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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.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost Tuesday said he has joined 41 other attorneys general in calling on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to take further action to stop the growing proliferation of illegal robocalls and spoofing. In formal legal comments delivered to the FCC, the attorneys general urged the FCC to adopt its proposed rules on enforcement against caller ID spoofing on calls to the United States originating from overseas, while also addressing spoofing in text messaging and alternative voice services. These provisions are included in the FCC appropriations authorization bill also known as the Ray Baum's Act of 2018.

**FY18-19 BUDGET**

Ohio's April tax revenues blew by estimates for the month by 20 percent or nearly \$414.2 million for the month as a whole and were nearly 40 percent over estimates for the personal income tax alone, according to preliminary figures released Thursday by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). The jump gives credence to OBM's argument that substantial dips in income tax collections

a few months ago were likely a timing issue related to the new federal tax law. Ohio is now 3.0 percent or a half billion dollars over estimates for this fiscal year. A total of \$19.1 billion has been collected; nearly \$18.6 billion had been estimated for the first 10 months of FY19.

## **FY20-21 BUDGET**

A final round of amendments to the budget bill brought strong, bipartisan support for HB166 in the House, as it cleared the House Finance Committee unanimously Wednesday and passed 85-9 on the floor Thursday. A potential roadblock to that bipartisan support, Rep. Jim Butler's (R-Dayton) Healthy Ohio Medicaid initiative, was removed at the last minute during floor debate. Final changes further reined in Ohio's small business tax deduction for pass-through entities, in order to finance across the board income tax rate cuts of 6.6 percent. Previous changes had already lowered the deduction threshold while eliminating Ohio's bottom two income tax brackets, meaning no income tax will be paid on a filer's first \$22,250 of earnings. Other changes made Wednesday included provisions against "surprise billing" for out-of-network providers in emergency situations, and health care price transparency measures. Following through on intentions announced last week, the House also included the language of HB154, proposing to dissolve the academic distress commissions now overseeing three Ohio school districts and establishing a new school turnaround model focused on buildings rather than entire districts.

Proponents of the Cupp-Patterson "Fair School Funding Plan" told the House Finance Committee May 3 that the most recent revisions to the school funding formula overhaul address issues that were encountered in high poverty districts. When an initial simulation of the funding plan was released, critics said some high poverty districts received nominal funding increases, while wealthier districts like New Albany-Plain Local Schools received substantial funding increases. Proponents said those issues have been addressed.

Superintendent Paolo DeMaria appeared before the Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee Tuesday to field questions from senators on funding proposals for traditional and charter schools, as well as on issues related to the school report card system, academic distress commissions, and more.

The Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee Wednesday morning plowed through budget testimony on HB166 (Oelslager) from five human service agencies: the Department of Health, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (ODOD), Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and Ohio Department of Aging (ODA). Each of the directors gave basically the same testimony on the as-introduced version of the DeWine FY20-21 budget that they presented in House although a few committee questions referenced the initial House substitute budget.

## **BUSINESS/CORPORATE**

It's a day to celebrate for Moraine, Parma and Toledo, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said Wednesday, while adding that "a lot has to happen" for a possible deal for a Cincinnati electric vehicle company to purchase the Lordstown Chevrolet Cruz plant that closed in early March. Shortly after a phone conversation with General Motors (GM) CEO Mary Barra early Wednesday, President Donald Trump had tweeted news that GM would be investing \$700 million in Ohio to create an estimated 450 jobs at three other GM plants in the state in Moraine, Parma and Toledo. He also said that,

subject to an agreement with United Auto Workers, GM would be selling the Lordstown plant to Loveland-based Workhorse, which manufactures custom electric trucks.

## **EDUCATION**

Ohio has a slightly larger pool of eligible sponsors and a new award category as it starts a third annual round of charter school grants. Hampered at launch by scandal and thus far constrained in its reach by a limited field of qualifying schools, the federally funded grant program has used only about 5 percent of available funding in the first two cycles, around \$2 million of \$49 million available. The grant program is to last five years total. The FY20 grant round will bring new eligible spending categories, thanks to flexibility offered under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) acceptance of corrective action plans for sponsors that don't meet eligibility criteria outright will bring the total number of nonprofit oversight agencies that schools can partner with to eight, up from six in the FY19 round.

States are using a variety of strategies, tools, services and approaches to tackle the difficult issues around school safety and violence prevention. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has released a summary of some of these practices. Steps states have taken to address school safety generally fall into the areas of threat assessment, infrastructure and technology, coordination of mental and behavioral health services and school climate practices.

## **ELECTIONS**

Secretary of State Frank LaRose Thursday announced the three finalists of the "I Voted" sticker contests while opening up voting to all Ohioans through his office's website. The secretary of state's office said that over 2,000 submissions were received from young Ohioans from all over the state. Voting on the new sticker is open to all Ohioans and will run through Friday, May 17. To cast a vote, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y2vcptom>.

