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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 Third Frontier Commission announced the winners of the second phase of the governor's Ohio Opioid Technology Challenge (OOTC), awarding 12 prizes of \$200,000 each. This second in OOTC's three-stage process, the Challenge Phase, examined four criteria to combat drug abuse and addiction through new technology applications: diagnose - rapidly identify individuals at high risk of addiction; prevent - eliminate or reduce urges, cravings or symptoms of withdrawal; connect - provide immediate and extended access for relapse or overdose interventions; and protect - protect first responders and medical professionals from inadvertent exposure to toxic opioid levels.

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Attorney General Mike DeWine on Monday announced the start of the 10th annual Take Action Video Contest, which gives high school students a chance to win up to \$2,500 in college scholarships.

Interested students in grades nine to 12 must produce and submit a 60-second video on one of the following topics: National Do Not Call Registry, illegal robocalls, or using technology to stop unwanted calls. They may enter individually or in teams of two. College scholarships will be awarded to the top three winning individuals or teams: \$2,500 for first place, \$1,500 for second place and \$1,000 for third place. The deadline to enter the Take Action Video Contest is Friday, Dec. 7, 2018.

## **BALLOT ISSUES**

"Dangerous constitutional amendment. ... Irresponsible and destructive. ... Poorly drafted. ... Rash and not thought out. ... Devastating consequences." Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and other Republicans continued the drum beat Monday against state Issue 1's drug possession overhaul following last week's blistering attack on the proposed constitutional amendment by House Speaker Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell). The attorney general led a press conference in Columbus with Rep. Robert Sprague (R-Findlay), candidate for state treasurer, and a raft of county prosecutors, sheriffs and former judges who oppose Issue 1's downgrade of felony drug possession to no more than a misdemeanor, among other provisions. Democrat Rich Cordray, DeWine's opponent for governor, supports the ballot issue.

Auditor Dave Yost, the Republican nominee for attorney general, is joining other Republicans on the statewide ticket as well as Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor in opposing Issue 1, the proposed constitutional amendment that would change Ohio drug possession laws to favor probation and treatment over prison time. Yost, a former Delaware County prosecutor, said Tuesday that while he believes the state needs to revisit its drug possession policies, he has several problems with Issue 1.

Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor made the defeat of Issue 1's drug sentencing overhaul her singular concern in Thursday's State of the Judiciary address, exhorting judges at the Ohio Judicial Conference's (OJC) annual meeting to contact editorial boards and fraternal organizations and appear on TV in order to defeat the proposed constitutional amendment.

## **FY18-19 BUDGET**

Two months into Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, revenues continue the state's recent trend of exceeding estimates -- this despite the reset on projected revenues for the year where they were increased by \$531.1 million. Specifically, revenues were \$16.2 million or 0.8 percent over estimates for the month of August, bringing the total over estimates for the year-to-date to \$27.8 million or 0.7 percent.

## **BUSINESS/CORPORATE**

New data reported to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission indicate that CEOs are vastly out-earning their median employees, according to a report by nonprofit Policy Matters Ohio (PMO). Data covering 44 of the top 100 Ohio employers in 2017 indicated that 39 of those 44 CEOs had annual salaries more than 100 times that of their median employees, while 28 CEOs made more than 200 times their median worker. Various employers did not have to report pay scales either because they are nonprofits, government employers, privately-owned or foreign companies.

## **CHILDREN/FAMILIES**

A former legislator told the Commission on Infant Mortality that focusing on early childhood education is a massive prevention strategy that can deal with the inequities that exist in the system. Shannon Jones, a former state senator and state representative who now serves as executive director of Groundwork Ohio, noted her work as a legislator with Sen. Charleta Tavares (D-Columbus) on the issue of infant mortality. She said now that she is on the outside of the lawmaking process looking in, she has a different perspective.

## **DISASTERS**

Members of an Ohio Task Force 1 water ready package have been deployed to the Carolinas ahead of Hurricane Florence's landfall. The team is trained to establish or enhance urban search and rescue operations in a water environment. It includes a water rescue manager, water rescue squad officers, boat operators, water rescue specialists, a logistics specialist, a medical specialist and support specialists.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Ohio Third Frontier Commission neared the \$1 billion mark in total grants under currently approved bond funding Wednesday with the awarding of \$4.5 million in grants split roughly between the Ohio Opioid Technology Challenge (OOTC) (see above) and the Technology Validation and Start-up Fund (TVSF) Program. A total of 10 projects received funding totaling \$2.1 million from the TVSF program.

