



OHIO COMMON GROUND RESEARCH CENTER

OCG Legislative Tracker

Issue Index #1 · Tracking ID: LT-2026-001 · Version 1.0

Ohio Common Ground Legislative Tracker

Issue Index #1: Affordability

Enacted and Pending Household-Cost Legislation in the 136th Ohio General Assembly, with Public-Opinion Context

Status current through July 3, 2026

Prepared by the Ohio Common Ground Research Center

Published July 10, 2026 · Updated periodically — see Revision History

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Suggested citation

Ohio Common Ground Research Center. Legislative Tracker, Issue Index #1: Affordability. Tracking ID LT-2026-001, Version 1.0. Dublin, Ohio: Ohio Common Ground, 2026.

Publication record

Series: OCG Legislative Tracker

Issue: Issue Index #1 — Affordability

Tracking ID: LT-2026-001

Version: 1.0 (see Revision History)

Publication date: July 10, 2026

Prepared by: Ohio Common Ground Research Center

Review: Peer review and editorial review (OCG Research Center)

Update cadence: Reviewed and reissued periodically, on a schedule set jointly with OCG leadership and informed by the Ohio General Assembly's legislative calendar. Not on a fixed calendar interval.

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Executive Summary

Eight affordability-related bills were enacted during the 136th Ohio General Assembly through July 3, 2026. Five formed a coordinated property-tax package, one restructured electric utility regulation, one established licensing and transparency requirements for pharmacy benefit managers, and one was the state's biennial operating budget. Twenty additional bills touching property tax, housing, utilities, child care, prescription drugs, health insurance, wages, and higher education remained pending in committee as of this report's status date.

This report describes that legislation, states each bill's status, and places it alongside independently published Ohio polling on how voters rank these issues relative to one another. It classifies each enacted bill by whether its principal effect reduces a household's current cost, restrains the future growth of a cost, or changes administrative or valuation procedure — a distinction that matters because several of the enacted bills slow the rate at which certain costs can rise without reducing what a household pays today.

This report does not evaluate whether these measures were sufficient relative to the scale of Ohio's affordability concerns. It documents what was enacted, how far pending measures advanced, and where meaningful uncertainty remains.

Key Findings

- 8 affordability-related bills enacted, 20 identified as introduced but not enacted
- 5 of the 8 enacted bills are property-tax measures; of those, 4 primarily restrain future revenue growth or change administrative procedure, and 1 (HB 186) also reduces a current liability through an expanded homeowner credit
- 1 utility-ratemaking bill (HB 15) and 1 pharmacy-benefit-manager regulation bill (HB 229, passed unanimously in both chambers) were also enacted
- Major pending proposals include a property-tax circuit-breaker credit (HB 365), a housing recovery package (HB 857), and a prescription-drug-affordability board (HB 890)
- Independent Ohio polling consistently places the economy and affordability among voters' top concerns, though the specific survey instruments measure related but distinct questions (see Public Opinion Context)

Why This Report Matters

Affordability — the cost of housing, property taxes, utilities, child care, prescription drugs, health insurance, and wages relative to household income — is one of the areas where Ohio voters across the political spectrum most consistently report shared concern. A legislature can respond to that concern in different ways: by reducing a cost directly, by slowing its future growth, by changing who administers or collects it, or by studying it further without changing it at all. Distinguishing among those responses is necessary to describe accurately what the General Assembly did, as distinct from what any bill's title or sponsor statement says it does.

Data and Methodology

Bill descriptions and statuses are drawn from the Ohio General Assembly's official legislative tracking system (legislature.ohio.gov), Legislative Service Commission (LSC) bill analyses and fiscal notes, sponsor and legislative-caucus press releases, and secondary legal, trade, and news publications, each cited individually. All statuses reflect the public record through July 3, 2026.

A bill is included in this report when its operative provisions have a direct, reasonably identifiable effect on household housing costs, property taxes, utility costs, child care, prescription-drug costs, health-insurance costs, wages, or higher-education costs, and the bill was introduced in the 136th General Assembly (January 2025 through July 3, 2026). Bills are not included or excluded on the basis of press coverage or advocacy-group attention.

