

NAIOP

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

NAIOP OF OHIO

NAIOP Weekly Legislative Report
Prepared by: Law Offices of Matthew G. Kallner
Report created on July 18, 2011

Supported Bills

- HB10** **REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITE (SEARS, B)** To authorize refundable tax credits for the completion of a voluntary action to remediate a contaminated site and for the return of such sites to productive use, and to exempt persons through 2017 who have issued covenants not to sue under the Voluntary Action Program from certain fees and penalties for one year after the issuance of such a covenant.
- Current Status:* 3/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
 All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
 2/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
 2/9/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
 2/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
 1/26/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
 1/11/2011 - Introduced
- HB17** **TAX CREDIT FOR HIRING UNEMPLOYED (BAKER, N)** To authorize a \$2,400 income tax withholding credit for an employer that hires and employs a previously unemployed individual.
- Current Status:* 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
 All Bill Status: 1/11/2011 - Introduced
- HB18** **TAX CREDIT - EXPANDING BUSINESSES (BAKER, N)** To authorize a nonrefundable tax credit for a business that increases payroll and expands into a vacant facility.
- Current Status:* 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
 All Bill Status: 2/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
 2/9/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
 2/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
 1/26/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
 1/11/2011 - Introduced

Oppose

- HB50** **TYPE-II ANNEXATION (SNITCHLER T)** To require that a political subdivision owner be included in determining the number of owners needed to sign a petition for an expedited type-II annexation.
- Current Status:* 6/21/2011 - House Local Government, (Fifth Hearing)
 All Bill Status: 6/14/2011 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Local Government, (Fifth

Hearing)
5/24/2011 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)
3/1/2011 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
2/22/2011 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
2/15/2011 - House Local Government, (First Hearing)
2/1/2011 - Referred to Committee House Local Government
1/26/2011 - Introduced

Monitoring

- HB134 CAPITAL GAINS INVESTMENTS (SCHURING K)** To reduce the income tax rate on capital gains reinvested in Ohio-based investments.
Current Status: 6/1/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 5/11/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
3/30/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
3/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
3/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
3/2/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
3/1/2011 - Introduced
- HB198 PROPERTY TAX COMPLAINTS (COLEY II W)** To permit property tax complaints to be initiated only by the property owner.
Current Status: 5/12/2011 - House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development, (Second Hearing)
All Bill Status: 5/4/2011 - House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development, (First Hearing)
4/12/2011 - Referred to Committee House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development
4/12/2011 - Introduced
- SB89 LABOR REQUIREMENTS (JORDAN K)** To prohibit state agencies from requiring or prohibiting certain labor requirements as a condition of performing public works and prohibit the appropriations of state funds for public works when political subdivisions require or prohibit certain labor.
Current Status: 3/8/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - Introduced
- SB115 PROPERTY SALE GAINS (KEARNEY E)** To exempt from income taxation any gains from the sale of Ohio property used in a trade or business and held for at least two years.
Current Status: 3/24/2011 - Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (First Hearing)
All Bill Status: 3/15/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development
3/9/2011 - Introduced

Bills Introduced Since 7/11/2011

- HB295 CHARITY GAMES OF CHANCE ON FAIRGROUNDS (RUHL M)** To remove the prohibition that an agricultural society must not permit, during, for one week before, or

three days after a fair, a charitable organization to conduct games of chance or bingo on the fairground.

