



The Ohio SHRM State Council *Monthly Legislative Report*



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UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES IN 2013

September 18-20, 2013: 2013 Ohio Human Resource Conference: HR – Making Connections that Count. Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, Ohio. Details and registration information available at http://www.ohioshrm.org/hr_conf/

TOP NEWS IN OHIO

Workers' Compensation

Under a plan announced by Gov. John Kasich nearly two weeks ago, Ohio schools and local governments would receive \$112.8 million in a rebate from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC). The rebates would go to nearly \$3,800 local governments and schools as part of an overall \$1 billion rebate plan. Kasich and BWC Administrator Steve Buehrer said at the announcement that the rebate would be a part of an overall BWC reform plan that includes tripling of the Safety and Wellness Grant Program, and a perspective payment system allowing employers to pay workers' compensation bills in advance of coverage periods instead of after them.

The administration said schools would get about \$42.5 million of the rebate, followed by cities (\$37 million), counties (\$16.5 million), and townships receive \$7.6 million. Local governments and schools that are self-insured and do not pay into the BWC system would not be impacted.

Public employers will be receiving approximately 56 percent of their annual workers' compensation insurance premium. The administration said checks could be mailed as early as June or July if the rebates are approved by the BWC Board of Directors on May 30. In addition, the proposal includes a 4 percent rate reduction for public employers.

State & National Unemployment Numbers for March-April 2013

According to an April 13 announcement by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Ohio's unemployment rate has continued ticking up, going from 7 percent in February to 7.1 percent in March. ODJFS figures show that Ohio lost 20,400 jobs over the month, the largest in the nation, and the number of workers unemployed in the state rose to 406,000, up from 405,000 in February.

Ohio's non-farm wage and salary employment decreased from 5.197 million in February to 5.177 million in March. On May 3, 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that unemployment for April was 7.5 percent -- down from the 7.6 percent recorded for March. Unemployment has declined by 0.4 percentage points since January of this year.



TOP NEWS IN OHIO

Bipartisan Bill Would Add Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity to Anti-Discrimination Law

Ohio legislators from both sides of the aisle are working together to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the state of Ohio. On Friday, May 10, Reps. Nickie J. Antonio (D-Lakewood) and Ross McGregor (R-Springfield) unveiled HB163, titled Equal Housing and Employment Act, that would add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to Ohio’s anti-discrimination law. A companion bill in the Senate, SB125, is sponsored by Sens. Frank LaRose (R-Fairlawn) and Michael Skindell (D-Lakewood).

Ohio’s anti-discrimination law currently prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, familial status, marital status, military status, national origin, ancestry, or disability. The proposed bill includes an exemption for employers with less than 15 employees and religious organizations.

According to a statement released by Antonio’s office, 60 “Fortune 500” companies headquartered in Ohio have recognized sexual orientation and/or gender identity as a part of their workplace policies. Eighty of Ohio’s top 98 employers listed on the JobsOhio website specifically prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity as part of their workplace policies.

There are currently 21 other states and the District of Columbia that have state laws that protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Future Uncertain for New RIGHT-TO-WORK Bills

Nearly half the states in the U.S. have a right-to-work law on the books that guarantees that no one can be compelled, as a condition of employment, to join a labor union. Michigan and Indiana became right work states in 2012. Two Ohio legislators have introduced legislation that would either address right-to-work through legislation or by ballot for the voters to decide.

On May 2, Rep. Kristina Roegner introduced [HB 151](#) that prohibits any requirement that employees of private employers join or pay dues to any employee organization and to establish civil and criminal penalties against employers who violate that prohibition. In addition, Rep. Ron Maag introduced [HB 152](#) that removes any requirement under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Law that public employees join or pay dues to any employee organization and prohibits public employers from requiring public employees to join or pay dues to any employee organization. Both bills have 16 co-sponsors, all Republicans.

Reps. Roegner and Maag have also co-sponsored [HJR5](#), proposing to enact Section 22 of Article I of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to prohibit employees from being forced to participate in a labor organization as a condition of employment.

