



COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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:*** 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:*** 3/28/2012 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 33-0
 All Bill Status: 3/28/2012 - Bills for Third Consideration
 3/14/2012 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (Fourth Hearing)
 2/15/2012 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (Third Hearing)
 2/2/2012 - Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (Second Hearing)
 1/24/2012 - Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (First Hearing)
 1/10/2012 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development
 12/14/2011 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 82-12
 12/14/2011 - Bills for Third Consideration
 12/6/2011 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED**

OUT AS AMENDED, House Ways and Means, (Sixth Hearing)
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: 3/20/2012 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT**, House Local Government, (Ninth Hearing)

All Bill Status: 1/31/2012 - House Local Government, (Eighth Hearing)
1/24/2012 - House Local Government, (Seventh Hearing)
12/6/2011 - House Local Government, (Sixth Hearing)
6/21/2011 - House Local Government, (Fifth Hearing)
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

HB357 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE - TAXING DISTRICT** (RAMOS D) To

require JobsOhio and state agencies offering economic development assistance to obtain Controlling Board approval before providing assistance to a person who, at or near the time of receiving the assistance, relocates employment positions from one taxing district to another or eliminates positions at an existing location.

Current Status: 11/9/2011 - Referred to Committee House Finance and Appropriations

All Bill Status: 10/26/2011 - Introduced

HB436 SITEOHIO CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (GROSSMAN C, ANIELSKI M) To create the SiteOhio certification program within the Department of Development to certify and market eligible commercial, industrial, and manufacturing sites and facilities.

Current Status: 3/28/2012 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 91-0

All Bill Status: 3/28/2012 - Bills for Third Consideration
3/15/2012 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Economic and Small Business Development, (Third Hearing)
2/28/2012 - House Economic and Small Business Development, (Second Hearing)
2/16/2012 - House Economic and Small Business Development, (First Hearing)
2/8/2012 - Referred to Committee House Economic and Small Business Development
1/31/2012 - Introduced

HB482 CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS (AMSTUTZ R) To make capital appropriations and make changes related to the laws governing capital projects.

Current Status: 3/29/2012 - Sent to Governor for Signature

All Bill Status: 3/28/2012 - Consideration of Senate Amendments; Concurred Vote-86-0
3/28/2012 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 33-0
3/28/2012 - Bills for Third Consideration
3/28/2012 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, Senate Finance, (Second Hearing)
3/27/2012 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance
3/27/2012 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing)
3/22/2012 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 93-2
3/22/2012 - Bills for Third Consideration
3/20/2012 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Finance and Appropriations, (Third Hearing)
3/15/2012 - House Finance and Appropriations, (Second Hearing)
3/14/2012 - Referred to Committee House Finance and Appropriations
3/14/2012 - House Finance and Appropriations, (First Hearing)
3/14/2012 - Introduced

HB487 MID-BIENNIUM REVIEW BUDGET (AMSTUTZ R) To make operating and other appropriations, to levy taxes and provide for implementation of those levies, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.

Current Status: 3/29/2012 - House Finance and Appropriations, (Second Hearing)

All Bill Status: 3/29/2012 - House Transportation Subcommittee, (First Hearing)
3/28/2012 - House Transportation Subcommittee, (First Hearing)
3/28/2012 - Senate Highways & Transportation, (First Hearing)
3/28/2012 - House Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)
3/28/2012 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)

3/28/2012 - House Criminal Justice, (Second Hearing)
 3/28/2012 - House Health and Human Services Subcommittee,
 (Third Hearing)
 3/27/2012 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
 3/27/2012 - House Local Government, (Third Hearing)
 3/27/2012 - House State Government and Elections, (Third
 Hearing)
 3/22/2012 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
 3/22/2012 - House State Government and Elections, (Second
 Hearing)
 3/22/2012 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
 3/22/2012 - House Health and Human Services Subcommittee,
 (Second Hearing)
 3/21/2012 - House Local Government, (First Hearing)
 3/21/2012 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
 3/21/2012 - House State Government and Elections, (First
 Hearing)
 3/21/2012 - House Health and Human Services Subcommittee,
 (First Hearing)
 3/21/2012 - House Criminal Justice, (First Hearing)
 3/20/2012 - Referred to Committee House Finance and
 Appropriations
 3/20/2012 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Finance
 and Appropriations, (First Hearing)
 3/16/2012 - Introduced

