D, HAMBLEY S) To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2020 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB497** | **SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT** (LIGHTBODY M, RUSSO A) To require the Director of Environmental Protection to adopt rules establishing maximum allowable contaminant levels in drinking water and water quality standards for certain contaminants. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2020 - Referred to Committee House Health |
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| **HB507** | **DELINQUENT TAX LIEN PAYMENTS** (MANNING D) To prohibit enforcement of delinquent property tax liens against owner-occupied homesteads and to require that any delinquent tax be paid before the title to a homestead may be transferred. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2020 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means |
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| **HB557** | **EMERGENCY TELECONFERENCE - PUBLIC BODIES** (SOBECKI L) To authorize public bodies to meet via teleconference and video conference during a public health state of emergency as declared by the Governor, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/16/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HB564** | **PREVENT UTILITY DISRUPTION DURING COVID-19** (LELAND D) To prevent the disruption of utility service during the state of emergency declared regarding COVID-19 and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HB572** | **STATE OFFICES - FEE, PENALTY WAIVERS** (SOBECKI L) To allow the Ohio Public Works Commission, the Ohio Water Development Authority, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, county auditors, and county recorders, during the state of emergency due to COVID-19, to waive certain penalties and late fees, suspend certain reporting requirements, and waive electronic recording fees, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HB573** | **COVID-19 - OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE** (SOBECKI L, BOGGS K) To make COVID-19 an occupational disease under the Workers' Compensation Law under certain circumstances and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HB574** | **TRANSFER FUNDS - UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FUND** (MILLER J) To transfer moneys to the Unemployment Compensation Special Administration Fund, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HB575** | **COUNTY DROP BOX PAYMENTS** (MILLER J) To permit counties to receive payments by a drop box instead of in-person for the duration of the Governor's COVID-19 emergency declaration and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HB581** | **ADDRESS COVID-19 CONCERNS** (CALLENDER J) To address immediate concerns related to COVID-19. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2020 - Introduced |
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| **HJR2** | **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AMENDMENT** (MANNING D, CALLENDER J) Proposing to enact Section 12 of Article XV of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to provide Ohio critical infrastructure protection. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/30/2019 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB1** | **REDUCE REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions and to continue the provision of this act on and after August 18, 2019. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/12/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB2** | **STATEWIDE WATERSHED PLANNING** (PETERSON B, DOLAN M) To create a statewide watershed planning structure for watershed programs to be implemented by local soil and water conservation districts. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Energy and Natural Resources, (Fifth Hearing) |
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| **SB8** | **TAX CREDITS-OHIO OPPORTUNITY ZONE** (SCHURING K) To authorize tax credits for investments in an Ohio Opportunity Zone. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/8/2019 - House Economic and Workforce Development, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB10** | **THEFT IN OFFICE PENALTIES** (WILSON S) To expand the penalties for theft in office based on the amount stolen and to include as restitution audit costs of the entity that suffered the loss. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/29/2019 - Re-Referred to Committee |
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| **SB33** | **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES OFFENSES** (HOAGLAND F) To modify certain criminal offenses with respect to critical infrastructure facilities and to impose fines and civil liability for damage to a critical infrastructure facility. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Public Utilities, (Seventh Hearing) |
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| **SB38** | **WATER AND SEWER FUNDS-MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS** (SCHURING K) To revise the law governing municipal corporation use of water and sewer funds. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/17/2019 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB50** | **INCREASE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL FEE** (EKLUND J) To increase state solid waste disposal fee that is deposited into the Soil and Water Conservation District Assistance Fund, and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/2/2019 - Senate Finance, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB86** | **UTILITY SERVICE RESELLERS** (MAHARATH T) To regulate certain resellers of utility service. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/10/2019 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (Third Hearing) |
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| **SB135** | **DEFERRED COMPENSATION-AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT** (HOTTINGER J) To authorize automatic enrollment of new employees in the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Program. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/15/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate General Government and Agency Review |
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| **SB171** | **17-DAY INTERIM BUDGET** (DOLAN M, O'BRIEN S) To enact a 17-day interim budget. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/30/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Effective Immediately |
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| **SB172** | **30 DAY BWC BUDGET** (DOLAN M, O'BRIEN S) To make operating appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the period beginning July 1, 2019, and ending July 31, 2019. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/30/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Effective Immediately |
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| **SB219** | **APPRENTICE PROGRAM** (WILLIAMS S) To establish a career pathways apprentice program. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2020 - Senate Education, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB244** | **CERTIFICATES OF TRANSITION** (RULLI M) To require fiscal officers of certain political subdivisions to provide certificates of transition to their successors when leaving office. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/10/2019 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB249** | **REQUIRE RESTROOM WITH ADULT CHANGING STATION** (LEHNER P) To enact Matthew's Law, requiring public buildings to have at least one rest room facility with an adult changing station and authorizing an income tax credit for installation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2020 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB273** | **REDUCE PROPERTY TAXES** (WILLIAMS S) To reduce property taxes on owner-occupied homes to the extent the taxes increase by more than 10% per year and to prohibit political subdivisions from placing a lien on property for unpaid water charges. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/3/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB279** | **PROHIBIT PHONES WHILE DRIVING** (MAHARATH T) To generally prohibit the use of electronic wireless devices while driving. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/4/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs |
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| **SB285** | **DISTRACTED DRIVING** (O'BRIEN S, KUNZE S) To revise the laws relative to distracted driving and the use of an electronic wireless communications device while driving. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/4/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs |
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| **SB293** | **OPEN MEETINGS LAW COMPLAINTS** (MANNING N, BLESSING III L) To create a procedure within the Court of Claims to hear complaints alleging a violation of the Open Meetings Law. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/17/2020 - Introduced |
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| **SB294** | **ABSENTEE VOTING** (HUFFMAN M) To extend absent voting by mail for the March 17, 2020, primary election to April 28, 2020, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2020 - Introduced |
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| **SJR1** | **CLEAN WATER IMPROVEMENTS** (GAVARONE T, O'BRIEN S) 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 clean water improvements. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/1/2019 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing) |
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| **SR488** | **SUPPORT CENSUS** (SYKES V) To recognize the importance of the 2020 decennial census and to support all efforts by state and local governments to ensure a complete and accurate count of all Ohioans. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/9/2020 - Introduced |