



Ohio Gets Low Grades on 'Status of Women' National Report Card

Ohio received a C, two C minuses, a D minus, and an F on a report card on the "**Status of Women in the States**," issued by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). "I'd be livid if my children brought home these grades," said Amy Hanauer, executive director of Policy Matters Ohio, which released the report locally. "The Status of Women in the States," a biannual report, charts women's progress in each state relative to women in other states, to men, to the nation as whole, and to previous performance. Ohio's grade dropped on three of the five areas covered in this most recent 2002-3 Report Card.

In women's political participation, Ohio ranked 43rd among the states, dropping from a D on the last report card to a D-. Only 66.3 percent of Ohio's women were registered to vote in 1998 and 2000, and only 52.5 percent actually voted in both years. While unprecedented numbers of women were elected to office across the U.S., the number of elected women in Ohio actually declined by more than 20 percent between 1996 and 2000.

Ohio ranked 32nd in employment and earnings, dropping from a C to a C-. Median annual earnings for an Ohio woman working full-time, year-round were \$26,717 in 1999, compared to \$26,884 nationwide. In the combined years 1999-2001, U.S. women earned 72.7 percent of what men earned, while Ohio women earned only 66.8 percent of men's earnings.

With 91.3 percent of women living above poverty in 1999, Ohio ranked 25th in economic autonomy for women, raising its grade from C- to C. Only 14.4 percent of Ohio women have four or more years of college, compared with 17.6 percent of women nationwide. Areas of relative strength for Ohio in this category

were lower poverty, higher health insurance coverage (87.5 percent) and higher percent of women-owned businesses (26.2 percent).

IWPR gave Ohio an F in reproductive rights, which included several variables.

In women's health and well-being, Ohio's grade dropped from C to C-, ranking 34th among the states. Ohio's women had higher than average rates of heart disease, lung and breast cancer mortality, and incidences of diabetes and chlamydia. Ohio had lower than average suicide mortalities and incidences of AIDS among women.

The study recommends stronger enforcement of equal opportunity laws; improved educational opportunities; higher minimum wages; greater provision of affordable child care; and welfare reform programs that provide a basic safety net for very low wage workers. "Women have made progress, but there's a lot more to do," said Dr. Heidi Hartmann, president and CEO of IWPR.

Additional information about the report can be found online at <http://www.iwpr.org>.

Governor Requests Federal Disaster Declaration

Gov. Bob Taft Friday asked the president to declare five northwest Ohio counties disaster areas because of the extraordinary expenses incurred by individuals whose homes and businesses were damaged due to storm damage on Sunday, November 10.

"I have determined this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments and that supplemental federal assistance is necessary," Taft wrote in his letter.

If granted, residents of Van Wert, Ottawa, Seneca, Putnam and Paulding counties would be eligible

for two major programs:

- Low-interest, long-term Small Business Administration loans of up to \$200,000 to individual home owners and up to \$1.5 million to individual business owners.
- Cash grants of up to \$25,000 for unmet, uninsured, essential needs as a result of last weekend's tornadoes and severe storms.

To be eligible for the individual assistance grants, applicants must first be denied an SBA disaster loan or have continuing, unmet, essential needs. Unmet, uninsured needs could include emergency housing, unemployment assistance, crisis counseling, disaster legal services and agricultural assistance.

Estimates of the tornado damage from last weekend's storms were prepared by state, federal and local emergency management agency officials last week. In the five counties alone which the governor declared an emergency, evaluators estimated that nearly 160 homes were either destroyed or suffered major damage. An additional 500 homes or businesses suffered other damage.

Ohio Emergency Management Agency officials continue to survey damage in the five counties to determine the long-term economic impact of damage to government-owned buildings and structures and the extraordinary expenses incurred by local and state governments due to the storms. Based on this continuing analysis, Taft may seek additional federal reimbursement for a portion of government costs related to the storms.

Taft issued an emergency declaration for the five counties early last week, authorizing state government agencies to assist local governments in their response and recovery efforts. Seventeen state agencies poured resources into the impact areas.

