



Week of November 6, 2023

DeWine nominates Dackin to be DEW director

Gov. **Mike DeWine** on Thursday [announced](#) **Steve Dackin** as his selection to serve as director of the Department of Education and Workforce. Dackin must appear before the Senate Education Committee for a confirmation hearing and then receive a confirmation vote by the Ohio Senate in order for his nomination to be permanent. Dackin previously held such roles as member of the State Board of Education, superintendent of the Reynoldsburg City School District, superintendent of school and community partnerships at Columbus State Community College, and briefly as state Superintendent of Public Instruction.

While a timeline is not yet known on the Senate confirmation process or when Dackin will name his two deputies, sources indicate an announcement will happen soon. Both deputies, one overseeing K-12 education and the other overseeing career-technical education, must undergo the same confirmation process.

Senate poised to expand homestead exemption

Rather than modifying the 20-mill floor or providing a three-year smoothing of property values via House Bill 187, the Senate appears ready to expand the homestead exemption to apply to all senior citizens in Ohio. [Speaking to reporters](#), Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair **Bill Blessing** said his chamber is “coalescing” around the notion, which would qualify all senior citizens but utilize household income to determine the amount of the exemption. Currently, the homestead exemption exempts the first \$25,000 in fair market value of a property owner’s home, and that amount is adjusted to inflation as a result of the biennial budget bill. The current homestead exemption eligibility is for homeowners who have an adjusted gross income of \$36,100 or less. Despite the Senate’s intent to further this proposal, the Senate Ways and Means Committee will not meet next week.

Election results

Ohio voters on Tuesday approved two statewide ballot issues to enshrine reproductive rights into the state constitution and enact laws legalizing recreational marijuana. Issue 1, the abortion rights amendment, passed 56.62% to 43.38%, according to unofficial results from the Secretary of State. Issue 2 passed 56.97% to 43.03%. Both issues are notably lower than the 60% threshold Statehouse Republicans had hoped to establish via a failed constitutional amendment at the August special election. DeWine, House Speaker **Jason Stephens**, and Senate President **Matt Huffman** are meeting Monday to discuss what changes lawmakers can make to the new marijuana laws that take effect on Dec. 7.

Meanwhile, unofficial election results indicate voters approved 115 of the 167 school levies, a passage rate of 69%. 93 of the 99 renewal levies were successful, a passage rate of 91%. Other levies requesting new money were less successful, with 22 of 68 issues passing, a 32% passage rate.

Heard Around the Statehouse

“I think the schools probably are (in support of this plan), not that they were vocally opposed before, but it was a relatively large local hit with the three-year valuation average and now it's not. I think the opposition to this legislation largely goes away with this.” - Sen. **Bill Blessing**, [speaking to reporters](#) about his new plan to address property valuation increases by expanding the homestead exemption.