

## Lame Duck Session Wraps Up Republicans Play Scrooge to Working Families...Again

The theme is all too familiar – Republican leadership in the General Assembly wasting taxpayer money on legislation designed to leave working families behind. The "Lame Duck" legislative session finally came to a close on December 20 leaving most to wonder what rock the Republicans were under when voters overwhelmingly voted for a change from their typical divisive and arrogant practices.

Instead of respecting the voters' desire for bi-partisanship to turn Ohio around, the final throes of the 126th General Assembly were filled with backroom, late-night Republican deals that would make Scrooge blush. Front and center on the legislative hit list was organized labor and working families. We are pleased to report that organized labor came together very quickly and displayed a united front not seen for quite some time. As a result some of the attacks were weakened or stopped altogether as you will notice in the mark up of bills below.

We also want you to know that the Democratic leadership of Joyce Beatty in the House and CJ Prentiss in the Senate was steadfast and with labor 100%. Both leaders invited the Ohio AFL-CIO and various unions to speak to their delegations and as a result their members were informed and on message. Please let your Democrat legislator know that you appreciate their support. There were also a handful of Republicans that bucked their leadership and voted with us on some if not all issues.

### First, the good and semi-good news:

#### **PASSED:**

##### **HB 468 - Ohio's Best Rx Amendments**

Labor led bipartisan bill makes the following changes to improve on the success of the program: Increases eligibility to 300% of poverty level, improves enrollment over the phone or on-line, terminates the Golden Buckeye Rx program and incorporates its members into Ohio's Best Rx.

##### **HB 187 - Civil Service**

The Ohio AFL-CIO and the public sector unions worked together to blunt harmful provisions of the bill and as a result all of the unions' position changed from opposed to neutral.

#### **STOPPED:**

##### **HB 699 - Amendments to Weaken/Eliminate Prevailing Wage**

The Ohio AFL-CIO joined the building trades in removing amendments to the Capitol Appropriations bill that would prohibit prevailing wage on school construction and eliminate project labor agreements on public works.

## HB 685

This bill would have made unwarranted changes to the Executive Branch's ability to efficiently perform its rulemaking responsibilities.

## Amendments to Enact School Employee Health Care Pooling and to Expand Charter Schools

## Now the bad news:

### **PASSED:**

#### **HB 690 - Minimum Wage Implementation\***

In our opinion the bill violates the newly passed Constitutional Amendment by exempting some employees like home healthcare and agriculture workers from receiving the new minimum wage. It also makes it more difficult for workers to recover back wages from employers who cheat them.

#### **HB 694 - Campaign Finance\***

Well, here we go again. The bill treats unions that have collective bargaining agreements with government entities at the state and local levels like business contractors and places restrictions on campaign contributions. We believe this bill also has some major legal problems.

#### **School Vouchers**

The legislature broadened eligibility for the state's voucher program. Vouchers will now be available to students who attend a school that has been rated Academic Emergency or Academic Watch for two of the last three years. This increases the number of eligible buildings from 99 to 236.

\*The Ohio AFL-CIO will hold stakeholders meetings in January to review legal opinions and discuss options regarding HB 690 and HB 694.

The Ohio AFL-CIO would like to thank the following organizations for their tireless work at the Statehouse during "Lame Duck":

AFSCME  
Carpenters  
Ohio Association of Professional Firefighters  
Ohio Education Association  
Ohio Federation of Teachers  
Ohio State Building and Construction Trades  
Operating Engineers  
Plumbers and Pipefitters  
SEIU

Special thanks also go to Mike Hunter of Hunter, Carnahan, Shoub, & Byard for his masterful legal assistance on the Minimum Wage Issue.