Among other things, this bill would address this issue by quickly passing HB 114. The Ohio House set out to tackle a long-term fix. On the requirements expired without an efficiency mandate, a two-year freeze on expensive and heavy-handed energy reform. Gov. John Kasich vetoed a bill in late 2016 that would have reformed the renewable energy mandates. Because Kasich vetoed this provision, the House has already voted to override — despite the Ohio Chamber’s objections. Should the Senate also vote to override, the provision will remain in effect.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
At the top of the Ohio Chamber’s 2017-18 agenda is enactment of necessary and overdue reforms to Ohio’s employment discrimination statutes. HB 2 would bring balance and predictability to these laws, which are woefully out of line with both their federal counterparts and those of other states. After numerous revisions addressing all major concerns raised about HB 2, the legislation is ready for a full House vote. Alarming, lawmakers have made two changes recently — with a third currently making its way through the legislature — that interfere with an employer’s right to decide whether to allow weapons on its private property.

TAXES
Tax policy changes typically are a key component of any state budget. This year, however, was a bit of an exception. Over Kasich’s first six years, lowering personal income tax rates was a top priority, and his original budget proposal included another across-the-board rate cut. To offset the financial impact of the tax cuts, the governor proposed both raising taxes in several areas and subjecting a number of services to the sales tax. Although this tax reform package would have delivered a net tax cut of $39 million, it would also have resulted in an estimated $1.2 billion in new taxes on Ohio employers.

Continued on page 3
You work to develop committed employees.

We all work to see better outcomes.

We’ll provide the resources to get you there.

We’re All for Ohio.

Working with some of Ohio’s best human resources attorneys, the Ohio Chamber built the HR Academy to help our members and the larger business community stay updated on important local and national HR issues. We continue to see strong participation in the program, garnering up to 200 participants per webinar, selling hundreds of HR Manuals and enjoying active engagement in our HR Symposium series. We are proud to offer this homegrown effort that brings together Ohio expertise and leadership.

We have many more webinars and symposiums scheduled for this year.

For more information, contact Michelle Donovan at mdonovan@ohiochamber.com or (614) 228-4201.

OHIO'S MISLEADING RX BALLOT ISSUE

Bad for Ohians, bad for business

There's an old adage that says if something sounds too good to be true, it usually is—and that is a good way to clearly describe a ballot issue Ohio voters will face in November.

In an election year that is focused on local races and issues, Ohioans will be faced with the so-called “Ohio Drug Price Relief Act,” a statewide ballot issue that, if passed, could be damaging. The issue is of serious concern to employers and business advocates.

In May, the board of directors of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce voted to oppose the ill-conceived and poorly written act.

The proposed law would impose unworkable contracting requirements on the state of Ohio whenever it purchases prescription drugs. It calls for state entities to pay no more than the lowest price paid by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs for prescription medications for state-run programs.

These include programs that serve people who depend on Medicaid, as well as injured workers through the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, retirees, prison workers, and people in other state-connected health care programs. The language of the ballot issue is vague, with no detail on how it could be implemented across state agencies and entities, and without definitions critical to its application.

“The Rx ballot issue is yet another example of a state-capitalist interest misusing Ohio’s ballot access process in an effort to advance its own interests—at the expense of Ohio citizens and taxpayers,” says Andrew E. Doehrel, president and CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. “This proposal will almost certainly lead to cost shifting to private payers, including employers, perversely resulting in a majority of Ohioans paying more, not less, for their prescription drugs.

“While it is so convoluted that it likely couldn’t work as intended, we’re concerned that a similar approach could be expanded to any other industry or produce the state purchases it if it was successful. Further, the proposal runs counter to the free market values that the Ohio Chamber stands for and is nothing more than an attempt to artificially fix drug prices.”

In expressing its opposition, the Ohio Chamber points out that businesses, organized labor, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, veterans, hospitals and others have examined the issue. The ballot issue won’t do what it promises and could even make things worse.

Three former state Medicaid directors, John McCarthy, Barb Edwards and Maureen Corcoran, as well as a former Ohio Budget and Management Director, Greg Browning, have examined the issue. They agree that the issue is unworkable and, should it pass and Ohioans be forced to implement it, it would create bureaucratic red tape and a quagmire of litigation.

The Ohio Chamber and other business advocates are concerned that the issue, if adopted, would increase tax rates and would establish artificial price fixing that could expand to other industries or products in the future. In addition, the majority of Ohioans who use employer-based or private insurance could see higher out-of-pocket costs and premiums.

