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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.

BALLOT ISSUES

Attorney General Mike DeWine rejected the third submission for a proposed constitutional amendment that would legalize marijuana for medical use in the state. The group Ohio Medical Cannabis Care LLC submitted the "Ohio Medical Cannabis Amendment" on Jan. 13. In rejecting the amendment, DeWine cited at least five defects.

EDUCATION

The House Education Committee opened hearings on HB 420 (Roegner), legislation that would provide school districts with an additional "safe harbor" from the effects of the latest round of report cards for the 2014-2015 school year, citing the effect the "opting out" of students from the state assessments had on their Performance Index score. Rep. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson), the

sponsor, said that this was beyond the control of the school districts and, as a result, the report cards are "not a fair representation of the school district's competency."

A new survey commissioned by the Fordham Institute gives a perspective on Ohio's charter school sector from the viewpoint of building leaders in the top third of charters by academic performance. Many principals responding to the survey say tighter oversight and regulation are needed to boost the sector's reputation and quality, while they also identify funding inequities and teacher recruitment as barriers.

The Ohio School Facilities Commission approved a template grant agreement for the upcoming award of grants for high-performing charter schools. Created in biennial budget bill HB 64 (R. Smith), the grant program can reimburse eligible schools for projects that increase seats in effective schools, serve unmet needs and show innovation. The commission previously approved guidelines governing the grant program.

ELECTIONS 2016

Former Gov. Ted Strickland told reporters Friday he has "no fear" of losing to Cincinnati Councilman P.G. Sittenfeld in the Democratic primary, but will not debate him. "My opponent is Rob Portman. That's my responsibility."

Rep. Michelle Lepore-Hagan (D-Youngstown) will not have a primary opponent after Democrat Michael O'Hara withdrew from the race, the *Vindicator* reported.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's December jobs report had positive markers even though the state's unemployment rate ticked up slightly. According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the state added 15,200 jobs in December, going from a revised 5,436,300 jobs in November to 5,451,500 in December. The unemployment rate rose from 4.5 percent to 4.7 percent. The rise can be attributed to the number of unemployed workers increasing 14,000 over the month, going from 255,000 in November to 269,000 in December. However, Ohio continued to run below the national unemployment rate, which was 5 percent.

GAMING

The Controlling Board approved nearly \$16 million for the Lottery Commission to purchase 900 new Quick Keno terminals to be placed around the state in bars, taverns and other popular locations for the self-service machines. Greg Bowers, finance director for the Ohio Lottery Commission, told Sen. Chris Widener (R-Springfield) that prices for the machines are already delineated in the commission's current contract with gaming vendor Intralot.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Kristin Boggs (D-Columbus) -- the daughter of former Senate Minority Leader and Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Bob Boggs -- was sworn in last Tuesday as state representative

for the 18th House District. She takes over the seat most recently held by former Rep. Michael Stinziano, who left at the end of 2015 to serve on Columbus City Council.

Democrats from both chambers released their economic agenda for the year, which they say will provide "a clear path to the middle class." The lawmakers' "Focus on the Future" legislation package includes a \$10.10 state minimum wage, providing family paid sick leave, equal pay legislation, income tax deductions for college tuition, along with infrastructure loans and grants, targeted sales tax cuts and revised clean energy standards.

The Senate bid farewell to retiring Senate President Pro Tem Chris Widener (R-Springfield), who submitted his resignation effective at the end of the month.

Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) announced that the Senate GOP caucus is now taking applications to fill the 10th Senate District seat, which becomes vacant when the resignation of Sen. Chris Widener (R-Springfield) takes effect Sunday, Jan. 31. The district encompasses all of Clark, Greene and Madison counties.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Linette R. Fout of Chillicothe (Ross County) and Richard P. Broderick of Springfield (Clark County) reappointed to the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice for terms beginning Jan. 22, 2016 and ending Oct. 31, 2018.
- Keagan L. Richard of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice for a term beginning Jan. 22, 2016 and ending Oct. 31, 2018.
- James M. Gasior of Canfield (Mahoning County) to the Eastern Gateway Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Jan. 25, 2016, and ending Oct. 16, 2020.
- Mark Mecum of Westerville (Delaware County) reappointed to the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice for a term beginning Jan. 25, 2016, and ending Oct. 31, 2018.
- Andrew N. Russell of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice for a term beginning Jan. 25, 2016, and ending Oct. 31, 2018.
- Christopher S. Sterwerf of Liberty Township (Butler County) reappointed to the Ohio Board of Motor Vehicle Repair for a term beginning Jan. 26, 2016 and ending Jan. 1, 2019.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

State Medicaid and education officials presented last Thursday to the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) on upcoming implementation of a new federal rule for reimbursing health services for students. The Affordable Care Act requires submission of the order, referral or prescription (ORP) of a health care professional with a valid National Provider Identifier (NPI) number in order to reimburse Medicaid claims. The mandate previously took effect for most providers and is now set to kick in for the Medicaid Schools Program (MSP) by Aug. 1, ahead of the coming academic year.

