



## CONTROLLING BOARD APPROVES INCREASED FUNDS FOR MEDICAID EXPANSION, LAWSUIT FOLLOWS

This week Ohio Controlling Board members voted to approve the Ohio Department of Medicaid's request to increase appropriation authority by nearly \$2.5 billion in federal funds through fiscal year 2015 for expanded Medicaid coverage for low income Ohioans.

Prior to the vote, House Speaker William Batchelder replaced Representatives Ron Amstutz (R-Wooster) and Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville)—both presumed 'no' votes on the measure—with Representatives Ross McGregor (R-Springfield) and Jeff McClain (R-Upper Sandusky). The measure passed 5-2, with Senator Bill Coley (R-Liberty Township) and Representative McClain voting against increasing the appropriation.

Press releases distributed by Republican leadership in the House and Senate following the vote stressed that Governor Kasich had already expanded Medicaid, as his administration had already secured federal approval for the plan. Speaker Batchelder said the vote would merely ensure the solvency of the state's Medicaid program.

Governor Kasich had previously included the measure to provide coverage for roughly 275,000 Ohioans in his budget proposal, but the language was removed during House budget deliberations. Further, the legislature included language in the budget to prohibit the governor from moving forward with expansion through his executive authority—language the governor ultimately vetoed.

Following the vote, five House Republicans along with two local Right to Life groups filed a **legal challenge** to the move. Representatives Ron Young (R-Leroy), Matt Lynch (R-Chagrin Falls), Andy Thompson (R-Marietta), Ron Maag (R-Lebanon), and John Becker (R-Union Township) argue that the governor does not have the authority to effectuate such a major policy change administratively.

A writ of mandamus is requested by the suit, ordering the Controlling Board to vacate the decision to appropriate funds to expand Medicaid spending.

## DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE ON POTENTIAL CHANGES TO OHIO'S RENEWABLE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY MANDATES

Senate Public Utilities Committee Chairman Bill Seitz continued hearings this week on **Senate Bill 58**, his controversial legislation to amend Ohio's energy efficiency and renewable energy mandates.

The hearing included both proponent and opponent testimony, with supporters continuing to tout the cost savings they believe consumers will realize as a result of the proposed changes to what they deem are ineffective state mandates. The bill's detractors, however, continue to point to the fact that it has only been five years since the current law was passed. The detractors assert it is not enough time to make an accurate assessment of how the law is working.

Meanwhile, the House Public Utilities Committee also met this week to begin hearings on companion legislation, House Bill 302, sponsored by Chairman Peter Stautberg. The bill is identical to Senator Seitz's legislation.

"My goal in introducing House Bill 302 is to begin the hearing process in the House in preparation for the arrival of Senate Bill 58, so that we are not starting from scratch when that day arrives," stated Stautberg in his sponsor testimony.

An additional hearing has been scheduled for Senate Bill 58 next week, however, no timetable or action plan has been announced for either bill. Senator Seitz has announced that changes are on the horizon for his legislation and amendments are likely to be offered in the coming weeks. While Seitz would like his legislation to pass the Senate by November, it is uncertain if the legislation will move forward.

## LEGISLATION CONSIDERED THIS WEEK

**Income tax rates:** Sponsored by Senator Chris Widener (R-Springfield), Senate Bill 210 would provide for a permanent income tax rate reduction of four percent for all tax brackets beginning in 2014. The bill was introduced Tuesday, October 22.

**Community foundations:** Sponsored by Senators Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster) and Bob Peterson (R-Sabina), Senate Bill 211 would authorize an income tax credit for donations to the permanent endowment fund of an eligible community foundation. The bill is scheduled for sponsor testimony in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on October 29.

**Electric recovery:** Sponsored by Representative Terry Johnson (R-McDermott), House Bill 312 would permit a public utility electric light company to recover costs of an economic and job retention program from all public utility electric light customers in Ohio. The bill was introduced on October 24.

**Medicaid:** Sponsored by Representative Barbara Sears (R-Sylvania), House Bill 317 makes various changes to the Medicaid program and increases civil penalties for defrauding the state. Additionally, the bill creates the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC), a bipartisan panel of House and Senate members to regularly review Ohio's Medicaid program. The bill was introduced on October 24.

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