

NAIOP

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NAIOP OF OHIO

NAIOP Weekly Legislative Report
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Report created on July 25, 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 7/18/2011

- HB300 SEARCH AND RESCUE DOGS (GOYAL J, RUHL M)** To provide protections for search and rescue dogs and to make changes to the law regarding emergency volunteers.

- HB301 MISSING OR DECEASED CHILD** (HOTTINGER J, BECK P) To require a parent, legal guardian or custodian of a child under the age of 13 to report to a law enforcement agency within twenty-four hours after the child is missing or the parent, legal guardian or custodian discovers that the child is deceased.
- SB201 FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES** (JORDAN K, LEHNER P) To prioritize the distribution of funds for family planning services.

Week in Review

Friday, July 22, 2011

ABORTION

Gov. John R. Kasich signed HB78 (Uecker-Roegner) into law on Wednesday. The bill prohibits abortions after the viability of an unborn child is confirmed and requires physicians to test fetuses for viability at 20 weeks into pregnancy or later. If viability is confirmed, an abortion cannot be performed except in the case of a medical emergency or if the mother has a serious health condition.

AGRICULTURE

Steven Maurer, state executive director for the Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA), reminded farmers that they have until Friday, July 29 to apply for assistance for 2009 crop losses under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. The program provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or quality losses.

The Department of Agriculture is planning five regional hearings throughout the state in August and September to educate farmers about recently completed Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board rules affecting the care of dairy cows, beef cows, turkeys, broiler chickens, sheep, goats, alpacas, llamas and horses.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General (AG) Mike DeWine announced that his office has sued foreclosure rescue company Diversified Real Estate Consultants LLC (DREC), its affiliates and its owner for multiple violations of Ohio consumer laws. According to the lawsuit filed in the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, DREC is a Florida registered company operating from Ohio that offered mortgage assistance relief services to Ohio consumers, even though it never registered to do business in Ohio.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine has sued Nicholas Lamb and Robert White, Ohio residents accused of running a craigslist scam offering to sell video game systems, video games, phones, and phone cards. The Ohio Attorney General's Office currently has 29 consumer complaints against Lamb and 27 against White. The office believes there may be more victims because both men made hundreds of posts on craigslist.

Attorney General (AG) Mike DeWine said in a formal opinion that although existing law permits school boards to pay out accrued vacation leave annually rather than at the time of termination, boards must have formal policies in place that allow for the practice rather than inserting it in a superintendent's contract as a "fringe benefit."

AUDITOR OF STATE

Auditor of State Dave Yost announced the first six recipients of Leverage for Efficiency, Accountability and Performance (LEAP) funding for performance audits. They include the city of Chardon, Clark County Auditor's Office, city of Findlay, city of Fostoria, city of Salem, and Washington County.

BALLOT ISSUES

The group working to keep collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones) from being overturned on a referendum lined up the endorsements of Republican presidential candidates this week. Building a Better Ohio, the group running the campaign to keep SB5, posted a YouTube video featuring former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich endorsing the law that reduces certain collective bargaining rights for public employees plus former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney posted a Facebook message backing the law. Earlier, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty had praised the bill.

Secretary of State Jon Husted Thursday certified the referendum on SB5 to the ballot, saying 915,456 of the 1.3 million signatures submitted were valid, compared to just 231,147 needed to make the ballot. On the same day, national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka came to Ohio to lead a roundtable discussion with other labor groups and SB5 foes on the fall campaign.

Backers of a referendum to overturn HB194 (Blessing-Mecklenborg), the elections reform law, filed 1,000 signatures and summary language with the secretary of state's office and attorney general's office on Monday. Despite moves by the House and Senate to tinker with the language of the law, former Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner told *Hannah News* Friday that there are still too many provisions of the bill that opponents feel would make it harder for people to vote. Once the signatures are validated and the language is approved, the group would need 231,000 valid signatures by the end of September in order to put it on the November 2012 ballot. It is too late for the measure to appear on this year's ballot.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Ohio Parole Board held its clemency hearing for Akron woman Kelley Williams-Bolar, who was convicted of falsification for enrolling her children in nearby Copley-Fairlawn schools despite not living in that district. David Singleton, Williams-Bolar's attorney, said that while activists and the media have made her case a propaganda tool for school choice, she was actually concerned more about her daughters' safety, not their educational needs.

