



**GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.
RH RESOURCES**

17 SOUTH HIGH STREET - SUITE 245
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413
PHONE: 614-461-9335
FAX: 614-461-9336



Week in Review
Monday, October 26, 2015

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.

BALLOT ISSUES

Speaking at a Statehouse press conference highlighting the broad support for Issue 1, the constitutional amendment that would change the way Ohio draws its General Assembly districts, the co-chairs of the official campaign said there has not been infighting as has been reported, but a lack of resources. Former Reps. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) and Vern Sykes (D-Akron), the co-chairs of Fair Districts for Ohio and the brains behind HJR 12, which put the issue before voters in November, said they have been in agreement over where resources should go, but there have not been a lot of resources to go around.

ResponsibleOhio has spent more than \$15 million to convince Ohio voters to legalize marijuana for recreational and medical use, while opponents have spent only a fraction of that. Groups supporting

or opposing the three statewide ballot issues were required to file their pre-general election finance reports last Thursday.

EDUCATION

Charter schools dominated discussion at last Tuesday's State Board of Education meeting, as Ohio Department of Education (ODE) staff began talking about putting HB 2 (Dovilla-Roegner) into effect and parceling out a new federal grant that relies on that new law and on fixing a troubled sponsor evaluation system. The board also revived last month's discussions about the evaluation controversy, which had prompted the summer resignation of top ODE school choice official David Hansen, during votes on two resolutions regarding investigation of the matter.

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) announced that Rep. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell) will be the new House Education Committee chairman after Rep. Bill Hayes (R-Granville) decided to step down. Hayes, who will now serve as vice chair of the committee, is focusing on a run for Licking County prosecutor next year. Brenner has been serving as vice chairman of the committee and has carried some of the House's major education bills.

ELECTIONS 2015

Sen. Bill Beagle (R-Tipp City) said that Dani Vandergriff will be his campaign manager in his bid for the 8th Congressional District seat. Vandergriff mostly recently served as the Southeast Ohio field representative for U.S. Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Columbus).

Endorsements made over the week include the following:

- Auditor Dave Yost endorsed Issue 1, the legislative redistricting amendment.
- Sens. Shannon Jones (R-Springboro), Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) and Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) endorsed Sen. Bill Beagle (R-Tipp City) for the 8th Congressional District.
- The Akron Beacon Journal endorsed Issue 1, the legislative redistricting reform amendment.

ELECTIONS 2016

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) said he supports Ohio Senate President Keith Faber's (R-Celina) announcement that he will be seeking the 84th House District seat next year. The seat is open following Rep. Jim Buchy's (R-Greenville) announcement that he is retiring at the end of 2016 even though he is not term-limited until 2020.

ELECTIONS 2018

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor said after a Statehouse student rally last week that she's "seriously considering" a run for governor in 2018. She recently formed the political nonprofit Onward Ohio to highlight the policy record of the Kasich-Taylor administration.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment rate dropped to 4.5 percent in September, down from a revised 4.6 percent in August, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced. The rate drop came even as Ohio lost 8,600 jobs over the month, with non-farm wage and salary employment going from a revised 5,409,500 in August to 5,400,900 in September. The reason for the drop in the unemployment rate can be seen in the number of unemployed workers in the state, which went from 265,000 in August to 254,000 in September.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said that the way to combat rising drug prices is to allow Medicare to bargain directly with the pharmaceutical companies. Speaking at Mount Carmel West Hospital in Columbus, Brown noted the number of companies that are buying the rights to old, existing drugs and then raising the prices overnight.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

A total of 20 boards and commissions appeared before the first meeting of the Sunset Review Committee. Some of them suggested changes to their own structure while others may come in for a closer review per questions and concerns raised by the committee members. The first order of business was the election of Rep. Tim Brown (R-Bowling Green) as chairman and Sen. Kris Jordan (R-Powell) as vice chairman for the remainder of 2015. Those roles reverse for 2016.

