



Reminders

RNC WOMENS SUMMIT

I hope to see many of you at the RNC Women's Summit this coming weekend. If you are driving down on Friday, we will be meeting in the Hyatt's second floor lounge at 5:15 to make plans for dinner. You are welcome to join us.

OFRW

Don't forget to register for our [spring conference](#) April 24 at Wright Patterson AFB. Due to security measures at WP AFB, all reservations must be received by the OFRW office no later than April 16. You will **not** be able to attend this event without advance registration - no tickets at the door.

Check out the

February 2010 Update on Political Happenings

Hello Everyone:

Welcome to the second update on political happenings.

Filing deadlines are over and we know who our candidates are! Now we face the primaries and there are a lot of them.

There will be 17 contests in the 33-seat Senate. Of those, eight are open - including five held currently by the GOP majority - due mostly to term limits. The GOP controls the Senate with 22 seats currently.

In the house, although all 99 seats are up for election this fall, a relative few are expected to be truly competitive districts, as usual. Republicans have said they would focus on districts they narrowly lost two years ago by targeting incumbents according to Gongwer.

This has been a month of political surprises and switches at the state level, and for some of us, at local levels as well. Whatever politics are, they are never dull!

Sharon C. Gingerich

INTRODUCED

The following is some of the legislation that has been introduced since the last newsletter - just for your information:

As a personal note, HB 428 made me chuckle...I don't know if you read all the Internet warnings about this \$20 fee and all the press coverage about it, but it was interesting to follow. Apparently, the complaints were overwhelming.

HB 428 MOTORIST LATE FEES (Boose, Amstutz) To eliminate the late fee of twenty dollars for motor vehicle registrations, commercial driver's licenses, driver's licenses, and motorcycle endorsements established by the biennial transportation appropriations act of the 128th General

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[OFRW newsletter](#).

NFRW

Also, visit the National Federation's [website](#) to stay updated on national issues. This is a valuable resource for you.

Ohio's Healthiest and Unhealthiest

Gongwer:

In response to a report ranking Ohio's healthiest and unhealthiest counties, the Department of Health announced its plans to investigate ways to improve the state's well being.

The University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute collaborated with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on a report that looks into the health of every county nationwide. The report indicates Delaware County residents are the healthiest in the state and Lawrence County is the least health statewide.

The 2009 County Health Rankings report shows the healthiest of Ohio's 88 counties are clustered in the northern, western and central regions; the least healthy counties are scattered primarily in the southern and eastern regions of the state.

Congratulations

Assembly for deposit primarily into the State Highway Safety Fund.

Full Text

SB 228 WATER/SEWER RATES (Goodman, Hughes) To limit recovery of rate-case expenses for certain water-works and sewage disposal system companies.

Full Text

SB 229 BRAIN INJURIES (Patton) To allow a notation on a driver's license that the licensee has suffered a traumatic brain injury.

Full Text

SB 230 DARE FUNDING_(Patton) To revise the drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) grant program funded by a portion of the license reinstatement fee charged to obtain a driver's license following an OVI-related license suspension.

Full Text

SB 231 TAX CHECK OFF (Schaffer, Wilson) To allow taxpayers to make contributions to the American Red Cross Ohio Disaster Response Readiness and Preparedness Fund through their income tax returns.

Full Text

HB 452 TAX RETURN DONATIONS (Bolon) To allow taxpayers to make contributions to the American Red Cross Ohio Disaster Response Readiness and Preparedness Fund through their income tax returns.

Full Text

HB 425 TOWING (Heard) To grant the Public Utilities Commission exclusive regulatory jurisdiction over all common and contract carrier towing companies and preempt local regulation, authorize the commission to establish a new certification program for common and contract carrier towing companies and a registration system for towed vehicle storage companies, authorize certain commission regulation of vehicle storage companies, revise law governing private tow-away zones, and make conforming changes in motor transportation company public utility law.

