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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

Ohio Attorney General (AG) Mike DeWine and 43 other attorneys general sent a letter to congressional leaders asking them to repeal a law they say has limited the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) ability to hold drug manufacturers and distributors accountable for contributing to the nation's opioid epidemic. In the letter, the attorneys general say the "Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act of 2016" diminishes the DEA's ability to suspend and begin proceedings to show how a manufacturer or distributor engaged in unlawful behavior that endangers public health.

AGING

Ohio Long-Term Care Ombudsman Beverley Laubert briefed the House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee on Wednesday on the history and recent efforts of her office. Laubert explained her office's duties originate in the federal Older Americans Act and related state laws, though she noted

state lawmakers were leaders in the U.S. in 1990 when they extended the office's responsibilities to include home- and community-based services.

In their second to last meeting, the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia heard from representatives of agencies that support families on the current services and what more should be done, including by the Legislature. They also announced that the last meeting would be on Tuesday, Dec. 5, and that the task force would issue a report and suggest legislation following that meeting.

DEATH PENALTY

Gov. John Kasich handed 69-year-old Alva Campbell a 19-month reprieve from the Death House Wednesday after execution officials reportedly failed to locate a suitable vein for lethal injection, making Campbell the second person in eight years to escape execution in Ohio because medical experts said they could not find a site for the IV. His capital sentence has been reset to June 5, 2019.

EDUCATION

A recent Fordham Institute study comparing teacher absenteeism in charter schools and traditional public schools has several key flaws, according to a review published this week by the National Education Policy Center (NEPC). The Fordham report, "Teacher Absenteeism in Charter and Traditional Public Schools," found that public school teachers were nearly three times more likely to be absent from school when compared to their charter counterparts. It argued that this may have an adverse effect on student learning. The NEPC review argues that the Fordham report ignores large bodies of contradictory academic research, is selective in its sources and ignores discrepancies in data.

State ratings of charter school sponsors for the 2016-2017 school year released Wednesday were substantially improved from the previous year, while also reflecting a shrinking of the ranks of sponsors. The latest ratings include three sponsors rated "exemplary," the highest grade -- Findlay City Schools, Zanesville City Schools, and Tri-Rivers Schools. In the next rating tier, 21 sponsors were deemed "effective," while 13 were rated "ineffective." The bottom rating of "poor" -- which can lead to termination of sponsorship authority -- went to eight sponsors.

The Joint Education Oversight Committee (JEOC) heard Thursday from Executive Director Lauren Monowar-Jones addressing research looking at the funding, enrollment and learning outcomes of Ohio's early childhood education programs to inform a report tentatively slated for release in January 2018. While initial comments from JEOC Chairman Rep. Bob Cupp (R-Lima) indicated the report would be largely informative, Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) said consideration will be paid to meeting the codified goals of Ohio's Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) framework, which ranks the state's early childhood education centers on a five-star scale.

ELECTIONS 2018

Rep. Tom Patton (R-Strongsville) said Tuesday he will seek re-election to the Ohio House rather than run for the Republican nomination for the 16th Congressional District, where U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) is not seeking re-election as he runs for governor. In a statement, he cited the health problems of his newborn grandson as having motivated his decision to stay in the General Assembly. Rep. Christina Hagan (R-Alliance) and former Ohio State University football star Anthony Gonzales are seeking the Republican nomination for Renacci's seat.

U.S. Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Cincinnati) this week announced his re-election campaign for the Second Congressional District.

Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine announced two hires Friday for his gubernatorial campaign, both of whom were involved in his 2014 re-election. Ryan Stubenrauch will be press secretary, reprising his 2014 role, and Brenton Temple will be senior political director.

Chris DePizzo will attempt to unseat U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (R-Niles) in 2018, the Republican attorney has announced.

Former U.S. Rep. Zack Space's campaign for state auditor Thursday released its first campaign video, titled "I'm Ready. Are You?"

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) and Delaware County Prosecutor Carol O'Brien endorsed Mike DeWine for governor.

ENERGY

The number of people working in clean energy industries throughout Ohio is 105,443, a more than 4 percent increase since 2015, according to an analysis from Clean Energy Trust and business group Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2). "Job growth across sectors including renewable energy generation, advanced grid, energy efficiency, clean fuels, and advanced transportation is occurring almost six times faster than overall job growth in the state," according to the 2017 Clean Jobs Midwest report.

FEDERAL

The Trump administration took its pitch for an income tax overhaul to America's heartland Tuesday when U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told a select audience on Capitol Square that the president's plan to double the standard deduction for personal withholding and lower the corporate tax rate to 20 percent will put money back into average American pockets. Mnuchin addressed the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants' annual meeting at the Columbus Athletic Club, where the Goldman Sachs alum laid out President Trump's larger economic strategy of a tax, trade and regulatory reform.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights) announced that Senate Minority Chief of Staff Mike Premo had submitted his resignation at Yuko's request, following recent "credible" information regarding "inappropriate conduct toward staff" Long-time Senate staffer George Boas has assumed the role of acting chief of staff.

