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Week in Review

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As a service to the clients and friends of Governmental Policy Group, Inc. and RH Resources we would like to extend the following weekly update of events happening around Capitol Square.

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Gov. John Kasich said Thursday during a Midwest drug interdiction conference hosted in Dublin he's convinced Ohio is making headway against the opioid addiction crisis, and he hoped to spread that success and learn from other states' approaches.

AGRICULTURE

Another round of harmful algal bloom reduction funding is available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), according to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg). The funding is part of a three-state, five-year, \$17.5 million program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine joined 55 other state and territorial attorneys general Monday in urging Congress to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) before funding expires later this year.

Attorney General Mike DeWine issued recommendations Monday to help Ohioans make wise charitable contributions and avoid scams related to the flooding and damage caused by Hurricane Florence. Among them were to carefully review donation requests and to beware of "look-alike" websites or accounts.

AUDITOR OF STATE

Auditor Dave Yost's office Wednesday released a review of results from recent school district performance audits, promoting the audits as a resource to stave off deficits many schools are projected to face in coming years. The auditor's office notes 93 percent of school districts are expected to see spending outpace revenue within the next five years. While some can rely on carryover balances, 148 districts are projected to end FY22 with deficit fund balances, according to forecasts submitted to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

BALLOT ISSUES

Gov. John Kasich said Thursday during a Midwest drug interdiction conference that he won't vote for Issue 1, the proposed constitutional amendment to lessen drug penalties and generally support probation and treatment over incarceration. He'd expressed some sympathy toward the proposal several weeks ago and maintained Thursday that it has positive elements but said ultimately parts of it "go too far."

CENSUS

U.S. Census Bureau data released recently show an increase in the state's rate of uninsured individuals, a decrease in poverty and a noticeable increase in the state's median household income. Ohio's percentage of uninsured individuals increased from 5.4 percent in 2016 to 6.0 percent in 2017; its rate of poverty decreased from 14.6 percent in 2016 to 14.0 percent in 2017; and its household median income increased from \$52,334 in 2016 to \$54,021 in 2017.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

The Center for American Progress (CAP), a Democratic leaning group, released findings from a public opinion poll on the state of child care in Ohio and what voters support to improve the system. The poll, conducted by GBA Strategies, found 68 percent of respondents with children under 18 say that lack of access to quality, affordable child care is a serious problem. Sixty-one percent said they

or an immediate family member have had their career or career prospects negatively affected due to child care considerations.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Ohio Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Illness co-chaired by retired Ohio Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton turned Monday to a discussion of Northeast Ohio Medical Center's (NEOMED) Center of Excellence and Clermont County's Community Alternative Sentencing Center. Introducing the day's meeting, Stratton told participants she had met with Ohio House Speaker Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) regarding mental health and criminal justice, speaking frankly about the activity or lack of activity of the General Assembly in addressing criminal justice reform. She pointed to recodification findings and other legislative recommendations that often languish while Ohio lawmakers instead pass the latest penalty enhancement.

EDUCATION

State Board of Education members and Superintendent Paolo DeMaria talked through both how they'd shoulder big cuts and where they'd like to see funding increases as they discussed planning for the FY20-21 budget Monday. DeMaria and Ohio Department of Education (ODE) budget chief Aaron Rausch presented outlines for two funding scenarios that the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) has asked agencies to plan for -- 90 percent of prior-year funding, and flat funding. DeMaria also prepared an appendix to the official budget submission to express board members' priorities for additional spending should the administration and lawmakers make additional money available.

As an advisory group nears completion of recommendations for new high school graduation rules, Superintendent Paolo DeMaria updated State Board of Education members on the outline of those proposals in advance of the recommendations formally going to the board in October.

Members of Native American communities and concerned citizens from around the state testified at Tuesday's State Board of Education meeting, urging the board and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to speak out against derogatory representations of native people in school mascots.

Officials at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) on Monday detailed two recently released online tools meant to help school districts gain insight into the art coursework being offered at schools statewide and to adopt strategies that will improve student outcomes. These included the new Ohio Arts Education Data Project and Evidence-Based Clearinghouse. The data project is intended to provide schools and the public a snapshot of the state of arts education in the state. Developed in partnership with the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, the Ohio Arts Council and Quadrant Research, the database will be provided to the public by Ohio and four other states. The second tool is the first version of the Evidence-Based Clearinghouse, which seeks to collect best

practice strategies that improve student results and engagement and to share them statewide. The tool, part of ODE's Empowered by Evidence initiative, first launched on Monday, Sept. 10.

