



**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**

August 11, 2017

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**

President Donald Trump's announcement that his administration will be taking steps to declare the opioid epidemic a national emergency and providing more federal resources to fight it drew applause from Ohio figures. Trump told reporters that the White House is working on the official paperwork.

**AFFORDABLE CARE ACT**

Anticipating what may come next in the federal health care debate, Jocelyn Guyer of Manatt Health Solutions in Washington, D.C., told attendees at this week's National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit that U.S. Sen. Rob Portman's (R-OH) proposal could well be one that returns to active consideration. According to Guyer, Portman's plan -- included in the Senate replacement bill to the Affordable Care Act repeal and replace proposal -- was designed to give states a way to replace some of the coverage lost if the Medicaid expansion were eliminated.

## **AGRICULTURE**

The 2017 Ohio State Fair concluded its 12-day run with an estimated 801,031 attendees entering the gates, reflecting a 13 percent decrease from 2016, according to the Ohio Expositions Commission. Fair attendance was 921,214 in 2016 and 982,305 in 2015, according to the Ohio Expositions Commission. Next year's fair will run Wednesday, July 25 through Sunday, Aug. 5, 2018.

## **AUDITOR OF STATE**

Charter schools subject to claw-back after being overpaid by the state could face further financial penalties if they don't seek a proportional reimbursement from their sponsors and management companies, Auditor of State Dave Yost said. In a guidance letter to charters, Yost said schools found to have been overpaid by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) for lacking documented proof of student participation should retain legal counsel to determine whether restitution should be sought.

## **BALLOT ISSUES**

The campaign supporting the Drug Price Relief Act has filed a complaint seeking to force their opposition to reveal a more detailed list of their campaign contributors. "The complaint filed with the Ohio Elections Commission alleges that the opponents have failed to comply with state campaign finance disclosure laws, including failing to file a complete and accurate list of donors, the essence of such laws," said Don McTigue, an election law attorney for Ohio Taxpayers for Lower Drug Prices, the proponents of Issue 2 slated for the November ballot.

## **FY18-19 BUDGET**

"We're off to a good start," Office of Budget and Management (OBM) Director Tim Keen said after preliminary revenue figures came out for July -- the first month of the new biennium and the new revenue forecasts. Estimates were only off "one-tenth of 1 percent" or approximately \$2.2 million out of revenues of nearly \$1.7 billion for the month.

## **EDUCATION**

Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) has introduced legislation ensuring all money recovered from overpayments to charter and online schools would go to local school districts. SB 175, introduced Monday, would establish that all money recovered from overpayments to charter schools would be returned to the district from which it was deducted, regardless of the type of audit or review.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The national unemployment rate fell slightly to 4.3 percent in July, down from 4.4 percent in June, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Total non-farm payroll employment increased by 209,000 in July, with the country seeing increases in food services and drinking places, professional and business services, and health care, the bureau said in a news release. Employment growth has averaged 184,000 per month thus far this year, in line with the average monthly gain of 187,000 in 2016.

## **ENERGY**

The first-ever American Wind Week runs Monday, Aug. 7 through Saturday, Aug. 12 to mark the contribution of wind generation to the U.S. energy market, the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) announced Monday. AWEA designated the week to recognize that wind power is now the largest source of renewable energy capacity in the U.S. and supports over 100,000 jobs throughout the 50 states.

Sen. Sean O'Brien (D-Cortland) this week was named the 2017 Legislator of the Year by the Ohio Propane Gas Association during its 69th annual summer convention in Geneva-on-the-Lake.

Clean Fuels Ohio named Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) its 2017 Public Official of the Year at their annual Midwest Green Fleet Forum.

## **GAMING/GAMBLING**

Ohio's casinos and racinos saw a moderate increase in revenue in July, in most cases easily beating out many earnings figures from a year ago. According to the monthly report released Monday by the Ohio Casino Control Commission, the casinos earned a combined \$69.9 million in July, up from \$64 million last month and \$66.1 million in July 2016. Ohio's seven racinos report \$84.5 million in the first month of this new fiscal year, up from \$78.1 million in June and \$80.1 million in July 2016.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

Chairwoman Dorothy Pelanda (R-Marysville) of the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia announced non-legislative members of the panel Friday and its calendar for August–October. The task force was formed to spread dementia awareness and understanding and to provide those living with dementia and Alzheimer's resources to keep them independent longer and to decrease the cost of the disease, according to Pelanda. She says the panel has the goal of providing collaboration between counties and the state through dementia outreach efforts, creating dementia friendly programs, and creating the availability of respite care for those in need.

During their first meeting, members heard about the scope of the disease, how Ohioans are affected by it, and programs that are in place to help those with dementia. Pelanda said no more than three bills will come out of the task force, which must report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by the end of the year. Lawmakers hope to create a statewide Alzheimer's and dementia care plan out of the task force's work.

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said Thursday that he anticipates the chamber will take up some of the House veto overrides when the Senate is next in session on Wednesday, Aug. 23, but also that the chamber could wait to do so during September sessions.

## **GOVERNOR**

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Michael L Gonidakis of Dublin (Franklin County) reappointed to the State Medical Board for a term beginning Aug. 8, 2017 and ending July 31, 2022.

- Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) (Montgomery County) and Rep. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell) (Delaware County) to the Early Childhood Advisory Council for terms beginning Aug. 8, 2017 and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is urging parents to make sure their kids are up-to-date on vaccines against serious diseases for the back-to-school season. To emphasize the importance of vaccinations, and to ensure that children are protected with all the immunizations they need, ODH is partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

The Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice (OCHCH) announced Thursday that it has selected former House aide and lobbyist Joe Russell to serve as its new executive director. Prior to joining OCHCH, Russell served as the director of policy and advocacy for the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB).

## **MARIJUANA**

The first pot cultivator licenses will likely be awarded in November, Kasich administration officials running the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP) said Thursday. Addressing members of the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee, officials also sought to ease worries about the potential lack of institutions of higher education to provide laboratory testing in the first year, noting private labs can be issued licenses as early as June 5, 2018. The entire program is required by law to be up and running by Sept. 8, 2018.

## **STATE GOVERNMENT**

The Controlling Board members approved all 71 items before them Monday, including one for \$53.5 million in highway operating funds by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Nine requests drew questions before approval and one on the agenda was deferred by agency request.

Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) Director Jacqueline Williams on Monday announced the appointment of William Spurgeon to the position of chief deputy state fire marshal. Spurgeon was previously the chief of the Division of State Fire Marshal's Code Enforcement Bureau. In his new role, he will be responsible for assisting State Fire Marshal Jeff Hussey with identifying the division's goals and objectives, and leading day-to-day operations of the office. He started his new position on Monday, according to a news release from DOC.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Bryant Smith, an assistant professor of law and nationally recognized expert on AVs at the University of South Carolina, said that state laws regulating autonomous vehicles (AVs) were made in good faith but fall short. Bryant was part of a panel discussing the legal landscape of AVs at the Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Boston.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:**

**SENATE:**

*No Senate activity to report.*

**HOUSE:**

*No House activity to report.*