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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.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) has announced that Ohio's average premium for individual health insurance policies on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchange will increase 14.5 percent in 2018, going from a weighted average premium for an individual market plan of \$5,065 in 2017 to nearly \$5,800 for 2018. That weighted average premium was \$2,650 in 2013 for an increase of 119 percent over those six years. For insurance companies, however, the cost of providing the coverage will increase 34 percent in 2018.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine announced Wednesday that 40 law enforcement departments and their partners will receive \$3 million in grants that will be used to help replicate or expand Drug Abuse Response Teams (DARTs) and Quick Response Teams (QRTs) to address the opioid epidemic in Ohio.

FY18-19 BUDGET

Ohio posted an even stronger month of revenues in August after Office of Budget and Management (OBM) Director Tim Keen gave July's biennial kick-off the thumbs up one month ago. The state is 1.3 percent, or \$25.8 million, ahead of estimates for August in preliminary figures.

ELECTIONS 2018

Rep. John Bocchieri (D-Poland) announced that he would be running for the Ohio Senate in 2018.

Melissa Ackison, a Marysville business owner, announced that she is running for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate in 2018, making her the third Republican to join the race.

The following endorsement was made over the week:

- U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo) endorsed Betty Sutton for governor.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The national unemployment rate increased to 4.4 percent in August, up from 4.3 percent in July, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

ENERGY

The Rover Pipeline has been granted the authority to commence natural gas service from Cadiz to Defiance, according to a letter from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Division of Gas, Environment and Engineering Director Rich McGuire. Energy Transfer Partners, which owns Rover Pipeline LLC, said that the 212-mile pipeline section went into service on Aug. 31.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) told reporters that he believes Congress should move ahead in finding a full legislative replacement for the executive Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) immigration policy, despite a full legislative agenda including tax reform, hurricane relief and the federal debt limit.

GAMING/GAMBLING

Ohio's four casinos brought in a combined \$66.7 million in August, up from \$63.9 million in August 2016 and down from nearly \$70 million in July, according to new figures released by the Ohio Casino Control Commission on Thursday.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Speaker of the House Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) announced the names of the seven individuals who applied to fill the soon-to-be vacant 52nd House District seat of Rep. Margy Conditt (R-Hamilton). The new member is expected to be sworn in during the Wednesday, Sept. 13 session.

The Ohio Senate cancelled its Wednesday session as legislators continue to hold discussions with the administration and interested parties on replacing the managed care organization (MCO) sales tax, but there is no agreement yet, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said Tuesday. The Senate's vote to override that veto had been a possibility for the Wednesday session.

GOVERNOR

Gov. John Kasich announced that he has named Tim Biggam to serve as his director of legislative relations, replacing Merle Madrid who has left for a private sector opportunity. Biggam currently leads stakeholder engagement and regional outreach for the governor. He assumes his new duties on Monday, Sept. 11.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- William D. Wells of Galena (Delaware County) reappointed to the Franklin Park Conservatory Joint Recreation District Board for a term beginning Sept. 1, 2017, and ending Aug. 31, 2020.
- Angelo Petro of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Expositions Commission for a term beginning Sept. 1, 2017, and ending Dec. 1, 2022.
- Marvin "Duane" Nellis, Ph.D. of Athens (Athens County) to the Third Frontier Advisory Board for a term beginning Sept. 1, 2017, and ending March 14, 2018.
- Robert A. Schuerger, II of Grandview (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Athletic Commission for a term beginning Sept. 5, 2017, and ending Sept. 2, 2020.
- Trudy Gaillard, Ph.D. of Cincinnati (Hamilton County), Gregory K.W. Lam, M.D. of Dublin (Franklin County) and Mark G. Watkins, D.O. of Toledo (Lucas County) to the Commission on Minority Health for terms beginning Sept. 5, 2017, and ending Sept. 2, 2019.
- Bhagwan Satiani, MD of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Commission on Minority Health for a term beginning Sept. 6, 2017, and ending Sept. 2, 2019.
- Miriam Diabate of Columbus (Franklin County) to the New African Immigrants Commission for a term beginning Sept. 6, 2017, and ending Oct. 7, 2017.
- Carol A. Hamilton O'Brien of Delaware (Delaware County) and Sheriff Paul T. Bailey of Marion (Marion County) reappointed to the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission for a term beginning Sept. 7, 2017, and ending Sept. 3, 2020.
- Teresa D. Gardner of North Ridgeville (Lorain County) and Donald L. Ortner of Oberlin (Lorain County) reappointed to the Lorain County Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 7, 2017, and ending Aug. 30, 2022.

MARIJUANA

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) has reached a final decision on medical marijuana dispensary districts, the board announced. Each of the four quadrants in the final map allow for the same number of total dispensaries as the draft version. OBP said it made one minor change following the public comment period.

PEOPLE

The last Democratic President of the Ohio Senate Harry Meshel died Monday in Youngstown at the age of 93. He had recently been in declining health. Meshel, who served as Senate president in 1983-1984, spent 22 years in the Ohio Senate from 1971 until 1993 when he resigned to become head of

the Ohio Democratic Party -- a post he held for three years. His funeral is set for Saturday, Sept. 9 at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, 220 N. Walnut St., Youngstown, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

Ohio Gov. John Kasich Tuesday joined a growing list of national leaders calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to rule against what they called harmful gerrymandering in a landmark case involving controversial state legislative districts in Wisconsin, a decision Kasich says will help stem the political polarization that fuels gridlock and inaction among policymakers. In signing an amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs in *Gill v. Whitford*, Kasich joins former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), former U.S. Sen. Majority Leader Bob Dole and others who are calling on the Court to overturn Wisconsin's legislative districts on the grounds that they unfairly advance political parties at the expense of the rights and views of Americans.

TECHNOLOGY

New legislation being introduced by Sens. Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) and Cliff Hite (R-Findlay) would create a grant program to provide funding to businesses, local governments and nonprofit groups to expand broadband infrastructure to Ohioans who cannot currently access it.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

No legislative activity to report.