## **ELECTIONS 2019**

Voters approved three quarters of the 104 school funding issues on local ballots in Tuesday's election, according to the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). Passage of 79 issues, equating to 76 percent approval rate, marks an increase from the 68 percent passage rate in the previous primary election, when 63 of 92 issues passed.

Rep. Kris Jordan (R-Ostrander) fell short Tuesday in his bid to unseat Delaware County Municipal Court Clerk Cindy Dinovo. According to unofficial results posted by the Delaware County Board of Elections, Dinovo defeated Jordan in the Republican primary by nearly 2,500 votes, or 60 percent to 40 percent of the votes cast.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose praised Tuesday's primary election day, calling it a success. In a statement, LaRose said Tuesday's election "gave Ohioans a chance to have their voice heard. All reports indicate the new voting machines being used in counties across Ohio performed well and all votes were securely and accurately counted.

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) reported that both children services levies on the ballot Tuesday - - a renewal levy in Ashtabula County and a replacement with increase levy in Logan County -- passed.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The nation added 263,000 jobs in April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) announced Friday, and the unemployment rate fell from 3.8 percent to 3.6 percent, marking the lowest rate since December 1969. The number of unemployed persons also dropped from 6.2 million in March to 5.8 million. BLS said there were declines among several major worker groups, including adult men (from 3.6 percent to 3.4 percent), adult women (3.3 percent to 3.1 percent), whites (3.4 percent to 3.1 percent), Asians (3.1 percent to 2.2 percent) and Hispanics (4.7 percent to 4.2 percent). There was "little or no change" for teenagers (13 percent) and blacks (6.7 percent).

Statewide efforts to promote "in-demand" occupations that often don't require a full four-year college degree and provide good pay started Monday, with Lt. Gov. Jon Husted in a prominent role given his leadership of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT), along with other initiatives. In addition, state agencies including the Ohio Department of Higher Education, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Ohio Department of Transportation, OhioMeansJobs and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities all held events with a number aimed at veterans.

## **ENERGY**

Chairman Sam Randazzo of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) told the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee Tuesday that all forms of government intervention are "destructive" to energy markets, and that the Legislature must decide whether the carbon emissions focus of HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) is better public policy than the energy efficiency (EE) and renewable portfolio standards (RPS) of 127-SB221. He said the latter's real purpose was to create a system of billing riders supporting utilities' generation assets, and that its EE and RPS provisions had less to do with carbon reductions than with expanded generation options to combat rising energy prices at the time.

The Ohio Hospital Association (OHA) recently received the 2019 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Award for its efforts in energy efficiency program delivery. OHA's efforts were recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Five organizations across the state will receive Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) grants for projects focused on household sewage treatment systems, habitat restoration, environmental careers and environmental education. The five grants total \$177,824, according to Ohio EPA.

A new coalition of stakeholders representing the agriculture, conservation, environmental and research communities has announced plans to develop an initiative to improve water quality across Ohio. "This unprecedented partnership brings together diverse interests to establish a baseline understanding of current on-farm conservation and nutrient management efforts and to build farmer participation in a new certification program," the Agriculture Conservation Working Group said in a news release.

## **GAMING/GAMBLING**

Lawmakers should expressly allow online and mobile options as part of any bill legalizing sports gambling in Ohio, according to a leading Internet gambling trade group based in Washington D.C. Speaking with *Hannah News*, iDEA Growth founder Jeff Ifrah said a mobile provision is an important part of any effective legislation allowing legal sports gambling. Allowing Ohioans to legally place bets on their smartphones is the only way to stop sports gamblers from using unregulated offshore websites, he said. While SB111 (Eklund-O'Brien) spells out that mobile and online sports betting is allowed, HB194 (Greenspan-Kelly) uses the word "device" as a catch-all term that Rep. Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) said could apply to mobile and online sports gambling once legal issues regarding the federal Wire Act are resolved.

Then on Wednesday, Rep. Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) said it has always been his intention to allow mobile and online betting under any legal sports gambling program in Ohio. Speaking with members of Internet gambling trade group iDEA Growth during an interested party (IP) meeting on HB194 (Greenspan-Kelly) in the Riffe Center, Greenspan said mobile betting is critical for persuading sports gamblers to play in the legal market instead of continuing to use unregulated offshore websites.

Total statewide revenue generated by Ohio's four casinos dipped slightly in April 2019 compared to that same month last year, according to data from the Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC). Similarly, the state's video lottery terminal (VLT) revenue from Ohio's seven racinos was just barely down year-over-year.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

Freshman legislator Rep. Allison Russo (D-Columbus), who has an extensive history working in health care policy beginning with the U.S. Department of Defense and then Medicare and Medicaid, told *Hannah News* federal health care policy is difficult to disentangle from state-level policies, with the political conversations moving away from evidence-based discussion to "ideological conversations."

