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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.

AGRICULTURE

Farmers and farming organizations continued their push Wednesday for revisions to the agricultural property tax formula, saying the changes they seek are modest while fielding questions on potential losses for schools and local governments. The Senate Ways and Means Committee convened its second hearing on SB36, a re-introduction of Sen. Cliff Hite's SB 246 of the 131st GA, that would change how interest rates affect the formula and assure lower tax rates for land dedicated to conservation practices.

FY18-19 BUDGET

The House Finance Committee reported the transportation budget bill, HB 26 (McColley), on a bipartisan vote Thursday, following adoption of a substitute bill Tuesday and additional amendments Thursday. The changes increase registration fees and retain current law on the point of taxation for motor fuel rather than adopt an administration proposal, among other revisions.

The Senate announced Thursday its schedule for hearing the state's transportation budget, HB 26 (McColley), with hearings to start Tuesday, Feb. 28 and a committee vote anticipated Wednesday, March 22.

EDUCATION

Three Ohio school voucher programs would merge into one income-based scholarship with greater flexibility under a proposal from Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima). Huffman said he expects to introduce legislation soon establishing the Ohio Opportunity Scholarship to combine the Cleveland, traditional EdChoice and EdChoice expansion programs, with higher scholarship amounts that adjust on a sliding scale with income. Ohio's Autism Scholarship and Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship programs would not be affected by his proposal.

ELECTIONS

Secretary of State Jon Husted on Thursday announced inflation adjustments to campaign contribution limits. The law requires the secretary of state to adjust limits in line with the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, as certified by the state auditor, in every odd-numbered year.

ELECTIONS 2018

Although she has not officially announced her 2018 plans, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor filed paperwork to form a campaign committee allowing her to raise money to run for governor. Taylor filed paperwork, including a designation of a treasurer, for the "Mary Taylor for Governor" campaign committee, becoming the first 2018 hopeful to specifically form a gubernatorial committee. She has also launched a website, www.marytaylorforgovernor.com.

FEDERAL

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia said it will rehear a case in which judges ruled the structure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), headed by Ohioan Richard Cordray, to be unconstitutional.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Rep. Keith Faber (R-Celina) gave sponsor testimony on HB 51 before the House State and Local Government Committee, explaining that the bill requires all state agencies to submit to a performance review by the Legislature every four years in order to continue operating. Calling the bill a replacement for last session's SB 329, Faber opened his testimony by suggesting that the state budget is too cumbersome to be an effective method of reviewing state agencies.

Ohio and Wisconsin plan to present a united front to Congress when pressing for greater state autonomy on a variety of fronts, and are in the midst of exchanging ideas and tips to fight common challenges like heroin and care for aging populations. House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) and his Wisconsin GOP counterpart, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, joined members of their caucuses Thursday to highlight those shared efforts.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Daniel Lee Pennock of Beverly (Morgan County) and R. John Lehman of Marietta (Washington County) reappointed to the Washington State Community College Board of Trustees for terms beginning Feb. 22, 2017, and ending Feb. 17, 2023.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC) on Thursday heard proposed rules from state agencies regarding pot supply limits, acceptable drug forms and methods of use, and testing laboratory operations. The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) is required by HB 523 (Huffman) to establish the parameters around a maximum 90-day supply of medical marijuana for patients. OBP Senior Counsel Erin Reed presented and answered questions on the proposal, which is included in the larger rule package on forms and methods of administration.

PEOPLE

Sen. Frank LaRose (R-Coley) has been named the 2016 "Legislator of the Year" by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, the senator's office announced.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Jon Husted said that 10,033 new entities filed to do business in Ohio in January, an increase of 1,409 over the number of entities that filed in January 2016.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) on Thursday accepted the results of Dominion East Ohio's auction for its standard service offer (SSO) and standard choice offer (SCO). The auction secured natural gas supplies for Dominion's SSO/SCO customers for the period April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018, resulting in a retail price adjustment of \$0.00 per thousand cubic feet (Mcf) off the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) month-end settlement price.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

HOUSE

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB9 MALFUNCTIONING LIGHTS-BICYCLES (Rep. Kyle Koehler) To specify that the alternative protocol for proceeding into an intersection with malfunctioning traffic lights due to a failure of a vehicle detector applies only to bicycles.

Vote 96-0

HB16 HIGHWAY DESIGNATIONS-CARL BERNHART (Rep. Jack Cera) To designate a portion of State Route 43 in Jefferson County as the "Army Corporal Carl H. Bernhart Memorial Highway."

Vote 97-0

HB22 HIGHWAY DESIGNATIONS-JAMES ALLEN (Rep. Steve Hambley) To designate a portion of State Route 261 in Medina and Summit Counties as the "Sergeant James F. Allen III Memorial Highway."

Vote 96-0

ADOPTED BY HOUSE

HJR1 JOINT SESSION-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH (Rep. Steve Arndt) Authorizing a joint session of the Ohio General Assembly to meet at the Sandusky State Theatre in Sandusky, Ohio, for the purpose of receiving a message from the Governor and calling for a committee to wait upon the Governor in anticipation of his State of the State Address.

Vote 59-38

SENATE

PASSED BY SENATE

SB9 AUGUST TAX HOLIDAY (Sen. Kevin Bacon) To provide for a three-day sales tax "holiday" in August 2017 during which sales of clothing and school supplies are exempt from sales and use taxes.

Vote 32-1

SB23 OMPHALOCELE AWARENESS DAY DESIGNATION (Sen. Louis Terhar) To designate January 31 as "Omphalocele Awareness Day."

Vote 33-0

ADOPTED BY SENATE

SJR2 JOINT SESSION-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH (Sen. Randy Gardner) Authorizing a joint session of the Ohio General Assembly to meet at the Sandusky State Theatre in Sandusky, Ohio, for the purpose of receiving a message from the Governor as to the State of the State and calling for a committee to wait upon the Governor in anticipation of his address.

Vote 31-2