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**Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition  
Legislative Activities Report  
February 2018**

With Ohio's legislators back in session, action around the Statehouse has heated up as state lawmakers work to move legislation prior to breaking for the summer to focus on the elections. Lawmakers face a number of challenging pieces of legislation, including a capital budget and a proposal to revise how congressional districts are drawn in Ohio.

Facing a February 7<sup>th</sup> deadline to qualify for the May ballot, legislators have been scrambling to find common ground on a GOP-crafted resolution (SJR 5) calling for reforms to how Ohio draws its congressional districts. The plan's drafters would like to see the resolution move through both chambers by the deadline in order to avoid a contentiously politicized issue landing on the general election ballot. In 2015, a bipartisan agreement led to a General Assembly-backed ballot issue on legislative redistricting that was ultimately approved by more than 70% of voters.

President Larry Obhof said this year's capital budget will be "a little bit tighter" than that of the last General Assembly. The capital budget, which is designed to fund capital improvements with state-issued debt, will likely be introduced in the next month. Lawmakers plan to have most of the details hashed out prior to the bill's introduction in order to streamline its passage. In 2016, the General Assembly's capital budget was \$2.6 billion. President Obhof indicated that this session's spending bill will likely be around 10% less than the previous bill.

Outside of the legislature, the inaugural meeting of the new Speech and Hearing Professionals Board took place on January 22, 2018. Gregg Thornton was officially hired as the Executive Director of the new board. While there is one public member yet to be named, the following board members were appointed:

### **Audiologists**

Tammy H. Brown, M.A., CCC-A  
Karen Mitchell, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA  
Carrie L. Spangler, Au.D., CCC-A

### **Hearing Aid Fitters**

Michael R. Pratt, H.A.S.  
Matthew Starner, H.A.S.

### **Speech-Language Pathologists**

Lisa A. Froehlich, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Barbara L. Prakup, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

### **Public Member**

Helen L. Mayle

Also on the administrative front, ODE recently convened the related services provider workgroup. The first meeting was held on January 25, 2018. The workgroup includes many representatives that GAC has worked with in the past on this important issue, including representatives from the OT and PT associations as well as the ESC association and the school psychologists association. The SLP representatives are Barb Conrad and Kathy McDermott and the audiology representative is Carrie Spangler. All three of these very capable practitioners participated in the GAC led workgroup that met in 2016. The workgroup is chaired by Director of the Office of Exceptional Children, Kim Mondachino. The group plans to meet through its statutory deadline of June 2019.

GAC representatives recently met with Ohio Medicaid on the draft speech-generating device rule. We renewed our concerns about the authorization of iPads as speech-generating devices and shared data from PRC about many denials by managed care plans that specifically reference an iPad as an appropriate alternative. In addition, we raised two other “wordsmithing” concerns that Medicaid agreed to correct. We continue to work with the Department to make the draft rule better for consumers and providers. It is important to note that the rule will not be effective on April 1<sup>st</sup>, as originally planned, but more likely closer to June or July 2018.

In political news, Governor Kasich recently announced Seventh District Court of Appeals Judge Mary DeGenaro as his pick to replace Supreme Court Justice Bill O'Neill. DeGenaro is also a declared candidate for the upcoming six-year term for the seat and has been endorsed by the Republican Party. The move creates a high court with no Democrats on the bench and gives Judge DeGenaro an advantage in the general election.

The House Republican Caucus recently announced its replacements for the vacancies in the 81<sup>st</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Districts. Former State Representative Jim Hoops was selected to replace now Senator Rob McColley in the 81<sup>st</sup> District and Riordan McClain, son of former Rep. Jeff McClain, was chosen to replace Wes Goodman in the 87<sup>th</sup> District. Mr. Hoops, of Napoleon, is currently associate vice president for Strategic Initiatives at Northwest State Community College. He also previously served as Henry County auditor. Mr. McClain, of Upper Sandusky, is director of Finance and Customer Service at Doc Investments LLC. He holds degrees from Bluffton University and the University of Findlay.

In other news, the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) recently proposed that private employer premium rates be cut by 12% starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. The proposal would save businesses \$163.5 million compared to current rates. BWC rates are already at their lowest point in more than four decades.

Also of note, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services recently reported that Ohio gained 2,500 jobs in December and the state's unemployment rate dropped to 4.7%. The rate is down from 5% from the previous year, yet still lags behind the U.S. unemployment rate of 4.1%.

We have been tracking the following legislation during the 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly:

**HB49**      **OPERATING BUDGET (SMITH R)** Creates FY 2018-2019 main operating budget.

*Current Status:* 8/22/2017 - Consideration of Governor's Veto

**HB51**      **DEPARTMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE (FABER K)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.

*Current Status:* 5/16/2017 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House State and Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)

- HB75**      **PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE-ARMED FORCES** (GAVARONE T, MERRIN D) To establish an expedited process to grant a professional license to an individual who is on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, or is the spouse of such an individual, and holds a valid license in another state.  
*Current Status:* 3/15/2017 - House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security, (Second Hearing)
- HB85**      **ENTER HEALTH CARE COMPACT** (RETFERFORD W) To enter into the Health Care Compact.  
*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - House Federalism and Interstate Relations, (First Hearing)
- HB98**      **CAREER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS** (DUFFEY M, BOGGS K) Regarding the presentation of career information to students.  
*Current Status:* 2/7/2018 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Education, (Second Hearing)
- HB115**      **DATABASE-PERSONS WITH COMMUNICATION DISABILITY** (GAVARONE T, WIGGAM S) To establish a database of persons who voluntarily register as being diagnosed with a communication disability or who voluntarily register a minor child or ward as the parents or guardians of such persons for purposes of law enforcement notification.  
*Current Status:* 1/31/2018 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Third Hearing)
- HB131**      **PHYSICAL THERAPY LAWS** (GAVARONE T, REINEKE W) To modify the laws governing the practice of physical therapy.  
*Current Status:* 1/31/2018 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Health, (Sixth Hearing)
- HB150**      **LICENSE PLATE CREATION** (PATMON B) To create a special license plate for hearing-impaired individuals.  
*Current Status:* 6/7/2017 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

