

Dear Township Officials:

This is a legislative update that will cover federal legislation, state legislation and other issues of importance. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or the appropriate person listed.

Federal Update - Social Security - Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Penalty An article in the Washington Post this past week indicated that key Members of Congress from both parties have held tentative talks about "overhauling" the Social Security system, and Congress could turn its attention to reform as soon as this fall. Congressional consideration of Social Security reform could offer an important opportunity to push repeal of the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. Such repeal will be a top priority for NEA in any reform debate.

Our efforts to move GPO/WEP repeal as part of overall reform of the Social Security system will be greatly enhanced if we can demonstrate maximum support among Members of Congress for the repeal proposal. As of today, The House version of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 235) has 274 bipartisan cosponsors – an impressive number that is close to the record level reached in the last Congress. The Senate version (S. 484), however, has only 24 cosponsors.

Senate

<http://capwiz.com/nea/issues/bills/?bill=13133141&cs_party=all&cs_status=all&cs_state=ALL> and House

<http://capwiz.com/nea/issues/bills/?bill=12402161&cs_party=all&cs_status=all&cs_state=ALL> cosponsor lists are available through the national education association website.

Additional pressure is needed to build up the Senate cosponsor list, as well as continuing to increase support in the House. Action Needed: Contact Senators and Representatives and urge them to cosponsor S. 484/H.R. 235 – the Social Security Fairness Act – if they have not already done so. Urge all Members to support including repeal of the GPO and WEP in any comprehensive Social Security reform package.

Ohio Statehouse Update

BUDGET UPDATE

The Ohio House passed Am. Sub. HB 1 last week and sent the state's biennial budget to the Senate for passage. However, in light of recent fiscal numbers released by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), the Senate will likely have to cut money and programs from the proposed budget. The fiscal outlook for the state is even more dismal than predicted, as income tax revenue was much lower than projected.

The Senate will be working to put together a budget that will take into account the lower revenue figures and they have begun working in groups on major issues. Technically the budget bill is to be passed by June 30th, as the state's fiscal year begins July 1st. There is a possibility that the budget will not be done by June 30th. We will keep you updated on the progress.

Attached is a letter that the OTA sent members of the Senate last week with respect to some of our concerns and praise for the budget bill. Please talk to your Senators about these issues.

Recently Introduced Bills: (To view bills, please visit www.legislature.state.oh.us)

INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE

HB 153 POLICE DEPARTMENTS (Yuko) To authorize regional water and sewer districts to establish police departments. Am. 109.71, 109.73, and 109.77 and En. 6119.60, 6119.61, 6119.62, 6119.63, and 6119.64

HB 159 UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE (Skindell, Hagan) To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents. Am. 3922.01 to 3922.15, 3922.21 to 3922.28, 3922.31, 3922.32, and 3922.33

HB 166 TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES (Carney, McGregor) To authorize the creation of transportation innovation authorities by specified governmental entities and to establish the powers and duties of such authorities. Am. 5501.03, 5501.311, 5531.09, and 5531.18 and to enact sections 5539.01, 5539.02, 5539.03, 5539.031, 5539.04, 5539.05, 5539.06, 5539.07, 5539.08, 5539.09, 5539.10, and 5539.11

INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE (To view bills, please visit www.legislature.state.oh.us)

SB 120 SMOKING BAN (Schuler) Regarding exemptions from the smoking ban. Am. 3794.01 and 3794.03

SB 121 TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES (Niehaus) To authorize the creation of transportation innovation authorities by specified governmental entities and to establish the powers and duties of such authorities. Am. 5501.03, 5501.311, 5531.09, and 5531.18, 5539.01, 5539.02, 5539.03, 5539.031, 5539.04, 5539.05, 5539.06, 5539.07, 5539.08, 5539.09, 5539.10, and 5539.11

Recent Legislative Action: (To view bills, please visit www.legislature.state.oh.us) PASSED IN THE SENATE

SB 7 FRAUD REPORTING (Wagoner) To require the Auditor of State to establish a fraud-reporting system for residents and public employees to file anonymous complaints of fraud and misuse of public funds by public offices or officials. 32-0 (Earlier AMENDED)

SENATE COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Ways & Means & Economic Development

SB 111 TAX PAYMENTS (Stewart) To make permanent the temporary reimbursements for local government and school district tangible personal property tax losses. (1st Hearing-Sponsor) CONTINUED Sen. Stewart said it is important that the state permanently continue reimbursing schools and local governments for the loss of tangible personal property taxes that are being phased out. The House version of the budget (House Bill 1) extends the hold harmless provision through 2011 while the tax reform law extended it to 2010 for schools. Athens City Schools in his district receives \$1.2 to \$1.4 million a year in hold harmless payments that it cannot afford to lose without making staff and program cuts.

SB 109 PROPERTY TAXES (Gibbs) To exempt from real property taxation the value of single-family residential property owned by a developer or builder until the developer or builder transfers possession or title. (1st Hearing-Sponsor) CONTINUED Chairman Gibbs said the bill would provide some relief to builders who must pay taxes on vacant properties before they are sold and that it would help builders provide jobs.

Environment & Natural Resources Committee SB 110 HOUSEHOLD SEWAGE (Niehaus) To revise the Household Sewage and Small Flow On-Site Sewage Treatment Systems Law, and to declare an emergency.

SB 100 HOUSEHOLD SEWAGE (Grendell) To revise the Household Sewage and Small Flow On-Site Sewage Treatment Systems Law, to establish the Household Sewage Treatment

System Revolving Loan Program and the Household Sewage Treatment System Grant Program in the Department of Health, to make appropriations, and to declare an emergency.

Multiple witnesses appeared for both bills. Please refer to legislative alert sent to OTA members on Friday, May 8.

Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration The Commission has met four times and has put together a work plan and research proposal for the next 14 months. The Commission will begin taking testimony at the May meeting where the Tax Commissioner is scheduled to come in and present on local government tax structure. Regional meetings will be scheduled in the fall around the state and the OTA will send out alerts as to the details about those meetings.

Beginning June 1st, a website, hosted by Miami University - Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs, will be totally up and running for the Reform Commission. The website will be www.ohioreformandcollaboration.org. The site will have a place for public comment, e-mail notification of meetings and testimony before the commission.

For additional information about any of these matters, please do not hesitate to contact the State Association.

Sincerely,

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