## **EDUCATION**

The State Board of Education's (SBOE) Career-Technical Planning District (CTPD) Report Card Workgroup discussed how state report cards should measure success in student preparedness recently, hearing a presentation from national expert Ryan Reyna, director of the Education Strategy Group. The group previously met on Aug. 30, focusing on how industry-recognized credentials should fit in the state report card for career tech districts and those credentials were also a topic of this latest meeting.

Educators and administrators at school districts in Ohio and around the country need to think about school safety and security more comprehensively, the keynote speakers told attendees of the inaugural School Security and Safety Solutions Summit at the Columbus Convention Center Wednesday. Dr. Amy Klinger and, her daughter, Amanda Klinger, co-founders of the Educator's School Safety Network, spoke before hundreds of educators, superintendents, school counselors and education professionals at the event organized primarily by the Ohio School Boards Association.

State university education colleges generated economic effects of more than \$92 million by placing aspiring teachers in about five of every six Ohio public school districts, according to a report from the State University Education Deans (SUED). The 2018 report uses data on 2016-2017 teacher candidates from state universities to assess their effect on Ohio education. Candidates were placed in 514 districts and 39 charter schools, reaching all 88 counties for that school year, according to the study.

Constitutional issues raised by Youngstown school officials in their challenge to a state oversight

panel are not causing confusion among lower courts or likely to be regular sources of conflict, attorneys for the state argued this week in urging the Ohio Supreme Court not to accept an appeal. Youngstown officials asked justices last month to accept their appeal of lower court decisions that upheld the establishment of an academic distress commission that is now in control of the school district via an appointed CEO. The request for an appeal is backed by major school management groups, union officials and the only other district to fall under the jurisdiction of a distress commission, Lorain.

Ohio school districts got their first overall ratings since 2012 Thursday with the release of state report cards that finally include the repeatedly delayed summative grade. The results will mean a third district, East Cleveland, falls under control of an academic distress commission, while Trotwood-Madison schools avoided that fate by earning an overall grade of D.

The agency that hosts centralized broadcasting for public TV and radio stations in Ohio approved plans Thursday for how it would cut its spending by 10 percent if required, a planning exercise ordered by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) in preparation for FY20-21 budget deliberations next year. Members of the Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC) voted unanimously to submit budget planning documents that would cover the 10 percent cut by reducing funds for Ohio Government Television (OGT) and for multimedia projects that TV stations pursue.

## **ELECTIONS 2018**

The secretary of state's office released the finalized list of candidates for the November 2018 election showing seven candidates are running unopposed. They include House Democratic candidates Reps. Kent Smith (D-Euclid), Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati), Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) and Michael Sheehy (D-Toledo) and Terrence Upchurch and Paula Hicks-Hudson and State Board of Education candidate Sarah Fowler.

The campaigns of gubernatorial candidates Mike DeWine and Richard Cordray jointly announced Friday that they have agreed to hold three debates, the first of which will be on Wednesday, Sept. 19 at the University of Dayton. The second debate is set for Monday, Oct. 1, at Marietta College while the last one will be held at Cleveland State University on Monday, Oct. 8. All of the debates begin at 7 p.m.

The major party gubernatorial campaigns Monday addressed the challenges of preparing Ohioans for the changing economy through workforce and education efforts, with both lieutenant governor nominees speaking to the Ohio Mayoral Education Attainment Summit. The event was hosted at Ohio State University and sponsored by the Gates Foundation, Ohio Mayors Alliance and major groups representing universities, community colleges and career-technical education interests. Former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton, Democrat Richard Cordray's running mate, and Secretary of State Jon Husted, Republican Mike DeWine's No. 2 on the ticket, spoke separately about their campaigns' plans for pre-K through college education as well as workforce training.