Pending minor revisions to reflect suggestions at its final meeting, the workgroup developing a long-term replacement for graduation requirements agreed Wednesday to a proposal to send to the State Board of Education, which will consider formally recommending it to the General Assembly. The draft final proposal largely fits the system Superintendent Paolo DeMaria presented to the school board's Achievement and Graduation Requirements Committee earlier in the week.

Charter schools in Ohio's eight largest urban districts generally outperformed their traditional school peers in student growth data, according to an analysis by Buckeye Charter School Boards Inc. (BCSB), an advocacy nonprofit. Site-based, general education charter schools got an A, B or C more often than nearby district schools on the overall value-added measurement; specifically, 44 percent of the charters got such grades, while 33 percent of district schools did. This measurement is based on testing data for math, English and science in grades four through eight, as well as some high school end-of-course exams.

ELECTIONS 2018

Two attorneys general -- one former, one current - sharply compared and contrasted their respective track records in public office as Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine and Democratic former Attorney General and former head of the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Richard Cordray met each other at the first 2018 Ohio gubernatorial debate Wednesday. Held at the University of Dayton, the candidates exchanged mutual criticisms of their roles in public office, clashing over their handling of the opioid epidemic, the handling of rape kits, gun violence, marijuana, criminal justice and several other issues throughout the debate. The next gubernatorial debate will be at Marietta College on Monday, Oct. 1.

Secretary of State Jon Husted Friday broke a tie at the Franklin County Board of Elections in favor of allowing 20th House District candidate Bobby Mitchell to remain on the ballot for November. The board deadlocked on whether to keep Mitchell on the ballot after a challenge was filed by a resident of the Canal Winchester apartment complex listed as Mitchell's voting address. The challenger alleged that Mitchell lives in a house that is outside the district. Mitchell had argued that he spends most of his nights at the apartment because it is closer to the church where he pastors.

Two different polls released in the last week show a vastly different take on the upcoming U.S. Senate race between incumbent U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and his opponent, U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth). The first came from Innovation Ohio, which showed Brown leading Renacci 46 percent to 42 percent while the Politico/AARP poll showed Brown leading Renacci 47 percent to 31 percent, with 22 percent undecided.

Meanwhile, the IO poll showed Democrat Richard Cordray and Republican Mike DeWine tied at 43 percent in the governor's race, though DeWine takes a slight lead 45 percent to 43 percent when Green and Libertarian candidates are included. In the governor's race, the Politico/AARP poll said DeWine leads Cordray 39 percent to 38 percent, with 23 percent undecided.

A new poll released Tuesday by Baldwin Wallace University (BWU) saw U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown leading in the U.S. Senate race and Attorney General Mike DeWine leading in the governor's race, but a large percentage of voters remain undecided. In the Senate race, Brown leads 49.2 percent to U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci's 31.8 percent, with 19.1 percent undecided. In the governor's race, DeWine leads Democrat Richard Cordray 41.8 percent to 37 percent, with 21.3 percent undecided.

In other BWU findings, nearly 43 percent of respondents approve of President Donald Trump's job performance, while nearly 52 percent disapprove. Half of respondents approve of how the Trump administration has handled tax cuts, but voters were split on trade tariffs and immigration. Fifty-three percent of respondents approve of the Mueller investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

Despite a disagreement over state Issue 1, the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (OPBA) Tuesday announced it was endorsing Richard Cordray for governor, who pushed back against ads suggesting he is soft on crime because of his support for the constitutional amendment favoring probation over incarceration.

Ohioans who care about clean air and water should cast their votes for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Richard Cordray, environmental advocates said Tuesday. During a press conference hosted by Conservation Ohio PAC, a campaign arm of the League of Conservation Voters, Columbus City Councilmember Elizabeth Brown said she supports Cordray because of his record at the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and his plans to protect Ohio's environment.

A current and a former employee of the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) have filed a class action lawsuit against the agency and Trump administration Acting Director Mick Mulvaney, alleging that the CFPB "maintains a biased culture replete with harmful stereotypes regarding its racial minority and female employees that infect its policies and decision-making, including performance evaluations, compensation and promotions." The allegations stretch back to 2011, covering the tenure of former Director Richard Cordray, the current Democratic candidate for Ohio governor.

