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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

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) delivered a "stunning" report to Congress recently on illicit shipments of fentanyl and doubly dangerous carfentanil into the United States by regular U.S. mail. Portman said a year-long congressional investigation found Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida led the nation in money sent to online dealers of opioids primarily based in China, who said they preferred the U.S Postal Service to private carriers because it was much easier to get illegal drugs into the country undetected.

The Kasich administration announced Tuesday that the \$8 million Ohio Opioid Technology Challenge had reached its first milestone with the conclusion of the "Idea Phase" and the awarding of prize money for the five most innovative concepts to address drug abuse and addiction. Hundreds of average citizens, researchers, caregivers and service providers from across the state, U.S. and nine

countries participated, submitting "bold and creative" ideas to accelerate solutions to the opioid epidemic, according to the Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA).

Gov. John Kasich joined representatives from the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy and the director of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Ohio MHAS) Thursday to announce new rules aimed at opioid wholesalers that will require more detailed data reporting to the state to catch suspicious activity. The governor and administration officials said the rules are the next logical step following new rules that limited how often doctors could prescribe opioid medications and tracked drug purchases more closely through the state's Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS).

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Mike DeWine released his office's annual report on human trafficking Monday, telling the Ohio Human Trafficking Commission that, while the state has made significant steps in addressing the problem, there is still a long way to go. The report shows that law enforcement reported 202 human trafficking investigations in Ohio in 2017, leading to 70 arrests and 18 successful criminal convictions. Law enforcement identified 221 suspected traffickers, including 211 potential sex traffickers and 10 potential labor traffickers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Kasich administration's newest round of Job Creation Tax Credits breaks down to a 2:1 ratio of jobs retained and jobs created, costing the state an estimated \$4.652 million in tax abatements. Six private businesses recommended by JobsOhio and approved by the Ohio Tax Credit Authority Monday hope to create 656 positions compared to 1,365 retained, resulting in over \$35 million in new payroll. The projects are also expected to spur \$30 million in additional investments in Ohio.

EDUCATION

Ohio drew roughly the same assessment it did last year from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' annual ranking of states' charter school statutes. The state ranked 23rd out of 45 states that allow charter schools, versus 21st out of 44 in the 2017 ratings. Kentucky joined the ranks of states with charter school laws last year.

Legislative, K-12, higher education and business leaders convened Wednesday to highlight Ohio's lagging educational attainment and discuss ways to get more degrees and credentials into the hands of Ohioans. At a luncheon, a press conference and a Senate committee hearing, participants discussed strategies for meeting Ohio's educational attainment goal of having 65 percent of Ohioans hold some post-secondary credential by 2025. Ohio now stands around 43 percent, rating it 33rd in attainment among the states.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) wrote to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) this week to ask what steps it's taking to help former Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) students move to new schools and how it's pursuing recovery of tens of millions of dollars from the online charter school.

ELECTIONS 2018

Democratic candidates for statewide office outraised their Republican counterparts, according to new campaign finance filings released Wednesday, though Republicans had more in their campaign accounts. The Ohio House Republican Organizational Committee (OHROC) reported \$2.2 million in contributions and has \$4.5 million as it goes into an election year defending its supermajority. The Ohio House Democratic Caucus reported \$405,078 in contributions and has \$484,058 on hand. The Republican Senate Campaign Committee reported nearly \$1.1 million in contributions and has a balance of \$2.8 million. Senate Democrats reported \$67,850 in contributions and \$42,405 on hand.

Secretary of State (SOS) Jon Husted's office has released a new online tool for accessing campaign contributions and expenditures data maintained by his office. The new service, dubbed "FACE Ohio," is an application programming interface, or API, for campaign finance data. It provides users with a data feed containing up-to-date campaign contributions and expenditures from the secretary of state's website, which can then be analyzed and presented however the user chooses. To access the data provided by FACE Ohio, users must visit the API sign up page at <http://tinyurl.com/y7to7bgp> and provide the requested information.

Emphasizing the importance of hope, lieutenant governor candidate Stephanie Dodd said Ohio's future calls for new leadership that she and gubernatorial hopeful Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) can provide. Dodd, a State Board of Education member, spoke Friday before the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA), which also heard from Democratic governor candidates Richard Cordray and Dennis Kucinich and Republican lieutenant governor candidate Jon Husted earlier in the week.

Cincinnati-area attorney Brian Flick announced that he will run as a Democrat for the 66th House District seat this year. The seat is currently held by Rep. Doug Green (R-Mt. Orab), who is running for re-election. Flick is a consumer protection attorney who serves as managing partner of DannLaw's Cincinnati office. He said in a statement that he is running because he believes Republicans in state government have ignored the needs of the residents of the district for too long.