Finally, many business leaders are concerned about lawsuit abuse. The promoters of the ballot issue wrote it into an unprecedented provision to give themselves the right to intervene at taxpayer expense in any legal challenges that may be filed against it if it becomes law. This provision would give the special interest a blank check to sue the state if they don’t like the way the law is being implemented, and require that the state’s legal fees be reimbursed by taxpayers whether they win or lose. 1

Veterans’ organizations are particularly concerned about the issue and the potential disruption to the VA system. Should the issue pass, the first problem centers on VA purchasing arrangements. The VA is not interested in purchasing contracts. That means state entities would not know what pricing benchmarks to meet. But if Ohio voters pass the ballot issue, state officials would be legally required to implement the new law, forcing them to challenge the VA for information and taking up resources both the state and the VA could put to better use. A number of Ohio veterans’ groups, including the American Legion, the VFW, the Iraq Afghanistan Veterans of America, Korean War Veterans and Military Officers Association of America, oppose the ballot issue.

An almost identical version of the proposal, Proposition 61 (Prop 61), was defeated on the November 2016 California ballot. Opposing Prop 61 were more than 200 organizations, including the California Chamber of Commerce. Opponents helped to educate voters about many flaws and potential harm to patients. Every major California newspaper opposed Prop 61, recognizing it as poorly constructed public policy.

The ballot issue is being promoted by a billion-dollar California-based nonprofit, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), that gets 70 percent of its revenue from pharmacists, and has been found in three separate government audits to have overcharged taxpayers for the drugs it sells. 2 AHF’s special counsel Michael Weinstein has been accused of using millions of tax-exempt dollars generated by his organization for political purposes wholly unrelated to the mission of his foundation. 3

The Ohio Chamber urges our members and supporters to oppose the deceptive Rx ballot issue. Educate your employees, colleagues and families that what the proponents claim as savings on prescription drugs and savings to taxpayers is deceptive and misleading. Visit www.deceptiveRxissue.org for more information. If it sounds too good to be true, it is true.

VOTE NO ON DECEPTIVE RX BALLOT ISSUE

Quick Glance

Act would limit amount state can pay for drugs

Chamber opposes the ill-conceived, poorly written act

Passage of issue could result in higher drug prices for most Ohioans

Three former Medicaid directors agree act is unworkable

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Unlike the president, our 100th day doesn’t draw national, state or even local attention. However, it is important to let our stakeholders know our activities of the first 100 days in service to you.

Our top concern is the prosperity of Ohio and the ability for companies of every size to succeed in business. Ohio needs to be a state with safe and strong communities, thriving businesses that allow for generational prosperity, and governmental rules and regulations that don’t impede the ability to start, grow or transition business ventures.

On Jan. 1, 2017, we officially opened our doors for business. Within the first few weeks, we held our inaugural board meeting with founding board members Brian Hicks, Tom Zaino, Tim Snyder, Frank Carrino and Walt Davis. More important, we also held a dynamic brainstorming session to come up with a list of potential projects or programs to tackle in the next few years.

In an effort to hear directly from business leaders, we launched our first project, Prosperity Pulse, a quarterly survey questioning the economic health of companies across the state. The feedback we received, and will receive in the future, is imperative to the success of the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation. Making decisions about the type of research needed to help the economic well-being of Ohio flourish is almost a fool’s errand without the input and data that we receive from you — our business leaders. Your voice is what we need to properly provide relevant, useful and trusted information to you, policymakers and future investors in the state of Ohio.

The first quarter results of Prosperity Pulse revealed a few eye-opening facts.

1. Less than half of Ohio business leaders are concerned with data security.

This is an interesting finding. If your business were to be broken into and your inventory stolen, you would immediately call the police. Most companies in Ohio have preventive measures to stop a robbery, for example an alarm system, deadbolts and even security guards. Your customer, client or employee data is just as, if not more, valuable than your inventory. There are preventive measures that you can take to avoid a data breach. Resources and information are available everywhere — including within the membership of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Also, the Ohio Attorney General’s office created the Ohio Cyber Initiative to assist businesses in Ohio with identity theft, cyber security and data privacy.

2. The majority of Ohio business leaders are satisfied with their current employees’ productivity but worried about their future workforce.