This report's scope was expanded from an earlier internal working draft after review identified relevant bills in the wages, health-insurance, and higher-education categories that had not yet been researched. That research is reflected in the tables below. As with any legislative inventory, later-introduced bills, committee amendments, or floor action after July 3, 2026 are not reflected here.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this report with the specific meanings given here.

- **20-mill floor.** The minimum effective tax rate — 20 mills for school districts, 2 mills for joint vocational school districts — below which certain levies are not reduced by the tax reduction factor described below.
- **Inside millage.** The portion of a taxing authority's levies (up to 10 mills total, historically) that do not require direct voter approval.
- **Tax reduction factor / rollback.** A mechanism that adjusts effective tax rates so that, absent new construction, a voted levy does not generate more revenue than originally approved as property values rise.
- **Circuit breaker.** A tax-relief design that ties the amount of relief to the share of a household's income consumed by a specific cost, rather than to a flat credit or exemption.
- **Pharmacy benefit manager (PBM).** A company that administers prescription-drug benefits on behalf of health plans, including negotiating rebates and setting pharmacy reimbursement rates.
- **Restrains future growth vs. reduces current liability.** This report's classification distinguishing bills that lower the rate at which a cost can increase going forward from bills that lower what is currently owed.

Legislative Record: Enacted Legislation

The following bills were signed into law during the 136th General Assembly as of July 3, 2026.

Bill	Principal legal change	Classification	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 96	FY 2026–27 state operating budget: income-tax rate reduction, school-funding formula, child-care appropriations, Medicaid, local-government funds	Mixed — appropriations, tax rate, and administrative provisions	Signed by the Governor; appropriations effective June 30, 2025, other provisions generally effective September 30, 2025. The Governor line-item vetoed several property-tax-related provisions. The House

Bill	Principal legal change	Classification	Status through July 3, 2026
			overrode one such item (Item 66, school-district levy restrictions) 61–29 on July 21, 2025, and the Senate completed that override on October 1, 2025. Other line-item vetoes were not overridden as of this report's status date.
HB 15	Restructures electric utility ratemaking; eliminates the Electric Security Plan framework and revises use of related rate mechanisms including specified riders; reduces tangible personal property tax on new baseload generation	Restrains future cost growth / administrative — household effect not yet measurable	Signed by the Governor; effective August 14, 2025
HB 124	Changes the sales sample and review process the Department of Taxation uses to check county property valuations during reappraisals; moves up certification deadlines; allows appeals of DOT corrections	Administrative / valuation procedure	Passed the House June 4, 2025. Signed by the Governor; effective March 18, 2026 (part of the five-bill December 2025 property-tax package)
HB 129	Changes which levies count toward a school district's 20-mill floor (or joint vocational district's 2-mill floor) starting tax year 2026; limits new fixed-sum levies to five-year terms	Restrains future revenue growth	Passed the House October 8, 2025. Signed by the Governor; effective March 18, 2026
HB 186	Creates an inflation-cap tax credit limiting school-district revenue growth at the 20-mill floor; expands the owner-occupied property tax credit; phases out the 10% nonbusiness credit for most residential property	Mixed — restrains future growth (floor credit) and reduces current liability (owner-occupied credit expansion)	Signed December 19, 2025 (appropriations effective immediately); generally effective March 20, 2026. Primary sponsors: Reps. James Hoops (R) and David Thomas (R).
HB 309	Allows county budget commissions to annually adjust levy collections for levies not requiring voter approval, within limits; commissions cannot reduce a levy below the prior year's collections unless reserves are available	Administrative / valuation procedure	Passed the House October 8, 2025. Signed by the Governor; effective March 18, 2026
HB 335	In reappraisal or update years, limits revenue growth from inside-millage levies to the three-year average GDP price-deflator growth rate	Restrains future revenue growth	Signed by the Governor; effective March 18, 2026
HB 229	Establishes a stand-alone state licensing process for pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), requires annual accounting of rebates, discounts, and fees to plan sponsors, and restricts PBMs from reimbursing affiliated pharmacies more than independent pharmacies for the same drug or service	Administrative / market-structure — reduces a cost driver rather than a direct household cost	Passed the House 96–0 (March 18, 2026) and Senate 31–0 (March 4, 2026), both unanimous. Enacted; effective June 30, 2026.

