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NAIOP OF OHIO

NAIOP Weekly Legislative Report
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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:* 9/27/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
All Bill Status: 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
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:* 9/27/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Sixth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
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 10/10/2011

DRUG TESTING FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS (HAGAN R) To establish a controlled substance testing requirement for statewide elected officials, members of the General Assembly, the Supreme Court, the board of directors of JobsOhio, and recipients of Troubled Asset Relief Program money and to establish a process for recalling statewide elected officials and members of the General Assembly.

OHIO INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE (BARNES, JR. J) To establish the Ohio International Initiative by creating the "SellOhio Global Initiative" within the Department of Development and the Global Initiative on International Relations within the General Assembly to create new, untapped global markets for Ohio businesses and thereby promote job creation, and to make an appropriation.

STIMULATION OF OIL AND GAS WELLS (DRIEHAUS D, HEARD T) Establishes a moratorium on horizontal stimulation of oil and gas wells until the USEPA publishes a report containing the results of a study of the relationship of hydraulic fracturing to drinking water resources and the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management issues a report analyzing how Ohio's rules address issues raised in the USEPA report.

POLICE/FIRE PENSION FUND - DISABILITIES (YUKO K) To provide that a firefighter, police officer, or public EMS worker who is disabled as a result of specified types of cancer or certain contagious diseases is presumed for workers' compensation and the Pension Fund to have incurred the disease while performing official duties.

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE TEST (BURKE D) To establish a waiver for the commercial driver's license skills test for driver' with military commercial motor vehicle commercial motor vehicle experience.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION-DISABLED VETERANS (SCHAFFER T) To exempt from property taxation the primary residences of military veterans who are 100% disabled from a service-connected disability.

Week in Review

Friday, October 14, 2011

ABORTION

Several anti-abortion activists and groups banded together Wednesday to form a new statewide organization, Ohio ProLife Action, to push for passage of the so-called "heartbeat bill" -- HB125 (Wachtmann) -- which would ban most abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detectable.

This followed Ohio Right to Life's decision months ago not to endorse HB125 because of fears it will simply invite further federal court rulings affirming a woman's right to seek an abortion. However, on Wednesday, Ohio Right to Life and its national counterpart rolled out federal legislation sponsored by presidential candidate U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) and also claiming the "heartbeat" moniker, the Heartbeat Informed Consent Act of 2011, to require abortion providers to make a woman considering an abortion view and hear the heartbeat of her fetus. National Right to Life and other groups plan to push it as model legislation in all 50 states.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

In its second meeting under Attorney General Mike DeWine's administration, the Human Trafficking Commission Wednesday continued organizing and discussing how to proceed with its mission.

AUDITOR OF STATE

Auditor Dave Yost announced Tuesday that his office has received a clean audit opinion for FY11. The independent audit was conducted by Kennedy Cottrell Richards LLC, and their opinion is part of the office's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) filed annually with the Ohio Office of Management and Budget.

BALLOT ISSUES

We Are Ohio, the group fighting against collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones) and Issue 2 to uphold the law, cried foul over the pro-Issue 2 side's use of a great-grandmother Marlene Quinn who appeared in the anti-SB5 group's most recent ad talking about a fire where her great-granddaughter Zoey was saved by Cincinnati firefighters. She urged a "no" vote on Issue 2 because she said passage would hurt firefighter staffing. However, Building a Better Ohio, the group urging a "yes" vote to keep the law in place, used some of the same footage of Quinn, but added that safety could be hurt if the issue goes down because it would lead to firefighter layoffs.

By Day 2 of "granny-gate," We Are Ohio reported that as many as 30 television stations in multiple Ohio markets were reported to have pulled the advertisement off the air with Gov. John Kasich weighing in, saying, "I don't run the campaign. What they're doing is fine," of the pro-Issue 2 actions. Jason Mauk, a spokesman for Building a Better Ohio, said the group is standing by the ad and won't agree to pull it or replace it.

