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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.

**ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Ohio Third Frontier is moving forward with Gov. John Kasich's \$8 million Opioid Technology Challenge following Controlling Board approval, with a launch date scheduled in just over a month. Evaluators also are vetting more than two dozen applications for the other half of \$20 million in opioid technology funding introduced in Kasich's 2017 "State of the State" speech. Awards are due by December.

**AFFORDABLE CARE ACT**

Gov. Kasich and nine other governors Tuesday urged U.S. Senate leaders to reject a Republican plan to reform health care and to renew efforts for a bipartisan approach. The governors, including Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (D), Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval (R), Pennsylvania Gov. Tom

Wolf (D), Alaska Gov. Bill Walker (I), Virginia Gov. Terence McAuliffe (D), Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) and Montana Gov. Steve Bullock (D), sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), asking them not to consider the Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson amendment, saying only a bipartisan approach can achieve true, lasting reforms for health care.

## **EDUCATION**

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Friday, Sept. 15, submitted the state's plan, as approved by the State Board of Education, to the U.S. Department of Education for implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Ohio's ESSA plan specifies, to the federal government, key aspects of Ohio's education policy framework and reflects engagement with parents, students, educators, and business and community leaders, as well as the governor and General Assembly.

State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria joined Chris Woolard, senior executive director for Accountability and Continuous Improvement for ODE, Monday to provide the State Board of Education an overview of how Ohio schools fared on their 2016-2017 report cards. According to the two, they showed statewide performance increases amid some lagging achievement grades. DeMaria cautioned the board from making broad assumptions based on the report card results, especially given that Ohio's education system is still in the process of phasing in new standards that came along with changes to assessments within the past three years.

## **ELECTIONS 2018**

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, a Republican gubernatorial candidate, announced in Cleveland Monday her plan to address health care in the Buckeye State and implement a fiscally sustainable model that she said will replace the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. The plan would include an end to the expansion of Medicaid under Gov. John Kasich.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- Reps. Nicholas Celebrezze (D-Parma), Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood), Emilia Sykes (D-Akron), Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo), Kent Smith (D-Euclid) and Tavia Galonski (D-Akron) endorsed Betty Sutton for governor.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

Ohio's unemployment rate was 5.4 percent in August 2017, up from 5.2 percent in July 2017, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Friday. Ohio's nonagricultural wage and salary employment increased 5,200 over the month, from a revised 5,540,000 in July to 5,545,200 in August, according to the latest business establishment survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor (Bureau of Labor Statistics) in cooperation with ODJFS.

## **ENERGY**

Recently proposed legislation that would revise wind setback restrictions was praised by environmentalists and medical professionals during a Statehouse press conference Wednesday. Sen. Cliff Hite (R-Findlay) said his SB 188 offers a compromise between those who want to harvest wind and those who do not want turbines near where they live. According to the bill, the actual setback distance required is increased from 1,125 feet to 1,225 feet. However, the distance is only measured from the tip of its nearest blade at 90 degrees to the exterior of the nearest habitable residential structure on an adjacent property, not to the property line.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Director Craig Butler said Wednesday while Rover Pipeline LLC is successfully working toward compliance with July's "unprecedented" unilateral order, the company is still in violation of at least one component. That violation has resulted in a referral to Attorney General Mike DeWine to bring Rover into compliance and to compel it pay a civil penalty, Butler said.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

Legislation proposed in the Senate would eliminate the duty of an individual to retreat before using force in self-defense in nearly all circumstances. "More than 30 states in the country recognize the right to self-defense in their criminal statutes," Sen. Joe Uecker (R-Loveland) told the Senate Judiciary Committee during sponsor testimony on SB180 (Uecker-Hottinger) Tuesday. The bill would allow an individual to use force in self-defense anywhere as long as they are legally allowed to be there. Currently, Ohio's "stand-your-ground" law only applies to situations occurring in the person's residence, vehicle or the vehicle of a family member.

House amendments to school infrastructure and technology legislation SB8 (Gardner-Terhar) were unanimously rejected by the Senate Wednesday, with Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) explaining that the bill could be further amended to address budget issues. "We're happy with everything that's in the bill right now, but we might use that as a vehicle for additional budget cleanup-related issues, or potentially some issues where we're able to work out agreements with the administration instead of doing additional overrides," Obhof told reporters after session. "I'm not sure how that's going to turn out yet, but we thought it was best to have it handy just in case."

On replacing the managed care organization (MCO) sales tax, Obhof said progress continues to be made among the Senate, House, governor's office and County Commissioners Association of Ohio. He said it's possible that SB8 could be a vehicle for any agreement reached on that issue.

Ohio medical providers and patient advocates gathered at the Ohio Statehouse Wednesday to push legislation, SB56 (Lehner-Tavares) and HB72 (Johnson-Antonio), that would reform "step therapy" practices. According to the coalition, "Step therapy is a cost management tool health plans use where patients must first take, then fail, prescription medications deemed to be at less cost than a drug originally prescribed. Only after patients 'fail first' on medications required by the health plans, can patients then get what a physician prescribed in the first place."