The future of all three pieces of legislation is uncertain because there is not a lot of political appetite in the GOP for taking on the issue heading into the 2014 election. GOP leaders, including Ohio House of Representatives Speaker Bill Batchelder, Ohio Senate President Keith Faber and Gov. John Kasich, have not embraced the idea.



HB117 (Captive Insurance Companies)

State Representatives Robert Hackett and Michael Stinziano introduced HB117 on April 8, 2013. The bill would provide for the operation of captive insurance companies in Ohio.

HB120 (Gender Pay Disparity Task Force)

State Representatives Matt Lundy and Denise Driehaus introduced HB120 on April 10, 2013. The bill would create the Gender Pay Disparity Task Force.

HB121 (Ohio Health Security Act)

On April 10, 2013, State Representatives Robert Hagan and Mike Foley introduced HB121, legislation to enact the Ohio Health Security Act for the purpose of establishing and operating the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents. House Bill 121, along with companion legislation introduced in the Senate, SB104, would create a single-payer health care system that will extend full and comprehensive coverage to all Ohioans.

HB125 (Medicaid Expansion)

Representatives John Carney and Nickie Antonio co-sponsored HB125 on April 16, 2013. The legislation intends to permit the Medicaid program to cover the eligibility expansion group authorized by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and to make an appropriation.

HB143 (Medicaid Expansion)

On April 16, Representatives John Carney and Nickie Antonio co-sponsored HB125, a bill to permit the Medicaid program to cover the eligibility expansion group authorized by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and to make an appropriation.

HB151 (Right To Work-Private Employers)

State Representative Kristina Roegner introduced HB151 on May 2, legislation to prohibit any requirement that employees of private employers join or pay dues to any employee organization and to establish civil and criminal penalties against employers who violate that prohibition.

HB152 (Right To Work-Public Employees)

On May 2, Representative Ron Maag sponsored HB152. The bill seeks to remove any requirement under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Law that public employees join or pay dues to any employee organization and to prohibit public employers from requiring public employees to join or pay dues to any employee organization.



HB163 (Ohio Civil Rights Law Expansion)

On May 14, State Representatives Ross McGregor and Nickie Antonio co-sponsored HB163, legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, to create an exception for unlawful discriminatory practices concerning admission to or membership in certain religious organizations, to add mediation to the list of informal methods by which the Ohio Civil Rights Commission must attempt to induce compliance with Ohio's Civil Rights Law before instituting a public hearing.

HJR5 (Right To Work)

State Representatives Kristina Roegner and Ron Maag co-sponsored HJR5 on May 2, 2013. The resolution is proposing to enact Section 22 of Article I of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to prohibit employees from being forced to participate in a labor organization as a condition of employment.

SB88 (Ohio Health Benefit Exchange Program)

On March 19, Senator Michael Skindell introduced SB88, legislation to establish the Ohio Health Benefit Exchange Agency and to establish the Ohio Health Benefit Exchange Program consisting of an exchange for individual coverage and a Small Business Health Options Program.

SB89 (Earned Income Tax Credit)

State Senator Michael Skindell introduced SB89 on March 19, 2013. The bill intends to grant a state earned income tax credit equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit.

SB104 (Ohio Health Care Plan)

State Senator Michael Skindell introduced SB104 on April 10. The bill is companion legislation to HB121, and would establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.

SB119 (Domestic Workers Protection)

On May 1, 2013, Senator Charleta Tavares introduced SB119, a bill to require that domestic workers be paid the minimum wage, as provided in Section 34a of Article II, Ohio Constitution, to require that domestic workers be paid overtime wages, to make certain conduct directed toward a domestic worker an unlawful discriminatory practice, and to require a weekly day of rest for domestic workers.

SB125 (Ohio Civil Rights Law Expansion)

Senators Frank LaRose and Michael Skindell co-sponsored SB125 on May 14, 2013. The bill seeks to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, to create an exception for unlawful discriminatory practices concerning admission to or membership in certain religious organizations, to add mediation to the list of informal methods by which the Ohio Civil Rights Commission must attempt to induce compliance with Ohio's Civil Rights Law before instituting a public hearing.