Former Rep. Jim Trakas Thursday announced he is running for the 6th Ohio House District, saying he will "continue to be a champion for taxpayers and job creation." Trakas served four terms in the Ohio House and served on the House leadership team. The seat is currently held by Rep. Marlene Anielski (R-Walton Hills), who is term-limited.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) endorsed Gina Hall Collinsworth for the open seat in Ohio House District 90. The 90th house district, which includes all of Scioto and Adams counties, and a portion of Lawrence County, is currently held by Rep. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott). He also endorsed Denise Martin for the 67th House District.
- The DeWine-Husted campaign announced the endorsement by the Holmes County Republican Party and the Mahoning County Republican Party.
- The congressional campaign of Carol O'Brien announced the endorsement of the Value In Electing Women Political Action Committee (VIEW PAC) for the 12th Congressional District.
- Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) endorsed Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) for U.S. Senate.
- The gubernatorial campaign of Richard Cordray announced the endorsement of Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley.

FEDERAL

U.S. Reps. Steve Stivers (R-Columbus) and Joyce Beatty (D-Columbus) are leading an effort to increase civil discourse in Washington D.C. and across the country. They announced the creation of the "Congressional Civility and Respect Caucus" during a Columbus Metropolitan Club event. Stivers, who chairs the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), said members of the caucus will need to pledge to be civil and spread that message in their communities, pointing to high schools as a starting place.

Four members of Ohio's congressional delegation were aboard the Amtrak train that collided with a garbage truck in Virginia on Wednesday, according to official statements and media reports. One occupant of the truck reportedly died, while there were no serious injuries reported among the almost 100 Republican legislators, including House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI), aboard the train headed to a party retreat.

President Donald Trump delivered his first official "State of the Union" address as president Tuesday night, eliciting expectedly divided reactions from congressional Democrats and Republicans. Trump touched on a variety of topics, including investment in infrastructure, the opioid epidemic, immigration and national security. He also touted successes such as the passage of the recent tax reform bill and the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) and Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) have issued apologies for offensive statements made during a recent party for outgoing House GOP Chief of Staff Mike Dittoe. In response, Speaker of the House Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) said he was "disheartened" by Seitz's "careless and insensitive remarks" at the event while Senate President Larry Obhof (R-

Medina) met with the senator and expressed his strong disappointment and disapproval, Senate spokesman John Fortney reported.

Rep. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) issued the following statement on the remarks: "Politicians who think it's alright to publicly degrade, humiliate and make light of victims who have been sexually harassed and preyed upon by elected officials are part of the problem in America. Elected officials, Democratic and Republican, who were sitting in the crowd that night should come forward and demand better, but sadly most of them won't in an effort to protect the establishment men entrenched in positions of political power across our state. Until we demand better of our elected officials and hold them accountable for treating taxpayers like commodities and the Statehouse like a playground, we won't make progress on important issues like job creation, school funding and equal pay. Time's up for sexual harassers at the Statehouse."

House Majority Floor Leader Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) should be removed from his leadership position and resign from office following recent remarks demeaning sexual harassment victims, Reps. Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood), Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) and Michele Lepore-Hagan (D-Youngstown) said Thursday.

GOVERNOR

Regarding his future, Gov. John Kasich told those at Wednesday's Ohio Associated Press 2018 Legislative and Political Preview Session, "In terms of running for president, I don't know what I'm doing next week. ... Here's what I do know, I don't know what I'm doing at the end of my term. ... I do want to be a voice in favor of immigration. I do want to be a voice in favor of trade. I want to be a voice in getting this country back together again and stopping all the fighting. ... What road that's going to take, I just don't know."

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Pamela M. Mowry of Ashland (Ashland County) reappointed to the North Central State College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Jan. 25, 2018, and ending Jan. 16, 2021.
- Gregory M. Murphy, P.E., MBA of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Power Siting Board for a term beginning Jan. 29, 2018, and ending Jan. 10, 2022.
- William G. Stanley, MFS of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Water Development Authority for a term beginning Jan. 29, 2018, and ending June 30, 2024.
- Kevin Crist of Athens (Athens County), Tammy L. Eallonardo of Chillicothe (Ross County), Jennifer Klein of Columbus (Franklin County), and Clifford L. Mason of Hebron (Licking County) reappointed to the State Emergency Response Commission for terms beginning Jan. 31, 2018, and ending Jan. 13, 2020.
- James "Jim" Samuel of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Wildlife Council for a term beginning Feb. 1, 2018, and ending Jan. 31, 2022.