Issue 2 took center stage during a lunchtime debate Thursday between Sen. Keith Faber (R-Celina) and Dale Butland of Innovation Ohio at an event hosted by the Columbus Metropolitan Club. Faber said the anti-Issue 2 side wants to make the campaign about hype, hyperbole and emotion. He said the reality is that collective bargaining legislation SB5 (Jones) reforms state government in a way that taxpayers can afford. He called SB5 "reasonable reforms" that provide transparency and shine light on the process that has led to public workers' making more than their private counterparts. Butland called SB5 "unfair, unsafe" and said it will hurt Ohioans. He said it is not about reasonable reform, but busting unions. Quoting Sen. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), who voted against the legislation, he said that management is able to impose its own offer, meaning there is no incentive to bargain.

In an interview with reporters, Columbus City police officer Rob Barrett weighed in on Issue 2 and the situation that thrust him into the national spotlight after video of Gov. John Kasich calling Barrett an "idiot" over a traffic stop surfaced on the Internet. "I voted for the guy," Barrett told reporters. "I voted for Kasich. ... Had I known this is what would have happened, I wouldn't have voted for him. It's actually a slap in my face that not only is he taking my profession and he's attacking the profession of those who put their lives on the line on a daily basis, he's attacking the citizens of the state of Ohio by saying this is good for the state. It's not good for the state."

As the campaign ramps up for and against Issue 2, the referendum on collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones), a new report from the liberal-leaning Policy Matters Ohio argued that collective bargaining contracts often contain provisions that directly benefit communities. Specifically, the report notes that teacher unions will often bargain to maintain smaller class sizes, which the group said foster better student-teacher relationships and safer, more stable classroom atmospheres. It also said that unions use collective bargaining to develop discipline plans that advocate for more in-school suspensions, as well as better school quality and improved evaluations.

Ohio Democrats seeking to block a new congressional map designed by Republicans and enacted in HB319 (Huffman) were turned away Wednesday after attempting to file more than 1,000 signatures with Secretary of State Jon Husted's office and summary language with Attorney General Mike DeWine in order to get the process for a ballot issue started. Both offices refused to accept the petitions. Secretary of State Jon Husted said "HB319, as passed by the Ohio General Assembly and signed by the governor, contained an appropriation and took effect immediately. It is therefore not subject to referendum."

The Catholic bishops, while remaining neutral on all three statewide ballot issues, encouraged voters to look beyond campaign rhetoric and partisan politics and to make a careful study of the issues, publishing a "reflection guide" that offers the pros and cons of each, as well as reflective questions and teaching principles. It can be found on the web at <http://www.ohiocathconf.org/>.

The *Columbus Dispatch* endorsed a "no" vote on Issue 1, the constitutional amendment to raise the mandatory retirement age for judges in Ohio.

The Ohio AgriBusiness Association endorsed a "Yes" vote on Issue 2 to keep collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones) in place.

CORRECTIONS

The plaintiffs in a civil rights complaint alleging unconstitutional conditions at the Washington County Juvenile Center in Marietta filed a proposed settlement in federal court Tuesday that would make changes to how youth are treated at the facility. Among the changes: No youth will be held in detention for more than 24 hours and a medical director is to be appointed and medical policies will be established. In addition, the proposed settlement would also include \$406,230 in damages, plus attorney fees, expenses and monitoring.

A Cincinnati attorney, Alphonse Gerhardstein, who represents youth in several complaints against Ohio's detention system, asked a federal judge to halt the use of pepper spray by adult corrections officers in juvenile facilities, unless sanctioned by the courts.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder chose Ohio to announce \$243 million in Department of Justice (DOJ) grants to the 50 states, including more than \$16 million in Ohio, ranking it third behind California and New Jersey for Community Oriented Policing. In addition, the agency awarded another \$750,000 to address domestic violence in Summit County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ohio Third Frontier approved another \$5 million from its Research & Development Center Attraction Program and \$1 million from its Advanced Materials Program, the first benefiting General Electrics proposed Aviation Research Center and the second, Momentive Performance Materials' joint project with Case Western Reserve University.

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) is hosting the 2011 Ohio Business Expo on Wednesday, Nov. 30 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Rhodes Center at the Ohio Expo Center in Columbus to assist minority, women-owned and small businesses access state contracts.

ECONOMY

Columbus saw its second day of rallies Tuesday in conjunction with the Occupy Wall Street movement. MoveOn.org followed Monday's effort by OccupyColumbus.org with another sign-laden protest at Columbus' own Wall Street near the Statehouse where they highlighted state issues including Issue 2 to repeal SB5 and HB194, which advocates say threatens Ohioans' voting rights, as part of the national agenda being voiced in New York City. The rally challenged the corporate and GOP agendas, noting that they represent what they say is the 99 percent of Americans and Ohioans who do not fall into the wealthiest 1 percent.