Richard Cordray and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) explained the motivations behind their respective 2018 political campaigns on Thursday, with both candidates emphasizing their desire to achieve bipartisan, practical solutions for Ohioans. The Democratic candidate for governor and the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate were also able to attack their respective opponents unanswered at an AARP-Politico event in Columbus, as Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine and U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) were unable to attend.

The Ohio Elections Commission Thursday found that Ohio Attorney General candidate Steve Dettelbach did not violate campaign finance law by telling supporters they could meet former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder if they donated, while the commission determined that current Hamilton County Clerk of Courts Aftab Pureval might have spent county campaign funds improperly towards his congressional campaign, warranting another hearing in the near future.

Secretary of State Jon Husted announced that absentee voting for military and overseas voters begins Saturday, Sept. 22, for the upcoming general election. The deadline to register to vote or update an existing registration ahead of the Nov. 6 General Election is Tuesday, Oct. 9 (30 days before the election). Voters may go to www.MyOhioVote.com/VoterRegistration to register online or update an existing registration. Voter registration forms can also be printed from www.MyOhioVote.com or obtained from a local library or board of elections office.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The Human Rights Campaign endorsed Louise Valentine and Nickie Antonio for Ohio Senate and Mary Lightbody, Beth Liston, Allison Russon, Casey Weinstein, Jeremy Blake, and Taylor Sappington for Ohio House.
- The re-election campaign of Rep. Dave Greenspan announced the endorsements of Teamsters Ohio D.R.I.V.E.
- The Ohio Education Association (OEA) endorsed Issue 1.
- The Ohio Business Roundtable announced its opposition to Issue 1.
- The Central Ohio Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) endorsed Tim Barhorst and Kris Jordan for Ohio House and Andrew Brenner for Ohio Senate.
- The Columbus Dispatch endorsed Frank LaRose for secretary of state.
- The National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund endorsed Jim Renacci for U.S. Senate.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) said he recently spoke to U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh regarding the then-anonymous allegation of sexual misconduct leveled against the judge by California psychology professor Christine Blasey Ford, and Kavanaugh was "surprised and frustrated" about the charge.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said Wednesday that he is pleased to see that talks are continuing with Canada on a new version of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but said there are a number of issues that still need to be addressed. Brown told reporters that a renegotiation of NAFTA needs to have Canada to work. The Trump administration had previously announced a tentative bilateral agreement with Mexico but is still trying to iron out details with Canada.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Ohio Statehouse Museum closed Wednesday for renovations that will ultimately bring the original Ohio Constitutions to the Statehouse in an exhibit described as the first of its kind in the nation. The \$850,000 exhibit will display the original 1802 and 1851 Ohio Constitutions and will also include interactive educational displays to not only introduce visitors to the documents but also show how they are relevant in the 21st century.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) announced that tickets for the 2018 edition of its Haunted Statehouse Tours are now available. The special Halloween tours will take place Friday, Oct. 19; Saturday, Oct. 20; Friday, Oct. 26; and Saturday, Oct. 27. Tickets for the Haunted Statehouse Tours are \$12 for adults and \$6 for children under the age of 12. CSRAB said the event is ticketed and tickets must be pre-ordered.

GOVERNOR

It doesn't matter what a person's political identity, political philosophy or religious views are -- everyone has the ability to do something selfless to improve their communities, Gov. John Kasich said Tuesday. "There is something in us. It is a battle, often, within ourselves as to which road do we take? The road where I'm all caught up in me or where I'm caught up in something bigger than me? I think we admire so much when we see people take that road of what's bigger than me," Kasich said during the Dispatch Media Group's "Everyday Heroes" event in Columbus.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Carol L. Garner of Mount Vernon (Knox County) reappointed to the Board of Trustees of the Martha Kinney Cooper Ohioana Library Association for a term beginning Sept. 19, 2018 and ending Sept. 15, 2022.
- Stephanie E. Green of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Fair Plan Underwriting Association Board of Governors for a term beginning Sept. 19, 2018 and ending Sept. 18, 2020.
- Janet Foley Orosz of Powell (Delaware County) reappointed to the Ohio Fair Plan Underwriting Association Board of Governors for a term beginning Sept. 20, 2018 and ending Sept. 18, 2020.
- Chief Clayton A. Harris of Solon (Cuyahoga County), Sheriff Michael E. Heldman of Findlay (Hancock County) and Col. Paul A. Pride of Baltimore (Fairfield County) reappointed to the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission for terms beginning Sept. 21, 2018 and ending Sept. 20, 2021.