- HB296 CAREER-TECHNICAL PLANNING DISTRICTS** (BARNES, JR. J) To require the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents to establish standards and protocols for approving career-technical planning districts to award associate degrees.
- HB297 MOTOR FUEL QUALITY TESTING** (WEDDINGTON C, FENDE L) To require the Department of Agriculture to establish a motor fuel quality testing program under which county auditors may conduct such testing.
- HB298 FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES** (ROEGNER K, ROSENBERGER C) To prioritize the distribution of funds for family planning services.
- HB299 CAYLEE'S LAW** (STINZIANO M, ANIELSKI M) To require a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child under the age of sixteen to report to a law enforcement agency with twenty-four hours after the child is missing or within one hour after the parent, legal guardian, or custodian discovers that the child is deceased, to increase penalty for falsification to mislead a public official, and to specify that the above provisions are to be known as "Caylee's Law."
- HCR23 BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT** (BURKE D) To memorialize the Congress of the United States to propose a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.
- SB197 SALE AND LEASEBACK OF COUNTY BUILDINGS** (WAGONER M) To authorize a board of county commissioners of any county to enter into agreements for the sale and leaseback of county buildings.
- SB198 MOTOR FUEL QUALITY TESTING PROGRAM** (TAVARES C) To require the Department of Agriculture to establish a motor fuel quality testing program under which county auditors may conduct such testing.
- SB199 BREAST CANCER AWARENESS** (SMITH S) To designate October 13 as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day.
- SB200 EDISON JOBS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM** (HUGHES J) To create the Edison Jobs Development Program within the Department of Development and to make an appropriation.
- SCR14 WORLD CHOIR GAMES** (JONES S) To recognize the 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati, Ohio, as a global event of cultural significance to Ohio and the United States and expressing support by designating the month of July 2012 as "World Choir Games Month."

Week in Review

Friday, July 15, 2011

AGRICULTURE

The Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board will re-file rules on the care, feeding and housing of egg-laying chickens and veal calves. The board pulled back on the chicken rules in advance of Monday's Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review meeting, citing questions about the rules' definition of "existing farm," which affects who is exempted from limits on battery cages. And the board agreed during Monday's JCARR meeting to re-file the veal rules after a Wayne County veal farmer testified that the new rules would force him and others out of the business.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Mike DeWine sued Reynoldsburg-based Glory Auto Sales, alleging multiple violations of Ohio consumer protection laws by the used car dealer.

BUDGET

According to the "Monthly Financial Report" issued Tuesday by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), Ohio ended FY11 with "an unencumbered, unobligated ending balance of \$138.8 million." This followed the transfer of \$246,898,867.21 from the General Revenue Fund (GRF) to the Budget Stabilization Fund (BSF)

DEATH PENALTY

Attorney General Mike DeWine's office said Wednesday that it won't appeal a federal judge's decision to halt the execution of Kenneth Smith, who was scheduled to die on Tuesday, July 19, for the May 1995 murder of Lewis and Ruth Ray of Hamilton. This followed U.S. District Judge Gregory Frost of the Southern District of Ohio issuing a temporary restraining order last week that temporarily stopped this execution -- and effectively all future executions in the state. Frost wrote that "Ohio's execution policy now embraces a nearly unlimited capacity for deviation from the core or most critical execution procedures." DeWine said that the state is going to make revisions to its execution policy based on Frost's ruling and go back to the judge with those revisions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gov. John Kasich appointed eight of nine members of the board of directors for JobsOhio shortly before the board's first meeting Monday. One appointment went to Kasich job czar Mark Kvamme, whom the board also appointed interim chief investment officer, a position for which he will take a \$1 salary despite the board's offer of \$300,000 plus bonuses. Other appointees are James C. Boland, retired vice chairman of Ernst & Young and former president of the Cavaliers Operating Company, who is chairman of the new board; Ohio State University President Gordon Gee; Bob McDonald, Procter & Gamble's chairman, president and CEO; Steven Davis, chairman and CEO of Bob Evans Farms; Gary Heminger, president and CEO of Marathon Petroleum; Pamela Springer, president and CEO of Manta Media; and C. Martin Harris, the Cleveland Clinic's chief information officer and information technology division chairman.