- Michael J. Staley of Olmsted Township (Cuyahoga County) to the Ohio Private Investigation and Security Services Commission for a term beginning Feb. 1, 2018, and ending Dec. 31, 2022.
- Jay C. Beighley of Granville (Licking County), Brian E. Simms of Westerville (Franklin County), and Sheriff Mark Wasylshyn of Bowling Green (Wood County) reappointed to the Ohio Private Investigation and Security Services Commission for terms beginning Feb. 1, 2018, and ending Dec. 31, 2022.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Malnutrition Prevention Commission on Monday discussed 15 proposed recommendations dealing with education, data and prevention models. The commission, created in 131-HB580 (Johnson), is required to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the governor and General Assembly by Wednesday, March 21. Commission Chair Dr. Mary Kate Francis said the group's final report and recommendations will receive a vote during the commission's last scheduled meeting on Monday, Feb. 26.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

Home sales activity and prices set records last year, according to the Ohio Association of Realtors. The state saw 151,748 sales in 2017, 1.9 percent higher than 2016's 148,952. The average sales price of \$172,870 was 5.7 percent higher than 2016's average of \$163,510.

INSURANCE

Flanked by supporters from the Single-Payer Action Network of Ohio (SPAN), Rep. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) told the House Insurance Committee Wednesday that her sponsored HB440 (Fedor-Kent) would enact a single-payer health care system across the state that she characterized as "necessary for the health and wellbeing of Ohioans," adding that the state's health care system must meet "human rights standards."

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court has released a new bench card to strengthen courts' response to the intersection of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual violence. The reference guide, developed by the Supreme Court's Domestic Violence Program, seeks to better educate the judicial branch on state laws that target human trafficking.

The Ohio Supreme Court announced Tuesday that its Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) Board has elected leadership for 2018. Renisa Dorner, a partner at Spengler Nathanson in Toledo, will serve as chair, becoming the first woman elected in that role. She served as vice chair last year. Ted Mohler, an attorney at Nationwide Insurance, also from Toledo, will serve as vice chair.

The Ohio Supreme Court Board of Professional Conduct has certified a four-count disciplinary complaint against sitting Justice Pat DeWine for an alleged "appearance of impropriety" in electing not to recuse himself from Court cases involving the office of his father, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Republican candidate for governor.

LOBBYISTS

Governmental Policy Group, Inc. and RH Resources is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Located in downtown Columbus, Governmental Policy Group, Inc. and RH Resources opened their first office on Feb. 1, 1988. The group's staff has over 100 years of combined political experience in representing its clients before the state's legislative leaders.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A special audit released Tuesday details almost \$1 million in illegal spending in the village of Mt. Sterling, capping a two-year investigation that brought criminal charges against four now-convicted former administrators and employees, the Ohio Auditor of State's office said. The review was sparked in early 2016 when Madison County law enforcement officials alerted the state auditor's office to an alleged theft involving village property. In the months that followed, state auditors and investigators uncovered extensive corruption dating back to 2012 that revolved around former Village Administrator Joseph Johnson.

MARIJUANA

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) on Wednesday released an updated medical marijuana dispensary applicant list.

PENSIONS

A union for school employees this week sued the state and the School Employees Retirement System (SERS) over a freeze in cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), alleging the funding difficulties that drove it arose from poor investment decisions and "extravagant" payments to actuaries and investment professionals, among other claims. SERS' attorneys are reviewing the case, "but we believe that all actions taken by SERS were legal and prudent with regard to the COLA changes," system spokesman Tim Barbour wrote in an email.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

Congressional redistricting discussions between lawmakers and members of the Fair Districts=Fair Elections Coalition continued throughout most of the week including late into Wednesday evening, but an agreement remained elusive. On Tuesday, Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) did present a substitute version of SJR 5 (Huffman) during the Senate Government Oversight and Reform

Committee meeting but no action was taken on it this week. With negotiations thought to continue over the weekend, legislators appear to be pushing final action up to the Feb. 7 deadline for their putting an issue on the May ballot.

TAXATION

The Ohio Department of Taxation began accepting 2017 state income tax returns on Monday, Jan. 29. More than five million Ohio taxpayers will file a return by the end of the filing season on Tuesday, April 17.

TECHNOLOGY

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine announced Friday that his Advisory Group on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) has issued its final report, which includes a model policy for use by law enforcement.