HB489 **STATE DEVELOPMENT OMNIBUS REORGANIZATION** (DOVILLA M, HAGAN C) To rename the Department of Development the "Development Services Agency"; to establish the Office of TourismOhio within the Development Services Agency, create the TourismOhio Advisory Board, and establish a pilot program to test a new funding mechanism for the state's travel and tourism marketing; to modify the operation of JobsOhio; to make changes to the Capital Access Loan Program Fund and to allow transfers to the Capital Access Loan Program Fund from the Minority Business Enterprise Loan Fund; to increase the membership of the Ohio Tax Credit Authority and provide for projects that were started prior to receiving a tax credit; to modify reporting requirements under the Voluntary Action Program; to require the Director of Development Services to administer federal funds received for Brownfields revitalization purposes; to terminate the Water and Sewer Commission; to terminate the Development Financing Advisory Council as of July 1, 2012; to increase the membership of the Third Frontier Commission; and to make an appropriation.

Current Status: 3/22/2012 - Referred to Committee House State Government and Elections

All Bill Status: 3/22/2012 - Introduced

SB5 **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REFORM** (JONES S) To make changes to Ohio's Collective Bargaining Law, which was first enacted in 1983.

Current Status: 11/8/2011 - Repealed by Voter Referendum

All Bill Status: 3/31/2011 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. 7/01/11
 3/31/2011 - Sent to Governor for Signature
 3/30/2011 - Consideration of House Amendments; Concurred 17-16
 3/30/2011 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Passed as amended; Vote 53-44
 3/30/2011 - Bills for Third Consideration
 3/29/2011 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Commerce & Labor, (Seventh

Hearing)
 3/17/2011 - House Commerce & Labor, (Sixth Hearing)
 3/16/2011 - House Commerce & Labor, (Fifth Hearing)
 3/14/2011 - House Commerce & Labor, (Fourth Hearing)
 3/10/2011 - House Commerce & Labor, (Third Hearing)
 3/9/2011 - House Commerce & Labor, (Second Hearing)
 3/8/2011 - Referred to Committee House Commerce & Labor
 3/8/2011 - House Commerce & Labor, (First Hearing)
 3/2/2011 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 17-16 Amended 19-14
 3/2/2011 - Bills for Third Consideration
 3/2/2011 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor, (Sixth Hearing)
 3/1/2011 - Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor, (Fifth Hearing)
 2/22/2011 - Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor, (Fourth Hearing)
 2/17/2011 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor, (Third Hearing)
 2/15/2011 - Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor, (Second Hearing)
 2/9/2011 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor, (First Hearing)
 2/2/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor
 2/1/2011 - 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

SB294 **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW** (SCHAFFER T) To revise the laws governing environmental protection.
Current Status: 3/27/2012 - Senate Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources, (Fourth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 3/21/2012 - Senate Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources, (Third Hearing)
 3/14/2012 - Senate Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources, (Second Hearing)
 2/14/2012 - Referred to Committee Senate Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources
 2/14/2012 - Senate Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources, (First Hearing)
 2/9/2012 - Introduced

- SB314** **JOBS OHIO II (WAGONER M)** To rename the Department of Development the "Development Services Agency"; to establish the Office of TourismOhio within the Development Services Agency, create the TourismOhio Advisory Board, and establish a pilot program to test a new funding mechanism for the state's travel and tourism marketing; to modify the operation of JobsOhio; to makes changes to the Capital Access Loan Program Fund and to allow transfers to the Capital Access Loan Program Fund from the Minority Business Enterprise Loan Fund; to increase the membership of the Ohio Tax Credit Authority and provide for projects that were started prior to receiving a tax credit; to modify reporting requirements under the Voluntary Action Program; to require the Director of Development Services to administer federal funds received for Brownfields revitalization purposes; to terminate the Water and Sewer Commission; to terminate the Development Financing Advisory Council as of July 1, 2012; to increase the membership of the Third Frontier Commission; and to make an appropriation.
- Current Status:** 3/28/2012 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing)
- All Bill Status:** 3/27/2012 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance
3/22/2012 - Introduced

