

28th Annual Ohio

Energy Savings & Management

C O N F E R E N C E

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Interactive Ohio Legislative Roundtable

Woody Hayes Ballrooms BCDE

**Priceless Insights on Major Bills Pending in the Ohio General Assembly ...
Each Would Fundamentally Change How Electricity Rates are Set in Ohio -**

Moderator: Lori A. Herf, *Senior Advisor for Governmental Relations, Ohio Energy Leadership Council (OELC) & BakerHostetler*, Columbus

The Honorable Shane Wilkin, *(District 17-R, Hillsboro)*, **Ohio Senate**

The Honorable Mark J. Romanchuk, *(District 22-R, Ontario)*, **Ohio Senate**

The Honorable Kent Smith, *(District 21-D, Euclid)*, **Ohio Senate**

The Honorable Bill Seitz, *(District 30-R, Cincinnati)*, **Ohio House**

Joe Price, *Executive Director, Ohio Energy Group*, Columbus

Steven T. Nourse, *Esq., Vice President – Legal, AEP Ohio*, Columbus

Chris Ventura, *Exec. Director, Midwest, Consumer Energy Alliance*, Columbus

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QUESTIONS FOR PANELISTS

By Moderator, Lori Herf, BakerHostetler

Q. [Steve Nourse]: Mr. Nourse, while many in our audience are very familiar with Ohio's Electric Security Plan statute, some may not be. Could you describe the ESP law and how it works in practice?

Q. [Rep. Seitz]: Representative Seitz, you supported the passage of SB221, the current ESP statute, as a then-senator in 2008. Could you talk about what you think has worked well, and what has not worked, under the ESP statute in the past 16 years?

Q. [Senator Romanchuk]: Senator Romanchuk, you have introduced legislation in the form of SB143 that would eliminate ESPs entirely. Is it your view that the ESP statute was always deficient in some respect, or alternatively what has occurred in the past 16 years that has convinced you that ratepayers in Ohio are better off without ESPs?

Q. [Senator Wilkin]: Senator Wilkin, your proposed SB102 preserves certain aspects of the ESP statute, but modifies some key provisions. What do you see as the three most important changes that SB102 would make to ESPs, and how would those changes benefit ratepayers in Ohio?

Q. [Senator Smith]: Senator Smith, you serve on the Senate's Energy and Public Utilities Committee where two of three pending bills we are discussing today are pending. What is your perspective on the need to either reform or eliminate the ESP statute?

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Q. [Joe Price]: Mr. Price, as Executive Director of the Ohio Energy Group, you have testified in support of Senator Wilkin’s SB102, and in your testimony you describe a balancing of consumer protections, rate reform and economic development. Focusing on consumer protections, could you discuss why SB102 proposes limiting the number of riders and how the proposed rider cap would work in practice?

Q. [Chris Ventura]: Mr. Ventura, the Consumer Energy Alliance focuses on environmental sustainability, with a mission of reliable, affordable, and environmentally sound energy resources. Of the three pending bills, which one do you see as the best avenue to advance that mission and why?

Q. [Steve Nourse]: Mr. Nourse, AEP Ohio has come out in support of Representative Seitz’s HB260, which shares some features with Senator Wilkin’s SB102 such as caps on riders (which HB260 calls trackers) and the use of forecasted test years. What is different about HB260 supported by AEP Ohio that you think makes it better than the reforms proposed through SB102?

Q. [Rep. Seitz]: Representative Seitz, explain what a forecasted test year is and how it would work under your HB260, and why that approach is better for Ohio’s ratepayers than the traditional rate-making model?

Q. [Senator Romanchuk]: Senator Romanchuk, unlike HB260, your SB143 relies entirely on the traditional rate-making model, going so far as to eliminate ESPs and their riders entirely. What do you believe are the aspects of the traditional rate-making model that best protects Ohio’s consumers in the rate-making process?



Q. [Senator Wilkin]: Senator Wilkin, is HB260 sponsored by Representative Seitz a workable solution to the issues with ESPs from your perspective, perhaps with amendments. If not, why not?

Q. [Senator Smith]: Senator Smith, which pending Senate Bill do you most agree with, and why?

Q. [Chris Ventura]: Mr. Ventura, all three pending bills continue to rely on the competitive market to procure energy for default electric service customers in Ohio. What is the Consumer Energy Alliance's position on the use of competitive markets to support energy policy in states like Ohio?

Q. [Joe Price]: Mr. Price, two of the three pending ESP reform bills deal expressly with the hot-button issue of refunds. What do you believe is the most appropriate way to address the timing of when refunds are due to ratepayers in the event any rates or riders are found to be unlawful or unreasonable?

Q. [Open To All]: Does anyone else on the panel want to address the topic of refunds, and the right balance on when refunds should be due back to ratepayers?

