

## EXECUTIVE

## FRONT

In case anyone was wondering if Ohio was under new management, Governor Ted Strickland left no doubt during his first day in office. The Governor took advantage of a procedural error to veto an anti-consumer lead paint bill passed during the "lame duck" legislative session. In issuing the veto, Strickland said, "Ohio's consumers must be allowed to hold companies fully responsible if a company has a product that harms Ohioans, especially children."

### **Prevailing Wage Restored on School Construction**

Gov. Strickland also wasted no time in removing restrictions on building schools using prevailing wage contractors. Seeking to stem the tide of shoddy school construction, the new majority on the Strickland appointed School Facilities Commission voted to reform its contracting process so schools are not forced to accept the cheapest bid. Factors such as quality of workmanship will now be considered which is expected to save school districts more money in the long run. The Commission also adopted a policy requiring that school builders adhere to guidelines that include using experienced personnel and paying into employee medical and retirement plans.

### **Governor Delivers Progressive Path During State of the State Speech**

Governor Strickland presented to the joint convention of the Ohio General Assembly a strong message of establishing new state priorities. The new priorities are detailed in the Governor's state budget proposal which was introduced on March 15. By law the biennial budget to begin July 1, 2007 must demonstrate that the state expenditures do not exceed revenues.

According to the Governor, the shifting of priorities means bold new ideas for Ohio especially for education and health care. Strickland is planning to pay for health care for all uninsured children, increase public education spending by \$1 billion and provide senior and disabled citizens a property tax break through usage of the tobacco settlement funds, closing corporate tax loopholes and some agency "belt tightening."

The Governor further declared his support for public education by placing a moratorium on new charter schools, and forbidding for-profit companies from operating them. He also proposes the elimination of Ohio's school voucher program.

William Burga, President, Ohio AFL-CIO said "the Governor's vision for Ohio puts us on a bold and bright new direction to help working families and those that have paid the price of a pay to play government of past administrations."

### **Governor Selects BWC Administrator**

On March 20 Governor Strickland announced his choice, Marsha Ryan, for Administrator of the Bureau of Workers Compensation. Ms. Ryan has a wealth of experience in administrating and managing, both in the public and private sectors. She spent over 18 years in the public sector, focusing on consumer protection, customer service, public policy and regulation at the Ohio Department of Commerce, the Ohio Office of the Attorney General, the Consumers' Counsel and PUCO. In the private sector, she has held numerous executive roles at American Electric Power including her current position as Vice President of Customer Operations.

After discussing with Ms. Ryan the BWC and its functions, William Burga, President of the Ohio AFL-CIO believes she understands the purpose of the BWC is to, first and foremost, quickly provide benefits to injured workers. Ms. Ryan acknowledged the importance of working with the many stakeholders and a sincere willingness to work with organized labor. Ms. Ryan is scheduled to go before the General Assembly for confirmation and is expected to begin as Administrator on May 1.

## LEGISLATIVE FRONT

### State Budget

With a slimmer majority in the Ohio House (53-46) and a new Democrat Governor the Republican controlled General Assembly has moved cautiously at the outset of the 127th General Assembly. The state's FY08 Biennial Budget (HB119) has and likely will remain the big legislative topic the first half of this year (see Governor Delivers Speech).

### Resolutions and Sign-on Letters - Trade and Labor Law

The Ohio AFL-CIO is leading an effort in support of state resolutions dealing with two separate federal legislative matters. The first is a resolution (SCR4, Sen. Dale Miller) in support of the Employee Free Choice Act (H.R.800). Another resolution expected to be introduced would call on Congress to block re-authorization of providing the President with so called "Fast Track" trade authority. Additionally, the Ohio AFL-CIO has called on legislators to sign on to letters to be sent to Congress supporting labor's position on these two issues.

## JUDICIAL FRONT

On March 8, 2007 the Ohio AFL-CIO joined the OEA and the UAW in filing a lawsuit with the Franklin County Common Pleas Court pertaining to HB694. Another motion was then filed and supported by the court to consolidate the case with HB1 -- the 2004 campaign finance bill under pending litigation. On March 22, a motion seeking a preliminary injunction was submitted and is pending.

As previously reported in Capitol Report, during the "lame duck" legislative session Republican lawmakers passed HB694 that includes campaign finance labor provisions which labor believes is punitive and unconstitutional. The new law which goes into effect April 4, 2007 treats unions that have collective bargaining agreements with government entities at the state and local levels like business contractors and places restrictions on campaign contributions.

GO TO [WWW.OHAFICIO.ORG](http://WWW.OHAFICIO.ORG) FOR ADDITIONAL  
INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER FOR THE  
OHIO AFL-CIO LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE MAY 8-9, 2007.