



This Week in Lansing

MHSA • Muchmore Harrington Smalley & Associates, LLC

Highlights of the Latest Major Legislative, Administrative and Regulatory Activity in the State Capitol

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SPEAKER FORMS MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE – *House Speaker Tom Leonard* (R-DeWitt Twp) announced Monday the creation of the ***CARES (Community, Access, Resources, Education and Safety) Task Force***, a step in improving the lives of those that suffer from mental health challenges in the state. *Mr. Leonard* named ***Representatives Klint Kesto*** (R-Commerce Twp) and ***Hank Vaupel*** (R-Handy Twp) as co-chairs of the bi-partisan task force, both currently chairs of two ***House Committees: Law and Justice*** and ***Health Policy***, respectively.

Commenting on the formation of the ***Task Force***, *Mr. Vaupel* stated, “We’re taking a comprehensive approach to address challenges vulnerable people face each and every day...We want to hear from anyone who struggles to succeed due to inadequate access to mental health care or confusing regulations.” Other members of ***CARES*** include the following ***House*** members:

- ***Representative Edward Canfield*** (R-Sebewaing)
- ***Representative Dave Pagel*** (R-Berrien Springs)
- ***Representative Daire Rendon*** (R-Lake City)
- ***Representative Jason Wentworth*** (R-Clare)
- ***Representative Mary Whiteford*** (R-Casco Twp)
- ***Representative Robert Wittenberg*** (D-Oak Park)
- ***Representative Sylvia Santana*** (D-Detroit)
- ***Representative Fred Durhal III*** (D-Detroit)
- ***Representative Vanessa Guerra*** (D-Saginaw)
- ***Representative Abdullah Hammoud*** (D-Dearborn)
- ***Representative Robert Kosowski*** (D-Westland)
- ***Representative David LaGrand*** (D-Grand Rapids)

Public hearings will be held beginning in July and August, with members also planning to tour facilities to further educate themselves on current programs and services available.

Mr. Kesto noted that the ***Task Force*** will do its best to make suggested reforms and learn more about those affected, stating, “Holding meetings and visiting families all across Michigan will allow us to gather feedback on a wide variety of topics related to mental health care, rehabilitation programs and vocational training.”

GOVERNOR SIGNS 2017-18 BUDGET – Late last week, ***Governor Rick Snyder*** signed the final budget bills for ***Fiscal Year 2017-18*** into law (***House Bills 4313*** and ***4323***), with a relatively low number of line items vetoed. The ***FY 2017-18*** budget overall totaled roughly \$57 billion, with highlights including:

- Business attraction and community revitalization: \$115.5 million
- Foundation allowance: \$60-\$120 per pupil increase
- At-risk youth academic achievement improvement: \$120 million
- College student financial aid: \$16.3 million
- **Michigan State Police** trooper recruit school expected to graduate 150 new troopers
- **Healthy Michigan Program** (expanded **Medicaid** coverage): \$4.1 billion (mostly federal monies)
- **Budget Stabilization Fund**: \$150 million (bringing the total to \$886 million in **Fiscal Year 2018**)

Commenting on the passage and signature of the budget, **Governor Snyder** applauded the work between legislators and the **Executive Office**, stating, “I am proud to say we can again celebrate our success in getting the budget signed well ahead of the new fiscal year. With significant investments in healthcare, education, public safety, infrastructure, natural resources, and our economy, this budget maintains our long-standing commitment to fiscal responsibility while making critical investments that will continue moving Michigan forward.”

