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# STATEHOUSE REPORT

*Published by: County Commissioners Association of Ohio*

209 East State Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309  
Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986 • www.ccao.org

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**July 10, 2015**

## **State legislative redistricting campaign kicked off**

The Fair Districts for Ohio campaign committee held a press conference this week to begin their campaign in support of the constitutional amendment that will be on the November ballot to reform the state legislative redistricting process in Ohio.

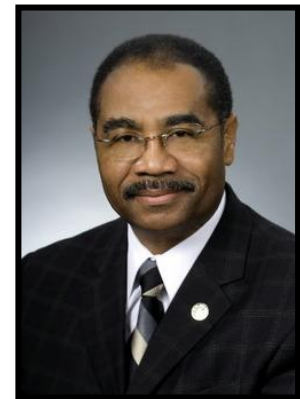
Campaign co-chairs and former Reps. Matt Huffman, a Republican, and Vernon Sykes, a Democrat, were flanked by representatives of voting rights groups and other advocacy organizations. The campaign co-chairs said they were unaware of any organized opposition to the measure and were encouraged by the

results of two polls that showed significant support for the amendment. The more recent survey by Public Policy Polling in June indicated 41 percent in favor of the issue and 20 percent opposed. After years of debate over "gerrymandering" and several failed ballot issue campaigns, the legislature adopted the resolution jointly sponsored by Reps. Huffman and Sykes (HJR12, 130th General Assembly) at the end of last session.

The proposed amendment would create a new seven-member Ohio Redistricting Commission comprised of the governor, secretary of state, state auditor and four members appointed by majority and minority leaders in the House and Senate. Unlike the current Apportionment Board process, a proposed legislative map would need two minority votes to be approved and remain valid until the next regular decennial reapportionment process. If a map fails to draw minority support, it remains in effect for only four years, after which the commission would draft new districts for the remainder of the decade. The proposed amendment also adds more specific requirements for mapmakers, such as how political subdivisions should be split when necessary



***Matt Huffman***  
***Former State Rep***



***Vernon Sykes***  
***Former State Rep***

to equalize population distributions. It would also require the panel to attempt to draw maps that don't favor either party and that correspond to voters' statewide preferences.

Huffman said the rules preventing jurisdictional splits would prevent gerrymandering, while a requirement for public input on a map prior to commission approval would ensure a more transparent process. The penalty for failing to get minority support - the second round of reapportionment - will encourage the parties to work in a bipartisan way, he said. "The incentive now is to reach a compromise." Sykes predicted that the amendment would ultimately result in a more even partisan distribution in the state legislature, where Republicans hold 65 of the 99 House seats and 23 of the 33 Senate districts.

Huffman said it might result in Democrats gaining more seats, but asserted that district maps were only one of many complex factors affecting the partisan makeup of the legislature. He recalled that Republicans have won elections in House districts that are solidly Democratic in recent years. "The point of this isn't that you are now, going forward, going to see 50 members of one party and 49 of another," he said. "It's going to, in my mind, result in the public understanding what the process is and believing that both sides have been treated fairly," he said. "The public has lost faith that it's a fair fight. So this is about making the rules fair, not about who's going to benefit one side or another." The measure would only affect state House and Senate legislative reapportionment.

## **Community-Police Advisory Board holds first meeting**

Members of a governor-appointed panel set the tone this week for a continuing discussion on police-community relations as the group barrels toward its first deadline on Sept. 3. During its inaugural meeting, the Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board reviewed its mission and set a course toward its two immediate priorities: developing statewide minimum standards pertaining to the use of deadly force, and recruitment and hiring. By Sept. 3, the board must have developed and submitted for approval minimum standards and model policies for agencies in those two areas.

The 12-member panel was created April 29 by Gov. John Kasich via executive order, with six current or former lawmakers tapped to serve in an ex-officio capacity. Its members are tasked with building upon recommendations from the Task Force on Community-Police Relations.

In the long term, the group will expand to cover other key areas, including community education and involvement, and accountability and oversight. In drafting use of force standards, Oregon Police Chief Michael Navarre recommended the board turn to established deadly force policies drafted by national accreditation groups such as the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA.)

Ronnie Dunn, Cleveland State University associate professor, suggested the group take a look at use of force language in Cleveland and other communities that have undergone a consent

decree from the U.S. Department of Justice, noting he would defer to the judgment of law enforcement officials. Members noted that ensuring there is a statewide minimum standard but allowing enough flexibility for law enforcement agencies to tailor it to their needs will be the challenge.

The board is expected to meet at least three more times in advance of its September deadline, although the dates of those meetings have yet to be finalized. During its meeting, the group developed a plan to invite a use of a force instructor, a psychological expert and representatives from CALEA to future meetings to provide insight. Once those standards are complete, the group can begin widening its work to institute other standards and develop a mechanism to hold departments accountable for meeting them. Dublin Mayor Michael Keenan reminded the group that the cost of implementing any standards will be critical, noting that probably the biggest issue a lot of departments - certainly most of the smaller ones – will face is how much this is going to cost them.

