



### Week of December 11, 2023

#### No action on property tax relief as 2023 work concludes

House Speaker **Jason Stephens** chose not to hold a vote this week on a bill that would temporarily cut property taxes for income-eligible senior citizens. [House Bill 187](#), which unanimously passed the Senate last week, needed only a House concurrence vote to reach Gov. **Mike DeWine**'s desk but failed to do so as lawmakers departed for the holiday break.

The Senate last week replaced most of the House's provisions in HB 187, which originally attempted to temporarily average property values for all Ohio homeowners over a three-year period. The Senate, instead, opted to provide a temporary property tax cut for seniors and only reimburse school districts one-half of the lost revenue from the tax cut, a \$97 million revenue loss over three years. Local governments and career centers would be fully reimbursed.

Negotiations between the House and Senate are expected to continue on a path forward to address property taxes, especially as the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform begins its work in 2024. But the ongoing political rift between the House and Senate as Senate President **Matt Huffman** challenges Stephens for the speakership in 2025 complicates the future success of any legislative endeavor. The House's next meeting is Jan. 24.

#### Save Womens Sports Act and SAFE Act sent to DeWine

[House Bill 68](#), which requires same-sex sports teams in K-12 schools and universities and bans gender transitioning operations for minors, was sent to **Gov. Mike DeWine** on Wednesday. In a matter of hours on Wednesday, the bill underwent changes in a Senate committee, was passed by that committee, passed the Senate, and then passed the House, sending the bill to DeWine. One change made by the Senate to the bill was including a grandfather provision to allow physicians to continue prescribing hormones or puberty-blocking drugs to minors already receiving those treatments.

#### House, Senate pass education bills

The Senate unanimously passed [Senate Bill \(SB\) 162](#) (academic intervention plans) and passed [SB 168](#) (regulatory flexibility) by a vote of 24-7. Prior to passage, the Senate Education Committee modified SB 168 with several changes, including:

- for purposes of the pupil transportation penalty system, extending, from 30 to 60 minutes, the deadline by which a student must be picked up from school if the school is providing academic services to students during that time;
- adjusting the deadline by which a district must conduct intradistrict open enrollment to occur between April 1 and the second Monday in June, rather than on the second Monday in June as under current law;
- requiring 30-day notice for retiring-rehiring staff if urgent reasons to fill a position with that staff member exist, while maintaining the baseline 60-day notice; and
- modifying the bill's corrective language on Rapback requirements for non-education-related contractors.

The House, meanwhile, passed [HB 147](#), which requires districts file a report to the state when (1) a licensed employee retires during a disciplinary investigation for misconduct, or (2) a licensed employee is removed from the list of eligible substitute teachers because they it has been determined they committed an act unbecoming to the teaching profession.

#### **House education committee passes regional partnership bill**

The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee amended and passed [House Bill 312](#). The amendment permits, rather than requires, the bill's Regional Partnerships Program partnership to consist of specific entities, including prenatal-to-five early learning programs, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and workforce and community partners.

#### **Paul Crafted selected to be state superintendent**

The State Board of Education on Dec. 12 selected **Paul Craft**, superintendent of Buckeye Valley Local Schools in Delaware County, to serve as the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The panel previously narrowed its eligible list of candidates to three, including Craft, **Julia Simmerer** with the Department of Education and Workforce, and **Jeffrey Greenley**, superintendent of Belpre City Schools.

#### **Heard around the Statehouse**

"There's a lot of people thinking about a constitutional amendment, and I think that it's something that should be looked into." - House Speaker **Jason Stephens**, discussing a potential constitutional amendment on term limits.

"You come in and boom, you've got \$100 (billion) of budget to figure out in six months and you don't know where the bathrooms are." - Speaker Stephens, again discussing term limits.