Without further probing, we are not able to explain why you are worried about your future workforce. Therefore, in quarters 2 and 3 surveys, we will be asking you to tell us specifically what worries you about attracting/hiring qualified employees. We want to be able to help find a solution and relieve your concerns about the future workforce.

How can you help the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation help you?

• Complete the survey. No doubt you are bombarded with surveys. However, this survey is not a customer satisfaction survey and won’t determine the future of any employee. Our survey is not self-serving but stakeholder serving. We want to help your business thrive.

• Consider a charitable contribution. We are a 501(c)(3) organization, and your gifts are tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

• Correspond with us by submitting project and topic ideas to research@ohiochamber.com.

With the first 100 days under our belt, we look forward to the next 265 days of serving you in 2017. To learn more about us, visit www.ohiochamberfoundation.com. If you would like to participate in the survey, or have any questions or comments, please connect with us via email at research@ohiochamber.com, phone (614) 629-0921, Twitter @GCCResearch, Facebook GCCResearch or mail 290 East Town St., Columbus, OH 43215.

As an employer, you are acutely aware of the so-called “skills gap” Ohio is facing. The Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation is consistently told by employers across the state that: 1) employers are unable to find the skilled workers they need, and 2) candidates lack the soft skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. From these statewide discussions, a number of initiatives have arisen to address these challenges, including Ohio’s In-Demand Jobs List.

The In-Demand Jobs List represents the needs of Ohio’s primary driving industries and guides workforce and education efforts across the state to ensure that employer needs are being met with a skilled and productive workforce.

The Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation first partnered with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in 2014 to develop a list of the state’s most in-demand occupations. The In-Demand Jobs List combines data from many sources — including responses from a survey sent to over 2,000 employers in Ohio, Ohio Labor Market Information, jobs posted on OhioMeansJobs.com and regional forecasts from JobsOhio’s targeted industries — to capture statewide hiring needs.

Using a combination of this data, we compiled a list of Ohio’s most in-demand occupations. Recently, the Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation sent out a second round of employer surveys. On July 1, 2017, the list was updated to reflect the newly forecasted occupations, and the survey portal will remain open indefinitely to continue to capture employer needs.

To ensure that the state is adequately meeting the needs of business, we encourage you to review the new version of the list and respond to the survey if you have not yet done so. To gain access to the survey, please email forecasting@governor.ohio.gov with your name and contact information.

To qualify as in-demand, an occupation will typically meet the following criteria:

• Pay greater than or equal to $13.47 per hour and

• Have greater than or equal to $30 projected annual openings or

• Have projected annual growth of 50 or more openings

Takeaways from the In-Demand Jobs List include:

• 37% of In-Demand Occupations require a high school diploma or equivalent.

• 43% require a post-secondary degree or certificate.

• 90% of the occupations from the prior (2014) list are on the new 2017 list.

• 23% of all projected annual openings fall within “Medical and Health Care.”

• 58% of all projected annual openings fall within Office & Administrative, Management, Health Care Practitioners, Support, Technical and Production.

The full list of In-Demand Occupations can be found at http://omj.ohio.gov/OMJResources/In-DemandOccupations.htm.

The Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation is committed to identifying the needs of business, connecting businesses with educators and individuals and aligning training to meet the needs of businesses.

Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation Inc.

OUR FIRST 100 DAYS

By Katie M. Koglman, Executive Director

OhioVatters
OSH RECORDKEEPING REGULATION

It’s not just about recording workplace injuries

Enforcement of the new Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordkeeping regulation began on Dec. 1, 2017. Without mentioning them in the rule itself, the comments accompanying the rule criticize, and attempt to outlaw (1) mandatory post-accident drug testing; (2) employer incentive programs that provide significant financial incentives toindividual employees or groups of employees who work safely and do not sustain injuries; and (3) employer policies requiring the immediate reporting of injuries.

While there are several pending legal challenges to the new recordkeeping regulation, this does not change the fact that the regulation is currently in effect. Employers can and will contest the NLRB under this regulation. However, it is noted that, according to OSHA’s website, it is not at this time accepting electronic submission of injury and illness logs that were required to be filed by July 1, 2017.

The regulation used by OSHA is entitled “Employee Involvement,” 29 CFR Section 1904.35. The regulation itself does not mention employee safety incentive programs, mandatory post-accident drug and alcohol testing programs, or rules regarding the immediate reporting of injuries. Period. It simply states that:

• (a) You must inform each employee of how he or she is to report a work-related injury or illness to you.
• (b) (1) You must establish a reasonable procedure for employees to report work-related injuries and illnesses promptly and accurately. A procedure is not reasonable if it would cause an employee to accurately reporting a workplace injury or illness... [Emphasis added].

