



### **Redistricting Still in Limbo**

The Ohio Supreme Court has now three times ruled maps drawn for the Statehouse as unconstitutional. The Redistricting Commission took a seemingly new approach and brought in independent map drawers (Republicans chose one and the Democrats chose one) to make recommendations to the Commissioners. A new map was due to be submitted by March 28th. However, as the deadline approached and a recommendation was not presented by the independent mappers, the Commission elected to resubmit the 3<sup>rd</sup> map with changes to the Supreme Court. The commission voted 4-3 (with Auditor Faber voting with the Democrats) on that action.

Ohio election officials remain concerned about conducting a May primary when the districts remain unknown. This conundrum has taken the attention of much of the legislature and other issues have been put on the back burner while they try to resolve this pressing issue. As of late March, Secretary of State LaRose has ordered that statehouse districts be pulled from May 3<sup>rd</sup> primary election ballots. However, despite mounting pressure, legislators have not formally taken statutory action to move the primary election, even for Statehouse races. Maps are redrawn every 10 years based on census data. However, this year is the first time maps have been drawn under a constitutional amendment passed by the electorate.

On the other hand, the Congressional maps seem to be finalized for a May primary. In a technical development, the Supreme Court failed to retain jurisdiction over the latest version of the maps, so they were allowed to move forward despite a challenge from outside groups. Groups have filed new legal action on those maps, but the schedule the Court has set for hearing that case extends into primary season, making it unlikely that any decision would impact this year's congressional election.

### **Amusement Ride Safety Rules Filed**

With the county fairs' administrative rules mostly complete, the Ohio Department of Agriculture is now working on a package of rules regarding the amusement ride safety division. The rules are largely just updating Ohio Revised Code section references. You'll recall that in HB 665, the amusement ride safety laws were re-numbered to give them a unique code section (ORC 993) from the fair sections (ORC 1711). GOSA has been closely monitoring the enactment and enforcement of inspection standard changes made as a result of Tyler's Law. We want to ensure safe rides, but not create overly burdensome standards for inspections.

The only change of substance proposed in the amusement ride rules is:

901:9-1-01 – Amusement ride or device permit – Allows additional flexibility for ride operators to submit their itinerary. Currently any itinerary changes must be submitted 10 days in advance; the new language allows flexibility as 10 day's notice was not practical (i.e. – a last minute cancelation).

A public hearing is scheduled for April 26, 2022, at 11am. Witness remarks are not limited to the changes proposed, but witnesses can also provide suggestions of changes they would like to see in the rules.

### **Ohio State Fair Back to Full Capacity in 2022**

After a 2-year hiatus because of COVID, the Ohio State Fair will be back for a full fledged event in 2022. The Ohio State Fair will take place July 27-August 7, 2022. In the announcement, General Manager Virgil Strickler said: "When we open our gates, people will be able to rediscover the Ohio State Fair," said Strickler. "This summer, all of our fair favorites will return. You'll be able to walk through the barn, see the iconic butter cow, try some deep-fried food on a stick, listen to music, browse arts exhibitions, watch performances by the All-Ohio State Fair Band and Youth Choir, visit with Smokey Bear, learn about agriculture, and so much more."

### **Legislation Could Suspend the Gas Tax Increase**

[Senate Bill 277](#) has been introduced by Senator Steve Huffman to temporary halt the gas tax increase that was enacted in the Transportation budget in the previous General Assembly. The bill reduces the tax rate on motor fuel purchased in Ohio to 28 cents per gallon, effective from July 1, 2022 through July 1, 2027. This equates to a temporary reduction of 10.5 cents for regular gas and 19 cents for diesel. The sponsor has indicated that the federal infrastructure funds will make up for any loss to from this bill. And that the increasing gas prices has disproportionately affected lower income Ohioans, so this bill would provide relief at the pump for them.

### **Youth Employment Bill Has Hearings**

Senator Tim Schaffer (R) and Senator Tina Maharath (D) have introduced Senate Bill 251 regarding youth employment. The bill would allow those under 16 to be employed after 7pm during school year. It would state that with parent or guardian's permission, those under 16 could work until 9pm. This bill is being considered by the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee.

### **How to Contact Your Lobbyist**

Amanda Sines  
Government Advantage Group  
17 South High Street, Suite 750  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
614-221-7157      [amanda@gov-advantage.com](mailto:amanda@gov-advantage.com)