## **GOVERNOR**

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Joel A. Bokerman reappointed to the Ohio Fair Plan Underwriting Association Board of Governors for a term beginning Sept. 19, 2017, and ending Sept. 18, 2019.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Kenyon College has received a \$75 million gift from an anonymous donor, the institution announced Friday. President Sean Decatur and Board of Trustees Chair Brackett B. Denniston said the donation is the largest single gift in the college's history.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Dreamers from Central Ohio gathered at the Statehouse for a Tuesday news conference to tell their stories and to urge Congress to pass either the Recognizing America's Children (RAC) Act or the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act before President Trump's six-month deadline runs out.

## **MARIJUANA**

The Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP) and the Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) on Tuesday released pot dispensary application materials. Dispensary applications will be accepted online from Friday, Nov. 3 until Friday, Nov. 17 and must be submitted electronically using the link that will be provided at [www.medicalmarijuana.ohio.gov/dispensaries](http://www.medicalmarijuana.ohio.gov/dispensaries).

## **MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM**

Re-filed Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) rules for the Behavioral Health Redesign Initiative cleared the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) on Monday, but not without debate and testimony. Testimony was provided by Teresa Lampl, an associate director with the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers, and Jim Tassie, assistant director with ODM.

Several members of the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) took representatives of the administration to task over the Medicaid spending plan for the current biennium at Thursday's meeting of the group. Several took exception to the idea that the budget as passed by the Legislature is actually underfunded for the biennium with Rep. Scott Ryan (R-Newark) also objecting to the labeling of that assertion a "legislative shortfall."

## **WORKFORCE**

Nearly three quarters of Ohio restaurants say they are experiencing labor challenges in a new survey conducted by the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) and Cleveland Research Company, which tracks the industry in Ohio.

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:**

### **HOUSE**

#### **PASSED BY HOUSE**

- HB116** TAX EXEMPTION-GLASSES AND CONTACTS (Rep. Derek Merrin) To exempt prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, and other optical aids sold by licensed dispensers from sales and use tax.  
*Vote 93-1*
- HB159** MONTH DESIGNATION-DRIVE OHIO BYWAYS (Rep. Craig Riedel) To designate May as "Drive Ohio Byways Month."  
*Vote 93-0*
- HB196** MONTH DESIGNATION-CHIROPRACTIC AWARENESS (Rep. Scott Lipps) To designate October as "Ohio Chiropractic Awareness Month."  
*Vote 94-0*
- HB215** CREATE PAULDING COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT (Rep. Craig Riedel) To create the Paulding County Municipal Court in Paulding on January 1, 2019, to establish one fulltime judgeship in that court, to provide for the nomination of the judge by petition only, to abolish the Paulding County County Court on that date, to designate the Paulding County Clerk of Courts as the clerk of the Paulding County Municipal Court, and to provide for the election for the Paulding County Municipal Court of one full-time judge in 2018.  
*Vote 88-6*
- HB235** EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT PROCEDURE (Rep. Theresa Gavarone) Regarding procedures for approval or disapproval of the state education plan for the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.  
*Vote 85-9*
- HB252** MONTH DESIGNATION-BLOOD DONOR AWARENESS (Rep. Stephen Huffman) To designate the month of January as "Blood Donor Awareness Month."  
*Vote 93-0*

**SB57** DAY DESIGNATION-CANCER AWARENESS (Sen. Stephanie Kunze) To designate the seventeenth day of May as "Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma Awareness Day."

*Vote 94-0*

#### **ADOPTED BY HOUSE**

**HR261** RELATIVE TO TRAVEL ALLOWANCE (Rep. Cliff Rosenberger, Rep. Fred Strahorn) Relative to travel allowance.

*Vote 94-0*

#### **SENATE**

#### **PASSED BY SENATE**

**HB59** DAY DESIGNATION-MOSES WALKER (Rep. David Leland, Rep. Thomas West) To designate October 7 as "Moses Fleetwood Walker Day."

*Vote 32-0*

**SB163** COUNTY INVESTMENT NOTE QUALIFICATIONS (Sen. Steve Wilson) To modify the qualifications regarding notes eligible for investment of county inactive moneys.

*Vote 32-0*

#### **CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS**

**SB8** SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (Sen. Randy Gardner, Sen. Louis Terhar) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security.

*Senate Does Not Concur, Vote 0-32*

**SB37** POLICE CHIEFS TRAINING (Sen. Cliff Hite) To require the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission to develop and conduct a chief of police training course for newly appointed village, city, and township chiefs of police.

*Senate Does Concur, Vote 32-0*

#### **ADOPTED BY SENATE**

**SR175** SUPPORTING HYPERLOOP TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE (Sen. Kevin Bacon, Sen. Stephanie Kunze) To express support for the Hyperloop Transportation Initiative.

*Vote 32-0*