EDUCATION

Education advisor to the governor Bob Sommers convened the first meeting of the Digital Learning Task Force, telling a diverse group representing district, charter and private schools that while Ohio has made great progress in full-time virtual learning, the state has more work to do on policies and resources for part-time, "blended" learning. Sommers, director of the Governor's Office of 21st ¹/₂ Century Education and a member of the task force created by budget bill HB153 (Amstutz), presented a 10-page Digital Learning Report Card for the state of Ohio that grades everything from access to digital coursework at all grade levels to the professional development and digital infrastructure that would enable teachers and administrators to lead blended learning.

The Ohio State Board of Education was sidetracked at its meeting Monday by debate over an unexpected resolution from member C. Todd Jones calling for the board to drop out of the National Association of State Boards of Education. Following significant pushback, Jones asked that the resolution be postponed indefinitely, saying he just wanted to start the conversation.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) notified two charter schools previously sponsored by Ashe Culture Center that they must close at the end of the 2011-2012 school year due to financial mismanagement. State Superintendent Stan Heffner confirmed Tuesday that the department officially notified Ashe that its permit to sponsor community schools has been revoked -- a first for Ohio. In the meantime, ODE will assume sponsorship of five of Ashe's seven remaining charter schools -- the department's statutory charge when a sponsor fails to maintain \$500,000 in assets and overall financial responsibility.

Eighteen Ohio school districts and their corresponding counties and townships will share \$1,238,864 from the sale of timber in Ohio's state forests through the "Trees to Textbooks" program, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Forestry announced.

Reading High School teacher Brian Page of Hamilton County has received a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award. An economics and finance teacher, he is one of 40 educators nationally to receive this year's Milken Family Foundation award this year, and the only Ohioan.

ELECTIONS

Former Dayton Mayor, State Rep. and State Sen. Rhine McLin announced that she will run for the Dayton City Commission in 2013, the *Dayton Daily News* reported.

ELECTIONS 2012

Fairfield County attorney Monty Lobb, a former assistant secretary of state under Ken Blackwell, announced Monday that he will run for the 78th House District in 2012. The newly drawn district that covers parts of Athens, Fairfield, Hocking, Morgan, Muskingum and Pickaway counties does not have an incumbent.

Various media outlets reported Samuel Joseph Wurzelbacher, aka Joe the Plumber, plans to run in the new 9th Congressional District, which contains the homes of both U.S. Reps. Dennis Kucinich (D-Cleveland) and Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo).

For the second straight quarter, Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel has outraised U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) in their potential 2012 matchup. According to reports, Mandel raised \$1.5 million in the quarter spanning from July until Sept. 30. Brown raised \$1.25 million.

Fairfield Mayor Ron D'Epifanio said he would not run for state representative as he had previously announced, at this point leaving former Rep. Greg Jolivet the sole Republican seeking term-limited Rep. Courtney Combs' (R-Hamilton) seat.

The *Plain Dealer* reports that former U.S. Rep. John Bocchieri (D-Alliance) might be contemplating another congressional run based on his campaign finance report filed at the Federal Election Commission.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The national unemployment rate held at 9.1 percent in September as the U.S. economy added 103,000 jobs, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics said.

ENERGY

Reps. Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) and Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) held a news conference Wednesday, highlighting two bills they are introducing with Reps. Tracy Maxwell Heard (D-Columbus) and Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) to address fracking in Ohio by proposing first a moratorium and then transparency around the chemicals used and their affect on public health and drinking water -- two amendments introduced by Democratic members of the House and Senate that were tabled by the

majority GOP during the debate on HB133 (J. Adams). The two bills are similar to those introduced in the Senate in September by Sen. Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood).

ENVIRONMENT

A new Ohio EPA report on Ohio's drinking water systems demonstrates significant progress over the last three years to help systems improve their technical, managerial and financial capabilities and provide drinking water in a consistent, reliable and cost-effective manner, the agency said in a release. The triennial "Capability Assurance Strategy" covering July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011 is a requirement of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. It documents Ohio EPA's efforts to ensure public water systems are operating effectively. In Ohio, 90 percent of residents receive water to use for bathing, cooking and drinking from about 4,900 licensed public water systems.

