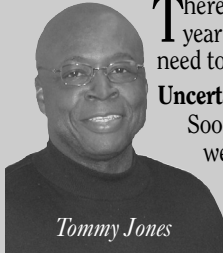




From the Assembly President

Dear brothers and sisters:



Tommy Jones

There's a lot on the horizon and, although last year was a good year, there's still a lot we need to focus on.

Uncertainty surrounds agency

Soon we'll have a new boss and, although we are eager to work with the new administration, we know there are many obstacles to face including budget shortfalls and various issues left over from the previous administration.

On top of that, state merit staff who offer top notch employment services continue to be threatened by federal revisions that could lead to privatization (See *Legislative Alert right*). The Assembly is doing everything it can to demonstrate the importance of civil service employees doing this work, and we continue to work directly with ODJFS and with AFSCME in Washington.

Additionally, the proposed Office of Medicaid has created quite a buzz of uncertainty (See *Legislative Alert right*). ODJFS members know firsthand the effect an organizational transition can have. That's why we have been working incessantly to see that our members and their customers are im-

See *president back page*

Transition

Union offers input to new administration

As a direct result of having a labor-friendly governor elected in November, OCSEA has been able to give input to agency transition teams as the Strickland Administration prepares to take over.

Two transition teams dealt with issues pertaining to ODJFS specifically. OCSEA

was able to offer input to both.

One team, the ODJFS transition team, was responsible for giving input on ODJFS as a whole – what's working and what's not. Discussions brought about several common themes including issues with internal communication, customer service availability, and IT functions.



Governor-elect Ted Strickland with wife Francis makes his acceptance speech Election Night.

OCSEA offered input on labor/management relationships, agency budget concerns, how former policies have affected state services,

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Workforce Policy Board approves new job matching system

The Governor's Workforce Policy Board passed a motion authorizing negotiations to begin with Monster.com to build a job matching system for Ohio and gives Gov. Taft the authority to sign off on the deal on his way out the door.

The Board had hoped the state's current job matching system, SCOTI, would meet their job matching goals, but, unfortunately, they say that it does not.

OCSEA and two other board members, including former ODJFS Director Bar-

"The need for an online system that employers value is very important but given similar multi-million dollar mistakes made in the past, the state shouldn't rush into anything."

~ Bruce Wyngaard, OCSEA

See *job matching back page*

Legislative Alert

Federal revisions threaten employment service staff

As one of its final actions of 2006, the U.S. Department of Labor published proposed revisions of the federal regulations governing the U.S. Employment Service and the Workforce Investment Act, and with that came yet another round of threats to Ohio's Wagner-Peyser staff – the federally mandated civil service employment service providers.

Specifically, the draft rules would eliminate the federal requirement that Wagner-Peyser employment service staff be state civil service workers. The revision would require that all employment service functions be provided in local One-Stops centers and would give governors the option of retaining state staff or handing over funding to One-Stops, which are often run by private contractors.

The draft regulations will not go into effect until after stakeholders have had a chance to provide input. The comment period ends Feb. 20.

"This comes at an odd time, especially considering the now Democratic-led Congress. This shows how truly persistent DOL is to make these revisions," said AFSCME legislative liaison Nanine Meikljohn.

OCSEA is currently working with AFSCME in Washington to explain the value of retaining state staff, particularly, to members of Congress.

"Ohio's Wagner-Peyser staff know this work like the back of their hands. It would be quite a debacle if this work is handed over to the private sector," said ODJFS Assembly President Tommy Jones.

Go to www.ocsea.org/jfs for more information and updates. *

Office of Medicaid could be a reality

On Dec. 31, the Medicaid Administrative Study Council issued a report to Gov. Taft, the President of the Ohio Senate and the Speaker of the Ohio House recommending the creation of the Office of Medicaid.

The report recommends the transition begin as quickly as possible, however, the governor and General Assembly must approve the measure. A small transition team is also recommended.

The report recommends ODOM be up and running by July 2007. The new agency would require 750 employees, 600 from ODJFS.

OCSEA understands the importance of controlling unnecessary costs and assuring Ohioans get the medical services they deserve. However the union has some reservations about rushing too quickly with these recom-

mendations for the following reasons:

- ODJFS is no stranger to organizational changes and the problems they bring. The 2000 OBES/ODHS merger resulted in lost services and millions of wasted dollars.
- It costs money to create a new agency. To pay for it, funds will likely have to be reduced elsewhere. Privateers, with their phony promises of savings, may try to exploit this problem.