Appearing in Columbus during a campaign event on Monday, Democratic state treasurer nominee Rob Richardson said his office would stress the importance of civil rights and gender equality and would advocate for issues such as criminal justice reform. Richardson, the former president of the University of Cincinnati board of trustees, said he is dismayed many in the nation see civil rights as optional, but said it is an issue that all should embrace. If elected, he said his office would embrace

diversity, saying that he believes making sure Ohioans have opportunities is important for the state to grow.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Richard Cordray Wednesday held an event to outline his education plan, focusing on three main features: expand wrap-around social and health services that support the entire student while also centering local schools in their neighborhoods; trust local educators and scale back on state tests; and "purge charters of corruption" while barring for-profit charter schools.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) marked the 10th anniversary of the collapse of Lehman Brothers on his weekly phone call with reporters Wednesday, saying that the Republican-led Congress and the Trump administration have amnesia when it comes to the worst financial crisis the country has faced since the Great Depression. Brown said that while the U.S. economy has recovered from that recession, many Ohio families are still struggling, and complained that he believes Republicans are putting Wall Street interests ahead of those families.

Under their administration, Republican governor and lieutenant governor candidates Mike DeWine and Jon Husted said Thursday that private-public partnerships would be used to make Ohio a national leader in new technology such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and expanding the "smart city" concept. This effort, which they unveiled as their "InnovateOhio" plan, would be spearheaded by a "dream team" of technology entrepreneurs advising them. DeWine said Husted would take the lead on that, though it would not be his only responsibility as lieutenant governor.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown's (D-OH) ex-wife Thursday blasted new efforts to use their divorce to tie Brown to the "#MeToo" movement aimed at shedding a light on sexual harassment and violence. The Daily Caller, a conservative news site, reported on a group known as "#MeTooOhio" that has created an online ad and website citing the 1986 divorce records between Brown and his ex-wife Larke Recchie where she claimed in an affidavit that she felt in fear of the safety of her wellbeing and her children "due to [Brown's] physical violence and abusive nature."

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund PAC endorsed Erica Crawley, (D-Columbus); Sedrick Denson (D-Cincinnati); Rep. Laura Lanese (R-Grove City); Beth Liston (D-Worthington); Rep. John Patterson (D-Ashtabula); Sen. Michael Skindell (D-Lakewood); Cassimir Svirgelj (D-Rocky River); Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson); and Erik Yassenoff (R-Upper Arlington) for the Ohio House and Rep. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood); Rep. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo); and Melinda Miller (D-Newark) for the Ohio Senate.
- The Ohio Senate Democratic Caucus said Rep. Nickie Antonio has been endorsed by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown for the Ohio Senate.
- The *Columbus Dispatch* endorsed Zack Space for state auditor.
- Americans for Prosperity-Ohio endorsed Andrew Brenner and Kristina Roegner for Ohio Senate and Mike Raser, Jim Trakas, Tim Barhorst and Todd Smith for Ohio House.
- NARAL Pro-Choice America endorsed Aftab Pureval for Congress.
- The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee endorsed the following candidates for Ohio House: Scott Wiggam; Mark Romanchuk; Theresa Gavarone; Bob Cupp; Tim Ginter; Jim Trakas; Thomas Patton; Dave Greenspan; Kristin Boggs; Tim Barhorst; Richard Brown; Stu Harris; David Leland; Laura Lanese; Erik Yassenoff; Tom Brinkman, Jr.; Jonathan Dever; Louis Blessing, III; William Seitz; Anthony DeVitis; Mike Raser; Bill Roemer; Phil Plummer; Jim Butler; Niraj Antani; Todd Smith; Derek Merrin; Scott Oelslager; Reggie Stoltzfus; Sara Carruthers; George

Lang; Gayle Manning; Dick Stein; Jamie Callender; Scott Lipps; Glenn Holmes; John Becker; Kris Jordan; Rick Carfagna; Steve Hambley; Darrell Kick; Scott Ryan; Larry Householder; Bill Dean; Sarah LaTourette; Tim Schaffer; Ron Hood; Kyle Koehler; Jena Powell; James Hoops; Craig Riedel; Jon Cross; Susan Manchester; Tracy Richardson; Riordan McClain; Bill Reineke; Steven Arndt; Brian Baldrige; Shane Wilkin; Gary Scherer; Ryan Smith; Jay Edwards; Jack Cera; and Brian Hill.

