**Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts
*Legislative Report – February 1, 2023***

**GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.
RH RESOURCES**

**Budget “Blue Books” for F.Y. 2024-2025**

The Office of Budget and Management (OBM) released the “Blue Book” outlining Gov. DeWine’s budget recommendations for the General Assembly for the F.Y. 2024-2025 operating budget. Released late on Jan. 31, [Book Three](https://archives.obm.ohio.gov/Files/Budget_and_Planning/Operating_Budget/Fiscal_Years_2024-2024/ExecutiveBudget/Budget_Highlights.pdf) is a 20-page document outlining the highlights of the executive proposal including a broad breakdown of the “All-Funds” budgets totaling in $103.3 billion for F.Y. 2024 and $99.8 billion for F.Y. 2025. The full budget language will be released when it is officially introduced in the Ohio House. The budget bill will also receive a bill number after it is introduced, traditionally by the chair of the House Finance Committee, or Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville) for the 135th General Assembly. In the meantime, all of the budget documents that have been released so far can be found on OBM’s website [here](https://obm.ohio.gov/areas-of-interest/budget-and-planning/03_operating-budget/01-fiscal-years-2024-2025).

**Governor DeWine’s State of the State Address**

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine delivered his State of the State Address on Tuesday, Jan. 31, to a joint session of the Ohio General Assembly in the House Chambers. As expected, during his [speech](https://www.hannah.com/ShowDocument.aspx?ItemID=136457) Gov. DeWine detailed some of the key elements of his F.Y. 2024-2025 budget proposal. Many of the governor’s priorities for the upcoming budget focused on children and families, including a new Department of Children and Youth Services to consolidate programs now spanning six agencies in one place. The plan also detailed continued implementation of the Cupp-Patterson school funding formula, funding for literacy instruction, a new $2,500 per child state tax deduction, an expansion of the income threshold for EdChoice to 400% of the federal poverty level, and $300 million for upgrades to career-tech programs. In addition to child and family initiatives, Gov. DeWine also highlighted a $2.5 billion “All Ohio Future Fund” for major economic development projects throughout the state, more resources for community mental health services, new state-level tax credits for housing development, and a new H2Ohio water-quality initiative focused on rivers.

**135th General Assembly Leadership**

The 135th General Assembly convened on Jan. 3, 2023, for Opening Day ceremonies to officially start the new two-year session. To kick off the new GA, members of the Ohio House elected State Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) to serve as Speaker of the House following months of a highly contested race. Speaker Stephens was elected by his colleagues over Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Monclova Twp.), who was initially chosen for the job by caucus members in an informal, closed-door vote shortly after November’s general election. Speaker Stephens beat Rep. Merrin by a vote of 54-43 and was immediately sworn into office, accepting the gavel from former House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima). The House then proceeded to elect Rep. Scott Oelslager (R-Canton) as Speaker Pro Tempore on Opening Day, but did not elect the rest of the majority leadership team until weeks later on Jan. 24. When the House returned, members voted 64-35 to adopt House Rules, as well as named the remaining members of the majority leadership team. With a vote of 62-34, the House elected Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) as majority floor leader, Rep. Jon Cross (R-Kenton) as assistant majority floor leader, Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) as majority whip, and Rep. Sharon Ray (R-Wadsworth) as assistant majority whip.

As a part of Opening Day session, the House also voted to elect members of the minority leadership team. The House re-elected Rep. Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington) as Minority Leader for her second term. Joining Leader Russo will be Rep. Dontavius Jarrells (D-Columbus) as assistant minority leader, Rep. Jessica Miranda (D-Forest Park) as minority whip, and Rep. Tavia Galonski (D-Akron) as assistant minority whip.

In the Senate, both the majority and minority leadership teams were elected as expected. Current Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) was re-elected by his Republican colleagues for the remainder of his term. President Huffman will be joined by Sen. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) as president pro tempore, Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) as majority floor leader, and Sen. Theresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green) as majority whip. For the minority leadership team, the Senate Democrats have elected Sen. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) to serve as minority leader for the 135th General Assembly. Leader Antonio will be joined by Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) as assistant minority leader, Sen. Kent Smith (D-Euclid) as minority whip, and Sen. Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo) as assistant minority whip.

**135th General Assembly Committee Assignments**

In addition to new leadership teams, the House and Senate have also named new committees and new chairs. The Senate will have [19 standing committees](https://www.gongwer-oh.com/public/Standing_Committees_135th.pdf), and while many of the panels are similar to last session, there are a few restructured committees and new committee chairs. Additionally, the Senate will be debuting two brand new standing committees – Community Revitalization, chaired by Sen. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott), and Medicaid, chaired by Sen. Mark Romanchuk (R-Ontario). The House has also released its list of [28 standing committees](https://www.gongwer-oh.com/public/135_House_committees.pdf) for the 135th GA. Many of the House committees from the previous session will be led by new chairs and vice chairs, and the House will also be debuting several brand-new standing committees. A few of the new panels include Aviation & Aerospace, Constitutional Resolutions, Homeland Security, and Pensions. The House has also opted to separate last session’s Transportation & Infrastructure Committee into two separate panels, as well as splitting the Health Committee into Public Health Policy and Health Provider Services. House Republicans have so far only named the committee chairs and vice chairs. [House Democrats](https://www.gongwer-oh.com/public/135DemsCommitteeAppointments.pdf), however, have already announced committee assignments in a memo sent Jan. 24.

**Below is a list of legislation we are tracking on your behalf:**

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| **SB3** | **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM** (SCHURING K) To create the Ohio Community Revitalization Program, authorizing nonrefundable income tax credits for undertaking community projects. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-3> |
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| **SB23** | **PURCHASING AUTHORITY-CONSTRUCTION SERVICES** (LANG G) To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 1/18/2023 - Introduced |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-23> |
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