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Week in Review
Monday, December 7, 2015

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.

EDUCATION

State Board of Education President Tom Gunlock plans to call a full-board vote at the December board meeting on who should serve as interim superintendent following Richard Ross' retirement at year's end. Ohio Department of Education (ODE) chief counsel Diane Lease sent a memo at Gunlock's request to board members ahead of the holiday weekend asking them to identify their preferred nominees by Wednesday, Dec. 9, ahead of the Dec. 13-15 board meeting.

ELECTIONS 2016

Two Democrats have joined the race for the open 94th House District seat currently occupied by Rep. Debbie Phillips (D-Athens), who is term-limited. Sarah Grace and Eddie Smith have either filed or announced their candidacies for the seat.

Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann announced that he will not be seeking re-election in 2016. His position was expected to be one of the more hotly contested local races next year, with Rep. Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) announcing her candidacy for the seat.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman's (R-OH) campaign has officially submitted petitions to run for re-election in 2016. The campaign said it submitted 3,000 signatures to the secretary of state's office, the maximum allowed, with signatures coming from all 88 counties.

Sen. Shannon Jones (R-Springboro) announced that she will run for the Warren County Commission in 2016. Jones is looking to succeed Commissioner Pat South, who has announced that he will not run for re-election.

The Butler County Republican Party issued its endorsement in the 51st House District race, and it didn't go to incumbent Rep. Wes Retherford (R-Hamilton). Instead, the party backed former Rep. Courtney Combs, the man Retherford replaced after Combs was term-limited.

Endorsements made over the week include the following:

- Sen. Jim Hughes (R-Columbus), Reps. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) and Anne Gonzales (R-Westerville) endorsed Stephanie Kunze for the 16th Ohio Senate District.
- U.S. Reps. Pat Tiberi (R-Columbus) and Steve Stivers (R-Columbus) endorsed Stephanie Kunze for the 16th Ohio Senate District.

ENERGY

In its third try, the electric utility industry succeeded in securing staff approval from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) for the re-regulation of aging generation facilities under the state's first power purchase agreement (PPA). Analysts recommended PUCO adoption of FirstEnergy's PPA proposal for the Davis-Besse Nuclear Station, Samsis power plant, and other coal-fired facilities.

ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) released its strategic plan to address harmful algal toxins in drinking water. Legislation sponsored by Ohio's U.S. Rep. Bob Latta (R-Bowling

Green) required the agency to develop the plan. Latta said his Drinking Water Protection Act is a "first step" in the development of a long-term strategy for managing the problem of harmful algal blooms (HABs).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Metal detectors were up and running at the Ohio Statehouse's public entrances on Monday, Nov. 30, the first day for new increased security measures employed by the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) following recent terror attacks abroad. CSRAB had announced late Wednesday, Nov. 25, that three walk-through metal detectors would be added to the 3rd and State street entrances, as well as to the south parking garage entrance. The West entrance on the High Street side will be permanently closed. CSRAB also announced that the North Ohio Statehouse garage revolving door has been modified to prevent multiple entries on an individual's Ohio Statehouse ID card.

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) said he is looking to announce a task force that will look at medical marijuana. He said Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton), who is heading up the House's efforts on medical marijuana, has already begun meeting with health professionals on the issue.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Diane Beastrom of Lakewood (Cuyahoga County) and Jennifer Cunningham of Worthington (Franklin County) to the ABLE Account Program Advisory Board for terms beginning Nov. 25, 2015, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.
- Kimberly Hauck of Columbus (Franklin County) and Kara B. Wentz of Dublin (Franklin County) to the Early Childhood Advisory Council for terms beginning Nov. 25, 2015, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.
- Dr. Sara E. Salkil of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board for a term beginning Nov. 25, 2015, and ending Oct. 10, 2018.
- Dr. David W. LeBourveau of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Commercial Dog Breeding Advisory Board for a term beginning Nov. 30, 2015, and ending March 12, 2017.
- Marge Barnheiser of Hilliard (Franklin County) to the ABLE Account Program Advisory Board for a term beginning Dec. 1, 2015, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.
- William R. Demjan of Steubenville (Jefferson County), Virginia D. Ragan of Westerville (Franklin County), and Dr. Manish Srivastava of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) reappointed to the Ohio Advisory Council for Aging for terms beginning Dec. 1, 2015, and ending Nov. 21, 2018.
- Thomas H. Johnson of Somerset (Perry County) to the Ohio Arts Council for a term beginning Dec. 1, 2015, and ending July 1, 2020.

