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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.

EDUCATION

A new report, "A Call to Action to Improve the Quality of Full-Time Virtual Charter Public Schools" from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and the 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now, finds that too many online charter schools experience "disturbingly low performance," and says state leaders should put tougher regulations for the virtual learning model in place. The report is national in scope but includes special focus on Ohio as one of the "big three" states -- along with California and Pennsylvania -- for online charter enrollment. Together, they represent a majority of online students nationwide, the report says.

The Dropout Prevention and Recovery Study Committee, an outgrowth of charter school reform bill HB 2 (Dovilla-Roegner), started its discussions last Wednesday with an overview of the basics of dropout prevention and recovery (DOPR) charter schools in Ohio, as well as a presentation from the National Dropout Recovery Center. The committee is to recommend a definition of quality for

DOPR schools and consider the merits of funding the schools based on competency or completion measures. Buddy Harris, director of the Office of Innovation at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and his agency's representative on the committee, said recommendations are due Monday, Aug. 1.

ELECTIONS 2016

Lu Dale, a former Huber Heights councilwoman, has withdrawn from the 6th Ohio Senate District race. Montgomery County Democrats are expected to name a replacement in the coming weeks. The seat is currently held by Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering), who is running for re-election.

The race for Ohio's U.S. Senate seat remains a dead heat, with the latest Quinnipiac University poll showing Democrat Ted Strickland and incumbent U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) tied at 40 percent.

Both caucuses are looking to replace candidates in the 3rd House District race after both of the candidates who won the March primaries have withdrawn. Democrat David Walters has recently filed paperwork to withdraw from the race after winning the primary. Rep. Tim Brown (R-Bowling Green), who was running for re-election, announced last week that he will be resigning his seat to become president of the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio added 9,200 jobs in May and the state's unemployment was 5.1 percent, down from 5.2 percent in April, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The final Controlling Board meeting of FY16 saw few concerns from legislators, with just three items held during the short meeting. Among those was eventual approval for the removal of an underground storage tank at the former Scioto Juvenile Correction Facility in Delaware. Also approved without comment was the secretary of state's office paying \$1.25 million to send out unsolicited applications for absentee voter's ballots, and requests from seven agencies to increase their licensed physicians' salaries -- part of a statewide effort to align the pay scale for physicians.

GOVERNOR

In a rare veto, Gov. John Kasich Friday rejected SB 296 (Seitz), legislation that set forth new requirements for keeping the polls open past 7:30 p.m., saying that while he agrees with many of the provisions of the bill, he disagreed with not giving judges the authority to waive a bond requirement. This was Kasich's second veto of a standalone bill.

Gov. Kasich signed two executive orders last Tuesday: one dealing with the inclusion of licensed independent chemical dependency counselors as eligible Medicaid providers, and the other distributing a little more than \$6.5 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) funds.

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Jon T. Elsasser of Zoar (Tuscarawas County) to the Ohio History Connection Board of Trustees for a term beginning June 17, 2016, and ending June 26, 2017.
- Thomas F. Needles of Whitehall (Franklin County) to the Motor Vehicle Dealers Board for a term beginning June 17, 2016, and ending Oct. 4, 2017.
- Kelly D. Cole of Hamersville (Brown County) reappointed to the Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation for a term beginning June 17, 2016, and ending June 2, 2021.
- Deborah A. Vesey of Twinsburg (Summit County) to the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning June 21, 2016, and ending May 1, 2019.
- Jane E. Gerhardt of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Ohio Humanities Council for a term beginning June 21, 2016, and ending Oct. 30, 2018.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Sixteen community health centers in Ohio received a total of nearly \$6.5 million to expand integrated oral health services around the state. Nationally, the awards from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will increase oral health service capacity by allowing health centers across the nation to hire approximately 1,600 new dentists, dental hygienists, assistants, aides and technicians to treat nearly 785,000 new patients.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A divided U.S. Supreme Court upheld the University of Texas at Austin's admission program that includes race as a consideration, saying the use of the program is lawful under the U.S. Constitution.

HOUSING

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) Board announced the recipients of the 2016 Housing Tax Credit (HTC) program awards used to fund the construction, acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable housing communities in Ohio. Nearly \$31.7 million in federal housing tax credits were awarded to 41 developments that will serve families, seniors and individuals with disabilities in rural, suburban and urban areas. Selected developers claim tax credits over a 10-year period to help offset the costs associated with construction or rehabilitation of a development. In exchange for the credits, owners must maintain rents that are affordable and limit occupancy to residents with low- to moderate- incomes for up to 30 years.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx and Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther officially announced that Ohio's capital city won the "Smart City Challenge." The city will receive \$40 million from USDOT and \$10 million from Vulcan Inc.

MARIJUANA

An Ohio Supreme Court panel will issue an advisory opinion on the legal profession's engagement with medical marijuana in view of HB 523's (Huffman) recent passage at the state level and a continuing ban on marijuana use -- medical or otherwise -- at the federal level. The Board of Professional Conduct, which handles complaints against all members of the bar, including judges,

prosecutors and other public servants, will issue the nonbinding advisory opinion following a public comment period ending Monday, July 11.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A policy discussion on police body cameras at the Columbus Metropolitan Club forum veered quickly in the direction of public records and competing privacy interests, as the Ohio Newspaper Association (ONA) and general counsel for the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) of Ohio examined the issues confronting legislation before the General Assembly.

TAXATION

The Legislature's 2020 Tax Policy Study Commission heard testimony last week on the range of personal and commercial tax issues facing the state from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Society of CPAs (OSCPA), with additional comments from the Ohio Department of Taxation and Ohio History Connection on the historic preservation tax credit.

UTILITIES

Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina), citing some senators' concerns with Gov. John Kasich's selection of Democrat M. Howard Petricoff to fill the vacancy on the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), wasted little time before calling for hearings on the appointment in the Senate Public Utilities Committee.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Legislators have recessed for the summer.