



### Week of October 9, 2023

#### **House passes property valuation bill, Senate review to begin next week**

Massive increases in property values across many Ohio counties would be softened under a plan passed this week by the Ohio House of Representatives. [House Bill \(HB\) 187](#), sponsored by Reps. **Thomas Hall** and **Adam Bird**, passed by a vote of 58-26 and now advances to the Senate where the Senate Ways and Means Committee will likely hold a hearing on the bill next week. For weeks now, the committee has received an advanced education and deliberation on the topic due to its hearings on the Senate companion bill to HB 187 – [Senate Bill 153](#).

After passing the measure, House Speaker **Jason Stephens** dismissed the idea of the state providing funding for property tax relief, citing complexities across properties and local taxing jurisdictions. He also praised a problematic provision that swaps the final authority on determining property values for reappraisals and updates from the state Tax Commissioner to county auditors. Finally, Stephens highlighted the forthcoming analysis by the newly created but uninitiated Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform.

“(HB 187) puts the property tax calculation more into the local governments as opposed to here in Columbus,” Stephens [told the Columbus Dispatch](#).

#### **Despite meeting postponement, majority of state school board members convene**

A majority of the 19-member State Board of Education convened Tuesday, despite an announcement last week postponing the panel’s October meeting based on the advice of legal counsel and pending litigation. The 11 members, consisting of seven elected Democrat members, three elected Republican members, and one Republican appointee, allege the postponement violated the board's policy manual, defied the temporary restraining order, and left unfinished business unfinished. The board members, who did not return for a meeting on Wednesday, crafted a list of nearly two dozen questions for Board President **Paul LaRue**, which ranged from who was responsible for the meeting's postponement to whether interim Superintendent of Public Instruction **Chris Woolard** still works for the board. Neither staff from the Department of Education and Workforce nor interim State Superintendent Woolard attended the meeting.

#### **School Bus Safety Working Group hears district testimonial on school bus seat belts**

**Joelle Magyar**, superintendent of the Avon Lake City School District, reported on Thursday to the School Bus Safety Working Group about her district’s experience with a program that district pilot that required seat belt use on two school buses. [Magyar discussed](#) the challenges of the pilot, including additional funding needed to purchase seat belt-equipped buses, longer route times, and the administrative challenges related to transporting students on those buses. Recommending against requiring seat belts, Magyar instead recommended new safety enhancements, the installation of exterior cameras on buses, increased penalties for illegally passing a bus, and changes to bus driver training, among others.

### **Committee action**

- [SB 153](#), which modifies the property valuation process, received a fourth hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, despite no in-person witnesses in appearance and only two written testimonies submitted.
- [SB 162](#), which requires academic intervention services for students who score “limited” on either the English language arts or math state tests, received a first hearing for sponsor testimony from Sen. **Andrew Brenner** in the Senate Education Committee.
- [SB 168](#), which contains various education deregulation and flexibility items, also received a first hearing for sponsor testimony from Sen. **Michele Reynolds** in the Senate Education Committee.
- [HB 183](#), which requires single-sex restroom and locker room facilities, received a second hearing for opponent testimony in the House Higher Education Committee.
- [HB 206](#), which creates enhanced student expulsion policies, received a second hearing for proponent testimony in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee.
- [HB 214](#), which requires a staff policy prohibiting certain beliefs and affiliations concerning political movements, also received a second hearing for proponent testimony in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee.
- [HB 250](#), which revises the Military Enlistment diploma seal, was amended to rename the seal to be the “Military Seal” and was subsequently passed by the House Primary and Secondary Education committee.
- [HB 47](#), which requires AEDs in schools and other places, received a first hearing for sponsor testimony in the Senate Health Committee.

### **On Tap – Active Bills Next Week**

- [HB 139](#) (fourth hearing) - Assault penalties against sports officials – A possible vote and all testimony in the House Criminal Justice Committee
- [HB 183](#) (third hearing) - Single-Sex Bathrooms – Proponent testimony in the House Higher Education Committee

The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee is expected to meet with an agenda posted on Friday afternoon. The Senate Education Committee will not meet next week.

### **Heard around the Statehouse**

"Our challenge, quite candidly, is it's been difficult to move forward with this program. The money's been provided by the legislature, but we have an injunction now that prohibits us, prohibits the department from moving forward and so we hope that gets resolved very quickly because the science of reading is the key." - Gov. **Mike DeWine** [speaking to reporters](#) on the education department litigation and Science of Reading provisions, which are on hold due to the lawsuit.