



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

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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.

BALLOT ISSUES

Office of Budget and Management (OBM) Director Tim Keen submitted the fiscal analysis on the two statewide issues as required by law this week, finding Issue 1, the constitutional amendment granting certain rights to victims of crime, would have a marginal fiscal impact on the state level, and finding that savings are possible under Issue 2, the Drug Price Relief Act, but noting that there are too many variables to estimate the full fiscal impact.

EDUCATION

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) again sought an injunction last week to stall state funding clawbacks, telling the Ohio Supreme Court it could close up shop by January otherwise.

Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) said he has introduced a bill, SB 216, to reduce some regulations on local schools that was put together with the help of superintendents in his district. Calling the bill "the Public School Deregulation Act," he said there is often talk about making sure regulations by

the state and federal government are not burdensome on businesses, but the same thing happens with local schools as well.

At Thursday's meeting of the Speaker's Task Force on Education and Poverty, members heard presentations from two educational leaders on the type of work being done in the state's dropout recovery and intervention schools and the potential positive impact they can have for some of Ohio's most vulnerable students.

ELECTIONS 2018

The four Republican candidates for governor in 2018 outlined their plans Sunday evening during an event hosted by Citizens for Community Values (CCV) in Westerville, just minutes away from Gov. John Kasich's residence. Despite being a Republican crowd, those in the audience voiced their displeasure with Kasich. The candidates added that while they like some of what Kasich has done, they disagree with some of his more recent moves, with two candidates saying the governor had changed tenor after deciding to run for president.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The national unemployment rate fell to 4.2 percent in September, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the nation lost 33,000 jobs over the month with a sharp decline in food services and drinking places as well as below-trend growth in some other industries.

Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) introduced new legislation this week to make changes to Ohio's unemployment compensation system that he said he believes is closer to a compromise than previous bills. The bill, HB 382, along with companion resolution HJR4, will reduce benefits to unemployed workers as the state tries to improve the solvency of the Unemployment Compensation Insurance Fund. The state borrowed more than \$3 billion from the federal government between 2009 and 2014 after the fund's balance dropped to zero during the recession, and state lawmakers have said they want to prevent any future borrowing by keeping the fund solvent.

ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has taken a step to repeal rules set by the Obama administration aimed at restricting carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants. USEPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on Tuesday issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to repeal the Clean Power Plan (CPP).

GAMING/GAMBLING

Ohio's four casinos saw a slight bump in their revenues in September compared to a year ago, while the seven racinos outperformed the casinos as they also saw an increase in revenues over the month.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

At Tuesday's meeting of the House Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia, Chairwoman Dorothy Pelanda (R-Marysville) and members heard testimony on a variety of issues including professional training at assisted living centers, elder abuse, shared living models and the effects of Alzheimer's on those with pre-existing developmental disabilities.

With just over two months remaining in 2017, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said overall priorities for the Senate will include the opioid epidemic, improving education and workforce development and making Ohio "as job friendly as possible." Having previously said that SB 8 (Gardner-Terhar) could be used to address budget issues, Obhof again said that he'd like to finish work on the bill by the end of October.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Mariame Diabate of Columbus (Franklin County), Comfort A. Kenneh of Gahanna (Franklin County), Eugenie Kirenga of Kettering (Greene County) and Ibrahima Sow of Reynoldsburg (Franklin County) reappointed to the New African Immigrants Commission for terms beginning Oct. 8, 2017 and ending Oct. 7, 2020.
- Michael D. Reese of Dublin (Franklin County) to the Ohio Water Development Authority for a term beginning Oct. 6, 2017 and ending June 30, 2021.
- Daniel C. Fischer of Logan (Hocking County) to the Hocking Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 6, 2017 and ending Aug. 26, 2020.
- Robert A. Montagnese of Pataskala (Licking County) reappointed to the Central Ohio Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 10, 2017, and ending Sept. 30, 2020.
- William A. Dodson, Jr. of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood for a term beginning Oct. 10, 2017, and ending July 30, 2019.
- Edward J. Levine of Gahanna (Franklin County) to the Medical Quality Foundation Board for a term beginning Oct. 10, 2017, and ending July 20, 2020.
- Michael W. Wise of Chagrin Falls (Cuyahoga County) to the Oil and Gas Leasing Commission for a term beginning Oct. 10, 2017, and ending Sept. 29, 2018.
- Robert D. Brokaw of Hilliard (Franklin County) to the Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee for a term beginning Oct. 11, 2017, and ending March 18, 2021.
- James S. Aslanides of Coshocton (Coshocton County) to the Technical Advisory Council on Oil and Gas for a term beginning Oct. 11, 2017, and ending Jan. 31, 2019.
- Mark K. Papke of Parma Heights (Cuyahoga County) and John S. Petkovsek of Chesterland (Geauga County) reappointed to the Environmental Education Council for terms beginning Oct. 12, 2017, and ending Oct. 1, 2019.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

President Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order his administration claims will improve access and lower the cost of health care, while critics charge it undermines protections in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and will ultimately raise costs for many individuals. "The time has come to give Americans the freedom to purchase health insurance across state lines, which will create a truly competitive national marketplace that will bring costs way down and provide far better care." Trump said.

