



GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.

RH RESOURCES

17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245

COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413

PHONE: 614-461-9335

FAX: 614-461-9336



Week in Review

August 4, 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.

AGRICULTURE

Heavy rain, extensive flooding and ponding have taken a toll on commodity fields across the state, leaving some growers facing diseased crops, dead plants and potential yield loss, according to Ohio State University (OSU) agronomists. Depending on the growth stage of corn crops stuck in waterlogged soils, some growers could experience a yield loss of more than 10 percent in corn crops that experienced as few as two days of flooding, said Alexander Lindsey, assistant professor of horticulture and crop science at OSU's College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

BALLOT ISSUES

The pharmaceutical industry is outspending supporters of a measure meant to lower drug prices by more than four to one. Supporters of a victim's rights ballot issue also filed campaign finance reports Monday. Groups campaigning on both issues largely got all their money from one donor apiece.

According to a press release from the groups supporting the issue including the League of Women Voters, the Fair Congressional Districts for Ohio ballot issue campaign has garnered over 100,000 signatures in the first month of petitioning. The campaign attributes its success thus far to "grassroots volunteer enthusiasm."

EDUCATION

Already losing \$2.5 million per month to make up for past overpayments, Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) will see an additional 12 percent of its state funding put in escrow, reflecting its own statements about dropping enrollment and the state's concerns about its ability to substantiate its student headcount. And that might not be the end of it, based on the state's assessment of ECOT's most recent enrollment review. Ohio Department of Education (ODE) budget chief Aaron Rausch informed ECOT of the decision in a letter Monday, and Superintendent Paolo DeMaria likewise informed Auditor Dave Yost, who had recently urged withholding funding, in another letter the same day. The reduction starts with the school's August payment.

Schools will face new requirements this fall for how to intervene when students miss too much school, and the Ohio Department of Education recently released a guidance and frequently-asked-questions document to help schools with the change. The 2017-2018 academic year is the first in which local boards of education must address changes enacted in 131-HB410 (Hayes-Rezabek): a ban on using suspension or expulsion as punishment for absenteeism, and a requirement to form intervention teams to identify and seek to address the causes of students' excessive absences.

ELECTIONS 2018

Campaign war chests for Republicans in the General Assembly again overshadowed those of Democrats for the first six months of 2017, according to semi-annual filings with the secretary of state's office. Some Republican candidates also put up big numbers in the gubernatorial primary, among other statewide candidate filings submitted Monday. In filings for the governor's race, Attorney General Mike DeWine, Secretary of State Jon Husted and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) all reported sitting on more than \$4 million, after Renacci tapped his personal wealth to vault forward in the money race by writing himself a \$4 million check. Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor is a distant fourth after raising about \$639,000 and spending \$202,000; she has about \$436,000 on hand.

Rep. Tom Patton (R-Strongsville) announced his candidacy Monday for the 16th congressional seat currently occupied by U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, who will be vacating the seat in a run for the Republican nomination for Ohio governor. Patton will face fellow State Rep. Christina Hagan (R-Alliance) in the primary battle for the reliably Republican district.

Mike Gibbons, a Cleveland banker challenging Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel for the Republican U.S. Senate nomination, added experienced talent to his team Thursday. Chris Schrimpf, former senior communications adviser to Gov. John Kasich's 2016 presidential campaign, will be Gibbons' communications adviser. He is joined on the Gibbons campaign by political adviser Matt Willis, formerly director of outreach for Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor.

Rep. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) has announced his candidacy for Ohio's 15th Senate District. The seat is currently held by Senate Assistant Minority Leader Charleta Tavares (D-Columbus), who is term limited.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) "may be getting close to" signing a consensual order with Rover Pipeline LLC that would require the company to pay a fine and continue its efforts to mitigate damage caused by their environmental law violations, Ohio EPA Director Craig Butler said Tuesday. Earlier this month, the agency issued unilateral orders against Rover and asked Attorney General Mike DeWine to pursue civil penalties.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) detailed his newly introduced legislation, the "Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act," in a conference call with reporters Tuesday. He said it aims to empower victims of sex trafficking to pursue legal options against their offenders and to hold accountable websites like Backpage.com, which he's alleged knowingly facilitated sex trafficking. The legislation was developed by Portman and U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) as a result of the Senate's two-year investigation into criminal human trafficking. The Senate recently approved legislation to provide the documents and findings of that committee to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Calling it a "winnable war," U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions outlined new steps the federal government will take regarding the opioid crisis during a meeting with law enforcement officials and families affected by the crisis Wednesday. Other speakers included Deputy Chief Timothy Becker of the Columbus Division of Police, Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio Ben Glassman. The event was held at the Columbus Police Academy, but drew attendees from around the state.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- William W. Patmon III of New Albany (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission for a term beginning July 29, 2017 and ending July 28, 2022.
- Suzanne Call Cryst of Chesterland (Geauga County), Tanya R. Gure of Dublin (Franklin County), Elizabeth A. Kowalczyk of Worthington (Franklin County), Ainsley M. Malone of New Albany (Franklin County), Jay M. Mirtallo of Delaware (Delaware County), Anita J. Meehan of Cuyahoga Falls (Summit County), Brian C. Polzner of Columbus (Franklin County) and Randall H. Schimmoeller of Perrysburg (Wood County) to the Malnutrition Prevention Commission for terms beginning July 28, 2017 and ending March 20, 2018.
- Scott H. Neely of Westerville (Franklin County) and Ann M. Ream of Canton (Stark County) reappointed to the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood for terms beginning July 31, 2017 and ending July 30, 2019.
- Alice C. Stephens of North Canton (Stark County) reappointed to the Stark State College of Technology Board of Trustees for a term beginning Aug. 2, 2017, and ending Aug. 1, 2020.