"Some new Medicaid agency will probably be created, but for now, things are in limbo while the new administration transitions," said ODJFS Assembly leader Debra King.

In the interim, OCSEA is organizing workplace meetings to discuss the issue. *

New ODJFS director appointed

Helen Jones-Kelley was recently appointed by the Strickland Administration to serve as director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and will oversee the large agency once the new governor takes office.

As the former director of the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services, she ran the county's Public Assistance, Child Protection, Child Support Enforcement



Helen Jones-Kelley, JD

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OHIO CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION AFSCME LOCAL 11 AFL-CIO

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From president front page

pacted as little as possible in the event this new agency is created.

Assembly moving forward in 2007

In other business, the six labor/management districts have been set to comply with contract jurisdictions. The regional L/M committees have been meeting regularly and are in the process of being trained by the Columbus Area Labor Management Committee to focus on interest-based problem solving and building a more cooperative L/M committee.

A statewide steward/manager training will take place in April at the Air Center in Columbus and will include information on grievance filing, the new "courtesy steward" system (when a steward represents a member in another chapter), and Art. 17 (Promotions, Transfers, Demotions and Relocations). A statewide stewards committee continues to meet to discuss the training and will make information available in the coming months.

In Solidarity,
Tommy Jones,
ODJFS Assembly president

From transition front page

what strategies should be used to improve state government and how to plan for the future to Turn Around Ohio.

A second team on workforce policy focused on concerns regarding state workforce development programs. The team brought up concerns with employment services law (Wagner-Pesyer) and believes improvements should be made about how the law is administered. The union continues to firmly advocate the importance of state civil service employees performing this work.

Both teams submitted recommendations to the new administration. It is uncertain at this time how those recommendations will be incorporated. *



In the days leading up to the election of Ted Strickland as governor, ODJFS union members came out to support him and other labor-friendly candidates.

(Above) Olga Petricovic (Chap. 4300) participates in the ODJFS Assembly-sponsored phonebank.

(Right) Cindy Bobbitt (Chap. 2320) shows off her Strickland bumper sticker and t-shirt.

Agreement clarifies CSR non-VDT time

An agreement reached between OCSEA and ODJFS clarifies a contractual provision that requires management to give Customer Service Representatives who work on video display terminals 15 minutes of non-VDT time for every 2 hours of VDT time.

The agreement clarifies that non-VDT time is not a break. It also reduces a lot of the red tape required get non-VDT time.

Additionally, during non-VDT time, management is required to have CSRs perform duties appropriate to their classification. However, ODJFS can suspend non-VDT time in the event that customer service levels fall below the agency's 80 percent standard.

A non-VDT training for local operations stewards and managers will be held on Feb. 13 at the Air Center in Columbus. *

From job matching front page

bara Riley, voted against the resolution. OCSEA felt the motion could potentially result in a rushed decision and gives little thought to cost of transitioning from one system to another and the impact that could have.

The resolution states that an "undetermined allocation" would be set aside.

"This has the potential to be a huge financial burden. Gov. Taft isn't going to have to live with this decision, the next Governor is," said Bruce Wyngaard, OCSEA's representative on the board.

Additionally, it's not clear how this will impact the current system and where one system would end and the other would begin. SCOTI was designed to meet the compliance and reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Labor and the union is not certain how or if these requirements will be met under the monster.com system.

"The need for an online system that employers value is very important but given similar multi-million dollar mistakes made in the past, the state shouldn't rush into anything," said Wyngaard. *



ODJFS ASSEMBLY

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If you do not know who your staff representative is or do not know how to contact them, call Member Customer Service.

ODJFS ASSEMBLY

**FEB 3, APRIL 7, JUNE 2,
AUG 4, OCT 10 & DEC 1
10 A.M.**

**OCSEA UNION HALL, 390
WORTHINGTON RD., WESTERVILLE**

From director front page

and Workforce Development Programs. She oversaw a \$120 million budget and over 800 staff. In addition, she served on the county's Family and Children First Council.

Jones-Kelley was formerly the Executive Director of Montgomery County Children Services until her appointment by the Board of County Commissioners to merge that agency with the Montgomery County JFS.

Prior to her work with Children Services, Jones-Kelley served as a Magistrate and Assistant Legal Director for Montgomery County Juvenile Court. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Dayton School of Law and is a licensed attorney.

OCSEA is looking forward to working closely with the new director and is scheduled to meet with her to discuss several important issues including the maintenance of Wagner-Pesyer civil service staff and the proposed Office of Medicaid. *