COMMISSION WOULD DRAW DISTRICT LINES – Under the proposed constitutional amendment currently being reviewed by the **State Bureau of Elections**, an independent commission would draw district lines, allowing for a more citizen approved map. The group behind the proposal, **Voters Not Politicians**, submitted the language roughly 20 days ago to the **Board of State Canvassers** for approval. To ensure the districts drawn by the commission would be bipartisan and unbiased, members of the commission could not:

- Have been a candidate or an elected official to a “partisan” federal, state or local office in the previous six years
- Have been convicted of a felony in the previous 10 years
- Have been an officer, precinct delegate or leadership member for national, state or local political party in the previous six years
- Be an employee of the **Legislature** or a state elected official; a lobbyist; employee of lobbyists; unclassified state employees
- Have been a consultant or employee of a federal, state or local elected official, or candidate, or **Political Action Committee (PAC)** (or similar organization)
- Be related by “two or fewer degrees of consanguinity or by three or fewer degrees of affinity” to any of the aforementioned persons

Once appointed, a commissioner would not be able to hold a partisan elected office, whether state or local, for five years following.

The commissioners would be randomly selected via the **Secretary of State (SOS)**, which would provide applications as well as send them to 10,000 registered voters at random throughout the state. Until 60 people from each major political party have applied, the **SOS** would be required to provide and send out the applications, where those interested would be required to indicate their party affiliation (if any). For those not affiliated with any party, the **SOS** would need to receive 80 applications. The **Legislative Quadrant** would then be allowed to eliminate up to 20 people from the **SOS** pool, five eliminations per legislator. Following that process, the **SOS** would then select 13 commissioners: 4 applicants from each major political party and 5 from the non-affiliated applicants.

As for the funding of the commission, legislators would be mandated to provide funds via the **General Fund** totaling nothing less than 25 percent of the **SOS** budget and at least equal to 25 percent of the **Governor’s** salary. Ten public hearings must be held before any drafting of the maps is conducted, and any language must be published for public comment for 45 days before it is voted on. As for the drawing of

the districts, the maps cannot bear particular advantage to an incumbent or a certain party, but rather must “reflect the state’s diverse population and communities of interest”.

The final version of any proposed drawings would then need to be approved by a majority of the commission, including two members of each major political party and two from the non-affiliates. Any changes to the commission’s language would be allowed to be made or reviewed via the *Michigan Supreme Court*, however, no *Legislative* or *Executive Office* oversight will be allowed.

ELECTIONS

- **Democratic Congressional** candidates *Haley Stevens* and *Matthew Morgan* have raised \$323,039 and \$115,578 respectively since entering the race last month for the seats currently held by *U.S. Representative David Trott* (R-Birmingham) and *U.S. Representative Jack Bergman* (R-Watersmeet)
- **Representatives Lana Theis** (R-Brighton) and **Holly Hughes** (R-Montague) announced their plans to run for *Senate Districts 22* and *34* respectively, currently held by term-limited *Senators Joe Hune* (R-Fowlerville) and *Goeff Hansen* (R-Hart)
- **Geoffrey Fieger** announced last week the creation of a **Political Action Committee (PAC)**, noting he is considering another run for political office
- **John James**, a **Detroit** business executive (**James Group International Company**) and **Republican**, announced the creation of an exploratory committee for his possible *U.S. Senate* candidacy
- **Greg Talberg**, **Williamston School Board President** and **Democrat**, announced his campaign for the *67th House District* seat, currently held by term-limited *Representative Tom Cochran* (D-Mason)
- **Attorney Mark Bernstein** announced he will not be running for **Governor** in 2018, instead opting to endorse current **Democratic** candidate and former *Senate Minority Leader Gretchen Whitmer*
- **Dr. Matt Longjohn**, former **National Health Officer** for the **YMCA**, declared his candidacy for the *6th U.S. Congressional District*, currently held by *U.S. Representative Fred Upton* (R-St. Joseph)
- Former **Representative Gretchen Driskell** announced on Wednesday her campaign for the *7th U.S. House District*, currently held by **Republican U.S. Representative Tim Walberg**

