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RH RESOURCES

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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 Ohio Attorney General's Office has partnered with the National Attorneys General Training and Research Institute (NAGTRI) to provide peace officers and prosecutors from across the state training on the investigation and prosecution of cases resulting from fatal opioid overdoses. Approximately 175 people attended the training at Southern State Community College in Wilmington.

AGRICULTURE

Nervous about the dramatic drop in milk prices, Ohio's dairy farmers are leaving the business at a higher than usual rate, according to the Ohio State University (OSU) College of Food Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

Advocacy and policy groups from across the state are decrying proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, in the 2018 Farm Bill. The bill in its current form threatens access to food assistance for thousands of Ohioans, including older

workers up to age 59 and parents and grandparents with children over the age of six, say representatives of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Center for Community Solutions, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Hunger Network in Ohio.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

If beleaguered counties want to alleviate poverty and fight back against the opioid crisis in their communities, effective solutions are going to come from the bottom-up, not the top-down, according to Gov. John Kasich. Kasich was in Waverly Tuesday to highlight a program operated by the Pike County YMCA that is assisting teenagers in the community who have struggled with abusive families and parents addicted to opioids. The Hurt to Hope program currently provides transportation, trauma-informed counseling, group therapy and other activities in a safe environment to young people in the area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Based on recommendations from JobsOhio and regional development partners, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA) approved incentives for six projects expected to bring 1,280 new jobs, retain more than 3,000 jobs and lead to \$54 million in new payroll and \$119 million in business investments.

EDUCATION

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) STEM Committee Friday approved the addition of 10 new STEM schools, bringing the state's total to 54 STEM-designated schools.

Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) offered by the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) to former employees are basically "taxpayer-financed hush money," representatives of left-leaning organizations ProgressOhio, Common Cause Ohio and Innovation Ohio said Monday.

There are steps that the State Board of Education can take in the near future to address some of the issues school districts and other stakeholders have with the current school report card system, but more systemic changes will take more time, and often require legislative action. A workgroup charged with making recommendations to the board wrestled with that conflict in their fourth meeting Monday, where they considered the possible recommendations formulated during the previous meeting on three of the six report card components: the achievement, K-3 literacy and prepared for success components.

House Democrats, citing controversy and a lack of results, are pushing legislation that would block the state from creating additional academic distress commissions that operate severely at-risk school districts under current law. Under a moratorium proposed in HB626, introduced by Reps. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) and Kent Smith (D-Euclid) Tuesday, school report cards would not have an effect on the creation of an academic distress commission for any school for three years, through 2021.

Superintendent Paolo DeMaria on Friday, April 27, appointed Maria Hoffmaster to serve on the academic distress commission overseeing Youngstown City School District.

School districts interested in developing or improving library programs, offering early literacy services and providing quality books to low-income students to boost their reading performance can

apply to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) for a grant through the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program. More information about the program is available at <http://tinyurl.com/ybfa79rk>.

The Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC) is urging the state to include last-mile connections to its main offices and Ohio's public broadcasters as part of the Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet). As the central master control operator for all public TV stations in Ohio, BEMC is a major user of capacity on OARnet, sending program signals to and from stations around the clock. But BEMC headquarters on the west edge of Ohio State University's campus, as well as stations' facilities across Ohio, are not directly tied in to OARnet.

ELECTIONS 2018

Republican primary races on the May ballot have added importance this year as a behind-the-scenes race for the House speaker's office plays out in a number of the districts. Reps. Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) were already battling to succeed the term-limited and now resigned House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) in the 133rd General Assembly. A number of Republican primaries next week will see multiple candidates seeking open seats who are backed by either Smith or Householder.

The proponents of the upcoming congressional redistricting ballot issue have received over \$150,000 ahead of the May 8 primary, a relatively small sum compared to other statewide issues. About one-third of the \$162,727 received by the bipartisan Coalition for Redistricting Reform came from the group Strong Communities Ohio, which contributed \$56,977. That group, also referred to as Strong Ohio Communities, backed the Issue 1 bond amendment approved by voters in November 2014.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Dennis Kucinich has announced he'll return the \$20,000 fee he accepted from a group sympathetic to Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. The former congressman from the Cleveland area recently disclosed the \$20,000 fee he accepted to travel to England last year to speak to the Association for Investment in Popular Action Committees, which includes the pro-Assad Syria Solidarity Movement.