JUDICIAL

Rep. Ron Young (R-Leroy) Thursday praised the Ohio Judicial Conference's (OJC) new bench card for courts on the subject of cognovit notes, an issue he has worked on for several years. Currently, many financial institutions in Ohio offering private commercial loans add a clause in their

promissory notes in the form of a cognovit note that allows them to immediately call for and collect a debt without informing debtors or giving them any opportunity to defend themselves in court.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The attorney general concluded this week that county boards of election are political subdivisions and therefore prohibited from requiring officers and employees to reside within the county -- at least on a board's own authority. Pointing to an overlapping mix of state laws, constitutional provisions, court rulings and past AG opinions, the Lucas County prosecutor's office had asked Attorney General Mike DeWine whether election boards are in fact a state function of the Ohio Secretary of State's Office or "political subdivisions" under R.C. 9.481(B)(1).

MARIJUANA

Those seeking to add a qualifying medical condition to the Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP) will have their first opportunity to submit petitions on Thursday, Nov. 1, 2018. The submission period will last until Monday, Dec. 31, 2018, according to MMCP. The State Medical Board of Ohio will consider the petitions, which are to be filed electronically through <http://medicalmarijuana.ohio.gov/> .

TRANSPORTATION

Gov. Kasich announced the official launch of the state's smart mobility center Tuesday following the roll-out of a regional initiative along U.S. 33 last fall. The governor told thousands of professionals at the Ohio Transportation Engineering Conference (OTEC) in Columbus that the new division inside the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) will be named DriveOhio, whose task is to coordinate smart corridor deployment statewide.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Wednesday accepted the results of FirstEnergy's wholesale auction that will ultimately determine its standard service offer (SSO) through May 2021. The auction, held on Oct. 10, 2017 secured both two- and three-year products to supply electricity to FirstEnergy's Ohio utility customers.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation said Friday there are nearly \$10 million in rebate checks that have not been cashed by more than 5,500 employers, and those checks will be expiring soon. The uncashed checks are among the more than 160,000 BWC issued in July as part of the agency's Third Billion Back rebate initiative. Uncashed checks will expire, or stale date, 95 days after the check's issuance date. That's Tuesday, Oct. 10 for some employers and as late as Wednesday, Oct. 18 for others.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

- HB24** VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS-TAX EXEMPTION (Rep. Tim Ginter) To modify the existing tax exemption for veterans organizations' property to include property of certain veterans organizations exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code and to exclude property that is not used primarily for meetings, administration, and the provision of programs and services to past and present members of the United States armed forces.
Vote 97-0
- HB76** LICENSE PLATE DESIGNATION (Rep. Steve Arndt, Rep. Theresa Gavarone) To create the "Ohio National Guard Ohio Cross" license plate and the "Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge" license plate.
Vote 92-2
- HB79** MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL FIREARMS TRAINING (Rep. Wes Retherford, Rep. Christina Hagan) To provide for firearms training for tactical medical professionals; to permit such a professional who has received that training and has been authorized by the law enforcement agency to carry firearms while on duty; and to grant such a professional the same right to carry a concealed handgun in this state as a concealed handgun licensee.
Vote 90-7
- HB184** AUTHORIZE TELEDENTISTRY SERVICES (Rep. Theresa Gavarone, Rep. Anthony DeVitis) To authorize the provision of dental services through teledentistry, to require a proposal for creation of a primary care dental student component of the Choose Ohio First Scholarship Program, and to make other changes to the laws governing the practices of dentistry and dental hygiene.
Vote 91-6
- HB226** FIREWORKS STUDY GROUP AND EXPANSION (Rep. Bill Seitz, Rep. Martin Sweeney) To establish a fireworks study group to review and make recommendations regarding the Fireworks Law, to extend to July 1, 2020, the moratorium on issuing fireworks manufacturer and wholesaler licenses, to eliminate, beginning January 1, 2021, the moratorium on geographic transfer of fireworks manufacturer and wholesaler licenses, and, beginning July 1, 2020, to impose a fee on the retail sale of consumer grade fireworks in this state and to expand the ability of individuals to obtain 1.3G display fireworks and obtain and use 1.4G consumer fireworks.
Amended on Floor, Bill Vote 83-14
- HB311** HIGHWAY DESIGNATION-ROY ROGERS HAPPY TRAILS (Rep. Terry Johnson) To designate a portion of State Route 348 in Scioto County as the "Roy Rogers Happy Trails Highway."
Vote 91-3
- SB27** DEAF HISTORY MONTH DESIGNATION (Sen. Bill Beagle) To designate the period beginning March 13 and ending April 15 as "Ohio Deaf History Month."

Vote 94-0

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

HB31 CONTRACTING ADVISORY COUNCIL-ABOLITION (Rep. Bob Cupp) To abolish the Government Contracting Advisory Council.

Vote 32-0

HB94 MONTH DESIGNATION-TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS (Rep. Emilia Sykes, Rep. Rick Perales) To designate February as "Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month."

Vote 32-0