SHRM LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

Employment Law

- HB82** OHIO'S CIVIL RIGHTS LAW EXEMPTION (HAYES B, BLAIR T) To exempt religious corporations, associations, educational institutions, or societies from the definition of "employer" for the purpose of Ohio's Civil Rights law.
Current Status: 3/6/2013 - House Judiciary, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_82
- HB120** GENDER PAY DISPARITY TASK FORCE (LUNDY M, DRIEHAUS D) To create the Gender Pay Disparity Task Force.
Current Status: 5/8/2013 - House Commerce, Labor and Technology, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_120
- HB163** OHIO CIVIL RIGHTS LAW EXPANSION (MCGREGOR R, ANTONIO N) To prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
Current Status: 5/22/2013 - House Commerce, Labor and Technology, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_163
- SB45** PRIVATE ELECTRONIC ACCOUNTS ACCESS (TAVARES C) To prohibit employers, employment agencies, personnel placement services, and labor organizations from requiring an applicant or employee to provide access to private electronic accounts of the applicant or employee.
Current Status: 3/6/2013 - Senate Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_45
- SB70** OHIO CIVIL RIGHTS LAW (TAVARES C) To specify that discrimination by an employer against any person because of the person's credit history is an unlawful discriminatory practice under the Ohio Civil Rights Law.
Current Status: 3/13/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Commerce and Labor
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_70
- SB92** WAGE DISCRIMINATION (TURNER N, TAVARES C) To enact the "Fair and Acceptable Income Required (FAIR) Act" and to revise the enforcement of the prohibitions against discrimination in the payment of wages.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - Introduced
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_92
- SB119** DOMESTIC WORKERS PROTECTION (TAVARES C) To require that domestic workers be paid the minimum wage, to require that domestic workers be paid overtime wages, to make certain conduct directed toward a domestic worker an unlawful discriminatory practice, and to require a weekly day of rest for domestic workers.
Current Status: 5/8/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Commerce and Labor
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_119



SHRM LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

SB125 OHIO CIVIL RIGHTS LAW EXPANSION (LAROSE F, SKINDELL M) To prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
Current Status: 5/14/2013 - Introduced
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_125

Healthcare

HB3 HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE (SEARS B, KUNZE S) To specify licensing and continuing education requirements for insurance agents involved in selling, soliciting, or negotiating sickness and accident insurance through a health benefit exchange.
Current Status: 3/19/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_3

HB91 HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT (YOUNG R, THOMPSON A) To enact the Health Care Freedom Act.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - House Health and Aging, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_91

HB117 CAPTIVE INSURANCE COMPANIES (HACKETT R, STINZIANO M) To provide for the operation of captive insurance companies in Ohio.
Current Status: 5/14/2013 - REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED, House Insurance, (Fourth Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_117

HB121 OHIO HEALTH SECURITY ACT (HAGAN R, FOLEY M) To enact the Ohio Health Security Act to establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.
Current Status: 4/17/2013 - Referred to Committee House Insurance
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_121

HB125 MEDICAID EXPANSION (CARNEY J, ANTONIO N) To permit the Medicaid program to cover the eligibility expansion group authorized by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 4/17/2013 - Referred to Committee House Finance and Appropriations
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_125

SB9 INSURANCE AGENTS EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (BACON K) To specify licensing and continuing education requirements for insurance agents involved in selling, soliciting, or negotiating sickness and accident insurance through a health benefit exchange
Current Status: 3/19/2013 - PASSED BY SENATE; Vote 33-0
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_9



SHRM LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

SB88 OHIO HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (SKINDELL M) To establish the Ohio Health Benefit Exchange Agency and to establish the Ohio Health Benefit Exchange Program consisting of an exchange for individual coverage and a Small Business Health Options Program.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_88

SB104 OHIO HEALTH CARE PLAN (SKINDELL M) To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.
Current Status: 4/16/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Medicaid, Health and Human Services
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_104

