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**Week in Review**

June 7, 2019

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**

Gov. Mike DeWine announced Wednesday that his RecoveryOhio initiative will invest \$11 million in federal grants over the next two years to help employers and unemployed workers overcome workforce problems related to the opioid epidemic. Funded by a National Health Emergency Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the money will support employers who hire individuals in recovery and provide job training and other services to help Ohioans recover from substance abuse and find employment.

**AGRICULTURE**

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee reported out legislation to decriminalize hemp and create a cultivation licensing program Tuesday after technical changes were made. Several witnesses also offered proponent, opponent and interested party testimony during the fifth hearing on SB57 (Hill-Huffman).

## **FY20-21 BUDGET**

The upper chamber will likely reveal its version of budget bill HB166 (Oelslager) next week, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) told members of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) of Ohio on Wednesday. "I believe in the general principle that stability and consistency is important to have, overall," Obhof said. "I can tell you that the bill that passes the Senate will have a significant net tax cut in it. I believe the House bill, notwithstanding what happened on the [small business tax deduction], had a net tax cut as well."

## **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

Gov. Mike DeWine said Friday he will be meeting with the Senate president and House speaker in a matter of days on new funding in budget bill HB166 (Oelslager) to help local law enforcement serve the more than 25,000 outstanding warrants in Ohio for "Tier I" offenses ranging from aggravated murder, rape and human trafficking to domestic violence, stalking and gross sexual imposition. The final report of the Governor's Warrant Task Force further calls for a statewide database modeled on Kentucky's along with legislation allowing local jurisdictions to compel court appearances for traffic and other minor offenses in lieu of bench warrants for failure to appear.

Citing changes in society and forensic science, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost called Monday for the General Assembly to remove the statute of limitations on rape, a change Gov. Mike DeWine has previously supported as well. A bipartisan group of five former Ohio attorneys general joined Yost in signing a letter promoting the change. Former AGs Betty Montgomery, a Republican, and Nancy Rogers, a Democrat, joined Yost at a press conference on the letter Monday. The other signatories included Lee Fisher, Jim Petro and Richard Cordray. Former Attorney General Marc Dann, who was not invited to sign the letter, later sent a letter endorsing the changes as well.

Gov. Mike DeWine moved Thursday to address the growing debate over local jail conditions after the long-idled Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) raised the possibility of adding local jail inspections to its regular responsibilities in May. DeWine announced plans to "significantly expand" the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's (DRC) Bureau of Adult Detention following a department review of the bureau's oversight for 300-plus jails and temporary holding facilities in Ohio. The governor says he asked DRC Director Annette Chambers-Smith in March to examine the overall jail inspection process, including operations at the Ohio Bureau of Adult Detention. She found the bureau is "substantially understaffed" relative to its workload, says DeWine, including annual onsite inspections of all local jails; examination of citizen/inmate complaints; and investigation of critical incidents including in-custody deaths, use-of-force incidents and inmate violence.

## **DISASTERS**

Damage assessment teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) Wednesday, June 5 will join Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) officials in a joint preliminary damage assessment of areas in 10 counties hit by last week's tornadoes.

To aid disaster relief following the Memorial Day tornadoes, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) extended its suspension of hours-of-service requirements for commercial drivers transporting motor vehicle fuel in Ohio.

## **EDUCATION**

The attorney general's office asked the judge overseeing a collections case against Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) founder William Lager to put a lien on two of his Ohio properties to help settle any final judgement for recovery in the case. Attorney General Dave Yost's office filed a motion for pre-judgement attachment for properties in Columbus and Senecaville. Success for the state on the motion and the case would mean Lager could not sell the properties free and clear without first paying the judgement the court enters against him.

Many of the existing testing requirements and measures in the report card for dropout recovery and prevention (DRP) schools often don't align with their unique model and challenges, representatives from multiple schools said Monday. The group joined State Board of Education members John Hagan and Lisa Woods in Columbus for the first meeting of a work group examining issues faced by DRP schools.

