



## NAWBO LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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Report created on February 18, 2020

- HB2 CREDENTIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** (CROSS J, LEPORE-HAGAN M) To create the TechCred Program and the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program, to develop a grant program to support industry sector partnerships, and to make an appropriation.  
*Current Status:* 1/13/2020 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-2>
- HB4 WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS** (RICHARDSON T, ROBINSON P) Regarding the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and industry-recognized credentials and certificate programs.  
*Current Status:* 1/14/2020 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-4>
- HB34 STATE-LOCAL MINIMUM WAGE** (KELLY B) To increase the state minimum wage and to allow municipalities, townships, and counties to establish higher minimum wage requirements.  
*Current Status:* 1/22/2020 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-34>
- HB75 PROPERTY VALUE CONTESTS** (MERRIN D) To require local governments that contest property values to formally pass an authorizing resolution for each contest and to notify property owners.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-75>
- HB81 WORKERS COMP-BODILY FLUID EXPOSURE** (PERALES R) Regarding Workers' Compensation coverage of post-exposure medical diagnostic services for a detention facility employee's exposure to another person's blood or bodily fluids.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-81>

- HB91**      **FAMILY-MEDICAL LEAVE** (BOGGS K, BOYD J) To establish family and medical leave insurance benefits.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - House Insurance, (Second Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-91>
- HB114**      **EITC INCOME RESTRICTION** (SKINDELL M, CRAWLEY E) To remove the income restriction on the earned income tax credit and to make the credit refundable.  
*Current Status:* 1/21/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-114>
- HB137**      **EMPLOYEE EARNINGS AND DEDUCTIONS** (KELLY B, VITALE N) To require an employer to provide earnings and deductions statements to each of the employer's employees.  
*Current Status:* 2/5/2020 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-137>
- HB197**      **TAX CODE CORRECTIONS** (POWELL J, MERRIN D) To enact the "Tax Code Streamlining and Correction Act" to make technical and corrective changes to the laws governing taxation.  
*Current Status:* 2/4/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-197>
- HB242**      **CONTAINER USE RESTRICTIONS** (LANG G, JONES D) To authorize the use of an auxiliary container for any purpose, to prohibit the imposition of a tax or fee on those containers, and to apply existing anti-littering law to those containers.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-242>
- HB251**      **CONTRACT ACTION-PERIOD OF LIMITATION** (LANG G, HILLYER B) To shorten the period of limitations for actions upon a contract.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - Senate Judiciary, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-251>
- HB263**      **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING-CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS** (KOEHLER K) To revise the initial occupational licensing restrictions applicable to individuals convicted of criminal offenses.  
*Current Status:* 2/5/2020 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Fifth Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-263>

- HB289 ELEVATOR LAW** (BALDRIDGE B) To revise the Elevator Law.  
*Current Status:* 1/22/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Fourth Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-289>
- HB308 PTSD COVERAGE - FIRST RESPONDERS** (PATTON T) Concerning workers' compensation and disability retirement for peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 74-22  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-308>
- HB312 INTRASTATE EQUITY CROWDFUNDING** (POWELL J) To permit intrastate equity crowdfunding under certain circumstances.  
*Current Status:* 1/21/2020 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-312>
- HB368 COMPUTER CRIMES** (BALDRIDGE B) To enact the Ohio Computer Crimes Act.  
*Current Status:* 2/20/2020 - House Criminal Justice, (Fifth Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-368>
- HB369 SEXUAL, GENDER DISCRIMINATION** (HILLYER B, SKINDELL M) To enact the Ohio Fairness Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, to add mediation as an informal method that the Ohio Civil Rights Commission may use, and to uphold existing religious exemptions under Ohio's Civil Rights Law.  
*Current Status:* 2/4/2020 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-369>
- HB380 CONTRACTOR PAYMENT DEADLINE** (CROSS J, SWEENEY B) To require owners of construction projects to pay a contractor within thirty-five days of receiving a request for payment.  
*Current Status:* 2/5/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-380>
- HB402 INTERIOR DESIGN EXAMINERS BOARD** (LANG G, SWEENEY B) To create the Ohio Interior Design Examiners Board to certify and regulate interior designers.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-402>
- HB432 OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE RECIPROCITY** (POWELL J, LANG G) To require an occupational licensing authority to issue a license or government certification to an

applicant who holds a license, government certification, or private certification or has satisfactory work experience in another state under certain circumstances.