Closing: To All: Thank you again to this distinguished panel for this spirited and interesting debate on how best to reform Ohio's ESP and rate-making process. Please give this panel a round of applause!

Biographical Information

**Moderator: Lori A. Herf, Senior Advisor, Government Affairs
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Lori Herf is an authority in the public policy process, with a history of achievement leading companies in diverse industries through the maze of legislative and regulatory challenges. Her background includes repeated success achieving short and long-term goals, gaining strategic advantage over the competition and protecting and enhancing brand image and reputation. She works with a variety of industries, including healthcare, tax, environment, energy, utility, employee benefits and financial services with a proven ability to work with officials on both sides of the aisle.

Lori represents companies before Ohio's executive, legislative and administrative/regulatory branches. Her lobbying experience embraces managing multiple issues, including legislative and regulatory. She is recognized for her ability to develop and implement effective offensive and defensive strategies for government affairs, identifying issues and opportunities that affect a business or organization and providing practical solutions.

The Honorable Shane Wilkin, Ohio Senate

Senator Shane Wilkin is serving his first term in the Ohio Senate. He represents the 17th Senate District, which includes Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, and Vinton counties, as well as part of Perry County.

Senator Wilkin is the Vice-Chair of the Small Business & Economic Opportunity Committee, and he diligently serves as a member of the standing committees on Energy & Public Utilities, Agriculture & Natural Resources, and Veterans & Public Safety. In addition to his standing committees, Senator Wilkin is the Co-Chair of the Sportsmen's Caucus of Ohio and serves on the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission and the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee.

Senator Wilkin served as a State Representative since 2018. In the Ohio House, he worked on important legislation regarding small business and even constructed what is now the Ohio Business Fairness Act, which was signed into law in 2021. Being a small business owner himself, this bill ended the inequity and leveled the playing field for all of Ohio's businesses, particularly smaller locally owned businesses.

Senator Wilkin was elected to three terms as a Highland County Commissioner. He previously served as Chairman of the Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission and board member of both the Community Improvement Corporation and the Highland District Hospital Foundation.

Senator Wilkin has previously been endorsed by the Buckeye Firearms Association and the National Rifle Association, earning an "A+" rating for his steadfast defense of the 2nd Amendment. Additionally, Senator Wilkin has earned the Award for Conservative Achievement four years in a row from the American Conservative Union – one of the highest ratings for conservative leadership in Ohio issued by the founders of CPAC.

Senator Wilkin currently resides near Hillsboro with his wife Kristy, Judge of the Ohio Fourth District Court of Appeals, and their two daughters Piper and Parker.

Biographical Information

The Honorable Mark Romanchuk, Ohio Senate

Senator Mark Romanchuk is serving in his first term in the Ohio Senate representing the people of the 22nd Senate District, which includes Ashland, Medina and Richland counties. He previously served four terms in the Ohio House of Representatives. Senator Romanchuk has over 35 years of experience in small business, systems engineering, management, and community development. He is the owner and CEO of PR Machine Works, Inc., a contract manufacturer providing precision machining, fabrication, and assembly services in the city of Ontario. Prior to his work at PR Machine Works, he worked at Hughes Aircraft Company in a diplomatic capacity to the former Soviet Union in support of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Also, he was based in Japan as a team leader and technical advisor to the U.S. Navy in support of the F/A – 18 aircraft.

He has been heavily involved in his community, particularly in local efforts to create jobs and in workforce development. He is a member of the National Tooling and Machining Association and served as Economic Region 6's team leader for the state's "Ohio Skills Bank," which strives to develop regional manufacturing career pathways. Senator Romanchuk also serves on the Ashbrook Center Board at Ashland University.

He is also the co-founder and past president of the Regional Manufacturing Coalition and is the past chairman of the Richland Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He is an active member of the Mansfield Sertoma Club, the National Federation of Independent Business and the Ohio Manufacturers' Association. Senator Romanchuk resides in Ontario with his wife, Zoi.

The Honorable Kent Smith, Ohio Senate

Senator Kent Smith currently represents Ohio's 21st Senate District. Smith was first elected to serve the people of Ohio in 2014 and was re-elected in 2016, 2018 and 2020 to serve Ohio's 8th House District. He joined the Ohio General Assembly after serving Euclid, Ohio as a Member of the Euclid Board of Education from 2002 – 2013. In his 12 years on the Euclid School Board, Senator Smith never missed a meeting. As a Euclid School Board Member, he was a four-time winner of the "Award of Achievement" which is awarded annually by the Ohio School Boards Association to less than three percent of all School Board Members in Ohio. Senator Smith graduated from Miami University in 1988 and earned his Master of Science in Urban Studies from Cleveland State University in 2001. His master's degree thesis - which was written in 2001 - was about the emerging threat of Predatory Lending and the Subprime Market. He also co-authored the first Predatory Lending Report by Policy Matters Ohio in 2002. Following his master's degree studies, he sought his PhD at Cleveland State University in Economic Development.

