

Legislative Update for OACTE, OAPCTE, and SUED

April 1, 2024

General Assembly

A select few legislative committees will meet this week at the Ohio Statehouse, though no committees overseeing higher education or K-12 education will meet this week. Those committees are expected to meet next on April 9.

Gov. Mike DeWine on April 10 will address Ohioans at the 2024 State of the State. It is expected he will discuss his literacy priorities relative to the Science of Reading, among other areas.

ACLU of Ohio files lawsuit on House Bill 68

The ACLU of Ohio on March 26 filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of House Bill (HB) 68, which is set to take effect on April 24. HB 68 prohibits gender transitioning surgeries and services for minors and requires same-sex sports teams for K-12 schools and colleges and universities. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of two families with a child who is at risk of losing their medical care from the new law, is pending in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas.

Race for House Speaker comes into focus as Huffman narrows Stephens' dwindling lead

Control of the Ohio House of Representatives currently remains in the hands of incumbent Speaker Jason Stephens, but challenger Matt Huffman notched key victories in the March 19 primary election, chipping away at Stephens' control of the lower chamber as two battle this year for the position to be assumed in 2025.

Four Republican allies of Stephens, including a member of his leadership team, lost their primary election to Huffman-supported challenger candidates. These defeats, combined with the departures of Stephens supporters due to term limits and running for other elected offices, whittle the original "Blue 22" Stephens loyalists down to 13, but Stephens' current roster of House GOP support is likely around at least 17. That's because Stephens appointed two allies to vacant seats in 2023 and appointed two more Republicans to his leadership team who did not support him for speaker last year. If House Democrats can maintain their current 32 seats, Stephens would need their support and only 18 Republican representatives to secure the 50-required votes to retain the speaker's gavel.

Stephens and Huffman will both spend the remainder of the year attempting to secure the allegiance of existing House Republicans and the roughly 20 Republican newcomer candidates in open races this November who are likely to be elected due to solidly Republican districts. Many candidates in these open races have already supported Huffman or received support from him or pro-Huffman political action committees.

The House and Senate are both set to meet on April 10.