Labor Relations

HB151 RIGHT TO WORK-PRIVATE EMPLOYERS (ROEGNER K) To prohibit any requirement that employees of private employers join or pay dues to any employee organization and to establish civil and criminal penalties against employers who violate that prohibition.
Current Status: 5/7/2013 - Referred to Committee House Manufacturing and Workforce Development
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_151

HB152 RIGHT TO WORK-PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (MAAG R) To remove any requirement under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Law that public employees join or pay dues to any employee organization.
Current Status: 5/7/2013 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_152

HJR5 RIGHT TO WORK (ROEGNER K, MAAG R) Proposing to enact Section 22 of Article I of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to prohibit employees from being forced to participate in a labor organization as a condition of employment.
Current Status: 5/7/2013 - Referred to Committee House Manufacturing and Workforce Development
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/res.cfm?ID=130_HJR_5

Taxation

HB107 CAREER EXPLORATION INTERNSHIPS-TAX CREDIT (BAKER N) To authorize a tax credit for businesses that employ high school students in career exploration internships.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - Introduced
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_107

SB89 EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (SKINDELL M) To grant a state earned income tax credit equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_89



SHRM LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

Unemployment Compensation

- HB2** UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION CLAIMANT (DERICKSON T, BROWN T) To require an unemployment compensation claimant to register with OhioMeansJobs to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits and to require a claimant to contact a local one-stop office beginning with the eighth week of filing for unemployment.
Current Status: 3/19/2013 - PASSED BY HOUSE; Vote 80-12
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_2
- HB22** MILITARY SPOUSE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (PILLICH C) To permit persons who quit work to accompany the person's spouse on a military transfer to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.
Current Status: 2/13/2013 - House Commerce, Labor and Technology, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_22
- HB37** SHAREDWORK OHIO PROGRAM (DUFFEY M, SCHERER G) To create the SharedWork Ohio Program and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT, House Commerce, Labor and Technology, (Fourth Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_37
- HB55** UNEMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY-MILITARY SPOUSE (PILLICH C, TERHAR L) To permit persons who quit work to accompany the person's spouse on a military transfer to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.
Current Status: 2/27/2013 - House Commerce, Labor and Technology, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_55
- SB8** UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BENEFITS-MILITARY SPOUSE (LAROSE F) To permit persons who quit work to accompany the person's spouse on a military transfer to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.
Current Status: 3/6/2013 - Senate Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_8
- SB14** UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION LAW (KEARNEY E) To authorize programs and tax credits to encourage the hiring of unemployed individuals, to make changes to the Unemployment Compensation Law.
Current Status: 2/13/2013 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_14



SHRM LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

SB25 SHAREDWORK OHIO PROGRAM (PETERSON B, LAROSE F) To create the SharedWork Ohio Program and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - PASSED BY SENATE; Vote 32-1 Emergency 33-0
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_25

Workers' Compensation

HB33 INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET (HACKETT R) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2015, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of Commission programs.
Current Status: 3/26/2013 - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_33

HB34 WORKERS' COMPENSATION BUDGET (HACKETT R) To make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2015; and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs.
Current Status: 3/26/2013 - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_34

HB143 WORKERS' COMPENSATION (DEVITIS A, BUTLER, JR. J) To require the Administrator of Workers' Compensation to include in the notice of premium rate that is applicable to an employer for an upcoming policy year the mathematical equation used by the Administrator to determine the employer's premium rate.
Current Status: 5/14/2013 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_143

Workforce Development

HB1 OHIO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LAW (DERICKSON T, ROMANCHUK M) To require a local workforce investment area to use OhioMeansJobs as the local workforce investment area's job placement system, to rename county one-stop systems, and to make other changes to Ohio's Workforce Development Law.
Current Status: 3/19/2013 - PASSED BY HOUSE; Vote 81-11
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_1

HB63 TAX CREDIT- OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION (CERA J, O'BRIEN S) To establish a nonrefundable commercial activity tax credit for companies involved in horizontal well drilling or related oil and gas production services that hire Ohio residents or dislocated workers.
Current Status: 2/20/2013 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_63