This section of the rule concludes by requiring employers to inform employees that they have the right to report their injuries, and that they cannot be discharged or discriminated against for reporting injuries. For the first time, then, an OSHA compliance officer can cite an employer for allegedly deterring reporting of work-related injuries and illnesses, and thus not having a reasonable procedure. 

For the most part, however, OSHA’s position in the rule on drug and alcohol testing is that conditioning a benefit on drug testing is not to be used by the employer as a form of discipline against employees who report an injury, but may be used as a tool to evaluate root causes of workplace injuries in appropriate circumstances. Further, OSHA specifically states that drug testing an employee whose injury could not possibly have been caused by drug use would be a violation under the standard. The examples

used by OSHA are representative strain injuries or bee stings.

• Discipline. The standard prohibits disciplining employees simply because they report a work-related injury or illness. OSHA’s new standards will be considered by the employer if the employee’s discipline was not reasonable under the rule.

With regard to workplace rules on reporting injuries, OSHA will consider whether the employer had a legitimate business reason for the discipline. OSHA will consider the following factors: 1) reasonableness of the rule; 2) did the employee have a reasonable basis for deviation from the rule; 3) does the employer have substantial interest in the rule and its enforcement; 4) discipline appears proportionate to the employer’s interest in the rule.

Safely incentive programs. OSHA states that withholding a bonus, award, or other substantial award, simply because of a reported injury, would be a violation, regardless of whether such adverse action is taken pursuant to an incentive program. OSHA does state that conditioning a benefit on legitimate safety rules or participation in safety-related activities would not be a violation.

This interpretation of the regulation proposed by OSHA would not doubt create questions among management personnel as to how they should move forward with revising and/or updating their policies. OSHA compliance officers can now ask to review those policies during an inspection, which may lead to violations of this recordkeeping regulation. As OSHA has increased its penalties, as of Jan. 13, 2017, up to $126,749 for serious or other-than-serious injuries and up to $1,186,654 for repeat or willful violations, it is important that companies review their policies now.
WHO’S RUNNING FOR STATEWIDE OFFICES?

With Gov. John Kasich signing his fourth and final budget, members of the Ohio General Assembly will have a two-week break to travel to their districts for county fair season. They’ll be back in the fall for deliberations on legislation that will undoubtedly have great implications on our state’s business climate. Following the fall session, the legislature will break again for the winter holiday season, which brings us into the 2018 election year.

With the signing of the budget, Kasich is effectively a lame duck. There is no question that the governor will be working diligently to cement his legacy during his remaining 16 months in office. Kasich’s impending departure may have top billing, but in January 2019, Ohio will have four new statewide elected officials: two new justices on the Supreme Court and a new speaker of the House in the General Assembly. In addition, on the federal level, Sen. Sherrod Brown stands for re-election in a 2017 rematch with Treasurer of State, Jeff Yost.

Below is a list of who is in, and who is speculating on a run for a statewide office (as of June 26, 2017). Be sure to follow along on ohiochamber.com for a real-time list updating you on the candidates’ statuses.

REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY

Former U.S. Attorney General Mike DeGroat* Secretary of State, Jon Husted* 

U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci*

DEMOCRATIC SECRETARY OF STATE PRIMARY

Former mayor of Cincinnati and Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley*