Buckeye Forest Council (BFC) Monday said that, on behalf of itself; the Natural Resources Defense Council; Sierra Club Ohio Chapter; Center for Health, Environment and Justice; Heartwood; Environment Ohio; and Ohio Environmental Council, it has filed a formal protest letter with the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) over proposed sales of gas and oil leases on five parcels totaling 3,302 acres of the Wayne National Forest in Athens, Perry, and Gallia counties. The protest joins others submitted by Ohio University, Athens County commissioners, Athens City Council, city of Athens administration, Athens Conservancy, Hocking River Commission, and individual residents.

A new, nationwide poll conducted by Hart Research Associates and GS Strategy Group and sponsored by Ceres, a coalition of investors, environmental groups and other public interest organizations, found that by a wide margin, respondents of both political parties and in all regions of the U.S. disagree with Congress' push to limit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) from implementing its new rules limiting air pollution from coal-fired power plants. Two-thirds of the respondents -- 67 percent -- oppose delaying implementation of the air pollution rules.

Updates to a program that allows voluntary trading of water quality pollution credits are being considered by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) as part of a five-year rule review. Public comments on draft rules are being sought through Oct. 25.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) again asked NASA to reconsider its decision on where to place retired space shuttles, following reports that New York might place the shuttle *Enterprise* at a different museum than the one it originally proposed to NASA. Brown termed it "a bait-and-switch."

The U.S. Department of Labor announced on Thursday that it will be notifying former workers of 25 facilities located in Ohio about benefits that may be available to them under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) administered by the department's Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation. Survivors of qualified workers also may be entitled to benefits.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) cleared the Delaware County Sheriff's Office of any wrongdoing for how it responded when Sen. Kris Jordan's (R-Powell) wife, Melissa, called 911 alleging he'd been drinking and pushed her around. Jordan had complained Delaware Sheriff Walter Davis III was out to ruin his political career, and the bureau started the investigation at the county prosecutor's office, after a deputy alleged a report on the incident had been tampered with to remove his narrative. But BCII agents found the narrative was missing because it hadn't been saved properly.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board and Capitol Square Foundation are seeking nominations for the "Great Ohioan" Award to commemorate Ohioans who have played a key role in an event or series of events of lasting significance in world, American or Ohio history. Additional criteria include being born

in Ohio or having lived in Ohio for a minimum of five years with at least 25 years having passed since the nominee participated in the commemorated event. The deadline for nominations is Friday, Dec. 2.

GOVERNOR

Citing a concern that Ohio is increasingly being used as a pipeline for major drug trafficking operations, Gov. John Kasich said the Ohio State Highway Patrol has been doing interdiction to tackle the problem, and his administration is looking at whether the drug laws need to be toughened.

Gov. John Kasich signed three bills this week: SB38 (Hughes) to designate May as "ALS Awareness Month"; SB101 (Patton) to designate May as "Substance Abuse Awareness and Education Month"; SB124 (Bacon) to make changes relative to the probate code.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Chancellor Jim Petro announced a shared services agreement for government IT virtualization that is projected to save the state \$25.4 million in direct savings and \$155.5 million in indirect savings over the next two years. Signed in conjunction with Ohio State University, the licensing agreement will serve all Ohio four-year and two-year campuses, K-12 schools, and state and local governments, as well as related health care communities.

The Early Childhood Education department at Terra State Community College will collaborate with the University of Toledo in an initiative that will benefit special needs families. With the help of a grant, "The Partners' Project" will improve Terra's curriculum as a means of better preparing early childhood educators to work with young children who have special needs and their families. Terra is the first community college to be selected for this project, which will be extended to four other community colleges in the next four years.

The University of Toledo announced that it has reached an agreement on a one-year contract extension with members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 4319. The contract runs through December 2012 and maintains current wages and asks CWA members to partner with the university to help cover increasing insurance costs.

The University of Akron (UA), Kent State University and Youngstown State University (YSU) were awarded \$432,558 by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents to establish the East Central Region College TechPrep/Program of Study Center (ECRC). The ECRC will serve more than 100 school districts and their students in an effort to boost student enrollment in College Tech Prep/Program of Study programs in high schools as well as in Ohio colleges and universities.