According to the governor's office, insurance companies have preliminary estimates of about \$70 million in property insurance claims.

Taft Announces Assistance Program for Elderly, Disabled Weather Victims

Gov. Bob Taft announced Friday that up to \$1.5 million in emergency financial assistance is available to elderly and disabled victims in the five northwest Ohio counties most severely impacted by the storm system that moved through the state Sunday, November 10. The funds were made available through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

"With this program, we are able to ensure that those hardest hit by Sunday's storms have some assistance while they get back on their feet," said Taft. "Although there is assistance readily available to disaster victims with dependents, it was important that our elderly and disabled citizens are not left to fend for themselves."

To be eligible for one-time cash assistance of up to \$750, a person must be either 55 and childless or receiving certain disability benefits and childless, impacted by the storms in one of the five counties declared an emergency by the governor and provide evidence of an economic need to the county job and family services agency. The counties with emergency declarations are Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Seneca and Van Wert. Applications will be accepted at the five county departments of job and family services for the next 30 days.

These county agencies are already eligible to tap into the \$5 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding reserved for disaster victims that include a child, or a pregnant woman, and have evidence of economic need.

Additionally, individuals who become unemployed due to the severe weather may apply to ODJFS for unemployment compensation. Applications may be filed by calling toll-free 1-877/644-6562 (877-OHIO-JOB) from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Applications are also accepted in person at ODJFS local offices. The Lima office at 799 N. Main St. is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday -- Friday.

Taft also noted that the disaster assistance efforts of 16 additional state agencies and the American Red Cross will continue as deemed necessary.

Business Tax Deadlines Extended in Storm Damaged Counties

The Ohio Department of Taxation announced that business tax deadlines are being extended for any Ohio company unable to file taxes because of damage suffered during the severe storms last weekend.

Tax Commissioner Thomas M. Zaino announced that the tax filing deadline is being pushed back to January 31, 2003 to give affected businesses time to reconstruct the records they need to comply with tax law.

"We are asking any business that is facing a filing deadline and needs an extension, to call us, explain their circumstance and we'll provide whatever assistance we can to help them get back on track." Zaino said.

The Department of Taxation hotline for businesses to call is 1-800-304-3211.

The taxes that are most likely to be involved with this extension are employer-withholding which, for most businesses, is due on the 15th of each month, and sales tax that is due on the 23rd.

The filing extension is available to impacted businesses in any of the five counties -- Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Seneca, and Van Wert -- that Gov. Taft has declared a disaster area.

Ohio EPA Taking Comments on Watershed 319 Grant Applications

Ohio EPA will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, November 26 to review grant applications and accept comments on which projects will receive funding in 2003 for nonpoint source pollution control projects. Ohio EPA expects to receive the funds from U.S. EPA as part of the federal Clean Water Act Section 319 program.

The meeting will be held at Blacklick Woods Metro Park, Beech Maple Lodge, 6975 East Livingston Avenue, Reynoldsburg from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Ohio EPA annually receives federal Section 319 grants to award to local watershed sponsors for nonpoint source water quality improvement projects. Pollution from a nonpoint source does not emanate from a pipe or specific discharge point, but results from land disturbance activity or direct modification of a stream ecosystem.

Last month, Ohio EPA announced \$4.4 million in grants, and expects to receive a similar amount in 2003. Beginning this year, Ohio EPA will generate a list of priority watersheds based on need, and target them for these funds. Projects first being considered for 2003 planning and implementation grants are those on the priority watershed list.

Priority watershed sponsors applying for 2003 planning grants of \$100,000 or less include:

- Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation applying for Little Beaver Creek;
- Friends of Big Walnut Creek for Big Walnut Creek;
- Cuyahoga River Plan Community Organization for the Lower Cuyahoga River;
- Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District sponsoring Pymatuning Lake and Shenango River; and
- Champaign County Cooperative Extension Service on behalf of the Upper Mad River.

