



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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

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Workforce performance measures and other initiatives take shape

Workforce delivery system reform was an agenda topic for two portions of the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, which convened earlier this week.

The reforms discussed are twofold and touch on the state and local Workforce Investment Act, Perkins (career tech funding), and ABLE (Adult Basic and Literacy Education, which is adult GED and remediation training):

1. Development of county-specific workforce success measures, detailing performance in key areas at the county level for each of the three programs; and
2. Creation of a unified state plan between the three programs to be submitted to the federal government, as opposed to the current practice of Ohio's state agencies creating a separate plan for each program.

Workforce Success Measures

In conjunction with The Ohio State University, the state is developing performance measures to track the efficacy of the three workforce programs, plus higher education state scholarship and loan recipients, in four key areas:

- Skills gains, or the extent to which education levels increase;
- Entered employment, or the extent to which program recipients get jobs and keep them;
- Average wages, and
- Employee retention.

The Office of Workforce Transformation and The Ohio State University plan to launch a "dashboard" available online yet this fall in order to allow policy makers to analyze trends and compare county successes in the various programs.

CCAO is continuing to encourage a thoughtful rollout of the workforce success measures and dashboard.

For a brief (less than two minute) video overview of the broader goals behind the workforce success measures produced by the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, click [here](#).

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Unified State Plan

The unified plan will be submitted to the federal government by the end of the calendar year. Through a process of convening workforce professionals who administer the three programs on the local level, areas targeted for unity were identified to be reflected in the plan. (In order to implement some, however, additional authority at the state level would be required, such as through legislative action.)

Broadly, the areas identified for reform in order to better align the three programs include:

- Statewide policies and practices, including requiring registration in OhioMeansJobs.com; a common intake application and case management system, common metrics, and a common assessment strategy;
- Increased access and awareness of workforce programs, including increased access to job readiness/soft skills training, career counseling, and remediation and high school equivalency; and,
- Local planning and collaboration, such as through developing a local unified plan as well as co-enrollment between programs.

The Office of Workforce Transformation will be conducting five regional stakeholder meetings (yet to be announced) this October to discuss the unified plan and envisioned reforms.

For additional information on these initiatives or other aspects of the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, meeting materials are available [here](#). (The Board's general [website](#) also includes other information that may be of interest.) Or, feel free to contact CCAO policy analyst Laura Abu-Absi at labu-absi@ccao.org.

Casino revenues climb for the third straight month

Revenue from Ohio casinos continued to climb in August for the third straight month, with the four gaming facilities pulling in more than \$70 million which is an increase over July's \$67.9 million. The four casinos recorded a total of \$70.6 million in net revenue last month, the highest level since May. The August figures bring the yearly total for Ohio casino net revenue to more than \$548.4 million.

Horseshoe Cleveland led monthly revenue collection in August with a reported \$20.4 million which is an increase over the \$17.7 million it saw in July and the second-highest revenue amount recorded by the facility in 2014. Hollywood Columbus followed with \$18 million in August net revenue which is up from the \$17.5 million it recorded in the previous month. Horseshoe Cincinnati and Hollywood Toledo, meanwhile, saw revenues drop in August, reporting a respective \$16.1 million and \$15.9 million for the month. In July, the gaming facilities pulled in \$16.2 million and \$16.4 million, apiece. (View the Casino control Commission's August revenue [report](#))

Racino revenue was also up for the month, with the six VLT locations reporting more than \$57.4 million in net win which is up from the \$53.4 million collected in July, the Ohio Lottery Commission [reported](#). Northfield's Hard Rock Rocksino led VLT net revenue collection last month with more than \$16.6 million. Columbus Scioto Downs Racino and Racetrack followed with more than \$12.2 million while Cleveland's Thistledown Racino pulled in \$11.1 million.

Miami Valley Gaming in Lebanon generated \$11 million, and Cincinnati's Belterra Park trailed with just \$4.4 million. Hollywood Gaming Dayton, which conducted a controlled demonstration on Aug. 26 and opened two days later, pulled in \$1.8 million in net revenue.

For more information, contact CCAO Staffer John Leutz at jleutz@ccao.org.

Committee examines alternative sentencing for drug addicts; legislative outcomes expected later this month

The summer study committee tasked with learning more about the impact of drug addiction on Ohio wrapped up hearings this week and heads back to Columbus for one final meeting during which members will discuss possible legislative action.

Rep. Dorothy Pelanda (R-Marysville), chair of the Law Enforcement Perspectives on the Drug Epidemic & Its Impact on Families Study Committee, has said she'd like to dig deeper into mandatory sentencing for dealers, a state drug czar who would oversee law enforcement operations and opting out of a federal mandate that requires judges to revoke licenses of drug offenders.



