

Week in review

August 19, 2011 -- Our top "5" subjects you should know

1. GOP leaders approach public union leaders for compromise

Governor John Kasich, House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina), and Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) held a press conference Wednesday, August 17, 2011, asking for union leaders to come to the table to negotiate a compromise on Issue 2-- the referendum on Senate Bill 5, the controversial collective bargaining law. During the press conference Governor Kasich confirmed having knowledge of meetings that took place with his confidants and union leadership focused on the potential for a compromise.

The three Republican leaders sent a letter to the government employee union leaders of *We Are Ohio*, the organization created to repeal the bill, stressing the need for government reform and inviting union leaders to a meeting scheduled for Friday, August 19, 2011, to seek an agreement. Although the three Republican leaders came to the meeting, no representatives from *We Are Ohio* attended.

A spokesperson for *We Are Ohio* said Kasich and the Legislature must repeal the bill before they will negotiate. The deadline to remove an issue from the November ballot is August 30.

2. Administration prepares to roll out JobsOhio II

The Department of Development (DOD) released a report to the General Assembly this week that included a review of its operations to determine which functions should remain within the state agency structure and which functions should transfer to JobsOhio, the nonprofit corporation established through legislation, responsible for the promotion of economic development, job creation, job retention, and the recruitment of businesses to Ohio.

The department received input from an independent entity, TechSolve, an Edison Technology Center, as well as key stakeholders and senior staff with the department when determining which functions should be transferred to JobsOhio and which should remain with the state. The report provides a structure that is expected to be included in a second piece of legislation, which will likely be introduced this fall and has been referred to as "JobsOhio II." TechSolve recommended that some of the functions of the Strategic Business Investment Division move to JobsOhio. It also recommended that the Ohio Tourism Division move to JobsOhio, which is not expected to transfer until early 2012.

The report suggests renaming DOD the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) and organizing the department in three divisions:

- **Business Services:** Business Assistance Office, Technology Investment Office, Workforce Assistance Office, and Tourism Office (until early 2012)
- **Community Services:** Energy Office, Governor's Office of Appalachia, Housing and Partnerships Office, Community Assistance Office, and Redevelopment Office
- **Operations:** Audit Office, Communication and Marketing Office, Information Technology and Facilities Office, Legislative Services Office, Policy and Research Office, Legal Services Office, Human Resources, and Budget and Finance Office

The process of starting up JobsOhio and transitioning DOD to the ODSA has been underway since January 2011 and will likely be completed in its entirety by January 2012.

3. House to hold study committees

House Republicans announced this week the creation of bipartisan, ad hoc study committees on tax policy, workforce development, and improving state government's use of technology. The committees will hold field hearings in the coming weeks to gather public input that could inspire legislation in the fall.

Rep. John Adams (R-Sidney), the House majority whip, will be chairman of the Tax Structure Study Committee, Rep.

Tim Derickson (R-Oxford) will be chairman of the Workforce Development Study Committee, and Rep. Craig Newbold (R-Columbiana) will lead the Technology in State Government Study Committee. Each committee is scheduled to meet at the Statehouse the week of August 22 before traveling throughout the state to discuss the issues and bring their findings back to Columbus.

4. Small Business Advisory Council holds inaugural meeting

The Small Business Advisory Council, housed in the Common Sense Initiative Office (CSIO), held its first meeting on Thursday, August 18, 2011. Lt. Governor Mary Taylor welcomed the council and shared background information on the formation of the council. She indicated that in reviewing the state's regulatory system, there should be a focus on creating economic development opportunities, ensuring a transparent and responsive review process, providing easy and inexpensive mechanisms for businesses to comply, and ensuring fair and consistent rules and regulations. The council has not yet been assigned any goals or timelines, but Lt. Governor Taylor said she hopes they will establish them on their own.

The meeting was primarily introductory for the council's new members and included presentations by Christiane Schmenk, Director of Development; Kristi Tanner, COO of JobsOhio; and Karen Shauri, State Director of the Small Business Development Centers. The nine-member panel was created in March through Senate Bill 2, which created the CSIO, headed by Lt. Governor Taylor. The council will advise CSIO of the adverse impact that proposed or existing agency rules and regulations have on small businesses in Ohio.

5. Carraher named executive director of OPERS

Karen Carraher has been named the executive director of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). Carraher has been the interim director with the state's largest pension system since February 2011. During that time, Carraher was involved in budget debates centering on a proposal to shift more contribution costs to employees, which was ultimately not included in the bill. Carraher has worked for OPERS since 2002. Previously, she worked as business services director for the Ohio Education Association, controller for both Mount Carmel Health and Riverside Methodist Hospitals, and as an audit manager for Ernst & Young.

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