JUDICIAL

A three-judge panel of the Board of Judicial Conduct heard oral argument Wednesday in the disciplinary complaint against sitting Justice R. Patrick DeWine, accused of violating the Rules of Judicial Conduct by failing to recuse himself from Ohio Supreme Court cases brought by his father, Republican gubernatorial candidate and state Attorney General Mike DeWine. The complainant,

Columbus attorney Brad Frick, argued that the "black-letter law" of Ohio's judicial rules disqualify Justice DeWine from the 14 percent of all Supreme Court cases with his father as named counsel, while DeWine's defense attorney, George Jonson of Montgomery, Rennie & Jonson in Cincinnati, countered that Court precedent and judicial conduct rules do not in fact require the justice to recuse. A decision is expected by year's end.

The Ohio Supreme Court has opened the application period for grants to help defray transportation costs for student field trips to the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Center and its Visitor Education Center. All schools receiving state funds are eligible to apply. Grants are awarded based the percentage of students enrolled in the free-and-reduced-lunch program, as reported by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Preference will be given to schools that didn't receive transportation grant funds during the 2016-2017 or 2017-2018 school years. Grant applications must be completed online at www.sc.ohio.gov/VisitorInfo/CivicEd/grants/default.asp by authorized teachers or school administrators.

The Ohio Supreme Court said Tuesday it is suspending the law license of John McNally IV, former Youngstown mayor and Mahoning County commissioner, because of his criminal conviction in a public corruption case. Justices suspended his license for one year, with six months of the sentence stayed, overruling the Board of Professional Conduct's recommendation of a public reprimand.

MARIJUANA

America's uncertain legal landscape and other complicating factors are leading many Ohio business owners -- even those open to allowing cannabis use -- to prohibit employee use of medical marijuana, according to an executive at a leading drug-free workplace consulting firm. In a phone interview with *Hannah News*, Working Partners Managing Director Karen Pierce said the main impediments are marijuana's federal illegality, the lack of an impairment test and the significant difference between a medical "recommendation" and a "prescription."

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Tuesday released the redacted version of a consultant's report on pharmacy benefit managers' (PBM) business and pricing practices. Sections of the report remain under wraps pending a judge's decision on whether they constitute trade secrets and are exempt from public records law, as the PBMs assert. And that hearing has been pushed back by Judge Jenifer French of Franklin County Common Pleas Court to Tuesday, Dec. 18.

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) Monday allowed a proposed Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) rule addressing eligibility for Medicaid providers with criminal records to move forward, as lawmakers on the panel and the agency itself promised to work with stakeholders on an improved solution. The rule addresses screening requirements for Medicaid providers that would classify employees with past criminal offenses into tiers. Some employees with

very low-level offenses would be able to work as a provider right away, while others convicted of violent offenses or those involving children would be permanently barred. It also allows those with criminal records to be certified as providers if they obtain a certification of qualification for employment (CQE) from a sentencing court.

Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) Chairman Sen. Dave Burke (R-Marysville) Thursday cautioned -- and prodded -- all players in the transition of behavior health services to managed care plans to get the program implemented. For the managed care plans (MCPs), he noted that he will be closely examining the "over and under" payments "in this space" come budget time. He further explained that the money is "out there [and] sits with you. It is important to find a way to get the money out to the providers." For the providers, he observed first that the contingency payments are "loans not grants," adding that the way the program is now set up opens it up to competition. Burke said agencies need to see themselves as businesses and not as government agencies. He added that, down the road, he can see these services provided by others "without the longevity in the state."

MIDWESTERN GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The future of automotive technology and infrastructure was the principal theme for the opening of the Midwestern Governors Association's (MGA) 2018 conference, with Gov. John Kasich and Ford President and CEO Jim Hackett delivering the opening remarks and Wednesday keynote, respectively. MGA Executive Director Jesse Heier noted displays on robotics and drones in the lobby of COSI, where the conference was held, and Kasich offered a summary of his initiatives to make Ohio a leader in the future, including his energy policy and solving workforce issues through partnerships among business and education institutions. The Governor's Executive Workforce Board held its second-to-last meeting of Kasich's administration at COSI as well Tuesday, in advance of the MGA conference.