Sources: Ohio Legislature bill-tracking system ([legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/\[bill\]](https://legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/[bill])); Ohio Legislative Service Commission, *Final Analysis: H.B. 186* (Jan. 16, 2026); Ohio Secretary of State, *Advisory 2025-06* (Dec. 5, 2025); Ohio School Boards Association legislative

report, July 21, 2025; Vorys client alert, "Ohio's New Property Tax Legislation: Key Changes Effective March 2026" (March 17, 2026); Ohio House Republican Caucus press releases, ohiohouse.gov (Oct. 22 and Dec. 19, 2025); LegiScan, House Bill 229 vote history.

HB 96 — the operating budget

HB 96 is the state's biennial operating budget and the largest single vehicle for affordability-related policy, funding schools, Medicaid, local-government aid, and child-care programs and setting the state income-tax structure. Its scale makes it difficult to evaluate as a single affordability measure: it bundles tax, education, health, and social-service policy, and it affects different households differently depending on income, family structure, and location. The Governor's line-item vetoes and the subsequent partial override — the House and Senate restored one property-tax-related provision affecting school-levy calculations, while other vetoed items were not overridden as of this report's status date — mean HB 96's final scope on property-tax administration was still being resolved months after passage.

The five-bill December 2025 property-tax package

HB 124, HB 129, HB 186, HB 309, and HB 335 were signed within days of one another in December 2025. House Republican leadership initially described HB 186 and HB 335 together as delivering more than \$2.4 billion in savings when those two bills passed the House in October 2025; the full five-bill package was later described in a December 19, 2025 sponsors' release as totaling more than \$3 billion. A preliminary LSC analysis reported by Policy Matters Ohio — a research organization that has publicly opposed the package — put the combined revenue effect of HB 129 and HB 186 at a \$1.04 billion reduction to school and joint vocational district collections over tax years 2025–2027, and the effect of HB 335 at a \$620–763 million reduction to inside-millage collections over tax years 2026–2028. These figures are not directly comparable: the sponsors' figures describe taxpayer savings, while the LSC-derived figures describe reduced collections to schools and other local taxing authorities, which is a related but distinct accounting question involving whether and how the state backfills the difference. Ohio Common Ground has not independently reproduced either estimate.

Four of the five bills (HB 124, HB 129, HB 309, HB 335) restrain future revenue growth or change valuation and levy-administration procedure; only HB 186's expansion of the owner-occupied credit reduces what a current taxpayer owes, and its own sponsors describe that reduction as beginning to reach homeowners in June 2026, roughly six months after signing.

HB 15 — electric utility law

HB 15 eliminates the Electric Security Plan framework — the broader statutory rate-plan mechanism, distinct from the individual riders and alternative rate provisions the act also revises — and reduces the tangible personal property tax on new baseload electricity generation by roughly two-thirds starting in tax year 2027. The bill's sponsor's office states it retained three baseload-generation provisions originally proposed in SB 2. Whether HB 15 lowers bills for residential ratepayers, as distinct from commercial and data-center customers, depends on implementation and is not observable from passage alone.

HB 229 — pharmacy benefit manager regulation

HB 229 creates a stand-alone state licensing process for pharmacy benefit managers, requires PBMs to account to health-plan sponsors at least annually for rebates, discounts, fees, and other payments they receive, and prohibits PBMs from reimbursing pharmacies they own or are affiliated with at a higher rate

than independent pharmacies for the same drug or service. It passed the House 96–0 and the Senate 31–0, was signed by the Governor, and takes effect June 30, 2026. Because PBMs are intermediaries rather than a direct household cost, HB 229's effect on what Ohioans ultimately pay for prescription drugs depends on how those savings are passed through by health plans and is not directly measurable from the bill's text alone.

Legislative Record: Introduced but Not Enacted

The following bills addressed the same affordability categories but had not been enacted as of July 3, 2026, organized by category.