Priority watershed sponsors applying for 2003 funding for implementing a cleanup plan include:

- Ohio State University Research Foundation for Bokes Creek, \$243,954;
- City of Kent for the Cuyahoga River, \$500,000;
- Mercer County Soil and Water Conservation District for Grand Lake St. Mary, \$150,800;
- Crossroads Research and Conservation Development Council for Huff Run, \$1 million;
- Mill Creek Restoration Project for Mill Creek - Ohio River, \$906,180;
- Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning Commission for Nimishillen Creek and Tuscarawas River, \$473,807;
- Vinton Soil and Water Conservation District for Upper Raccoon Creek, \$1 million;
- Highland Soil and Water Conservation District for Rocky Fork Creek and Paint Creek, \$333,350;
- Cuyahoga County Health Department for Rocky River, \$601,073; (*continued*)

- Darke County Health Department for Stillwater River, \$1 million; and
- Ohio Valley Research and Conservation Development Council for White Oak Creek, \$490,852.

Persons wishing to be placed on the interested parties list for the meeting or who wish to submit written comments for Ohio EPA's consideration in reviewing the grant applications may do so by writing to Natalie Farber, Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43215-1049. Comments must be received by the close of business, Tuesday, November 26, 2002. To attend the meeting, please register in advance by contacting Farber at (614) 644-2143, or by e-mail: natalie.farber@epa.state.oh.us.

Petro Declares City of Jackson in Fiscal Watch

Auditor of State Jim Petro Monday declared the City of Jackson (Jackson County) to be in fiscal watch due to a projected \$5.9 million general fund deficit for the year ending December 31, 2002.

"The fiscal watch status allows the city to receive a performance audit at no cost," said Petro. "The recommendations in the performance audit can save tax dollars."

Requested by Jackson City Council, the report examines the city's general fund financial forecast, including operating transfers to other funds with anticipated deficits. The city's forecasted deficit is primarily due to transfers made by the city from the city's various utility funds to the General Fund which were not in accordance with state law. These adjustments were cited in a special audit released by the Auditor of State's office in February, 2002 and noted in previous audits and were recorded by the city in September, 2002.

While the city has taken steps to reduce this deficit by formally requesting a legal transfer of \$3.5 million from the Electric Fund, the remaining deficit of \$2.4 million would still place the city in fiscal watch.

According to state law, a fiscal watch may be declared based on a financial forecast examined by the Auditor of State for the current year if certain criteria are met. Specifically, the Auditor of State must certify that the general fund deficit at the end of the current year will exceed one-twelfth of the general fund revenues from the preceding fiscal year.

The fiscal watch status, intended as an early warning, notifies governments that their finances are approaching fiscal emergency status. Under fiscal emergency, a state/local commission of officials and citizens assumes oversight of government finances. The fiscal watch law allows the City of Jackson to receive free advisory and technical assistance from the Office of Auditor of State to better manage public funds and help restore financial stability and also allows city officials an opportunity to resolve their financial issues.

To further assist the city, the auditor office will conduct a performance audit of the city's operations. This management review is provided at no cost to the city and will provide in-depth analysis of specific city functions, with recommendations for improvements and cost savings. Performance audits have led to millions in savings for Ohio's schools and local governments.

Moyer Appointed to Einstein Institute Board

Chief Justice Thomas Moyer was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the Einstein Institute for Science, Health and the Courts, commonly referred to as EINSHAC. His three-year term began Saturday, Nov. 16.

The non-profit organization, which began operations in 1995, provides science and technology education and research services to trial and appellate courts in state and federal jurisdictions in the genetic, environmental and neuro-sciences. Specifically this includes genetics, molecular biology, biotechnology and molecular medicine. The aim is to assist judges in managing complex cases.

"The issues addressed by EINSHAC are critically important to the courts of this country," Moyer said.

The Washington, D.C.-based group is funded with grants from federal agencies including the Office of Biological and Environmental Research, U.S. Department of Energy and the National Institutes of Health.

EINSHAC operates four programs: 1) the Genetics Adjudication Resource Project (GARP); 2) the Law and Science Academy (LSA); 3) Courts and Bioterrorism; and 4) International Working Conversations.

