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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  **July 2021** |

After four months of work the Ohio General Assembly passed the biennial budget bill (HB 110) with bipartisan support, after making historic tax cuts and reforming the state’s school funding formula. The HB 110 Conference Committee met for weeks before advancing the compromise report with unanimous support. The Senate then voted 32-1 and the House voted 82-13, to send the final bill to the governor. The final version of HB 110 provides over $74 billion in GRF spending over the next two years. Favorable revenue forecasts for the state allowed lawmakers to make massive cuts to personal income taxes, totaling more than $1.6 billion. The tax changes include a reduction of 3% in personal income taxes beginning in 2021. Additionally, HB 110 eliminates the highest tax bracket, which reduces the number of brackets from five to four. Just a few years ago Ohio had seven tax brackets. The move to reduce the number of tax brackets is an effort to advance towards the goal of many GOP lawmakers, which is a flat tax rate. HB 110 also increased the income level at which the first tax bracket begins, from $22,150 to $25,000. Even with the massive cut in taxes, legislators were able to make investments in multiple issues, the most high-profile being school funding. After over three-years of work, lawmakers adopted a new system for funding primary and secondary education. The proposal, which was developed by Speaker Bob Cupp and former legislator John Patterson, would establish new individualized base costs per pupil for each of the state’s school districts and determine every district’s capacity for generating revenue locally based on property and income factors within a community. While the proposal met pushback in the Senate, which raised concerns that the costs of the House plan could balloon over its proposed six-year phase-in, the conference committee largely accepted the House plan, but limited the formula to two years, to ensure the bill doesn’t tie the hands of future legislators. In addition to education, HB 110, provides $150 million for building demolition and site revitalization, $350 million for brownfield remediation, and $250 million for broadband expansion grants. The bipartisan vote on the budget was welcomed by many, including Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko, who said, “my hope is that we use this as a starting point, and my hope is that for the next 18 months we continue to work together, we continue to make things happen, because we can, and we must.”

Governor DeWine signed HB 110 on June 30th. Prior to signing the budget bill, the governor issued 14 vetoes striking language impacting numerous issues, including COVID-19 violations, Medicaid managed care procurement, nursing facility quality incentive payments, and the General Assembly’s intervention in lawsuits. The governor’s signature marks the end of the lengthy budget process that started on February 1st, when the DeWine Administration first rolled out the proposal. The governor praised the bill as assisting Ohioans by investing in our communities, businesses, and economy. The Ohio House and Senate can override the governor’s vetoes; however, there has been no indication given from either the House or Senate if they plan to do so.

Governor DeWine also signed the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation (BWC) budget (HB 75). After weeks of negotiations, a conference committee reported the $715 million biennial spending plan. Much of the debate over HB 75 centered on language added by the Senate to address concerns over a provision that would allow a journalist to request names of workers’ compensation claimants. The compromise that was reached, limits that access if the claim resulted from sexual assault in the workplace and prohibits a journalist who obtains that information from releasing it for reasons other than journalism.

Governor Mike DeWine signed HB 168 which included over $2 billion in federal funding provided to Ohio through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). HB 168 became the vehicle for the most recent COVID relief efforts, after it was amended in the Senate. The legislation uses approximately $1.5 billion in ARPA funding to pay off the federal unemployment compensation debt incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Paying off the debt saves Ohioans, specifically businesses, from paying future penalties, as the debt would have started accumulating interest in September. HB 168 also provides $422 million for local governments, including townships, with populations under 50,000. Additionally, the bill creates a $250 million water and sewer infrastructure grant program under the Department of Development and allocates $84 million for pediatric behavioral health services. HB 168 was passed with bipartisan support in both chambers.

CORD was extremely active in recent months advocating for the Water and Sewer Quality Program, which was created in HB 168. The $250 million in federal funding will be administered by the Department of Development and will provide grants aimed at addressing Ohio’s most critical infrastructure needs. The program relies on county engineers, who have 60 days to prioritize projects in their counties and submit those to the Department of Development. In signing the bill, Governor DeWine touted the water and sewer funding as the “beginning of a major effort in Ohio to deal with this challenge.”

The Ohio House of Representatives this month voted to expel former Speaker Larry Householder from office. The historic vote, which marks the first time since before the Civil War that the House voted to expel a member, came after Householder was arrested and indicted on a racketeering charge surrounding HB 6th from the 133rd General Assembly. Householder, the two-time speaker, spoke in his defense, claiming that he has never taken a bribe and that the members of the House didn’t hire him, the people of the 72nd District did, and that supporting the expulsion resolution (HR 69) is “disparaging the people of this state.” Speaker Bob Cupp, who voted in support of the resolution, acknowledged the difficulty of the vote, but said members of the chamber wanted to “put this behind us.”

The House GOP wasted little time replacing Householder, selecting Kevin Miller of Newark to represent the 72nd District. Miller served as the State Highway Patrol’s legislative liaison and prior to that served as a trooper, labor relations advocate, and post commander. “I am honored by the opportunity to serve the 72nd House District and look forward to working on the issues affecting Coshocton, Licking, and Perry counties and ensuring our communities’ voices are heard in Columbus.”