Bills Introduced Since 3/26/2012

- HB491** **OHIO WINES MONTH (YOUNG R, KOZLOWSKI C)** To designate June as "Ohio Wines Month."
- HB492** **MELANOMA AND SKIN CANCER DETECTION AND PREVENTION MONTH (GONZALES A)** To designate May as "Melanoma and Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month."
- HB493** **OIL AND GAS LAW (OKEY M, FEDOR T)** To establish additional requirements governing wells that are drilled into the Marcellus shale formation or a deeper formation, to establish requirements governing oil and gas land professionals, including the registration of such professionals and the creation of disclosure forms that must be presented to a prospective lessor of oil and gas mineral rights and to a prospective seller of mineral rights, and to make other changes in the Oil and Gas Law.
- HB494** **VETERANS (PILLICH C)** To provide a five per cent bid preference for state contracts to a business owned by veterans and to authorize a personal income and commercial activity tax credit for a business that hires and employs a veteran for at least one year.
- HB495** **CONCEALED CARRY HANDGUN LICENSES (JOHNSON T)** To authorize the automatic validity in Ohio of a concealed handgun license issued by another state if the other state automatically recognizes as valid in that state an Ohio concealed handgun license without the need for any reciprocity agreement between the states; to repeal the competency certification currently required for renewal of a concealed handgun license; to revise the definition of "unloaded" that applies to the offense of "improperly handling firearms in a motor vehicle" and the related vessel-based offense; and to simplify, through the use of new definitions, the law regarding concealed handgun licenses.
- HB496** **PSYCHOLOGY LAW (HACKETT R, GARLAND N)** To revise the laws governing the practice of psychology.
- HB497** **HEALTH INSURER-DENTAL PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT (HACKETT R)** To prohibit a health insurer from reimbursing dental providers based upon a fee schedule if the dental services provided are not covered by any contract or participating provider agreement between the health insurer and the dental provider.
- HB498** **VOLUNTEER COACHES CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK (FEDOR T, GARLAND N)** To make volunteer coaches engaged by recreational youth athletics organizations or entities and game officials certified by interscholastic athletic regulatory organizations or associations subject to mandatory criminal records checks, to prohibit for a minimum of five years after the individual's release from imprisonment imposed as a result of the offense or a minimum of five years after sentencing if the individual was not imprisoned the use of a

coach or the certification of an individual as a game official who has been convicted of specified offenses, and to revise the immunity from civil liability for an act or omission of a volunteer who has been subject to a criminal records check.

- HB499 COMMITTEE TESTIMONY** (DAMSCHRODER R) To require publication of legislative committee testimony on the General Assembly's web site.
- HB500 BRINE RECYCLING FEE** (GERBERRY R) To authorize a fee on the recycling of brine from oil and gas operations to benefit local governments.
- HCR40 OHIO WINES MONTH** (YOUNG R, KOZLOWSKI C) To designate June as "Ohio Wines Month."
- SB317 SWEEPSTAKE TERMINAL DEVICES LICENSING AND REGULATION** (SCHIAVONI J) To provide for the licensing and regulation of sweepstakes terminal device operators, vendors, and key employees.
- SB318 OIL AND GAS LAW CHANGES** (CAFARO C) To require wells in urbanized areas to comply with zoning requirements, to revise the setback distances of a well from an occupied dwelling, to require the disclosure of all chemicals and substances used in hydraulic fracturing, to eliminate mandatory pooling, to apply the Consumer Sales Practices Act to lease agreements for the exploration for or development of oil and gas on residential property, to require a surety bond for an injection well, to make other changes in the Oil and Gas Law, and to make appropriations to support oil and gas training programs, including employee training grants to oil or gas well owners.
- SB319 HIGHWAY NAME DESIGNATION** (HITE C) To designate the interchange of State Route 15 and State Route 37 in Hancock County as the "Patrolman David L. Sterner Memorial Interchange."
- SCR29 179TH AIRLIFT WING** (JORDAN K, OBHOF L) To urge the Congress of the United States to maintain operation of the 179th Airlift Wing at Mansfield-Lahn Regional Airport in Mansfield, Ohio.
- SR219 HONOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN OHIOAN VOLUNTEERS** (TURNER N) To honor the 511 African-American Ohioans who enlisted in the 54th and 55th Regiments of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War.

