

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 27, 2020

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Governor DeWine Signs House Bill 197

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today signed House Bill 197 which provides emergency relief to Ohioans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill:

- Waives state testing requirements for school children this year.
- Extends professional licenses for those who cannot get them renewed.
- Allows local governments to hold public meetings remotely and with transparency.
- Extends the income tax deadline to July 15, 2020.
- Extends absentee voting by mail until April 28, 2020.
- Provides funding for small businesses, such as day cares and services for the disabled.

A [line item veto](#) was issued to correct a drafting error.

*NOTE: See reaction to today's bill signing below.

SUPPORT LOCAL:

Governor DeWine announced that Ohio is launching a website to encourage Ohioans to continue to support local retailers and restaurants by shopping online, choosing local, ordering carryout from restaurants, and taking virtual tours of well-known attractions around the state.

There are currently more than 250 local restaurants, shops, and virtual activities being featured online. To find a local shop or restaurant to support, or to have your business featured, go to [Ohio.org/SupportLocalOhio](https://ohio.org/SupportLocalOhio).

CURRENT DATA:

There are 1,137 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 19 deaths. A total of 276 people have been hospitalized, including 107 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language closed captioning, can be viewed on the [Ohio Channel's YouTube page](#).

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 197:

“CCAO’s members appreciate the added flexibility provided to counties to conduct virtual meetings in the recently passed Am. Sub. H.B. 197. We thank Governor DeWine and the members of the Ohio General Assembly for providing counties the authority needed to conduct meetings via teleconference, video conference or other electronic means. We believe that citizens should be able to participate in county government without risking their health and the health of others.” **Carl Davis, Monroe County Commissioner and CCAO President**

“On behalf of Ohio’s 165 community banks we want to express our sincere appreciation for Governor DeWine’s strong and proactive reaction to reduce the overall impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) on the state of Ohio and its citizens. We also express our appreciation to the members of the Ohio General Assembly for their quick passage of the bipartisan legislation contained in (HB 197) that unanimously supports those decisions made by the DeWine-Husted administration.” **Bob Palmer, President and CEO, Community Bankers Association of Ohio**

“CTAO’s members applaud the prompt and critical action taken by Governor DeWine’s Administration and the Ohio General Assembly in passing Am. Sub. HB 197. The bill provides much-needed certainty to county offices across the state during these unprecedented times.” **Kevin Futryk, Executive Director, County Treasurers Association of Ohio & Julia Wynn, State Lobbyist, County Treasurers Association of Ohio**

“[Governor DeWine’s] guidance on key reforms contained in HB 197, in tandem with The Ohio General Assembly’s quick and decisive action, will allow the State to push out tax filing and payment deadlines to July 15 without penalty or interest. These changes will allow Ohioans to use those funds now to purchase essential needs, and to focus their time and energy on keeping their businesses going and families fed.” **Scott D. Wiley, CAE, President & CEO, Ohio Society of CPAs**

“We appreciate [Governor DeWine’s] work with the Ohio General Assembly to pass House Bill (HB) 197. We strongly support the bill’s changes aimed at easing the challenges for public school districts and their students during the coronavirus outbreak.” **R. Kirk Hamilton, Executive Director, Buckeye Association of School Administrators; Jim Rowan, Executive Director, Ohio Association of School Business Officials; Rick Lewis, Executive Director, Ohio School Boards Association**

“Small business owners across Ohio are impressed with the decisive actions taken by Governor DeWine, Lt Governor Husted, Senate President Oboff, House Speaker Householder, and the entire Ohio General Assembly in responding to the coronavirus that is devastating Ohio and its business community. In the unprecedented times we are facing as a state, Ohioans look to the leadership of their elected officials, and these leaders continue to do their best to protect the health and safety of our citizens while balancing not doing such damage to the economy that we can not recover.” **Roger Geiger, Vice President and Executive Director for NFIB in Ohio.**

“We applaud Governor Mike DeWine’s and Department of Health Director Amy Acton’s leadership, and the guidance received on a daily basis from the Ohio Departments of Aging and Medicaid and local authorities as we ensure that older Ohioans and people with disabilities who are most vulnerable and at highest risk continue to be served.” **Larke Recchie, CEO, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging**