The Controlling Board approved all but two agenda items without discussion Monday, with one deferred by agency request and the other drawing questions from Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) and Rep. Jack Cera (D-Bellaire) before it was passed. The deferred item, from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), was for a contract with The Computer Workshop in Dublin (Franklin County) to develop training curriculum in several technology categories. The item that received questions, also from ODJFS, was to amend a contract to provide an additional \$1.3 million in FY19 to TALX Corporation.

Brad Young will remain in his position as clerk of the Ohio House of Representatives for the remainder of the 133rd General Assembly, after the House approved a resolution during a nonvoting session Tuesday. The House adopted HR130 (Butler) which states Young will remain clerk until the first regular session of the 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The Ohio Senate Wednesday passed legislation that would require state agencies to cut their regulations by 30 percent over three years. The vote was 24 to 8. The Senate also unanimously passed SB37 (Schuring), to renew Ohio's tax credits for the film industry, despite the House considering a budget amendment that would do away with the credits entirely; SB26 (Kunze), authorizing a state income tax deduction for teachers' out pocket expenses for professional development and classroom supplies; and SB107 (Rulli) to allow local candidates for public office to file their campaign finance reports electronically.

Rep. Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster) was officially sworn in before the Senate tackled its voting calendar Wednesday, taking the 20<sup>th</sup> Senate District seat left vacant by the resignation of former Sen. Brian Hill (R-Zanesville) in April. This is Schaffer's second time being a member of the Ohio Senate, having previously served in the upper chamber from 2007 to 2014.

In other action, House Civil Justice Committee reported out HB168 (Arndt), dealing with affirmative defense regarding the release of hazardous substances; the House Insurance Committee reported out SB9 (M. Huffman), which deals with health plan claim information; the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee reported out SB4 (Rulli-Kunze), which deals with school facilities assistance; the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out HB129 (McClain), which addresses motorcycle riders' hearing protection; the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee reported out HB50 (Greenspan), which deals with charter county hospital patents; and House Criminal Justice Committee reported out SB10 (Wilson), addressing theft in office penalties.

## **GOVERNOR**

In his first address as governor to the annual Governor's Holocaust Commemoration, Gov. Mike DeWine said that not even houses of worship are immune to hate in today's world. Citing attacks on synagogues in California and Pittsburgh, the governor said the threat level for places of worship and religious spaces remains high. He said Ohio Homeland Security is working with the federal government to help protect against the threat of domestic terrorism and noted that the agency will be holding a summit for religious organizations over the summer that will include safety training.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Frances B. Henry of New Albany (Franklin County) to the Banking Commission for a term beginning May 3, 2019, and ending Jan. 31, 2022.
- Tina L. Husted of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Ohio Arts Council for a term beginning May 3, 2019, and ending July 1, 2020.
- Timothy J. Cosgrove of Kirtland (Lake County) to the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 3, 2019, and ending May 1, 2028.
- Allen L. Ryan Jr. of Niles (Trumbull County) to the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 3, 2019, and ending April 30, 2028.
- Matthew T. Evans of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 14, 2019, and ending May 13, 2028.
- Justin P. Kelley of Liberty Township (Butler County) as the student member on the Ohio University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 14, 2019, and ending May 13, 2021.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

With measles cases confirmed in 22 states including Ohio neighbors Indiana, Kentucky and Michigan, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Amy Acton Friday reminded all Ohioans

about the importance of children and adult being up-to-date on all recommended vaccinations. Ohio currently has no confirmed cases of measles.

On Tuesday, Amy Rohling-McGee, president of the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO), told the House Health Committee, "Ohioans spend more on health care but are less healthy than people in most other states. ... Ohio's health care spending needs to be re-aligned to provide greater support for healthy aging and prevention as a way to reduce spending on costly sick care later in life." Rohling-McGee was joined by Reem Aly and Amy Bush Stevens, co-authors of HPIO's "2019 Health Value Dashboard."

Nurses who are forced to work past their scheduled shifts can often suffer from fatigue and other effects that put themselves and patients at risk, proponents of HB144 (D. Manning) argued to the House Commerce and Labor Committee Wednesday. Those who speak up about their working conditions often face threats of termination or professional sanctions, they added.

## **JUDICIAL**

The high court Tuesday considered whether pet owners warrant one "free bite" and a minor \$100 fine when they fail to confine a dog that injures a person or kills another dog under 129-HB14 (Sears), which eliminated breed-specific penalties but also provided a definition and sanction for "dangerous dogs." The case is *State v. Jones*.