*Current Status:* 1/29/2020 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-432>

**HB440 SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS-MANUFACTURING** (MIRANDA J, CARRUTHERS S) To authorize sales tax exemptions for property and services used to clean or maintain manufacturing machinery and for employment services used to operate manufacturing machinery.

*Current Status:* 1/28/2020 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-440>

**HB442 PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT CERTIFICATE** (ROEMER B, WEST T) To modify the requirements to obtain a certified public accountant certificate.

*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - House Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-442>

**HB452 OCCUPATIONAL REGULATIONS** (WILKIN S, STEPHENS J) To revise and streamline the state's occupational regulations.

*Current Status:* 1/28/2020 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-452>

**HB466 AUTOMATED VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM** (SWEENEY B) To create an automated voter registration system.

*Current Status:* 1/28/2020 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-466>

**HB467 PASS-THROUGH ENTITY TAX REDUCTION** (SCHERER G) To reduce the pass-through entity withholding tax rate to four percent.

*Current Status:* 2/19/2020 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-467>

**HB469 HEALTH INSURANCE COST-SHARING** (MANCHESTER S, WEST T) To prohibit certain health insurance cost-sharing practices.

*Current Status:* 2/18/2020 - House Health, (First Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-469>

**HB508 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS** (CERA J, SWEENEY B) To allow an individual to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits for unemployment due to domestic violence.

*Current Status:* 2/13/2020 - Introduced

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-508>

- SB7**      **TEMP STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES-MILITARY** (LEHNER P, HACKETT R) Regarding temporary state occupational licenses for members of the military and their spouses.  
*Current Status:* 1/27/2020 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-7>
- SB21**      **BENEFIT CORPORATIONS** (DOLAN M) To allow a corporation to become a benefit corporation.  
*Current Status:* 1/21/2020 - House Civil Justice, (Fifth Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-21>
- SB39**      **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS-TAX CREDIT** (SCHURING K) To authorize an insurance premiums tax credit for capital contributions to transformational mixed use development projects.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Economic and Workforce Development, (Seventh Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-39>
- SB75**      **PROHIBIT NONCOMPETE PROVISIONS-BROADCASTING** (WILLIAMS S) To prohibit the use of noncompete provisions in employment contracts in the broadcasting industry.  
*Current Status:* 2/5/2020 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-75>
- SB89**      **CAREER-TECHNICAL EDUCATION -- EDCHOICE** (HUFFMAN M) With regard to career-technical education and the compensation of joint vocational school districts located in enterprise zones, to make changes regarding STEM school report cards, to prohibit the use of value-added data for evaluations of careertechnical educators, to revise the law on community school fiscal officer liability, to make changes regarding school financing studies by the Department of Education, to revise the eligibility and operation of the Educational Choice Scholarship program, to dissolve existing academic distress commissions, to place a moratorium on the creation of academic distress commissions, to establish the School Transformation Board, to rename the income-based expansion of the Educational Choice Scholarship program as the Buckeye Opportunity Scholarship program, and to declare an emergency.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - Consideration of House Amendments; Emergency Clause 7-24, Senate Does Not Concur  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-89>
- SB149**      **EMPLOYEE WAGE HISTORY** (MAHARATH T) To prohibit employers from seeking a prospective employee's wage or salary history.

*Current Status:* 1/29/2020 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-149>

**SB156**     **DRUG SCREENINGS** (GAVARONE T) To prohibit defrauding an alcohol, drug, or urine screening test.

*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 31-0

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-156>

**SB219**     **APPRENTICE PROGRAM** (WILLIAMS S) To establish a career pathways apprentice program.

*Current Status:* 2/11/2020 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-219>

**SB246**     **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING** (ROEGNER K, MCCOLLEY R) To require an occupational licensing authority to issue a license or government certification to an applicant who holds a license, government certification, or private certification or has satisfactory work experience in another state under certain circumstances.

*Current Status:* 2/19/2020 - Senate General Government and Agency Review , (Fifth Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-246>

**SB257**     **ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATIONS** (O'BRIEN S, RULLI M) To authorize tax incentives for the purchase of plug-in electric motor vehicles and charging stations.

*Current Status:* 2/11/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-257>

**SB264**     **TAX CREDIT-EDUCATION LOANS** (WILLIAMS S) To authorize a nonrefundable tax credit for a business that assists an employee with the repayment of education loans.

*Current Status:* 2/5/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-264>

**SB274**     **CREATE LIQUOR PERMIT** (WILLIAMS S) To create the F-11 liquor permit, which authorizes specified entities to sell beer and wine at special functions, including social and benevolent functions.