EDUCATION

In an unusual turn of events, Interim Superintendent of Education Stan Heffner not only became a candidate for permanent appointment to the position but was also named to the job by the State Board of Education, all on Tuesday. This happened after the second of three finalists for the job, Reynoldsburg Schools Superintendent Steve Dackin, pulled out of consideration over the weekend. Earlier, Gov. John Kasich's director of the Office of 21st Century Education, Bob Sommers, had withdrawn, citing a conflict of interest. This left only former Illinois Superintendent Robert Schiller, and his background check had remained incomplete.

Following his selection, Heffner responded to allegations that he suffered from a blatant conflict of interest concerning testimony in May addressing the use of Texas-based Educational Testing Service's (ETS) Praxis exams for teacher licensure. Heffner, who had been set to take a job with ETS in August, said he "didn't recommend a contract" and that he would have had no involvement in teacher assessment work at ETS.

The Ohio Department of Education announced the launch of two Facebook pages, one for parents, "Ohio Families and Education," and a second that will debut later this year for teachers.

As promised, state Superintendent of Education Stan Heffner announced an official downsizing plan for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Thursday that will eliminate more than 60 full-time employees, should layoffs mirror FY12-13 budget cuts. Along with less money, Heffner said, the department is taking on new duties under budget bill HB153 requiring additional staff.

The next priority of the state's superintendent of public instruction, following Thursday's announced downsizing at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), is the compromise teacher/principal evaluation plan mandated by budget bill, HB153, no later than Dec. 31. The short timeline for completed recommendations was reportedly a major consideration this week in the permanent hire of Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction Stan Heffner as the permanent schools chief.

ELECTIONS

Former Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner has launched a referendum petition drive to overturn parts of HB194 (Mecklenborg-Blessing), election law reform which passed last month and was signed into law by Gov. John Kasich on July 1. According to an email sent to followers of her "Courage PAC," Brunner said that HB194 would limit access to voting and make less votes count. She singled out provisions that need addressed including the size of voting precincts, poll worker guidelines, regulation of corporations, guidelines for not counting votes, poll hours and more restrictive voter ID requirements.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The national unemployment rate rose to 9.2 percent following a report that the nation added just 18,000 new jobs in June.

FEDERAL

In conjunction with U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Gil Kerlikowske, director of National Drug Control Policy, unveiled the National Drug Control Strategy Monday at a news conferencing in Columbus. It includes

expanding early intervention programs in health care settings, aligning criminal justice policies and public health systems to divert non-violent drug offenders into treatment instead of jail, funding more scientific research on drug use, and expanding access to substance abuse treatment; and strengthening U.S. commitments to key international partners, working simultaneously on supply and demand reduction efforts with allies in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia.

President Barack Obama declared 21 southern Ohio counties major disaster areas on Wednesday, opening them up for federal aid in addition to state aid for areas struck by severe storms and flooding in April and May. Those counties include Adams, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Clermont, Gallia, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hocking, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington. Funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

In reaction to the acquittal of Casey Anthony in her high-profile Florida murder trial, Reps. Michael Stinziano (D-Columbus) and Marlene Anielski (R-Walton Hills) introduced HB299, "Caylee's Law," named after Anthony's dead daughter, which would make it a felony not to report a missing or dead child to police within a short period.

The Senate Republican Caucus swore in Rep. David Burke (R-Marysville) as the replacement for Sen. Karen Gillmor (R-Tiffin) and Rep. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville) as the replacement for Sen. Jimmy Stewart (R-Albany). Now, the House Republican caucus must fill those vacancies.

Rep. Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City) introduced HB283 Tuesday, which would require Ohioans under the age of 18 to complete a first aid and CPR class before they could get their driver's license.

The lineup is set for a friendly game of "base ball," the vintage game historically spelled with two words that will be played on the Statehouse lawn as part of the Ohio Statehouse Sesquicentennial celebration. The Capitol Cannons will be made up of both Republicans and Democrats from the House and Senate. The 21-member team will take on the Ohio Village Muffins on the West lawn of the Statehouse on Friday, July 22 at 7 p.m. The winner will receive bragging rights and a commemorative trophy.

