BALLOT ISSUES

The ballot campaign to halt energy subsidies in HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) mounted a legal broadside against Ohio's referendum process in federal court, accusing the Ohio Constitution and the Ohio General Assembly of violating U.S. constitutional guarantees on the right to freedom of speech and association, freedom to petition the government for redress, and "the fundamental right to vote." Committee members for Ohioans against Corporate Bailouts, which opposes statewide subsidies for FirstEnergy nuclear plants, filed the lawsuit against Secretary of State Frank LaRose in U.S. District Court Monday. They say referendum requirements in the Ohio Constitution and Revised Code run afoul of federal protections by requiring campaign workers to publicly register with the secretary of state's office and secure approval of their referendum summary from the attorney general's office before circulating petitions, thereby delaying signature gathering and exposing workers to "harassment, assault and bribery."

FY20-21 BUDGET

The state brought in $37.3 million more in tax revenue during September than it had estimated, or about 2 percent over, according to preliminary figures released by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). The state is now nearly $71.4 million over estimates after the first quarter. The increase was despite the non-auto sales and use tax being under estimates by 0.9 percent, or $6.9 million below estimates. The auto sales and use tax was $2.4 million above estimates, and both combined were $4.5 million below estimates.

CENSUS

The most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) indicate that 10 Ohio counties have "flipped," so that they now are home to more adults over the age of 65 than children under the age of 18. Belmont County was the first Ohio county to flip in 2015, followed by Erie County in 2016, and Ottawa, Trumbull, Mahoning, Jefferson, Monroe and Noble Counties following in 2017. Now 2018 ACS data show that Lake and Columbiana counties have joined the group.

ECONOMY

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Ohio's forecasted August 2019 annualized employment growth rate is 1.12 percent. The following Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) are also predicted to grow: the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA at 0.22 percent; the Cleveland-Elyria MSA at 0.83 percent; the Dayton MSA at 0.85 percent; the Akron MSA at 0.90 percent; the Toledo MSA at 1.05 percent; the Canton-Massillon MSA at 1.41 percent; the Cincinnati MSA at 1.57 percent; and the Columbus MSA at 1.96 percent.

EDUCATION

Citing her passion to lift up her students and nurture a love of learning, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria surprised students and staff at Norwood Middle School by announcing Leila Kubesch's selection as Ohio's 2020 "Teacher of the Year."

The Youngstown City Schools Board of Education moved one step closer to replacing its elected members with mayoral appointees with Thursday's first meeting of the state panel that will recommend a slate of candidates for the positions. The Superintendent's Nominating Panel, created as part of the academic
distress law enacted in 2015 via 131-HB70 (Brenner-Driehaus), was to compile and submit to the city mayor at least 10 potential appointees for five appointed slots on a new board of education.

ELECTIONS 2020

Betsy Rader, a Geauga County attorney who made an unsuccessful bid for Congress last year, announced she will run for the Democratic nomination for the Ohio Senate in 2020. She is seeking the 18th Ohio Senate District seat that is currently held by Sen. John Eklund (R-Chardon), who is term limited. Rader ran for the 14th Congressional District in 2018 but lost to U.S. Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Novelty).

ENERGY

The Ohio Senate will follow passage and signing of energy subsidy bill HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) with a policy focus on electric reliability as part of its "comprehensive" energy overhaul, said Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee Chairman Steve Wilson (R-Maineville). It will not address a submetering debate that has confronted capital-area lawmakers and that prompted renewed legislation Tuesday from Sen. Tina Maharath (D-Canal Winchester).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Speaker of the House Larry Householder (R-Glenford) announced Monday afternoon that Lawrence County Auditor Jason Stephens had been selected to succeed former Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) in the 93rd House District seat. He was sworn in on Thursday, Oct. 10. That district includes Gallia and Jackson counties, most of Lawrence County and part of Vinton County.

Cindy Abrams, a member of Harrison City Council and a former Cincinnati police officer, was sworn into office, replacing Rep. Louis Blessing III (R-Cincinnati) in the 29th House District. Blessing has moved to the Ohio Senate.

The Senate welcomed former Rep. Louis Blessing III (R-Cincinnati) to its ranks on Wednesday, filling the vacancy created with the retirement of former Sen. Lou Terhar (R-Cincinnati).

The Senate Wednesday unanimously passed a bill that would require hospitals to disclose the costs of procedures in advance. Similar language had been included by the Senate in HB166 (Oelslager), the biennial budget, but was vetoed by Gov. Mike DeWine. Sen. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) said his SB97 would require hospitals to provide good faith cost estimates for procedures at least seven days in advance of the procedures. He noted that hospitals would be the only entity required to give these estimates. This bill, according to Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina), has less strict guidelines than the budget version and provides a little more flexibility while getting consumers more information.

