



Week of Jan. 22, 2024

Senate overrides HB 68 veto, bill becomes law

A once-vetoed bill that would prohibit gender transitioning surgeries and treatments for minors and require same-sex sports teams at K-12 schools, colleges, and universities is now law. The Senate on Wednesday overrode Gov. **Mike DeWine**'s veto of [House Bill 68](#) by a vote of 24-8, the second and final step in the veto override process; the House voted to override by a vote of 64-29 on Jan. 10. At least 20 votes in the 33-member Senate and at least 60 votes in the 99-member House are both required to override a veto. With these override votes, the bill becomes law and takes effect on the 91st date after the bill is filed with the Secretary of State. While no official announcements have been made, there have been rumors of a lawsuit challenging the new law.

Senate Education Committee begins review of three bills

Members of the Senate Education Committee met this week for the first time in 2024 to hear sponsor testimony on legislation that would prohibit compelling staff to ascribe to political beliefs, expand drug curriculum requirements, and rename the Military Enlistment diploma seal. The following bills received a first hearing in the committee:

- [HB 214](#), which requires districts adopt a policy that (1) prohibits compelling staff to affirmatively ascribe to or opine about a political or ideological belief or affiliation, (2) prohibits using statements of commitment to political or ideological beliefs or affiliations to evaluate employees or job applicants, and (3) prohibits using those statements as part of a student's academic evaluation;
- [SB 205](#), which expands the existing drug abuse curriculum and requires that instruction to be provided annually; and
- [HB 250](#), which renames the Military Enlistment Seal as part of the graduation seal system to become the Military Seal and qualifies a student to earn the seal if they were accepted a scholarship to enter the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) or were appointed to a United States military service academy.

Joint property tax committee meets for second time

The second meeting of the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform was held this week and featured testimony from the County Auditors' Association of Ohio and the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals. Representing the auditors were auditors from Athens, Franklin, and Union counties and one Board of Revision administrator from Cuyahoga County. Choosing not to focus on the 20-mill floor, auditors instead focused on property tax administration, the valuation process, LLC loopholes, tax abatements, and property tax relief measures.

It is anticipated that representatives of school districts will soon be invited to discuss state and local funding of schools, school levies, and other topics before the committee.

Replacement levies slated for repeal while schools' authority to challenge values would narrow

House lawmakers heard opponent testimony this week on [HB 344](#), which would eliminate replacement

levies and further curtail school districts' and individuals' ability to challenge property values. Since 2011, an average of three replacement levies each year have appeared on ballots across the state. Various organizations representing schools and local governments provided testimony to the committee outlining their opposition to the House proposal. The only in-person witness was the Columbus and Franklin County Metroparks, which received pointed questions from Republican committee members about the public demand for parks services, the voter turnout of their levy efforts, and their cash balances.

A vote is expected in the coming weeks on HB 344.

Mike Duffey confirmed as chancellor of ODHE

A former legislator has replaced another former legislator to become the newest chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE). **Mike Duffey**, a former House lawmaker and senior vice chancellor with ODHE, was confirmed this week by the Ohio Senate and is now serving in his new role.

Heard around the Statehouse

“Look, no one likes to pay taxes. It would be lovely if we could do away with all taxes. But we have to fund our schools. Kids have to be able to go to school in Ohio. We have to remove barriers for people...”
- Gov. **Mike DeWine**, discussing with reporters a new legislative proposal that would phase out the income tax – which represents 45% of state tax revenue – until it is fully eliminated in 2030.