*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-274>

**SB276**     **LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES** (ROEGNER K) To enact the Ohio Revised Limited Liability Company Act.

*Current Status:* 2/12/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-276>

**SB282**      **UNEMPLOYMENT COMP COMPLAINTS** (HOAGLAND F) To require the Director of Job and Family Services to establish a process for employers to make complaints regarding unemployment compensation benefits.

*Current Status:* 2/14/2020 - Introduced

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SB-282>

**SJR3**      **REQUIRE SUPERMAJORITY-INCOME TAX INCREASE** (BURKE D) Proposing to enact Section 7 of Article XII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require that any increase in income tax rates be approved by a supermajority of the membership of each house of the General Assembly.

*Current Status:* 2/11/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-SJR-3>

## In the News:

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A group of Ohio River Valley residents recently met with DeWine administration staffers to discuss the potential large ethane cracker plant in Belmont County, hoping to persuade Gov. Mike DeWine to drop his support for the project. While no final decision has been made on whether PTT Global Chemical America (PTTGC America) and Daelim Industrial Company will move forward with the project, economic development nonprofit JobsOhio approved a \$30 million grant to support initial site preparation work in July 2019.

### ELECTIONS 2020

Former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Bill O'Neill announced on Facebook that he is considering a run for the Ohio House as an independent this year. O'Neill posted that he has taken out petitions for the 76th House District, writing "Our government is broken." The seat is currently held by Rep. Diane Grendell (R-Chesterland), who is running to retain the seat after she was appointed to it this session.

### EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The national unemployment rate rose to 3.6 percent in January even though total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 225,000 in January, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported on Friday. The national unemployment for December 2019 was 3.5 percent, but rose to 3.6 percent in January because the number of unemployed persons rose from 5.8 million to 5.9 million over the month.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has updated its website on labor market information, providing a more streamlined and better organized view of the data. That content remains the same, ODJFS spokesman Bret Crow told *Hannah News*. The new site can be viewed at <https://ohiolmi.com/>, while the former site is still accessible through March 31 at <http://archive.ohiolmi.com/>.

## **GAMING/GAMBLING**

Ohio's casinos and racinos enjoyed much higher earnings in January 2020 when compared to the same month in 2019, according to data released by the Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) and Ohio Lottery Commission (OLC). The state's four casinos made \$73.1 million in January 2020, up from \$62.4 million in January 2019. Ohio's seven racinos raked in \$94.3 million in January 2020, up from \$78.3 million in January 2019.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

The Ohio House Wednesday passed legislation that would allow first responders to apply for workers' compensation due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as lawmakers in support urged their colleagues to take care of those "who take care of us first." No one spoke against HB308 (Patton) on the floor, but the bill still saw a split vote of 74-22, with no votes coming from a number of Republicans.

Led by House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes (D-Akron), House Democrats outlined their "Ohio Promise" bill package with a focus on promoting education and ending wage disparities at a media conference Thursday. Sykes said the package is meant to ensure that Ohioans can "live the American Dream right here at home."

In other action, the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee reported out SB73 (Brenner) addressing the law governing yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks; and HB158 (Blessing) which waives the fee for seeking limited driving privileges; the Senate Ways and Means Committee reported out SB125 (Hottinger-Brenner) which expands the income tax deduction for contributions to 529 education savings plans to those plans in other states; the Senate, Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee reported out HB65 (Carfagna) which deals with parental notice of serious risks to the health or safety of children in child care; SB230 (Craig-Antonio) and SR406 (Craig-Antonio) which both deal with recognizing Diabetic Ketoacidosis Day; and SCR7 (Craig-Antonio) which supports the "Screen at 23" campaign regarding screening Asian Americans for type 2 diabetes; and the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee reported out HB295 (Hoops) establishing requirements for low-speed electric scooters.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) said Friday that the number of influenza-related hospitalizations has hit its highest peak for the 2019-2020 flu season, with 832 people newly hospitalized in the most recent week that data has been available. According to ODH, the 832



people hospitalized from Sunday, Jan. 26 through Saturday, Feb. 1, is an increase of more than 36 percent over the previous week of flu reporting.

Proponents testifying in the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee Wednesday on SB254 (Gavarone-O'Brien), regarding parity for mental health and substance use disorder benefits, received questions from multiple senators who said the bill would go beyond simply aligning Ohio and federal laws.

