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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.

BALLOT ISSUES

Proponents of a proposal to require the state to issue bonds to pay for clean energy projects have returned to the Attorney General for the sixth time with new language for a constitutional issue. The last time the group Yes for Ohio's Energy Future submitted its proposal, the Ohio Ballot Board split it into two separate issues, despite having certified previous issues as one. The proposal would require the General Assembly to issue \$1.3 billion in general obligation bonds each year for 10 years to pay for energy infrastructure capital improvement projects, as well as consumer and business energy cost reduction and jobs training programs in the clean energy field.

A new group has filed a proposed constitutional amendment with the Attorney General's office that would place new limits on Ohio legislators, including restricting their base pay to no greater than Ohio's median household income. The proposed amendment was brought by Ethics First - You

Decide Ohio, a group that said it wants to "improve the ethical behavior of state legislators." It would lower the base pay for legislators to the median household income beginning in 2019. Ohio's current median household income is \$49,644, while the base pay for legislators is \$60,584, although committee chair and leadership positions pay more.

Attorney General Mike DeWine now has three petitions to legalize medical marijuana in Ohio as pro-marijuana advocates continue to split on how it should be done. The newest submission, known as the Medicinal Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Act, is taking a bare-bones approach to legalizing marijuana in the state. It is being brought by former members of the Ohio Rights Group, which had been advocating for legalized medical marijuana and had submitted previous petitions but had never collected enough signatures to put their proposal before voters.

FY16-17 BUDGET

State revenues continue coming in just short of estimates, with February tax receipts running \$2.2 million or 0.2 percent below estimates for the month. For the year-to-date, revenues are that same percentage under -- 0.2 percent -- for a total shortfall on the year so far of \$22.7 million. This is according to preliminary revenue figures released Monday by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

The city of Wilmington has survived the loss of DHL Express' Ohio operations long enough to land another big prize: Amazon.com's entry in the air freight business alongside Air Transport Services Group Inc. (ATSG). Headquartered in Clinton County, ATSG inked a formal agreement last Wednesday to lease Amazon Fulfillment Services, Inc. 20 of its cargo jets for the online retailer to ship packages to U.S. customers.

EDUCATION

During the state superintendent's update to the State Board of Education, members expressed concerns over discrepancies in scores of online versus paper assessment test takers reflected in newly released school report card data.

ELECTIONS 2016

A national voting rights group filed a lawsuit in Franklin County arguing that Secretary of State Jon Husted has denied 17-year-old Ohio citizens the right to vote in next week's presidential primary. Later, Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders' (I-VT) campaign said it had filed a suit against Husted in federal court. Under Ohio law, 17-year-olds who will turn 18 before the General Election are allowed to cast ballots in the primary for candidates that will be moving on to the General Election ballot. Husted's office has said that because voters are not directly voting for a presidential candidate, but instead for delegates who will nominate a candidate at their respective party's national convention, a 17-year-old voter cannot cast a ballot in the presidential race. Husted's office argues that it is Ohio law and was precedent under previous secretaries of state.

Secretary of State Jon Husted released a statement Tuesday clarifying how delegates will appear on the March 15 Republican presidential primary ballot and how they will be awarded according to Republican Party rules. "Traditionally, Ohio Republicans have awarded at-large delegates and awarded district delegates. So there were two contests on the ballot. In late 2015, the Republican Party decided to change how it awards delegates in Ohio to a winner takes all process. The Republican Party chairman has clarified that the rules for awarding delegates will be based on the winner of the at-large delegate contest. Both contests will be counted. But the awarding of delegates is based solely on the first question. Essentially we are required by law to have both contests, but the awarding of delegates under Republican Party rules is based in the first question."

Former President Bill Clinton spoke to a crowd of hundreds in Columbus last Wednesday as part of a swing through Ohio for his wife's presidential campaign in advance of the state's primary next Tuesday, March 15. He also had events in Chillicothe and Dayton.

GAMING

A milder February brought gamblers to Ohio's casinos and racinos, with revenues up over the previous year. According to the Ohio Casino Control Commission, the four casinos brought in \$72.1 million in revenue, which was up from February 2015, when the casinos earned \$67.5 million. The total was also up from January of this year, when revenues were \$65.5 million.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) selected former clerk of the Ohio House of Representatives Laura Clemens as the new executive director, succeeding William Carleton, who announced his retirement earlier this month.

CSRAB also approved recommendations to further improve security at the Ohio Statehouse. X-ray equipment will be installed in the coming months. Once installed, CSRAB personnel will screen all bags entering the Ohio Statehouse at the three public entrances.

GOVERNOR

Individuals wishing to attend Gov. John Kasich's 2016 "State of the State" address on Wednesday, April 6 in Marietta can now register for the random ticket lottery at <http://governor.ohio.gov/Tickets>. The event begins at 7 p.m. and will be held at the newly renovated Peoples Bank Theatre.

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Gwendolyn J. Harshaw of Gahanna (Franklin County) to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning March 4, 2016, and ending Oct. 26, 2018.
- Joel A. Miller of Napoleon (Henry County) to the Northwest State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning March 4, 2016, and ending June 9, 2021.
- George R. Klein of Akron (Summit County) reappointed to the Wildlife Council for a term beginning March 7, 2016 and ending Jan. 31, 2020.

- Larry E. Woods of Hilliard (Franklin County) to the State Auctioneers Commission for a term beginning March 8, 2016 and ending Oct. 9, 2018.
- Peter G. Margaritis of Reynoldsburg (Licking County) reappointed to the Ohio War Orphans Scholarship Board for a term beginning March 9, 2016 and ending Dec. 31, 2019.
- Roger M. Synenberg of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) to the Ohio Public Defender Commission for a term beginning March 9, 2016 and ending Jan. 12, 2018.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Kasich administration will pursue mid-biennium review (MBR) legislation addressing the local health assessment and planning process, according to Office of Health Transformation (OHT) Director Greg Moody. Moody was one of several presenters at the first meeting of the Legislative Committee on Public Health Futures at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) last Thursday. The committee, which was created in HB 64 (R. Smith), selected Sen. Dave Burke (R-Marysville) as chair, Hamilton County Health Commissioner Tim Ingram as vice chair and Rep. Dan Ramos (D-Lorain) as secretary.

MID-BIENNIUM REVIEW

Sen. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville) introduced what is now the third MBR bill last Thursday. This one, SB 293, addresses the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and includes a merger of Ohio State Parks and the Division of Watercraft.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

No legislative activity to report.