

Legislative Update

In late March the Chamber hosted a Legislative Forum providing an opportunity for members in our round table format to meet with State Representatives Carfagna and Lightbody, Senator Brenner, Westerville Mayor Treneff, and Genoa Township Trustee Gebhardt.

The 133rd General Assembly is underway with newly elected Speaker of the House Larry Householder (since Jan. 7, 2019) and Speaker Pro Tempore Kirk Shurig. This General Assembly consists of 99 members of the Ohio House of Representatives and 33 members of the Ohio Senate.

Topics of discussion included:

*A few members expressed concerns with Pharmacy benefits and the coverage through private insurance coverage and Medicaid and how co-pays are handled.

Pharmacy reimbursement to the pharmacies

*Regulations within our public schools related to qualifying for free and reduced lunch program and pros and cons with providing free breakfast and lunch to all children every day.

* Requirements for graduation rates, report card ratings and how schools are measured year to year.

*2-year transportation budget – Governor’s version of the budget compared to what passed through the House with a 71-27 vote and what is now (at the time of this meeting) being discussed with the Senate. The constitutional deadline for the transportation budget is April 1, 2019.

Adjustment in our gas tax would put Ohio more in line with surrounding states. All surrounding states except Ky. have higher gas taxes than Ohio. (Pa. 58.7, Michigan 44.1 Indiana is 42.9. West Virginia 35.7 compared to Ohio’s current 28 cents.)

*Operating Budget was in circulation one week at the time of this meeting. Governor DeWine is required to have a 2-year operating budget in place by end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2019. The budget represents the single most important policy statement the legislature makes.

Much of the Governor’s proposed state budget prioritizes what was on his campaign trail – funds for early childhood education, addressing the opioid epidemic and cutting regulations.

If you have interested in these state topics and local legislation we invite you to join the Chamber’s Government Relations Committee. The group meets the first Tuesday of each month, 3:30-5:00PM at the Chamber office.