Week in Review
Friday, March 30, 2012

AGRICULTURE

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) said boxwood blight has been discovered at the Red Mill Farm of Losely Nursery in Lake County in northeast Ohio. Boxwood blight is a disease caused by a fungus (*cylindrocladium pseudonaviculatum*) that threatens the health and sustainability of boxwood plants. This is the first detection of boxwood blight in Ohio.

AUDITOR OF STATE

Auditor Dave Yost released the State Single Audit for FY11, finding federal questioned costs had dropped more than 90 percent from the previous fiscal year. According to Yost, the questioned costs dropped from \$105 million in FY10 to \$8.3 million in FY11. The majority of the questioned costs (\$6.3 million) involve a federal compliance requirement for the Unemployment Insurance Program.

BALLOT ISSUES

Advocates of gay marriage Monday filed a new constitutional amendment with Attorney General Mike DeWine's office seeking to overturn a 2004 constitutional amendment and allow same sex couples to legally marry in the state. Freedom to Marry Ohio said it filed more than 2,380 signatures collected in 60 counties with the attorney general's office, seeking approval of summary language so it can begin collecting the 385,245 valid signatures needed to make the November ballot.

Confidential

There was more than the usual conflict between policy and politics Wednesday in the Ohio Senate, where Democrats worked to divine the real intentions of Republicans in first passing a controversial elections bill and then seeking to repeal it, and where the majority sought to divine the real motives of Democrats in first calling for the legislative repeal of HB194 (Mecklenborg-Blessing) and then opposing it in favor of an election referendum on voter access. It passed on a party-line vote of 23-10.

The conservative Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions said Wednesday that average family income in Ohio should be as much as \$12,000 higher than it is now, and would be if the state had passed a right-to-work law 35 years ago. Buckeye Institute (BI) makes the claim in a new report released Wednesday, *Ohio Right-to-Work: Freedom of Workers Enhances Prosperity*. Right-to-work is one of many issues for which groups are collecting signatures to put on the ballot.

Backers of a proposed constitutional amendment to put Ohio's legislative and congressional redistricting process into the hands of an independent citizen's commission took another step toward the ballot Thursday after Attorney General Mike DeWine certified their petition language as a "fair and truthful statement." The issue was submitted by "Voters First," a coalition of organizations including the League of Women Voters of Ohio, Common Cause and others, who claim that the process needs to be taken out of the hands of politicians who will only serve their own interests when drawing maps.

One of the two groups behind constitutional amendments to legalize medical marijuana in Ohio outlined their campaign effort to reporters Thursday, and said they are pushing to be on the November 2012 ballot. Members of the Ohio Medical Cannabis Association (OMCA), which is pushing the so-called Ohio Medical Cannabis Amendment, said they are looking to help people who are suffering from medical conditions or dying without making them criminals.

BUDGET

Rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) Wednesday upgraded the Ohio Enterprise Bond Fund (OEBF) to 'AA+' from 'AA-', citing a very strong risk profile and sound financial policies as key factors, the state treasurer's office announced. "This was the first OEBF ratings increase by S&P since 2003, when they raised the funds' 'A-' rating to 'AA-'. S&P also assigned its 'AA+' long-term rating to Ohio's Series 2012-3 state economic development revenue bonds that State Treasurer of Ohio Josh Mandel's office will issue for OEBF within the next two weeks."

FY12-13 BUDGET/MID-BIENNIUM REVIEW (MBR)

Rep. Ron Amstutz (R-Wooster), chairman of the House Finance and Appropriations Committee, set 5 p.m. Friday, March 30 as the deadline for members seeking changes in Gov. John Kasich's Mid-Biennium Review (MBR) budget update to submit amendments. And they must be the actual amendments drafted by the Legislative Service Commission, he said, not just concepts or lists of changes. Amstutz also said on Thursday that a number of the provisions may be broken out into standalone bills.

Hearings were held in both houses this week on the three different bills included in the governor's "Mid-Biennium Review" (MBR): HB487 (Amstutz) -- general MBR provisions; SB315 (Jones) -- MBR energy provisions; and SB316 (Lehner) - MBR education/workforce provisions. In addition, in the House, HB487 was divided among not only the House Finance and Appropriations Committee subcommittees but also various of the other standing committees to vet the many provisions contained in the 2,700+ pages of the bill.