Open seats in Ohio's biggest cities have drawn interest from numerous Democratic candidates ahead of the Tuesday, May 8 primary. In Cuyahoga County, 20 Democrats are running for four seats where the current incumbent is looking to move to the Ohio Senate. In Franklin County, Democrats are hoping a blue wave will allow them to win seats that have been held by Republicans for the last eight years. Term limits will also bring new faces to a number of Ohio House seats now held by Democrats in the next General Assembly. A number of races on Tuesday's primary ballot may decide who will win that seat in November.

Secretary of State Jon Husted said Tuesday that 220,051 absentee ballots have been requested by-mail and in-person by the close of business on Friday. Of the ballots requested, 128,276 have been cast. Husted's office said of the 220,051 ballots requested, 182,887 were requested by mail and 91,112 were cast; 37,164 were requested in person and all of those were cast.

Whether 2018 will be a wave year for Ohio Democrats or not, two political pundits Wednesday said the electoral mood is still anti-incumbent and anti-status quo. Kyle Kondik, the managing editor of Sabato's Crystal Ball at the University of Virginia, and Republican pollster Neil Newhouse spoke about the trends for the mid-term election in Ohio during a Columbus Metropolitan Club forum co-sponsored by *Hannah News*.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- National Nurses Organizing Committee endorsed Dennis Kucinich for governor.
- The U.S. Senate campaign of Mike Gibbons announced the endorsement of Youngstown State University football Coach Bo Pelini.
- The gubernatorial campaign of Richard Cordray announced the endorsements of Cleveland Firefighters IAFF Local 93; Columbus Professional Firefighter IAFF Local 67; Elyria Firefighters Local 474; Lorain Professional Firefighters Local 267; and International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1690 (Parma Heights).
- The gubernatorial campaign of Mary Taylor announced the endorsement of former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.
- NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio endorsed U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) for re-election.
- The Republican Liberty Caucus of Ohio endorsed Ryan Sawyer for Ohio Senate and John Becker, JD Winteregg, Bill Seitz and Kris Jordan for Ohio House. Brian Lorenz, Bob Mazerowski, Jena Powell, Justin Pizzulli, Wes Retherford, Scott Powell and Kevin Black were "recommended" for the Ohio House.
- The Ohio Citizens PAC endorsed Mary Taylor for governor.
- The Ohio Fraternal Order of Police endorsed State Issue 1.

GAMING/GAMBLING

Gambling disorders are experienced by 1.4 percent of adult Ohioans, a recent study by personal finance site WalletHub found, and the state is 23rd overall in a ranking of "Most Gambling-Addicted States." WalletHub also ranked states in terms of "Gambling Friendliness" and "Gambling Problem and Treatment," and the Buckeye State was 22nd and 23rd, respectively, in those categories.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) will keep a lighter meeting schedule this summer, according to an updated calendar released by the committee. The committee is cancelling half its meetings from June through October.

GOVERNOR

"There's a big ocean of people in the middle who are up for grabs," Gov. John Kasich said in an interview on CNN Sunday, though he again said it was too early to discuss any decision regarding the 2020 election. Kasich, interviewed by State of the Union host Jake Tapper, said that moderate voters are disenchanted with both sides, using the analogy of a red and blue department store that aren't appealing to "the great middle" and so "another store" would open for them.

Gov. John Kasich signed seven bills into law Wednesday: HB478 (Smith-LaTourette), regarding wireless small cell facilities; HB115 (Gavarone-Wiggam), establishing a voluntary database of people with communication disabilities; HB122 (Hambley-Rogers), to establish the Regional Economic Development Alliance Study Committee; HB195 (Seitz-Ingram), regarding transport of people who use wheelchairs; HB251 (Greenspan), regarding political subdivisions' bonds and obligations; HB354 (Reineke), giving Tiffin-Fostoria municipal court concurrent jurisdiction with Seneca County common pleas court for an addiction recovery program; and SB170 (LaRose), regarding commercial driver's licenses.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Former Sen. Nina Turner of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County), Austin B. Harris of Cincinnati (Hamilton County), Michael H. Keenan of Dublin (Franklin County) and Ronnie A. Dunn of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board for terms beginning April 29, 2018, and ending April 29, 2021.
- Charles T. George of Kent (Portage County) to the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 1, 2018 and ending April 30, 2027.
- Terrence P. Fergus of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) to the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 2, 2018, and ending May 1, 2027.
- Wallace E. Edwards of Portsmouth (Scioto Co.) to the Shawnee State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 3, 2018, and ending June 30, 2026.
- Gary E. Smith Jr. of Pickerington (Fairfield Co.) to the Wildlife Council for a term beginning May 3, 2018, and ending Jan. 31, 2022.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is warning Ohioans about a significant increase in cases of Hepatitis A, urging them to be vaccinated against the liver disease. In the first four months of 2018, there have been nearly 10 times as many cases of the disease as in the same time frame in 2017 -- 47 cases compared to just five. No official outbreaks -- linking two cases to a common source -- have yet been identified in Ohio, but they have occurred in neighboring states.