FCP Releases Report on Tax Expenditures

Cleveland's Federation for Community Planning just released the next installment of its series looking at Ohio's tax system. This one, entitled "**Implications of Tax Expenditures on Ohio's Revenue System**," looks at the issue of tax expenditures -- that is "tax dollars fore-gone" (or not collected) because of "deductions, exemptions, and credits in tax laws."

"In Ohio they represent a significant loss of revenue amounting to an estimated \$19.3 billion in the current (FY 2002-2003) biennium. While the earliest state tax expenditures were enacted in 1896, their proliferation occurred during the 1990s and continues on to the present. In the 1990s, almost 40 percent of the reported 142 state tax expenditures were enacted at a revenue loss of \$1.4 billion. That number will continue to grow as more taxpayers take advantage of newly-available tax breaks, as some would call them.

"Local governments have a number of economic development tools available to them, most prominent of which are several state programs permitting the abatement of real and personal property taxes. The way the programs operate is that one jurisdiction, generally a city or county, grants the abatement, but most of the costs are borne by other jurisdictions, notably schools and health and human services agencies. No official statewide estimate of the value of these lost revenues exists, but they are in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually."

The federation identified the following problems with the use of tax expenditures:

- Those that attempt to address social goals do so less efficiently than if direct appropriations, accompanied by audits and other methods of assuring accountability for the use of funds to taxpayers, had been employed.
- Those that apply to businesses violate several principles of a sound tax structure including the principle of neutrality by treating some businesses better than others; they are difficult to administer; they create inequities between businesses; and public accountability in the use of the funds from lost revenues is seldom achieved.
- From a budgeting perspective, the use of tax expenditures places the beneficiary in a more favorable position than those public purposes that receive their benefits through the appropriations process.
- Tax expenditures are advanced without the use of cost benefit analysis and are never subsequently evaluated to determine their continued usefulness.

"It is clear that it is politically next to impossible to eliminate a tax expenditure once it is in the tax code. One way of addressing the issue is to start over again through extensive tax structure revision." A major revision in how businesses are taxed, described in another in this series, "Business Climate, Business Taxes, and Economic Development," would address the issues raised in this report also.

"An alternative approach is to begin an extensive legislative review process of all existing tax expenditures, taking into consideration the issues of costs versus benefits, results, accountability, and fairness. Once the review is completed, if it is determined that it meets all the criteria, then it could be time-limited, along with any tax expenditures enacted in the future, to ensure periodic reassessment. Besides these policy alternatives, the suggestions made in a study of taxes prepared by the Federation for Community Planning in 1994 are still relevant:

- "• State business taxes should be applied equally and fairly to all businesses, regardless of whether they are organized as corporations, partnerships, or sole proprietorships.
- "• The state's business taxes should be restructured to reflect the realities of the state's current economy, especially its increased dependency upon services. (*continued*)

- "• Tax expenditures granted to businesses and organizations should be related to the purpose of an organization and should benefit the public at large.
- "• Tax expenditures should be limited to organizations performing functions that government otherwise might have to provide.
- "• Tax expenditures should not establish unfair competition for taxable organizations that provide the same or similar service as the organization receiving the tax benefit. Tax expenditures are appropriate to protect low-and moderate-income persons from a heavy tax burden.
- "• Tax expenditures and the intended beneficiaries should be clearly defined and efficiently targeted rather than used to grant broad-based tax relief.

"It would be useful if these criteria were used in conjunction with relatively short (five years or less) sunset provisions applied to all existing tax expenditures, in the case of state government, and property tax abatements in the case of local governments. Also, it would be useful to see an annual report describing each company receiving a credit, the amount, and how the company complied with the purpose of the credit in terms of jobs produced, and so on.

"When tax expenditures are authorized, or reauthorized, they should be done in a separate bill, not incorporated into the appropriations bills."

For a copy of the complete report, visit the federation website at www.fcp.org.