- The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee endorsed the following candidates for Ohio Senate: Rob McColley; Anne Gonzales; Stephen Huffman; Stephen Wilson; Nathan Manning; Bob Peterson; Andrew Brenner; Sandra Williams; Kristina Roegner; Kirk Schuring; and Jay Hottinger.
- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio endorsed Issue 1.
- The Ohio State Bar Association announced its opposition to Issue 1.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The nation added 201,000 jobs in August while the unemployment rate stayed at 3.9 percent, according to new numbers released Friday by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The number of unemployed persons "changed little" and is now at 6.2 million, BLS said. The labor force participation rate, at 62.7 percent, and the employment-population ratio, at 60.3 percent, both declined by 0.2 percentage points in August. There were 434,000 discouraged workers in August, essentially unchanged from a year earlier. Discouraged workers are persons not currently looking for work because they believe no jobs are available for them. The remaining 1.0 million persons marginally attached to the labor force in August had not searched for work for reasons such as school attendance or family responsibilities.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has proposed to reduce the amount of time oil and gas companies are required to spend monitoring fugitive emissions at well sites and compressor stations.

The proposal also includes provisions "aligning requirements between USEPA's rule and existing state programs and making it easier for owners and operators to use emerging measurement technologies in their leak monitoring surveys," USEPA said. The agency estimates the changes will save the oil and gas industry approximately \$484 million in regulatory costs from 2019 to 2025. And while Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Craig Butler praised the proposal, Melanie Houston, director of climate programs at the Ohio Environmental Council, slammed it.

A contaminated aquifer site in Donnelsville has been added to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), the agency announced Tuesday.

The state of Ohio has awarded seven grants totaling nearly \$1.5 million to clean up seven abandoned gas stations across Ohio. The projects were evaluated based on the impact the cleanup will have on the environment, community and local economy.

## **GAMING/GAMBLING**

The state's four casinos raked in \$70.3 million in August 2018, a marked improvement from August 2017's adjusted gross casino revenue of \$66.7 million, according to the Ohio Casino Control Commission.

The casinos also outperformed revenues from July, when they pulled in \$69.7 million.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

The Ohio Senate said Friday that it will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 25 at 11 a.m. but that the sessions announced for both Thursday, Sept. 20 and Wednesday, Sept. 26 have been cancelled. There are no further Senate sessions scheduled until after the Nov. 6 elections with an "if needed" session set for Tuesday, Nov. 13 and a session set for Wednesday, Nov. 14. The House had earlier cancelled the two "if needed" September sessions it had scheduled. It, too, has no further sessions scheduled until after the elections, with the House due to return on Wednesday, Nov. 14 and Thursday, Nov. 15.

When the Senate convenes on Tuesday, Sept. 25, members will be voting on a variety of legislation, including a bill concerning funds tied to pre-paid gift cards, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said. They'll also be considering one or two House bills and one or two Senate bills during that session. He doesn't expect many committees to convene that week, save for some with bills that the Republican Caucus identifies as priorities.

Regarding the vacancy left by former Sen. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville), Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said he plans to accept applications for the position in the fall through the second week of November and make a determination following that. Balderson recently won a special election to fill a vacant U.S. House seat; he was sworn in last week. Obhof also said he has not yet decided who will chair the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which Balderson chaired, though he said he would do so before the Senate reconvenes.

The Joint Legislative Ethics Committee (JLEC) has waded into the national debate over ridesharing services in a new advisory opinion that finds Uber, Lyft and other providers are no different than taxis under lobbying restrictions imposed by Ohio Revised Code Section 102.031(C)(1) and Joint Legislative Code of Ethics Section 5(B).

## **GOVERNOR**

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Jeffrey Sczpanski of Galloway (Franklin County) to the Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers Board for a term beginning Sept. 7, 2018, and ending Aug. 27, 2020.
- Brian M. Perera of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Board of Trustees of the Martha Kinney Cooper Ohioana Library Association for a term beginning Sept. 7, 2018, and ending Sept. 15, 2020.
- Glory Brissett of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County), Prince Ellis of Cincinnati (Clermont County), Kefa M. Otiso of Bowling Green (Wood County), and Ademola O. Solaru of Cleveland Heights (Cuyahoga County) to the New African Immigrants Commission for terms beginning Sept. 7, 2018, and ending Oct. 7, 2019.
- Lloyd V. Graham Jr. of Columbus (Franklin County) to the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools for a term beginning Sept. 7, 2018, and ending Nov. 20, 2022.
- Jerry H. Wray of Newark (Licking County) to the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission for a term beginning Sept. 10, 2018, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.
- Stephen P. Ciucci of Sylvania (Lucas County) to the University of Toledo Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 10, 2018, and ending July 1, 2027.