- Louis M. Borowicz of Powell (Delaware County) reappointed to the Ohio Advisory Council for Aging for a term beginning Dec. 2, 2015, and ending Nov. 21, 2018.
- H.C. Buck Niehoff of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Board of Trustees of the Martha Kinney Cooper Ohioana Library Association for a term beginning Dec. 2, 2015, and ending Sept. 15, 2019.
- Christina L. Hurr of Miamisburg (Montgomery County) to the Governor's Executive Workforce Board for a term beginning Dec. 2, 2015, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.
- Scott J. Harmon of Dover (Tuscarawas County) to the Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission for a term beginning Dec. 3, 2015, and ending July 1, 2019.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) has announced \$2.5 million in grants to strengthen and expand sober housing options for Ohioans in recovery from alcohol or other drug addiction. The department said the funding will support a total of 25 projects benefitting 18 counties -- adding approximately 200 new beds to Ohio's recovery housing stock.

The Ohio Infant Mortality Commission got a briefing last week on the March of Dimes report card for premature birth in Ohio and other states, and also brought in representatives of health care organizations to discuss how they're implementing and spreading best practices to prevent early childhood deaths. Ohio had a 12.1 percent rate of pre-term births in 2014 and a 10.3 percent rate in 2015, both of which earned it a "C" grade. March of Dimes said recent changes in the report card measurements make it difficult to compare this latest report card to previous data.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

An official response from Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor to the inspector general says she's already implemented some of the administrative recommendations made in a recent report showing two of her staff took pay for time they were not at work.

PENSION FUNDS

Ohio's largest public pension system is mobilizing its half million-strong membership to convince federal leaders to repeal the so-called Cadillac tax, a provision of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that imposes an excise tax on health care plans above a certain cost threshold. Other systems are also eyeing the tax's effects as well. The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) estimates it would be on the hook for about \$25 million if the tax takes effect in 2018.

PEOPLE

Matt Peters, the former chief of staff to Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA) Director David Goodman, has been named assistant director of DSA.

Tim Doran, president of the Ohio Automobile Dealers Association (OADA) for nearly 40 years, announced that he will retire effective July 2016. He will be succeeded by his son Zach Doran, per a vote of the OADA Board of Directors.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Ohio liquor sales could tip the \$1 billion mark in 2015 thanks in part to the state's economic growth over the last five years, the Kasich administration announced. Anticipating "record holiday sales," the Ohio Division of Liquor Control is working to ensure the state's growing variety of beer, wine and spirits is available at the 466 contract liquor agencies. So far, spirituous liquor sales for 2015 through October totaled approximately \$819.5 million, according to the department.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB50 FOSTER CARE-ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGE (Rep. Dorothy Pelanda, Rep. Cheryl Grossman) To extend the age for which a person is eligible for federal foster care and adoption assistance payments under Title IV-E to age twenty-one, to provide a ward's bill of rights, to require that a guardian receive the Ohio Guardianship Guide, and to make an appropriation.

Amended on Floor, Bill Vote 92-2

HB197 DEXTROMETHORPHAN SALES (Rep. Jeffrey Rezabek) To prohibit the over-the-counter sale, without a prescription, of dextromethorphan to a person who is under 18 years of age.

Vote 92-2

HB200 EPINEPHRINE AUTOINJECTORS (Rep. Christina Hagan) To permit epinephrine autoinjectors for which no prescriptions have been written to be stored and accessed for use in case of emergency

Vote 94-0

HB207 WORKERS' COMPENSATION-SURPLUS FUND (Rep. Michael Henne, Rep. Robert McColley) To allow a state fund employer to have a workers' compensation claim that is likely to be subrogated by a third party paid from the

surplus fund account in the state insurance fund rather than charged to the employer's experience.

Vote 94-0

HB260 WEEK DESIGNATION (Rep. Louis Blessing III) To designate the first week of December as "Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week."

Vote 94-0

SB10 MILITARY HEALTH CARE BENEFITS (Sen. Dave Burke, Sen. Frank LaRose) To establish a process for identifying individuals who are medical assistance recipients that may be eligible to receive federal military-related health care benefits.

Vote 94-0

SENATE:

No Senate activity to report.