



NEWS RELEASE

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Union to ask Governor to veto Sunset Review bill

Westerville – Members of the largest state employee union today are extremely concerned that the Sunset Review Commission bill, **Senate Bill 329**, is seeing new life during the lame duck session. The bill has the potential for eliminating entire state agencies, disrupting the lives of millions of Ohioans who depend on public services.

A hearing is expected on the bill tomorrow morning before it heads to the House floor for a vote.

Legislators seemed to have little appetite for the bill when it was introduced in May of this year and during a handful of hearings this fall. In fact, the bill was widely expected to be scuttled in favor of another bill that would make permanent sunset reviews for Ohio's boards and commissions. SB 329 expands the sunset review process to include most executive level state agencies.

Not only could the language potentially eliminate state agencies, it also requires that legislators pass a bill just to keep in existence state agencies under review. Besides being cumbersome and unnecessary, the bill would give small committees of legislators the power to "expire" entire state agencies.

Not only would it create government gridlock, the bill could interrupt the lives of millions of Ohioans who go to school, receive nursing home or long-term care, receive unemployment compensation, and depend on safe communities and safe roadways.

OCSEA told members of the House Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee in testimony last week that such reviews were tried by states beginning in the 70s and 80s but have been largely dropped or severely curtailed due to ineffectiveness. Sunset commissions were supposed to help states manage their resources and budgets, but in reality have demonstrated little to no savings for states. Florida has already scrapped its sunset review process. The only state with a process at all similar to Ohio's is Texas, where it has become a political quagmire.

"This bill is unnecessary and dangerous. Besides, lawmakers already have the power to review state agencies and make changes," said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. "Our member state employees have gone through major system changes: state agency mergers, budget shortfalls, institutional closures and consolidations, and none of those issues needed to be addressed through a sunset review process. In fact, having labor and state employees who perform the work at the table often allowed for a more open exchange and better outcomes."

"It is our hope that if this bill makes its way to the Governor's desk, that he will veto it. It's the right thing to do for Ohio's citizens who depend on the steady hand of Ohio's state agencies," said Mabe.

OCSEA represents approximately 30,000 state and local government employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).