ODDS & ENDS


- According to a study from the **Workers Compensation Research Institute**, changes to the state’s workers’ compensation laws have lessened the price gap between prescriptions charged by physicians and those charged by pharmacies, but have not changed the number of drugs prescribed
- **Representative John Reilly** (R-Oakland Twp) introduced **House Bills 4829-4834** on Wednesday, calling for the creation and clarification of citizen requirements for nursing scholarships, the **Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)**, competitive state scholarships, part-time independent student grant programs, work-study programs, and the **Michigan Promise Grant**
- In terms of business competitiveness, **CNBC** has ranked Michigan as 11th in the country, moving the state up 30 spots on the list since 2007
- A public hearing on **Enbridge Energy’s Line 5 Pipeline** potential anchor installation (the group applied to install 22 anchors) will be held on Tuesday, July 25 in **St. Ignace** at the **Little Bear East Arena and Community Center**
- During a joint press call on Monday, **House** and **Senate Democrats** introduced their “**Michigan Jobs First**” plan in the form of a four-bill package that would call for increased bidding opportunities for Michigan businesses
- According to a statement from the **U.S. Department of Education**, Michigan was noted as “Needs

Assistance” for 2016 in regard to its special education services; mostly faulted for special education students’ performance on the *National Assessment for Educational Progress*

- The *Michigan Court of Appeals* ruled on Tuesday that the plaintiffs seeking to recover damages from the state (due to the *Unemployment Insurance Agency* wrongfully accusing them of fraud) filed their lawsuit too late; after the expiration of the six-month statute of limitations
- According to a [report](#) issued Tuesday via the *Responsible Retirement Reform for Local Government Task Force*, the state needs to create an oversight board as well as increase monitoring and transparency in order to ensure local government finances are stable
- A report recently released by the *Auditor General* stated that Michigan should improve current background check processes for those developing and maintaining the state’s information technology systems, and also suggested legislation be passed allowing for fingerprint checks
- According to the *House Fiscal Agency’s* revenue update, *General Fund* revenue for June 2017 are up approximately \$67 million above projections due to increased business tax collections
- The *Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)* announced updated mandates for foster and adoptive parents, calling for the requirement of firearms to be “stored in a locked metal or solid wood gun safe or (b) Trigger locked and stored without ammunition in a locked area”
- Michigan’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent in June of this year, the lowest since August 2000, according to the *Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB)*
- The *U.S. House Appropriations Committee* passed its *Fiscal Year 2018* budget on Tuesday, leaving in \$300 million for protection of the *Great Lakes* via the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative*, reversing the proposal to eliminate the funding in *President Donald Trump’s* budget recommendation
- The Michigan *Talent Investment Agency (TIA)* recently asked district courts in three counties to cancel 186 criminal bench warrants issued to residents who had been wrongfully accused of fraudulently obtaining unemployment benefits
- A “secret” project in *Durand* (known as “*Project Tim*”) set to cost between \$4.5 and \$5 billion has been outed as being a 24-million-square-foot steel mill, expected to create 800 jobs
- According to *U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos*, nationwide school of choice nor nationwide voucher mandates will be on her list of focus items during her term
- *Oakland County* has filed a suit in the *Court of Claims* against the *State*, claiming the creation of the *Michigan Indigent Defense Counsel Commission* is unconstitutional
- *President Donald Trump* announced the intended appointments of *Andrea Fischer Newman (University of Michigan Regent)* and *Vincent Vernuccio (Mackinac Center)* to the *Federal Service Impasses Panel*
- According to a report released by *Moody’s Investor Services*, the newly passed and signed teacher pension reformation in Michigan is rated “credit positive” for all involved “political subdivisions” as well as the state as a whole
- Several members of the *Pipeline Safety Advisory Board* released comments on the recently released draft report of alternatives to *Enbridge Energy’s Line 5* pipeline, stating the report was designed to support the company’s interests instead of the safety of the *Great Lakes*
- Former *Representative George Darany* will serve as an equitable services ombudsman in the *Michigan Department of Education (MDE)*, as confirmed by the *Department* on Thursday

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