

March Public policy update

The Ohio General Assembly is bogged down because the Redistricting Commission has not been successful in adopting the map for the Ohio General Assembly seats. The Commission has submitted 3 proposed maps, each one has been found to be unconstitutional by the Ohio Supreme Court.

Until the maps are approved Ohio will not be able to have a primary, since the exact configuration of each House and Senate district is unknown. Likely the scheduled primary will be pushed back or we could have situation where there are actually two primaries. One for local and Federal offices and another for the Ohio General Assembly.

The concentration on the Redistricting Commission's efforts has slowed the process for bill approval in the Ohio General Assembly. There are bills that the Ohio Apartment Association would like to see passed. Most notably his House Bill 126 which would create a new process for property tax appeals.

House Bill 126 would only allow a property owner to file a valuation challenge after the value has been set by the county auditor. As drafted the bill would not allow school boards to challenge valuations unless the property owner initiated a challenge, then the school board could be a party of interest. The bill also would prohibit the school boards from appealing the board of revision decision to the court of appeals or the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals. The bill does allow the owner to appeal the Board of Revision decision.

House Bill 126 passed in the House of Representatives was sent to the Ohio Senate where significant modifications were made, including the provision that would prohibit school boards from challenging valuations., it was sent back to the House for their reconsideration. The bill is still awaiting either a compromise committee or for the Ohio House to accept the Senate version. This bill is very insignificant for multifamily property owners and the Ohio Apartment Association is anxious to see this bill passed.

Another bill that was recently introduced is House Bill 563. House Bill 563 prohibits local municipalities from passing any ordinances that would control short term rentals. The Ohio Apartment Association is monitoring this bill, the concept of removing local restrictions is attractive but there may be unintended consequences as it's currently drafted. The Ohio Apartment Association will continue to monitor the bill as it moves through the process in the Ohio House of Representatives.

Locally, the Columbus Apartment Association continues to work with IMPACT Community Action agency and the city of Columbus to try to improve the emergency rental assistance distribution. Over the last few weeks there have been editorials in many Ohio newspapers pointing out that Ohio has not done a good job of just disseminating information about the program and has not been successful in spending down the funds as required by the federal

government. Failure to spend down the funds in a timely manner could result in those funds being recaptured and given to another state.

Councilmember Favor is proposing an ordinance that would require an owner of a rental property to accept third party payments. The issue for Councilmember Favor is that some owners will not take rental assistance funds from IMPACT Community Action agencies or other community-based organizations. The Columbus Apartment Association has conveyed to Councilmember Favor the objections that we have because her proposed ordinance interferes with a civil contract, the rental agreement, and reduces the protections of the property owner that are in state law.

In addition to creating a conflict between the state and local ordinances, CAA is also concerned about this ordinance because a third-party payor could add additional requirements that are unfavorable to the property owner. An example would be requiring the property owner not to evict for an extended period of time after receiving the rental assistance payment. CAA will continue to work with Councilmember Favor and see if we can come to an agreement on a ordinance that accomplishes what she wants but is not onerous to property owners.

Although it's only March the Ohio General Assembly is likely to slow the pace of their work down substantially. The General Assembly already works at a very slow pace but with the upcoming Midterm Elections and the issues around the redistricting maps it is unlikely that much significant legislation will be passed until after the General Elections in the fall.

CAA will continue to monitor activities at both the state and local level and will work NAA to provide you information about significant events that might occur at the federal level.