



GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.

RH RESOURCES

17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245

COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413

PHONE: 614-461-9335

FAX: 614-461-9336



Week in Review

April 27, 2018

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

The Ohio Pharmacists Association (OPA) announced a new statewide Opiate Task Force at its annual meeting Friday in an effort to educate the public and health professions about the dangers of abusing not only prescription-grade opioids but, increasingly, "counterfeit" pain pills laced with fentanyl. OPA Executive Director Ernie Boyd said pharmacists are seeking an expanded role in alerting the public at large about the proper purchase, use and disposal of prescription drugs.

A recent study from research firm IQVIA showed that the total volume of opioids prescribed by doctors in the United States has decreased by 29 percent from a 2011 peak, and it appears to be continuing its downward trend. According to "Medicine Use and Spending in the U.S.: A Review of 2017 and Outlook to 2022," opioid prescriptions skyrocketed in 1992 from an average prescription of about 22 pills, or 134 morphine milligram equivalents (MMEs) per adult, to a peak of 72 pills or 1,011 MMEs per adult in 2011. Usage has since declined to 52 pills or 676 MMEs per adult.

According to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO), Ohio continues to face a quandary in managing its share of the nation's opioid crisis: an overdose death rate that continues to rise despite increased state funding and prioritized policy initiatives designed to address it. In an effort to help legislators and others understand the current strengths and gaps in the state's plans to curb rates of overdose and addiction, HPIO compiled and analyzed 193 changes to state addiction policies from 2013 through 2017 in its "Ohio Addiction Policy Inventory and Scorecard," where it rated measures on their efficacy and adherence to evidence-based criteria.

In a phone call with reporters Wednesday, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) detailed his latest legislation to send grant money to state and local law enforcement agencies to purchase drug scanning devices that would detect potent synthetic opioids like fentanyl, thereby shielding officers from exposure to those substances. Brown's "Providing Officers with Electronic Resources Act" (POWER Act) would build upon the senator's recently passed INTERDICT Act, which sent similar drug scanning devices to customs and border patrol agents. The POWER Act is co-sponsored by fellow Ohioan U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH).

The federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) will sponsor another National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 28, to allow safe disposal of leftover medications. Those interested can you use their ZIP Code or city, county and state to search for nearby drug takeback sites at <http://tinyurl.com/y72svtw2> .

Ohio University (OU) has created a group to address the opioid epidemic in the state and the region, the university announced Thursday. The OU Opioid Task Force -- composed of community members and university faculty, staff and administrators from the Athens and regional campuses -- will join OU's public and private partners to "collectively elevate the impact of the region's opioid-related initiatives," the university said.

AGRICULTURE

Ohio companies engaged in maple sap extraction could be authorized for a property tax exemption under bipartisan legislation introduced in the House. Reps. John Patterson (D-Jefferson) and Sarah LaTourette (R-Chesterland) said HB606 aims to boost local maple syrup producers and businesses while putting recognized best practices in place for sustainable forest management throughout the state.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Recently passed legislation in Arizona designed to facilitate innovation in the financial technology sector could inspire a similar move in Ohio. Attorney General Mike DeWine's CyberOhio Advisory Board agreed to take a closer look at the model passed by the Arizona Legislature and signed into

law in March. The board discussed the bill during its meeting Wednesday and its potential to lure companies that are looking to innovate to Ohio.

Attorney General Mike DeWine announced applications are open for students interesting in serving on his office's Teen Ambassador Board. Ohio high school students who will be juniors or seniors during the 2018-2019 school year are eligible to apply. The deadline is Thursday, May 31. Additional information about the board and application forms can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/ya3ftvbw> .