Senator Smith serves as the Ranking Member on the Senate Energy and Public Utilities, Financial Institutions and Technology, and Ways and Means Committees. He also serves on the Senate Judiciary, Transportation, and Rules and Reference Committees.

Throughout his time in the House, he served as the Ranking Member on the House Public Utilities (134th and 133rd GA), Financial Institutions (133rd GA), Financial Institutions, Housing, and Urban Development (132nd GA), and Economic & Workforce Development (131st GA) Committees. He also served on the House Higher Education and Career Readiness, Technology and Innovation, Education, Commerce and Labor, and Rules & Reference Committees.

Prior to joining the Ohio General Assembly, Senator Smith worked for the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, which included an assignment with the Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and at four Northeast Ohio nonprofit organizations.

He is eager to use his unique perspective and professional experience to improve the quality of life for the people of the 21st Ohio Senate District and working families across the state.

Biographical Information

The Honorable Bill Seitz, Majority Floor Leader, Ohio House

A lifelong resident of western Hamilton County, State Representative Bill Seitz has worked to represent the best interests of the Greater Cincinnati area at the Statehouse. Known for his colorful floor speeches and legal acumen, in a 2016 ranking of all 132 legislators published by Columbus Monthly Magazine, Seitz was rated best speechmaker, savviest, funniest, and most knowledgeable and was also recognized as second most effective and hardest working. He has put these talents to good use on issues that matter to his constituents.

Seitz began his public service career as a member of the Cincinnati Board of Education and the St. Antoninus Parish Education Commission. He was twice elected Green Township Trustee, where he also served as president of the Hamilton County Township Association. He has never forgotten his local government roots.

Beginning in 2000, Seitz served in the Ohio House of Representatives for almost seven years. There, he rose through the ranks, serving as Majority Whip and Assistant Majority Whip and chair of the Civil and Commercial Law Committee. Seitz then went on to serve in the Ohio Senate from 2007 to 2016 before returning to the Ohio House where he is now serving the 30th House District in his third consecutive term. In the Senate, Seitz served as Chairman of the Public Utilities Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Government Oversight & Reform Committee.

A fiscal conservative, Seitz is a champion of government efficiency. While others in Columbus talk about reducing the size of state government, Representative Seitz has put tangible ideas on the table, including now-enacted proposals that would reduce prison overcrowding and save the state hundreds of millions of dollars.

Throughout his legislative career, Representative Seitz has been at the forefront of criminal and civil justice issues, leading the effort to reform Ohio's criminal sentencing laws and eliminate the barriers to employment many nonviolent offenders face following their release from prison. He has also worked to enhance penalties for violent offenders and to keep sex predators away from our children. He was the key architect of Ohio's sweeping tort reforms by which nearly two dozen such bills between 2001-2004 transformed Ohio's civil justice landscape and made Ohio more business-friendly. In these endeavors, he has been aided by his legal background. A lawyer since 1978, he is currently of counsel with Dinsmore and Shohl and for over ten years he has been listed in the Best Lawyers in America book.

In 2014, he was named Southwest Ohio's Best Antitrust Lawyer by that publication and was named State Legislator of the Year by the United States Chamber of Commerce Institute for Legal Reform.

Representative Seitz is an alumnus of the University of Cincinnati, where he graduated summa cum laude with an undergraduate degree in history. He also earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Cincinnati College Of Law, where he distinguished himself as a member of the Order of the Coif and was selected to the Law Review.

Biographical Information

Steven T. Nourse, Esq., Vice President - Legal, American Electric Power
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Steven T. Nourse, Esq., Vice President - Legal for AEP Ohio, is responsible for forming and implementing legal strategies that shape the company's regulatory policy and legislative initiatives in the increasingly complex regulatory legislative landscape of Ohio.

After initially joining the AEP Legal Department in 2006 as Senior Counsel, Nourse was subsequently promoted to Chief Ohio Regulatory Counsel. In these roles, Nourse advocated AEP Ohio's regulatory positions before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Ohio General Assembly. Significant regulatory proceedings include each of the Electric Security Plan cases, the capacity charge "war" of 2010, and numerous ratemaking and legislative proceedings.

Nourse started his legal career with the Attorney General of Ohio in 1990, eventually working with four Attorney Generals. He served as Principal Assistant Attorney General, successfully defending numerous decisions of the PUCO before the Supreme Court of Ohio and in federal court. During the period when Ohio adopted electric deregulation and implemented the market development period, Nourse was also the senior policy advisor to the chairman of the PUCO.

Nourse earned his Juris Doctor with honors from Capital University School of Law in 1990, and a Bachelor of Political Science from Bowling Green State University. Nourse is licensed to practice before the United States Supreme Court, the Supreme Court of Ohio, and multiple federal Circuit and District Courts.

