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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

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released State Opioid Response grants Wednesday including \$55.8 million for the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), according to releases from U.S. Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Ohio's funding is part of a total \$1.8 billion in awarded grants. ODH will distribute the funds in Ohio through the program, which was formerly known as the 21st Century CURES Act. It has been used to increase access to naloxone and better provide long-term addiction treatment and recovery services, including medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

AGRICULTURE

Ohio Department of Agriculture State Veterinarian Dr. Tony Forshey announced the confirmation of one case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse in Ashtabula County and is urging horse owners to contact their veterinarian to ensure their animals' EEE vaccine and boosters are up to date.

The Office of Ohio Treasurer continues to take applications through Friday, Nov. 15 for reduced interest loans through the Ag-LINK program. Treasurer Robert Sprague said, "Since the application period was re-opened in July, Ohio's farming community has turned to the Ag-LINK program for relief after this year's extreme weather. So far, more than 30 reduced interest rate loans have been made possible through Ag-LINK at a total of \$3.45 million."

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost said Friday that he has asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit to halt or delay the October trial against opioid manufacturers in Cleveland until the state's complaint goes to trial. Yost cites Supreme Court precedent in saying that only the state of Ohio can speak on behalf of all its people.

BALLOT ISSUES

Secretary of State (SOS) Frank LaRose Friday certified that Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts (OACB) had submitted more than the 1,000 valid signatures needed for certification of the referendum on energy subsidy law HB6 (Callender-Wilkin). Coupled with Thursday's action by the attorney general finding the group's summary of the proposed ballot issue to be a "fair and truthful representation of the measure," OACB can now proceed with collecting the approximately 265,000 signatures needed to put it on the November 2020 ballot.

FirstEnergy Solutions (FES) asked the Ohio Supreme Court Wednesday to block Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts' petition campaign against HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) on the theory that the law's \$170 million energy subsidy is a "tax" shielded from ballot referendum by the Ohio Constitution. Petitioners called it a "specious claim" contradicted by FES's own supporters in the Ohio General Assembly. FES said the petition against statewide charges supporting nuclear, solar and coal-fired generation is "a misleading and ultimately futile solicitation of signatures" that is "expressly exempted" by Article II, Section 1d of the Ohio Constitution, which bars any referendum against statutory "tax levies."

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

Working in manufacturing is not the dirty, dark and dangerous career path that many think it is, and businesses have to work with education partners to change that perception, representatives from Honda of America told an audience at the Columbus Metropolitan Club Wednesday. Tom Shoupe, executive vice president of Honda of America Manufacturing; Scot McLemore, manager of talent acquisition and deployment; and Lewis Gleason, equipment service technician, each spoke about their experiences with the company, which has invested about \$11 billion and has about 15,000 employees in Ohio.

CORRECTIONS

The massive jail system at the center of Gov. Mike DeWine's county correction reforms has added another former employee and an inmate gang leader to individuals indicted by the Cuyahoga County Grand Jury as part of state and federal efforts to halt a criminal enterprise involving at least six other former correction officers, six additional inmates, several civilians and a half dozen unnamed guards. The Cuyahoga County Corrections Center (CCCC) housed more than 26,000 inmates and a daily population of 2,260 in its most recently reported year.

ECONOMY

Ohio business leaders have "emerging worries among businesses about future economic stability," according to a quarterly survey released Thursday by the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation. During the second quarter of 2019, the state's "prosperity pulse" dropped slightly to 119.6, after a steep increase to 121.8 in 2019's first quarter.

EDUCATION

The State Board of Education's Executive Committee met for about 90 minutes Tuesday to discuss pay and goal-setting for Superintendent Paolo DeMaria, mostly in a closed-door executive session, but ended up deferring action on the superintendent's compensation until a meeting later this month.

The State Board of Education Dropout Prevention and Recovery Schools Workgroup met Tuesday to continue its discussion about the creation of a report card for dropout recovery schools, with members struggling to come to an agreement on what the best metrics and evaluative measures should be.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Office of Integrated Student Supports will hold a statewide "Lunch Menu Playlist" contest through the end of September in support of National School Lunch Week, which will take place from Oct. 14 through 18. ODE is encouraging schools to submit a week-long school lunch menu relating to the "What's on Your Playlist?" theme. According to ODE, the theme is designed to spotlight "the wide variety of flavors, dishes and delivery options available in today's school lunch."