David Diroll, director of the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission, said he called off the July and August meetings of the commission because of an oversight in the new budget. When the budget conference committee undid a Senate move to eliminate the commission, lawmakers reinstated provisions outlining the commission's creation and membership but not those outlining its duties.

DEATH PENALTY

The Ohio Parole Board unanimously recommended against clemency for condemned killer Brett Hartman, reaching the same conclusion it did in 2009 before a federal court delayed Hartman's execution. However, Gov. John Kasich granted Hartman a reprieve until 2012, not because of questions about his guilt but because the state needs time to devise new execution protocols in response to a ruling from U.S. District Court Judge Greg Frost.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ohio Department of Development Director Jim Leftwich led what appeared to be his final Third Frontier Commission meeting Thursday by joining the board in approving more than \$13 million in taxpayer-backed bond funding for medical technology, sensors and internships in various high-tech clusters. Awards included nearly \$8 million for the state's Biomedical Program, nearly \$1 million for the Medical Imaging Program, \$4 million for the Sensors Program, and \$321,000 for the Internship Program. The second of three development directors named by Gov. John Kasich in his young administration, Leftwich is scheduled to depart by Aug. 1, when ODOD General Counsel Christiane Schmenk will take over as director.

A group of Democratic women legislators sent a letter to Gov. John Kasich questioning the fact that just one woman was among the group of eight people he appointed to the board of JobsOhio, noting a parallel to the four out of 26 positions occupied by women in his cabinet.

The Department of Development opened the application process for the Governor's Excellence in Exporting Awards, with entries due Aug. 19.

EDUCATION

Liberty Local Schools' plunge into fiscal emergency brings to five the number of school districts added to the Ohio Auditor of State's worst category of financial performance over the past year and half. The list now stands at eight districts in seven counties, ranging from one week to four years in fiscal emergency. That compares to only two school districts that entered fiscal emergency over the previous year and a half, dating from summer 2008 in the middle of former Gov. Ted Strickland's administration.

New State Superintendent Stan Heffner laid out his personal to-do list for education policy in his weekly memo to educators, naming eight priorities: defining and enacting an educational system that ensures college and career readiness; ensuring that quality school choices are available for every student; challenging our traditions to ensure we maximize resources for efficiency and effectiveness; implementing a new state funding formula; replacing the current accountability system; implementing a new assessment process; expanding the principal evaluation system; creating a new teacher evaluation system.

The Kasich administration is targeting \$70 million in new Race to the Top (RttT) funding as part of President Barack Obama's "Early Learning Challenge" (ELC), a half-billion dollar effort to bring "bold, comprehensive reforms" to early childhood education in the U.S.

ELECTIONS

The Ohio Elections Commission narrowly ruled Thursday that an outside political group that employed a political confidante of House Minority Leader Armond Budish (D-Beachwood) in the 2010 cycle did not improperly coordinate its activities with Budish and other Democrats. Also Thursday, the commission fined former Secretary of State Ken Blackwell and his 2006 gubernatorial campaign treasurer a combined \$3,500 for late or incomplete campaign finance filings.

ELECTIONS 2012

U.S. Rep. Steve Stiver's (R-Columbus) re-election campaign announced second quarter fundraising of \$436,200 Friday, bringing campaign coffers to \$650,000 in cash on hand. The campaign reported individual contributions amounted to \$208,000 for the quarter. Stiver's campaign said this marks the fifth consecutive quarter of raising more than \$350,000.

ENERGY

Ohioans would pay less for electricity, have more job opportunities, and breathe cleaner air if the state adopted stronger clean energy standards, according to a report released by Wednesday by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). The report shows that Ohio and other Midwest states have potential to produce electricity from renewable resources, particularly wind, biomass, solar and through energy efficiency methods.

Dayton Power & Light Inc. (DP&L) rescheduled its annual meeting to allow shareholders to vote on a proposed \$3.5 billion merger of DP&L with AES Corporation that was announced on April 20. The meeting is set for 10 a.m. on Sept. 23 at the Mandalay Banquet Center at 2700 E. River Rd., Dayton, OH 45439.

ENVIRONMENT

Residents of Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida live in states with the most toxic air pollution from coal- and oil-fired power plants, according to an analysis released Wednesday by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

ETHICS

The ethics complaint against newly installed Superintendent of Public Instruction Stan Heffner has expanded to the Office of Inspector General and the Ohio Legislature. State Rep. Debbie Phillips (D-Athens) says the conflict-of-interest issue raised last week by a Plunderbund writer with the Ohio Ethics Commission should also be investigated by Inspector General Randy Meyer, who has concurrent jurisdiction over ethics complaints. Phillips announced her request Monday, releasing a letter to Meyer dated July 18.