The Ohio Board of Building Standards asked Attorney General Dave Yost recently for a formal opinion on which schools qualify for a moratorium now in effect on building code provisions that require new schools to be built with storm shelters.

Teachers, students, administrators and union officials cheered a legislative proposal Tuesday to scale back Ohio's state testing regimen, saying it will free up instructional time, lessen students' anxiety and prompt schools to re-examine their own local assessment requirements. The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee convened a hearing for proponent testimony on HB239, legislation from Reps. Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) and Erica Crawley (D-Columbus) to eliminate four high school end-of-course exams: English language arts I, geometry, American history and American government. It also makes student participation voluntary for 11th grade administration of the ACT or SAT and requires school districts to gather local work groups to review their own testing mandates.

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) Advisory Council voted Wednesday to approve a report recommending 13 priority improvements to EMIS, which collects information on students and schools for purposes of state funding, report cards and various other uses.

## **ELECTIONS 2020**

A community activist Tuesday announced she will be running for the Democratic nomination for Ohio Senate District 16. The seat is currently held by Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hillard), who is expected to run for re-election. Crystal Lett said her campaign will highlight her advocacy for affordable health care after her family's personal struggle with medical costs related to her son's rare genetic disorder.

## **ENERGY**

FirstEnergy Solutions (FES), which supports state-mandated subsidies for its two Ohio nuclear plants in HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), and American Petroleum Institute (API), which opposes the bill's incentives as hostile to natural gas generation, sent the General Assembly dueling, out-of-state lobbyists Tuesday to argue for and against the future profitability of nuclear energy and the workability of PJM Interconnection's wholesale market.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's (PUCO) current and former chairman agreed Wednesday that Ohio's status as a net importer of electricity is irrelevant to PJM Interconnection's ability to meet the state's power needs reliably and at the lowest possible cost. PUCO Chairman Sam Randazzo and Executive Director Asim Haque of PJM's office of strategic policy and external affairs addressed the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee on the 13-state regional wholesale market and HB6's (Callender-Wilkin) larger focus on nuclear energy subsidies.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

A former director of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission who chaired the Ohio Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force Tuesday told the House Finance Committee that H2Ohio funds should be directed towards watersheds with critical water quality needs rather than using a scattershot approach to address water quality in the state. Gail Hesse, who currently serves as the Great Lakes Water Program director for the National Wildlife Federation, testified as a proponent of HB7 (Ghanbari-Patterson), which she believes is a critical step towards making significant, ongoing investments in restoring and protecting Ohio's water resources.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) has announced that \$15 million in Volkswagen (VW) settlement grants is now available to assist with replacing or repowering aging diesel fleet vehicles in 26 priority counties where emission reductions are most needed in order to comply with federal ozone standards.

The eight-state Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) voted to revise its water pollution control standards (PCS) for industrial and municipal wastewater discharges into the Ohio River on Thursday, drawing condemnation from environmental groups across the region. Ohio's ORSANCO representation includes Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Director Laurie Stevenson, Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District Executive Director John Hoopingarner and ORSANCO Commissioner Stuart Bruny. All three of Ohio's representatives voted in favor of the revision, ORSANCO Executive Director Richard Harrison told *Hannah News*. The final vote was 19 in favor, two opposed and one abstention, Harrison said.

## **GAMING/GAMBLING**

Gov. Mike DeWine wants any legislation legalizing sports betting in Ohio to give regulatory authority to the Casino Control Commission rather than the Ohio Lottery Commission. DeWine wouldn't talk about the topic Thursday when asked, but on Friday spokesman Dan Tierney confirmed DeWine's position. He said the governor had no comment beyond that.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

House Democrats seated Gil Blair, a Weathersfield Township trustee and municipal court prosecutor, to fill the vacant 63rd District House seat, left vacant by former Rep. Glenn Holmes' (D-McDonald) appointment to the Ohio Parole Board.

