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**Week in Review**  
Monday, September 14, 2015

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. Please note the issues are listed alphabetically and in no way signify the level of importance:

**AGRICULTURE**

In the fourth of five off-site hearings scheduled over the summer legislative recess, the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee heard testimony from Chris Henney, president and CEO of the Ohio AgriBusiness Association; Sam Custer, OSU Extension agriculture and natural resource educator and leader of the Nutrient Stewardship for Cleaner Water Signature Program; and Melanie Tomczak, director of biological and nanoscale technologies at UES Inc.

**BALLOT ISSUES**

ResponsibleOhio filed a 70-page merit brief outlining its case against Secretary of State Jon Husted and the Ohio Ballot Board over the ballot language and title for Issue 3 that the marijuana

legalization group said is biased and aimed at prejudicing the voter. The group had filed a lawsuit with the Ohio Supreme Court last month challenging the language that was adopted by the Ohio Ballot Board by a 3-2 vote, citing a number of instances it said the language violates the standards set out by the Ohio Revised Code that say ballot language must not mislead, deceive or defraud voters.

A group looking to make term limits stricter in the state cleared its first hurdle on a proposed constitutional amendment after Attorney General Mike DeWine certified the petition language for the "Strengthening Term Limits on State Legislators" issue.

## **FY16-17 BUDGET**

Two months into FY 16, state revenues were on target, pulling in \$14.2 million or 0.4 percent more than predicted for the year so far. August saw revenues totaling \$1,881,036 against a \$1,876,300 estimate. Taxes coming in over estimates for the month were both components of the sales tax (auto and non-auto) and the personal income tax.

## **CHILDREN/YOUTH**

Rep. Ron Maag (R-Lebanon) and Attorney General Mike DeWine announced the introduction of credit freeze bill HB 317 (Maag), which would empower guardians of adults and children under 16 and executors of estates to protect credit files from identity thieves and other bad actors. The bill would allow guardians and executors to request the credit freeze for a small fee of no more than \$5, even if the child is too young to have an actual credit report.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Criminal justice reform in Ohio gained national prominence last Thursday as Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) and members of the Criminal Justice Recodification Committee gathered with *Orange is the New Black* author Piper Kerman and Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform for a Statehouse press conference. Citing their many ideological differences, speakers including ACLU Smart Justice Director Alison Holcomb said Americans of all persuasions are reaching consensus on sentencing reform, placing Ohio's current deliberations center stage.

## **EDUCATION**

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) released tens of thousands of pages of emails, text messages and calendar entries last Thursday night following numerous records requests seeking more information on how ex-school choice chief David Hansen built a charter sponsor rating system that left out some schools' lagging grades, and what others in the department knew about it. The records show no correspondence between Superintendent Richard Ross and Hansen on the matter and show numerous requests from Hansen to other ODE staff to run various data analyses on schools, including requests for them to "back out" or leave out data from e-school and dropout recovery students.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The nation added 173,000 jobs in August and the federal unemployment dropped to 5.1 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) said last Friday. BLS said the number of unemployed persons edged down to 8 million over the month as job gains occurred in health care and social assistance and in financial activities. Manufacturing and mining lost jobs. While the nation added 173,000 jobs, it was below the 12 month average of 247,000.

## **ENERGY**

The House Democratic Caucus called on Republican members of the Energy Mandates Study Committee to correct their "costly mistakes" in freezing state mandates on renewable energy, energy efficiency and peak demand reduction (PDR) and scuttling the 50 percent in-state requirement on renewable resources in SB 310 (Balderson). Reps. Michael Stinziano (D-Columbus) and Jack Cera (D-Bellaire), members of the Energy Mandates Study Committee, issued a letter and recommendations on restoring standards to committee Co-chairs Rep. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) and Sen. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville), sponsor of energy freeze SB 310.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Ohio Senate Minority Leader Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) joined U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Aaron Young, executive director of Mill Creek MetroParks, at a news conference to call for state and federal legislation to assist communities across Ohio to improve outdated sewer and water systems. Schiavoni and Brown discussed the legislation during a press conference at Mill Creek Park -- according to Schiavoni, "the site of a sewage spill earlier this summer that polluted waterways and killed fish."

A group of Ohio water stakeholders issued its strategic plan for maintaining and strengthening the state's resources, including the creation of an Ohio Water Trust. According to Healthy Water Ohio's (HWO) recently released report, the trust fund should be a public-private endeavor with a minimum annual goal of \$250 million to fund a variety of water-related needs such as research and monitoring, improvement or restoration of gray and green infrastructure, and education.

## **GAMING**

Ohio's four casinos brought in less tax revenue in August than they did in July, as well as from the same period the year before, numbers released by the Ohio Casino Control Commission showed. The seven racinos around the state also saw a drop in revenues from July.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

The House Healthcare Efficiencies Study Committee heard from various experts in the behavioral health field when it traveled to Shawnee State University in Portsmouth last Tuesday for a hearing focused on mental health.

Former state legislator and Congressman John Bocchieri is one of three candidates who are seeking the blessing of the Mahoning County Democratic Party to fill the seat formerly held by Rep. Ron

Gerberry (D-Canfield), who resigned after pleading guilty to a misdemeanor involving his campaign finance report.

## **GOVERNOR**

The governor made the following appointments last week:

- Sam D. Bassitt of Lima (Allen County) reappointed to the James A. Rhodes State College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 4, 2015 and ending Aug. 31, 2018.
- Col. Wayne A. Smith of Woodsfield (Monroe County) to the Belmont College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 4, 2015 and ending May 12, 2018.
- Dr. Patricia P. Guttman of Bexley (Franklin County) to the State Dental Board for a term beginning Sept. 9, 2015 and ending April 6, 2019.
- Faye A. Heston of Canton (Stark County) to the Commission on Service and Volunteerism for a term beginning Sept. 10, 2015 and ending April 21, 2018.
- Cirous Haghazari of Westerville (Delaware County) reappointed to the Motor Vehicle Salvage Dealer's Board for a term beginning Sept. 10, 2015 and ending July 31, 2018.
- Cora Munoz of Worthington (Franklin County) reappointed to the Ohio Commission on Minority Health for a term beginning Sept. 10, 2015 and ending Sept. 2, 2017.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The latest awards from the Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) total \$645,152 in grants to 15 recipients around the state and a single loan of \$196,055 to the city of Hamilton.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) announced that crashes resulted in 11 deaths during the Labor Day weekend. This is lower than last year's Labor Day weekend, according to the patrol.

## **TAXATION**

The Senate Ways and Means Committee started hearings last Wednesday on tax-law cleanup from the biennial budget and plans to pass the measure soon, according to Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina), the committee chairman.

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY**

*No legislative activity to report while legislators are on summer recess.*