- James Brady of Shaker Heights (Cuyahoga County), Angela M. Mingo of New Albany (Franklin County), and Sean A. Whalen of Powell (Delaware County) reappointed to the State Lottery Commission for terms beginning Aug. 2, 2017, and ending Aug. 1, 2020.
- Pauline Zarrieff of Canal Winchester (Franklin County) to the Malnutrition Prevention Commission for a term beginning Aug. 2, 2017, and ending March 20, 2018.
- Lori M. Gillett of Westerville (Delaware County) and Deborah L. Saunders of Gallipolis (Gallia County) appointed to the Governor's Executive Workforce Board for terms beginning Aug. 3, 2017, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

A new report from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACSCAN) indicates that, while Ohio shows significant progress in some areas, the state government can do more to limit the preventable causes of cancer. The "How Do You Measure Up?" report shows that the state excels in the areas of smoke-free laws, access to Medicaid and Medicaid coverage of tobacco cessation treatment. However, it indicates the state is falling short in the areas of indoor tanning bed restrictions, breast and cervical cancer detection and tobacco use prevention funding.

MARIJUANA

The final rule package for the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP) cleared the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) on Monday. Items included Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) rules on processors and testing laboratories; Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) rules on dispensaries, patients, caregivers, forms and methods; and State Medical Board of Ohio (SMBO) rules for physicians. According to 131-HB523 (Huffman), the rules are required to be adopted by Friday, Sept. 8. The program must be fully operational by Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018.

TAXATION

Shoppers can buy clothing and supplies for the return to school tax-free this weekend, when Ohio will have its third, three-day sales tax holiday. The holiday, stretching from 12 a.m. Friday, Aug. 4 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 6, allows purchases free of sales tax for clothing items costing \$75 or less, school supplies at \$20 or less and school instructional materials at \$20 or less.

TRANSPORTATION

Trucking companies and other fleet operators are making great strides in the number of fuel options and efficiency upgrades available to them, though all-electric tractor trailers and fully driverless semis may be further off than some people imagine. That was the takeaway Wednesday at the Midwest Green Fleets Forum & Expo, where Director Giorgio Rizonni of the Ohio State University Center for Automotive Research joined the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) director of vehicle technologies, Michael Berube, and three other experts for a discussion on "Clean and Smart Mobility." Clean Fuels Ohio Executive Director Sam Spofforth moderated the panel.

UTILITIES

As part of its focus on distributed energy resources (DER), the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's (PUCO) PowerForward conference concluded with a look at storage capacity needed to maximize the effectiveness of micro-grids.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) issued orders Wednesday for a pair of troubled energy companies, approving an emergency surcharge on customers of the bankrupt Youngstown Thermal LLC and a time extension on the transfer of assets of Ohio Rural Natural Gas (ORNG).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Administrator Sarah Morrison said Friday that the Kasich administration is negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with stakeholders in which it will agree not to transfer money from the bureau to bolster the state's bottom line, as it was authorized to do in the new biennial budget bill. Business and labor groups are strongly opposed to the transfer authority, warning it sets a bad precedent and might be unconstitutional.

WORKFORCE

The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation launched Ohio's Workforce Success Measures Dashboard, a new interactive tool to allow Ohio's policymakers to measure the success of Ohio's largest workforce development programs. Policymakers and Ohioans alike can use the new Workforce Success Measures Dashboard to see statewide, county and provider level data on the number of Ohioans completing workforce transformation programs. The dashboard allows program administrators and policymakers to evaluate program performance and identify best practices by measuring four common goals including employment, skills, wages and value to business.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE:

No Senate activity to report.

HOUSE:

No House activity to report.