Ohio State University's College of Arts and Sciences (ASC) and College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) are partnering to create the Center for Applied Plant Sciences (CAPS). The development of new bio-products and enhanced crop performance are among its priorities.

Carole Dabney-Smith, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Miami University, is among 94 researchers named by President Barack Obama to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) -- the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on scientists and engineers who are in the early stages of their independent research careers, the university said.

HOUSING

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) Friday joined U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan and Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman to highlight construction at the Commons at Third, the fifth project for the city under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). While the project is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the HUD secretary took the opportunity to use the project as a model of what could happen on a grander scale with passage of the president's American Jobs Act.

JUDICIAL

The Supreme Court of Ohio (SCO) will accept public comment until Nov. 8 on proposed amendments that change references to "partnership having limited liability" and "registered partnership" to "limited liability partnership." Changes conform the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio and the Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct to the language used in an updated Ohio Revised Code chapter. The proposed amendments also update the statutory references to the Ohio Uniform Partnership Act.

The Supreme Court of Ohio has adopted a series of rule amendments designed to improve Ohio's disciplinary system for lawyers and judges. The new rules take effect Jan. 1, 2012. Earlier this year, the Court considered the proposed amendments that were contained in a December 2009 report from an 18-member Task Force to Review the Ohio Disciplinary System appointed by the late Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer. The Court also considered comments received during two public comment periods.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor invoked a little-used section of the Ohio Revised Code Tuesday in appointing a special commission to investigate the recommended state suspension of Shelby County Sheriff Dean Kimpel, indicted in two counties for felony sexual battery and unauthorized background checks on the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway, respectively.

Joshua Engel, once chief counsel at the Department of Public Safety who was demoted and then fired amid the Strickland-era inmate-smuggling scandal, should keep his law license but be publicly reprimanded, the Ohio Supreme Court's Board of Commissioners on Grievances and Discipline recommended this week. The report rejected the Office of Disciplinary Counsel's request that Engel receive a stayed six-month suspension of his law license, citing a similar reprimand of former Gov. Bob Taft as justification. The Supreme Court will make the final decision.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Writer and conservationist Louis Bromfield is walking again at his home at Malabar Farm State Park. "Louie," Mark Sebastian Jordan's historical drama recounting the glittering, turbulent personal life of the late Pulitzer Prize-winning author, is currently in the second week of a repeat run at the farm. Performances are set for Friday and Saturday nights, Oct. 14-15 at 7 p.m. in the main barn.

More than 15,000 ring-necked pheasants will be released on 28 public hunting areas across the state this fall as part of a seasonal effort by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife to improve hunting opportunities for this popular game bird.

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General (IG) announced it has completed an investigation of the ODNR Division of Wildlife and concluded wrongful acts and omissions were committed by two Ohio Division of Wildlife officers who helped Indiana conservation officials avoid paying for a more costly non-resident fishing license by falsifying Ohio residential addresses on their license applications.

PENSION FUNDS

An Ohio Retirement Study Council subcommittee awarded Hay Group the highest score Tuesday among six bidders for a contract to help vet strategies to ensure long-term solvency for the five state pension systems.

Hay Group received 46 out of 50 possible points on a rubric that awarded proposals up to five points in each of 10 categories: vendor capabilities; vendor references; staff qualifications; resources; methodology; timeline; additional information and services; glossary; and cost information. Scoring second highest was Pension Trustee Advisors/KMS Actuaries at 43, followed by Segal and Milliman, tied at 37; Bolton Group at 30; and Deloitte, 26. The full Retirement Study Council (ORSC) ratified the bid proposal scoring at its Thursday meeting.

PEOPLE

Former Cincinnati Mayor Charlie Luken and former Ohio Senate President Richard Finan will lead the new Cincinnati office of Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP. The move gives the firm a physical presence in Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati.

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, director of the Department of Insurance, said Tuesday that Chris Brock will be the department's new communications director. He previously was exchange outreach coordinator, which put him in charge of policy and outreach for health insurance exchange planning. He also worked as manager of grassroots advocacy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and as a communications assistant in the House speaker's office.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife named Korey Brown, former wildlife license sales coordinator for the division, as the new manager for its Wildlife District One in Central Ohio. He replaces David Lane, whom the agency promoted to division chief in May. He will not move into the new position until the new year because of his "key role in the implementation of the new license and game check system."