Former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Mike Donnelly

DEMOCRATIC OHIO SUPREME COURT PRIMARY

Appellate Judge Mary DeGenaro

Appellate Judge Craig Baldwin

Appellate Judge Matthew McFarland

Appellate Judge Colleen O’Toole

DEMOCRATIC ATTORNEY GENERAL PRIMARY

Former Attorney General Rich Cordray

Former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton*

State Rep. Robert Sprague

REPUBLICAN CHIEF JUDGE PRIMARY

Common Pleas Judge John O’Donnell

Appellate Judge Cynthia Rice

REPUBLICAN AUDITOR OF STATE PRIMARY

State Rep. Keith Faber

REPUBLICAN TREASURER OF STATE PRIMARY

Franklin County Treasurer Clarence Mingo

State Rep. Robert Sprague

REPUBLICAN TREASURER OF STATE PRIMARY

Former Cincinnati mayoral candidate Bob Richardson*

REPUBLICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL PRIMARY

State Auditor Dave Yost*

REPUBLICAN STATE TREASURER PRIMARY

State Rep. Steve Dettelbach

REPUBLICAN SECRETARY OF STATE PRIMARY

State Sen. Frank LaRose

State Rep. Dorothy Pelanda

DEMOCRATIC SECRETARY OF STATE PRIMARY

State Rep. Kathleen Clyde*

*Indicates they have officially announced

BASIC FEDERAL LABOR LAW FOR NONUNION EMPLOYERS

over workers who are otherwise subject to contractual arrangements, he be hands off as possible and clearly define the responsibilities and authority of both entities in writing.

Class action waivers in arbitration agreements. One important issue for employers is the treatment of employee arbitrations and the rights of employers’ ability to require employees to waive their right to bring class or collective actions. In May 2017, the NLRB took up a case involving a condition of employment that required employees to waive the right to bring a class or collective action in any forum because it restricted the right to engage in protected concerted activity by implying that, if the waiver was not signed, the employee would be fired or not hired. Since then, federal appellate courts have issued split decisions on this issue. In June 2017, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit — the binding federal appellate jurisdiction for Ohio — ruled against the employer, which will be resolved during the 2017 term.

The United States Supreme Court recently agreed to hear a series of cases to decide whether the NLRB’s interpretation of joint employer is correct, which will be resolved during the October 2017 term. In the meantime, employers looking to proceed cautiously should have a judicial forum open for class and collective claims, such as allowing employees to opt out of an otherwise mandatory class action waiver without fear of retaliation.

No-recording policies. In 2015, the NLRB held that a policy barring photographs and audio or video recording in the workplace, as well as the posting of photographs and recordings on social media, is protected if employers are acting in concert for their mutual aid and protection and no overriding employer interest is present. In other words, an employer may not lawfully adopt a rule prohibiting recording if employees are acting in concert with one another for mutual aid and protection and the employer cannot demonstrate an overriding business interest. Moving forward, employers should carefully review and revise no-recording policies to ensure they are narrowly tailored to protect privacy and other business concerns, confirm that they clearly explain why the restrictions are necessary and specify that they are not intended to infringe on rights to engage in protected concerted activity.

At-will handbook disclosures. In its relatively controversial stance, the NLRB has taken the position that certain disclosures in employee handbooks concerning at-will nature of employment may violate the LMRA. Most handbooks indicate that employment is “at-will.” The NLRB’s position is that a handbook that indicates employment is “at-will” likely cannot change interferes with employees’ rights to collectively bargain. Therefore, at-will statements in handbooks and policies must be carefully written to ensure they properly state that employment is at-will and that the at-will status can only be changed under certain conditions, such as a written agreement from an officer.

Social media policies. Social media handbooks and tweets are the new “workplace water coolers,” and the NLRB’s heightened interest in this area requires employers’ attention. Not only must employers balance privacy concerns when drafting social media policies, they must also avoid suppressing protected concerted activities.

The NLRB struck down a catch-all social media policy that barred posts that “damage the company, defame any individual or damage any person’s reputation or violate the policies,”

2017 POLICY CONFERENCE AT SALT FORK

Since 1989, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce has been hosting the Policy Conference at Salt Fork, commonly referred to by our veteran attendees as just “Salt Fork.” It is a nationally recognized, one-of-a-kind public policy networking event held in off-election years, the goal is to bring together members of the Ohio General Assembly with public affairs professionals in a relaxed setting, rather than under the Ohio Statehouse dome, to discuss issues that are being debated on Capitol Square. This year’s conference is Sept. 6-8 at Salt Fork State Park in Guernsey County.

While the full agenda is still in the planning stages, we are excited to announce that our opening night speaker is J.D. Vance, New York Times best-selling author of “Hillbilly Elegy.” Vance grew up in Middlefield, Ohio, and “Hillbilly Elegy” serves as a memoir of his life growing up in Appalachia and the struggles he and his family endured. Having recently relocated to Columbus after working for a venture capital firm in California, Vance will speak about what his family taught him and his vision for the future. Other speakers will be announced soon.

Past attendees attest to the fact that relationships made and issues discussed at Salt Fork make a lasting impression. Legislators and public policy professionals who attend Salt Fork rave about its importance, especially now when legislators are term limited. Working together, forging good public policies for our state and stopping to take the time to get to know each other make the two days away from the office or Statehouse well worth it.