Two different law enforcement issues were raised Thursday in the House Finance and Appropriations Committee with Mercer County Sheriff Jeff Grey, president of the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, testifying for Ashtabula County Sheriff William Johnson, in opposition to a Mid-Biennium Review bill provision that gives the Ohio State Highway Patrol jurisdiction over privately owned correctional institutions operated under agreement with the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction -- or, in other words, the Lake Erie Correctional Institution. However, Ohio Department of Public Safety and

Highway Patrol officials said this language merely continues jurisdiction the patrol has had for years and is important for patrol efforts to oversee state inmates.

The other issue deals with law enforcement training, which surfaced in a number of committee venues over the week -- what is required, who pays what and who controls the \$20 to \$23 million in training dollars expected from the tax on casinos.

CHILDREN

Gov. John Kasich joined Rep. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) and Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine in a Statehouse announcement Thursday to intensify the fight against child prostitution and human trafficking. The governor signed an executive order creating the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force to redouble the work of the Trafficking in Persons Study Commission created by former Ohio Attorney General Rich Cordray.

DEATH PENALTY

The Ohio Parole Board added to the likely backlog of Death Row inmates scheduled and cleared for execution on Friday by unanimously denying a favorable clemency recommendation to 49-year-old Mark Wiles, convicted of murdering a 15-year-old equestrian champion at a Portage County horse farm. Gov. John Kasich must still weigh in although he has granted clemency to only two individuals under Ohio's aggressive execution calendar.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The second piece of legislation, HB489 (Dovilla-C. Hagan), related to the formation of the governor's private economic development entity, JobsOhio, was introduced in the House, a 228-page bill that outlines the reorganization of the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) into the new Development Services Agency.

EDUCATION

A group of education organizations representing Ohio's public schools has moved to intervene in the American Electric Power (AEP) operating companies' electric security plan case pending before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). Joining the litigation are the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), Ohio Schools Council (OSC) and Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA).

The bipartisan nucleus behind the Cleveland school reorganization plan, Sens. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland) and Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) and Reps. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland) and Ron Amstutz (R-Wooster), announced significant progress Thursday in negotiations between the mayor, school district and local union officials, and said a bill could be introduced next week.

ELECTIONS

Secretary of State Jon Husted Friday referred a case involving potential voter fraud in Fulton County to the attorney general for further review and possible prosecution. An initial review by the Fulton County Board of Elections revealed that an individual, who appears to be a registered voter in both Ohio and South Carolina, may have voted in both states in multiple elections.

ELECTIONS 2012

The race to replace Ohio Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) is heading to an automatic recount after the results from the March 6 primary were officially certified Tuesday. According to the Clermont County Board of Elections, Rep. Joe Uecker (R-Loveland) leads Paul Hall in the Republican primary for the 14th Ohio Senate District by 179 votes. Under Ohio law, if the margin of difference in a

state legislative race is less than one half of 1 percent of the total vote, there must be an automatic recount. In the 14th Senate District race, that threshold is 211 votes.

State Treasurer Josh Mandel took his U.S. Senate campaign to the bankers Tuesday, speaking at the Ohio Bankers League Day at the Capitol luncheon. Mandel railed against the attitude that "business is guilty until proven innocent," saying that businesses should be allowed to grow and expand without overregulation. However, he had no opinion on the governor's proposed changes to the taxing of the state's financial institutions and the creation of the Financial Institutions Tax (FIT).

Rasmussen Reports polled Ohio voters on the U.S. Senate race, showing U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel tied at 43 percent.

The latest Quinnipiac University poll released Wednesday showed President Barack Obama taking a bigger lead over potential Republican rivals, a result that was also found in a Rasmussen Reports survey released the same day. However, the Quinnipiac Poll showed a different outcome in the U.S. Senate race with U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) holding a 10-point lead over Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment continued its downward trend in February as employers added 28,300 jobs over the month and the unemployment rate dropped to 7.6 percent, a slight decrease from 7.7 percent in January, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Friday.

