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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.

AUDITOR OF STATE

Auditor Dave Yost released special audit findings for a now-defunct tutoring program in Columbus City Schools, showing improper payment of hundreds of thousands of dollars for tutoring that never happened or was for students who weren't in the district. He also announced the unsealing of a federal indictment against one tutoring provider.

BALLOT ISSUES

Ohio would earn tax revenues of \$133 million to \$293.3 million within a year after all marijuana growing facilities and retail stores are open, a fiscal analysis of Issue 3 released by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) says. The projections are much less than what an analysis by ResponsibleOhio, the group behind the legalization effort that is in Issue 3, found in

March. That group projected \$554 million in tax revenue by 2020, estimating that Ohioans would use more than 244 metric tons of marijuana and sales would hit nearly \$2.3 billion.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced recently that it is awarding over \$1.9 million under HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) to six organizations in Ohio to fight housing discrimination.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio and the Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions joined forces last week with a message for the General Assembly: Don't increase any more criminal penalties until the efforts of the Criminal Justice Recodification Committee are complete. The ACLU also released a report with an analysis of 54 new bills introduced so far in the 131st General Assembly, or about 11 percent of the total number of bills introduced in both chambers, that would send more people to prison and jail. The group said that the new bills are counterintuitive to criminal sentencing reform efforts.

EDUCATION

House and Senate conferees agreed unanimously last Tuesday to a compromise version of charter school reform measure HB 2 (Dovilla-Roegner), adopting changes meant to prevent a repeat of recent problems with sponsor evaluations and to counteract the effects of a recent Ohio Supreme Court ruling on ownership of charter school property. The legislation drew broad support in final votes last Wednesday, passing the Senate unanimously and the House with just six dissenters. Late-breaking pension system changes caused some grumbling and a handful of no votes, but lawmakers overall lauded the conference committee's version of HB 2 as likely to promote quality schools and rein in abuses.

Auditor of State Dave Yost said he'll be looking for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to take special care in distributing money from its recent \$71 million federal grant for charter schools. The grant award has prompted calls from charter school critics in Ohio to call on USDOE to reconsider the award or attach special restrictions to its disbursement, given recent controversies in the charter sector, including the withdrawal of sponsor ratings.

ELECTIONS 2016

Rep. Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) opened her campaign for Hamilton County commissioner this week and will challenge incumbent Republican Greg Hartmann in 2016. Driehaus is term-limited next year and cannot run for re-election to the House.

Rep. Bob Hackett (R-London), who is term-limited at the end of this session, stated that he is considering running for the Senate in 2016. Sen. Chris Widener (R-Springfield) is term-limited at the end of this session as well, leaving the 10th Senate District as an open seat.

While Rep. Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City) has announced a bid for the 16th Senate District in 2016, the Senate Republican Caucus is putting its support behind Rep. Stephanie Kunze(R-Hilliard). Grossman is term-limited, while Kunze is in her second term in the House. If Kunze were to run for the Senate, her House seat would be open, allowing current Sen. Jim Hughes (R-Columbus) to run for it.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The nation added 142,000 jobs in September and the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 5.1 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) announced on Friday.

ENERGY

Energy Mandates Study Committee Co-Chair Sen. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville) said he was caught off guard by the Kasich administration's negative response to the panel's report, which calls for an indefinite freeze of Ohio's clean energy standards. Joe Andrews, Gov. John Kasich's spokesman, said the committee's recommendation was "unacceptable" shortly after the report's recent release.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) announced it has opened an initial comment period related to the agency's new draft rules for public drinking water systems and laboratories as it relates to the reporting and monitoring of harmful algal blooms (HABs).