- Michael Kirkman of Bexley (Franklin County) to the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Council for a term beginning Sept. 11, 2018, and ending June 1, 2019.

## **JUDICIAL**

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor received the ninth annual Thomas J. Moyer Award for Judicial Excellence Thursday at the Ohio Judicial Conference's (OJC) annual meeting. In nearly four decades of public service, O'Connor has served as practicing attorney, prosecutor, magistrate, common pleas court judge and Ohio lieutenant governor before joining the Supreme Court in 2003 and becoming the first woman to be elected chief justice in 2010.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

A 7 percent tax on Columbus event tickets would either save the city's art scene or drive artists out of town, depending on whom you ask. During a Columbus Metropolitan Club (CMC) forum Wednesday, Greater Columbus Arts Council President and CEO Tom Katzenmeyer and COSI President and CEO Frederic Bertley explained why they believe the tax is necessary, while Arnold Sports Festival Co-Founder Jim Lorimer and attorney Bret Adams discussed why they think it would be a disaster.

## **MARIJUANA**

The "fully operational" deadline for Ohio's medical marijuana program has been delayed indefinitely, but Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights) noted that it was to have been "fully operational" by Saturday, Sept. 8 under 131-HB523 (Huffman). It's unclear when the actual products will become available because of cultivator delays.

A new group backed by a Cleveland-based cannabidiol (CBD) company is urging state policymakers to continue allowing hemp-derived CBD products be sold outside the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program. "This movement is in response to the Ohio Board of Pharmacy's (OBP) ill-advised memo sent out claiming that CBD, regardless if derived from hemp or marijuana, is illegal in the state of Ohio," Ohio CBD Movement said.

Among the "dozens of errors and inconsistencies" in the Ohio Department of Commerce's (DOC) medical marijuana cultivator application scoring process, the most significant problem was its illegal allocation of two additional grower licenses, Auditor of State Dave Yost's office announced in a new audit Thursday. DOC Director Jacqueline Williams defended her department's process in a letter to Yost and during her presentation to the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC) on Thursday, saying she disagreed with some of the audit's conclusions, including the assertion that DOC acted unlawfully in awarding additional licenses.

## **MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM**

According to Cleveland-based Center for Community Solutions (CCS), much of the political debate surrounding Medicaid currently focuses on expanding access to the program, but policymakers could find other cost efficiencies by focusing on pricing. During an online conference, CCS Public Policy Fellow Loren Anthes said the key issue facing lawmakers and regulators is the following: "The political environment around Medicaid currently centers on access for low-value populations and increasing legislative oversight despite the limited ability of the department to address pricing and

regulatory capture by an influential industry." The conference was a part of CCS's "Strategic Review of Medicaid," which explored in depth the structure, current enrollment and policies of the program.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Ohio Tree Farm Committee named Whispering Ridge Tree Farm in Monroe County as the 2018 "Ohio Tree Farm of the Year," according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is now accepting applications for the Ohio Geology License Plate Fund grant program, the department announced. For the fourth academic year, the ODNR Division of Geological Survey's program will support graduate students researching aspects of the state's geology.

## **PEOPLE**

The Board of the Greater Columbus Chinese Chamber of Commerce named Zachary Q. Grammel as its new executive director. Grammel, who has lived in China and speaks Mandarin, has broad experience working with international businesses, the chamber said.

Having led the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) since 1987, Executive Director William T. Pound recently announced he plans to retire by August 2019. NCSL's officers anticipate forming a search committee to manage the succession process.

According to a number of media reports, Cleveland businessman Edward Crawford, 80, is on target to become ambassador to Ireland, although he must still be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Per the *Irish Times*, Crawford has been linked to the position since 2017, when President Donald Trump's first choice to fill the role withdrew because of health reasons. The position has been open since Trump became president.

## **POLITICS**

U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) will be the keynote speaker at the Ohio Democratic Party's State Dinner on Sunday, Oct. 7 in the Battelle Grand Ballroom at the Columbus Convention Center, according to the party. For ticket information, attendees are asked to text "DINNER" to 90975.

## **POVERTY**

Analysts weighed in on U.S. Census Bureau data on poverty and health insurance released Wednesday, observing a steady downward trend in the official poverty measure, an upward trend in median income and a rate of uninsured individuals statistically the same as last year. According to the bureau, the nation's official poverty rate in 2017 was 12.3 percent, with 39.7 million people in poverty, compared to 12.7 percent in 2016 -- the third consecutive annual decline in poverty.

