



Week of September 18, 2023

Judge temporarily halts creation of Department of Education and Workforce, hearing scheduled

A Franklin County judge on Thursday issued a 14-day temporary restraining order halting the creation of the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). House Bill (HB) 33, the biennial budget bill, created the new state agency, transferring to it most of the duties and powers of the State Board of Education.

The ruling, issued by Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judge Karen Held Phipps, was in response to a lawsuit filed two days earlier by seven elected Democrat members of the State Board of Education who allege the budget changes regarding DEW and the State Board violate various provisions of the Ohio Constitution.

A hearing is scheduled for Oct. 2 – the day before the DEW creation is set to go into effect – for a Franklin County magistrate to consider whether to issue a preliminary injunction.

Property valuation bill headed for October House vote

By a vote of 13-3, the House Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday advanced [House Bill 187](#), which would base property valuations equally on the past three years of property valuation studies. Prior to passage, the committee amended the bill to give county auditors, rather than the state Tax Commissioner, the final authority regarding the property tax equalization of a county's property.

Given the political pressure to act on soaring property values statewide, the House is likely to pass the bill at its next meeting – Oct. 11 – and is expected to amend the bill on the floor to make the bill go into immediate effect, rather than the standard 91 days. The Senate, meanwhile, has already begun vetting the proposal via a companion bill, Senate Bill 153, which received sponsor testimony this week. Senate President **Matt Huffman** also told reporters this week this issue is a priority for his chamber.

Under the current legislative schedule, the soonest the bill could reach Gov. **Mike DeWine**'s desk would be Nov. 15, dangerously close to the deadline some county auditors have unofficially said must be met to properly implement the bill's provisions.

Ohio Redistricting Commission Reviews Legislative Maps

The Ohio Redistricting Commission, composed of five Republicans and two Democrats, met this week and approved the use of Republican-developed maps as the working versions of the maps as the panel continues its work. Prior to approving those maps for consideration, the panel voted down Democrat-developed maps on a party-line vote.

The commission is co-chaired by Auditor of State **Keith Faber** and Sen. **Nickie Antonio** and must approve state legislative maps by Oct. 23 according to Secretary of State **Frank LaRose**, also a commission member. Commission meetings are scheduled through Sept. 26.

Heard around the Statehouse

“The board members involved have failed to effectively do their jobs, and now they want to hold the

system hostage. Drop the lawsuit, and let Ohio build a better education and workforce system for Ohio's kids.” - Lieutenant Governor **Jon Husted**, responding [via a statement](#) to the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the creation of the Department of Education and Workforce.

“Ultimately, yes.” - **Aaron Rausch**, ODE Chief of Budget and School Funding, responding to a question from a member of the State Board of Education who asked whether the panel must address a budget shortfall in fiscal year 2025 caused by insufficient funding from the state operating budget.