



### Week of June 3, 2024

#### **Required religious release time, private school accountability bills and others debated**

A nearly four-hour hearing in the House's education committee this week featured testimony from advocates in favor of mandated religious release time, as well as lobbyists against private school accountability, among other pending proposals. The following bills received a hearing this week in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

- opponent testimony on [House Bill \(HB\) 407](#), which enacts accountability and transparency requirements for private schools;
- proponent testimony on [HB 445](#), which requires, rather than permits, schools to have a policy permitting religious release time;
- proponent testimony and a technical amendment on [Senate Bill 29](#), which deals with student technology records and prohibiting accessing communications on school-issued devices;
- proponent testimony and a substitute bill on [HB 440](#), which allows services for the Jon Peterson Special Needs or Autism voucher programs to be offered remotely by qualified credentialed provider;
- sponsor testimony on [HB 408](#), which requires public schools to provide free meals to students; and
- sponsor testimony on [HB 468](#), which requires public schools to provide at least one opportunity per year for patriotic organizations to provide information to students.

The committee will not meet next week.

#### **Bill to revise release of student directory information debated**

A bill that would exempt directory information as a must-report item under the Public Records Law received sponsor testimony this week in a House committee. [HB 557](#) also allows schools to choose not to release, or permit access to, any student's directory information.

#### **Action on capital bill expected next week**

[News reports indicate](#) that the lawmakers are set to take the first step in restarting legislative movement on the capital appropriations bill and a \$700 million budget surplus appropriations measure. It is anticipated that lawmakers will unveil preliminary spending plans for the plan early next week.

#### **DeWine signs Biden ballot fix, foreign national contribution ban**

Gov. **Mike DeWine** on June 2 signed into law two bills from the special legislative session: [HB 1](#), which prohibits foreign nationals from making campaign contributions, and [HB 2](#), which places President **Joe Biden** on Ohio's ballot for the November presidential election.

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

"Our budget people tell us that we're still going to be fine. That's kind of the bottom line. It obviously changes every month. We've seen that Medicaid costs are down, and there's other things. The budget is going to be fine. What we all worry about is, where is this economy going? And I don't think anybody really knows. You never know for sure. We think in the long run that Ohio's economy is very good, but we're just watching the numbers like everybody else does." - Gov. **Mike Dewine**, speaking to reporters about Ohio's budget revenues that have missed projected levels to the tune of nearly \$450 million dollars.