College readiness indicators and rates of credential attainment among high schoolers raise concerns about Ohio students' level of preparation for higher education and the workforce, the Fordham Institute said Thursday in releasing a report on the topic. In "The Mountain Ahead: A report on the college and career readiness of Ohio students," Fordham's research director, Aaron Churchill, analyzes the graduating class of 2017 and found less than half of students were well-equipped to enter college or the workforce.

Ohio moved up a spot to 21st in the annual "Quality Counts" rating of state educational performance by magazine *Education Week*. Ohio earned a grade of C with 76 out of 100 points, the same as the nation's grade. This year, the magazine stretched the release of rating information across the year, assessing states' work on preparing students for success in January, school finances in June and K-12 achievement this month, along with the overall grade encompassing all three areas.

ELECTIONS

The Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) filed suit in federal court Friday to block Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose's scheduled purge of disputed voter registrations on Sept. 6, saying Thursday's settlement with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) allowing certain individuals to cast provisional ballots fails to ensure a quarter million Ohioans full voting rights and directly threatens up to 30,600 electors. However, a federal judge Tuesday denied the request.

Ohio voters would be able to request an absentee ballot online through new legislation introduced Wednesday by Sen. Theresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green). According to Gavarone, SB191 would establish a new online system for voters to submit absentee ballot requests. She said the system

prioritizes security by requiring the requestor to verify the last four digits of their Social Security number, driver's license or state ID number and birth date. Upon receipt of the request, the signature of the voter would be compared to that on file with the statewide voter registration database.

ELECTIONS 2020

The campaign of U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Cincinnati) said this week that it is cooperating with federal authorities who are looking into the possible misuse of campaign funds. The Federal Elections Commission (FEC) sent a letter to Jim Schwartz, treasurer for Chabot's campaign, in August questioning an amended campaign finance report that showed an increase in receipts of \$123,625 and asking for more information as to why the activity was not disclosed in the original report. Schwartz was told to clarify the reason for the change by Oct. 1.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced Thursday that it is partnering with LinkedIn to develop a pilot program aimed at making it more convenient for unemployment claimants to apply for and keep track of job openings. LinkedIn's "unemployment" section will allow Ohio claimants with an account on the job posting platform to receive reminder emails about the need to apply for two jobs a week, save their job application history in one place, download a copy of the state's work search activity form and access resources including coursework, information from experts and job listings, according to an ODJFS release.

ENVIRONMENT

Three small businesses in Montgomery, Franklin and Medina counties have been approved for a total of up to \$265,000 in bond financing and up to \$72,000 in grant assistance to purchase new air quality control equipment, the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) has announced.

FEDERAL

U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo) said she is doing fine after her vehicle was involved in an accident in Toledo on Wednesday. In a statement sent to the media, Kaptur's office said she was driving in Toledo in a single lane construction zone when a backhoe operating in the adjoining lane swung over into the lane reserved for through traffic and hit her windshield on the driver's side. She was examined at the hospital and released.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Sen. Louis Terhar (R-Cincinnati) announced Tuesday that he will be retiring from the Senate eff. Oct. 1, citing health reasons. He was first elected to the Senate in 2016 after serving in the Ohio

House for six years. The Senate Republican Caucus will accept applications for the vacancy until 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20 with Rep. Louis Blessing (R-Cincinnati) having already announced that he will be seeking the appointment to the seat and would run in 2020. The other two House members of Terhar's Senate district are Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), who formerly held Terhar's Senate seat and won Terhar's old House seat in 2016, and Rep. Jessica Miranda (D-Cincinnati), who defeated former Rep. Jonathan Dever in 2018.

Senate Republicans said Wednesday a caucus screening committee is recommending former Rep. Terry Johnson to replace Sen. Joe Uecker (R-Loveland), who recently resigned to take a position with the Ohio Department of Transportation. The full Senate Republican Caucus is expected to vote on the recommendation later this month. Johnson won out over Reps. John Becker (R-Cincinnati) and Doug Green (R-Mt. Orab), among other applicants for the seat.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) will again commemorate the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 with a memorial flag display on the West Lawn of the Ohio Statehouse.