ENERGY

American Electric Power (AEP) has announced Thursday it will participate in the Green Button initiative to provide customers with a simple, standardized way to download their energy usage information from their utility's website. The initiative is a joint effort among utilities, technology companies and the federal government to help customers save energy and money, and to spur the development of new energy usage applications and tools, AEP explained in a release.

The Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) approved three projects during its Monday meeting, including an AEP Ohio Transmission Company substation near the village of Sunbury in Delaware County; a Columbia Gas natural gas pipeline in northwest Columbus; and an American Transmission Systems Inc. substation in the city of Lorain.

AEP Ohio, a unit of American Electric Power (AEP), announced that it is offering a \$50 rebate to its customers who schedule to have their old appliance picked up and hauled away for recycling now that spring cleaning season is here. In addition, customers who replace their old appliances can save up to \$150 a year in energy costs as a result of lower electricity usage.

FEDERAL

Attorney General Mike DeWine, who campaigned on bringing Ohio into the multi-state lawsuit against the federal Affordable Care Act, forecast a tough fight as the battle now is in the U.S. Supreme Court, with hearings having started Monday, March 26. He reiterated his views that the law's requirement that everyone obtain health insurance clearly stretches the federal government's commerce clause powers too far.

GAMING

The diverse parties affected by gaming legislation HB386 (Blessing) rallied Wednesday in the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee on behalf of their respective interests. Chairman Bill Coley (R-West Chester) and his colleagues weighed concerns ranging from the survival of Ohio horse breeding to problem gambling to the survival of charitable bingo and the many community interests it supports.

State Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Canfield) introduced SB317 to license and regulate sweepstakes terminal devices within the state of Ohio. Unlike gambling activities and skill-based amusement machines which are regulated under Ohio law, sweepstakes operations at Internet cafes are currently unregulated, he explained in a release.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Both houses of the General Assembly wrapped up work this week before heading for a two-week break which actually now appears to be a real break with no committees announcing any hearings for at least the first week and many saying they will be on break both weeks.

The House Republican Caucus will have four vacancies by the middle of April, and a spokesman for Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina) told *Hannah News* that all four will likely be filled when the chamber returns from Spring break in April. Reps. Mary Matheney (R-Richmond Heights) and Phillip Rose (R-Hamden), who were appointed as temporary replacements until after the March 6 primary, both submitted their resignations effective in April. Also resigning was Rep. Lynn Slaby (R-Copley), who is taking an appointment to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. These are in addition to the vacancy created earlier by the appointment of Rep. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) to the Senate.

The House Democratic Caucus is also seeking a replacement for Rep. Carlton Weddington (D-Columbus), who resigned after he was indicted on multiple charges, including bribery and election falsification, by a Franklin County grand jury.

The Controlling Board unanimously approved contracts with three unions on Monday that will extend current agreements by three years. Mike Duco, the deputy director of the Office of Collective Bargaining for the state, told the panel that the tentative agreements are with the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police, which represents about 500 state employees, the Ohio Education Association, which represents about 500 employees, and the Ohio State Troopers Association, which represents about 1,500 employees.

Two men who communicate through medical technology known as a speech-generating device told the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) on Monday that a proposed Medicaid rule could make it harder for them and others to get tools to be able to work and express basic needs to doctors, aides and others. But the committee declined to recommend invalidation of the rule after a large professional association of speech- and hearing-related providers said the state had met most of its concerns and pledged to cooperate on resolving the remaining ones.

Responding to a report issued March 19 by the State Integrity Investigation, which gave the Ohio an overall "D" on its ethics laws, Reps. Ted Celeste (D-Grandview), Jay Goyal (D-Mansfield), Matt Lundy (D-Elyria) and Connie Pillich (D-Cincinnati) Monday called on legislative leaders "to create a bipartisan task force to review the enforcement practices of current laws and consider new legislation to strengthen accountability and transparency."

The north entry and exit of the Ohio Statehouse Parking Garage will be closed to all vehicles on April 3 and April 4, the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board said. Both south entries and exits will remain open. In addition, access to the Statehouse loading dock will not be affected by the north end garage closure.

Reps. Mark Okey (D-Carrollton) and Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) introduced a "truth in leasing" bill, HB493, that they said would protect Ohio landowners against fraud, abuse and deceptive practices by the oil and natural gas industry.