SHRM LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

- SB1** OHIOMEANSJOBS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND (BEAGLE B, BALDERSON T) To create the OhioMeansJobs Workforce Development Revolving Loan Fund, to create the OhioMeansJobs Workforce Development Revolving Loan Program, to allocate a portion of casino license fees to finance the loan program, and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 3/19/2013 - Senate Workforce and Economic Development, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_1
- SB2** OHIO'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LAW (LEHNER P, BEAGLE B) To require a local workforce investment area to use OhioMeansJobs as the local workforce investment area's job placement system, to rename county one-stop systems, and to make other changes to Ohio's Workforce Development Law.
Current Status: 3/20/2013 - PASSED BY SENATE; Vote 32-1
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_SB_2
- Misc.**
- HB59** BIENNIAL BUDGET (AMSTUTZ R) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2015; to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.
Current Status: 3/21/2013 - House Finance and Appropriations, (Seventh Hearing)
State Bill Page: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_59

OTHER NEWS IN STATE, LOCAL & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Federal

Ohio Congressman Proposes Taxpayer Nondiscrimination Act

U.S. Rep. Mike Turner (R-Centerville) is introducing legislation in response to reports that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) targeted, for extra review, groups with the words "Tea Party" and "patriot" in their organization's name.

Turner's Taxpayer Nondiscrimination and Protection Act of 2013 would amend Title 18 of the U.S. Code to make it a crime for an IRS employee to discriminate against an individual or group on the basis of their protected rights. It would also clarify that political speech and political expression are protected rights.

Last week, Lois Lerner, the official in charge of the IRS division overseeing tax exempt groups, said a number of conservative organizations that were seeking tax-exempt status were targeted by employees working in a Cincinnati-based unit.



OTHER NEWS IN STATE, LOCAL & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Currently, IRS employees who discriminate against taxpayers may be subject to termination. However that is at the discretion of their supervisors. Turner's bill would increase the maximum penalty to a \$5,000 fine, five years in prison, or both -- which is the same maximum penalty for a member of the president's cabinet who directs an employee to take such action.

Internet Sales Tax Legislation

A bill proposing to require online purchasers of goods to pay sales tax in the state where they reside is nearing a vote in the US Senate. Named the "Marketplace Fairness Act of 2013, the legislation would grant states the authority to compel online and catalog retailers to collect sales tax from purchasers at the time of transaction. Despite some bipartisan support in Congress, the bill's fate is far from certain.

State

Number of Teleworkers in Ohio Grows

Nearly one in five Ohioans now works from home for part or all of the week, reports a new study by broadband initiative Connect Ohio, saving more than two billion commuting miles and \$430 million in travel costs. The state's 783,000 "teleworkers," as they're called, rely on Internet connectivity to fulfill their commitment to employers offsite. Of that number, more than 300,000 Ohioans work from home every day.

RuleWatch

On April 29th, lawmakers who sit on the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) unveiled a new website that's meant to make it easier for the public to track regulations proposed by state agencies. RuleWatch -- found at www.rulewatchohio.gov -- allows users to sign up for email notifications on specific rules or by category. Updates on all selected rules or categories of rules will be consolidated into one daily email, which will be sent the next business day after agencies take actions such as introducing a rule or scheduling a public hearing.

Autism Treatment Covered for State Employees

State employees and their family members will be able to receive autism treatment as part of their employee health insurance benefits beginning July 1, 2013. Negotiations recently concluded with state employees' unions to revise the contractually-negotiated health plan.

Taxation

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce's Dan Navin recently testified during a House Ways and Means Committee hearing on tax reform where he suggested that lawmakers should focus on tax base expansion to bring reduced rates, while targeting small-business tax cuts like the one Gov. John Kasich proposed toward those owners most likely to reinvest tax savings in their companies. He also presented updated recommendations of the "Redesigning Ohio" report written by the state and metro chambers. [View The Redesigning Ohio report](#) [The Redesigning Ohio report](#).