[Governor DeWine's] close work with the General Assembly to unanimously pass House Bill 197 speaks volumes about [his] commitment as Governor of Ohio. The bill not only protects Ohioan's voting rights but ensures upcoming graduates will receive the diplomas they have worked so hard to obtain and provides relief to those impacted by unemployment and economic uncertainty through no fault of their own. **Phillip E Cole, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies**

"The Ohio Bankers League applauds the leadership of Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Husted, as well as the Ohio legislature, for their early and decisive action in the fight against the Coronavirus." **Michael Adelman, President & CEO, Ohio Bankers League**

"The Ohio Council of Retail Merchants applauds Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Husted, and the Ohio legislature led by Speaker Householder, Minority Leader Sykes, Senate President Obhof, and Minority Leader Yuko for their bipartisan leadership during this difficult time." **Gordon Gough, President and CEO, Ohio Council of Retail Merchants**

"Ohio's grocers and retail food industry workers are on the front lines of this pandemic and realize this healthcare crisis is unlike anything we have faced in modern times. Our members are committed to providing the necessary resources for our state and the proactive leadership from the administration and legislature continues to provide the necessary tools to do this. OGA applauds the Governor and the General Assembly for tackling many of state's most pressing issues and providing immediate relief for all Ohioans with the passage of House Bill 197." **Kristin Mullins, President, Ohio Grocers Association**

"In the wake of very real economic injury during this public health crisis, [Governor DeWine's] Administration has partnered with the General Assembly, in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion, to move legislation ensuring continuity of operations as well as free and fair elections, getting immediate help to those now unemployed, and regulatory relief to assist the direct care workers on the front line of this crisis." **Howie Biegelman, Executive Director, Ohio Jewish Communities**

"As the largest Chamber of Commerce in the Ohio, and on behalf of our thousands of members, the Greater Cleveland Partnership is writing to say thank you to Governor DeWine for his leadership and support of emergency legislation in response to the coronavirus outbreak. GCP is appreciative of Governor DeWine's hard work, and the work of Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, Senate President Larry Obhof, Speaker of the House Larry Householder, Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko, and House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes." **Joe Roman, President & CEO, Greater Cleveland Partnership**

"The Ohio Library Council would like to thank [Governor DeWine and leaders of the Ohio General Assembly], as well as [their] colleagues, for taking decisive actions during these unprecedented times in Ohio while we are all at war with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The measures passed unanimously by the legislature in Am. Sub. House Bill 197 are just another example of our state leaders coming together and taking steps to offer emergency relief for Ohioans and providing state and local governments with the tools necessary to continue essential operations." **Michelle Francis, OLC Executive Director & Jay Smith, OLC Director of Government & Legal Services**

“My members strongly support Amended Substitute House Bill 197, that was approved unanimously on March 25 by both legislative chambers. As you know, this bill includes several emergency provisions that help Ohioans continue to move forward during the Coronavirus epidemic. Many of those directly impact the real estate industry and our ability to operate in these challenging times.” **Scott Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Ohio REALTORS**

“On behalf of the Ohio Township Association (OTA), I am writing to express our support of House Bill 197 and the state’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Ohio is facing an unprecedented challenge with the spread of COVID-19 and its many implications. The OTA appreciates the decisions made by [Governor DeWine’s] administration and the effort to collaborate with local governments on these issues.” **Heidi M. Fought, Executive Director, Ohio Township Association**

“On behalf of the hard-working professional men and women making the supply chain in this country possible, we thank Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Husted for their work. Together with the Ohio Legislature, their swift action in passing House Bill 197, keeps America’s professional truck drivers delivering the freight this country needs right now instead of physically waiting in line for a license renewal.” **Tom Balzer, CAE, President & CEO, Ohio Trucking Association & Ohio Association of Movers**

“The past several weeks have been hard for Ohio and its manufacturers. We appreciate the swift actions taken by the administration and the General Assembly. The cooperation between the administration and both chambers has been a model for decisive action in a time of uncertainty. The emergency measures in House Bill 197 begin to blunt the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on manufacturers and Ohioans. The measures are truly appreciated.” **Eric L. Burkland, President, Ohio Manufacturers’ Association**