Assuring individuals who need opiates to manage long-term pain they need not worry about losing their medication, Gov. John Kasich Wednesday announced new rules aimed at curbing the unnecessary prescription of opiate painkillers to manage sub-acute and chronic pain and promoting the use of alternative treatments.

INSURANCE

The Ohio Department of Insurance announced that it is a new member of the International Association of Insurance Supervisors' (IAIS) Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU), an international supervisory cooperation and information exchange agreement.

MARIJUANA

During its ongoing review of the Ohio Department of Commerce's (DOC) Medical Marijuana Control Program cultivator application scoring procedures, Auditor of State Dave Yost's office found a scoring error concerning Ohio Clean Leaf LLC's application.

The Brunner Quinn law firm has resubmitted the petition for the "Marijuana Rights and Regulations" constitutional amendment, according to a filing on the attorney general's website. Attorney General Mike DeWine rejected the original petition in mid-April, citing problems with the summary language.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Monday submitted a finalized waiver application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that would allow the state to impose work requirements on adults enrolled in Ohio's Medicaid expansion population.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The fifth annual "Ohio Women's Outdoor Adventures" weekend will begin on Friday, Aug. 24 and run through Sunday, Aug. 26 at Deer Creek State Park in Central Ohio, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). A detailed listing of the weekend's events is available at watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/owoa.

The National Park Service is planning "extensive" changes to the Special Park Uses Program for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), the Northeast Ohio park announced Wednesday. The changes will be implemented on Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019, CVNP said.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) will institute a temporary Shore Structure Permit to allow Lake Erie coastal property owners to quickly address any severe erosion damage their property may be experiencing. More information on the permits can be found at coastal.ohiodnr.gov/tssp.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Ohio State Bar Foundation (OSBF) said Tuesday it awarded its first strategic grant to Issue Media Group (IMG) for a communication and engagement strategy to improve the civic knowledge of Ohio adults.

PEOPLE

The Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) announced that Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) and former Ohio Attorney General Betty Montgomery were among the organization's award winners for 2018. Obhof received the "Lawyer-Legislator Distinguished Service Award," which was established in 2014 to recognize Ohio lawyers who provide "exceptional service" as Ohio legislators. Montgomery received the "Women in the Profession Section's Nettie Cronise Lutes Award," which recognizes women lawyers who demonstrate a high level of professionalism and who open doors for other women and girls.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Surviving families of public safety officers who die from duty-related causes would receive an increase in benefits for the first time since 1976 under legislation introduced in the House and soon to be introduced in the Senate, lawmakers said Thursday. Rep. Jim Hughes (R-Columbus) and Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) joined first responders for a press conference outside Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) of Ohio headquarters to discuss the bill, which would extend the full salary benefit cutoff from 25 years to 33 years and increase access to health care for survivors.

UTILITIES

Ohio and several other states are preparing to respond to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) request for input on electric grid reliability, saying Wednesday that PJM Interconnection's transmission territory is both reliable and "resilient." Draft comments apparently fall short of a precise definition of that word, however, one that has been debated since FERC first sought a verdict on grid reliability from the country's regional transmission organizations (RTO) and independent system operators (ISO) last January. The request came after FERC rebuffed U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry's push for coal and nuclear generation subsidies based on those technologies' apparent resiliency.

The Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) says electric utility customers across the state should not have to pick up the tab for bankrupt FirstEnergy Solutions, which is seeking to unload \$268 million in financial obligations as part of its partnership in Ohio Valley Electric Corporation's (OVEC) subsidized coal generation facilities. FirstEnergy's filing with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Ohio describes the unprofitable status of OVEC's aging coal plants.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE:

No legislative activity to report.

HOUSE:

No legislative activity to report.