

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, JUNE 2009

ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

EXPECTATIONS

State Budget	ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES	EXPECTATIONS
	<p>Amended Substitute HB 1 passed the Ohio House on April 29, 2009 by a party line vote of 53-45. The Senate passed its version by a party line vote of 20-11 on June 3, 2009. A Conference Committee has begun meeting to work out major differences. A balanced budget must be presented by July 1, 2009.</p> <p>In the Ohio House and Senate, the Catholic Conference, in partnership with many other advocates, was successful in having most of the line items for which we lobbied adjusted. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of \$8 M for hunger-related programs for a total of \$ 12 M per year; • Increase of \$37.5 M for county public assistance and child protection services for a total of \$50 M per year; • Reworking of the hospital fee assessment in the Senate that will hold hospitals harmless. • Elimination of the mandated hospital reimbursement cap; • Requiring a federal waiver to help nursing homes, not accepting Medicaid, such as House of Loreto, avoid the new bed tax; • An additional \$234 M to \$ 269 M to nursing homes through reworking the bed tax and reimbursement formula; • Inclusion of a provision allowing chartered nonpublic schools to access all of the allocated Administrative Cost Reimbursement funds; • Maintenance of school voucher programs • Increase of \$1 M in Auxiliary Services; • Simplification of public assistance enrollment and continuing eligibility procedures; • Provision of \$200,000 for cord blood promotion and banking, however the Senate has proposed eliminating this amount. 	<p>The Senate cut close to \$1 M from the House-passed version. Current revenue projections show a continuing decline in revenues. The Conference Committee needs to cut an additional \$2 B from the Senate passed version.</p> <p>This budget will be one of the most difficult in which to find consensus. Issues being raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wisdom of using so much one-time federal stimulus money; • The uncertainty of projected revenues and economic recovery; • Disagreements regarding the cost and fairness of education reform; • Disagreements over new bed taxes, franchise fees, and other fee increases; • Lack of sufficient funds to allocate to so many worthwhile and needy programs; • Disagreement over the wisdom of proposing new revenue streams such as gambling, delaying tax cuts, raising new taxes. <p>The Senate eliminated most of the Governor's proposed education reforms. They placed an emphasis on parental choice in education.</p> <p>The Senate maintained funding for most of the House-passed human services programs.</p>

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, JUNE 2009

<p>Gambling</p>	<p>There are three serious proposals under consideration to expand gambling in Ohio.</p> <p>Proposal 1 is an initiative petition drive, currently underway, to place on the November 2009 ballot a constitutional change allowing four casinos in Ohio (Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Cincinnati). This is the proposal that Senator Voinovich has asked us to oppose.</p> <p>Proposal 2 is a legislative effort that may be included in the state budget bill allowing slot machines (80,000) in bars, restaurants, bingo and veterans' halls, and racetracks. Voters would approve sites through precinct-by-precinct votes (similar to liquor options).</p> <p>Proposal 3 is also a legislative effort that may be included in the state budget bill. It would allow slot machines (14,000) only at Ohio racetracks.</p>	<p>We expect Proposal 1 to be on the ballot. The opposing forces in the last election have joined together and are in the process of collecting the 400,000 signatures needed for the proposal to be on the ballot. These forces are expected to spend over \$50 million on passage. Their projections are to pay the state around \$600 M per year and create 20,000 jobs.</p> <p>Proposals 2 and 3 argue that voters do not need to approve such expansions because the Ohio Lottery Commission already has the authority to approve such machines. This claim is being challenged.</p> <p>Proposal 2 is being led by the Bar and Restaurant Associations. They project to pay the state around \$500 M per year.</p> <p>The State Racing Commission is leading Proposal 3. It is not clear how much money this will bring to the state; however, supporters claim that this will help save 16,000 horserace related jobs.</p>
<p>Immigration</p>	<p>The two ICE directors in Ohio continue to respond, openly and fairly, to the Conference's concerns regarding the humanitarian arrest and deportation practices.</p> <p>The statewide Immigrant Worker Project, under the leadership of Jeff Stewart, is working in concert with diocesan representatives in addressing this issue. The good news is that the ICE officials are contacting us for help. The bad news is that this is taxing our limited staff and resources.</p> <p>The Conference's ad-hoc immigration commission is just beginning its work. Their report to the Board is expected in October.</p>	<p>Federal reform remains absolutely necessary. Discussions are under way as to how consensus can be reached. Another try at federal reform is expected this fall.</p> <p>The new federal directives are a bit more immigrant-friendly. The focus is somewhat shifting to drug lords, human traffickers, and gangs.</p> <p>Several bills are being introduced both at the state and federal levels to clamp down on employers who knowingly employ undocumented workers. The heightened use of <i>status verification systems</i> is also being promoted. These systems often have proved flawed and unreliable.</p>

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, JUNE 2009

<p>Death Penalty</p>	<p>Six Ohio executions are pending over the next six months:</p> <p>John Fautenberry, July 14, 2009 Marvellous Keene, July 21, 2009 Jason Getsy, August 18, 2009 Romell Broom, September 15, 2009 Darryl Durr, November 10, 2009 Kenneth Biros, December 8, 2009</p>	<p>The reintroduction of an Ohio study bill is expected.</p> <p>Ohio executions are expected to continue at a steady pace throughout the next several years.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation Discrimination</p>	<p>HB 176 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations.</p> <p>HB 176 does not impact marriage.</p> <p>There is an exemption for religious organizations (4112.02 (R))</p>	<p>“ (R)(1) Nothing in this section shall prohibit any religious association, corporation, or society that is not organized for private profit, or any institution organized for educational purposes that is operated, supervised, or controlled by such a religious association, corporation, or society, from doing either of the following:</p> <p>(a) Limiting admission to or giving preference to persons of the same religion or denomination;</p> <p>(b) In matters related to sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, taking any action with respect to education, employment, housing and real property, or use of facilities.</p> <p>(2) Division (R)(1) of this section shall not apply to secular business activities in which the religious association, corporation, or society engages if the conduct of those activities is unrelated to the religious and educational purposes for which the association, corporation, or society is organized.”</p>