## **STATE GOVERNMENT**

On the 17th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attack, Gov. John Kasich said Americans should take the opportunity to not only mourn the victims, but also ruminate on what it means to be a U.S. citizen. After the program, volunteers from across Central Ohio began installing 2,977 U.S. flags on the Statehouse lawn. Since 2002, the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) has

partnered with HandsOn Central Ohio and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency to display the flags, which represent the 2,977 victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93. When seen from above, the design represents the World Trade Center towers, with a space in the shape of the Pentagon and an open strip representing the field in Pennsylvania. Located on the West Lawn of the Ohio Statehouse, the memorial was in place from Monday, Sept. 10 through Thursday, Sept. 13.

The Controlling Board approved all items on its agenda Monday, but not before holding two funding requests for questioning -- one from the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and one from the Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) regarding the state's medical marijuana program. Sen. Jay Hottinger (R-Newark) wanted to know the current status of the medical marijuana program and whether or not OBP anticipated any additional funding requests before the next biennial budget. Rep. Scott Ryan (R-Newark) held a request from DAS to ask for clarification regarding the timeframe for the implementation of an e-procurement solution for state agencies.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Calling them a "cyber cavalry," Sen. Frank LaRose (R-Copley) said the Ohio National Guard's (ONG) Cyber Reserve would, if established, help defend Ohio against increasing cyber threats. LaRose announced SB327 -- legislation to create the reserve -- in a press conference Wednesday. The reserve, made up of civilians in the cybersecurity industry, would receive \$450,000 in initial funding under the bill, which LaRose said he hopes will be passed before the end of the 132nd General Assembly.

## **UTILITIES**

A familiar critic of Ohio's electric utilities told the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) Governing Board Tuesday that American Electric Power (AEP), FirstEnergy, Duke Energy and Dayton Power & Light (DP&L) continue to lobby the General Assembly at ratepayers' expense, and that the Legislature and Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) are largely complicit in consumers' inflated energy bills. President/Founder Bill Siderewicz of Clean Energy Future, owner and operator of a half dozen modern gas-fired generation plants in Ohio, said electric distribution utilities (EDU) here have become adept at "clawing back" from residential and commercial customers more than their fair share of the business.

## **VETERANS**

Former Ohio Rep. E.J. Thomas is among the 20 members of the 2018 Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame class, recently announced by the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. These 20 inductees, selected from 119 nominees, will be honored for their accomplishments and achievements at the 26th annual Induction Ceremony on Thursday, Nov. 8. The ceremony, which begins at 10 a.m., will take place at Radiant Life Church, 7100 Post Rd. in Dublin OH. The members of the 2018 class represent 13 Ohio counties and four military branches.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) is launching a pilot program in October to provide up to \$5 million over two years to help employers in Montgomery, Ross and Scioto counties hire and retain workers in recovery from addiction to opioids and other dangerous substances, the

bureau announced Monday. BWC will partner with county alcohol, drug addiction and mental health (ADAMH) boards on the program, with boards identifying eligible employers and employees, dispersing funds and managing results. Each ADAMH board will receive a lump sum on a quarterly basis, with employers paying expenses up front and applying for reimbursement.

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) has awarded \$1.1 million in grants to 40 Ohio employers to purchase equipment designed to substantially reduce or eliminate workplace injuries and illnesses. BWC said employers receiving grants operate in 29 counties around the state as well as one in West Virginia, and the recipients included 17 local governments or schools.

## **WORKFORCE**

Municipal, K-12 and higher education officials this week explored how they can work with one another to get more Ohioans the skills, credentials and degrees necessary to meet Ohio's workforce and economic needs. Monday's Mayoral Educational Attainment Summit at Ohio State University's Blackwell Inn featured several panels and speeches on the topic with insights from college, university, traditional district, career-technical education and teachers union officials. Attendees also heard from the lieutenant governor nominees of both major political parties on their campaigns' workforce and education platforms. In addition, State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria sat on a panel addressing the question of how schools, communities and the state can work together to improve educational attainment.

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:**

### **SENATE:**

No legislative activity to report.

### **HOUSE:**

No legislative activity to report.