## **JUDICIAL**

While cautioning that nothing has been finalized, Gov. Mike DeWine said Thursday that he is "very enthusiastic" about a potential plan on how to split potential opioid lawsuit settlement money among the state and local communities. Asked about it on Thursday during a press conference, DeWine said he is cautious about the plan but satisfied with where they are on negotiations right now. Under the plan, DeWine said local communities would get 30 percent of all settlement money right away. Another 55 percent would go into a trust fund where the local communities collectively would have control of how it is spent "by a significant number."

The Ohio Supreme Court partnered with the Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) in sponsoring a seminar on preventing sexual harassment in the legal system, "Not Another Sexual Harassment Training: Empowering Attorneys and Judges to Create a Culture of Civility and Respect."

## **LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

Speaking at the Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Small Business Advisory Council (SBAC) Thursday, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced the state is launching an artificial intelligence (AI) tool to help reform Ohio's regulatory landscape by performing research and analysis much faster than human staffers can. Husted had previously discussed plans for the tool, saying it would be software that reads the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) and learns more along the way to provide "a degree of interactivity" without being "some robot at a desk." Due to the terms of the software license, he told *Hannah News* the tool would not be able to include any public-facing search functions.

Following the one-year anniversary of their taking office, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted recently noted the successes of his and Gov. Mike DeWine's work on economic development and strengthening Ohio's workforce, particularly through his InnovateOhio initiative.

## **MARIJUANA/HEMP**

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) on Friday awarded a dispensary certificate of operation to Herbology, located at 1220 Buchholzer Blvd. in Cuyahoga Falls. The board has now issued 49 operating licenses. A total of 57 dispensaries have received provisional licenses, meaning there are still eight awaiting state approval to begin providing medical marijuana products to patients.

Patients dealing with generalized anxiety disorder, autism spectrum disorder and cachexia could soon gain the ability to legally treat their conditions with medical marijuana. The State Medical

Board of Ohio (SMBO) Medical Marijuana Expert Review Committee on Wednesday decided those three conditions warranted further review by subject matter experts after reading through all of the petitions submitted by people hoping to add new qualifying conditions under the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP).

## **MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM**

When asked what changes could be made in Ohio's Medicaid system that would have an immediate effect on coverage, Ohio Department of Medicaid Director (ODM) Maureen Corcoran joined Health Policy Institute of Ohio head Amy Rohling McGee in saying the forms and notices must be simplified. Each spoke from their own recent experiences in helping others secure and/or maintain Medicaid coverage, saying that they found it difficult and intimidating to decipher the paperwork and to traverse a system that does see two-hour waits on the phone. Rohling McGee added that, "This must be attended to if we want the full engagement of people in the process."

## **OHIO HISTORY**

The League of Women Voters (LWV), along with Honorary Chairperson Loann Crane of the Ohio History Connection, will host a special event "Celebrating 100 Years and Embracing the Future" in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and the 100th Anniversary of LWV. The event will be held at Ohio State University's Fawcett Center on Tuesday, March 31 at 7 p.m., and is open to the public. Information regarding tickets can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/tsvsq2u>.

## **PENSIONS**

With benefit and funding changes recently enacted or under consideration by multiple state pension systems, the Ohio Retirement Study Council (ORSC) on Thursday heard the first of what are meant to be quarterly updates from retirement fund leadership on their plans. The five retirement systems are more than seven years past the last major round of reforms in 2012, and some have recently implemented or are studying cutbacks in health care, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and other changes.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Gov. Mike DeWine joined Sens. Sean O'Brien (D-Cortland) and Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard) and the families of people killed by distracted driving Thursday to announce a "Hands-Free Ohio" bill that will make distracted driving a primary offense for all drivers. Under current law, using a wireless device while operating a motor vehicle is only a primary offense for 16- and 17-year-old drivers, and a secondary offense for adult drivers, meaning a police officer must witness another traffic offense first before executing a traffic stop.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced a new program to provide \$2 million in safety grants for employers to purchase equipment protecting workers during trenching and excavation, as well as a new website on trench safety. The program provides four-to-one matching funds, up to \$12,000, for Ohio private and public employers covered by the State Insurance Fund for such equipment purchases, such as trench boxes and hydraulic shoring. BWC is also providing training and educational materials on the basic requirements of trench safety, and the new website [trenchsafetyohio.com](https://trenchsafetyohio.com) (<https://tinyurl.com/rwn3tvf>) has additional information.