Six people applied to the House Republican caucus to fill an upcoming vacancy in the 89th District seat, from which Rep. Steve Arndt (R-Port Clinton) plans to retire this summer. The applicants are Quinton Babcock, mayor of Oak Harbor; Nathan Daniels of Curtice, an attorney working as special counsel in the Oregon Municipal Court; Daniel Frederick, an architect and Milan Township trustee; Judge Frederick Hany II of Ottawa County Municipal Court; Jeffrey Krabill of Sandusky, Sandusky

Board of Education president and business owner, who ran for the House in 2010; and Doug Swearingen Jr. of Huron, attorney with the firm Wickens, Herzer, Panza.

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) on Monday welcomed Suzanna "Suzie" Dawson of Granville to the Ohio Senate, where she will serve as sergeant at arms. Dawson, a retired Granville Police Department lieutenant, is the first female officer to join the Senate's sergeant at arms team, which provides security for lawmakers, staff and the general public when they are visiting the Senate chamber, offices and committee rooms.

In addition to passing the workers' compensation budget, HB80 (Oelsalger), the House voted Wednesday to pass HB136 (Hillyer), prohibiting the death penalty for aggravated murder when the offender had a serious mental illness at the time of the offense; and HB189 (Blessing-Patterson), regarding amusement ride safety inspections.

Thursday's House session included passage of two bipartisan priority bills: HB4 (Richardson-Robinson), regarding workforce development; and HB8 (Manchester-Galonski), regarding foster care.

House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) this week handed down committee assignments for the three most recent additions to the House, Reps. Gil Blair (D-Mineral Ridge), Diane Grendell (R-Chesterland) and Jeff LaRe (R-Canal Winchester), in addition to making a variety of other changes.

In other legislative action, House Health Committee reported out HB8 (Manchester-Galonski), regarding foster care; HB10 (Brown-Stoltzfus), to establish the Governor's Office of Drug Policy; HB14 (Boyd-Baldrige), regarding kinship care; and HB63 (Lipps-West), regarding pharmacy benefit managers; House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out HB211 (Arndt), regarding titles for abandoned watercraft; House State and Local Government Committee reported out HB235 (Miranda-Kelley), to designate the sugar cookie as the official cookie of Ohio; and Senate Finance Committee reported out SB39 (Schuring), regarding development tax credits.

## **GOVERNOR**

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Jude S. Foulk of Marion (Marion County) reappointed to the Marion Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning April 30, 2019 and ending April 29, 2022.

## **GREAT LAKES**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has announced the availability of \$14 million to address nutrient and stormwater runoff. The agency will accept applications for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grants until Friday, July 12, according to a news release from the agency. This year, USEPA said it is including a category to provide funding for innovative water quality trading projects, noting approximately \$1.5 million is available for four projects in this category. These projects are expected to promote cost-effective and market-based approaches to reducing excess nutrients to surface waters.

A very large harmful algal bloom (HAB) is likely to form in the Western Basin of Lake Erie this summer, according to the latest forecast from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA). "We project that the bloom will have a severity greater than seven -- much greater than 2018," NOAA said. The NOAA/Heidelberg University HAB severity scale ranges from one to 10.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Amy Acton issued an order late Friday directing Mount Carmel Grove City hospital to take immediate action to stem an outbreak of Legionnaires' in at least eight patients that ultimately resulted in one death over the weekend.

A bill that would impose work requirements for recipients of food assistance benefits through the Supplemental Assistance Program (SNAP) receive a fair amount of criticism during Tuesday's House Health Committee hearing, both from advocates who say the bill will kick needy Ohioans off their benefits and county officials who warned against the administrative burden the bill may impose.

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Amy Acton Thursday announced the upcoming formation of a workgroup to examine the challenges posed by a legionella outbreak like that which recently struck the Mount Carmel Grove City hospital, and to consider policy measures such as the formation of a statewide hospital licensure system.

## **INSURANCE**

A bill sponsored by Reps. Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson) and Allison Russo (D-Columbus), HB243, would mandate commercial insurers cover \$2,500 of the cost of a hearing aid over 48 months for an individual under the age of 22. The sponsors noted total costs can amount to more than \$4,800 per hearing aid over that period. The \$2,500 would apply to each hearing aid, meaning insurers would be required to cover \$5,000 for a pair of hearing aids over a 48 month period. Such devices are already covered by Medicaid and Medicare, Russo said.

