



Legislative Update

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Political activity

The General Assembly has been on its primary election break, which means there has been little official business taking place for the past month. All of that is expected to change when lawmakers return to Columbus in April. What they will actually accomplish remains to be seen. The battles within the republican party, that are likely to be a harbinger of what to expect in the months ahead, continue as the primary election results are being interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on one's perspective. Further, the expected battle for the Speaker of the House position between current Senate President, Matt Huffman (who will win a seat in the Ohio House in November), and current House Speaker Jason Stephens will heat up and affect what the chambers decide to focus on and how business will be conducted for the next few months.

The battle for control within the house also was played out in several contested republican primary races. Some observers believe the losses suffered by Speaker Stephens' supporters, signaled that Stephens' hold on the reins of leadership is fatally weak, while others disagree. Twelve republicans, dubbed the "Blue 22", faced contested primaries. Of the twelve, eight Stephens' supporters survived. However, Rep. Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton) who was supportive of ANA-Ohio's hackathon and possible legislation coming out of that event, was defeated (53%-47%) as were representatives Jon Cross (R-Findlay) assistant majority floor leader; Brett Hillyer (R-Uhrichsville); and Gail Pavliga (R-Atwater). Rep. Haraz Ghanbari (R-Perrysburg) co-sponsor of ONA's staffing ratio bill won his very contentious primary earning 54% of the vote. While these losses are significant, they do not provide a definitive message regarding the future make-up of the house for the next General Assembly.

Legislative activity

The legislative committee schedule for the week of April 2nd includes several bills ANA-Ohio has been following. The House Provider Services Committee will hear **HB 136** that authorizes the operation of remote dispensing pharmacies (possible vote); **SB 144** regarding immunizations administered by pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and pharmacy technicians (first house committee hearing); **SB 81** authorizing CNS's, CNM's, and CNP's and PA's to sign documents related to hospital patient admission treatment and discharge (will receive opponent testimony); **HB 319** prohibiting discrimination against an individual for the refusal of certain

medical interventions for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions (will have its first hearing); and **HB 236** that prohibits a congregate setting from denying a patient or resident access to an advocate (will be the subject of opponent testimony).

New legislation of note

HB 437 sponsored by Representatives Beth Lear (R-Galena) and Brian Lorenz (R-Powell) requires voters to declare their political party 90 days before a primary election. Sponsors call it an “election integrity bill”. Under the bill, partisan candidates must have voted in a party’s last primary election to run in that party’s primary election. The League of Woman Voters oppose the effort to restrict access to partisan ballots. Other bills addressing the same issue that take a variety of approaches, include HB 208 and HB 210. These bills have had committee hearings where both republicans and democrats express concerns that this action will spur more ideologically extreme primary winners and prevent independent voters’ voices from being heard. (Source: Gongwer News Service (March 7, 2024). *Bill latest attempt at closing state’s primary.*)

HB 452 sponsored by Representatives Andrea White (R-Kettering) and Rachel Baker (D-Cincinnati) addresses hospital violence prevention and related training, security plans, and incident reporting. The bill requires the Department of Higher Education to survey colleges and universities that provide education for health care providers (including nurses) to determine the extent to which the education and training provided to these students address the prevention of workplace violence and management of aggressive behaviors. The Chancellor is to report survey results to the General Assembly. Each hospital, in consultation with a team that includes direct care providers, is to establish a security plan for preventing workplace violence and managing aggressive behaviors. The bill also includes specific requirements the plans must meet. Hospitals and hospital systems are to submit annually a report to ODH that identifies the number of incidents reported, the number reported to law enforcement, and the number of individuals charged criminally. This data is to be shared with the hospital teams developing the security plans.

HB 465 Sponsored by Rep. Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton) allows a resident of an ICF/IID to conduct electronic monitoring of the resident’s room and establishes a new Medicaid home and community-based services waiver for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Groundwork Ohio collaboration

The ANA-Ohio Board of Directors approved the PPC’s recommendation to become a collaborative partner with Groundwork Ohio. That organization will closely follow Gov. Mike DeWine’s State of the State Address on April 10th to see what he says about the importance of supporting Ohio’s infants, toddlers, young children, and families as the state continues to prosper due to the unprecedented economic development currently underway. Groundwork Ohio is also conducting a listening tour across Ohio beginning in April to talk with families, community leaders, early childhood professionals, policy makers, and others about the significant challenges and opportunities facing young children and families. Nurses’ voices should be included in that endeavor. The first event will be held April 25th from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. in Wilmington. Other stops on the tour include Canton, May 3; Piqua, May 17; Akron, May 31;

Dayton, June 6; and Portsmouth, June 20. Other stops on the tour include Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, Zanesville, Athens, and Cleveland with the actual dates and locations for each of these cities yet to be determined. Go to Groundworkohio.com to register and learn more details.

Nurse licensure compact update

Several states are currently considering adopting the nurse licensure compact. The states include **Connecticut** where the governor is a strong advocate; **Hawaii** where companion bills have been introduced with hearings being held in both chambers. The governor is also supportive. **Illinois** also has companion bills pending, both sponsored by democrats. The senate version also includes unit-specific nurse-to-patient ratios. In **New York** Governor Kathy Hochul's annual executive budget included compact provisions and there is also a bill pending before the state's senate. Legislation has also been introduced in Alaska, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Minnesota.

The APRN compact bill has been introduced in Arizona and New York. Currently four states have approved compact legislation—North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, and Utah. Seven states must be on board before the provisions are considered in effect in any state, however. (A state must first enact the RN/LPN licensure compact before it can adopt the APRN compact.)

Federal legislation

The ANA-Ohio Board of Directors acted in late February to endorse soon to be introduced federal legislation championed by ANA that would restrict the use of mandatory overtime in health care facilities. Senator Jeff Matsui (D-California) and Representative Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia) will reintroduce the *Nurse Overtime and Patient Safety Act* in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives respectively. The bill prohibits health care facilities from *requiring* nurses to work in excess of a previously scheduled work shift or duty period; 48 hours in any workweek; 12 consecutive hours in a 24-hour period; or during the 10-hour period immediately following the 12th hour worked in a shift or duty period. The bill includes exceptions during a declared emergency or disaster under certain circumstances, and whistleblower and nondiscrimination provisions to protect nurses against retaliation by noncompliant employers. Civil penalties can be imposed for violations of the law.

On the horizon?

More than 30 years ago (1992), Ohio voters approved a state Constitutional Amendment that imposes term limits on Ohio state legislators. These lawmakers can serve only eight consecutive years; however, the amendment does not prohibit them from moving from one chamber to another once they reach the eight-year mark in either the house or senate. Ohio's top legislative leaders, Senate President Matt Huffman, and House Speaker Jason Stephens have begun testing the waters about "loosening or eliminating" term limits. Stephens first raised the possibility in late December and Huffman joined the refrain in March. It is unlikely that the legislature will take any action before the November election, but they are obviously informally taking the pulse of their colleagues and voters to see how the idea of making changes to term limits might fare in Ohio.