Tickets are now on sale for the 2019 edition of the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board's (CSRAB) Haunted Statehouse tours. These tours will take place Friday and Saturday, Oct. 18 and 19 and Oct. 25 and 26. Tickets for the Haunted Statehouse Tours are \$12 for adults and \$6 for children under the age of 12. This is a ticketed event. Tickets must be pre-ordered.

GOVERNOR

An investigation by the State Medical Board of Ohio (SMBO) into allegations against former Ohio State University (OSU) physician Richard Strauss found "credible evidence" of sexual misconduct, Gov. Mike DeWine told reporters Friday, but no action was taken to rescind Strauss' license or report the matter to law enforcement. DeWine announced the findings of a working group created to investigate the SMBO's handling of the Strauss case as well as recommendations they offered. The working group was created in May after the report commissioned by OSU contained redactions regarding the SMBO investigation, which DeWine said was unacceptable. The group's focus was on what SMBO knew and when.

Gov. Mike DeWine told reporters Wednesday his upcoming trip to Japan represents an effort to build relationships toward business development, and while he hopes there will be short-term successes as a result, it is part of efforts that will last through the course of his administration. DeWine will be in Japan Sept. 8-13, including attending the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association (MWJA) annual conference.

GREAT LAKES

The Detroit District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that based on preliminary August data, Lake Superior tied its record high for the month while Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie established new record high monthly mean water levels in August. Water levels on Lake Michigan-Huron and Lake Ontario were slightly below record highs but are still very high compared to average.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

In response to the changing health care needs of the Toledo region, the University of Toledo Medical Center (UTMC) has elected to transition to a Level III trauma center from a Level I.

A survey released Wednesday by UHCAN Ohio and Altarum highlighted the burdens of health care costs on Ohioans and found support across all party lines for legislative solutions to address those issues. The Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey (CHESS) questioned nearly 982 adults through a web panel design in March 2019 and issued three targeted reports on key findings from the survey.

HUMAN SERVICES

To kick off September as "Kinship Care Month," the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced a new website with resources for grandparents and other relatives caring for children. It can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y2rnl76f>.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court says the newly launched Ohio Legal Help website enacts a major recommendation of the Task Force on Access to Justice convened several years ago by Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor. The website offers free information on common legal issues, court details, legal forms and attorney referrals. Ohio Legal Help is funded by the Supreme Court, Ohio State Bar Foundation and Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (which becomes the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation this month) and was developed by stakeholders including the Ohio Judicial Conference, Ohio Clerk of Courts Association, Ohio State Bar Association, Alliance of Ohio Legal Aids, Consortium of Ohio County Law Libraries, Ohio Library Council & Ohio Domestic Violence Network.

The Ohio Supreme Court is accepting public comment until Friday, Oct. 25 on proposed amendments to the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio that would require counties with multiple municipal or county courts to adopt a uniform bail bond schedule. A bond schedule is only used when a judicial officer is not available to set bond, such as non-court hours. Proposed rules state that if a county has more than one municipal court and they are unable to establish a uniform bail bond schedule, the courts shall use a model schedule established by the Supreme Court.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

At its August meeting, the Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) heard a presentation on a draft of the 2019 Access Monitoring Review Plan (AMRP), a report designed to assess Ohioans' access to public health care. While the state continues to transition to a managed care plan delivery model, the handful of remaining beneficiaries receiving care on a fee for service model are receiving adequate access, according to the AMRP. Presenting the findings of the report was Allison Barr, with the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Bureau of Health Plan Policy, who said that more than 90% of Medicaid beneficiaries receive care through a managed care plan model. By comparison, the percentage of Medicaid beneficiaries consistently receiving care through a fee for service model is smaller and decreased over the duration of the study from 14.1% in 2016 to 8.3% in 2018.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry announced that four additional miles of all-purpose vehicle (APV) trails have been opened at Pike State Forest. The new trails are located on a 144-acre property acquired in 2015 utilizing State Recreational Vehicle (SRV) funds. These four miles of new trail bring the total Pike APV State Forest trail system to nearly 20 miles of trail.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Director Mary Mertz announced Jeremy Wenner has been selected as the new chief of the Division of Engineering. "Jeremy has been an integral part of ODNR's engineering work for several years," said Mertz in a statement. "His knowledge, skills,

and leadership made him the clear choice for this position, and I'm confident in his abilities to guide this division in the years ahead."

