



Week of May 20, 2024

Modifications to residential development property tax exemption headed to DeWine

A bill that would remove notification and appeal authority of schools regarding property tax exemptions for residential development is headed to Gov. **Mike DeWine** for his signature. [House Bill \(HB\) 50](#), which cleared the House in an 85-8 concurrence vote on Wednesday, prohibits school districts from challenging whether a residential development property is eligible for the property tax exemption and removes the notification requirement for school boards to be notified of an applied-for exemption. It also requires property owners to submit the exemption application to the county auditor, rather than the state Tax Commissioner as under current law.

Senate passes required open enrollment policy for students of military families

The Senate on Wednesday unanimously passed [Senate Bill \(SB\) 208](#), which requires school districts to allow non-resident students to open enroll in their district if the student's parent is an active-duty member of the U.S. armed forces stationed in Ohio. Districts that prohibit open enrollment would be required to comply with the bill, allowing such students to open enroll into their district. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

Private school voucher accountability bill debated in committee

A bill that would require voucher students in private schools to take the Ohio State Tests and create a private school report card and a private school financial expenditure report received proponent testimony this week in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. [HB 407](#), a Republican-sponsored bill from Reps. **Gayle Manning** and **Bill Seitz**, received witness testimony from several groups, including the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and other statewide associations.

The committee also amended and passed [HB 432](#), which creates licensure flexibility for career-technical educators. The amendment (1) requires the mentoring program for the bill's alternative two-year licensure program to be a program created by one or more lead districts and (2) requires the bill's alternative licensure programs to align with the state competency standards developed by the Department of Education and Workforce.

The committee also held a first hearing for sponsor testimony on [HB 440](#), which allows services provided under the Jon Peterson Special Needs (JPSN) and Autism Voucher programs to be offered remotely by qualified credentialed providers, and (2) expands the list of individuals who may provide services to students receiving a JPSN voucher.

Senate Education Committee amends bill, holds hearings on others

Despite not voting on the bill, the committee on Wednesday, accepted a substitute version of [SB 112](#), which now (1) requires "protective door assemblies" in all public school and private schools to comply with 2015 national standards or the standards in effect on the date the door was installed, (2) requires annual inspections of protective door assemblies by a qualified inspector, and (3) requires schools to fix noncompliant those within 18 months of the bill's effective date or receive a \$1,000 penalty per door assembly.

- The House Higher Education Committee held two hearings this week on the Science of Reading with representatives from public and private institutions of higher education. Additional hearings will resume for the remaining colleges and universities and are expected to take place June 4, 5, 11, 12, and 18.

- A House committee held proponent testimony from business groups on [HB 499](#), which extends, from 15 to 30 years, the potential term of a community reinvestment area (CRA) property tax exemption for residential development projects located near a megaproject, provided the impacted school board approves the extension.
- A Senate committee held sponsor testimony on [SB 242](#), which extends a property tax exemption available to political subdivisions and charitable and educational institutions that use or lease property exclusively for charitable, educational, or public purposes to religious institutions and purposes.
- A House committee held a fourth hearing on [HB 349](#), which creates EnergizeOhio Zones in which natural gas companies in those areas receive a reduction in their property values and accelerates the depreciation schedule of those properties, further lowering their value. A revised version of the bill is currently being drafted.

Joint property tax committee holds potentially final witness hearing for public testimony

After more than 17 hours of testimony from nearly 70 witnesses, the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform held what might be its final witness-focused hearing on plans to modify the state's property tax system. What happens next is unclear, though some observers agree it is far too high of a bar for the committee to coalesce on concrete policy proposals. A possible outcome, instead, could be similar to the results of the Senate Select Committee on Housing. That panel published several general recommendations and also featured written perspectives of senators – in this case, members of the joint committee – on their perspectives and recommendations to address property tax laws. Also, individual legislators on that committee introduced standalone legislation on the topic, and the same is expected to occur by individual lawmakers in the coming months based on testimony received in committee.

Heard around the Statehouse

"Ohio is running out of time to get Joe Biden, the sitting president of the United States on the ballot this fall. Failing to do so is simply not acceptable. This is ridiculous. This is an absurd situation...I have waited. I have been patient. And my patience has run out. And I think the patience of the people of Ohio has run out, too." - Gov. **Mike DeWine**, in a Thursday night impromptu press conference announcing his call for a special legislative session to be held on May 28 to pass legislation authorizing President **Joe Biden** to be placed on Ohio's presidential ballot.

"We should be able to come up with a solution that's very straightforward and get it done without all this gamesmanship back and forth between us. I don't know if anybody else is tired of it, but I'd like to get some stuff done." - House Speaker **Jason Stephens**, responding to the inability between the House and Senate to pass legislation authorizing Biden to be on Ohio's presidential ballot.

"I think the House, the folks who want to keep foreign money out of these elections, they ought to bring it for a vote and people ought to vote and concur with the changes that we've made which I think are supported by nearly all of the Republicans in the House." - Senate President **Matt Huffman**, responding to several bills that prohibit foreign contributions to state ballot campaigns, one of which was previously amended into another bill that would have placed Biden on Ohio's presidential ballot, a poison pill for Ohio Democrats who helped Stephens secure his Speakership.