Rep. Bob Mecklenborg (R-Cincinnati) was absent from Wednesday's floor session as House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina) joined those saying that Mecklenborg should resign in the wake of a DUI arrest in Indiana on April 23 on a charge of driving a vehicle while intoxicated. The arrest did not become

public until late last month. Earlier in the day, Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Chris Redfern had demanded Mecklenborg resign because the lawmaker endangered lives.

Bills passed by the Senate include: HB224 (Dovilla-Stinziano), a bill designed to make it easier for military and overseas voters to participate in elections, which also became the vehicle for a fix to elections-omnibus HB194 (Blessing-Mecklenborg), which lawmakers passed just weeks ago, by a vote of 29-0; HB78 (Roegner), which limits abortions after fetuses are deemed viable, by a vote of 22-7; and SB165 (Obhof-Grendell), the historical documents bill, by a vote of 29-0.

Senators confirmed Gov. Kasich's appointment of former Sen. Karen Gillmor (R-Tiffin) to the Industrial Commission as well as several other appointments.

The House was unanimous in passing bills on Wednesday, approving SB187 (Grendell), a bill naming parts of various U.S. routes in Ohio for fallen soldiers and public safety officers that also included an amendment correcting axle weight laws changed in the transportation budget; HR116 calling for Congress to add President Franklin D. Roosevelt's D-Day prayer to the national World War II memorial; and Senate changes to HB224 (Dovilla-Stinziano), an elections bill.

GOVERNOR

Gov. John Kasich will sign four bills on Friday, July 15, his spokesman Rob Nichols told *Hannah News*, although he said a decision on the Great Lakes Compact bill, HB231 (Wachtmann), is still pending. The bills that will be signed in private ceremonies include: HB64 (Ruhl-Burke) to prohibit and add synthetic cannabinoids commonly known as K2 or Spice to the list of Schedule I controlled substances; HB188 (Batchelder) to establish the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission and to make an appropriation; HB229 (Buchy) to revise the laws governing agriculture; and HB277 (Blessing-Gerberry) to permit a horse-racing permit holder who is eligible to become a video lottery sales agent to apply to the State Racing Commission to move its track to another location.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Dr. Gregg Alexander of Madison Pediatrics in London became the first Ohio physician to receive a Medicaid incentive check for adoption of electronic health records, drawing a payment of \$21,250 for a three-month caseload in which children on Medicaid accounted for 48 percent of visits.

Gov. John Kasich made an impromptu pledge of \$2 million to Nationwide Children's Hospital during a tour of the institution's biopathology center, putting his staff on the task of working out the details. However, he had suggested it could come from the state's Rainy Day Fund or from revenues his office recently pried out of the casino industry. The governor also said he would bring the hospital into his medical corridor initiative, and said the money would need to be shared with other children's hospitals in the state for research.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education ranked Ohio in the top five percent for total college costs, with Ohio's biggest public universities priced thousands above the 2008-2009 average total college cost of \$10,747.

Kent State University and Stark State College signed an agreement to ease transfers from the latter to the former, guaranteeing admission and transfer of up to 60 credit hours to Kent State for Stark State students who complete an associate's degree with a minimum GPA of 2.0.

Kent State University announced a third record-breaking year for fundraising, with supporters kicking in more than \$40 million for the fiscal year that just ended.

ESPN went to the Ohio Supreme Court seeking to force Ohio State University (OSU) to surrender emails and other correspondence related to the scandal that forced out OSU football coach Jim Tressel, with the sports network saying the school is wrongly hiding behind the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

According to ESPN's complaint, the network asked for correspondence among Tressel, OSU President Gordon Gee, compliance director Doug Archie and athletic director Gene Smith related to Ted Sarniak, a confidant of former OSU quarterback Terrelle Pryor. But the university told ESPN it couldn't release the information because of FERPA, while ESPN maintains such records are not educational and thus aren't covered.