The Senate also unanimously passed legislation that will recognize Feb. 11, 2020 as "James 'Buster' Douglas 42:1 Odds Day," marking the 30th anniversary of when Douglas, an Ohio native, defeated boxing champion Mike Tyson despite the odds being 42 to one against Douglas winning. Sen. Jay Hottinger (R-Newark) said SCR4 (Hottinger) will also serve as an opportunity to honor the success of anyone who overcomes long odds every day. Douglas himself was in the chamber for the vote and was recognized by the Senate.

The Senate unanimously adopted SB76 (Lehner-Maharath) designating the first week of May as "Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week," which sponsor Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) said is a rare disorder that features repetitive, involuntary jerking movements. Sen. Tina Maharath (D-Columbus) said the disorder can be difficult to diagnose, especially because a patient might not be aware of the symptoms.
The Senate concurred in House amendments to SB52 (Gavarone), which creates the civilian cyber security reserve forces, among other cybersecurity measures. It now goes to the governor for his signature.

Sen. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) has been appointed chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) announced Wednesday. She replaces Lou Terhar, who recently retired. Roegner previously served as vice chair of the committee. In addition, Obhof appointed Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) to the Senate Finance Committee.

Mounting rare opposition for his office, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost told senators Wednesday the pre-trial mental health exemption for capital murder defendants in HB136 (Hillyer) would "stand Western jurisprudence on its head" and further mire a legal process "so deep that it is nearly impenetrable." Yost joined the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association (OPAA) and Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office for opponent testimony on a bill that passed the House by a bipartisan margin of 4-to-1 and has since prompted Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) to remark, "maybe we need to rethink current law."

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) Wednesday appeared before the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee to give sponsor testimony on his SR376, a resolution that urges Congress to adopt the trade agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada, also known as USMCA. The agreement negotiated between the Trump administration and the two neighboring countries was signed by President Donald Trump and the leaders of Canada and Mexico in November 2018, and has already been ratified by Mexico's Senate.

At Wednesday evening's meeting of the Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee, opponents of a proposal to place photographs on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit cards said the measure would cost the state far more to implement than it would save in deterred fraud, and said federal regulations would render the effort ineffective. Because federal law mandates that any family member in a household receiving SNAP benefits can use the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card with the correct Personal Identification Number (PIN), opponents said placing a photograph on the EBT card would only confuse retailers and would not serve to prevent existing methods of fraud.

Thursday's House session saw the passage of two bills and the seating of two new members. Jason Stephens, the former Lawrence County auditor, was sworn-in to replace Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) in the 93rd House District, while Cindy Abrams, a member of the Harrison City Council and a former Cincinnati police officer, was seated in the 29th House District, replacing now Sen. Louis Blessing III (R-Cincinnati). Both bills on the calendar were unanimously passed. They included the tax omnibus bill, SB26 (Kunze), and SB24 (Wilson) to create the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Task Force.

The Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) was pressed for a policy commitment Wednesday on whether the office has statutory authority to inspect county jails along with state prisons, a question following Gov. Mike DeWine's move last spring expanding the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's (DRC) Bureau of Adult Detention. After the introduction of Travis Ricketts, former policy staffer to House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford), as deputy director and a brief agency update from Executive Director Charlie Adams, Sen. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland) repeated her question from last May on CIIC's potential oversight of jails, including the troubled Cuyahoga County Corrections Center.

The House State and Local Government Committee held discussions on a number of state licenses Wednesday, hearing from representatives of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Common Sense Initiative (CSI).

In other action, the House Civil Justice Committee reported out HB209 (Carruthers-Kick) which abolishes the estate by dower; the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out HB293 (Cross), an overpass designation, and HB303 (Romanchuk) and HB334 (Hillyer), both highway naming bills; the
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee reported out SB150 (Maharath) which designates the first week of May as "Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week" and SB59 (Antonio) which deals with naloxone dispensing without a prescription; and the Senate Judiciary Committee reported out SB58 (Gavarone) which addresses nonviolent criminals with mental illness.

**GOVERNOR**

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Richard B. Birt of Greenville (Darke County) reappointed to the Reclamation Commission for a term beginning June 29, 2019 and ending June 28, 2024.

- Edward C. Spiker of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Reclamation Commission for a term beginning Oct. 4, 2019 and ending June 28, 2024.


- Timothy D. Cassady of Mechanicsburg (Champaign County) to the Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission for a term beginning Oct. 4, 2019 and ending July 1, 2023.

