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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

While the broad details regarding its recommendations are in place, the Attorney General's Insurer Task Force on Opioid Reduction met for a potentially final time Wednesday to discuss lingering issues in its 15-recommendation report set to be released by the end of April. Deputy Chief Counsel Jonathan Fulkerson and Assistant Attorney General Lauren Emery led Wednesday's meeting, going down the list, item-by-item, and asking the panel of health insurance professionals what questions and concerns they still have with the recommendations.

AGRICULTURE

Ohio farmers are already experiencing negative consequences as a result of China threatening to add soybeans to the list of American products facing 25 percent tariffs in response to Trump administration tariffs on Chinese products, Ohio Soybean Association Executive Director Kirk Merritt told *Hannah News* on Wednesday.

FY19-20 CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS

Gov. John Kasich touted funding in the \$2.6 billion capital budget that he signed on Friday while urging lawmakers to continue the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act after he leaves office. Kasich signed HB529 (Ryan) during a ceremony held at Twin Valley Behavioral Health Hospital in Columbus. The bill includes \$112 million to replace the main hospital at Twin Valley.

FY18-19 BUDGET

Tax revenues were 2 percent ahead of estimates in March after stronger sales tax collections outstripped a shortfall in income tax collections, according to preliminary figures released Thursday by the Office of Budget and Management.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

The next administration must do more to support Ohio's beleaguered foster care system and inadequate kinship support system to better serve the state's most vulnerable children, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) said this week. In a new report, "Foster Hope for Ohio's Children: Policy Solutions for a System in Crisis," PCSAO suggests a plan for dealing with the strains being placed on the state's children services system.

Advocates donned in superhero capes and masks sat alongside everyday audience members in the Statehouse Atrium Thursday for the kickoff of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, which will last through April 2018, as designated by HR390 (LaTourette, Boyd) and SR408 (Kunze). The event, organized by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF), aimed to portray "everyday heroes" as the real superheroes in the lives of children and parents, whether they take the form of mentors, teachers, volunteers or any other individuals willing to offer support to families through impromptu babysitting, or merely a kind word.

CORRECTIONS

The Council of State Government's (CSG) Ohio Justice Reinvestment Project 2.0 (JR2.0) gathered at the Statehouse for its second meeting Thursday following a five-month hiatus, during which researchers have amassed state-based data on a number of criminal justice topics, including violent crime. It was a major focus of the day's discussion, with some good news and bad news for Ohio and its major cities, depending on the region of the state.

EDUCATION

Currently, the State Board of Education is not permitted to adopt statewide health education standards. That would change under a bill introduced Thursday by Sen. Vernon Sykes (D-Akron). SB287 requires the State Board of Education to develop and adopt health education standards before July 1, 2019, establishing that they do so using the same methods they use for any other subject matter.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is accepting intent-to-apply notices through Friday, April 6 from community schools interested in a share of federal grant funding intended to expand high-performing charter schools in the state. A link for the intent-to-apply notice as well as application

materials and other information are available at <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Charter-Schools-Program-Grant-CSP>.

The State Board of Education's Executive Committee voted unanimously Monday to recommend a new tool for evaluating the superintendent of public instruction, as well as changes to the process by which school districts may take on additional debt.

A recent report from think tank The Early Childhood Data Collaborative analyzing various states' approaches to publicly funded early childhood education indicates that Ohio is making strides towards an early education and child care system designed to provide access to all children, regardless of socioeconomic status.

OhioMeansJobs is preparing to make improvements to its website, including creation of resource pages for K-5 and 6-8 grade bands, and is seeking feedback from educators on the plans. A survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018Survey_OMJK-12.

The State Board of Education's panel exploring report card reforms started a series of sessions Tuesday where it will review particular components of the state's measures of local school districts, then break into small groups for discussions of changes. The group reviewed the Achievement section of the report card Tuesday, with Ohio Department of Education accountability official Chris Woolard briefing members on the mechanics of the Performance Index and Indicators Met, the two measures that determine the overall Achievement grade districts receive.

ELECTIONS 2018

While other groups have issued their endorsements for governor in the upcoming primary on Tuesday, May 8, the Republican Liberty Caucus of Ohio said it was only issuing a recommendation, not a full endorsement. The group said it had gone through a "rigorous endorsement process" including interviews as well as reviewing prior voting and records of positions. But the group said it did not feel any one candidate "stood out as one that would restore individual liberty in Ohio." It said it does "feel that some candidates are more dangerous to liberty than others." The group said it is recommending Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor for governor.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The gubernatorial campaign of Mary Taylor announced the endorsement of the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio.
- The U.S. Senate campaign of Mike Gibbons announced the endorsement of the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio.
- The congressional campaign of Zach Scott announced the endorsement of Communications Workers of America Local 4320.
- The auditor campaign of Zack Space announced the endorsements of the Ohio Education Association and Ohio Federation of Teachers.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) has put forward a wide-ranging legislative proposal seeking to address Lake Erie phosphorous, economic development, regulatory reform and other environmental protection issues. The agency has identified Rep. Steve Arndt (R-Port Clinton)

as a potential sponsor. He said details of what he'll introduce are still under discussion, and that his legislation will not mirror exactly the EPA's draft plan.