Rep. Dorothy Pelanda

She declined on Wednesday to provide details about the potential legislative outcomes resulting from the four meetings that were held across the state but said in an interview that members should know by the end of the month how they'd like to put the information they've received to use.

Although panel members received an array of suggestions from witnesses on which legislation to support, "There is clearly one resounding statement and that is we need more outpatient resources and that jail and prison are not the answers to this problem," Rep. Pelanda said.

At the University of Cincinnati on Tuesday, the panel heard from Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Executive Director Gary Mohr as well as a handful of common pleas court judges - all of which urged members to support alternative sentencing as a means of keeping drug offenders out of prisons and instead in community rehabilitation programs.

"Rather than continuing the practice of increasing incarceration of low-level, non-violent offenders, our position is clear: provide judges with increased resources to develop evidence-based options, both residential and non-residential, for non-violent offenders, and recidivism rates will be positively impacted," Director Mohr said.

As the state begins transitioning more felony 4 and 5 offenders through community corrections instead of prison, it has experienced a corresponding reduction in the recidivism rate, he said. It's currently at an all-time low of 27.1% as compared to the national average of 49.7%.

Although the committee has shown interest in reinstating mandatory sentencing for dealers who have been handed multiple low-level drug charges, Mr. Mohr said, "There should be a concerted effort to reduce mandatory sentences in the Ohio Revised Code."

He said DRC has promoted prison alternatives by making \$10.4 million available to rural and smaller communities to fund start-up community corrections programs and support drug courts in Auglaize, Pike and Jackson counties. Those counties recently received a \$370,000 U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance grant to pilot a program that focuses on treatment as well as swift and certain sanctions.

Warren County Common Pleas Court Judge Robert Peeler said his jurisdiction has found success in alternative options for addressing drug offenders, despite facing initial backlash regarding the cost of providing treatment to inmates.

He said addicts arrested in Warren County go to jail to detox and receive medication-assisted treatment before being sent home and electronically monitored for 90 to 120 days. During that time they begin a treatment program and are given privileges to attend court hearings and work, he added.

In the last six months, 11 people have completed the alternative sentencing process and none of them has relapsed, Judge Peeler said, adding that the cost of treating and monitoring the offenders is 85% less than keeping them in local incarceration for the same amount of time.

"Anyone who questions the cost of medication assistance should learn about the cost of incarceration, welfare for families of incarcerated individuals or the cost of multiple emergency room visits for opiate addicts who continue to use," he said.

Highland County Common Pleas Court Judge Rocky Coss also spoke to a federal mandate that requires a judge to suspend a drug offender's license. He said the requirement interferes with an addict's ability to continue on with as normal a life as possible and get to treatment.

"There is great pressure from many sources to reduce the prison population while addressing the drug crisis we have in the state," he said. "I do not believe that this will happen until the rate of recidivism is reduced through treatment, rehabilitation and education. Removing a pointless statutory impediment to felony offenders' reentry into the community would be one step toward that goal."

Although her study committee is coming to an end, Chair Pelanda said there is more work to be done in understanding and curbing addiction, especially how it's linked with mental health. Another study committee could possibly be facilitated to take on that topic, she added.

"There are just so many parts to this and it evidences just how little we really know about the drug epidemic," she said. "Obviously any legislation we would consider or put forth would simply be a first step in addressing the problem."

Lawmakers optimistic judicial, elected official salary increases could see lame duck consideration

This story was originally published in Gongwer News Service September 5, 2014.

Stagnant judge and elected official salaries could see a boost in the near future, as the issue of pay increases continues to percolate in the General Assembly.

With pay frozen at 2008 levels, supporters including Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor have cautioned that failure to increase salaries could deter Ohioans from seeking the bench or public office.

In her recent State of the Judiciary Address, however, Ms. O'Connor hinted at positive discussions on the issue with legislative leaders. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, August 28, 2014](#))

Sen. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), who also championed judicial pay increases in recent years, said he's waiting on "white smoke" from chamber leadership to officially begin work on a proposal.

In addition to looking at judicial pay, however, the senator said he's also open to looking at salary increases for all elected officials who've seen their salaries frozen for several years.

"I'm open to limiting it to judges, but I feel also quite open - and think it's preferable - to consider an increase for all of those who have gone without an increase since Jan. 1, 2008," he said.

The Cincinnati Republican said when he last discussed the issue with Senate [President Keith Faber](#) (R-Celina) in July the chamber leader expressed interest in potentially funneling the topic through the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission.

Nevertheless, Sen. Seitz said he's "cautiously optimistic" that a pay increase bill could move forward this session.

With lawmakers not set to return to Columbus until the fall, the senator said he believes such a move would be good for the lame duck session - a time, he said, when such bills have historically been passed.

