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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

Months after it released a broad set of recommendations, the Joint Study Committee on Drug Use Prevention Education met Thursday to solicit members' ideas of how to advance or expand upon the suggested policies in its February report. Alisha Nelson, a member of the heroin unit in Attorney General Mike DeWine's office, said the attorney general's office is looking for ideas on how best to use the current administration's remaining 13 months to advance the cause of prevention. DeWine will be term-limited at the end of next year, though he is running for governor.

BALLOT ISSUES

Attorney General Mike DeWine on Monday certified two proposed constitutional amendments addressing local community rights that were brought in response to fracking operations around the state. He said the summaries of the amendments were fair and truthful and that the proposals had the necessary 1,000 signatures to move forward. The two amendments, titled the "Initiative and

Referendum Amendment for Counties and Townships" and the "Ohio Community Rights Amendment," were brought by the Ohio Community Rights Network.

EDUCATION

Several recent changes to state rules will give more flexibility to teachers seeking certain licenses, said the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Among the changes are the removal of a supplemental license course requirement and an expansion of the definition of "short-term" as it relates to substitute licenses.

State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria gave presentations before House and Senate committees on proposed changes in state learning standards, fulfilling the statutory requirement that the House and Senate education committees review such changes before final adoption by the State Board of Education.

ELECTIONS 2018

Secretary of State Jon Husted ended his bid for governor on Thursday and joined Attorney General Mike DeWine's campaign as his running mate, saying it is about service and doing what's right for the state. Both men also said they had heard from Republicans all across the state to end intraparty fighting and work together. Opponents quickly began attacking the pairing. U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) posted a video to Twitter saying that "two career politicians have joined forces." Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor called a press conference to reaffirm her candidacy, saying, "I think many thought that this was going to chase some out of this race, or chase me out, but voters have a choice because I'm in this race."

Meanwhile, on the Democratic side of the gubernatorial race, TV host and former Cincinnati Mayor Jerry Springer said he would not enter the race, citing personal concerns and a reluctance to create a "circus" atmosphere.

ENERGY

Legislation rolling back renewable energy and energy efficiency standards could pass before the end of the year, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) told reporters.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) has cited Rover Pipeline LLC for spilling contaminants into the Black Fork of the Mohican River in Ashland County. The violation is Rover's fifth since the company received permission from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in September to resume drilling construction at certain locations in Ohio, according to the Ohio EPA.

FEDERAL

Former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray officially left his office as the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) on Friday, naming a successor and setting up a battle with the White House over who is in charge until the Senate confirms a permanent director. Cordray, the first director of the agency created under the Dodd-Frank Act, announced earlier in the month

that he was leaving. Speculation has been that he is running for governor in Ohio, but he has not announced his next move.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

John Barron will take over as chief of staff for the Senate GOP Caucus effective Monday, Dec. 18, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) announced. Barron currently serves as the deputy executive director and general counsel for the Ohio Casino Control Commission. Barron replaces Jason Mauk, who stepped down after six years as chief of staff effective Dec. 1 to lead the Republican Senate Campaign Committee.

Former Senate President Bill Harris, a Republican from Ashland, died Monday at age 83. Harris served 15 years in the General Assembly, joining the House after his election in 1994 and moving to the Senate in 2000 when former Sen. Richard Schafrath resigned his seat for a position. Harris became Senate president in 2005 and served three terms in the office. His funeral will be held Saturday, Dec. 2 at 11 a.m. at Grace Brethren Church of Ashland, 1144 W. Main St., Ashland OH 44805.

Ohio Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) announced late Tuesday the recommendation of Rep. Robert McColley (R-Napoleon) to fill the vacancy in Ohio's 1st State Senate District seat, which includes all of Defiance, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert and Williams counties and portions of Auglaize, Fulton and Logan counties. A seven-member screening committee of senators met with six applicants for the vacancy and recommended McColley. The selection will go to the full caucus in the near future, with McColley expected to be seated in early December. The Senate vacancy was the result of the resignation of former Sen. Cliff Hite (R-Findlay) in mid-October.