He and his wife, Sandy, have three daughters and two sons. If you can't find him in his office, he is probably either skiing, cycling, or golfing.

Chris Ventura, Midwest Executive Director, Consumer Energy Alliance
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614-524-0100 cventura@consumerenergyalliance.org

Chris Ventura, Executive Director for Consumer Energy Alliance – Midwest is based out of Columbus, Ohio. In this position, Ventura works with state policymakers, trade associations, and community groups to foster a dialogue around policies which ensure affordable, reliable energy from all energy sources for families, farmers, and businesses.

Prior to joining CEA, Ventura served as Senior Project Manager for the Ohio House of Representatives under Speaker William Batchelder. Ventura also served as Legislative Aide and Clerk of the Policy and Legislative Oversight Committee for State Representative Michael Dovilla. Ventura provided strategic counsel on policy issues ranging from electricity generation and manufacturing to cybersecurity and travel and tourism.

He holds a master's degree in public administration from The American University with a focus on State / Local Government and Management Consulting and a B.A. in Adolescent Young Adult Social Studies Education from Baldwin Wallace University.

Biographical Information

Joe Price, Executive Director, Ohio Energy Group/Partner, Larr Policy Group
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Joe Price, Partner of Larr Policy Consulting, is a seasoned government affairs and business professional with more than 15 years of experience in state & federal policymaking and political campaigns. Joe has a diverse range of knowledge on issues including energy, environment, transportation, taxes, and an array of other matters pertaining to businesses. Joe specializes in breaking down complex concepts and repackaging those ideas into messages that resonate with decision makers. Having worked in both the public and private sector, Joe's unique background allows him to effectively seek change – and most importantly – produce results.

Prior to joining Larr Policy Consulting, LLC, Joe was responsible for managing government affairs at TimkenSteel Corporation, one of Ohio's leading manufacturers and one of the largest consumers of electricity and natural gas in the nation. Joe's government affairs background, combined with his business acumen, allowed him to successfully lead the implementation of a strategic procurement plan for energy while effectively advocating for state and federal policies that helped manufacturing thrive in Ohio.

Respected by his peers, Joe also served in the top leadership roles of some of the most influential statewide business organizations. Prior roles include President of the Ohio Energy Group (OEG), Chair of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce's Energy & Environment Committee, and Chair of the Ohio Steel Council's Government Affairs and Energy & Environment Committees.

Prior to joining TimkenSteel, Joe served as the chief policy advisor for Ohio Congressman Bob Gibbs in Washington, D.C. In that role, he implemented a comprehensive legislative strategy for the Congressman's position on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, including his Chairmanship of the House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee. Joe was directly involved in drafting, planning, and successfully passing six bills to amend U.S. EPA regulatory programs under the Clean Water Act through the Committee, as well as the "Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014" (WRRDA).

Earlier in his career, Joe managed state and federal grassroots advocacy for a multi-national financial services company, launching campaigns in more than thirty states. Additionally, he served as the Grassroots Coordinator for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, where he created the Chamber Action Alliance (CAA), the first-ever outreach program to engage local chambers of commerce in state policy initiatives. Joe also has political campaign experience, having served as regional political director for a nationally targeted congressional race in Ohio, where he oversaw voter outreach programs for a six-county region.

Joe began his career as an aide in the Ohio House of Representatives, serving in the offices of Ohio State Representative Bill Seitz and Speaker Pro Tempore Chuck Blasdel.

A native of Ohio and graduate of The Ohio State University, Joe has called the Buckeye State home for most of his life, along with his wife Sara and his loyal basset hounds Linus and Lenny.

Biographical Information

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He holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from The American University with a focus on State / Local Government and Management Consulting and a B.A. in Adolescent Young Adult Social Studies Education from Baldwin Wallace University.

The Honorable Bill Reineke, Ohio Senate

Senator Bill Reineke serves the people of Senate District 26 which includes Union, Crawford, Marion, Morrow, Sandusky, Seneca, and Wyandot counties. He is currently serving his first term as State Senator. He chairs the Energy and Public Utilities Committee and serves on the Transportation Committee, Workforce and Higher Education, and Small Business and Economic Opportunity committees. His foremost priority is workforce development and job creation, which he pursues as a member on the Governor's Executive Workforce Board.

Senator Reineke previously served three terms in the Ohio House of Representatives. He has worked closely with the Seneca County Chamber of Commerce, Tiffin Seneca Economic Partnership, Tiffin Tomorrow, and Tiffin Rotary Club as a business owner in Tiffin and now representing the district in Columbus.

Senator Reineke attended Morehead State University. He is a business partner in Reineke Family Dealerships, a three-generation family business, that has grown to include 10 dealerships and over 400 full and part time employees. He is a 38-year resident of Tiffin and the proud father of two daughters.