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Week in Review

May 26, 2017

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

The Third Frontier Commission has made good on a proposal in Gov. John Kasich's latest State of the State (SOS) speech by awarding \$20 million to strengthen the opioid battle with breakthrough technologies. The Ohio Opioid Abuse, Prevention and Treatment Technology Initiative, approved by the commission Wednesday, will award \$12 million to accelerate the commercialization of drug-related diagnostics, devices, pharmaceuticals and health technologies. Another \$8 million will fund competitive grants and prizes for new technologies to fight the opioid crisis.

BALLOT ISSUES

The Ohio Attorney General's Office certified the petition for a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution that would change the process for congressional redistricting in Ohio, saying supporters had both the necessary 1,000 valid signatures from registered Ohio voters and a "fair and truthful" summary of the proposed amendment. Earlier in May, the Fair Congressional Districts for Ohio

campaign had resubmitted the "Bipartisan Congressional Redistricting Reform Amendment" constitutional amendment for review.

FY18-19 BUDGET

Sen. Scott Oelslager (R-Canton), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, released the committee's hearing schedule as it moves into the final weeks before the full chamber votes on HB49 (R. Smith), the FY18-19 budget bill. That vote, according to Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina), is expected around Wednesday, June 21.

ELECTIONS 2018

Rep. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) announced he is running for the 5th Senate District seat currently held by Sen. Bill Beagle (R-Tipp City), who is term-limited. Huffman, in his second term in the House, is a physician and former Miami County coroner.

Beth Ellis, a Sabine farmer, announced she will seek the 91st House District seat in 2018 and has received the backing of the current seat holder, Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville), who is term-limited. Ellis and her husband co-own Cherrybend Pheasant Farm, where she manages day-to-day operations.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) endorsed Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel for U.S. Senate in 2018, encouraging Republicans to unify behind Mandel's candidacy.

Constance Gadell-Newton, a Columbus attorney who ran unsuccessfully for the Ohio House in 2016, announced this week that she will seek the Green Party nomination for governor in 2018.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment rate was 5.0 percent in April, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced, down from 5.1 percent in March and unchanged from April 2016. ODJFS said Ohio's nonagricultural wage and salary employment decreased by 5,700 over the month, from a revised 5,518,500 in March to 5,512,800 in April 2017. The number of workers unemployed in Ohio in April was 288,000, down 5,000 from 293,000 in March. The number of unemployed has increased by 5,000 in the past 12 months from 283,000, ODJFS said.

ENERGY

The state could miss out on 13,000 jobs and more than \$4.2 billion in local economic activity if Ohio's wind turbine setback law isn't revised, according to a new report from the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA). Ohio's setback law was changed from approximately 550 feet to about 1,300 feet after the enactment of HB 483 (Amstutz). During a Statehouse press conference releasing the report, industry representatives and local business development officials decried the policy, which they said was one of the most restrictive in the country.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The portraits of seven former Ohio House speakers were revealed during a dedication ceremony in the Statehouse Rotunda Tuesday. The portraits are of former speakers Charles Kurfess, A.G. Lancione, Vernal Riffe Jr., Larry Householder, Jon Husted, Armond Budish and William Batchelder. Current House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) said all of the former speakers told him they didn't want their images hanging in the Statehouse. However, he said it is important for their families and Ohio's children to see paintings of the state's leaders from the past.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Donald L. Mason of Zanesville (Muskingum County) to the Kent State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 19, 2017, and ending May 16, 2020.
- Thelma Patrick of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Maternity and Newborn Advisory Council for a term beginning May 19, 2017, and ending Oct. 31, 2017.
- Kimberly S. McConville of Westerville (Franklin County) to the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board for a term beginning May 19, 2017, and ending Jan. 25, 2020.
- Robert F. Klaffky of Bexley (Franklin County) reappointed to the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board for a term beginning May 22, 2017, and ending April 22, 2020.
- Matt Granito of Middlefield (Geauga County) reappointed to the Commercial Dog Breeding Advisory Board for a term beginning May 22, 2017, and ending March 12, 2020.
- Charles DeJonckheere of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Materials Management Advisory Council for a term beginning May 25, 2017, and ending July 1, 2017.