Nathan Jester was recently named district forest manager for the Southern Region by the ODNR Division of Forestry. The Southern Region includes 14 of Ohio's 21 state forests and comprises more than 184,000 acres in the unglaciated part of the state.

The State Library of Ohio announced that Evan T. Struble has joined its staff as library consultant for information systems and technology. In this role, Struble will manage and provide support to the library's statewide resource sharing initiative, Ohio Libraries Share: MORE.

Anna Hall has been named Ohio Farm Bureau Federation's (OFBF) organization director for Fairfield, Hocking, Perry, Pickaway and Ross counties.

Seven new members were inducted into the Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame at a ceremony Thursday in the Statehouse Atrium. Recognized for their "significant contributions to the progress of civil rights and equal justice in the state of Ohio," they included: Roger Abramson, Theodore M. Berry, Ken Campbell, Nathaniel R. Jones, Amos Lynch Sr., Louis Sharp and V. Anthony Simms-Howell.

POVERTY

The annual winter heating season re-connect program begins Monday, Oct. 17, giving residential customers who have had their home heating service disconnected or have received a disconnection notice an opportunity to pay to have their home heating service restored or maintained, according to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). Residential customers must pay \$175 or the amount owed, whichever is less, plus a reconnection fee of no more than \$36 to restore or maintain service with their regulated natural gas or electric company. The winter reconnect order may be used one time during the winter heating season that runs from Oct. 17 through April 13, 2012.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland) sent a letter to Gov. John Kasich and members of the Ohio Apportionment Board Friday asking for one of her press statements to be entered into the board's record in response to the decision to switch around which House districts are contained in the new 21st and 25th Senate districts. In her letter, Turner complained that only one of three press statements issued in response to the Apportionment Board amendment to switch districts was entered into the record -- that of Rep. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland), president of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, who indicated she supported the move.

Various General Assembly Democrats who were drawn into districts with fellow caucus members or into districts that favor a Republican incumbent are weighing their options after the Apportionment Board finalized new legislative maps. Reps. Ted Celeste (D-Grandview Heights) and Mike Stinziano (D-Columbus), whose districts were combined, say they've talked, and Stinziano is considering a move to the incumbent-less 17th District, while Celeste might run in the new 3rd U.S. House District. Rep. Denise

Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) might move to the 31st District after being drawn into a Republican-leaning district with Rep. Louis Terhar (R-Cincinnati).

The Ohio Supreme Court Monday set an expedited schedule for hearing a lawsuit from Democrats challenging legislation creating Ohio's new congressional districts, ordering that all parties submit evidence and briefs by Wednesday at noon and reply briefs by Thursday at noon.

REGULATORY REFORM

The Kasich administration's Common Sense Initiative (CSI) got down to the business of simplifying Ohio's regulatory structure at Tuesday's meeting of the Small Business Advisory Panel. CSI Director Mark Hamlin laid out the opportunities and challenges facing his office as they work to make regulatory reform a reality in the everyday world of entrepreneurs and growing companies.

Lt. Governor Mary Taylor said Wednesday that CSI Ohio and the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) worked together to reverse a change in classification of deputy registrars that was increasing premiums for these small business owners by 97.5 percent over the previous year.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Kaiser Health News reported that Ohio is not alone in declining to pay for membership in the National Governors Association. Also not joining are Florida, Idaho and Texas.

The Ohio Department of Commerce said Tuesday that it is seeing an increase in the amount of unclaimed fund payouts for the first part of the new fiscal year. According to the department, the Division of Unclaimed Funds has paid 39.8 percent more claims and 35.5 percent more money during the first quarter of FY12 than during the first quarter of FY11. The state has paid 14,473 claims worth more than \$14.6 million so far this fiscal year.

TRANSPORTATION

The U.S. Department of Transportation pulled \$1.5 million in federal funding that the Kasich administration hoped to use to hire a consultant to help with a potential lease of the Ohio Turnpike, following complaints from Democratic members of Ohio's congressional delegation. Later in the week, however, Republican members of Ohio's congressional delegation sent their own letter to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood asking the federal government reconsider its decision to yank the funds. The Republicans noted that a number of other states, including Kentucky, applied and received funding for studies similar to Ohio's request.