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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.

CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION (OCMC)

The OCMC Constitutional Revision and Updating Committee took up the issue of citizen-initiated referendums last week and the possibility of requiring the public to pass a constitutional amendment not once but twice before it could take effect.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The federal and state governments should decriminalize possession of illicit drugs for personal use, according to a new study from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Enforcement of the current law ruins lives, discriminates against people of color, and undermines public health, says the report, "Every 25 Seconds: The Human Toll of Criminalizing Drug Use in the United States."

EDUCATION

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) is seeking expedited appellate consideration of its lawsuit against the state, citing the effect of the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) enrollment findings on its relationship with lenders. Meanwhile, the school also started an administrative appeal of the state's finding that its 2015-2016 enrollment was substantially lower than the online charter school reported.

Most of Ohio's sponsors of charter schools earned the rating of "ineffective," the second lowest of four possible designations, in long-awaited evaluations the state released last Thursday. About a third were rated "poor," meaning they could lose their sponsorship authority entirely. No sponsor earned the highest rating of "exemplary," while five were one rung down in the "effective" category: Buckeye Community Hope Foundation, Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, Jefferson County Educational Service Center, St. Aloysius Orphanage and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

The Joint Education Oversight Committee (JEOC) unanimously approved a list of proposed research projects from JEOC Executive Director Lauren Monowar-Jones. Items on the list include educational choices, assessments, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), accountability, early learning investment, value added, career technical education and transportation. The last item was the focus of last Thursday's meeting, and the committee plans to hear more testimony on the topic in November. A report summarizing the transportation testimony and making recommendations could come sometime after that, according to the proposal.

ELECTIONS 2016

Absentee voting began Wednesday, Oct. 12, after the deadline to register closed on Tuesday, Oct. 11. Boards of election will be accepting mail-in ballots as well as be open for in-person voting as follows:

- **Wednesday-Friday, Oct. 12-14:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Monday-Friday, Oct. 17-21:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Monday-Friday, Oct. 24-28:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Saturday, Oct. 29:** 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Sunday, Oct. 30:** 1 to 5 p.m.
- **Monday, Oct. 31-Friday, Nov. 4:** 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Saturday, Nov. 5:** 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Sunday, Nov. 6:** 1 to 5 p.m.
- **Monday, Nov. 7:** 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Then on Election Day -- **Tuesday, Nov. 8** -- polls are open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Secretary of State Jon Husted said that an estimated 1,091,188 absentee ballot applications have been received by county boards of elections statewide as of Friday, Oct. 8. Of the applications

received, 17,300 came from military and overseas voters, whose absentee ballots began going out on Sept. 24. Of those ballots, 1,445 have been returned.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The national unemployment rate rose slightly from 4.9 percent to 5 percent in September, according to new figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as the national total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 156,000 jobs.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) announced that it is offering water quality training at Ken Green's Farm, 943 Water St., Woodville, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016.

FEDERAL

A federal appeals court last week said the structure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) headed by former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray is unconstitutional because it puts unchecked power in the hands of a single director rather than a board that oversees the agency. The ruling drew opposite reactions from Ohio's two U.S. senators.

GAMING

Ohio's casinos earned slightly less in September than they did a year ago, according to new numbers released by the Ohio Casino Control Commission. According to the commission, the four casinos earned nearly \$63.9 million over the month, down from \$64.3 million earned in September 2015. The casinos earned \$62.8 million in August.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) said he expects continued discussion on state energy standards in the post-election lame-duck session of the Legislature, and said he will be pushing the House to act on a few of his chamber's priorities. While education issues could be on the lame-duck agenda, Faber said the debate over enrollment and attendance standards for online charter schools is "probably too big" to handle in the post-election session.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- W. Craig Zimpher of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the State Employment Relations Board for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2016, and ending Oct. 6, 2022.

- Daniel L. Wilson of Pepper Pike (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the School Employees Retirement Board for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2016, and ending Sept. 27, 2020.
- Daniel J. Massey of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Industrial Commission Nominating Council for a term beginning Oct. 12, 2016 and ending Oct. 20, 2017.
- Jack R. Green of Columbus (Franklin County) and Darrell L. McNair of Aurora (Portage County) reappointed to the Minority Development Financing Advisory Board for terms beginning Oct. 13, 2016 and ending Sept. 30, 2023.
- Shawn E. Saunders of Gallipolis (Gallia County) reappointed to the Rio Grande Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 13, 2016 and ending Oct. 10, 2021.

MARIJUANA

The Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) has contracted with B&B Grow Solutions to assist the state with the development and implementation of rules and regulations affecting cultivators of medical marijuana, DOC spokesperson Kerry Francis announced. The company, which includes owners with experience in Colorado and Illinois, was one of 16 entities that responded to the department's request for information (RFI).

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) and House Minority Leader Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) made their appointments to the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC) created in HB 523 (Huffman). Rosenberger appointed Drug Free Action Alliance (DFAA) Executive Director Marcie Seidel and legislative analyst James "Ted" Bibart of Benesch Attorneys at Law to the committee, while Strahorn appointed Jason Kaseman, political director for United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1059.

Gov. John Kasich spokesperson Emmalee Kalmbach said the governor has chosen Curtis Passafume, vice president for pharmacy services at OhioHealth, to chair the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC).

STATE GOVERNMENT

For the second consecutive year, Ohio has exceeded the goal of its Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program, according to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). The state purchased 23.63 percent of eligible goods and services through certified minority-owned businesses, spending a record of nearly \$298 million during FY16, according to the department.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) could save \$3.5 million annually by replacing outdated structures with more efficient facilities that are more strategically located, according to a performance audit released by Auditor of State Dave Yost.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Administrator/CEO Sarah Morrison recently announced the appointment of Kevin Cogan as the bureau's chief legal counsel.

Legislative Activity:

No legislative activity to report at this time as legislators are on summer recess.