The attorney general's Cybersecurity Advisory Board and CyberOhio initiative are closely watching this week's hearing on "safe harbor" cybersecurity bill SB220 (Hackett-Bacon) for potential opposition to the proposal, AG officials said at Monday's meeting of the advisory board. The legislation -- board members' and CyberOhio's top priority heading into 2018 -- would provide a legal defense against tort actions around data breaches for businesses that enact the cybersecurity program envisioned in the bill.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Cities and wireless companies appear to have worked out differences they had on small cell wireless technology, but Ohio's cable companies said Tuesday new legislation needs revisions before it can gain their support. Cities and wireless companies brought forth H B478 (LaTourette-Smith) to enable deployment of small cell technology, which is needed for the upgrade of networks to 5G capabilities. Previously, the two sides had been at odds, with municipalities having sued to block small cell laws passed in SB 331 (Peterson).

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) approved additional funding for 12 construction projects in Ohio. The new funding commitments total \$58.8 million, according to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

The House Transportation and Public Safety Committee Wednesday took invited testimony regarding connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV) and the state's preparation for them from Senior Managing Director Kristi Tanner of JobsOhio, Executive Director Randy Cole of the Ohio

Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission, Market Development Manager Thomas Huie of 3M Connected Road Group and Executive Director James Barna of the newly minted DriveOhio.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) on Wednesday accepted the results of FirstEnergy's wholesale auction, which will ultimately determine its standard service offer (SSO) through May 2021.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

State agencies and public universities will see another 7.8 percent rate cut from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) thanks to Friday's Board of Directors vote. The reduction -- agencies and universities/hospitals' sixth in as many years -- follows the Actuarial Committee recommendation for a 12 percent decrease in private employer premiums that goes before the full board in February. The cut to state agencies' pay-as-you-go program is expected to yield total premiums of \$37.4 million in the next fiscal year.

Thirty-nine Ohio fire departments will share \$376,517 in grants from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) under a new program to reduce firefighters' exposure to toxic environmental elements, the bureau announced Tuesday.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

HB276 THREATENING UTILITY WORKERS (Rep. Jeffrey Rezabek, Rep. Dave Greenspan) To expand the offense of aggravated menacing to prohibit threatening a utility worker with intent to obstruct the operation of a utility.

Vote 94-3

HB279 JOHN GLENN HOME-HISTORIC SITE (Rep. Brian Hill, Rep. Cliff Rosenberger) To require the Ohio History Connection to designate John Glenn's childhood home as a state historic site.

Vote 97-0

HB281 BROADBAND EXPANSION PROGRAM (Rep. Rick Carfagna) To establish the residential broadband expansion program within the Development Services Agency to award matching grants for last mile broadband expansion in municipal corporations and townships and to make an appropriation.

Vote 92-5

HB300 STATE ID-DISABLED PERSONS (Rep. John Barnes, Jr.) To provide that any nondriver identification card that is issued to a resident of Ohio who is permanently or irreversibly disabled must be issued with a 15-year expiration date

and to exempt such cardholders who are also unemployed from the identification card fees.

Vote 97-0

- HB341** JUDGES-PUBLIC RECORDS EXEMPTION (Rep. Stephen Huffman, Rep. Jack Cera) To include judges as individuals whose residential and familial information is exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law, and whose addresses public offices, upon request, must redact from records available to the general public on the internet.

Vote 92-2

- HB430** SALES TAX EXEMPTION-OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION (Rep. Tim Schaffer) To expand the scope of a sales and use tax exemption for certain kinds of property used in the production of oil and gas.

Vote 85-12

- HB462** FOR-PROFIT HOSPITAL CLOSURE (Rep. Kirk Schuring, Rep. Thomas West) To require that a for-profit hospital and its affiliated health care facilities in certain counties follow specified procedures before ceasing operations or closing, and to declare an emergency.

Vote 84-12, Emergency Clause 88-8

- SB70** CHILD SUPPORT CHANGES (Sen. William Coley) To amend the child support laws.

Vote 96-1

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

- HB145** IMPAIRED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (Rep. Stephen Huffman, Rep. Robert Sprague) To provide for the establishment of a confidential program for the treatment of certain impaired practitioners and to declare an emergency.

House Does Concur 92-4, Emergency Clause 92-5

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

- HB362** HIGHWAY PATROL RETIREMENT (Rep. Rick Carfagna, Rep. Dan Ramos) To revise the law governing the State Highway Patrol Retirement System.

Vote 32-0

- HB52** DEED SOLICITATION REGULATION (Rep. Jeffrey Rezabek) To regulate the solicitation of certain deeds.

Vote 32-0

- HB165** MONTH DESIGNATION-CONGENITAL CYTOMEGALOVIRUS AWARENESS (Rep. Anne Gonzales, Rep. Margaret Conditt) To designate May as "Congenital Cytomegalovirus Awareness Month."

Vote 32-0

HB252 MONTH DESIGNATION-BLOOD DONOR AWARENESS (Rep. Stephen Huffman) To designate the month of January as "Blood Donor Awareness Month."

Vote 32-0