Legislators in the Senate got a first look at the proposed reorganization of the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) Wednesday as bill sponsors Sens. Mark Wagoner (R-Toledo) and Capri Cafaro (D-Hubbard) introduced SB314 to the Senate Finance Committee. A companion to HB489 (Dovilla-Hagan), Wagoner said it provides the groundwork for restructuring ODOD into the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) and provides appropriations through the current biennium. He said much of ODSA's work

will be done in conjunction with JobsOhio and support the private economic development agency's mission to encourage business development in Ohio.

Among the six bills and two resolutions approved by the Senate Tuesday was Sen. Peggy Lehner's (R-Kettering) SB238, which requires trustees in townships of 5,000 or more to file the financial disclosure statement required under Ohio's Ethics Law and Sen. Tom Patton's (R-Strongsville) SB297, which would allow for the renewal of a clinical research faculty certificate. On Wednesday, the Senate accepted the conference committee report on history education provisions in SB165 (Obhoff); and passed the capital spending in HB482 (Amstutz); business tax credits in HB18 (Baker), and abandoned property clean-up in SB109 (Gentile) and agreed to House amendments to reappropriations bill SB312 (Widener), emergency first responder bill SB243 (Hughes), and uniform commercial code bill SB208 (Obhof-Kearney).

A split House Tuesday approved Senate changes to "Right to Cure" legislation with Democrats voting against accepting Senate amendments on HB275 (Young-Slaby), arguing again that the bill weakens the state's Consumer Sales Practices Act. On Wednesday, the House accepted the conference committee report on SB165 (Obhof) and narrowly passed HB265 (Slaby-O'Brien) which allows a prosecutor to object if a criminal defendant waives a jury trial by a vote of 50-41. Also passed were HB322 (Brenner) dealing with interest rates banks can charge; HB312 (Widener), capital reappropriations; SB289 (Coley-Schiavoni), which adds co-generation to the renewable portfolio standard; and SB134 (Wagoner), designating Vietnam Veterans Day, among other bills.

Although the House Finance and Appropriations Committee was not scheduled to take testimony before it reported the capital reappropriations bill, it nevertheless received an earful from former Sen. Richard Finan, chairman of the Capital Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB), over language in an amendment to SB312 (Widener) establishing a Holocaust memorial on the Statehouse grounds. It was eventually amended to require the Ohio Arts Council and CSRAB to "work together and jointly select proposals for a Holocaust memorial on Capitol Square."

In other legislative action, the conference committee on SB165 (Obhof) which addresses historical documents in school curriculums agreed on a report; the House Finance and Appropriations Committee reported out as amended SB312 (Widener), capital reappropriations; the House Judiciary and Ethics Committee reported out SB208 (Obhof-Kearney), changes in Ohio's Uniform Commercial Code; House State Government and Elections Committee reported out HB396 (McGregor-Murray), changes to the rule making procedures, and HR198 (Boose-Foley) concerning the Detroit River International Crossing; the House Commerce and Labor Committee reported out HB491 (Young-Kozlowski) and HCR40 (Young-Kozlowski), both of which deal with making June "Ohio Wines Month"; the House Criminal Justice Committee reported out SB19 (Hughes) dealing with juvenile driving suspensions and driving classes; the House Education Committee reported out HCR38 (Stinziano-Gonzales) designating March 2012 as Professional Social Work Month; the House Health and Aging Committee reported out HCR21 (Slesnick-Ramos) supporting steelworkers in their dealings with the federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp. and HB334 (Johnson-Bubp) which tracks pseudoephedrine and ephedrine products through a national exchange; the House Public Utilities Committee reported out HB379 (Blessing) dealing with water works and sewage disposal system companies, HB360 (Rosenberger) to revise wireless payment system for 9-1-1 services and SB289 (Coley-Schiavoni) which includes co-generation technology as a renewable energy resource; House Veterans Affairs Committee reported out SB134 (Wagoner) designating March 30 as "Vietnam Veterans' Day"; Senate Finance Committee reported out HB482 (Amstutz), the capital appropriations bill; the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee reported out SB295 (Coley) which repeals election law reform bill HB194; Senate Health, Human Services and Aging Committee reported out HB244 (Gonzales-Roegner) regarding paramedics administering immunizations, SB304 (Balderson) designating May as "Better Hearing and Speech Month," and SB287 (LaRose-Cafaro) addressing dependency profession law; and Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee reported out SCR24 (Obhof-Faber) regarding certain federal mandates.