MARIJUANA

The first meeting of the House's medical marijuana task force led by Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) was short, with members saying they are ready to hear the arguments for why Ohio should become a state that allows the use of marijuana for medical needs. "We are here today with open minds and are giving everyone ample opportunity to make their case pro and con on medical marijuana," Schuring said.

TAXATION

Sen. Kevin Bacon (R-Columbus) introduced SB 264 to make the Ohio Sales Tax Holiday permanent. Bacon had introduced the previous legislation -- 130-SB243 -- that created a pilot project last August testing the idea of a period in which sales tax is not collected on certain clothing and school items.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Nominating Council recommended sitting commissioner member Asim Haque for re-appointment to his seat, along with three other candidates: Robert Burns; Alan Enrenrich; and Allan Sears. Gov. John Kasich has 30 days to pick one of the four or request a new slate of candidates.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB158 INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY TERM (Rep. Jonathan Dever, Rep. Stephanie Howse) To change the variations of the term "mentally retarded person" to "person with an intellectual disability."

Vote 97-0

HB166 LOCAL TAX-FISCAL REVISIONS (Rep. Doug Green) To extend the deadline for filing an application for the homestead exemption or 2 1/2% property tax rollback to the end of the tax year, to require that auditors certify Local Government Fund allocations to subdivisions by regular or electronic, rather than certified mail, and to repeal laws requiring county auditors to issue permits for traveling shows, issue licenses for new merchandise public auctions, certify the annual state tax interest rate to local courts, and provide certain certifications related to the repealed personal property tax.

Amended on Floor, Bill Vote 96-1

HB236 ENGINEERING TRAINING (Rep. Louis Blessing III, Rep. Al Landis) To require professional engineers to complete continuing professional development hours in professional ethics or rules relevant to engineering or surveying practices.

Vote 96-0

SB60 HIGHWAY NAME DESIGNATION (Sen. Jim Hughes) To designate a portion of Interstate Route 670 as the "Dana G. 'Buck' Rinehart Memorial Highway."

Vote 97-0

HB178 LIQUOR PERMIT-FARMERS MARKETS (Rep. Nathan Manning) To establish the F-10 liquor permit to authorize certain A-2 permit holders to sell Ohio wines at farmers markets.

Vote 97-1

HB256 HIGHWAY DESIGNATION (Rep. Ron Maag) To designate a portion of state route forty-eight within Warren county as the "SFC Bobby Lee Estle Memorial Highway."

Vote 97-0

HB342 OHIO FARM WINERY PERMIT (Rep. Ron Young) To create the Ohio Farm Winery Permit.

Vote 96-1

HB359 ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY (Rep. Mike Duffey, Rep. Anne Gonzales) To create an address confidentiality program for victims of domestic violence, menacing by stalking, human trafficking, trafficking in persons, rape, sexual battery, and other crimes.

Vote 98-0

HB384 HIGHER EDUCATION AUDITS (Rep. Tim Schaffer, Rep. Mike Duffey) To specify that state institutions of higher education may be subject to performance audits conducted by the Auditor of State.

Vote 97-0

SB2 INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE-INCORPORATE CHANGES (Sen. Bob Peterson) To expressly incorporate changes in the Internal Revenue Code since March 22, 2013, into Ohio law, and to declare an emergency.

Vote 98-0, Emergency Clause 97-1

ADOPTED BY HOUSE

HR298 ELECTION OF KRISTIN BOGGS (Rep. Cliff Rosenberger) Relative to the election of Kristin Boggs to fill the vacancy in the membership of the House of Representatives created by the resignation of Michael Stinziano of the 18th House District.

Vote 32-0

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

HB294 ABORTION-STATE FUNDS (Rep. Bill Patmon, Rep. Margaret Conditt) To require the Department of Health to ensure that state funds and certain federal funds are not used either to perform or promote elective abortions, or to contract or affiliate with any entity that performs or promotes elective abortions.

Vote 22-8

SB260 CAPITAL REAPPROPRIATIONS (Sen. William Coley) To make capital reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2018.

Amended on Floor, Vote 30-0

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS

SB2 INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE-INCORPORATE CHANGES (Sen. Bob Peterson) To expressly incorporate changes in the Internal Revenue Code since March 22, 2013, into Ohio law, and to declare an emergency.

Senate Does Concur 31-0 , Emergency Clause 31-0