## **JUDICIAL**

The Ohio Supreme Court reinstated the impaired driving conviction of a Trumbull County woman in a ruling last week, finding that the lack of information about who requested delays did not constitute a violation of the right to a speedy trial. The 5-2 opinion from Justice Melody Stewart overturns an Eleventh District Court of Appeals ruling that found the trial court erred in not recording which party requested continuances and said those delays counted against the state when not journalized.

## **LIBRARIES**

Public libraries do not prohibit speech at their facilities based on content, the Ohio Library Council (OLC) said Monday, responding to pressure from conservative activists and House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) to ban LGBTQ programs involving drag artists and entertainers. Two planned LGBTQ events in Central Ohio were recently moved to non-library locations following threats and misinformation, OLC said, noting the programs were requested by individuals in the communities to coincide with LGBTQ Pride Month. Householder recently sent a letter to OLC and Newark's Emerson R. Miller Library demanding the prohibition of drag-related programs at public libraries.

The Ohio Library Council (OLC) announced Wednesday that Michelle Francis, director of government and legal services, will become executive director following the retirement of current Executive Director Doug Evans on Friday, June 28.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

While saying it is a "case-by-case basis" and not citing any specific policy in general, Gov. Mike DeWine Monday told reporters that he has expressed to the General Assembly that "as much as possible, we don't want to be in a position to tell local governments what they can pass and what they can't pass." DeWine's comments come as the General Assembly is considering bills to have state law supersede local ordinances banning plastic grocery bags, among other preemption laws.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Nominations are now being accepted for the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). For more than 50 years, the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame has recognized individuals who have improved the quality of life in Ohio through natural resources management, environmental education or scientific achievement. Selection criteria and a nomination form are available at [ohiodnr.gov/HallofFame](http://ohiodnr.gov/HallofFame). Online nomination forms must be submitted no later than Friday, Aug. 2.

Ohio hunters checked a total of 19,088 wild turkeys during the 2019 spring wild turkey hunting season, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. In 2018, hunters checked a total of 22,635 wild turkeys.

After increasing throughout 2018, Ohio's horizontal shale well production dropped during the first quarter of 2019, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The state's horizontal wells produced 5.1 million barrels of oil and 609 billion cubic feet of natural gas during Q1 2019, down from Q4 2018's totals of 5.8 million barrels of oil and 663 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

Lawmakers should terminate the Ohio Water Advisory Council, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Legislative Director Danielle Vandegriff told the Sunset Review Committee on Tuesday. Vandegriff said the council was created in 1984 to provide guidance and make recommendations to the ODNR Division of Water Resources regarding groundwater resources, water supply planning and flood risk management.

Walleye fishing at Lake Erie is expected to be "excellent" through October, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. "Walleye catches are typically best during June, followed closely by July and August," ODNR said in release.

Forest land totaling more than 1,200 acres adjacent to Shawnee State Forest in Southern Ohio will be acquired with a federal partnership grant through the Forest Legacy Program, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

## **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

The Ohio State Bar Foundation (OSBF) announced the awarding of a total of \$306,050 to 11 projects across Ohio. Each project fulfills the OSBF mission of promoting the pursuit of justice and public understanding of the rule of law.

## **PEOPLE**

The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers, a trade and advocacy group representing addiction treatment and prevention, mental health and family services organizations, announced Monday that Associate Director Teresa Lampl is its new CEO. Lampl replaces Lori Criss, whom Gov. Mike DeWine appointed as director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Ohio MHAS).

Michael Billirakis, who served as president and vice president of the Ohio Education Association, died Friday at age 72 after fighting cancer.