Representatives of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and National Science Foundation (NSF) joined the University of Toledo (UT) to announce the creation of a new School for Green Chemistry and Engineering. The new school will focus on the need for sustainability with the design of products and processes from origin through end of life that use renewable raw materials and environmentally safe processes.

HOUSING

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development picked the Ohio Housing Finance Agency as its project-based contract administrator for Section 8 projects in Ohio.

JUDICIAL

The Supreme Court of Ohio upheld lower court rulings Tuesday that a biological mother who acknowledged her same-sex partner as a "co-parent" of her daughter while the two women were in a relationship did not permanently give up her sole custody of the child to create legal shared custody with the partner. The case was *In re Mullen*.

In response to the *In re Mullen* ruling, Ed Mullen, executive director of Equality Ohio, said, "This ruling is yet another example of how children raised by same sex couples and people in same sex relationships are harmed by the inequalities in Ohio law. The only court that even considered the best interests of the child ruled that it was in the best interest of Lucy to maintain ties with Michele [Hobbs] and that Michele should be granted joint custody. And the end result is that child has been separated from the woman she knows as 'Momma' because the Court set an artificially high barrier for same sex couples to express an intent to share permanent custody."

Mayors' court activity dropped in 2010, the Ohio Supreme Court reported, with 291,470 filings in 320 Ohio mayors' courts, compared to more than 300,000 filings in 2009.

Two Ohio judges will participate in a national two-year leadership and management initiative after being nominated for the program by Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor as "justice system leaders of tomorrow." Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Judge Michael P. Donnelly and Fairfield County Municipal Court Judge Patrick N. Harris will join 43 other judges nationwide in the National Judicial College's (NJC) "Innovative Leadership/Management Skills for Future Court Leaders" program.

The Supreme Court of Ohio may finally have completed its constitutional analysis of sex offender registration and notification (SORN), ruling Wednesday that the reclassification scheme in the federally compliant Adam Walsh Act of 127- SB10 (Austria) is not only a separation-of-powers violation -- a ruling of the Court that had scrapped its retroactive provisions over a year ago -- but is also, in fact, a violation of the retroactivity clause of the Ohio Constitution. The new ruling in *State v. Williams* comes despite the Court's having twice upheld the retroactive nature of SORN reclassification in Ohio, along with a score of related rulings declaring reclassification civil rather than criminal and remedial rather than punitive, and despite U.S. courts' having unanimously upheld the parallel reclassification scheme of the federal Adam Walsh Act.

Laws granting sovereign immunity from personal liability for public-employee negligence do not extend to private doctors volunteering for observation by state university medical students, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled unanimously. The ruling overturns a finding by the Ohio Court of Claims and the 10th District Court of Appeals that Dr. Marek Skoskiewicz, as a volunteer "clinical faculty member" for the University of Toledo Medical Center who allowed a third-year medical student to observe a vasectomy surgery at Henry County Hospital, was acting as a state employee and thus immune from personal liability.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor met with the consul general of Slovenia on Tuesday to talk about economic development opportunities for the state. Cleveland has the largest Slovenian community outside of the country itself and has the only official diplomatic consulate general located in the state of Ohio. Consul General Jure Zmauc said his country has a number of small companies that are developing solar technology, and noted that American Electric Power is developing a large solar field in southeastern Ohio. He said he sees it as an opportunity for both Ohio and Slovenia to benefit.

Regarding her office's efforts to implement the "Common Sense Initiative" (CSI), Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor said it is up and running and they are taking a look at issues coming to them dealing with regulatory reform. She said the goal will be that each new rule that is introduced will go through a business impact analysis to see if there are any unintended consequences. "We will work that process as new rules are proposed."

NATURAL RESOURCES

Acknowledging that the governor has until Monday to address whether he will sign or veto HB231 (Wachtmann), Kasich spokesman Rob Nichols did confirm he is planning to decide by Friday, July 15. *Hannah News* obtained a copy of a letter to Ohio's Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Director David Mustine from Joe Martens, commissioner of the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, urging him to recommend that Kasich veto the bill. In addition, a representative of Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder called Kasich's office Thursday to share some concerns. Also, Ohio Environmental Council's Jack Shaner, an opponent of the bill, said Thursday that a number of newspapers have called on the governor to veto the bill. They include the *Toledo Blade*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Akron Beacon Journal*, and the *Canton Repository*, among others.

PENSION FUNDS

The Ohio Retirement Study Council Wednesday amended bid specifications it had approved two weeks ago for an outside review of proposed pension reforms in Ohio, dropping a provision that would have required all bidders to fly to Columbus for a pre-bid conference. Instead, the council will answer any questions from bidders in writing, with the questions and answers to be distributed to all bidders and posted on the council website, www.orsc.org. Because of the change, the council also pushed back the submission deadline from Aug. 11 to Aug. 25.

PEOPLE

David T. Williams, chairman of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, died at his home. A memorial service is planned for 10 a.m. Saturday, July 16 at St. Joseph's Church in Amherst.

Lucas County Common Pleas Court Judge James D. Jensen and Marion County Family Court Judge Deborah A. Alspach were elected to three-year terms as representatives of Ohio State Bar Association District 4 and District 5, respectively, on the association's Board of Governors.

The *Plain Dealer* reported Tuesday that Sen. Tim Grendell (R-Chester) was not on a list of five recommendations sent to Gov. John Kasich for a vacant Geauga County judicial vacancy. The five finalists are Donald Bagley, James Flaiz, Arthur Pearson Leary, Mary Brigid Matheney and Edward Ryder, who is chairman of the Geauga County Republican Party and who removed himself from the screening process to avoid a conflict of interest.

Several media reports indicated that the U.S. House Ethics Committee is reviewing complaints against U.S. Rep. Jean Schmidt (R-Loveland) by adversary David Krikorian that she received free legal assistance from Turkish-American groups during their long-running dispute over Schmidt's ties to Turkish interests.

Rebecca M. Kuhns has joined the Columbus office of McDonald Hopkins LLC as an advocacy specialist in the business advisory and advocacy law firm's government affairs practice as a non-attorney professional.

Neil Clark, managing partner of Grant Street Consultants, announced that the firm has hired Steve Washington as Northeast Ohio business development manager.

The Mid-America Jewelers Association announced Thursday that Adriana "Adri" Sfalcin has joined the group as its executive director even as the group is finalizing plans for its 68th annual jewelry show next month in Columbus. She had formerly served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants (OCRM).

Recently, the United States Association of Former Members of Congress announced the selection of U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Youngstown) as vice chair to the Congressional Study Group on Germany.

Tony Coder has been hired as communications manager at the Drug-Free Action Alliance.

Gov. John Kasich appointed Jill Christine Hreben of South Lebanon (Warren Co.), Joseph B. Kuyoth Jr., CNHA of Dublin (Franklin Co.) and R. Douglas Spittler of Cincinnati (Hamilton Co.) as members of the Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators for terms beginning July 13, 2011 and ending May 27, 2014; Beau Slater of Beavercreek (Greene Co.) as a student member of the Bowling Green State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning July 13, 2011 and ending May 17, 2013; and Klara B. Reynolds of Portsmouth (Scioto Co.) as a member of the Shawnee State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning July 14, 2011 and ending June 30, 2016.

POLLS/STUDIES

A new study of political polarization in the United States by Ohio State University assistant professor Philipp Rehm suggests that changes in the labor market since the 1970s have helped create more Republican and Democratic partisans and fewer independents.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Division of State Fire Marshal (SFM) reported that at least nine fireworks investigations were conducted throughout Ohio near the Independence Day weekend. Six people, including one firefighter, were injured in fireworks incidents, one fireworks-related fire was reported and more than 5,000 pounds of fireworks were seized.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

The Senate Select Committee on Redistricting together with the House State Government and Elections Subcommittee will hold a series of joint hearings starting Wednesday, July 20 in Columbus and Zanesville, to take public testimony. Other hearings will be held in Cleveland, Lima and Cincinnati.