GOVERNOR

Gov. John Kasich joined representatives of Ohio's children's hospitals at a news conference announcing two research initiatives to be funded by \$2 million in state money the governor promised recipients last

year: a research project on juvenile asthma and one on neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), which afflicts drug-addicted babies after birth.

HIGHER EDUCATION

WKYC-TV anchor and reporter Eric Mansfield will become Kent State University's new executive director for university media relations. The journalist and Akron native begins his new position on June 1.

Brian Kelly has been elected chairman of the Cincinnati State Foundation Board. Kelly, a graduate of Cincinnati State, currently works as a Cincinnati-based attorney whose practice includes an office in Los Angeles.

HOUSING

The Ohio Association of Realtors (OAR) reports that the number of single-family homes and condominiums put under agreement in February rose for the 10th straight month compared to the results from the prior year. Ohio's February pending home sales index of 104.6, a forward-looking indicator based on contract signings, rose 26.5 percent from the February 2011 index of 82.6. In addition, the 2012 result also bests the February indexes posted in 2010 and 2009.

The Ohio Housing Study Committee did not take action on a final report that is due by the end of the month as Rep. Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City), the committee's chairwoman, told members that there are still many stakeholders to hear from before the committee concludes its work.

JUDICIAL

The 29-member Task Force on Funding of Ohio Courts held its first meeting on Friday, with Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor saying courts must face the reality of continued funding rollbacks if they do not wish to become irrelevant to society as a whole.

The Ohio Supreme Court said recently that the application deadline is Monday, April 2 for law students preparing to take the July 2012 bar examination. The bar examination takes place Tuesday-Thursday, July 24-26 at Franklin County Veterans Memorial, 300 W. Broad St. in Columbus.

A federal appeals court Tuesday upheld a lower court's ruling that Samuel Wurzelbacher, aka "Joe the Plumber," had failed to prove that the state of Ohio's breach of his personal information constitutes a violation of his First Amendment right to free speech. Wurzelbacher had sued the state claiming his constitutional rights were violated after individuals in the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) had accessed his confidential information in state databases after he had challenged then-candidate Barack Obama on the presidential campaign trail.

The state's highest court ruled Thursday that illegal drug sales constitute "sustained remunerative employment" sufficient to void workers' compensation benefits collected by a disabled police officer turned part-time drug dealer. Instead of enforcing laws against prescription drug abuse, Officer Donald McNea of the Parma Police Department encouraged the practice by dealing OxyContin in 2005. At the time, he was receiving permanent total disability (PTD) benefits from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) for injuries purportedly sustained while on duty. However, no one involved in the BWC claim knew he was already being investigated by his own department for prescription drug sales.

PEOPLE

Greater Ohio, the nonprofit, non-partisan organization that promotes policies for sustainable development and economic growth, said that Gene Krebs, a former legislator who has served as senior director of government affairs and policy for the group, will be transitioning into a new role with the organization "as an outside consultant on government relations matters."

The Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) said it has filled two senior leadership positions, naming Tammy Collins, Ph.D., as chief of prevention services, and Matthew J. Popovich as chief of management information systems.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce announced that Keith Lake has re-joined the organization as the new managing director of government affairs. Lake previously worked at the Ohio Chamber from 1998 to 2009 in the political and candidate education program (P.a.C.E.).

Tadd Nicholson is the new executive director of the Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association (OCWGA), the organization announced. In his new role, Nicholson will manage two of Ohio's check-off programs, the Ohio Corn Marketing Program (OCMP) and the Ohio Small Grains Marketing Program (OSGMP).

POLITICS

The Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) announced changes to its communications staff on Friday, naming Jerid Kurtz as communications director, Meredith Tucker as deputy communications director and Andrew Zucker as press secretary.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Ohio Inspector General Randall Meyer's office issued a new report Thursday questioning the use of a state-issued credit card by an employee of the Ohio Lottery Commission. The case has been referred to the Cuyahoga County prosecutor's office for consideration.