



Ohio Township Association Legislative Alert

April 17, 2020

Legislative Action This Week

COVID-19 Updates

Economic Recovery Task Force Continues

The House Economic Recovery Task Force continued to meet and receive testimony this week. While the Task Force originally aimed to wrap up work this week, the Chair announced that the Task Force would continue into next week to allow additional time for feedback and policy suggestions. You can watch these discussion on the [Ohio Channel](#).

OTA Website

The OTA has compiled relevant coronavirus-related information on our [website](#) in a format that is more easily accessible.

The "COVID-19" page, located on the website's main banner, has five subcategories for Legislative Information, Open Meetings Act Changes, Remote Meeting Tools, Resources for Constituent Distribution, and Township Resource Links.

Bills Recently Introduced

[HB 608 POLICE/FIREFIGHTER CERTIFICATIONS](#) (Crossman)- To make changes to the law regarding peace officer and firefighter certifications during the declaration of an emergency regarding COVID-19 and to declare an emergency.

[HB 609 TAX AMNESTY](#) (West) - To require the Tax Commissioner to administer a temporary amnesty program from August 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, with respect to delinquent state taxes and fees, and to repeal Section 1 of this act on January 1, 2021.

OTA/OSU Webinars

The OTA, in collaboration with OSU Extension - Community Development, put together two webinars: a mock electronic township meeting and a basic tutorial on using Zoom.

You may access the mock township meeting [here](#).

For links to the Zoom 101 webinar and materials presented in the video, see below:

- [OTA/OSU Zoom 101 Webinar](#)
 - [Electronic Meetings Best Practices](#)
 - [Open Meetings Act Changes and HB 197](#)
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First Responder Safety

To protect our first responders and to ensure consistency across the state, Dr. Amy Acton announced that a new [order](#) has been issued that **requires local health departments to provide to their jurisdiction's dispatch agency or agencies the names and addresses of COVID-19-positive individuals.** Dispatch agencies are required to keep this information confidential. By knowing in advance if they will be interacting with someone who has tested positive, first responders will be better prepared when they arrive at a scene with appropriate protective gear.

Additionally, Governor DeWine announced an expansion of Ohio's partnership with Battelle and the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) to extend their sanitization services to law enforcement agencies and EMS providers. Beginning this today, April 17th, **local law enforcement and EMS agencies can bring their packaged N-95 masks to any Ohio State Highway Patrol Post in the state. The patrol will then bring those masks to Battelle for sanitization.** Battelle is providing this service for free.

Cemetery Grant Update

The Ohio Department of Commerce has provided an update to the OTA regarding the Cemetery Grant Program. There will be approximately \$80,000 available to fund FY 2021 projects. The grant application will be released online in May. Stay tuned for more information.

As a reminder, the Cemetery Grant Program was created in [HB 168](#) (132nd General Assembly) and provides \$1,000 grants (or up, with matching funds) every year (if a township has 5 or more cemeteries) or every other year (if a township has less than 5 cemeteries).

Federal Update



Congressional Action

The House and Senate were both in recess this week. The Senate is still scheduled to remain in recess until Monday, April 20th, while the House does not yet have a fixed return date. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) sent a floor schedule update indicating that "Members are advised that absent an emergency, the House is not expected to meet prior to Monday, May 4, 2020." Senate Republican Policy Committee Chairman Roy Blunt (R-MO) also recently said that the Senate is "unlikely" to stick to its plans for a late-April return.

House and Senate Republican leaders remain united in trying to pass a \$251 billion increase for the recently enacted Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which loans and then grants federal funds to small businesses for two months of payroll, rent, and utility expenses. The current program is expected to run out of funding by April 17th, according to National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow. GOP leaders want a "clean" PPP funding increase, while House and Senate Democratic leadership argue that hospitals and state and local governments also need an additional \$250 billion in federal relief to cope with the pandemic. Bipartisan talks between the House, Senate, and Trump Administration continued this week on what may be included in an interim emergency coronavirus relief package.

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) has assigned appropriations subcommittee leaders top-line allocations for their FY 2021 appropriations bills and they are remotely drafting legislation to fund the government past September 30, 2020 even as the coronavirus complicates their work. The appropriators held hearings with most, but not all, major Trump Administration officials on the President's FY 2021 budget request in February and March. The full committee announced plans in late February to hold markups on all twelve FY 2021 bills beginning April 21st and concluding on May 19th. Any additional COVID-19 emergency stimulus legislation (or lack thereof) may have an impact on how the FY 2021 appropriations bills are written.

NATaT has created a [Coronavirus Guidance webpage](#) to store NATaT letters, memos and briefs

on the outbreak, as well as critical information and guidance released by Congress and the Administration.

Bill to Spur Broadband Projects in Rural & Economically Distressed Communities Introduced

A bill to ensure rural and distressed communities can more readily use Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to develop high-speed broadband access has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO) and Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Ranking Member John Katko (R-NY).

The Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (E-BRIDGE) Act ([H.R. 6491](#)) removes hurdles for broadband projects under EDA grants (including difficult last-mile efforts that often delay rural broadband deployment), ensures that local communities can partner with the private sector in carrying out broadband projects, and gives communities more flexibility in complying with their funding match requirements.

2020 Census



All Your Information for the Upcoming 2020 Census

The U.S. Census Bureau continues to carefully monitor the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and follow the guidance of federal, state and local health authorities. We are adjusting some operations as outlined below with two key principles in mind: protecting the health and safety of our staff and the public and fulfilling our statutory requirement to deliver the 2020 Census counts to the President on schedule.

As of today, over 5 million have responded online to the 2020 Census. Currently, the planned completion date for data collection for the 2020 Census is July 31, 2020, but that date can and will be adjusted if necessary as the situation dictates in order to achieve a complete and accurate count.

It has never been easier to respond on your own, whether online, over the phone or by mail - all without having to meet a census taker.

Learn more about these updates and ways to be counted [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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