Members of the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting were announced and include Sens. Keith Faber (R-Celina), Larry Obhof (R-Medina), Scott Oelslager (R-North Canton), Tom Sawyer (D-Akron) and Shirley Smith (D-Cleveland).

Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) flatly disputed Thursday that the fix is already in for what Ohio's new Congressional map will look like. With Republicans already controlling 13 of 18 current seats, many have speculated it would be hard to eliminate two Democrats' districts. Niehaus wouldn't comment on whether he thinks it's possible for his party to post a net gain on the new map. He said Senate Republicans do not plan to use a public contest to draw the map, as other groups have proposed, but will take public feedback.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Christiane Schmenk, general counsel to the Ohio Department of Development and the former mayor of Marysville, will become the department's new director and lead its restructuring, Gov. John Kasich's office said Tuesday. Development Director James Leftwich is leaving to return to the private sector, Kasich's office said. Schmenk will take over Aug. 1.

The Department of Public Safety deferred a request before the Controlling Board to buy components for manufacturing temporary license plates after board members questioned the reliance on an out-of-state contractor.

State Reps. Ted Celeste (D-Columbus), Jay Goyal (D-Mansfield) and Matt Lundy (D-Elyria) criticized state Republicans Wednesday for secrecy in government as they unveiled HB294, dubbed the "Commonsense Transparency Bill," which addresses the practice of businesses' and third parties' drafting legislation with the Legislative Services Commission, as seen in the recent state budget. In addition, in response to a budget amendment that makes it easier to stonewall public records requests, Goyal said he and Lundy will introduce legislation which would restore the previous penalty of \$1,000 per record destroyed with no cap. They said the new provisions compromise the ability to deter the destruction of documents.

TREASURER OF STATE

Treasurer Josh Mandel released the results of an internal review of his office, saying that it has led his office to return a \$400,000 surplus for FY11 to the state and reduce General Revenue Fund operating expenses by \$1.2 million. The "top-bottom" review found a number of efficiencies including consolidating regional offices, saving \$47,000; reducing the number of employees in the treasurer's office to 127, saving \$850,000 in salaries and benefits; turning off unused phone, fax and mobile lines, saving \$30,000; and lowering the minutes on cell phone plans, saving \$10,000, among other changes.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

On Monday, Policy Matters Ohio issued a report saying that state leaders have less than two months to claim \$176 million from the federal government for unemployment compensation by making changes outlined in the federal stimulus legislation, otherwise the money will be forfeited.

Then on Wednesday, Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Youngstown) and Ohio AFL-CIO President Tim Burga held a press conference referencing SB13 and calling on the General Assembly to adopt two of four suggested unemployment compensation reforms by Aug. 22 to qualify for the \$176 million. Schiavoni said he had tried to add it to the state budget multiple times, but Republicans tabled it in one instance and refused to add it in conference committee.

UTILITIES

The Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel detailed the cuts it will undergo as a result of budget reductions that halved agency funding, saying it will weigh in on fewer than half the 300 cases it is involved in now, cease responding to customer complaints about utility service, and scale back outreach and education programs.

American Electric Power (AEP) said Thursday it is terminating its cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and placing its plans to advance carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) technology to commercial scale on hold, citing the current uncertain status of U.S. climate policy and the continued weak economy as contributors to the decision. In 2009, AEP was selected by DOE to receive funding of up to \$334 million through the Clean Coal Power Initiative to pay part of the costs for installation of a commercial-scale CCS system at AEP's Mountaineer coal-fueled power plant in New Haven, WV.