The Ohio Ethics Commission announced that former Hocking Technical College President John Light and former Senior Vice President of Student Affairs Roxanne DuVivier have pleaded guilty to five ethics charges involving more than \$20,000 in total restitution and fines. Light and DuVivier accepted a plea deal Friday in Athens County Municipal Court, where Julie Korte of the Ohio Ethics Commission and Paul Scarsella of the Ohio Attorney General's Office acted as special prosecutors in the case.

FEDERAL

President Barack Obama has turned to a former Ohio attorney general to lead the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), announcing Sunday that he will nominate Richard Cordray as director. Cordray has already been serving a large role in the fledgling agency as the head of enforcement and now will take over as its director. The agency, which officially began operation on Thursday, has power to write federal rules on consumer products such as loans, mortgages and credit cards.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman reiterated concerns Thursday he expressed earlier in a letter about the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, saying any hang-ups for former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray as the nominee to head the bureau will not be personal. "I think he's got a distinguished record of public service and I look forward to hearing what he has to say, especially about [bureau] reform," Portman said. "Just about every [Senate] Republican ... signed a letter some time ago, long before Rich Cordray was even on the scene, saying we required reforms on the agency before we can move forward on any nomination."

GAMING

The Casino Control Commission approved the application form casino operators will need to complete to secure a license, pending approval from Spectrum Gaming Group, an adviser to the commission hired by the Kasich administration. Commission Chairwoman Jo Ann Davidson said Thursday that the commission is continuing its search for an executive director after a prospective candidate turned down an offer. She wouldn't name the candidate but said it was someone the commission sought out and not someone who had submitted a resume.

A federal judge approved a settlement between the city of Columbus and Penn National Gaming resolving their dispute about annexation of the Franklin County casino site into the city.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Rep. Bob Mecklenborg (R-Cincinnati) made his resignation official over the weekend, sending a two-sentence letter to Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina) Sunday and releasing a statement saying his pending DUI case has become a distraction to the Legislature. Mecklenborg is facing a charge of driving under the influence after his April 23 arrest in Indiana. The arrest did not become public until last month. Reports said he had a blood alcohol level of 0.097 percent. He also had a 26-year-old woman in the car with him that media reports linked to a nearby strip club.

Orders are now being accepted online at <http://www.statehouseshop.com/> for the new book "Ohio Statehouse: A Building for the Ages" which will be available in the Statehouse Museum Shop in early August. Click on "Statehouse exclusive." The book is part of the sesquicentennial of the Statehouse that is being commemorated throughout 2011.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) and the Capitol Square Foundation Wednesday received a \$150,000 gift from Honda of America Mfg., Inc and the Walmart Foundation to fund two additional years of transportation grants allowing school children to visit the Ohio Statehouse and its museum.

Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Chris Redfern sent a public records request to House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina) seeking records from between April and June pertaining to outgoing Rep. Robert Mecklenborg's (R-Cincinnati) arrest on a charge of drunken driving. Redfern has charged House GOP leaders knew of Mecklenborg's arrest sooner than they let on, but a spokesman for Batchelder said the speaker learned about it when his staff opened an anonymous letter containing the arrest report June 29.

House Republicans said they are taking applications until 3 p.m. Friday, July 22 for the vacant seats formerly held by Reps. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville) and Dave Burke (R-Marysville), who were appointed to fill Senate vacancies. The process has not begun for replacing Rep. Robert Mecklenborg (R-Cincinnati), who has resigned effective Aug. 2.

Rep. Rex Damschroder (R-Fremont) sent a letter to the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board objecting to the opening of a bar in the Statehouse, saying it sends a bad message to the public. Some members of the board agreed with him, with Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) and former House Speaker Jo Ann Davidson putting a halt to the bar opening at Thursday's board meeting until a committee can study the issue further.

Sen. Kris Jordan (R-Powell) and his wife Melissa, the Delaware County recorder, released a joint statement after a domestic dispute that prompted Melissa Jordan to call 911 became public. "Like many couples, we have stressful lives. We had an emotional argument and are embarrassed that some very personal issues have become public. We are all human. We make mistakes. Please allow us the space, time and privacy to work through this together. We ask for your prayers," their statement said.

