

Ohio Township Association Legislative Alert



October 27, 2017

To print this alert as a PDF, [please click here](#).

Legislative Activity This Week

Monday, October 23

Rep. Wiggam (phone) - HB 291, potential amendments

Tuesday, October 24

Passed in the House

HB 168 CEMETERY REGISTRATION (Stein) To modify duties of the Division of Real Estate in the Department of Commerce regarding cemetery registration, to specify cemetery owners must reasonably maintain cemeteries, to establish the Cemetery Grant Program, and to make an appropriation.

80-2 (Brinkman & Vitale)

HB 251 SUBDIVISION INVESTMENTS (Greenspan) To increase from five to ten years the maturity period of other political subdivision's bonds and obligations eligible for investment of a subdivision's interim moneys, a county's inactive moneys, and money in the county public library fund.

93-0

House Ways & Means

HB 343 PROPERTY VALUES (Merrin) To require local governments that contest property values to formally pass an authorizing resolution for each contest and to notify property owners.

The Sponsor stated the bill would require local governing bodies - such as school boards - to pass resolutions authorizing individual complaints filed by their attorneys in an effort to contest real property assessments.

HB 371 PROPERTY TAX (Merrin) To exempt from property taxation the increased value of land subdivided for residential development until construction commences or the land is sold.

Rep. Merrin said Ohio is missing out on economic benefits from new homebuilding and that the Buckeye State has performed "far below" national averages in single- and multi-family home construction. Specifically, the bill would exempt pre-residential lots from an increased tax value on land due to subdividing for residential homebuilding until construction commences or the land is sold. He described a hypothetical developer who purchases 10 acres of land for \$100,000. After the developer subdivides the land into 10 parcels, the county auditor then places a new value on the 10 lots. Rep. Merrin put that hypothetical figure at a \$50,000 tax value, bumping overall land value to \$500,000, which increases the developer's risk. Committee members questioned the bill's impact on former agricultural land and on older suburban areas that may house vacant lots where homes have been demolished.

State & Local Government

HB 121 PIPE MATERIALS (Edwards) To require a public authority to consider all piping materials that meet the engineering specifications for a state-funded water or waste water project.

An amendment was accepted and there was no testimony on the bill.

HB 291 GOVERNMENT INSURANCE (Wiggam) To authorize counties, townships, and municipal corporations to purchase an employee dishonesty and faithful performance of duty insurance policy, instead of a bond, for protection from loss due to the fraudulent or dishonest actions of, and the failure to perform a duty prescribed by law by, an officer, official, employee, or appointee for which a bond is required by law.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio, the Ohio Township Association, the Ohio Municipal League, Baugman Township Fiscal Officer Carolyn Baer, the Wayne County Administrator, a representative from Wichert Insurance and an insurance broker testified in support of the legislation, which permits alternatives to surety bonds to protect a political subdivision from the fraudulent or dishonest acts of employees.

Wednesday, October 25

House Government Accountability & Oversight

HB 312 POLITICAL SUBDIVISION SPENDING (Schuring, Greenspan) Regarding use of credit cards and debit cards by political subdivisions.

A substitute bill was accepted by the Committee. It included a change requested by the Ohio Township Association relative to the return of credit cards and receipts. Two school districts testified as interested parties on the bill.

HJR 4 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (Schuring) Proposing to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to allow the General Assembly to provide by law for the issuance of bonds to pay unemployment compensation benefits when the fund created for that purpose is or will be depleted or to repay outstanding advances made by the federal government to the unemployment compensation program.

No testimony was given.

HB 382 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (Schuring) To modify terms describing payments made under the Unemployment Compensation Law, to increase the amount of wages subject to unemployment compensation premiums, to require qualifying employees to make payments to the Unemployment Compensation Insurance Fund, to allow the Director of Job and Family Services to adjust maximum weekly benefit amounts, to reduce the maximum number of benefit weeks, and to make other changes to the Unemployment Compensation Law.

No testimony was given.

Thursday, October 26

Rep. Hill (phone) - HB 175 position

Rep. Carfagna - HB 291 position

Legislative Committees for Next Week (10/30-11/3)

Tuesday, October 31

House Ways & Means (Ch. Schaffer), Rm. 121, 9 a.m.

HB 343 PROPERTY VALUES (Merrin) To require local governments that contest property values to formally pass an authorizing resolution for each contest and to notify property owners.

2nd Hearing-Proponent testimony

HB 371 PROPERTY TAX (Merrin) To exempt from property taxation the increased value of land subdivided for residential development until construction commences or the land is sold.

2nd Hearing-Proponent testimony

Wednesday, November 1

House State & Local Government (Ch. Anielski), Rm. 122, 10 a.m.

HB 291 GOVERNMENT INSURANCE (Wiggam) To authorize counties, townships, and municipal corporations to purchase an employee dishonesty and faithful performance of duty insurance policy, instead of a bond, for protection from loss due to the fraudulent or dishonest actions of, and the failure to perform a duty prescribed by law by, an officer, official, employee, or appointee for which a bond is required by law.

3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments

HB 121 PIPE MATERIALS (Edwards) To require a public authority to consider all piping materials that meet the engineering specifications for a state-funded water or waste water project.

5th Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments

Recently Introduced Legislation

HB 393 BRINE SALES (DeVitis, O'Brien) To authorize a person to sell brine derived from an oil and gas operation that is processed as a commodity for use in surface application in deicing, dust suppression, and other applications.

OPERS Board Proposes Changes to Cost-of-Living Adjustment For Retirees



The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration and management of your pension plan. As the System's governing body, the Board has been entrusted to act in the best interests of all OPERS members. As fiduciaries to all members and retirees, one of the Board's duties is to assure that the plan is well funded. OPERS must adapt to a variety of issues as time passes, such as volatile financial markets and the changing demographics of members.

After much deliberation, which included seeking feedback of current retirees and stakeholders, last week the Board endorsed a series of recommendations to adjust the cost-of-living allowance, or COLA, in order to help preserve the System for generations to come. These changes, anticipated to take effect in 2019, would affect current and future retirees.

The recommendations, which require legislative approval by the Ohio General Assembly to implement, include:

1. Tying the COLA to the CPI: Beginning in 2019, all future COLAs will be based on the U.S. Consumer Price Index, capped at 2.25%. That means the maximum COLA to be granted will be 2.25%, even if inflation during the measurement period exceeds that amount.
2. Delaying implementation for some retirees: The new COLA formula will be delayed two years for OPERS members who retired from 2010 through 2012. This provision was included based upon feedback from our recent survey of OPERS retirees.
3. Delaying initial COLAs for future retirees: The first COLA will be delayed for future retirees until their second pension anniversary.
4. Restoring purchasing power: OPERS will provide a one-time pension adjustment to restore 85% purchasing power for those retirees whose purchasing power is less than 85%.
5. Including funding triggers: Should OPERS' required time to pay off unfunded liabilities top 30 years, the COLA will be frozen for the next calendar year. In the event inflation exceeds 3% for an extended period of time, the Board could increase the COLA to 3% if OPERS funding is strong.

OPERS would like to thank the thousands of retirees who responded to a survey on the COLA issue. More than 76,000 replies were received. Making these adjustments to the COLA will reduce the OPERS unfunded liabilities by approximately \$4 billion, helping to sustain the System. OPERS staff will continue to update you on the progress of this proposal as the process moves forward.

Ohio Township Association

6500 Taylor Road, Suite A, Blacklick, OH 43004
614.863.0045 | www.OhioTownships.org
fought@ohiotownships.org