House Democrats will also be required to replace a member, as Rep. Erica Crawley of Columbus was recently selected to fill a vacancy on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. Crawley serves as ranking minority member of the House Finance Committee. She replaces former county commissioner Marilyn Brown, who resigned earlier this year.

Below is a list of legislation we are tracking during the 134th Ohio General Assembly:

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| **HB13** | **MODIFY THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW** (GRENDELL D, FRAIZER M) To modify the campaign finance law and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/15/2021 - House Government Oversight, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB20** | **PROHIBIT FORECLOSURES, EVICTION DURING COVID-19** (LELAND D, CROSSMAN J) To prohibit foreclosure activity and the eviction of residential and commercial tenants during the state of emergency declared regarding COVID-19, to refer such proceedings caused by the state of emergency to mediation, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2021 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB43** | **PUBLIC BODIES - ELECTRONIC MEETINGS** (SOBECKI L, HOOPS J) To authorize public bodies to meet via teleconference and video conference. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2021 - House Government Oversight, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB63** | **AMEND EMINENT DOMAIN LAWS** (CUTRONA A, STOLTZFUS R) To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/2/2021 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB90** | **OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNOR'S AND HEALTH ORDERS** (WIGGAM S, EDWARDS J) To establish legislative oversight of the Governor's executive orders, certain public health orders, and emergency rules, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/24/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB91** | **AUTHORIZE CERTAIN PUBLIC-PRIVATE INITIATIVES** (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:*** | 4/28/2021 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Infrastructure and Rural Development, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB103** | **REGARDS ADOPTION/DURATION EMERGENCY RULES** (MERRIN D) Regarding the adoption and duration of emergency administrative rules. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB110** | **OPERATING BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 7/1/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; effective 7/1/21 |
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| **HB146** | **REGARDS APPLYING PREVAILING WAGE LAW TO PUBLIC PROJECTS** (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:*** | 6/23/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB158** | **PROHIBIT USE OF CERTAIN FIREFIGHTING FOAM FOR TESTING/TRAINING** (BALDRIDGE B) To prohibit the use of class B firefighting foam containing intentionally added PFAS chemicals for testing and training purposes. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/15/2021 - Senate Veterans and Public Safety, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB167** | **PROVIDE RENT, UTILITY ASSISTANCE** (OELSLAGER S) To provide rent and utility assistance and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/11/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. immediately |
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| **HB168** | **UNEMPLOYMENT DEBT** (FRAIZER M) To remit funds from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund to repay unemployment advances, to provide funds to support improvements at pediatric behavioral health care facilities, to require the Development Services Agency to establish the Water and Sewer Quality Program, and to make appropriations. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/29/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. immediately |
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| **HB175** | **DEREGULATE CERTAIN EPHEMERAL WATER FEATURES** (HILLYER B) To deregulate certain ephemeral water features under various water pollution control laws. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/23/2021 - House Agriculture and Conservation, (Fifth Hearing) |
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| **HB177** | **ALLOW GOVERNMENTS TO USE BLOCKCHAIN** (CARFAGNA R, FRAIZER M) To allow a governmental entity to utilize distributed ledger technology, including blockchain technology. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/6/2021 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 95-2 |
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| **HB202** | **VOID ORDERS REQUIRING FACIAL COVERINGS** (POWELL J) To void the order of the Interim Director of Health requiring the use of facial coverings throughout the state and prohibit the Governor or other administrative department heads from requiring the use of facial coverings without approval by the General Assembly. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/22/2021 - House Government Oversight, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB203** | **REQUIRE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE IF EXPERIENCED IN OTHER STATE** (POWELL J) To require an occupational licensing authority to issue a license or government certification to an applicant who holds a license, government certification, or private certification or has satisfactory work experience in another state under certain circumstances and to amend the version of section 3319.22 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect on April 12, 2023, to continue the changes on and after that date. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/9/2021 - **BILL AMENDED**, House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB232** | **OHIO EQUAL PAY ACT** (HOWSE S, MIRANDA J) To enact the Ohio Equal Pay Act to address wage disparities in public and private employment. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/22/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB245** | **EXPAND ELIGIBILITY - COUNTY SEWER DISCOUNTED RATES** (INGRAM C) To expand eligibility for county sewer discounted rates or charges. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/14/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **HB247** | **REVISE PLUMBING INSPECTION LAW** (WEST T, KELLY B) To amend the law related to plumbing inspections. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/26/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Health |
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| **HB267** | **LIMIT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JORDAN K) To limit the duration of public health orders and to allow the General Assembly to act via concurrent resolution in response to a public health emergency if the Governor or Department of Health does not. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **HB269** | **REPEAL SB22** (GALONSKI T) To repeal the version of Section 3 of S.B. 22 of the 134th General Assembly scheduled to take effect on June 23, 2021, to repeal the changes made by S.B. 22 of the 134th General Assembly to the laws governing legislative oversight of certain orders and rules issued by the executive branch, including the establishment of the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **HB275** | **EXPAND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION JOINT PURCHASING AUTHORITY** (LAMPTON B) To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/12/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB299** | **CONSUMER UTILITY BILLING TRANSPARENCY ACT** (SKINDELL M) To enact "The Consumer Utility Billing Transparency Act" requiring the itemization of all riders, charges, taxes, and other costs on certain utility bills. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/19/2021 - House Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB309** | **FAIR, OPEN COMPETITION ACT** (BRINKMAN T) To enact the Fair and Open Competition Act regarding project labor agreements in public improvement contracts. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/18/2021 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor |
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| **HB350** | **PROHIBIT MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINE** (CUTRONA A) To prohibit mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations, requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination, and certain other actions relating to an individual's COVID-19 vaccination or health status and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/22/2021 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing) |
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| **HR19** | **URGE CONGRESS TO CREATE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE BANK** (SOBECKI L, STEPHENS J) To urge the United States Congress to create a National Infrastructure Bank to finance urgently needed infrastructure projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/24/2021 - House Infrastructure and Rural Development, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB9** | **REDUCE REGULATIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions in their administrative rules. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/20/2021 - House Government Oversight, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB15** | **FISCAL OFFICERS-LIABILITY** (WILSON S) To change the circumstances in which certain fiscal officers may be held liable for a loss of public funds. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **SB19** | **REGARDING PROPERTY TAXATION** (SCHAFFER T) To modify the law regarding property taxation and sales and use tax. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/28/2021 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Amended on Floor, Bill Vote 61-36 |
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| **SB22** | **LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JOHNSON T, MCCOLLEY R) To establish legislative oversight of orders issued by the executive branch, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Consideration of Governor's Veto; House Overrides Veto, Vote 62-35 |
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| **SB27** | **AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT-DEFERRED COMPENSATION** (HOTTINGER J) To authorize automatic enrollment of new state government employees in the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Program. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/8/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 9/7/21 |
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| **SB39** | **COOPER'S LAW - CRIMES & RECORD RETENTION** (SCHAFFER T) To eliminate the 20-year statute of limitation for felonious assault and aggravated assault if the victim is a peace officer, to modify the law regarding records retention schedules developed by counties, municipal corporations, and townships, to modify the penalties for aggravated assault, tampering with evidence, falsification, and falsification in a theft offense, and to name this act Cooper's Law. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/9/2021 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB56** | **INDEMNITY-DESIGN CONTRACTS** (BLESSING III L) To regulate the use of indemnity provisions in professional design contracts related to public improvements. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/22/2021 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB78** | **JUNETEENTH-LEGAL HOLIDAY** (CRAIG H, BRENNER A) To establish the nineteenth of June as Juneteenth, a legal holiday for which government employees receive paid leave. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight and Reform |
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| **SB83** | **BROWNFIELDS** (WILLIAMS S, RULLI M) To require the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a study to determine where brownfield sites are located in this state and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/23/2021 - House Agriculture and Conservation, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB84** | **CLEAN OHIO REVITALIZATION FUND** (WILLIAMS S, RULLI M) To make changes to the law relating to the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2021 - Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB95** | **REGULATE UTILITY RESELLERS** (MAHARATH T) To require refunds to utility customers who have been improperly charged and to regulate certain resellers of utility service. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/31/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB96** | **PREVENT UTILITY DISTRUPTION-COVID** (WILLIAMS S) To prevent the disruption of utility service during the state of emergency declared regarding COVID-19 and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/31/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB105** | **MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES** (SYKES V, SCHURING K) To require political subdivisions to recognize state certifications of minority business enterprises. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/10/2021 - Referred to Committee House Economic and Workforce Development |
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| **SB110** | **RENT, UTILITY ASSISTANCE** (O'BRIEN S, WILSON S) To provide rent and utility assistance and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance |
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| **SB131** | **LICENSURE RECIPROCITY** (ROEGNER K, MCCOLLEY R) To require an occupational licensing authority to issue a license or government certification to an applicant who holds a license, government certification, or private certification or has satisfactory work experience in another state under certain circumstances and to amend the version of section 3319.22 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect on April 12, 2023, to continue the changes on and after that date. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/26/2021 - Senate Workforce and Higher Education, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB143** | **ADOPT MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL-ALUMINUM** (O'BRIEN S) To require the Director of Environmental Protection to adopt a maximum contaminant level for aluminum in drinking water. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/15/2021 - Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Third Hearing) |
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| **SB152** | **FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE TASK FORCE** (HOAGLAND F) To establish the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Task Force in the office of the Attorney General and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/21/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |
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| **SB175** | **LABOR AGREEMENTS-PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTS** (LANG G) To enact the Fair and Open Competition Act regarding project labor agreements in public improvement contracts. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/5/2021 - Introduced |
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| **SB180** | **EXPANDED DISCOUNTED SEWER RATES** (THOMAS C) To expand eligibility for county sewer discounted rates or charges. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/8/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB193** | **UNPAID WATER CHARGES** (WILLIAMS S) To prohibit political subdivisions from placing a lien on property for unpaid water charges. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/2/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Energy and Public Utilities |
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| **SJR2** | **PERMIT BONDS-CLEAN WATER IMPROVEMENTS** (GAVARONE T, YUKO K) 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:*** | 4/21/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |