



Ohio Township Association

Legislative Alert

January 24, 2020

Legislative Action This Week

Legislature Returns from Break

House and Senate committees resumed this week with the Senate in session on Wednesday.

Legislative Meetings

This week, the OTA met with Rep. Scherer (R-Circleville) regarding the process for village dissolution and the potential effects on townships. Additionally, the OTA spoke with Rep. Ghanbari (R-Perrysburg) regarding township police.

Statehouse Committee Updates

Senate Committee Hearings - General Government & Agency Review

[HB 76 ELECTION NOTICES](#) (MERRIN) - To enact the "Ballot Uniformity and Transparency Act" to modify the form of election notices and ballot language for property tax levies.

The committee heard opponent testimony from Becky Princehorn, on behalf of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Public Children Services Association of Ohio, and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District; OTA position - opposed.

[HB 46 SPENDING DATABASE](#) (GREENSPAN) - To require the Treasurer of State to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database.

The committee accepted a substitute version of the bill with several updates to the legislation.

Bills in Committee Next Week

Senate Energy & Public Utilities - Tuesday, January 28th at 9:30am

[SB 234 WIND REGULATIONS](#) (MCCOLLEY) - To require inclusion of safety specifications in wind farm certificate applications, to modify wind turbine setbacks, and to permit a township referendum vote on certain wind farm certificates.

2nd hearing - proponent testimony.

House Insurance Committee - Tuesday, January 28th at 10:00am

[HB 308 PTSD COVERAGE](#) (PATTON) - Concerning workers' compensation and disability retirement for peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury.

3rd hearing - all testimony; OTA position - opposed.

House Public Utilities Committee - Wednesday, January 29th at 11:00am

[HB 163 WATER/SEWER SERVICE](#) (BRINKMAN) - To create a process for withholding local government funds and state water and sewer assistance from municipal corporations that engage in certain water and sewer practices with respect to extraterritorial service.

6th hearing - all testimony; OTA position - support.

If you are interested in testifying, please let the OTA know.

Bills Recently Introduced

[HB 476 EMINENT DOMAIN](#) (Manning, Hambley) - To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency.

OTA Conference Volunteers

Volunteers Needed - Please consider helping!

The Association is looking for Sergeant-at-Arms volunteers for all workshops. These positions are very important and at the same time, difficult to fill.

Sergeant-at-Arms are required to be at their assigned workshop a few minutes early and duties include passing out handouts, reminding conference goers to turn off or silence cell phones, and contacting an OTA or Convention Center staff person if temperature changes or additional supplies are needed. The following are the sessions for which we still need volunteers:

Wednesday, February 5th from 1:30-2:30pm

- Strategic Planning

Wednesday, February 5th from 2:45-3:45pm

- BZA Hearings: What Could Go Wrong?
- Round Table Discussion with the Auditor of State's Local Government Services

Thursday, February 6th from 1:00-2:00pm

- How National Political Discourse Affects Local Politics

Thursday, February 6th from 2:15-3:15pm

- Understanding Fire Service Today
- Small Cell and 5G: What's the Latest?
- Benefits of a Performance Audit
- Words that Work and Words that Don't

Thursday, February 6th from 3:45-4:45pm

- Firefighter Safety: Reducing Cancer Claims and Limiting Liability
- The Elephant in the Room: Healthcare & Collective Bargaining
- UAN 101

Friday, February 7th from 9:00-10:00am

- Improving Relationships between Management & Labor
- Audit Basics
- How National Political Discourse Affects Local Politics

Friday, February 7th from 10:30-11:30am

- All About OPERS
- What's Next? Running a Successful Campaign

Friday, February 7th from 1:45-2:45pm

- OPERS Update
- Township Financials 101: Where the Money Comes From
- Legislative Update

Friday, February 7th from 3:00-4:00pm

- Free Resources to Achieve Environmental Compliance

If you are interested in serving as a Sergeant-at-Arms, please send an email to fought@ohiotownships.org.

OPERS Update

Board approves health care changes, effective 2022

The OPERS Board of Trustees has approved changes to health care coverage for Medicare and pre-Medicare retirees. These changes will preserve retiree health care coverage now and for years to come. Over the last two years, OPERS has communicated and engaged with members and retirees about potential solutions. The Board's plan will retain health care coverage for all eligible members and retirees.

Changes, effective Jan. 1, 2022, extend the life of the health care trust fund from 11 years to almost 19 years. In addition, preliminary 2019 investment returns of 19 percent will further extend solvency to nearly 23 years.

Pre-Medicare coverage

The biggest change for those under 65 is the discontinuation of the OPERS-sponsored Medical Mutual PPO plan. Beginning in 2022, those enrolled in the OPERS pre-Medicare plan will instead enroll in the health care plan of their choosing. OPERS will partner with a service provider to help pre-Medicare participants find the best plan for their needs, in a manner similar to the OPERS Medicare Connector.

