

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF DECEMBER 10, 2018

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LAME DUCK IN FULL EFFECT

With Democrats soon to take over the offices of governor, attorney general and, secretary of state; Republicans in the state Legislature are moving quickly through as many bills as possible during the last days of the Lame Duck session, including passing bills to restrict the incoming Democrats and alter statewide ballot proposals.

As for restricting soon to be in control Democrats, both the Senate and House this week passed bills to restrict the executive branch and allow legislative lawsuits. Campaign finance and Nonprofit protection bills are through the Senate but not the House yet.

Although not pursuing a bill this week to ban growing Marijuana at home (which is legal after voters approved it in November) both Republican-led chambers did pass changes to the minimum wage and paid sick leave laws this week. The Senate also passed bills seeking changes to legislative redistricting and voting rights, while the House passed alterations to the ballot initiatives law.

Both Legislative chambers also quickly passed the Line 5 legislation and moved on to Gov. Rick Snyder who has already signed the bills which settles the proposal to build a tunnel to protect Line 5, and creates a governor-appointed authority to oversee it.

Look for a *Capitol News Update* wrap-up of Lame Duck next week.

SENATE SET TO VOTE ON LARGE CARNIVORE BREEDING

Bills to allow large carnivore breeding in Michigan will be up for a final vote in the Senate next week—making it legal to breed large carnivores in Michigan if passed, and setting high standards similar to federal regulations.

The bill will allow zoos to breed large carnivores, such as lions, tigers, and leopards, in the state instead of having to transfer them out of state. It also sets appropriate precautions and standards including adequate facilities, emergency protocols, controlled environmental conditions, breeding program participation, and more. In addition, the bill creates the Large Carnivore Breeding Advisory Committee which would be chaired by the state veterinarian.

SENATE PASSES PET SHOP REGULATIONS

Legislation that strengthens standards for pet shops in Michigan and stops local governments from banning the shops is headed to Governor Rick Snyder's desk after the passed the bills on Thursday.

Sponsored by Rep. Hank Vaupel (R-Fowlerville), HB 5916 and 5917 passed by a vote of 23-14, with all 11 Democrats and three Republicans voting no—including Sen. Patrick Colbeck (R- Canton Twp.), Sen. Rick Jones (R- Grand Ledge) and Sen. Tory Rocca (R- Sterling Heights).

The bills require that qualified pet shops can only sell dogs that come from a shelter, retailer, or qualified breeders that are U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) certified.

They also prevent local governments from banning retail pet sales outright, if the shops comply with state law.

In addition, the legislation also sets a minimum age when puppies can be placed for sale, and dogs to be vaccinated and micro-chipped, and guarantees all dogs have a certified health certificate from a licensed veterinarian.

BILL PAUSING DEER STERILIZATION, HEADS TO SNYDER'S DESK

The House voted on Wednesday to give final approval to freeze deer sterilization permits issued by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources until April 1, 2022.

HB 5321 67-42, passed by the House after it concurred with the Senate's changes, now goes to Gov. Snyder.

The bill allows the city of Ann Arbor, which is the only community currently with a permit to sterilize some of its deer, to continue its current permit which allows sterilizing up to 80 deer. As of November, however, the city had already sterilized 78 deer and recently approved another plan to use a mix of sterilizing and killing.

As part of the plan, the DNR will need to submit reports on the results of research from the Ann Arbor permit.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Triston Cole (R-Macelona), said the state's hunters support the legislation and hunting as the primary way to manage game in Michigan.

HOUSE PASSES LEGISLATION TO GRADE SCHOOLS

During a late-night/early-morning lame duck session, the House passed legislation to create an accountability system for Michigan's public schools—giving them A-F grades in five categories.

As passed, the Department of Education would be responsible for creating and implementing the grade-system, while a new five-member peer review panel appointed by the governor and legislative leaders would oversee and report on the system.

Changes on the House floor before the bill was passed mean that, instead of a single grade assigned to each school, there would be five separate letter grades for each school—in the areas of proficiency in math and English language arts, growth in math and English language arts, growth in English as a second Language proficiency, graduation rates, and academic performance compared to similar schools.

The bill passed with a vote of 56-53, with a few Republicans joining the Democrats to vote against it.

Opponents of the bill argued that it places emphasis on standardized testing, and wipes out the Department of Education's school transparency dashboard, which contains more detailed information on schools.

Proponents of the bill say that the changes make the bill more palatable to education groups and that the system would provide a more comprehensive, easy-to-understand review of schools.

The bill now goes on to the Senate for consideration.

MM&A BRIEFS

Retiring Ellen Jefferies to be replaced by Chris Harkins

Senate Fiscal Agency announced this week that its Director Ellen Jeffries will be retiring and will be succeeded by Chris Harkins. Harkins, currently senior policy advisor for government relations at Jackson National Life Insurance Company, has also been director of the Office of Health and Human Services and director of policy initiatives and government affairs in the State Budget Office, and served nine years for House and Senate staff.

Milliken Chief of Staff, UPI Journalist dies at 86

George Weeks, a well-known United Press International reporter and aide to former Michigan Gov. William G. Milliken, died last week at the age of 86. Weeks, from Traverse City, worked with Milliken for 14 years before returning to his successful journalism career.

Calendar of Important Events

Jan. 1 Inauguration of the 49th governor
Location: 12 p.m., East steps of the Capitol, Lansing