AUDITOR OF STATE

Two Medicaid providers are on the hook for a combined \$3 million-plus after Auditor of State Dave Yost's office identified numerous instances of unauthorized payments. Yost's office said Tuesday that America's Home Health Services, based in Columbus, owes \$2.13 million including interest for payments accrued from 2013 to 2016. Last week, Yost's office accused Gardenia Home Health Care, based in Whitehall, of receiving overpayments that, with interest, total \$979,064.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The Ohio Society of CPAs (OSCPA) has joined Ohio Business Competes, a coalition backing passage of anti-discrimination laws that would add protections against discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation in housing, employment and public accommodations. The coalition backs such state-level policies "to attract from the widest possible talent pool to grow Ohio's economy." A bill to expand the discrimination laws, HB160 (Antonio), is now pending in the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee.

CORRECTIONS

Six Central and Southwest Ohio men face federal charges of conspiring to possess drugs with the intent to distribute them after an investigation by local, state and national law enforcement of alleged smuggling into London Correctional Institution (LCI).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ohio policymakers should move to "connect the entire state to high-speed Internet" as part of a larger strategy to invest more public dollars into Ohio's economy, according to a new position paper from left-leaning organizations Policy Matters Ohio (PMO) and Innovation Ohio (IO). "A Winning Economic Agenda for Ohio's Working Families," released on Tuesday and touted by PMO Executive Director Amy Hanauer and IO Education Fund President and CEO Keary McCarthy during a press conference call, says nearly a million Ohioans -- mostly in rural areas -- currently lack access to broadband Internet services.

EDUCATION

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio sent a letter to Sidney City Schools saying it had received complaints that Sidney High School students were forced to attend a sectarian prayer rally on a day when students around the nation were walking out to protest gun violence.

The Ohio Department of Education heard last summer from a person who claimed to be a former Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) employee and shared allegations that the now-defunct online charter school data on student participation was "suspect."

Sharing bus maintenance duties would save neighboring Eastern Ohio school districts money, Auditor Dave Yost's office said in a study released Tuesday. The study was requested by schools in Belmont County and conducted under 131-HB5 (Kunze-Koehler), a law passed in 2016 allowing the auditor's office to do feasibility studies on sharing services and facilities among state and local government agencies.

Attorneys for Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) sparred Wednesday on the meaning of the word "final" and whether the online charter school was due an administrative appeal of the state's determination that it over-reported enrollment figures. Tenth District Court of Appeals Judges Susan Brown, Jennifer Brunner and Betsy Luper Schuster presided over oral arguments in one of ECOT's multiple lawsuits against the state, this one arguing the State Board of Education's enrollment findings fall under the administrative appeal processes of Ohio Revised Code Chapter 119.

Legislation introduced Thursday would require the State Board of Education (SBOE) to include in-depth fetal development information in its health curriculum and compel the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to develop and distribute materials that "clearly and consistently state that abortion kills a living human being." Rep. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg) told *Hannah News* that his HB619 would require the SBOE, in conjunction with ODH, to create a model curriculum providing "scientifically verifiable information" regarding various gestational intervals. According to the bill, neither agency is allowed to consult with any organization that provides abortions when developing the program. The bill would appropriate \$1 million over two years to develop the program and materials.

There are many areas of the country, especially in Ohio, that could support charter schools but may not have those options for students and their families, a new report from pro-school choice think tank, the Fordham Institute, shows. The report, "Charter School Deserts: High-Poverty Neighborhoods with Limited Educational Options," released Thursday and prepared by Miami University professor Andrew Saultz, examined areas around the country that could potentially benefit from education options other than traditional public schools.

ELECTIONS 2018

Secretary of State Jon Husted said Tuesday that 171,954 absentee ballots were requested by mail and in person for the Tuesday, May 8 primary election by the close of business Friday. Of the ballots requested, 63,253 have been cast. Husted said that at the same point in absentee voting in 2014, more than 155,000 absentee ballots had been requested, and over 73,000 ballots had already been cast.

Democratic attorney general candidate Steve Dettelbach said Tuesday that reports of a whistleblower investigation show Auditor Dave Yost, Dettelbach's likely November opponent, has not properly conducted an investigation into closed Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT).

