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Week in Review
July 5, 2016

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.

CHILDREN/YOUTH

The Joint Legislative Committee on Multi-System Youth issued its final report with seven recommendations to improve the lives of children and families dealing with behavioral problems, addiction and developmental disabilities, a policy agenda Chairman Sen. Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green) said warrants dedicated funding and "immediate" action by the General Assembly. In its final meeting, the bicameral, bipartisan committee unanimously approved an 18-page report in response to five statutory charges in budget bill HB 64 (R. Smith).

EDUCATION

Paolo DeMaria's tenure as Ohio's 38th superintendent of public instruction began Monday, June 27, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) announced. "Education defines our future as individuals,

as a community, as a state and as a nation," DeMaria commented. "It's an exciting time for education in Ohio, and I look forward to engaging with our families, teachers, administrators, policymakers and advocates to help guide our work at the department."

ENVIRONMENT

A federal court has struck down recently finalized rules from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that restrict fracking activities on federal lands. U.S. District Court Judge Scott Skavdahl wrote that Congress did not authorize the department to regulate fracking.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Democratic lawmakers are asking House Republican leaders to further consider three bills they say will guarantee protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) Ohioans. The bills are the following: HB 389 (Antonio-Driehaus), known as the Ohio Fairness Act, would ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing and public accommodations; HB 247 (Driehaus-Phillips), which bans the practice of gay conversion therapy on minors; and HB 569 (Antonio), which would change the name of the offense of "ethnic intimidation" to "bias-motivated crime" and add LGBTQ individuals to the list of protected parties.

GOVERNOR

Gov. John Kasich continued to act on the flurry of bills sent to him by the Legislature before it went on summer break, putting his pen to 13 bills, including legislation brought by Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) to create a new streamlined process for public records complaints. The bill, SB 321, puts public records disputes into an expedited process through the Court of Claims. Faber said the legislation will eliminate financial and legal barriers that ordinary Ohioans face when trying to get public records.

The governor also signed HB 390 (Schaffer-Retherford), which included a number of spending and appropriations items including the Office of Budget and Management mid-biennium review bill. The bill also pays off the state's unemployment compensation debt.

The governor also signed the following bills into law:

- **HB 230** (Sprague) makes changes regarding the practices of chemical dependency counseling and prevention services.
- **HB 277** (Brenner) authorizes a county, township or municipal corporation to impose a 9-1-1 system levy in only the portion of the subdivision that would be served by the 9-1-1 system and to declare an emergency.
- **HB 303** (Dever-McColley) creates the D.O.L.L.A.R. Deed Program.

- **HB 305** (Schuring) includes certain nonteaching employees of The University of Akron as members in the Public Employees Retirement System and retroactively extends eligibility for benefits from the Volunteer Peace Officers' Dependents Fund regarding volunteer peace officers who are totally and permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty.
- **HB 317** (Maag) enables the parents or guardian of a protected consumer to freeze that consumer's credit to protect the consumer from identity theft.
- **HB 342** (Young) creates the Ohio Farm Winery Permit and authorizes the Division of Liquor Control to issue a D-51 liquor permit to a premise that is located in a municipal corporation that is wholly within the geographic boundaries of a township, provided that a specified population density applies to the municipal corporation and township.
- **HB 351** (Perales-DeVitis) increases the amount of spirituous liquor that an A-3a liquor permit holder may annually manufacture and allows an A-3a permit holder to obtain an A-1-A liquor permit.
- **HB 387** (Terhar-Dever) raises the maximum allowable limit of the monetary jurisdiction of small claims divisions of municipal courts.
- **HB 391** (Terhar) requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to create the SmartOhio Financial Literacy Pilot Program at the University of Cincinnati to operate for the 2016-2017 school year, establishes the Task Force for Creating Opportunities for Shared Governance on Co-Located Campuses, provides support for the Ohio Youth Entrepreneur Program at Youngstown State University, renames the Capitol Theatre of the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts as the Speaker Jo Ann Davidson Theatre, and makes an appropriation.
- **HB 413** (Brinkman) adds to the purposes for which a board of township trustees may go into executive session, permits a township to charge for recycling services, reduces the population threshold for a township to adopt a limited home rule form of government, authorizes a township to purchase, lease or provide underwater rescue and recovery equipment for fire and rescue purposes, authorizes boards of township trustees to pay for group life insurance for any employee, expands the cemetery purposes for which such boards may levy a tax or expend township funds, makes other changes to the township laws or laws relating to township authority, allows taxing units to use the proceeds of a fire, police or emergency services tax levy to pay costs related to the service for which the tax is levied, removes the limitations on the authority to reappoint members of the Ohio Small Government Capital Improvements Commission, authorizes boards of township trustees and boards of park commissioners to expend funds for the public purpose of presenting community events in their parks and other recreational facilities, and expands the public infrastructure improvements townships, municipal corporations, and counties may pay for using money from their public improvement tax increment equivalent funds.
- **HB 434** (Baker) designates May as "Fibromuscular Dysplasia Awareness Month."

