

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF JANUARY 18, 2021

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GOVERNOR GRETCHEN WHITMER PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Gov. Whitmer presented a proposed supplemental appropriation that adds \$575 million in state funds to about \$5 billion in federal coronavirus relief on Tuesday, with more specific bill language on Wednesday of this week detailing how recommended appropriations would be doled out to school districts.

For school districts, Whitmer's proposed fiscal year 2020-21 education supplemental would provide:

- Total federal spending of more than \$1.656 billion to K-12 schools for addressing the impact of COVID-19.
- \$157.35 million of the federal amount in addition to another \$300 million in state school aid revenues, will be disbursed to districts through a different formula than what is usually used for Title I federal funding, which typically is based on levels of poverty. The combined federal and state COVID-19 funds totaling \$457.35 million would be disbursed as follows:
 - \$10 million to intermediate school districts, half based on the number of special education pupils in the district and the other half disbursed on an equal per pupil basis with no ISD getting less than \$25,000
 - Half of the remaining \$447.35 million distributed to districts based on the number of special education pupils in each district in the 2020-21 school year
 - The other half distributed on an equal per pupil basis with no district receiving less than \$25,000
 - \$8.3 million would go toward the Department of Education for administration and oversight purposes.
 - In addition, Districts could use the funds for the same purposes permitted under the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, with unspent funding carrying into the 2021-22 fiscal year.

In the initial presentation, Whitmer also included the following:

- \$660 million in federal aid for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, aiding persons struggling to pay rent and utilities;
- \$575 million in federal aid to support coronavirus testing and tracing, and \$90 million in federal funds to administer, distribute and track vaccines; and
- \$2 billion in additional federal Food Assistance funds that will cover a 15 percent increase in those benefits as well as increased numbers of people using those benefits
- \$5 million to pay for the enforcement of a yet-to-be-implemented ban on weapons at the Capitol.

An additional \$225 million in a variety of business relief measures include:

- \$22 million so that businesses and residents unable to pay their summer 2020 property taxes can avoid interest and penalties if they pay by Feb. 26, 2021.
- \$125 million for a Michigan Mainstreet Initiative to help businesses survive the pandemic. \$25 million for businesses with nine or fewer employees to assist them through the pandemic
- \$75 million in additional grants to help businesses grow.

INDOOR DINING REOPENS FEB. 1

Due to COVID-19 infection and death rates are improving in the state, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced today that restaurants in Michigan will be able to reopen on Feb. 1 with restrictions. Indoor dining has been closed in the state since Nov. 18. The order runs through Feb. 21, 2021.

State-implemented restrictions will include:

- No more than 100 people or 25% capacity, whichever is smaller
- Indoor dining must be closed by 10 p.m.
- No more than 6 people to a table, with tables set at least six feet apart
- No mingling with other patrons outside your diner group or in common areas or other places, such as dance floors
- All restaurants must obtain contact information for every person who eats indoors. This is crucial for contact tracing in the event someone who ate at a restaurant gets COVID-19.
- If an employee contracts COVID-19 or shows symptoms at work, the venue must shut down until a deep cleaning is conducted.

In addition, concessions can restart at casinos, movie theaters, and stadiums.

Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, the state's chief medical executive, said that there are still risks, but the changes give residents a choice. "It does not mean it is 100% safe or that you should do it," she said.

ONLINE GAMING, SPORTS BETTING BEGINS TODAY

Nine operators in Michigan are allowed to launch online gaming and online sports betting at noon today. The Michigan Gaming Control Board announced the operators this week, including all three Detroit casinos and six tribal casinos.

Two of the three Detroit casinos, the MGM Grand Detroit and MotorCity Casino, are authorized for both online casino games and online sports betting, while Greektown Casino is authorized only for online sports betting.

The six tribal casinos that will be allowed to offer both online gaming and online sports betting are: The Bay Mills Indian Community, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Hannahville Indian Community, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

HOUSE SETS COMMITTEES FOR 2021-22 SESSION

The Michigan House of Representatives, and new Speaker of the House Jason Wentworth (R-Clare) announced committee assignments for the 2021-22 legislative session. Many of the committees maintained their chair from the 2019-20 term, however, a few of the major changes in committee leadership positions include:

- Rep. Bronna Kahle, chair, House Health Policy Committee
- Rep. Scott VanSingel replaces Rep. Matt Maddock as chair of the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee
- Rep. Maddock will now serve as the chair of the Joint Capital Outlay Subcommittee
- Rep. Mark Huizenga replaces VanSingel as chair of the Appropriations Higher Education and Community Colleges Subcommittee
- Rep. Pamela Hornberger will continue to chair the House Education
- Rep. Roger Hauck will chair the House Regulatory Reform.
- Rep. Steve Johnson, chair, House Oversight
- Rep. Graham Filler, chair of the House Judiciary
- Rep. Mike Mueller, chair, House Government Operations
- Rep. Joe Bellino, chair, House Energy
- Rep. Jack O'Malley, chair, House Transportation
- Rep. Jim Lilly, chair, on the new Rules and Competitiveness Committee
- Rep. Beth Griffin, chair, the Workforce, Trades and Talent Committee
- Rep. Thomas Albert, chair, Appropriations
- Rep. Mary Whiteford, vice-chair, Appropriations
- Rep. Joe Tate, minority vice chair, Appropriations
- Rep. Brad Paquette, chair, School Aid and Department of Education Subcommittee
- Rep. Bradley Slagh, chair, Corrections Subcommittee

"The selection of committees is one of the most important tasks of the Legislature. It sets the tone and helps mold the agenda for the session," House Speaker Wentworth said in a statement.

MM&A Briefs

Former legislator Shirley Johnson, 83, dies

Shirley Johnson, a former state legislator and trailblazer who served for nearly 26 years between 1980 and 2010, passed away last week.

Johnson served from 1999 to 2006 as the state senator in the 13th District, which includes Royal Oak. She served in the House of Representatives from 1981-98.

She is survived by sons Cliff Jr. and Garrett. They could not be reached for comment Thursday. She was predeceased by her husband, Cliff.

A friend of former Michigan Gov. John Engler, Johnson was known as a hard-working legislator who wouldn't shy away from big jobs or issues. She was the first woman in several of her appropriations positions, including as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Many of her staff have gone on to hold significant positions and remain involved in the Michigan legislative community.

U.S. Attorney Schneider Resigns

The U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, Matthew Schneider, submitted his resignation on Wednesday and has taken a position with the Honigman law firm.

Since U.S. attorneys are nominated for their positions by the president, it's typical for most U.S. attorneys to resign upon a change in the presidency, as they expect the new president will likely appoint someone new.

Saima Mohsin has been assigned to be the new U.S. Attorney for the office, pending Mr. Biden's nomination of a new U.S. attorney and confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Daunt to Replace Van Langevelde as State Canvasser Board Member

Tony Daunt has been selected by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to replace outgoing Republican Board of Canvassers member Aaron Langeveld.

The Michigan Republican Party choose not to renominate Langeveld for another four-year term after he was the only Republican on the board to vote to certify the November 2020 election results.

The governor picks the board member after each major political party nominates three candidates for the position.

Calendar of Important Events

- Feb. 3** **Sen. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 8 a.m., Lambert, 114 West Allegan St, Lansing, 8 a.m.
- Feb. 4** **Rep. Pamela Hornberger (R-Chesterfield) Fundraiser**
Lambert & Company, 114 West Allegan St., Lansing, 10:30 a.m.