GOVERNOR

Following the urging of environmentalists, two former Ohio Republican governors, members of Congress, and governors in other states, Gov. John Kasich vetoed his first bill Friday when he said no to legislation implementing the Great Lakes Compact in Ohio. HB231 (Wachtmann) was passed mainly along party lines in the House and Senate, but groups said that provisions regarding water withdrawals fell well short of what the compact was seeking to achieve. In vetoing the bill, Kasich issued a statement calling for improvements to the legislation.

As the scandal in Great Britain involving the media empire of Rupert Murdoch begins to spill over into the states, Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Chris Redfern on Wednesday wrote to Gov. John Kasich, calling on him to contribute to charity the contributions and earnings he received from Murdoch and his News Corporation.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

University Hospitals (UH) Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital have received the largest individual gift in their history with the \$17 million donation from Char and Chuck Fowler in memory of their daughter, Angie, who died of melanoma at age 14. The funds will be used to establish The Angie Fowler Child & Young Adult Cancer Institute.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Robert G. Frank, Kent State University's provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, has announced he will leave the university at the end of the 2011-2012 school year in hopes of landing the top job at another institution.

Bowling Green University's Board of Trustees approved a 3.5 percent increase in in-state undergraduate tuition at a meeting recently, adding \$168 to the cost of a semester for the 2011-2012 academic year. Non-resident and graduate tuition rates were unchanged. According to the university's website, the increase accompanied approval of the 2011-2012 budget of \$285.7 million for its main campus and \$14.7 million for its Firelands campus.

Seven Ohio State University medical programs, including those that treat cancer and heart diseases, have been designated among the nation's 25 best programs within their respective specialties, according to a survey released Tuesday by U.S. News & World Report. Four programs -- cancer, diabetes and endocrinology, rehabilitation, and ear, nose and throat -- are ranked in the top 20.

Chancellor Jim Petro introduced a draft version of the plan for "enterprise universities" that he is to submit to the General Assembly in August. His six-page proposal would remove some mandates from all universities while granting greater freedom to institutions that meet certain benchmarks on finances, graduation and retention rates, research spending, affordability and other factors.

HOUSING

U.S. Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), co-chair of the Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus, introduced legislation encouraging homeowners to preserve homes of historical significance across the country. The Historic Homeownership Revitalization Act, HR2555, extends the tax credit currently in effect for commercial property owners to families living in historic homes.

Ohio housing sales continued to lag 2010 figures, with June sales totaling 10,009, compared to 12,000 a year earlier. Prices and total dollar volume were also down compared both to June 2010 figures and the first six months of 2010.

JUDICIAL

It will be 2013 before court interpreter rules backed by the late Chief Justice Tom Moyer that seek to protect the courts and litigants from potential conflicts of interest take effect. Limits on who can act as an interpreter will exclude police, probation officers and court personnel, though rules adopted by the Ohio Supreme Court Monday allow the court to designate someone with demonstrated "proficiency" if a certified foreign language interpreter is unavailable. Ohio courts must accommodate approximately 80 languages and more than 25,000 cases a year requiring a court interpreter.

The Supreme Court of Ohio announced recently the first-ever hiring of a woman to fill the "reporter of decisions" position. She is Sandra Huth Grosko, case management counsel in the Office of the Clerk. She replaces Ralph Preston, who will retire at the end of the month.

The Northern and Southern district federal trial courts in Ohio are among 14 nationwide that will take part in a digital video pilot to evaluate the effect of cameras in federal courtrooms. The three-year experiment for civil proceedings in which the parties have consented to recording began Monday, July 18.

The family of former two-term Ohio Supreme Court Justice Ralph Locher, who was credited with creating an atmosphere of collegiality, recently donated his portrait to the Court. Locher, a former mayor of Cleveland and a former Cuyahoga County Common Pleas and Probate judge, served on the Supreme Court from 1977 to 1989.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, Speaker of the House William Batchelder (R-Medina) and Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) all announced their selections for the nine-member Small Business Advisory

Council established in state law as part of CSI Ohio: the Common Sense Initiative. Taylor got five appointments while Niehaus and Batchelder each got two. Taylor's appointments included the following: Orlando Alonso, president and general manager of Columbus Pest Control, Columbus; Brandon Cohen, president and CEO of Ohio IT Alliance, Toledo; Richard Fedorovich, CEO of Bober Markey Fedorovich, a CPA firm, Akron; Michael Flowers, vice president of KBK Enterprises, a real estate development company, Columbus; and Dan Young, CEO of Young's Jersey Dairy, Yellow Springs. Batchelder named Michael Baach, president and CEO of Philpott Rubber Company, Brunswick; and Michael Canty, president and CEO of Alloy Bellows & Precision Welding, Cleveland. Niehaus' appointments are Thomas Demaline, president of Willoway Nurseries, Avon; and Crystal Faulkner, founding partner of Cooney, Faulkner & Stevens LLC, Cincinnati.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources named Gail Hesse of Columbus as the new executive director of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. Hesse, recently environmental manager in the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Division of Surface Water, replaces Edwin Hammett, who held the position for nine years.