## **Casino revenues continue to drop**

The state's four casinos also saw net revenues dip last month, as they pulled in nearly \$63.5 million, a decline from May's reported \$71 million, according to the Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC). Despite seeing a slow start to the calendar year, Hollywood Toledo led revenue collections in June, pulling in nearly \$16.6 million - a drop from the \$16.9 million collected in May. Hollywood Columbus trailed with a reported \$16.4 million in net revenue collected in June – a drop from the \$18.4 million the previous month. Horseshoe Cincinnati collected \$16 million in net revenue last month, down slightly from the \$16.7 million it reported in May. Horseshoe Cleveland reported a record low \$14.39 million in June.

Ohio racinos ended the 2015 Fiscal Year with nearly \$773 million in net revenue, despite seeing collections drop last month. The state's seven video lottery terminal venues pulled in a collective \$67.4 million in June, down from the \$73.6 million in net revenue reported for May. The amount brought Ohio racinos' net revenue collections to a total of \$772.9 million for FY 2015 - nearly double what the Ohio Lottery Commission reported for FY 2014 when Hollywood Gaming Dayton Raceway and Hollywood Mahoning Valley Race Course had yet to open.

Furthermore, during the state budget process, the Legislative Service Commission developed projections showing a decline in gross casino revenues estimating revenue distribution of \$134,400,000 in SFY 2015, \$123,500,000 in SFY 2016, and \$114,100,000 in SFY 2017. These represent projected declines of 8.1 percent in SFY 2016 compared with SFY 2015 and 7.6 percent in SFY 2017 compared with SFY 2016.

## Statehouse Etc.



**House schedule for rest of 2015** – The House will not meet again until the end of September. Session days have been set for Sept. 30; Oct. 7; Nov. 17 and 18; and Dec. 2, 8 and 9. If-needed session dates were set for Oct. 14, Nov. 10 and Dec. 1. House committees may also meet on Sept. 29 and Oct. 6 and 13.

**More than a half a billion dollars transferred into Ohio's budget stabilization fund** – State budget officials on Thursday transferred more than a half a billion dollars into Ohio's budget stabilization fund, a move that boosts state reserve funds to more than \$2 billion, officials said. After the \$526.6 million transfer, the "rainy day fund" reached \$2.005 billion, a record for the state. FY 2015 ended, for a fourth consecutive year, with tax revenues above projection and spending below estimate. The state budget bill increased the authorized rainy day balance to 8.5 percent of the previous fiscal year general revenue fund revenues. Before that, the limit was capped at 5 percent of the previous year's GRF balance.

**2015 will be one of the worst years for toxic algae** – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) researchers said Thursday that new predictions indicate 2015 will be one of the worst years for toxic algae in western Lake Erie, which could see the second most severe blooms after the record worst season in 2011. The heavy rains in June produced record amounts of nutrients flowing into the lake from the Maumee River. NOAA predicted this summer would measure between 8.1 and 9.5 on the agency's toxic algae severity index running from zero to 10, which corresponds to the worst on record bloom in 2011. While a severe bloom is being forecasted much of the lake will be fine most of the time. The bloom will develop from west to east in the Lake Erie Western Basin beginning this month, it's effects will vary with winds, and it will peak in September.

## Bills Introduced



**HB 282 PREVAILING WAGE (Roegner, K., Hood, R.)** To repeal the Prevailing Wage Law. Am. 121.083, 123.281, 164.07, 176.011, 307.022, 307.671, 307.673, 307.674, 307.696, 351.06, 353.03, 1311.25, 1506.44, 1509.071, 1710.02, 5540.03, and 6117.012; to repeal sections 176.05, 4115.03, 4115.031, 4115.033, 4115.034, 4115.04, 4115.05, 4115.06, 4115.07, 4115.071, 4115.08, 4115.09, 4115.10, 4115.101, 4115.11, 4115.12, 4115.13, 4115.131, 4115.132, 4115.133, 4115.14, 4115.15, 4115.16, 4115.21, 4115.99, and 6121.061

**HB 283 DNA TESTING (Fedor, T.)** To require DNA testing for misdemeanor convictions of voyeurism, public indecency, procuring, soliciting, loitering to engage in soliciting, and prostitution. Am. 2901.07

**HB 284 RETIREMENT BENEFITS (Dovilla, M., Anielski, M.)** To add extortion and perjury and certain federal offenses to the offenses that may result in forfeiture or termination of public retirement system benefits. Am. 145.27, 145.572, 145.573, 742.41, 742.463, 742.464, 2329.66, 2901.43, 2929.192, 2929.193, 3305.08, 3305.11, 3305.12, 3305.20, 3307.20, 3307.372, 3307.373, 3309.22, 3309.672, 3309.673, 5505.04, 5505.262, and 5505.263 and to enact sections 2901.432, 2901.433, 2901.434, and 2927.28