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

Ohio State University (OSU) launched the public phase of its "Time and Change: The Ohio State Campaign" on Friday. "Time and Change" has a financial goal of $4.5 billion -- the largest in Ohio State's history. The campaign focuses on three core areas: student success, discovery and healthy vibrant communities. University, academic, medical center and volunteer leaders have been working together on campaign planning for the last four years. The quiet phase of the campaign began Oct. 1, 2016. Nearly 500,000 donors have contributed over $1.7 billion so far. "Time and Change" strives to engage 1 million supporters.

Ohio University (OU) suspended all chapter operations for Interfraternity Council (IFC) chapters until further notice on Thursday. The decision came from Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students Jenny Hall-Jones, after the university received hazing allegations that encompassed seven IFC chapters. Two chapters, ACACIA and Alpha Epsilon Pi, have been placed on "cease and desist" from Community Standards and Student Responsibility (CSSR). OU plans to send notices of investigation and cease and desist letters from CSSR to the other five chapters in the next few days, as well as release their names.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) will deliver the commencement address for fall Ohio State University graduates, the university announced Tuesday. Approximately 3,600 students will receive degrees during the commencement ceremony on Sunday, Dec. 15 in the Jerome Schottenstein Center.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Director Mary Mertz designated the Cuyahoga River Water Trail as Ohio's 13th state water trail, the department announced. The trail's designation coincides with the 50th anniversary of the last burning of the river, ODNR said. Cuyahoga River Water Trail Partners -- a grassroots collaboration of more than 25 organizations, agencies, and communities -- worked to develop the trail, which spans the entire length of the river.
As Ohioans and visitors to the Buckeye State seek glimpses of the leaves changing to red, yellow and orange this autumn, ODNR plans to help people find the best locations to enjoy the state's seasonal colors. This fall, the ODNR Division of Forestry is expecting color to peak in the northern third of Ohio the fourth week of October, the fifth week of October for the central third, and the first week of November for the southern third. The current forecast, along with informational videos, is available at www.fallcolor.ohiodnr.gov.

The recently-dedicated Andreoff Wildlife Area, located in Hardin County, will add more than 700 acres of public land in Northwest Ohio, according to the ODNR Division of Wildlife. The wildlife area provides opportunities for people to hunt, trap and view wildlife, ODNR said.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Andrew Hanauer, founder and director of the One America Movement and the director of Faith-Based Partnerships at Repair the World focused on the effects of political polarization and the way AmeriCorps strengthens communities in his keynote speech at the AmeriCorps 25th anniversary event hosted on Tuesday in the Riffe Center. Hanauer said polarization is an increasing problem across the country, and organizations like AmeriCorps help strengthen communities and undercut divisiveness by bringing people from different backgrounds together to serve. He said service makes people grow together and builds the "connective tissue" of communities.
**Bills Introduced Since 10/7/2019**

**HB356**
**CLEVELAND HOUSING COURT JURISDICTION** (PATTON T) To grant the Cleveland Housing Court jurisdiction in any review or appeal of a final order of an administrative body that relates to a local building, health, or safety code.

**HB357**
**CLEVELAND MUNICIPAL COURT JURISDICTION** (PATTON T) To grant the Housing Division of the Cleveland Municipal Court concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Common Pleas in criminal cases related to environmental pollution.

**HB358**
**DAY DESIGNATION - GENE KRANZ** (SOBECKI L, SHEEHY M) To designate the seventeenth day of August as "Eugene 'Gene' F. Kranz Day."

**HB359**
**VETERAN PLATES-WORLD WAR II** (WIGGAM S, RICHARDSON T) To allow veterans of World War II to obtain World War II license plates without paying motor vehicle registration taxes and fees.

**HB360**
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS-WATER STATIONS** (CRAWLEY E, HILLYER B) To require water bottle filling stations and drinking fountains in certain public school buildings.

**HB361**
**OHIO TUSKEGEE AIRMEN DAY** (UPCHURCH T, STRAHORN F) To designate May 7 as "Ohio Tuskegee Airmen Day."

**HB362**
**MASKED INTIMIDATION OFFENSE** (PLUMMER P, LANG G) To create the crime of masked intimidation, a misdemeanor of the first degree.

**HB363**
**COMING OUT DAY** (BOYD J) To designate October 11 as "Coming Out Day."

**HB364**
**AORTIC ANEURYSM AWARENESS DAY** (MANNING G) To designate February 13 as "Aortic Aneurysm Awareness Day."

**HB365**
**CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY COUNSELOR REQUIREMENTS** (MANNING G) To revise the requirements for a chemical dependency counselor II license.