Ohioans can track the progress of state agencies fighting toxic algae blooms at Grand Lake St. Marys through a new website, www.livelakedata.com, which includes information from five water-quality monitors installed at the lake.

PENSION FUNDS

The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System released results of a survey showing half of system members who are eligible to retire within the next year are considering doing so, with 30 percent saying proposed pension reforms are the main reason for considering retirement.

PEOPLE

The Industrial Commission of Ohio (IC) announced Friday that Gov. John Kasich had appointed Commissioner Karen L. Gillmor as the new Industrial Commission chairperson, effective July 14.

John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth and longtime U.S. senator representing Ohio, celebrated his 90th birthday on Monday.

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Administrator/CEO Steven Buehrer announced the appointment of Dale Hamilton as chief operating officer and Kevin Abrams as head of BWC's Employer Services Division.

Hancock County resident Stephanie Miller was recently named a fellow by the National Society of American Foresters (SAF) Council, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Forestry. SAF Fellows must be committed to SAF volunteer activities, as well as demonstrate exemplary action, sustained leadership, and advancement of the forestry profession.

Former State Board of Education President Sue Westendorf has been hired by the Ohio Coalition of Quality Education (OCQE) as education advisor, the organization announced Friday. Westendorf previously worked for the Ohio Department of Education and served as former executive director of My School My Choice, which lobbied against charter school cuts in the executive budget of former Gov. Ted Strickland.

A service in memory of Hubert Heard, 83, father-in-law of Rep. Tracy Heard (D-Columbus), was held Friday, July 22 at Smyrna Baptist Church in Columbus.

Former Rep. Jim Davis of St. Marys, who served in the General Assembly from 1985 to 1994, died at age 76.

POLLS/STUDIES

The latest Quinnipiac University poll in Ohio showed Gov. John Kasich's approval ratings have slipped, with 50 percent of respondents disapproving of his performance and 35 percent approving. The poll showed 56 percent of respondents favor repeal of SB5 at the ballot, compared to 32 percent who oppose repeal. It also showed strong support among Democratic, Republican and independent voters for requiring voters to show a photo ID at the polls, and showed support breaking along partisan lines for a proposed constitutional amendment to block parts of the federal Affordable Care Act. In addition, the poll showed President Barack Obama and U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown ahead of potential Republican challengers at this point.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

The League of Women Voters of Ohio, Midwest Democracy Network and Ohio Citizen Action launched a public redistricting competition similar to the one they sponsored with former Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner in 2009, this time sweetening the pot with up to \$5,000 in prize money and scholarships for the winners.

Witnesses who testified at the first field hearing of the House State Government Subcommittee on Redistricting and the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting urged lawmakers to maintain an open process for drawing a new congressional map, and also asked that they do more to accommodate minority representation and not continue to carve up Franklin County into three districts.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Credit rating agency Standard & Poor's upgraded Ohio's overall economic outlook from "negative" to "stable," undoing a downgrade it instituted about two years ago when a plan for new gambling revenue started to fall apart. S&P cited restoration of structural balance in the new FY12-13 budget as influencing the upgrade.

UTILITIES

The Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel briefed its governing board on the effects of the 50 percent-plus budget cut the office underwent in the state budget, with Consumers' Counsel Janine Migden-Ostrander saying additional staffing cuts might be needed in FY13 when the budget drops to \$4.1 million, beyond the cut from 75 employees to 40 that has already been made.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Monday announced that it "has entered the world of social media, launching both Twitter and Facebook accounts, each with its own distinctive purpose." The Twitter account (<http://twitter.com/ohiobwc>) will highlight agency activities, news and information, and distribute updates important to employers, injured workers, medical providers, safety professionals and Ohio's entire workers' comp community. The Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ohiobwcfraud will focus on the bureau's fraud investigation efforts.