GAMING/GAMBLING

One of Ohio's seven racetracks is being sold after MGM Growth Properties LLC (MGP) announced it has agreed to purchase the Hard Rock Rocksino at Northfield Park for \$1.06 billion from Milstein Entertainment LLC.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Updated data released in March by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) showed a slight uptick of one-half percent in the proportion of state legislators who are women, reaching 25.4 percent. "This represents a noteworthy change from the 2017 session's ratio of 24.9 percent, as the share of women legislators has finally reached one-quarter nationwide," NCSL said on its website.

Legislation providing an appropriation for new voting machines will likely be considered on the floor next week, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said Tuesday. Sen. Frank LaRose's (R-Copley) SB135 could be considered along with as many as a dozen other bills during the Senate's session on Wednesday, April 11, Obhof told reporters following the chamber's non-voting session.

Workers nationwide have lost more than \$500 million in wages due to a 2016 U.S. Department of Labor rule extending overtime pay being "effectively blocked," according to ProgressOhio Executive Director Monica Moran, but forthcoming Democratic legislation would institute the rule in Ohio if passed. Reps. Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) and Kent Smith (D-Euclid) announced the bill at a Tuesday press conference, where they were joined by Moran and Policy Matters Ohio (PMO) researcher Hannah Halbert.

GOVERNOR

In addition to signing the capital budget, HB529 (Ryan), on Friday, Gov. John Kasich also signed SB226 (Bacon), making the August sales tax holiday permanent; HB24 (Ginter), regarding tax exemptions for veterans organizations; HB98 (Duffey-Boggs), regarding career information for students; HB194 (Johnson-Craig), regarding license plates; SB22 (Peterson), tax conformity legislation; and SB143 (Eklund), which designates Sept. 25 as "International Ataxia Awareness Day."

Gov. John Kasich Thursday signed legislation that will allow victims of dating violence to get protection orders against their abusers, making Ohio one of the last states to do so. Rep. Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) said the issue had been a priority of hers since she arrived in the 131st General Assembly. With the signing of HB1 (Sykes-Manning), she said the state is telling victims that they are standing with them.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Jill A. Neff of Jackson (Jackson County) to the Rio Grande Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending Oct. 10, 2020, and Joshua S. Smith of Gallipolis (Gallia County) for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending Oct. 10, 2021.

- Adriana Sfalcin of Dublin (Franklin County) to the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending June 30, 2020.
- Holly M. Hollingsworth of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending July 1, 2021.
- Otto Beatty III of Columbus (Franklin County) and D. Michael Crites of Powell (Delaware County) to the Ohio Elections Commission for terms beginning March 28, 2018 and ending Dec. 31, 2022.
- Roy A. Church of Elyria (Lorain County) reappointed to the Third Frontier Advisory Board for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending March 14, 2021.
- Timothy K. Staup of Delphos (Allen County) to the Motor Vehicle Salvage Dealer's Board for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending July 31, 2019.
- Emmett M. Kelly of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) reappointed to the Tax Credit Authority for a term beginning March 28, 2018 and ending Jan. 12, 2019.
- Jennifer R. Justice of Westerville (Delaware County) to the Children's Trust Fund Board for a term beginning March 29, 2018 and ending July 2, 2018.
- Matthew J. Davis of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Ohio Business Gateway Steering Committee for a term beginning March 29, 2018 and continuing to serve at the pleasure of the governor.
- Charles L. Bills of Findlay (Hancock County) to the Owens Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning April 12, 2018 and ending Sept. 21, 2020.
- Deborah Kneuve of Columbus Grove (Putnam County) to the Board of Nursing for a term beginning March 30, 2018 and ending Dec. 31, 2021.
- Charles R. Moses of Dublin (Franklin County) to the Ohio History Connection Board of Trustees for a term beginning March 30, 2018 and ending June 26, 2019.
- James G. Minikowski of Solon (Cuyahoga County) to the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board for a term beginning March 30, 2018 and ending Oct. 10, 2020.
- Stephen W. Badenhop of Marysville (Union County) reappointed to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for a term beginning April 1, 2018 and ending March 31, 2021.
- Donald Jack Brogan of Worthington (Franklin County) to the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board for a term beginning March 30, 2018 and ending Jan. 14, 2021.
- Ronald R. Davidson of Sandusky (Erie County) reappointed to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for a term beginning April 2, 2018 and ending March 31, 2021.
- Rachel E. Bankowitz of Dayton (Montgomery County) to the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board for a term beginning April 2, 2018 and ending Jan. 14, 2021.
- Michael S. Bisesi of Westerville (Delaware County) to the Radiation Advisory Council for a term beginning April 3, 2018 and ending Sept. 6, 2019.