OPERS will provide funding (a monthly allowance) to help participants pay for that coverage. This allowance will be a percentage of a base allowance amount. Each retiree's allowance percentage is determined by their qualifying service credit and their age when initial coverage began.

The base allowance amount will begin at \$1,200 per month and will remain at that level for three years, before it could be adjusted subject to the Board's review.

Impact on previous grandfathering: Over the years, when changes were made to health care coverage, OPERS used grandfathering to protect some retirees from the full impact of those changes. Under the new health care program, as a current retiree, your eligibility for health care coverage is "grandfathered," but your allowance amount is not. Depending on your age and years of service when you retired and first enrolled in the OPERS health care plan, your previous grandfathering status could change. Here's how:

- If you retired and enrolled prior to 2015 with 20 or more years of service, your allowance could change depending on where you fall on the allowance table. Specifically, this would impact retirees who had an allowance percentage on the table less than 75% but were grandfathered at 75%. Your allowance will be reduced based on your actual position on the allowance table with a floor of 51%. You can find the allowance percentage chart on our website.
- If you retired and enrolled prior to 2015 with less than 20 years of service, you were likely subject to the 75% allowance grandfathering. Your allowance percentage will be reduced to 51%.

For future retirees: Members retiring under age 65 after Jan. 1, 2022, will be eligible to participate in the health care program only with 30 or more years of service depending on your retirement group. To participate with fewer than 30 years of service, members will need to be age 65 with 20 years of qualifying service.

Medicare coverage

OPERS will continue to offer the OPERS Medicare Connector for those age 65 and over who qualify for Medicare parts A and B.

The biggest change for the Medicare-eligible population is that the base allowance will be reduced from \$450 to \$350. This allowance is based on a market analysis that shows the average Medigap medical and drug supplemental plan costs \$275 per month. OPERS data indicates our program is successful - members are actively using their Health Reimbursement Arrangement accounts through automatic reimbursement and continue to have an average balance of \$3,700 in these HRA accounts.

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could change. Here's how:

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- If you retired and enrolled prior to 2015 with less than 20 years of service, you were subject to the 75% allowance grandfathering. Your allowance percentage will be reduced to 51%.

For future retirees: To access health care with fewer than 30 years of service, members will need to be age 65 with 20 years of qualifying service.

Disability recipients

The current eligibility conditions will continue to apply to current OPERS disability recipients. Grandfathering conditions outlined above apply to disability recipients.

For more information, visit the Health Care 2020 portion of the OPERS [website](#).

Federal Update



Congressional Action

The House was in recess this week. When the chamber returns the week of January 27th, it will consider the Comprehensive Credit Reporting Enhancement, Disclosure, Innovation, and Transparency (CREDIT) Act of 2020 ([H.R. 3621](#)), a package of six bills reported by the House Financial Services Committee in July 2019 to reform the credit reporting system.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said in her weekly press conference on January 16th that House Democrats would roll out their long-awaited infrastructure initiative when Congress returns next week. What will be released will be a high-level "principles" document, not actual legislative text; the text of some of these bills, particularly those from the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, are still weeks or months away. It is still not clear if various transportation-related bills will move to the House floor as one package, separately, or if they could be voted on separately and then packaged together.

Senators voted on adoption of the rules for the impeachment trial of President Trump laid out by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) on January 20th. The resolution outlining the rules give House managers and Trump's defense team 24 hours of floor time each to make their arguments, but limit them to three days each (i.e., 8 hours/day). The rules also allow the President's team to seek a quick dismissal of the charges, though many Republican senators have said they should at least hear the case. Neither side would be allowed to call witnesses or seek documents under the proposed rules unless a majority of the Senate votes to allow such motions after the opening phase of the trial, including up to 16 hours of senators' questions. The trial will run every day (excluding Sundays), beginning at 1pm ET, and will last at least through Thursday, January 30th. At the conclusion of the trial, the Senate will take final votes on whether to acquit President Trump for each of the two articles of impeachment.

2020 Census

United States
Census
2020

All Your Information for the Upcoming 2020 Census

PSAs Available

The US Census Bureau has provided a selection of public service announcements intended to help educate the public. You may access them [here](#).

[US Census Website](#)
[Ohio Census Website](#)

The 2020 Census is headed your way! And it's so important that your township gets an accurate count. This section will help you get information out to your friends and neighbors to ensure residents in your area are counted. Check here for weekly information and links to important documents and resources.

Ohio Township Association

6500 Taylor Road, Suite A, Blacklick, OH 43004

614-863-0045 | OhioTownships.org

myers@ohiotownships.org