“PCSAO supports HB 197 and appreciates the bipartisan work of the General Assembly to develop a plan to address the multitude of challenges presented by this pandemic. In particular, we are grateful that county commissions and children services boards that are essential to the oversight and administration of child protection will be able to meet remotely, but still with citizen input, under this legislation. Recognizing that many families involved in the children services system already struggle with basic needs, we also appreciate efforts to prevent disconnection of utilities and expand eligibility for unemployment compensation, so as to reduce additional stress on families. In consideration of current and former foster youth, we are pleased by efforts to not penalize young people whose schooling has been interrupted. Finally, we appreciate the flexibility of pandemic day care centers and that child protection caseworkers are deemed an essential service and be prioritized to have access to such centers.” **Angela Sausser, Executive Director, Public Children Services Association of Ohio**

“[Governor DeWine’s] Executive Order laid the necessary groundwork for the Ohio General Assembly to craft legislation that meets the needs of our State. H.B. 197 is necessary to keep our people working, provide essential care where needed and keep our economy stable and ready to rebound.” **Tom Feeney, President & CEO, Safelite**

“We appreciate the efforts of Senate President Obhof, House Speaker Householder, Minority Leaders Sykes and Yuko, and all members of the Ohio General Assembly who worked on the

development and passage House Bill 197. Thank you to Governor DeWine for his quick action to sign this legislation into law that will provide immediate assistance to Ohio businesses. Specifically, moving the tax filing deadline to July 15 to match the federal filing and the extension of licenses until December will give businesses greater flexibility during this time and ability to focus on their operations and employees.” **Wendy R. Gramza, CCE, President & CEO of the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce**

“Today we thank [Governor DeWine] specifically for requesting that student testing requirements be suspended for the 2019-2020 school year. This issue has been weighing heavily on the minds of our members, and we were pleased to hear [Governor DeWine] propose to eliminate this as a worry for this school year.” **Julie Davis, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators & Kenneth Baker, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators**

“Based on the unprecedented physical and economic climate created by the Coronavirus epidemic, Ohio Utilities Protection Service, d.b.a. OHIO811 wishes to express our full support for the decisive actions [Governor DeWine] and Dr. Acton have taken and continue to take to protect the 11.7 million citizens of Ohio. We further support the passage of House Bill 197 by [the DeWine] Administration and the Ohio General Assembly. We recognize that urgent actions are necessary to maintain continuity of government, provide clarity for our medical professionals, businesses, schools and students, families and to provide relief for employers and workers affected by COVID-19. **Roger Lipscomb, President/Executive Director, Ohio Utilities Protection Service dba OHIO811**

“The response, as outlined in House Bill 197, shows that at this challenging time, everyone can come together and do what is right for our residents and our communities. We see in particular the action of ensuring that no one in Ohio will have to suffer from a lack of resources such as having their utilities shut-off as being of paramount importance at this time. We appreciate [Governor DeWine] taking this action, and for the General Assembly ensuring that it is codified in temporary law.” **Allison Goebel, Executive Director & Jason Warner, Manager of Government Affairs, Greater Ohio Policy Center**

“On behalf of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and over 70 Central Ohio local government members we thank [Governor DeWine for his] leadership and swift action over the last several weeks to confront both the public health crisis caused by the Coronavirus and COVID-19, as well as the economic challenges associated with this unprecedented situation. Local governments are on the frontlines of our nation’s local public health emergency response and overall public safety efforts. Now, more than ever, local, state, and federal governments must work together to address this crisis. It is in this vein that we thank [Governor DeWine] and offer our strong support of Substitute House Bill 197. We specifically thank you for the following provisions of the bill.” **William Murdock, Executive Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission**

“While life is confusing right now, this week’s actions by state leaders moved us in the right direction. Training in new skills for new opportunities is one thing that can get people quickly back on their feet once this ends, and Ohio’s community colleges are especially well-suited for that mission. We are grateful for the extraordinary leadership that Gov. DeWine, Lt. Gov. Husted and the General Assembly have shown with these important supports for Ohioans and their ongoing

leadership during this challenging time. We're all in this together and we'll all get through it together." **Ohio Association of Community Colleges**