GREAT LAKES

Data from last spring released Monday by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) showed phosphorous loads in the Maumee River were more than double reduction targets agreed to by the U.S. and Canada. The Spring 2017 Western Lake Erie Tributary Water Monitoring Summary summarizes water quality data collected by the U.S. Geological Survey, Heidelberg University, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and Ohio EPA. It evaluates dissolved reactive phosphorous, total phosphorous and nitrogen, and monitoring stations throughout the lake basin.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Advocates for Ohio's elder care and health system communities expressed both their aspirations and hesitations about potentially expanding long-term services into Medicaid managed care at the second meeting of the Legislature's Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) Study Committee. Co-chairs Sen. Dave Burke (R-Marysville) and Rep. Mark Romanchuk (R-Mansfield) invited non-state agency members to share their perspectives on the current barriers to improving health care quality and outcomes in long term services, the best practices they've identified that promote consumer choice, redundancies in state rules and regulations, and the challenges of managed care contract terms and conditions.

Medicaid Director Barbara Sears outlined in detail plans this week to look into accusations of anti-competitive pricing by pharmacy benefit managers (PBMS).

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) joined organizations across the country Wednesday to recognize April as National Fair Housing Month and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act.

INSURANCE

Starting Tuesday, April 3, the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) is hosting dozens of meetings and seminars across the state to help senior citizens preparing to enroll in the federal Medicare program get information and assistance. A complete list of events and webcasts is available at www.insurance.ohio.gov/Consumer/OSHIIP/SitePages/WelcomeToMedicare.aspx.

Public feedback was mixed on Ohio's plan to ask the federal government for an exemption from the individual insurance mandate, the state's application for the exemption shows. ODI submitted the application for a 1332 state innovation waiver Friday following a public comment period.

ODI is the latest state agency looking to address drug prices and the role of pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) in driving them. The department issued rules Wednesday it says will provide "heightened protections for Ohio consumers related to prescription drug prices."

MARIJUANA

A lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Ohio's Medical Marijuana Control Program has been put on hold for a month, according to a staff attorney with Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judge Charles Schneider's office.

The Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP) is on track to be "fully operational" by the legal deadline but will be "limited," new program coordinator Mark Hamlin and other agency leaders told the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC) on Thursday.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The 10th District Court of Appeals has ruled that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) does not have to cede the Sawmill Wetlands to a private developer. The ruling reverses the

decision by the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, which had ruled the state must award the property to JD So Cal Ltd. for breaching its contract with the company.

The state's designated all-purpose vehicle (APV) areas are now available for use, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The APV areas are located on four state forest properties -- Maumee in Northwest Ohio, Pike and Richland Furnace in Southern Ohio and Perry in East-Central Ohio, the department said in a news release.

PEOPLE

Will Schwartz, an Ohio Legislative Service Commission staffer who specialized in education issues, is now a lobbyist for the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), the group announced Monday.

Policy Matters Ohio announced that Roland Anglin and Ashwini Sehgal have joined its board of directors. Anglin is the recently-appointed dean of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University. Sehgal is the Duncan Neuhauser Professor of Community Health Improvement and co-director of Center for Reducing Health Disparities.

The Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF) has appointed Tyler Duvelius as executive director effective immediately, the organization announced Tuesday.

PUBLIC SAFETY

More than 500 agencies -- employing 82 percent of Ohio's law enforcement officers -- are in the process of implementing Ohio's statewide police standards, according to a report issued by the Ohio Department of Public Safety's (ODPS) Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS).

TAXATION

Ohio is seventh-highest among state in terms of benefits of 2017 tax reform, a report by personal finance site WalletHub found, though middle- and high-income families in Ohio were listed as receiving a much greater share of the effects.

The Ohio Attorney General's Office reports that more consumers are reporting tax scams ahead Tax Day, Tuesday, April 17. In March, the AG Help Center logged more than 340 reports of tax scams, compared to about 160 in January and 280 in February.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

As the number of crashes caused by distracted drivers continues to climb, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) announced that they are implementing a "Distracted Driving Safety Corridor." The goal of the corridor -- which runs along I-76 and I-80 between Newton Falls Road and West Liberty Street -- is improving safety while reducing crashes, fatalities and injuries along one of Ohio's busiest stretches of interstate highway.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) plans to spend \$2.35 billion on nearly 1,000 construction projects in 2018, aiming to preserve existing roads and bridges, enhance capacity and improve safety. "Roads and bridges don't get better over time. That's why 90 cents of every dollar we're investing this year is to take care of what we have," ODOT Director Jerry Wray said in a news

release. "We're using better data and more frequent maintenance to address the small issues with our infrastructure before they become big issues."

UTILITIES

Affiliates of FirstEnergy in charge of Ohio's two nuclear power plants, as well as coal plants and other generating facilities, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection over the weekend, days after announcing intentions to shut down the nuclear plants within three years. The filing covers FirstEnergy Solutions (FES), FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company (FENOC) and subsidiaries.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) launched an official proceeding Wednesday to monitor FirstEnergy Solutions' (FES) pending bankruptcy. The development follows FES's filing for Chapter 11 reorganization last weekend.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE:

No legislative activity to report.

HOUSE:

No legislative activity to report.