**HB262 INDEPENDENT BUDGET PROCESS (BUTLER, JR. J, ROMANCHUK M)** To provide for the preparation of a state biennial budget independent of that submitted by the Governor and to authorize the Legislative Service Commission, upon the request of the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the President of the Senate, to arrange for an independent actuarial review of a proposed bill, specified analyses of economic policy initiatives and state benchmarking data, and a study of the state's long-range financial outlook.

*Current Status:* 6/20/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight

**HB280 MOTORCYCLE EARPLUGS (GOODMAN W)** To permit a person to wear earplugs for hearing protection while operating a motorcycle.

*Current Status:* 11/8/2017 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

**HB289 OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING REVIEW (HOOD R, MCCOLLEY R)** To establish a statewide policy on occupational regulation, to require standing committees of the General Assembly to periodically review occupational licensing boards regarding their sunset, to require the Common Sense Initiative Office to review certain actions taken by occupational licensing boards, and to require the Legislative Service Commission to perform assessments of occupational licensing bills and state regulation of occupations.

*Current Status:* 1/30/2018 - House Government Accountability and Oversight, (Second Hearing)

**HB399 HEALTH INSURANCE SAVINGS INCENTIVES (HENNE M, BUTLER, JR. J)** To enact the Ohio Right to Shop Act to require health insurers to establish shared savings incentive programs for enrollees.

*Current Status:* 11/28/2017 - Referred to Committee House Health

**HB440 SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH CARE (FEDOR T, KENT B)** To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.

*Current Status:* 1/31/2018 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)

**HB465 PRESCRIBED DRUGS BENEFIT-MEDICAID (LIPPS S)** To provide for the prescribed drugs benefit to be delivered under the Medicaid program through the fee-for-service system.

*Current Status:* 1/24/2018 - Referred to Committee House Health

**HCR5**      **SUPPORT AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** (SYKES E) To urge the Congress of the United States, and in particular the Ohio Congressional delegation, to support the preservation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.

*Current Status:* 2/28/2017 - Referred to Committee House Insurance

**HCR6**      **REPEAL AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** (GOODMAN W, FABER K) To urge congress to continue its efforts to fully repeal the affordable care act and to recommend that future federal health care policies restore power to the states, fund the Medicaid program through block grants to individual states, and permit the sale of health insurance across state lines.

*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight

**SB3**      **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (BEAGLE B, BALDERSON T) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week.

*Current Status:* 11/6/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. 90 days

**SB27**      **DEAF HISTORY MONTH DESIGNATION** (BEAGLE B) To designate the period beginning March 13 and ending April 15 as "Ohio Deaf History Month."

*Current Status:* 10/19/2017 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days

**SB48**      **HEARING IMPAIRED-DRIVING** (WILLIAMS S) To create a special license plate for hearing-impaired individuals and to require the registrar to include an identifying symbol on a driver's license, commercial driver's license, or state-issued identification card of a hearing-impaired individual, if requested.

*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing)

**SB59**      **BICYCLE USE-HELMETS** (SKINDELL M) To require bicycle operators and passengers under 18 years of age to wear protective helmets when the bicycle is operated on a roadway and to establish the Bicycle Safety Fund to be used by the Department of Public Safety to assist low-income families in the purchase of bicycle helmets.

*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing)

- SB79**      **STATE DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE** (JORDAN K) To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.  
*Current Status:* 9/12/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight
- SB91**      **OHIO HEALTH CARE PLAN** (SKINDELL M, TAVARES C) To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.  
*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions, (First Hearing)
- SB93**      **HEALTH INSURANCE-HEARING AIDS** (BROWN E) To require health insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids.  
*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions, (First Hearing)
- SB99**      **MEDICAID EXPANSION-NEW ENROLLMENT** (COLEY W) To prohibit the Medicaid program from newly enrolling individuals as part of the expansion eligibility group.  
*Current Status:* 3/21/2017 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid, (First Hearing)
- SB110**     **HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS-IDENTIFICATION** (TAVARES C) To require a health care professional to wear identification when providing care or treatment in the presence of a patient.  
*Current Status:* 1/23/2018 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid, (First Hearing)
- SB168**     **MEDICAID EXPANSION** (JORDAN K) To prohibit the Medicaid program from covering the expansion eligibility group and to require aggregate General Revenue Fund appropriations for state agencies to be reduced by specified amounts for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017 and ending on June 30, 2019.  
*Current Status:* 6/28/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

- SB174**      **WAGE PROTECTIONS-FAIR ACT (TAVARES C)** To enact the "Fair and Acceptable Income Required (FAIR) Act" and to revise the enforcement of the prohibitions against discrimination in the payment of wages.  
*Current Status:* 9/7/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce
- SB177**      **VOLUNTEER HEALTH CARE-IMMUNITY (LEHNER P)** To expand the circumstances in which qualified immunity from civil liability applies with respect to volunteer health care services provided to indigent and uninsured persons.  
*Current Status:* 9/26/2017 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing)
- SB255**      **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARDS REVIEW (MCCOLLEY R)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to periodically review occupational licensing boards regarding their sunset, and to require the Legislative Service Commission to perform assessments of occupational licensing bills and state regulation of occupations.  
*Current Status:* 2/12/2018 - Introduced