## **MARIJUANA/HEMP**

Ohioans suffering from anxiety disorder or autism spectrum disorder are one step closer to becoming eligible for treatment with medical marijuana. The State Medical Board of Ohio's (SMBO) Medical Marijuana Expert Review Committee on Wednesday recommended adding those two disorders as new qualifying conditions for treatment under the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program.

Congress should pass legislation granting marijuana-related businesses access to the federal banking system, Attorney General Dave Yost said Wednesday. Ohio's Republican attorney general is part of a coalition of 38 state and territorial attorneys general calling on federal lawmakers to approve the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act (HR1595) or a similar measure.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) announced the launch Friday of a Conservation Teen Advisory Council (ConTAC) to serve as a statewide network of student leaders working to bolster the department's youth outreach and programs. Teens entering grades 9th-12th in the 2019-2020 school year who are interested in natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, wildlife or simply making a positive impact on the Buckeye State may apply to be among the founding members.

The ODNR Division of Forestry has approved \$297,520 to fund 52 projects through the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant program. The grant dollars will support fire departments in rural parts of Eastern and Southern Ohio, ODNR said.

Ohio is once again the top state in the country for Tree City USA communities, according to the ODNR Division of Forestry. As part of this nationwide program, Ohioans last year planted more

than 24,000 trees, pruned more than 77,000 trees, volunteered more than 42,000 hours in their urban forestry programs and invested a combined total of more than \$40 million toward urban forestry efforts.

People outside enjoying nature this spring should leave young wild animals alone, according to the ODNR Division of Wildlife.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and ODNR Director Mary Mertz Tuesday dedicated the purchase of 118 acres adjacent to the Lakeside Daisy State Nature Preserve in Marblehead. Funding for this acquisition comes from both a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and donations from Ohioans using their state income tax refunds to support Ohio State Nature Preserves. This purchase increased the size of the preserve from 19 acres to 137 acres.

## **PEOPLE**

The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) announced that Miranda (Randi) Leppla has been promoted to vice president of energy policy for the organization. She formerly served as the group's "clean energy" attorney.

The Ohio Association for Justice (OAJ) presented outgoing Industrial Commission of Ohio Chairman Tim Bainbridge with its Workers' Compensation Outstanding Service Award for his commitment to protecting workers' rights in Ohio spanning 50 years. The award, presented during OAJ's Annual Convention May 1-3 in Columbus, "honors an attorney whose tireless dedication to improving Ohio's workers' compensation system makes Ohio a better place for injured workers," OAJ explained.

## **REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT**

Ohio's congressional maps created under 129-HB369 (M. Huffman) in 2011 are "an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander," a three-judge U.S. District Court panel ruled Friday in a decision requiring the maps be redrawn by Friday, June 14. If state officials do not develop an acceptable plan, the decision said, the court may take action to have districts re-drawn by a special master. Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost appealed the decision, seeking a stay, according to a statement in which he called the decision "a fundamentally political act that has no basis whatsoever in the Constitution." However, the judges later in the week denied the state's request for stay. Yost has also filed a notice of appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Lawmakers could have a lot of work ahead of them to draw new congressional maps and should be laying the groundwork now, House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) said Wednesday. Sykes is designated as co-chair of the Legislative Task Force on Redistricting, Reapportionment and Demographic Research, which can hire staff, buy software and prepare demographic data to help the General Assembly in its decennial effort to update district boundaries for the General Assembly and Ohio's congressional districts. She sent a letter Wednesday to Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina), the other co-chair, asking that the task force start meeting next week in light of last week's federal court ruling that declared Ohio's congressional map unconstitutional.

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:**

### **SENATE:**



**PASSED BY SENATE**

- SB1 REDUCE REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS (Sen. Robert McColley, Sen. Kristina Roegner) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions and to continue the provision of this act on and after August 18, 2019.  
Vote 24-8
- SB26 TAX DEDUCTION-TEACHER CLASSROOM SUPPLIES (Sen. Stephanie Kunze) To authorize a state income tax deduction for teachers' out-of-pocket expenses for professional development and classroom supplies.  
Vote 32-0
- SB37 MOTION PICTURE TAX CREDIT (Sen. Kirk Schuring) To extend eligibility for and make other changes to the motion picture tax credit.  
Vote 32-0
- SB107 FILE CAMPAIGN FINANCE STATEMENTS ELECTRONICALLY (Sen. Michael Rulli) To allow certain entities to file campaign finance statements electronically and to require the Secretary of State to make the information in those electronic statements available online.  
Vote 32-0

**HOUSE:**

**PASSED BY HOUSE**

- HB166 OPERATING BUDGET (Rep. Scott Oelslager) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.  
Vote 85-9, Bill Amended on Floor.