Meeting Announcements

- The Department of Development's Affordable Housing Task Force regional meetings on Tuesday, November 19: Northwest Ohio's at 9 a.m. at the Main Auditorium, Ford Lima Training Center, 1155 Bible Road and Southwest Ohio's at 2 p.m. at the Russ Engineering Center, Room 144, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glenn Highway, Dayton.
- Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Board at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19 at the board offices, 250 Civic Center Drive, Suite 350, Columbus.
- Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, November 20 at the OCC offices, 10 W. Broad St., Columbus.
- The Biomedical Research and Technology Transfer Commission (BRTTC) will meet Wednesday, November 20 at 11 a.m. at the Business Technology Center at 1275 Kinnear Rd., Columbus.
- The State Coordinating Committee on Groundwater at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 21 at the Horace R. Collins Laboratory, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, 3307 S. Old State Road, Delaware.
- Ohio Civil Rights Commission at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 21 at the commission offices, 1111 E. Broad St., Suite 301, Columbus.
- Ohio Criminal Justice Sentencing Commission at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 21 at the Ohio Supreme Court, Rhodes Office Tower, 30 E. Broad St., 3rd Floor, Columbus.
- The Solid Waste Management Advisory Council of the Ohio EPA at 10 a.m. on Thursday, November 21 at High Banks Metro Park, 9466 Columbus Pike, Lewis Center.
- The Governor's Workforce Policy Board at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, December 4 at the Quest Business Center, 8405 Pulsar Place, Columbus.
- Committee meetings of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities on Wednesday, December 11 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Columbus, 350 N. High St. with the full council meeting on Thursday, December 12 at 10:15 a.m. at the same location.

Additions and Changes to the Committee Agenda

House Civil & Commercial Law

Rep. Williamowski: 466-9624

Tuesday, November 19, 2002, 1:00 p.m., Room 114

- HB597** (JERSE E) Eliminate four-day max. on jury fees--taxed in civil action.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- HB628** (HUGHES J) Regarding probate court procedures.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- SB250** (SPADA R) Regarding information listed on credit card receipt.
Third hearing/all testimony/POSSIBLE VOTE.
- HB665** (GRENDLELL T) Court grant remittitur--certain tort actions--medical claims.
First hearing/sponsor testimony. Presentation by two OSMA witnesses.

House Civil & Commercial Law

Rep. Williamowski: 466-9624

Wednesday, November 20, 2002, 9:30 a.m., Room 114

- SB253** (AUSTRIA S) Charge no fees related to certain protection orders.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- HB655** (FABER K) Immunity for schools--discipline injured student.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- HB597** (JERSE E) Eliminate four-day max. on jury fees--taxed in civil action.
Second hearing/proponent testimony.
- SB149** (COUGHLIN K) Increase amount wrongfully imprisoned person entitled to in Court of Claims.
Sixth hearing/all testimony/POSSIBLE VOTE.
- SB179** (WACHTMANN L) Modify the law regarding peer review committees.
Second hearing/proponent testimony.
- HB665** (GRENDLELL T) Court grant remittitur--certain tort actions--medical claims.
Second hearing/proponent testimony.

House Civil & Commercial Law

Rep. Williamowski: 466-9624

Thursday, November 21, 2002, 9:00 a.m., Room 116

- HB603** (WEBSTER S) Divorcing parents consider child's postsecondary education.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- HB656** (DEPIERO D) Authorize civil commitment--certain sexually aberrant persons.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- HB658** (CARMICHAEL J) Expand notification provision of SORN Law.
First hearing/sponsor testimony.
- HB286** (DISTEL G) Snowmobile--recreational activity for landowner's immunity.
Fifth hearing/all testimony/SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT/POSSIBLE VOTE.
- HB597** (JERSE E) Eliminate four-day max. on jury fees--taxed in civil action.
Third hearing/all testimony/POSSIBLE VOTE.
- HB665** (GRENDLELL T) Court grant remittitur--certain tort actions--medical claims.
Third hearing/all testimony.

**The House
adjourned until
Tuesday,
November 19, 2002
at 11:00 a.m.
Nonvoting Session**

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**The Senate
adjourned until
Tuesday,
November 19, 2002
at 9:30 a.m.
Nonvoting Session**