My School, My Choice Monday released a primary election voter guide that was compiled through a candidate survey so its members and supporters could better understand the positions of legislative candidates regarding school choice issues. The survey was sent to every Ohio candidate for state senator, state representative, and every candidate for every Ohio statewide office.

Attorney General Mike DeWine enters the Tuesday, May 8 primary with a big money lead over his opponents in both the Republican gubernatorial primary and potentially the general election, according to new campaign finance reports filed Thursday. Meanwhile, Democrats in down-ticket races outraised their Republican counterparts, but still trailed in the overall funds in their bank accounts. The Republican Caucuses of the House and Senate continued to add to their cash accounts over their Democratic counterparts.

Left-leaning pollster Public Policy Polling (PPP) Thursday said it had polled 12 congressional district races in Republican leaning districts to test whether this year's mid-term elections will be a wave for Democrats, and said they all came back competitive, including Ohio's 1st District.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The gubernatorial campaign of Richard Cordray announced the endorsements of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson; Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish; Lorain Mayor Chase Riteauer; Cleveland Heights Mayor Carol Roe; Maple Heights Mayor Annette Blackwell; Brook Park Mayor Mike Gamella; Pepper Pike Mayor Richard Bain; Cleveland City Council President Kevin Kelley; and Cleveland City Council members Kevin Bishop, Anthony Brancatelli, Phyllis Cleveland, Kevin Conwell, Anthony Hairston, Basheer Jones, Brian Kazy, Martin Keane, Kerry McCormack and Matt Zone; Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz; Akron Mayor Daniel Horrigan; Canton Mayor Thomas Bernabei; Chillicothe Mayor Luke Feeney; Athens Mayor Steve Patterson; Lakewood Mayor Michael Summers; Lima Mayor David Berger; Barberton Mayor Bill Judge; Beachwood Mayor Martin Horowitz; Broadview Heights Mayor Samuel Alai; Cuyahoga Falls Mayor Donald Walters; Elyria Mayor Holly Brinda; Euclid Mayor Kirsten Holzheimer Gail; Independence Mayor Anthony Togliati; Massillon Mayor Kathy Catazaro-Perry; North Royalton Mayor Robert Stefanik; Parma

Heights Mayor Michael Byre; Sheffield Village Mayor John Hunter; Solon Mayor Ed Kraus; South Euclid Mayor Georgine Welo; and Springfield Mayor Warren Copeland.

- The gubernatorial campaign of Joe Schiavoni announced the endorsements of University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan; Newburgh Heights Mayor Trevor Elkins; Brooklyn Mayor Katie Gallagher; and Bedford Mayor Stan Koci.
- The congressional campaign of Zach Scott announced the endorsement of Transport Workers Union Local 208.
- The re-election campaign of Rep. Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) announced endorsements by the Northern Ohio Firefighters Association and the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council.
- President Donald Trump announced on Twitter that Jim Renacci "has my full endorsement" for U.S. Senate.
- The Service Employees International Union District 1199 endorsed Richard Cordray for governor, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) for re-election, Danny O'Connor for the 12th Congressional District and Kenny Yuko for Ohio Senate District 25.
- FreedomWorks for America endorsed Christina Hagan for the 16th Congressional District.
- The campaign of Melanie Leneghan announced the endorsement of the Family Research Council Action PAC for the 12th Congressional District.
- The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors endorsed Issue 1, the May 8 ballot proposal to reform the way Ohio's congressional districts are drawn.
- National Federation of Independent Business/Ohio's political action committee endorsed Rep. Larry Householder (R-Glenford) for re-election to the 72nd Ohio House District.
- The *Plain Dealer* endorsed U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate.
- The gubernatorial campaign of Mary Taylor announced the endorsement of Pastor JC Church.
- The *Findlay Courier* endorsed Mike Gibbons in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate.
- The Communications Workers of America Local 4502 endorsed Danny O'Connor for the 12th Congressional District.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate continued its recent downward trend in March, inching down to 4.4 percent from 4.5 percent in February, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The rate is down more than half a percent from the 5.1 percent seen in March 2017, but still above the current national rate of 4.1 percent.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Office of the Legislative Inspector General and the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office should initiate investigations of former House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger's (R-Clarksville) resignation, two House Democrats said over the weekend. Reps. David Leland (D-Columbus) and Kristin Boggs (D-Columbus) wrote letters to Joint Legislative Ethics Committee (JLEC) Executive Director Tony