**HB366**
**CRIMINAL CHILD ENTICEMENT PROHIBITION** (MIRANDA J, PLUMMER P) To revise the general prohibition against criminal child enticement.

**HB367**
**SCHOOL COUNSELOR HIRING PRACTICES** (MIRANDA J, MANCHESTER S) To require the Department of Education to make recommendations for a job description for school counselors and to designate at least one staff member as a school counselor liaison.

**SB210**
**INCOME TAX JOINT FILER CREDIT** (ROEGNER K) To change the computation of the income tax joint filer credit for taxable years beginning in or after 2021.

**SB211**
**CAMPAIGN FUNDS-CHILD CARE** (MAHARATH T) To allow a candidate to use campaign funds to pay certain child care costs.

**SB212**
**AUTHORIZE TOWNSHIPS-EXEMPT PROPERTY TAX** (SCHURING K) To authorize townships and municipal corporations to designate areas within which new homes and improvements to existing homes are wholly or partially exempted from property taxation.

**SB213**
**VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION** (BRENNER A) To modify Veterans Service Commission Law and to mandate each county veterans service commission to establish a veterans service committee.

**SB214**
**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN LICENSE PLATE** (WILLIAMS S) To create the "National Council of Negro Women" license plate.

**SB215**
**PROTECTED COMMUNICATIONS** (HUFFMAN M) To enact the Ohio Citizen Participation Act to provide protections to persons who engage in specified protected communications.

**SB216**
**SCHOOL DISTRICT TAXES** (ROEGNER K) To allow school districts to exempt recipients of the existing homestead exemption from additional school district taxes.

**Tracked Bills**
**LOCAL GOVT ROAD IMPROVEMENT FUND** (GREENSPAN D) To provide for a new Local Government Road Improvement Fund for local governments to fund road improvements.

*Current Status:* 2/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

**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

**PROPERTY VALUE CONTESTS** (MERRIN D) To require local governments that contest property values to formally pass an authorizing resolution for each contest and to notify property owners.

*Current Status:* 4/9/2019 - REPORTED OUT, House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)

**PROPERTY TAX EXEMPT-RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION** (MERRIN D) To enact the "Affordable Homebuilding and Housing Act" to temporarily exempt from property tax the increased value of land subdivided for residential development.

*Current Status:* 4/10/2019 - House Economic and Workforce Development, (Second Hearing)

**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:* 9/25/2019 - Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Second Hearing)

**TAX EXEMPTION-GOODS MOVEMENT** (ANTANI N) To exempt from sales and use tax things used primarily to move completed manufactured products or general merchandise.

*Current Status:* 10/15/2019 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

**OPEN MEETINGS-VISITORS BUREAUS** (BRINKMAN T, BECKER J) To require certain convention and visitors' bureaus to make available for inspection by the public all meeting minutes, vendor payment information, and financial information.

*Current Status:* 4/2/2019 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

**ABOLISH ESTATE BY DOWER** (CARRUTHERS S, KICK D) To abolish the estate by dower.

*Current Status:* 10/8/2019 - REPORTED OUT, House Civil Justice, (Fourth Hearing)

**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.

**HB251**
**CONTRACT ACTION-PERIOD OF LIMITATION** (LANG G, HILLYER B) To shorten the period of limitations for actions upon a contract.
**Current Status:** 10/16/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Fifth Hearing)

**HB252**
**LAND REUTILIZATION** (GREENSPAN D) To create the Land Reutilization Demolition Program and to make an appropriation.
**Current Status:** 6/30/2019 - Re-Referred to Committee

**HB288**
**EMINENT DOMAIN** (MANNING D) To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency.
**Current Status:** 10/16/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Fifth Hearing)

**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:** 10/16/2019 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing)

**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)

**SB39**
**MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS-TAX CREDIT** (SCHURING K) To authorize an insurance premiums tax credit for capital contributions to transformational mixed use development projects.
**Current Status:** 10/16/2019 - House Economic and Workforce Development, (First Hearing)

**SB95**
**STATE AND LOCAL TAX INDUCEMENTS** (KUNZE S, PETERSON B) To enhance state and local tax inducements for businesses making substantial fixed asset and employment investments and their suppliers.
**Current Status:** 6/19/2019 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

**SB180**
**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BONDS** (SCHAFFER T) To authorize the issuance of industrial development bonds by a township and to authorize counties, townships, and municipal corporations to issue industrial development bonds without requiring the county, township, or municipal corporation to designate a community improvement corporation as its agency for industrial, commercial, distribution, and research development.
**Current Status:** 10/1/2019 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing)