



State Advocacy Update

Terrence O'Donnell, Dickinson Wright

External and Stakeholder Relations & Advocacy Committee

February 6, 2024

State Advocacy Update, Dickinson Wright



Terrence O'Donnell is the Chair of Dickinson Wright's Government Relations Practice Group and brings 25 years of experience to his public policy practice. His focus is advocacy at the Ohio statehouse, administrative law, regulatory compliance, and policy-related appellate litigation. He represents dozens of companies, trade groups, and nonprofits before the state's General Assembly and executive agencies.

Born and raised on Cleveland's west side, he also represents a number of Northeast Ohio clients, in addition to the GCRTA, including the Ohio Aerospace Institute and St. Edward High School.

Terrence represents the Ohio Chamber of Commerce as *amicus curiae* on issues of importance to the state's business community that reach the Ohio Supreme Court. In addition, the state Attorney General has appointed him as special counsel to the Ohio Secretary of State in appellate litigation across the state, including the Supreme Court.

Terrence is annually recognized as one of the *Best Lawyers in America*.

State Advocacy Update

Contract Overview & Scope

- Initiated: May 2020
- Duration: 2-year base with two option years
- Total Value: Not to exceed \$340,000.00
- ✓ State advocacy for public transportation
- ✓ Policy and legislative monitoring
- ✓ Provide impact assessment and assistance to guide GCRTA's funding, programs, and projects in accordance with legislative opportunities and landscape

Strategic Collaboration

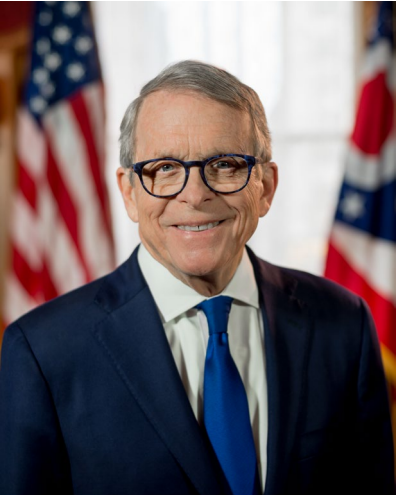
- ✓ Work closely with GCRTA to create, update and maintain agency's legislative agenda and annual strategy
- ✓ Advocacy support, including coordination of delegation sessions, meetings and hearings
- ✓ Draft proposed legislation and related research, including responses to legislation and administrative actions
- ✓ Monitor state legislative process, funding opportunities and hearings affecting GCRTA's legislative agenda

Your Government Relations Advocates



Murray Murphy Moul + Basil LLP
Attorneys at Law

Ohio's Elected Leaders



Governor Mike DeWine



Lt. Governor Jon Husted



Speaker Jason Stephens



Senate President Matt Huffman



Cuyahoga County Delegation

Ohio House of Representatives

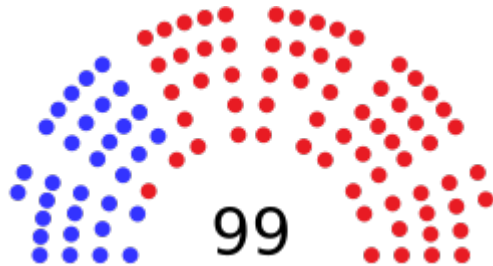
- Bride Rose Sweeney
- Tom Patton
- Elliot Forhan
- Phil Robinson
- Juanita Brent
- Terrence Upchurch
- Mike Skindell
- Richard Dell'Aquila
- Sean Brennan
- Darnell Brewer

Ohio Senate

- Nickie Antonio
- Matt Dolan
- Jerry Cirino
- Kent Smith

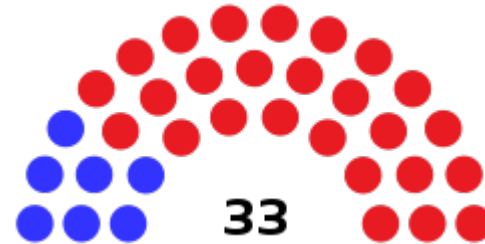
Ohio General Assembly Political Make-Up

Ohio House of Representatives



67 Republicans / 32 Democrats

Ohio Senate



26 Republicans / 7 Democrats

Transportation Budgets

Public Transit Funding

- Sustained record funding of \$70 million for public transportation in two most recent budgets (only \$7 million initially proposed in 2021)
- **NEW:** \$30 million for Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership in 2023 transportation budget

Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program

- Establishes grant program to help RTAs support business needs inside employment centers
- GCRTA & OPTA inserted amendment to expand eligible employment centers to include locations inside an existing service territory



- India Birdsong Terry testifying before the Ohio House Finance Committee.

Railcar Replacement Funding & Rail Track Reconstruction TRAC Eligibility

- ODOT had historically only funded roads & bridges with TRAC funds
- GCRTA applied for Railcar Replacement Funding but was unsuccessful
- Senate President Matt Huffman visited GCRTA to see need for railcar replacement firsthand as well as our rail infrastructure needs
- GCRTA successfully engaged Cuyahoga County delegation to make GCRTA rail track replacement eligible for TRAC funding while supporting railcar replacement funding from the ODOT OTP2 program
- Supporters included Senators Dolan, Williams, and Antonio and Representatives Patton and Sweeney, and more
- **GCRTA received \$4.2 million for light rail reconstruction at Blue Line Van Aken Yard**
- **GCRTA received \$12.0 million for the 25 Connects/MetroHealth Line BRT project**

Sec. 5512.11. (A) As used in this section, "qualified county" means a county to which both of the following apply:

(1) It has a population between one million one hundred thousand and one million three hundred thousand as of the most recent federal decennial census;

Am. Sub. H. B. No. 74

153

134th G.A.

(2) As of the effective date of this section, an existing public passenger commuter rail service is operated in that county and does not operate in any other county.

(B) The director of transportation shall include in the process developed under section 5512.02 of the Revised Code, a policy that makes the purchase and replacement of rail lines used for public passenger commuter rail service operated in a qualified county eligible to receive funding approval from the transportation review advisory council.

(C) Purchases made under division (B) of this section are other statutory highway purposes for the purpose of Ohio Constitution, Article XII, Section 5a.

What's Next?

- February 13th – Ohio Loves Transit Day at Statehouse
- Meetings already scheduled with Representatives Brewer, Brennan, Brent, Skindell and Sweeney and Senators Smith, Antonio, and Kunze
- Further dialogue with ODOT re: TRAC and other funding sources
- Legislation to prevent conceal carry on public transit
- More TRAC funding for rail track replacement
- 2025 Transportation Budget



January 19, 2024

Dr. Jack Marchbanks, Chairman
Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC)
1980 W. Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43223

Re: GCRTA Light Rail Track Reconstruction TRAC Application

Dear Chairman Marchbanks:

We write to request the TRAC give full and fair consideration to the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's 2023 TRAC Application for the Light Rail Track Reconstruction Program. Northeast Ohio's passenger rail system plays a key role in our regional economy and its aging infrastructure is in serious need of replacement.

For these reasons we remain strongly supportive of the 2021 successful legislative change to clarify that our regional passenger rail line is eligible for TRAC funding, and we appreciate TRAC's initial award of \$4.3 million toward the \$70.0 million program. However, GCRTA is seeking another \$26.7 million to close the funding gap and complete the track rehabilitation by mid-2027. This coincides with the start of service of GCRTA's new rail vehicles. As you know, local, state, and federal funding have made rail car replacement possible, and we believe the state should do its part as well for the track replacement program.

We were disappointed that the TRAC staff did not recommend this funding in the current SFY2024-2027 cycle. We respectfully ask you and your TRAC colleagues to reconsider the financial support GCRTA has requested for its Light Rail Track Reconstruction Program.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership on transportation issues in our state.

Sincerely,

Matt DeLeon
State Senator
24th Senate District

Bride Rose Sweeney
State Representative
16th House District

Jerry C. Cirino
State Senator
18th Senate District

Nickie J. Antonio
Senate Minority Leader
23rd Senate District

Thomas F. Patton
State Representative
17th House District

Kent Smith
State Senator
21st Senate District

Michael J. Skindell
State Representative
13th House District

Darnell T. Brewer
State Representative
18th House District

Elliot Forhan
State Representative
21st House District

Sean P. Brennan
State Representative
14th House District

Philip M. Robinson, Jr.
State Representative
19th House District

Juanita O. Brent
State Representative
19th House District

Richard Dell'Agglio
State Representative
15th House District

Terrance Upchurch
State Representative
20th House District

cc: TRAC Members



State Advocacy Update

Thank You