Bledsoe and Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien, saying the unprecedented situation necessitates a thorough, independent investigation.

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) received the Ohio State Bar Association's Lawyer Legislator Distinguished Service Award at the association's annual Council of Delegates meeting. Four other Ohio attorneys also received awards at the Council of Delegates meeting on Friday, April 27.

House Speaker Pro Tempore Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) has set a House Republican caucus vote on a new speaker for Tuesday, May 15, a week after primaries elections that could bring the leadership race into further focus. The full House will vote on the speaker during its Wednesday, May 16 meeting.

GOVERNOR

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Kimpton E. Williams of Waynesville (Warren County) reappointed to the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund Advisory Council for a term beginning April 20, 2018, and ending Jan. 31, 2021.
- Capt. Kevin T. Uhl of Sycamore Township (Hamilton County) to the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services for a term beginning April 20, 2018, and ending Nov. 12, 2019.
- Dasmine Wright of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Public Benefits Advisory Board for a term beginning April 20, 2018, and ending June 30, 2018.
- Austin McClain of Canton (Stark County) to serve as the student member on the Ohio University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 14, 2018 and ending May 13, 2020.
- Ryan M. Hays of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Third Frontier Advisory Board for a term beginning April 19, 2018 and ending March 14, 2021.
- Brian J. Buschur of Troy (Miami County) to the Environmental Education Council for a term beginning April 19, 2018 and ending Oct. 1, 2019.
- Michael C. Fair of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Radiation Advisory Council for a term beginning April 19, 2018 and ending Sept. 6, 2020.
- Steven M. Steinberg of Columbus (Franklin County) to the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services for a term beginning April 19, 2018 and ending Nov. 12, 2018.
- Michael A. Sieron of Dayton (Montgomery County) reappointed to the Third Frontier Advisory Board for a term beginning April 23, 2018, and ending March 14, 2021.
- Amista N. Lipot of Beverly (Washington County) to the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism for a term beginning April 23, 2018, and ending April 21, 2021.
- Rick Ritzler of Galena (Delaware County) to the Columbus State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning April 25, 2018, and ending Aug. 31, 2023.
- Amy Dingle of Dayton (Montgomery County) to the Waterways Safety Council for a term beginning April 25, 2018, and ending Jan. 30, 2021.

- Michael R. Bertolone of Concord (Lake County), Jane B. Federer of Columbus (Franklin County) and Christopher M. Shaffer of Waverly (Pike County) reappointed to the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism for terms beginning April 24, 2018, and ending April 21, 2021.
- Matthew J. Kirby of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority Investment Board for a term beginning April 24, 2018, and ending Jan. 30, 2022.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

According to a recent study from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants ate about the same number of calories as non-participants while spending less money on food than non-participants, but nutrition outcomes were worse for SNAP participants.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles) Tuesday announced that Northeast Ohio is receiving a \$329,969 grant from NeighborWorks America to develop and preserve affordable housing, revitalize and sustain neighborhoods, and create jobs. The grant is being distributed to Ravenna nonprofit Neighborhood Development Services (NDS), a member of the National NeighborWorks network.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Supreme Court heard its latest arguments Tuesday in the standoff between the General Assembly and municipalities over traffic camera laws, which legislators have sought to block with threats of withheld local government funding. The city of Toledo said a lower court was within its rights to block the state from enforcing the set-off law, but the Ohio Attorney General's Office argued that the trial court was outside its jurisdiction -- whether or not it was issuing a finding of contempt against the Legislature for attempting to skirt a previous Court injunction, or whether it was issuing a second injunction against the Legislature's new attempt to yank local funding.