The program begins Wednesday, Sept. 6, with dinner and a program at noon. Attendees have time to acclimate and can take in a practice round of golf, some balls on the tennis court or just enjoy one of Ohio’s largest state parks. We will have a welcome reception at 6 p.m., with dinner and a program to follow, capped off by several hospitality suites.

On Thursday, Sept. 7, our day begins with a group breakfast, followed by morning policy sessions. Afternoon activities include a round of golf, tennis tournament, a tour or leisure time. At 6:30 p.m., we will have an evening reception, followed by dinner, an evening program (featuring Ohio Chamber members as well as members of the Ohio General Assembly) and the final night of hospitality suites.

On Friday, Sept. 8, we will start our day with a group breakfast, followed by morning policy sessions. The program begins at 9 a.m.

No other public policy event in our state has the positive impact that this one has. Attendees return home with a greater understanding of legislative processes and better relationships with Ohio’s lawmakers. Registration information is available on our website at www.ohiochamber.com or you can contact Ashley Brown at (614) 229-4201 or abrown@ohiochamber.com.

Continued from page 5
DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH THE OHIO CHAMBER

In listening to our members, one of the most common concerns we hear across the board is the rising cost of health care. Renewal rates can be disheartening, to say the least. Because some have sought ways to lower those costs. We have been diligently working on a program, especially for you members. We are very excited to announce our new standalone dental and vision plans for small businesses from Delta Dental and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield’s Blue Vision.

As many of our small business owners know, dental and vision plans are crucial. The Ohio Chamber survey found that over 49 employees can be incredibly expensive, making it nearly impossible to keep health care costs manageable. Even if these plans are in the budget, many times they are subpar compared to those offered by larger groups. These Ohio Chamber member-exclusive plans offer small businesses rates that were once only available to larger groups. These Ohio Chamber member-exclusive plans offer small businesses rates that were once only available to larger groups.

Delta Dental’s plans range from basic diagnostic and preventive service with no copays for in-network offices to 50 percent coverage for prosthetic services. Anthem’s Blue Vision plans range from routine eye exams with $10 copays to $100 allows for eyeglasses. As well, these plans cover the gamut of dental and vision services.

The best news is, if you already have a Delta Dental or Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield’s Blue Vision plan, you can still take advantage of these savings.

By combining Delta Dental and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield’s Blue Vision with our health insurance products, we are seeing major cost savings. In fact, with the savings of our health plans (an average of 15 percent), small businesses can now afford to add dental and vision coverage and still save money.

We at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce have the utmost confidence we can help your business decrease health care costs while keeping your employees happy with choices that help in health care coverage. If you have questions or would like a risk-free quote, contact Laz Pescajo, project manager for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. (614) 629-0242 or lpescajo@ohiochamber.com.
Building relationships is an important part of being an effective advocate in any walk of life, but it’s especially true in politics. This is not because lawmakers support or oppose legislation based solely on friendships, but because credibility and trust are the foundation for successfully educating elected officials on public policy positions. This is especially true in a time of term limits.

Members of the Ohio General Assembly have eight short years to serve their constituents (even though some switch back and forth between the House and Senate). So they must become familiar with the public policy process and a multitude of complex issues in a fairly short time. Finding knowledgeable individuals on whom they can rely is fundamental to their success.

There are many ways people can build relationships with their elected officials. The real-world knowledge business leaders possess is a valuable commodity in the legislative process. Communications, whether in writing or in person, about how proposed legislation will affect a business’s bottom line is another good way to see and be seen. Commitment to a candidate’s successful election or re-election begins a transition from knowledgeable constituent to loyal supporter. And a loyal supporter who has valuable information about an important public policy issue is a credible, trustworthy and influential source.

Another way to get to know members of the House and Senate is to attend. It will be an experience you will never forget, and you’ll return with a greater understanding of the public policy process, better relationships that can’t materialize in a vacuum. This year, make a commitment to yourself to develop influential relationships by attending. It will be an experience you will never forget, and you’ll return with a greater understanding of the public policy process, better relationships with Ohio lawmakers and a true sense of accomplishment.

SAVE THE DATE: SEPT. 6-8, 2017

POTENTIAL CONFERENCE AT SALTFORK

Wednesday night speaker: J.D. Vance, author of New York Times bestseller “Hillbilly Elegy”.

Registration is available now at www.ohiochamber.com