The CJR Group, Inc. announced the addition of Jay O'Bryant to their government affairs team. He previously worked as the government affairs manager for IGS Energy in Dublin.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Government agencies represent a major potential adopter of new blockchain technology, SafeChain CEO Tony Franco told the House Commerce and Labor Committee Wednesday, and Ohio could take the "lion's share" of unique, high-paying jobs in the resulting sector if it maintains its current competitive edge. Franco, a co-founder of the Columbus startup, testified on HB220 (Carfagna), which would allow government entities to use distributed ledger technology including blockchain.

## **UTILITIES**

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) is taking public comment on a proposed FirstEnergy subsidy supporting a \$600-\$700 million planned expansion at North Star BlueScope Steel's northwest Ohio facility that could cost the utility's remaining customers up to \$28 million over seven years. PUCO staff have recommended approval of North Star's proposed "reasonable arrangement," which would provide a 70 percent billing credit against PJM Interconnection's FirstEnergy auction rate up to 130 megawatts (MW) of consumption at the Fulton County plant.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) is ending payments for Oxycontin and generic sustained-release oxycodone tablets to workers who suffer on-the-job injuries on or after Saturday, June 1, the bureau announced Friday. Those already taking such medications have until Dec. 31 to discontinue their use or switch to a different product on the BWC formulary. The move was approved by the BWC Board of Directors in February.

The House Finance Committee Tuesday overwhelmingly voted to report out HB80 (Oelslager), the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) budget, with provisions allowing police officers and firefighters to file claims for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) without an underlying physical injury. It passed the House on Wednesday after the addition of an amendment that would require



those filing claims to check a box stating whether they are a U.S. citizen, unauthorized alien or legally authorized to work in the U.S.

## **WORKFORCE**

The House Economic and Workforce Development Committee Wednesday reported out workforce credential bills HB2 (Cross-Lepore-Hagan) and HB4 (Richardson-Robinson) after amending both and receiving additional proponent testimony.

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:**

**SENATE:** No legislative activity to report.

## **HOUSE:**

### **PASSED BY HOUSE**

- HB4 WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS (Rep. Tracy Richardson, Rep. Phil Robinson) To permit the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation to develop industry-recognized credentials and certificate programs.  
Vote 89-0
- HB8 FOSTER CAREGIVERS (Rep. Susan Manchester, Rep. Tavia Galonski) Regarding foster caregiver training.  
Vote 89-0
- HB80 BWC BUDGET (Rep. Scott Oelslager) To make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the bureau's programs.  
Vote 56-38, Bill Amended on Floor
- HB136 DEATH PENALTY-MENTALLY ILL (Rep. Brett Hillyer) To prohibit imposing the death penalty for aggravated murder when the offender had a serious mental illness at the time of the offense.  
Vote 76-18, Bill Amended on Floor
- HB189 AMUSEMENT RIDE SAFETY (Rep. John Patterson, Rep. Louis Blessing III) To revise the laws governing amusement ride operation and safety, to designate this act as "Tyler's Law," and to declare an emergency.  
Vote 88-6, Emergency Clause 84-10

### **RE-REFERRED TO COMMITTEE FINANCE:**

- HB2 CREDENTIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (Rep. Jon Cross, Rep. Michele Lepore-Hagan) To create the TechCred Program and the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program, to develop a grant program to support industry sector partnerships, and to make an appropriation.
- HB10 OFFICE OF DRUG POLICY (Rep. Richard Brown, Rep. Reggie Stoltzfus) To establish the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and to make an appropriation.
- HB14 KINSHIP CARE (Rep. Janine Boyd, Rep. Brian Baldrige) To require a region-based kinship care navigator program and to make an appropriation.
- SB52 CIVILIAN CYBER SECURITY RESERVE FORCES (Sen. Theresa Gavarone) To create the civilian cyber security reserve forces, to make the Secretary of State a member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council, to require the Secretary of State

to appoint a chief information security officer, to require the boards of elections to audit election results, and to make an appropriation.

**ADOPTED BY HOUSE**

HR153 63RD DISTRICT-GIL BLAIR (Rep. Larry Householder) Relative to the election of Gil Blair to fill the vacancy in the membership of the House of Representatives created by the resignation of Glenn Holmes of the 63rd House District.  
Vote 33-0