As data breaches at companies and government agencies continue to escalate, Reps. Michael Henne (R-Clayton) and Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) want to make it easier for Ohioans to freeze their credit. In sponsor testimony to the House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development Committee (FIHUD) on Tuesday, the lawmakers said HB 386 would eliminate the \$5 fee credit agencies charge to freeze and unfreeze credit.

Speaker of the House Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) released the schedule for January through June, 2018. The first House session for the new year is set for Wednesday, Jan. 17; the last is set for Wednesday, May 23. Sessions after May 23 through June are all "if needed." Earlier, the House clerk's office announced the chamber will meet only twice more for the year on Tuesday, Dec. 5 and Wednesday, Dec. 13, cancelling other "if-needed" sessions set in December.

The House returned from Thanksgiving break Wednesday to approve a conference report on SB 8 (Gardner-Terhar) which had originally established a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security, but became the vehicle for a number of budget correction items after the two legislative chambers sent it to a conference committee.

Legislation regulating fantasy sports games that require an entry fee was approved by the Senate 25-4 on Wednesday. Under HB 132 (Dever-McColley), the Ohio Casino Control Commission would be granted the authority to investigate, license, penalize and regulate anyone conducting or participating in a "fantasy contest" in Ohio.

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) Thursday announced that screening panels will be organized in the coming weeks to begin the process of filling the vacancies in the 81st and 87th House districts. The 87th House District is vacant after ex-Rep. Wesley Goodman (R-Cardington) resigned amid scandal, and the 81st House District will become vacant after the Tuesday, Dec. 5 appointment of Rep. Rob McColley's (R-Napoleon) to the Ohio Senate.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Lucas J. Hanks of Orient (Franklin County), Charles A. Penzone of Delaware (Delaware County), and Tasha L. Sheipline of Wapakoneta (Auglaize County) reappointed to the State Board of Cosmetology for terms beginning Nov. 21, 2017, and ending Oct. 31, 2022.
- Robert J. Doersam of Pickerington (Fairfield County) to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning Nov. 21, 2017, and ending Oct. 26, 2020.
- John H. Seguin of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Maternity and Newborn Advisory Council for a term beginning Nov. 21, 2017, and ending Oct. 31, 2022.
- Kent J. Appelhans of Pemberville (Wood County), Karen Beavers of Sidney (Shelby County), James E. Davis of Westerville (Delaware County), Julie A. Rose of Ashtabula (Ashtabula County), and Hamilton P. Schwartz of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) reappointed to the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire and Transportation Services for terms beginning Nov. 21, 2017, and ending Nov. 12, 2020.
- Patrick G. Foltyn of Columbus (Franklin County) to the State Fire Council for a term beginning Nov. 30, 2017, and ending Nov. 1, 2022.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Development Services Agency (DSA) awarded \$24 million to 30 communities to rehabilitate, repair and construct affordable housing for low-income Ohioans as well as provide homeownership and rental assistance. The Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program grants are funded by the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs.

Housing authorities and organizations advocating for the poor, homeless and mentally ill on Tuesday criticized HB 282 (Hambly) that would prohibit metropolitan housing authorities from renting or providing housing assistance to people recently convicted of criminal mischief relating to residential property damage.

MARIJUANA

The Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) on Thursday announced the 12 winners of level one medical marijuana cultivator licenses.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) recently took action for the first time on a complaint filed under its newly established rules for residential sub-metering companies, finding that

a Central Ohio woman's case should be dismissed because the utility reseller met safe harbor criteria established earlier this summer.

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) announced that he has appointed Warren County Commissioner and former Sen. Shannon Jones to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Nominating Council.