Sen. Seitz unsuccessfully pushed the issue in the last lame duck session in 2012. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, December 5, 2012](#))

[Sen. Cliff Hite](#) (R-Findlay), another supporter of raising judicial and public official salaries, said lame duck consideration could also help ease apprehensions for lawmakers "concerned about political ramifications."

Another way to smooth concerns around such a proposal could be to raise wages for judges and public officials, but not legislators, the Findlay Republican said.

"I wouldn't have a problem if we raised some pay for all public officials and leave us out of the mix - I have no problem at all," he said. "But I will tell you this, if we want to be part of the mix or should be part of the mix, I know some people want to politicize it and frankly, there are people that have been around for an extremely long time that have never seen a raise."

Like Chief Justice O'Connor, Sen. Hite argued that stagnant wages could discourage individuals from seeking office or the bench, or remaining in such positions.

"I have felt all along that if you don't raise the bar a little bit, you're going to lose candidate potentials and I just think that's a strong part," he said.

The senator said he has been discussing the issue with Sen. Seitz for years, adding that a pay raise proposal was floated as a potential amendment to the last budget, but didn't go anywhere. He said he hopes the issue is addressed in the near future.

House Finance & Appropriations Committee Chairman [Rep. Ron Amstutz](#) (R-Wooster), meanwhile, acknowledged that discussions around the issue have also been taking place in the lower chamber.

"I've heard some talk about various pay raise possibilities, and I wouldn't be surprised if there'll be some more conversation, but I'm not aware of anything really ready to gel or to even make a decision whether it goes forward or not," he said. "I think that's one of the many things being discussed but hasn't reached a point where you can predict whether anything will happen."

Carolyn Best, spokeswoman for House [Speaker Bill Batchelder](#) (R-Medina), affirmed that late House State & Local Government Committee Chairman Rep. Terry Blair was looking at the issue prior to his death.

A new point-person hasn't yet been designated to review the issue, she said.

Statehouse Etcetera



State Financial Reports Paint A Picture Of Slow Economic Growth, Lower Spending

Ohio's economic recovery has slowed but is still moving forward, and state spending continues to lag estimates mostly because of ongoing trends in the Medicaid entitlement, the latest financial reports show.

The separate monthly finance updates from the Office of Budget and Management and the Legislative Service Commission ([Budget Footnotes](#)) point to a steady upswing in the state's economy that has slowed in recent months, with the [administration's August report](#) providing more details on independent state and national forecasts.

"Personal income growth slowed in July to an annual rate of 2.3% following a six-month increase at an annual rate of 5.6% through June," the report stated. "Ohio personal income increased 4.3% in the first quarter, compared with an upwardly revised increase of 5% nationally...."

Reflecting a recent slide in the state's sales tax collections, OBM observed, "Personal consumption expenditures weakened even more than income, falling 0.1% in July after rising at an annual rate of 5.2% during the previous five months."

House, Senate Cancel 'If Needed' Session Dates

The House and Senate on Thursday announced the cancelations of "if needed" session dates scheduled for later this month and early October.

The House Clerk's office said possible session days set for Sept. 16-18 will not be needed.

Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina), meanwhile, announced that the upper chamber's "if needed" session dates for Sept. 30-Oct. 2 have been canceled.

Bill Introductions

[HB 618](#) TOWNSHIP POLICE ARRESTS ([Becker, J.](#)) To permit a member of a township police or joint police district and a township constable to make arrests on a portion of an interstate highway located within a township with a population greater than 40,000, instead of a population greater than 50,000 as provided in current law. Am. 4513.39.

[HB 619](#) WASTE VEHICLES ([Cera, J.](#), [Rogers, J.](#)) To require motor vehicle operators to take certain actions upon approaching a stationary waste collection vehicle collecting refuse on a roadside. Am. 4511.01, 4511.213, and 4513.17

[SB 361](#) CRIMINAL LIABILITY ([Seitz, B.](#)) To clarify when strict criminal liability is imposed or a degree of culpability is required for the commission of an offense, to modify the concept of acting recklessly, and to require that future acts creating criminal offenses specify the requisite degree of culpability. Am. 2901.21 and 2901.22 and to enact section 2901.20.

[SB 362](#) VOTING ([Kearney, E.](#), [Turner, N.](#)) To extend the period for in-person absent voting and to specify the days and hours for in-person absent voting. Am. 3509.01, 3509.03, 3511.02, and 3511.10

Hearing Schedule

Tuesday, September 18

- Children Services Funding Work Group, 77 S. High St., 31st Fl., South A, Columbus, 1 p.m.
- Adult Protective Services Funding Work Group, 77 S. High St., 31st Fl., South A, Columbus, 3 p.m.