Full Text

HB 426 OIL & GASLAWS (Skindell, Stewart, D.) To revise the Oil and Gas Law.

Full Text

HB 427 CLASS ACTION SUITS (Schneider, Sykes) To declare how monetary awards in class actions that are not paid over to members of the class are to be used.

Full Text

HB 429 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE_(Harris, M., Lehner) To increase the penalties for domestic violence to authorize a

Ohio Real World Design Challenge

The winning teams of the Ohio Real World Design Challenge are Kettering Fairmont High School, Metro Early College High School and Thomas Worthington High School.

First place went to the Kettering Fairmont High School team, which will compete in the national Real World Design Challenge in March.

Teams from Metro Early College High School and Thomas Worthington High School were also recognized as top scorers.

Each year, student teams are asked to address a real challenge that confronts the nation's leading industries using industry tools and devising workable solutions. This year's challenge focused on aeronautics and energy usage, and was Ohio's first year of participation.

The winning teams will be showcased at the Ohio STEM Conference, which will be held at COSI in Columbus on March 2.

Department of Development:

Pearl Interactive Network LLC is the recipient of the 2010 Ohio Social Entrepreneur Award. Pearl Interactive Network is a virtual home-based business process outsourcing firm and a social enterprise.

The award is in recognition of the community and economic contribution made by Ohio's small business owners who create jobs for socially and economically disadvantaged Ohioans. The winners were

court to issue a protection order against a person convicted of domestic violence and to prohibit violation of such a protection order, to require a peace officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of a protection order has been committed to arrest any person who the peace officer has reasonable cause to believe is guilty of the violation, to require an offender who commits domestic violence to meet periodically with the sentencing judge and attend a batterer intervention program, to authorize a board of county commissioners to create a domestic violence fatality review board, and to require the Attorney General to track the issuance and violation of protection orders.

[Full Text](#)

HB 430 STATE EMPLOYEE SALARIES (Morgan, Goodwin)

To base the total amount that the administrative departments spend on the salaries or wages of their employees on changes in the Gross Domestic Product of Ohio.

[Full Text](#)

Freedom of Speech

From Gongwer:

Speaker Armond Budish decided to allow the National Right to Life Oratory Contest winner to receive an honorary resolution on the House floor after mounting criticism from anti-abortion activists and Republican lawmakers.

Well...most reports about this incident tended to omit the fact that it wasn't just "anti-abortion activists and Republican lawmakers" who took Speaker Budish to task over his decision. The ACLU actually agreed that Budish was wrong in his decision.

The House and Senate recognized Elizabeth Trisler of Russia, Ohio for winning the national Right to Life oratory contest.

Ohio Right to Life Executive Director Mike Gonidakis welcomed the speaker's decision to allow the recognition.

"Speaker Budish recently called me to convey his change of heart and I thanked him on behalf of the pro-life community," he said in a statement. "Blocking speech because you don't like what someone is saying or what they stand for goes against the very fabric of who we are as Americans. And, while the speaker got there the hard way, at least he got there."

Related Issues

Separately, senators voted 21-9 to adopt a resolution that expresses the state's opposition to a potential federal plan that could strike down state-based abortion restrictions.

selected by criteria that included adopting a mission that creates and sustains both private and social value, and conceptualizing a solution that creates or promotes the earning potential and/or alleviates the economic suffering of the socially and economically disadvantaged population. Eight companies and organizations were recognized, but Pearl Interactive was selected as the statewide Social Entrepreneur of 2010. The other companies and organizations that were recognized during the 2010 Ohio Social Entrepreneur Award ceremony were: The Durable Slate Company (Columbus), Freedom House (Ravenna), Hyde-N-Seek Designs (Pickerington), New Directions Career Center (Columbus), Nightsweats & T-cells Co. (Cleveland), The Voice of Your Customer (Cincinnati) and WASCO Inc. (Marietta).