GAMING

Ohio's four casinos saw a drop in revenue from August to September, but numbers were up from the same period in 2014, the Ohio Casino Control Commission announced this week. According to the commission, all four casinos earned about \$64.3 million in September, down from \$66.3 million in August. In September 2014, the casinos earned \$63.3 million.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

On Tuesday, representatives for Uber and the insurance industry testified in support of HB 237 (Duffey-Hackett), the compromise rideshare regulation bill, before the Senate State and Local Government Committee. Testimony was offered by John Koetz on behalf of the Professional Independent Agents Association of Ohio, Inc. (PIAAO) and Robert Kellman, manager of public policy issues for Uber.

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) sent out a revised House schedule last Thursday that did the following:

- Canceled if-needed House sessions on Wednesday, Oct. 14 and Tuesday, Nov. 10.
- Added a House session on Tuesday, Oct. 27 and Tuesday, Dec. 1.
- Added an if-needed session for Wednesday, Nov. 18.
- Canceled the House session set for Wednesday, Dec. 2.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Kellie R. Brown of Cambridge (Guernsey County) reappointed to the Help Me Grow Advisory Council for a term beginning Oct. 2, 2015 and ending June 30, 2019.
- Frederick M. Cash, Sr. of Richmond Heights (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission for a term beginning Oct. 2, 2015 and ending June 30, 2019.
- Craig N. Porter of Cadiz (Harrison County) reappointed to the Reclamation Commission for a term beginning Oct. 5, 2015, and ending June 28, 2020.
- James B. Krimmel of Twinsburg (Summit County) reappointed to the Environmental Education Council for a term beginning Oct. 5, 2015, and ending Oct. 1, 2017.
- Chief Kimberley K. Jacobs of Columbus (Franklin County) appointed to the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission for a term beginning Oct. 5, 2015, and ending Sept. 20, 2018.
- Sheriff Michael E. Heldman of Findlay (Hancock County) and Col. Paul A. Pride of Baltimore (Fairfield County) reappointed to the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission for terms beginning Oct. 6, 2015 and ending Sept. 20, 2018.
- Louis J. Carson of Lancaster (Fairfield County) reappointed to the Motor Vehicle Dealers Board for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2015, and ending Oct. 4, 2018.
- Dr. Lisa A. Froehlich of Lebanon (Warren County) reappointed to the Board of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2015, and ending Sept. 24, 2018.
- Dr. Alice H. Randolph of Marblehead (Ottawa County) reappointed to State Board of Psychology for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2015, and ending Oct. 4, 2020.
- John S. Petkovsek of Chesterland (Geauga County) reappointed to Environmental Education Council for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2015, and ending Oct. 1, 2017.
- Dean C. Ringle of Dublin (Franklin County) reappointed to the State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Surveyors for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2015, and ending Sept. 24, 2020.
- Walid E. Gemayel of Worthington (Franklin County) to the State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Surveyors for a term beginning Oct. 7, 2015, and ending Sept. 24, 2019.
- Juan M. Rivera of Campbell (Mahoning County) reappointed to the Commission on Hispanic-Latino Affairs for a term beginning Oct. 8, 2015 and ending Oct. 7, 2018.
- Sue E. Derck of Antwerp (Paulding County) reappointed to the Northwest State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 8, 2015 and ending June 9, 2021.
- Steven A. Cohen of Blacklick (Franklin County) reappointed to the Central Ohio Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 8, 2015 and ending Sept. 30, 2018.

POLITICS

Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) said last Wednesday he won't seek to replace U.S. House Speaker John Boehner (R-West Chester) in the special election that will follow Boehner's planned departure from the House at month's end. "My wife and family and friends determined that isn't the right seat, it's not the right time, and it's not the right job for me right now," he said after last Wednesday's Senate session.

PUBLIC SAFETY

With 97 fire deaths so far this year, Ohio Department of Commerce Director Jacqueline Williams announced a new effort by the Kasich administration to reduce that number. Williams, State Fire Marshal Larry Flowers and other state officials were on hand Monday to discuss the "Safe & Sound" campaign, which will encourage smoke alarm use and educate Ohioans on fire risks from heat sources during winter. Other state agencies joining the initiative include the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA), Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg), Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) and Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA). The American Red Cross will also assist with the campaign.