Property Tax

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 365	Property Tax Refund Act: refundable credit or rebate for homeowners and renters whose property tax or rent exceeds 5% of household income	Reps. Brennan, Brent, and others	Introduced; referred to committee; not enacted
HB 212 / SB 275 / HB 483	Allow eligible homeowners to defer payment of a portion of their property taxes; identical proposal advanced under three bill numbers	Reps. Humphrey, Brennan (HB 212); Sen. Craig (SB 275); Rep. Miller, K. (HB 483)	All three versions remained in committee. HB 483 is the most advanced of the three: LSC completed a fiscal-impact analysis (Feb. 6, 2026) estimating deferred tax amounts by county and income decile.

Housing

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 857	Housing Recovery Act	—	Introduced; not enacted. This report has not completed a detailed review of its funding mechanisms and eligibility rules; it will receive fuller treatment in a future edition.
HB 135	Prohibits discrimination in rental housing based on lawful source of income (e.g., housing vouchers)	Reps. Upchurch and Lawson-Rowe	Introduced; referred to committee; not enacted
HB 313	Creates a grant program for townships and municipalities that adopt pro-housing policies	Reps. Mathews, A. and Isaacsohn	Introduced May 28, 2025; in House Development Committee; not enacted
HB 765	Modifies the Single-Family Tax Credit Program — created in 2024 but reported to have left roughly \$200 million in appropriated funds unused — by tying credit amounts to the affordability or appraisal gap and shortening the affordability-restriction period from ten years to seven	Reps. White and Young	Introduced March 17, 2026; received committee testimony through June 2026; not enacted

Utilities

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
SB 2	Increase power generation and improve grid reliability	—	Passed Senate March 2025; remained in House Energy Committee. Its sponsor's office states HB 15 retained three of its baseload-generation provisions. This report has not independently performed a provision-by-provision comparison of the enrolled texts to verify the scope of overlap.
HB 158	Consumer Utility Billing Transparency Act: requires itemization of all riders, taxes, and other costs on certain utility bills	Reps. Brennan and Thomas, D.	Introduced; referred to committee; not enacted
HB 467	Prohibits certain public utilities from recovering political-expenditure costs from customers	Reps. McNally and Rader	Introduced September 23, 2025; in House Energy and Natural Resources Committee; not enacted
HB 819	Modifies the rate and revenue allocation of the severance tax on oil and natural gas and creates an electric-bill credit	Reps. Rader and Synenberg	Introduced; in House Ways and Means Committee; not enacted

Child Care

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 2	Child-care policy provisions	—	Introduced; not enacted as a standalone bill. Related child-care funding was enacted separately through HB 96.
HB 787	Revises the law governing the Child Care Choice Voucher Program	—	Introduced; referred to House Children and Human Services Committee March 25, 2026; not enacted
HB 827	Revises income eligibility for publicly funded child care	Reps. Tims and Lett	Introduced; referred to House Children and Human Services Committee May 13, 2026; not enacted

Prescription Drugs and Health Insurance

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 890	"P.R.I.C.E. Act": creates a Prescription Drug Affordability Board with authority to set upper payment limits on certain high-cost drugs	Rep. Hall, D.	Introduced May 2026; referred to committee; not enacted
HB 438	"FAMILY Act": amends health-insurance premium and benefit provisions	—	Introduced September 15, 2025; referred to House Insurance Committee; not enacted

Wages and Higher Education

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 34	Phases in a state minimum-wage increase to \$15 per hour by 2030 (from \$11 in 2026)	Reps. Jarrells and Mohamed	Introduced February 3, 2025; in House committee; not enacted
HB 644	Creates a Higher Education Evidence-Based Innovation Fund and grant program	—	Introduced May 19, 2026; not enacted

Homestead Exemption Proposals

Bill	Subject	Sponsor(s)	Status through July 3, 2026
HB 61, 103, 143, 261, SB 92, SB 215	Various homestead-exemption expansion proposals (eligibility, income thresholds, or credit amounts)	—	Various stages in committee; none enacted as standalone measures. HB 187 (135th General Assembly) remains the governing homestead-exemption law.

Sources: Ohio Legislature bill-tracking system; Ohio Legislative Service Commission fiscal analyses; sponsor press releases (ohiohouse.gov); Greater Ohio Policy Center legislative testimony and bill tracker; The Times Leader, "\$200M in taxpayer funds for Ohio affordable housing left unused" (May 2026).

Public Opinion Context

Independent polling provides context for how Ohio voters weigh affordability against other issues. The polls below measure different things — top-of-mind issue salience, perceived difficulty, and voting importance are not the same variable — and are presented separately with their limitations rather than combined into a single narrative.

Poll / Question	Sponsor & Pollster	Field Dates, Sample	Finding	Major Limitation
Top issue facing Ohio voters (response option: "the economy")	Emerson College Polling (independent academic pollster)	Aug. and Dec. 2025; Ohio active registered voters, reported n≈1,000 (Aug.) and n≈850 (Dec.)	"The economy" was the most frequently selected option in both waves (44%), followed in December by threats to democracy (13%), healthcare (11%), housing affordability (9%), and immigration (8%)	Measures "the economy," not affordability directly
Perceived change in housing difficulty over five years	Opportunity Starts at Home campaign; fielded by Hart Research Associates	2024; statewide Ohio voters	84% said it is harder to find stable, affordable housing than five years earlier	Advocacy-sponsored; more than a year old relative to this report
Importance of housing affordability as a voting issue; sentiment on home-buying conditions	National Association of Realtors; Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates	Conducted January 2026, publicly reported February 2026; national sample	52% rated housing affordability a very important voting issue nationally; 17% said it was a good time to buy a home	National rather than Ohio-specific

Emerson's survey instrument offered "the economy" as a response option, not "affordability" specifically; because economic concern can include employment, inflation, wages, and taxation as well as affordability, this report treats that result as a proxy

for, not a direct measure of, affordability concern. Ohio-specific polling isolating prescription-drug or child-care costs was not identified during this report's research.

Interpretive Considerations

The record above supports more than one reasonable reading, and Ohio Common Ground does not adopt one. The dimensions below are offered so a reader may form an independent judgment.

- **Breadth:** enacted bills concentrate in property tax, utility ratemaking, and pharmacy-benefit-manager regulation. Housing recovery, a property-tax circuit breaker, prescription-drug pricing, minimum wage, and health-insurance premium bills remained in committee.
- **Depth:** of the five property-tax bills, four restrain the future growth of a cost or change administrative procedure; one (HB 186's owner-occupied credit expansion) reduces a current liability. HB 15 restructures ratemaking process; its effect on the amount residential customers actually pay is not yet measurable. HB 229 changes market structure rather than billing a household directly.
- **Timing:** HB 186's homeowner credit is described by its sponsors as reaching taxpayers beginning June 2026. HB 15 took effect August 2025, but rate effects depend on subsequent PUCO proceedings. HB 229 takes effect June 30, 2026. Bills still in committee have no effective date to evaluate.
- **Distribution:** HB 15's baseload-generation tax reduction applies broadly to new generation investment, not specifically to residential ratepayers. HB 186's credit expansion is specific to owner-occupied residential property, which does not include renters.
- **Fiscal trade-offs:** the property-tax package's sponsor-reported savings and the LSC-derived reduction in local collections describe related but distinct quantities; how, and whether, the state backfills reduced local revenue to schools and other taxing authorities is a separate question this report has not independently analyzed.
- **Measurement:** many effects — particularly from HB 15's rate proceedings and HB 229's pass-through to consumers — will only be observable in future utility rate cases and drug-pricing data, not from the bills' text alone.
- **Implementation uncertainty:** HB 15's residential rate effects, the scope of SB 2 provisions actually carried into HB 15, and the eventual disposition of HB 96's non-overridden line-item vetoes are all outcomes this report cannot yet characterize with available public information.

Limitations and What This Report Does Not Claim

- **Selection, not exhaustive census.** This report covers bills meeting its stated inclusion criteria across eight affordability categories. It is not a complete census of every bill introduced in the 136th General Assembly with any fiscal or cost-of-living implication.
- **Descriptive, not evaluative.** This report does not rate, grade, or conclude whether the General Assembly's output was adequate to the scale of Ohio's affordability concerns.
- **Fiscal estimates not independently reproduced.** Dollar figures attributed to bill sponsors, LSC, or third parties are reported as such; this report has not built an independent fiscal model to verify them.
- **Household-level effects not yet measurable for several bills.** Where an enacted bill's effect on what a specific household pays depends on future rate cases, pass-through behavior, or administrative implementation, this report says so rather than projecting an outcome.