Bugs and Birds

The chamber passed a bill to revise laws governing mosquito control districts (HB 35). Sponsored by Rep. Steve Dyer (D-Green), the sanitary district bill on controlling "biting arthropods" was introduced in the wake of a failed attempt by a local mosquito abatement district to expand and impose new taxes on residents of southern Summit County. And, if you don't know, Ohio's bald eagle nesting season is underway with at least two eagle pairs already incubating eggs, according to the Division of Wildlife.

Sen. Tim Grendell (R-Chesterland) said the proposal is important because it deals with abortion, but also stressed that states need to stand up to federal government efforts to control state policies.

Sen. Shannon Jones (R-Springboro) amended the resolution to clarify opposition to federally controlled abortion policies, in whatever form they come. Further, the amendment expresses concern about the use of taxpayer funds to support abortion.

The amendment and the resolution were adopted without comment from dissenters.

IN COMMITTEE

HB 407 [CALAMITY DAYS](#) (Zehringer, Okey) To allow school districts and STEM schools to make up excess calamity days by requiring students to complete lessons posted online. (1st Hearing-Sponsor) [Full Text](#)

HB 353 [SCHOOL BUS ADVERTISING](#) (Huffman, Letson) To authorize school districts to sell commercial advertising space on school buses. (3rd Hearing-All testimony) [Full Text](#)

HB 316 [SEX EDUCATION](#) (Slesnick) To establish statutory standards for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention education in public schools and to designate section 3313.6011 of the Revised Code as the "Act for Our Children's Future." (2nd Hearing-Proponent) [Full Text](#)

Cigarette Tax Increase

From Gongwer:

A report, titled Tobacco Taxes: A Win-Win-Win for Cash-Strapped States, issued by a coalition of public health organizations claims that raising the cigarette tax by \$1 per pack would produce \$299.7 million in new money for Ohio.

The report released by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation claims benefits of a \$1 tax increase would:

- Prevent 109,000 kids from becoming smokers;
- Spur 52,600 current adult smokers to quit;
- Save 48,800 residents from premature, smoking-caused deaths; and
- Save \$2.4 billion in health care costs.

Ohio's cigarette tax is \$1.25 per pack, which is 25th in the nation. The Ohio Wholesale Marketers Association says any tax increase on cigarettes is always something it opposes. "What happens when we see tax increases, we see some business suffer from that," OWMA spokeswoman Beth Wymer said. "We also see sales in surrounding states increase."

An eagle pair in Huron County began sitting on eggs Feb. 1. Another pair in Ashtabula County began incubation Feb. 5. Wildlife biologists anticipate the Huron County eggs will hatch sometime on or around March 7.

During the recently completed aerial mid-winter survey of bald eagles, biologists observed 121 birds throughout the state. Ohio's bald eagle population grew from only four nesting pairs along the southwestern Lake Erie shore 31 years ago, to a record 215 eagle nests in 2009.

She said because some cigarette consumers will go out of state or online, which is done tax free, to buy the product, the increase is not necessarily stopping smoking as much as it might seem.

"At the end of the day, it's costing the state revenue," Ms. Wymer said. "Yeah (the state will) get a one time bump, but it's not something that's sustainable."

She said lower income groups are those who will be hit hardest by a tax increase because they tend to be the ones to smoke the most and the least likely to quit.

Big Brother is Still Watching

Taxation Department: Citizens who suspect retailers of selling untaxed tobacco products can help the state snuff out illegal activity by calling a new toll-free hotline: (877) SMOKE-80.

The Department launched the new hotline in an effort to generate tips on the sale of untaxed tobacco products, an illegal practice that hurts law-abiding business owners, according to a release.

Packs of cigarettes and other tobacco products that are sold legitimately bear a tax stamp from the state as proof. Retailers who sell untaxed products face misdemeanor or felony charges, based on the quantities they hold. They also owe taxes and penalties on the products held without tax stamps, and these products are confiscated as evidence.