TAXATION

State tax revenues came in about \$34 million below estimates in September, putting Ohio 0.4 percent behind projections for the fiscal year to date but still \$300-plus million ahead of what it had collected in the first three months of the previous fiscal year.

TRANSPORTATION

Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) Executive Director Randy Cole told legislators that raising the speed limit on the Northern Ohio roadway would almost certainly lead to more crashes. According to OTIC data, there has been a 14.5 percent increase in fatal crashes, a 9.1 percent hike in injury crashes, a 12.6 percent jump in property damage crashes, and a 12 percent rise in total crashes since the implementation of the 70 mph speed limit in April 2011. However, he did not place all the blame on the higher speed limit.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

HB124 VENEREAL DISEASES-PRESCRIPTION AUTHORITY (Rep. Terry Johnson, Rep. Stephen Huffman) Regarding the authority to prescribe without examination a drug for a sexual partner of a patient diagnosed with chlamydia, gonorrhea, or trichomoniasis.

Vote 32-0

SB139 DEATH PENALTY-TRIAL FILE (Sen. Bill Seitz, Sen. Sandra Williams) to require the clerk of a common pleas court to retain a copy of the original trial file when a death penalty is imposed.

Vote 32-0

CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

HB2 CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP (Rep. Mike Dovilla, Rep. Kristina Roegner) With regard to sponsorship and management of community schools.

Senate Accepts Conference Committee Report, Vote 32-0

ADOPTED BY SENATE

SCR6 EXPORT-CRUDE OIL (Sen. Troy Balderson) The urge the U.S. Congress to lift the prohibition on the export of crude oil from the United States.

Vote 31-1

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB151 STALKING-TELECOMMUNICATIONS HARASSMENT (Rep. Marlene Anielski) To expand the offenses of menacing by stalking and telecommunications harassment, to prohibit a person from knowingly causing another person to believe that the offender will cause physical harm or mental distress to a family or household member of the other person, to increase the penalty for assault when the victim is a volunteer firefighter, and to correct a cross reference in the theft statute to special purchase articles.

Vote 98-0

HB164 SEALED OFFENSES (Rep. Dorothy Pelanda, Rep. John Rogers) To allow a person who is convicted of an offense that may not be sealed to apply to have the conviction sealed if, before the person makes that application, the offense is changed so that it may be sealed.

Vote 97-1

HB195 LICENSE PLATE DESIGNATION (Rep. Cheryl Grossman) To create the "Dream Field" license plate.

Vote 97-1

SB117 RETT SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH (Sen. Kenny Yuko, Sen. Jim Hughes) To designate October as "Rett Syndrome Awareness Month."

Vote 98-0

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

HB39 SCHOOL-CAMP INHALER PERMIT (Rep. Mike Duffey) To permit schools and camps to procure and use a metered dose inhaler or dry powdered inhaler used to alleviate asthmatic symptoms in accordance with prescribed policies and to exempt them from licensing requirements related to the possession of these inhalers.

House Does Concur, Vote 98-0

CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

HB2 CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP (Rep. Mike Dovilla, Rep. Kristina Roegner) With regard to sponsorship and management of community schools.

House Accepts Conference Committee Report, Vote 92-6

ADOPTED BY HOUSE

HCR16 CMS-PATIENT PAIN MANAGEMENT (Rep. Barbara Sears, Rep. Nickie Antonio) To encourage the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to revise survey measures included in the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems that relate to patient pain management.

Vote 98-0

HR107 SAVE THE DREAM OHIO-FUNDING RENEWAL (Rep. Christie Kuhns, Rep. Jonathan Dever) To request the Congress of the United States to renew funding for Save the Dream Ohio to help homeowners in the state of Ohio avoid foreclosure.

Vote 86-11