- Provision-by-provision statutory comparison not performed. Where a sponsor characterizes one bill as incorporating provisions from another (for example, SB 2 into HB 15), this report reports that characterization rather than independently verifying it against the enrolled statutory text.

Future Research

- Complete the review of HB 857's funding mechanisms, eligibility rules, and fiscal projections once a finalized LSC analysis is available.
- Track HB 15's residential rate effects through subsequent PUCO proceedings and rate cases.
- Perform a provision-by-provision comparison of the enrolled HB 15 and SB 2 texts to verify the scope of overlap described by SB 2's sponsor.
- Revisit the property-tax package's fiscal effects once final, non-preliminary LSC fiscal notes are published for all five bills.
- Expand this report's category coverage to food costs, transportation, and consumer credit and fees, which remain outside its current scope.

Sources

- Ohio General Assembly, official bill-tracking system (legislature.ohio.gov) and Ohio Senate legislation pages (ohiosenate.gov), consulted for status and full text of each bill discussed.
- Ohio Legislative Service Commission, bill analyses and fiscal notes, including the Final Analysis of House Bill 186 (Jan. 16, 2026) and the fiscal analysis of House Bill 483 (Feb. 6, 2026).
- Ohio Secretary of State, Advisory 2025-06: House Bill 96 Budget Bill Veto Override and Impacts to Levies (Dec. 5, 2025).
- Ohio House Republican Caucus and individual sponsor press releases (ohiohouse.gov), Oct. 22, 2025 and Dec. 19, 2025.
- Policy Matters Ohio, "Senate goes 0 for 4 on property tax reform" (Nov. 21, 2025), cited for preliminary LSC fiscal figures; disclosed here as a source that has publicly opposed the property-tax package.
- Vorys client alert, "Ohio's New Property Tax Legislation: Key Changes Effective March 2026" (March 17, 2026).
- Emerson College Polling, Ohio statewide surveys (Aug. and Dec. 2025); Opportunity Starts at Home campaign / Hart Research Associates poll (2024); National Association of Realtors / Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates poll (Jan.–Feb. 2026).
- Greater Ohio Policy Center, legislative bill tracker and interested-party testimony on House Bill 765 (June 2026); The Times Leader, reporting on the Single-Family Tax Credit Program (May 2026).

Conclusion

This report is intended as a factual description of selected affordability legislation enacted or considered during the 136th Ohio General Assembly. It does not evaluate whether these measures were sufficient, only what they did, how far they advanced, and where uncertainty remains. Eight bills reached enactment; twenty more, spanning property tax, housing, utilities, child care, prescription drugs, health insurance, wages, and

higher education, remained pending as of July 3, 2026. Future editions of this report may expand its scope further as additional categories are researched.

Revision History

This is a living tracker rather than a fixed monograph. It is reviewed and reissued periodically as the 136th General Assembly acts on affordability-related legislation, on a cadence set jointly by OCG's Research Center and organizing leadership rather than a fixed calendar interval. Each revision is logged below, and superseded versions are preserved in the OCG Research Library.

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	July 10, 2026	Initial publication.

Appendix A. Bills Discussed in This Report

Ohio General Assembly. "House Bill [number], 136th General Assembly." Accessed July 3, 2026. [legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/hb\[number\]](https://legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/hb[number]).

- Enacted: HB 96, HB 15, HB 124, HB 129, HB 186, HB 309, HB 335, HB 229
- Property tax (pending): HB 365, HB 212, SB 275, HB 483
- Housing (pending): HB 857, HB 135, HB 313, HB 765
- Utilities (pending): SB 2, HB 158, HB 467, HB 819
- Child care (pending): HB 2, HB 787, HB 827
- Prescription drugs and health insurance (pending): HB 890, HB 438
- Wages and higher education (pending): HB 34, HB 644
- Homestead exemption (pending): HB 61, HB 103, HB 143, HB 261, SB 92, SB 215