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Laura L. Howell of Defiance (Defiance County) to the Northwest State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning June 24, 2016, and ending June 9, 2021.

- Paul W. Imhoff of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Ohio Humanities Council for a term beginning June 24, 2016, and ending Oct. 30, 2017.
- Dr. Michael D. Ginder of Athens (Athens County) to the State Dental Board for a term beginning June 24, 2016, and ending April 6, 2020.
- Anthony Moyer of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning June 24, 2016, and ending Oct. 26, 2018.
- Meghan Hays of Shaker Heights (Cuyahoga County) to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for a term beginning June 27, 2016, and ending March 31, 2019.
- James S. Simon of Akron (Summit County) to the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority for a term beginning June 27, 2016, and ending June 30, 2023.
- Col. Ralph P. Anderson of Springfield (Clark County) to the Ohio Military Facilities Commission for a term beginning June 28, 2016, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.
- James F. Dicke of New Bremen (Auglaize County) and C. Ellen Connally of Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the Ohio History Connection Board of Trustees for terms beginning June 28, 2016, and ending June 26, 2019.
- Michael R. Coury of Olmsted Falls (Cuyahoga County) to the Board of Executives of Long-term Services and Supports for a term beginning June 29, 2016, and ending May 27, 2019.
- Christopher Kershner of Springboro (Warren County) and Bill W. Dingus of South Point (Lawrence County) reappointed to the Transportation Review Advisory Council for terms beginning June 30, 2016, and ending June 29, 2021.
- Kelly L. McDonald of Mentor (Lake County) to the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council for a term beginning June 30, 2016, and ending Oct. 26, 2018.

PEOPLE

John Wolfe, 72, former publisher of the *Columbus Dispatch*, died at the James Cancer Hospital at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center on Friday, June 24, after a two-year battle with cancer, the *Dispatch* reported. Gov. John Kasich commented, "John Wolfe's passing is a huge personal loss to me, just as it is an irreplaceable loss to Columbus and Central Ohio, where he was always there on the frontlines of everything that mattered. John's devotion to his community was unmatched, and no one had a closer eye on the workings of state government. As Karen and I join John's family and colleagues in their grief, we also celebrate the lasting mark he has made on his state and community."

PUBLIC SAFETY

All 190 deputy registrar sites of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) began accepting credits cards last week. Consumers using credit cards will be charged \$1.25 or 1.95 percent, whichever is greater.

TAXATION

The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) announced that its major technology system upgrade -- the State Taxation Accounting and Revenue System (STARS) -- now includes the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT), bringing it to more than two-thirds of the 23 tax types that are now fully operational in STARS. This is Ohio's effort to integrate multiple computer systems used to administer state and many local business taxes into a unified technology platform that will result in greater efficiency and make paying taxes simpler. The remainder of tax types is expected to be completed by June 2017.

TRANSPORTATION

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has released a new mobile application to help drivers avoid traffic tie-ups by using OHGO for personal traffic alerts, information on road construction and travel delays, and hands-free voice on the go. The app is available at the App Store and Google Play.

UNIONS/NON-UNION ISSUES

A second "right to work" bill was introduced by Rep. John Becker (R-Cincinnati), with the provisions extending to public sector employees. The bill, HB 583 (Becker), will give public employees the chance to opt out of union representation, and allow non-union employees to voluntarily make financial contributions to a union. The sponsor said the provisions would give unions an added revenue source, and would free them of the responsibility of representing non-union employees.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Newly installed BWC Administrator/CEO Sarah Morrison announced the agency's new legislative director, Elle Decot, former legislative liaison for the Kasich administration.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Legislators have recessed for the summer.