The state of Ohio is on its way to ensuring it will receive a healthy slice of the burgeoning \$10 trillion personal transportation industry, KPMG in the United Kingdom (U.K.) Global Head of Infrastructure Richard Threlfall said Wednesday. Threlfall participated in a panel discussion on the intersection of physical and digital infrastructure at the 2018 MGA Summit at COSI. He was joined by AT&T Internet of Things Solutions Assistant Vice President Ken DiPrima, Ford Smart Mobility Vice President John Quant and Smart Columbus Vice President Mark Patton.

The Canadian government believes it is important to maintain its relationships with states, the consul general of Canada told the audience during a session on trade at the MGA Summit held this week. Douglas George sat down with Gov. John Kasich for a question and answer session to talk about the trade issues between the United States and Canada as both countries begin a new round of renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). George said both sides have agreed to not share details of the talks while they are ongoing, but he stressed that Canada is a friend to the U.S.

Chairman Asim Haque of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) led panelists in an extended energy tech-talk Wednesday at the MGA conference, covering everything from the Internet of Things to artificial intelligence to variable versus fixed utility costs. Haque pitched questions to Ram Sastry, vice president of infrastructure and business continuity at American Electric Power (AEP), Jake Oster, director of energy policy at Amazon, and Dana Saucier, senior managing director of energy and chemicals at JobsOhio.

While Wednesday's opening sessions of the MGA conference focused on transit and infrastructure development, Thursday's opening panel and keynote remarks were all about how the coming tech revolution will change the workforce and what steps should be taken to prepare. The panel on education and workforce development featured Sebastian Thrun, chairman and president of online college Udacity; Brookings Institute Vice President and Director of Governance Studies Darrell West; Stark State College President Para Jones; and Cisco Systems Senior Vice President Tae Yoo. Columbus State Community College President David Harrison moderated the discussion, also offering his own perspective at times.

PENSIONS

The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) reported double-digit 2017 returns to state lawmakers Thursday but said a dropoff in the capital market outlook led actuaries to recommend it consider lowering its long-term assumptions for investment earnings. Karen Carraher, CEO of OPERS, presented the 2017 valuation report to the Ohio Retirement Study Council, reporting "very favorable returns" of 16.7 percent, representing \$6.8 billion in excess earnings over expectations.

PEOPLE

Roger Beckett, executive director of the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University and a former member of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission (OCMC), died suddenly Friday, Sept. 14. He was 44. Calling hours will be held from 1-3 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 23, at the Ashbrook Center, 8th floor of the Ashland University Library, 401 College Ave., Ashland, OH. A memorial service will follow at the Jack & Deb Miller Chapel at Ashland University, beginning at 4 p.m.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Jon Husted said Friday that 10,994 new entities filed to do business in Ohio last month, an increase of 992 when compared to August 2017. The secretary of state's office said Ohio is currently on track for 2018 to be another record-breaking year for new business filings. Since January, the Buckeye State has seen 87,124 new businesses file, up 5,143 from the same eight-month period last year.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Expositions Commission selected a new ride provider for the Ohio State Fair a little more than a year after a fatal accident occurred under its former carnival partner. Concluding a sixth-month process, the commission said the state has signed Fort Worth, TX-based Talley Amusements to a four-year contract beginning in 2019.

The Kasich administration's Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Small Business Advisory Council heard from National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) Ohio Executive Director Roger Geiger at its Wednesday meeting, where Geiger informed members of the latest results of the NFIB small business survey and offered what he said were the top policy priorities for small businesses.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) on Monday approved a five-year, \$1.87 million deal with Agile Network Builders LLC to provide redundant fiber optic connections to the commission's network and service plaza-wide WiFi access.

WORKFORCE

In its penultimate meeting of the Kasich administration, the Governor's Executive Workforce Board Tuesday discussed efforts to connect education curriculums and employer needs and made plans to review its work when the board convenes for the final time. Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) Director Ryan Burgess said that work would continue "to the finish line" as Gov. John Kasich's final term winds down, saying that at a high level they have completed 60 percent of board recommendations and will finish another 28 percent by the end of the year, with 12 percent remaining.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE:

No legislative activity to report.

HOUSE:

No legislative activity to report.