OHIO HISTORY

The Ohio Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) Tuesday laid out groundwork for its coming year, seeking to fund raise for events and installations that will both honor the 100th anniversary of American women earning the right to vote and encourage others to register and vote.

PEOPLE

Kurtis A. Tunnell, who served as chief legal counsel for Gov. George Voinovich and was a former managing partner at the Brickler & Eckler law firm, was killed Saturday after a car collided with his bicycle on Scioto Darby Road in rural Hilliard. He was 58. The funeral was held on Thurs, Sept. 5.

Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Director Matt Damschroder announced that Katherine Nickey has been named deputy director of the General Services Division, which provides direct services to state agencies. She started Tuesday, Sept. 3.

The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) last month installed Dean C. Ringle, executive director of the County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO), as its 2019-20 president.

POLITICS

The Ohio Democratic Party announced that the October Democratic presidential debate will be held in Ohio. The event will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 15, with a possible Wednesday, Oct. 16 second debate if enough candidates qualify. The location of the event will be announced at a later date.

POLLS/STUDIES

Adults are really good at paying attention only to what they're told to - but children don't ignore anything. That difference can actually help children do better than adults in some learning situations, a new study from Ohio State University suggests.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) reported 10 traffic fatalities over the Labor Day Holiday, two fewer than last year, according to provisional data. There were 10 fatal crashes which claimed 10 lives -- a decrease from 2018 when 12 fatal crashes killed 12 people. Alcohol was a contributing factor in at least two fatalities. Additionally, three motorists were not using an available safety belt and two motorcyclists killed were not wearing helmets.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Gov. Mike DeWine joined officials from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Thursday for a confidential briefing on domestic terror threats to Ohio faith-based groups. Religious leaders from across Ohio gathered in the state capital to learn to identify and protect against threats and respond to actual attacks. The Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus hosted over 100 representatives of Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh communities.

TECHNOLOGY

Two Ohio organizations will receive a piece of \$59 million announced by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for new and innovative advanced vehicle technologies research. They are Rural Action, which will receive \$900,524 for a project increasing mobility services in rural areas, titled the Rural Open Access Development Mobility Action Plan; and Clean Fuels Ohio, which is receiving \$779,011 for its heavy-duty electric vehicle demonstrations for freight and mobility solutions, and \$669,999 for its project titled "Decentralized Mobility Ecosystem: Market Solutions for 21st Century Electrified Mobility."

TOBACCO/SMOKING

State and local public health officials in Ohio have confirmed that three reports of severe pulmonary illness are likely due to vaping and are investigating 11 additional illness reports. Also, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued updated recommendations on vaping for the public.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) will be closing 13 driver examination stations around the state while expanding hours at nine other stations. Those closing are in Bryan, Tiffin, Wapakoneta, Sidney, Marysville, Urbana, Circleville, Mt. Vernon, Ashland, Chardon, Carrolton, Cambridge and Gallipolis.

The Reason Foundation recently ranked Ohio's highway system 18th in the nation for overall cost-effectiveness and condition, an improvement of eight spots over the last edition of the group's annual report.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

A total of 140 Ohioans who died as a result of a workplace illness or accident were honored ahead of the Labor Day Weekend by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation. The names of the fallen workers are available at <https://tinyurl.com/y2zm4yf7>.

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) will be increasing the prize amounts for the top three award recipients at its 2020 Safety Innovation Awards in order to better encourage participation and creative solutions, according to a release. The first-place award recipient will now receive \$10,000 rather than \$6,000, while the second-place award increases from \$4,000 to \$6,000 and the third-place award rises from \$3,000 to \$4,000. The honorable mention prize will still be \$1,500.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE:

No legislative activity to report.

HOUSE:

No legislative activity to report.