



# Ohio Township Association

## Legislative Alert

February 14, 2020

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## Legislative Action This Week

### ***First Hearing for Township Omnibus Bill***

The OTA's township omnibus bill, [HB 444](#), received its first hearing this week. The bill sponsors, Reps. Baldrige (R-Winchester) and Abrams (R-Harrison), provided testimony and answered questions.

The bill is pending in the [House State and Local Government Committee](#). To watch the committee hearing, click [here](#).

### ***HB 308 Passes the House***

[HB 308](#), which covers PTSD for first responders under BWC regardless of an accompanying physical injury, passed the House this week. During the committee process, a one-year cap on benefits was removed from the bill. HB 308 now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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## Statehouse Committee Updates

### **Senate Committee Hearings - Public Utilities**

[SB 234 WIND REGULATIONS](#) (MCCOLLEY) - To require inclusion of safety specifications in wind farm certificate applications, to modify wind turbine setbacks, and to permit a township referendum vote on certain wind farm certificates.

*The committee heard opponent testimony from the American Wind Energy Association, Ohio Conservative Energy Forum, the Nature Conservancy, EDP Renewables North America LLC, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy, and numerous individual witnesses.*

### **Senate Committee Hearings - Ways and Means**

[SB 212 PROPERTY TAXATION](#) (SCHURING) - To authorize townships and municipal corporations to designate areas within which new homes and improvements to existing homes are wholly or partially exempted from property taxation.

*The committee received interested party testimony from the Ohio Association of County Boards and the Greater Ohio Policy Center; OTA position - support.*

[SB 190 INCOME TAX CREDIT](#) (SCHAFFER) - To allow an income tax credit for law enforcement officials who purchase safety or protective items to be used in the course of official law enforcement activities.

*The committee heard proponent testimony from the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association and individual police departments; OTA position - support.*

### **House Committee Hearings - Insurance**

[HB 308 PTSD COVERAGE](#) (PATTON) - Concerning workers' compensation and disability retirement for peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury.

*The committee received opponent testimony from the Ohio Manufacturer's Association, Ohio Business Roundtable, NFIB, Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and the Ohio Municipal League. The committee also heard proponent testimony from several first responders. The committee reported the bill 11-3;*

*OTA position - opposed.*

## **House Committee Hearings - State and Local Government**

[HB 444 TOWNSHIP LAWS](#) (BALDRIDGE, ABRAMS) - To make various changes to township law.

*The committee heard sponsor testimony from Reps. Baldrige and Abrams; OTA position - support.*

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## **Bills Recently Introduced**

[SB 273 REDUCE PROPERTY TAXES](#) (Williams) - To reduce property taxes on owner-occupied homes to the extent the taxes increase by more than 10% per year and to prohibit political subdivisions from placing a lien on property for unpaid water charges.

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## **AOS Bulletin – Audit Rates**

The Auditor of State's Office charges local and state entities an hourly rate for audit services in order to recover costs. Prior to House Bill 166 of the 133rd General Assembly, these rates were established by rule, but recent amendments to ORC 117.13 removed the rulemaking authority and instead requires the Auditor to determine and publish annually the rates to be charged to state agencies and local public offices.

For the remainder of FY 2020 or until a subsequent bulletin is published, the following rates are to be charged:

- \* audit rate charged to local governments is \$41/hour,
- \* audit rate charged to state agencies is \$76/hour,
- \* rate for Local Government Services is \$50/hour, and
- \* rate for interns is 50 percent of the standard rate charged for the services provided.

You can read the full bulletin [here](#).

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## **Youth Service Grant**

ServeOhio - along with its partners American Electric Power Foundation and the Corporation for National and Community Service - announce the availability of grants to support community service projects organized for Global Youth Service Day on April 17-19, 2020. Grant awards will range between \$500 to \$2,000.

How can the funding be used?

The grants support projects that create or improve community assets or infrastructure such as parks, schools, senior centers, community gardens, or low-income homes through youth volunteer engagement. Funds may be used for supplies, materials, and volunteer support.

Who is eligible to apply?

Non-profit and public organizations in Ohio including, but not limited to, volunteer centers, school districts, community colleges, universities, and local governments are eligible to apply.

Ready to apply?