Kicking off a series of hearings on electric utility consumer protection bill HB247 (Romanchuk), the House Public Utilities Committee heard proponent testimony from a range of organizations including those representing manufacturers, small businesses, environmentalists and free market think tank representatives.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Wednesday accepted the results of AEP Ohio's wholesale auction that will determine its default generation rates beginning June 1, 2018. The auction, held on Nov. 28, 2017 secured one-, two- and three-year products to supply electricity to AEP Ohio's utility customers. The results will be blended with future auctions to establish a price-to-compare for AEP Ohio's customers during the delivery period.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

HB 380, a bill that would block individuals residing in the U.S. illegally from receiving benefits through Ohio workers' compensation program, was approved by the House Insurance Committee Wednesday despite concerns expressed by the bill's opponents. Committee Chairman Tom Brinkman (R-Cincinnati) said he felt it was important that the committee moved the bill forward, saying that he hopes the bill's sponsors, Reps. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) and Larry Householder (R-Glenford), consider some of the opponents' concerns.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE

PASSED BY SENATE

- HB132** FANTASY SPORTS REGULATION (Rep. Jonathan Dever, Rep. Robert McColley) To grant the Ohio Casino Control Commission the authority to regulate fantasy contests and to exempt fantasy contests from the gambling laws.
Vote 25-4
- SB134** HIGHWAY DESIGNATIONS-THOMAS BELKOFER (Sen. Randy Gardner) To designate a portion of State Route 795 in Wood County as the "Lt Col Thomas P. Belkofer Memorial Highway."
Vote 30-0
- SB173** HIGHWAY DESIGNATION-STEVEN DISARIO (Sen. Jay Hottinger) To designate a portion of U.S. Route 40 in the Village of Kirkersville as the "The Steven Eric DiSario Memorial Highway."
Vote 30-0
- SB185** HIGHWAY DESIGNATION-CHRISTOPHER DYER (Sen. Louis Terhar) To designate a portion of Interstate Route 75 in Hamilton County as the "Lance Corporal Christopher J. Dyer USMC, Lima Co, 3/25 Marines Memorial Highway."

Vote 30-0

ADOPTED BY SENATE

SCR14 COUNTER OPEC MARKET MANIPULATION (Sen. Frank Hoagland, Sen. William Coley) To urge the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States to take certain actions to counter manipulation of the oil market by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Vote 31-0

SCR15 YEAR DESIGNATION-TRAILS (Sen. Sean O'Brien, Sen. Steve Wilson) To designate 2018 as "Ohio's Year of the Trails."

Vote 30-0

HOUSE

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB98 CAREER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS (Rep. Mike Duffey, Rep. Kristin Boggs) Regarding the presentation of career information to students.

Vote 92-0

HB230 THIN BLUE LINE FLAG (Rep. Anne Gonzales, Rep. Tim Ginter) To prohibit manufactured home park operators, condominium associations, neighborhood associations, and landlords from restricting the display of the thin blue line flag.

Vote 90-2

HB286 PALLIATIVE CARE PROGRAMS (Rep. Sarah LaTourette) To create the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Council, to establish the Palliative Care Consumer and Professional Information and Education Program, and to require health care facilities to identify patients and residents who could benefit from palliative care.

Vote 91-0

SB33 LEADS DISCLOSURE (Sen. John Eklund) To allow disclosure of information from the law enforcement automated data system (LEADS) to a defendant in a traffic or criminal case.

Vote 90-0

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

HB199 OHIO RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LENDING ACT (Rep. Louis Blessing III) To create the Ohio Residential Mortgage Lending Act for the purpose of regulating all non-depository lending secured by residential real estate and to limit the application of the current Mortgage Loan Law to unsecured loans and loans secured by other than residential real estate.

House Does Concur, *Vote 83-9*

CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

SB8 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (Sen. Randy Gardner, Sen. Louis Terhar) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a

program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security.
House Accepts Conference Committee Report, Vote 88-4