A former Cleveland City Council member is facing 26 first-degree misdemeanor charges of unlawful interest in a public contract after an Ohio Ethics Commission investigation found evidence of conflict of interest in his voting record. Joe Cimperman is facing charges that he voted in favor of public contracts with a nonprofit design company that employed his wife. Cimperman sat on the council from 1997 to 2016 while the actions in question took place from 2002 to 2012.

MARIJUANA

Potential growers of medical marijuana faced off against state regulators in two court hearings Friday that addressed the state's process for awarding cultivation licenses. In one hearing, Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Kim Brown announced an expedited briefing schedule for parties to address questions of whether plaintiff CannAscend should be pressing its claims about the cultivator

license scoring process in an administrative hearing. In a separate case, Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Richard Frye and Ohio Releaf's attorney Jeffrey Lipps both questioned whether the potential addition of a previously-denied cultivator applicant would force out one of the 12 provisional license recipients.

Despite objections from the two Democrats on the panel Monday, the Controlling Board approved more funding for the medical marijuana control program after assurances from the Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) that it wants to be transparent with the program. The request from the agency sought an increase in the appropriation authority for FY19 by nearly \$5.2 million, which is above the \$1.5 million appropriated in the biennial budget.

The woman who helped make the rollout of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's (BWC) CORE computer system a success will take her talents to the Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) to assist the launch of the state computer system that will monitor Ohio's medical marijuana program. BWC Administrator/CEO Sarah Morrison told the bureau's board of directors Thursday that Shadya Yazback, the bureau's chief of policy analysis, technology and governance, will be on temporary assignment to DOC.

House Speaker Pro Tempore Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) has appointed patient representative Robert Bridges to the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC), according to Thursday's *House Journal*.

NATURAL RESOURCES

With 241 cities, villages and townships earning the "Tree City USA" designation, Ohio marked its 37th year in a row in 2017 as the state with the most such communities, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

Ohio's youth hunters harvested 1,860 game birds during the state's spring wild turkey season, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) announced Monday.

POVERTY

Speakers at the Columbus Metropolitan Club's "Bridges out of Poverty" discussion Wednesday agreed that systemic change in generational poverty will require a concerted effort by those helping the poor and those trying to emerge from poverty. CMC hosted a talk by former NBA star and author Lawrence Funderburke, Bridges out of Poverty author Philip DeVol, and President and CEO Lisa Courtice of the United Way of Central Ohio, who moderated the event.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission approved numerous school renovation and construction projects and discussed plans for new facilities at Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare Hospital during its Thursday meeting.

TAXATION

Tax breaks for the coal industry and agriculture received most of the specific testimony at Wednesday's hearing of the Tax Expenditure Review Committee, with Policy Matters Ohio Research Director Zach Schiller giving lengthy general testimony as well. The tax exemptions for tangible personal property used or consumed in agriculture and mining received testimony from Mike Cope, president of the Ohio Coal Association, and Tony Seegers, director of state policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

UTILITIES

The Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) has scheduled a new round of hearings this summer for the Icebreaker Windpower proposal, which seeks to build a wind farm approximately eight to 10 miles off the shore of Cleveland in Lake Erie.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Gov. John Kasich and Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Administrator/CEO Sarah Morrison announced a \$1.5 billion employer rebate Tuesday based on strong investment returns, becoming the administration's fourth "billion dollars back" since 2013. It will be finalized by the BWC Board of Directors at its May meeting.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE:

No legislative activity to report.

HOUSE:

No legislative activity to report.