For the application and instructions, visit the ServeOhio [website](#). **The application deadline is Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 5:00 PM.**

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# Assistance to Firefighters Grant

The [FY 2019 Assistance to Firefighters Grant](#) (AFG) under FEMA has opened.

The program goal is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. Applicants may request funding for operations and safety projects, vehicle acquisition, and regional projects, which should benefit more than one local jurisdiction. Eligible applicants are fire departments, non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations, and state fire training academies.

For this round of funding, approximately \$315 million is available to support 2,500 awards. Maximum award and required match contributions vary based on the departments jurisdiction size. Generally, applicants serving larger population sizes can request a larger maximum award size (up to \$3.5 million) but must provide a larger match share.

For more information on the program, click [here](#). **Applications are due March 13th.**

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## Rural EMS Training Grant

The US Department of Health and Human Services is offering a grant aimed at recruiting and training emergency medical services personnel in rural areas. For full details on this program, click [here](#).

**Applications are due March 30, 2020.**

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## OHRAB Grants

The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board announces the availability of grants between \$500 and \$5,000 to archival institutions to fund projects to preserve and/or provide access to Ohio's historical records.

**Grant applications are due March 28, 2020.** More information on the grants, including the application packet, is available [here](#).

Projects eligible for funding in 2020 include:

- **Assessment and Strategic Planning:** hiring consultants to identify needs and priorities for improving the organization, description, preservation and access to collections.
- **Access, Arrangement, and Description:** identifying, organizing, and improving access to historical records.
- **Preservation:** purchasing archival file folders, archival boxes, dehumidifiers, humidifiers, hygromographs, or HEPA vacuum cleaners.
- **Website Development:** Adding collections to online catalog, developing virtual archives, or creating an on-line database. Websites designed to support access to researchers (e.g., online catalogs, finding aids, and digitized collections, rather than curated web exhibits) will receive preference in funding.

Please Note: all projects should produce some type of online content, such as a finding aid, report, or digital images.

Questions? Please contact:  
Ron Davidson  
Special Collections Librarian  
Sandusky Library  
419.625.3834  
[rdavidson@sanduskylib.org](mailto:rdavidson@sanduskylib.org)

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# BWC Safety Grant Increase

Last week, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced it will increase funding to its Safety Grants program for employers by \$30 million over 2020 and 2021 - bringing total grant funding to \$70 million.

The Safety Grants program has already reached its 2020 appropriation of \$20 million, prompting the move by the board.

The grants, up to \$40,000 per employer, provide private and public State Insurance Fund employers funding for training, wellness programs, and equipment intended to reduce the risk of workplace injuries and illnesses.

**The deadline to apply for the grants in the 2020 fiscal year is March 31, 2020.**

Applications for FY 2021 will be accepted beginning July 1, 2020. For more information, visit the BWC's [website](#).

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## Federal Update



### ***Congressional Action***

The House and Senate were in session this week. The House considered 9 bills under suspension of the rules, including the Protecting Critical Infrastructure Against Drones and Emerging Threats Act ([H.R. 4432](#)), which would require the Department of Homeland Security to develop and disseminate a terrorism threat assessment on unmanned aircraft systems and associated emerging threats based on information requested from federal, state, local, and private sector stakeholders, as well as establish a secure communications infrastructure that would create a voluntary channel for critical infrastructure owners and operators to report information on emerging terrorist threats. For the remainder of the week, the House voted on: the Protecting America's Wilderness Act of 2019 ([H.R. 2546](#)), a package of natural resource committee wilderness and conservation bills; the Smithsonian Women's History Museum Act ([H.R. 1980](#)), which would establish a Smithsonian museum on American women's history; and a resolution ([H.J. Res. 79](#)) to remove the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

Other noteworthy events this week included the release of President Trump's \$4.8 trillion FY 2021 budget proposal and the New Hampshire primary (the first primary election following the Iowa Caucuses).

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## 2020 Census



### **All Your Information for the Upcoming 2020 Census**

#### *PSAs Available*

The US Census Bureau has provided a selection of public service announcements intended to help educate the public. You may access them [here](#).

[US Census Website](#)

[Ohio Census Website](#)

The 2020 Census is headed your way! And it's so important that your township gets an accurate count. This section will help you get information out to your friends and neighbors to ensure residents in your area are counted. Check here for weekly information and links to important documents and resources.

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