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Week in Review
Monday, November 2, 2015

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

Gov. John Kasich announced a \$1.5 million appropriation to forge a statewide integration of the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS) with private pharmacy and medical record networks at a news conference at a Kroger pharmacy. An "early adopter," Kroger's switch to the integrated system signals a possible tenfold increase in the use of OARRS by pharmacies around the state.

BALLOT ISSUES

The Ohio Attorney General's Office certified the petition for a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution regarding the state minimum wage, dubbed "The Ohio Fair Wage Amendment." The submission was certified as containing both the necessary 1,000 valid signatures from registered Ohio voters and a "fair and truthful" summary of the proposed amendment, which takes the state's minimum wage to \$10/hour, effective Jan. 1, 2017; to \$10.50/hour, effective Jan. 1, 2018; to \$11/hour, effective Jan. 1 2019; to \$11.50/hour, effective Jan. 1, 2020; and to \$12/hour, effective Jan. 1, 2021. After that, "it will be annually adjusted for inflation consistent with existing law."

The 1851 Center for Constitutional Law took aim at anti-monopoly amendment Issue 2 this week, issuing a policy briefing which it said would prohibit tax reform without stopping monopolies or marijuana legalization.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Rep. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) announced that she will be reintroducing legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing or public accommodations. Dubbed the "Ohio Fairness Act," the legislation will add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the lists of classes found in the Ohio Revised Code that are protected from discrimination.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Kasich administration said that \$3.8 million in new tax credits would help keep 1,120 jobs in Ohio and spur another 875 positions, also generating \$205 million in new commercial investments. The Ohio Tax Credit Authority (OTCA) approved six projects recommended by JobsOhio and its regional partners, led by a \$1.2 million credit to Radiance Technologies Inc. in the Montgomery County city of Riverside.

EDUCATION

Gov. John Kasich on Sunday signed far-reaching charter school reform legislation, making a variety of changes to laws intended to improve operations and increase accountability in the education sector.

"While we are proud of Ohio's high-performing charter schools, there are too many that haven't been serving our kids with the quality they deserve," Mr. Kasich said in announcing that he had signed HB 2. "Making sure that our kids aren't stuck in failing schools has been a priority and this bill will profoundly benefit our children."

ELECTIONS 2016

As part of his presidential campaign, Gov. John Kasich signed the "Taxpayer Protection Pledge" issued by Americans for Tax Reform and its leader, Grover Norquist.

ENVIRONMENT

Ohio and 23 other states are moving forward with the expected legal challenge to President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan (CPA) after the 152-page rule was officially promulgated in the *Federal Register*. Attorney General Mike DeWine and other state attorneys general are asking the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. to overturn the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) restrictions on electric-generating carbon emissions as unconstitutional.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The House Ways and Means Committee passed SB208 (Beagle), the tax fix bill, in a single hearing last Monday after adding one amendment to further narrow a tax break for a New Albany business park housing several businesses with an integrated supply chain. The measure passed committee with one dissenting vote from Rep. John Barnes Jr. (D-Cleveland), whose hometown school district urged the committee to go farther with the rollback of Kasich's veto regarding the tangible personal property phase-out to help it address an expected \$13.9 million drop in state funding in FY17. Then on Tuesday, the House overwhelmingly passed the bill by a vote of 84-6. The Senate went on to unanimously agree to the House change, sending the bill on to the governor for his signature.

Speaker Rosenberger said the House will work on legislation involving Ohio's unemployment system. Legislation led by Rep. Barbara Sears (R-Sylvania) will be coming later in the year but won't pass until 2016. Rosenberger said they will be looking at the unemployment compensation debt issue as well as how the state characterizes unemployment. Some provisions have come from the Ohio House Unemployment Compensation Debt Study Committee that Sears chaired in the 130th General Assembly, he said.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Brian P. Younkin of Grove City (Franklin County) reappointed to the Motor Vehicle Dealers Board for a term beginning Oct. 28, 2015 and ending Oct. 4, 2018.
- Richard H. Hoffman of Findlay (Hancock County) and John D. McIntyre of Maumee (Lucas County) reappointed to the Real Estate Appraiser Board for terms beginning Oct. 28, 2015 and ending June 30, 2018.

HOUSING

September home sales exceeded the prior year's figures by double digits and came in slightly ahead of August numbers, according to the Ohio Association of Realtors (OAR). September home sales of 148,028 marked a 12 percent increase over the 132,194 sales in the same of 2014, and a 1 percent bump over the 146,577 sold in August of this year.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Those pushing for more funding to protect Ohio's water resources addressed the Lake Erie Legislative Caucus last Tuesday, offering lawmakers ideas for crafting a state ballot initiative for 2016.

PEOPLE

The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) announced the impending retirement of Executive Vice President John C. (Jack) Fisher, who has held the position since 1996. The bureau's board of trustees has begun its search for a successor, who is expected to replace Fisher in mid-2016, according to OFBF.

The Wholesale Beer and Wine Association of Ohio (WBWAO) announced the appointment of Jacob C. Evans to lead its government affairs efforts in the state. Evans will begin work as WBWAO counsel for legislative affairs on Monday, Nov. 9, according to WBWAO General Counsel David Raber.

Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services (OhioMHAS) Director Tracy Plouck has been appointed to serve on the Board of Directors for the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center -- a national, nonprofit organization that provides nonpartisan advice and evidence-based strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Amendments to Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) rules regarding payment for physical medicine cleared the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) in spite of concerns raised by an independent physical therapist.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB233 REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS (Rep. Kirk Schuring) To authorize municipal corporations to create downtown redevelopment districts and innovation districts for the purposes of promoting the rehabilitation of historic buildings, creating jobs, encouraging economic development in commercial and mixed-use areas, and supporting grants and loans to technology-oriented and other businesses.

Vote 91-0

HB340 LOCAL GOVERNMENT INNOVATION COUNCIL (Rep. Ron Amstutz) To extend the operation of the Local Government Innovation Council until December 31, 2019, and to declare an emergency.

Bill Vote 90-0, Emergency Clause Passed 88-0

SB208 STATE INCOME TAX (Sen. Bill Beagle) To make technical changes to the state income tax law, to modify the requirements for receiving the joint filing credit.

Vote 84-6

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

HB244 DAY DESIGNATION (Rep. Cliff Rosenberger, Rep. Terry Johnson) To designate the tenth day of November as Armed Services, Peace Officer, First Responder, and Dual Service Recognition Day.

House Does Concur, Vote - 88-1

SENATE:

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS

SB208 STATE INCOME TAX (Sen. Bill Beagle) To make technical changes to the state income tax law, to modify the requirements for receiving the joint filing credit.

Senate Does Concur. Vote 30-0