MARIJUANA

Ohio should legalize recreational marijuana, release all non-violent pot offenders and use the tax revenue gained to build a "world-class" state-run mental health network to treat opioid addicts, according to Ohio Supreme Court Justice William O'Neill. "What we are doing is making no sense," O'Neill said during a speech to the Wayne County Democratic Party, the full text of which he posted on his Facebook page. "The time has come for new thinking. We regulate and tax alcohol and tobacco and imprison people for smoking grass -- which is substantially less addictive, less dangerous and less fatal."

TRANSPORTATION

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) will hold six stakeholder meetings throughout the state regarding the development and adoption of administrative rules including fees, among other topics, as required by recently enacted transportation/public safety budget, HB 26 (McColley).

UTILITIES

A diverse coalition of pro-competition consumer organizations announced its support for electric legislation – HB 247 sponsored by Rep. Mark Romanchuk (R-Mansfield) -- which was introduced Wednesday in the Ohio General Assembly. AARP Ohio (AARP), Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC), Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), Ohio Manufacturers' Association

(OMA), and the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) jointly applauded the legislation, which they say will address anti-consumer provisions that date back to the implementation of 127-SB221 in 2008. That bill altered the regulatory structure under which Ohio's electric utilities operate, created new ratemaking provisions and established policies to promote advanced and renewable energy.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

- HB8** PUBLIC RECORDS-MINORS (Rep. Steve Hambley, Rep. Jeffrey Rezabek) To exempt from the Public Records Law certain information concerning a minor that is included in a record related to a traffic accident involving a school vehicle in which the minor was an occupant at the time of the accident.
Vote 95-2
- HB63** SENTENCING-DISFIGUREMENT SPECIFICATION (Rep. Jim Hughes) To require an additional prison term for felonious assault of 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, or 20 years if the offender also is convicted of a specification that charges that the harm caused by the violation resulted in a permanent, serious disfigurement or substantial incapacity or that the offender used an accelerant in committing the violation and to name the act's provisions "Judy's Law."
Vote 97-0
- 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 82-15
- 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.
Amended on Floor, Vote 96-1, Emergency Clause 95-2

ADOPTED BY HOUSE

- HR85** FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OVERHAUL (Rep. Ron Young) To respectfully urge Congress and President Donald Trump to amend the Federal Clean Air Act to eliminate the requirement to implement the E-Check Program and direct the Administrator of USEPA to begin new rulemaking procedures under the Administrative Procedures Act to repeal and replace the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards; to respectfully urge Congress and President Donald Trump to pass legislation to achieve improvements in air quality more efficiently while allowing companies to innovate and help the economy grow; to urge the Administrator of USEPA to alleviate burdensome requirements of the E-Check Program and the Clean Air Act if Congress and the President fail to act; and to encourage OEPA to explore alternatives to ECheck in Ohio.
Vote 72-25

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

HB32 CASINO GAMBLING EMPLOYEES (Rep. Bill Seitz) To specify that the criminal penalty related to casino operators and employees participating in casino gaming applies at their casino facility or an affiliated casino facility.

Vote 32-0

SB131 EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION-TAX CREDITS (Sen. Matt Dolan) To provide that compensation paid to certain home-based employees may be counted for purposes of an employer qualifying for and complying with the terms of a Job Creation Tax Credit.

Vote 32-0

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS

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.

Senate Does Concur, Vote 30-1, Emergency Clause 30-1

SB24 CONSUMER INSTALLMENT LOANS (Sen. Louis Terhar) To create the Ohio Consumer Installment Loan Act.

Senate Does Concur, Vote 32-0