The Senate last Wednesday passed legislation to fix an inadvertent budget tax hike, SB 208, after adding an amendment to partially reverse Gov. John Kasich's line-item veto of about \$78 million in K-12 budget funding meant to offset losses from phasing out reimbursements for the Tangible Personal Property Tax.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Kristen K. Johnson of Findlay (Hancock County) and Kendra J. Kec of Whitehouse (Lucas County) reappointed to the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice for terms beginning Oct. 16, 2015 and ending Oct. 31, 2017.
- V. Anthony Simms-Howell of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) and Michael G. Florez of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) have been reappointed to the Commission on Hispanic-Latino Affairs for terms beginning Oct. 19, 2015 and ending Oct. 7, 2018.
- Emmanuel Torres Sifuentes of Blacklick (Franklin County) reappointed to the Commission on Hispanic-Latino Affairs for a term beginning Oct. 20, 2015 and ending Oct. 7, 2018.
- Daniel A. Molina of Loveland (Clermont County) to the Commission on Hispanic-Latino Affairs for a term beginning Oct. 21, 2015, and ending Oct. 7, 2016.
- Gregory A. Kidwell of Sugar Grove (Fairfield County) reappointed to the Credit Union Council for a term beginning Oct. 21, 2015, and ending Sept. 22, 2018.
- Emily Wampler of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice for a term beginning Oct. 21, 2015, and ending Oct. 31, 2017.

- Captain Kenneth J. Kocab of London (Madison County) to the Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee for a term beginning Oct. 22, 2015 and ending Feb. 6, 2017.
- Michael R. King of Nashport (Muskingum County) reappointed to the Credit Union Council for a term beginning Oct. 22, 2015 and ending Sept. 22, 2018.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Members of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) rallied at the Statehouse as part of the National Teen Driver Safety Week and as part of its advocacy training at the state capitol.

TAXATION

An informal working group led by the co-chairs of the Ohio 2020 Tax Policy Study Commission (TPSC) issued its report on oil and gas severance tax reform, which Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) and Rep. Jeff McClain (R-Sandusky) said will provide a foundation for the commission to build on as it examines Ohio's overall tax structure. Peterson said the report includes two critical findings: Ohio's tax burden on the oil and gas industry is as low or lower than every other state with a severance tax; and the industry is currently struggling because of fluctuating oil and gas prices.

TRANSPORTATION

The Joint Legislative Task Force on Department of Transportation Issues held its final hearing on the issues of whether to increase the speed limit on certain roads and whether to require a single license plate instead of two. Co-Chair Sen. Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) said a report -- required by transportation budget HB 53 (Grossman) -- with findings and recommendations will be completed by its Tuesday, Dec. 15 due date. She said task force members will not vote on the recommendations, but will be able to sign their name to the report if they endorse it. Co-Chair Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City) and Manning noted the committee will begin hearings on infrastructure funding in January.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

HB244 DAY DESIGNATION (Rep. Cliff Rosenberger, Rep. Terry Johnson) To designate the tenth day of November as Armed Services, Peace Officer, First Responder, and Dual Service Recognition Day.

Amended on the Floor, Bill Vote 33-0

SB208 STATE INCOME TAX (Sen. Bill Beagle) To make technical changes to the state income tax law, to modify the requirements for receiving the joint filing credit.

Vote 33-0

SB209 OHIO RURAL JOBS ACT (Sen. Cliff Hite) To enact the "Ohio Rural Jobs Act" which authorizes a nonrefundable tax credit for insurance companies that invest in

rural business growth funds, which are certified to provide capital to rural and agricultural businesses.

Vote 33-0

SB214 ABORTION (Sen. Keith Faber) To require the Department of Health to ensure that state funds and certain federal funds are not used either to perform or promote nontherapeutic abortions.

Vote 23-10

SB223 HEALTH COVERAGE LIMITS-EXCLUSIONS (Sen. Kevin Bacon) To make changes to the health coverage benefit limits and coverage exclusions for life and health insurance guaranty associations.

Vote 33-0

HOUSE:

No House activity to report.