Rep. Wes Goodman (R-Cardington) suddenly resigned early Wednesday morning after House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) told the freshman lawmaker to due to "inappropriate behavior related to his state office." Rosenberger announced the resignation, saying he was told the details of the behavior Tuesday afternoon. The speaker's statement did not elaborate on what the

behavior was. Goodman released a statement expressing regret "that my actions and choices have kept me from serving my constituents and our state in a way that reflects the best ideals of public service. For those whom I have let down, I'm sorry."

The Conference Committee on SB8 (Gardner-Terhar) and the full Senate Wednesday unanimously approved the report on the bill containing an omnibus amendment that makes a number of budget corrective changes including a nearly \$7.4 million increase in state aid for school districts experiencing reductions in Tangible Personal Property Tax (TPP) reimbursements. The report must still go before the full House.

The House Speaker's Task Force on Education and Poverty met Thursday to give its non-legislative members an opportunity to talk about the successes and challenges they've experienced in their own local school districts and organizations. It was the final meeting called by Chair Rep. Bob Cupp (R-Lima) before the group will compile a summary of testimony heard and recommendations to the Legislature.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Susan J. Pohler of Columbus (Franklin County) and Dr. Raymond "Butch" Losey of Cincinnati (Clermont County) to the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board for terms beginning Nov. 13, 2017, and ending Oct. 10, 2019.
- Betty Montgomery of Columbus (Franklin County) to the State Medical Board for a term beginning Nov. 15, 2017, and ending July 31, 2022.
- Brianne Y. Patek-Gruber of Perrysburg (Wood County) reappointed to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning Nov. 15, 2017, and ending Oct. 26, 2020.
- Arthur C. Schlesinger of Miamisburg (Montgomery County) reappointed to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning Nov. 14, 2017, and ending Oct. 26, 2020.
- John H. Ballard of Akron (Summit County) to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning Nov. 14, 2017, and ending Oct. 26, 2020.
- Richard "Scott" Blake of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Accountancy Board for a term beginning Nov. 14, 2017, and ending Oct. 20, 2024.
- Joshua D. Atkinson of Napoleon (Henry County) appointed to the Wildlife Council for a term beginning Nov. 16, 2017, and ending Jan. 31, 2021.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Legislation introduced this week by Rep. Stephen Huffman (R-Tipp City) aims to provide Ohioans transparency into the cost of health care services while side-stepping the legal issues that a similar law has faced. Speaking at a press conference Tuesday, Huffman said his bill, HB416, would repeal the current health care price transparency law that was folded into the previous General Assembly's workers' compensation budget, HB 52 (Hackett). That law was championed by Rep. Jim Butler (R-Oakwood).

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

Ohio Medicaid Director Barbara Sears said Thursday her department will add two weeks to the beta testing window for the behavioral health redesign initiative, stretching it from Nov. 30 to Dec. 15, but insisted the administration is ready to flip the switch Jan. 1 on new claims processes.

MENTAL HEALTH

Youth advocates for mental wellness joined state officials Thursday for the launch of the Be Present campaign, which is meant to help young people care for themselves and support peers amid isolation, depression and other mental health issues. The campaign is also meant to help address the problem of youth and young adult suicide. Angie Bergefurd, assistant director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), said the campaign was developed by youth, for youth.

PEOPLE

Former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray said Wednesday that he will step down as director of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) by the end of the month. Though he did not say what his next move will be, many speculate that he would be returning to Ohio to run for governor.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Jon Husted Wednesday announced 9,250 new entities filed to do business in Ohio throughout the month of October, an increase of 969 when compared to the same month in 2016.

UTILITIES

Ohio Consumers' Counsel Bruce Weston gave House members a refresher Tuesday on the role of his office and the difference between an electric security plan (ESP) with its assorted billing riders and a market rate offer (MRO) for electric generation. The latter is a largely academic discussion as Ohio has never had an MRO, Weston noted, despite statutory language on market-based rate plans and ESPs in energy omnibus 127-SB221.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE

PASSED BY SENATE

HB199 OHIO RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LENDING ACT (Rep. Louis Blessing III) To create the Ohio Residential Mortgage Lending Act for the purpose of regulating all non-depository lending secured by residential real estate and to limit the application of the current Mortgage Loan Law to unsecured loans and loans secured by other than residential real estate.

Vote 32-0

SB152 STRUCTURED SETTLEMENT PAYMENT TRANSFER (Sen. Matt Dolan) Relative to transfers of structured settlement payment rights.

Vote 32-0

SB164 ABORTION PROHIBITION-DOWN SYNDROME (Sen. Frank LaRose) To prohibit a person from performing, inducing, or attempting to perform or induce an abortion on a pregnant woman who is seeking the abortion because an unborn child has or may have Down Syndrome.

Vote 20-12

CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

SB8 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (Sen. Randy Gardner, Sen. Louis Terhar) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security.

Senate Accepts Conference Committee Report, Vote 32-0

HOUSE

No House activity to report.