

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF JUNE 21, 2021



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& ASSOCIATES

HOUSE PASSES BUDGET PLAN WITH RECORD SCHOOL FUNDING — SENATE SUPPORT UNCERTAIN

With Republicans in the House and Senate at odds, and the House Appropriations chair leaving negotiations early to be at his wife's side while she went into labor, the House passed a Fiscal Year 2022 budget Thursday night with widespread bipartisan support and large increases for schools.

Already supported by the Administration, House leaders now hope to get the Senate to agree to the spending plan. The division between the two chambers seems to be over strategy and details — whether the budget should be done by July 1 or later in the summer, and equalization payments for schools.

The House package increases funding for K-12 schools by 8% or \$683 million, providing at least \$8,700 per student across the board and closing the funding gap between districts. House Bill 4410, an omnibus bill for agencies passed 104-4; House Bill 4411, which included the K-12 budget, passed 105-3; and House Bill 4421, a K-12 supplemental that provides \$4.4 billion in federal funds for schools, passed 105-3.

In addition to the budget, the House also passed an amended version of Senate Bill 28 with 95 to 13 votes. The bill would establish a \$10 million fund for post-acute care providers who care for victims of catastrophic auto accidents following the July 1 fee schedule change set to take effect.

House and Senate leaders, including House Speaker Jason Wentworth (R-Farwell) and Senate Appropriations Chair Jim Stamas (R-Midland), met throughout the day Thursday to discuss the budget. Both sides have indicated that their relationship is good, and discussions will continue.

The legislature adjourns next Wednesday, July 1 for summer break, some saying this is an indicator that the Senate is willing to work on signing off on the proposal earlier rather than later in the year.

According to Sen. Stamas, "We want to work with the House and the governor's office on getting this done. The speaker and I have been clear we would like to have a budget finalized by July 1. I've committed to look at what is sent to us by the House and see if we can get it done. Even if we are unable to get the budget done by July, our schools have already received substantial additional dollars, and both our schools and our local and state governments are still funded through October 1. While there may not be an immediate impact, I understand that our schools and our local communities would like to know what their funding levels will be before they set their budgets."

Current law requires the Legislature to approve a budget by July 1, however, lawmakers could change this deadline. If passed in the Senate, the House package technically meets the July 1 deadline, even though it has many blanks to fill in. The House package does not include funding bills for community colleges and universities yet and leaves \$6 billion unspent with few details about spending for department budgets and other major areas. The bills do, however, remove most of the department budget cuts which were in the original House budget proposal.

Legislators and the Whitmer administration could and likely will continue work on those budgets through the summer.

HOUSE PASSES REVISED VOTER IDENTIFICATION BILLS WITH VOTER ID REQUIREMENT

The state House passed revised versions of SB 303 and 304 this week which would require voters to show identification to vote, removing the option for voters to sign an affidavit of identity instead of providing official photo identification. The change would mean that voters who show up in person without an ID would be required to fill out a provisional ballot that would only be tabulated if the voter followed up by proving their identity to their local clerk.

The changes also would require election workers to compare a voters' signature to that voters' electronic signature in the state's qualified voter file. If the election worker determines that the signatures don't match, then the voter would need to cast a provisional ballot and confirm their identity to their local clerk within six days of the election.

House and Senate Republicans say the changes would make Michigan's elections more secure. Opponents say the bills would add additional barriers.

The House also passed an additional proposal to provide free ID cards to all Michigan residents. Currently, the cards cost \$10 to obtain or renew, with some fee waivers.

The bills are part of a package of nearly 40 Republican-backed bills designed to address changes to Michigan's election process.

SENATE PASSES BILL TO END UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

The Michigan Senate voted Thursday to end the \$300 weekly federal unemployment benefits through the Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program by passing House Bill 4434 along party lines, with 19-16 votes. The bill followed Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's announcement that most of the state's coronavirus restrictions would be lifted as of June 22.

Although the program is set to end Sept. 4, 2021, Republicans in the legislature have said that the benefits, combined with state benefits that max out at \$362 per week, are hurting the labor force by deterring workers from returning. The Senate amended the bill to end the program effective July 31, although technicalities would mean that the bill's effective date would be sometime in March 2022.

The House concurred the Senate changes to the bill, however, it will likely be vetoed by Gov. Whitmer.

MM&A BRIEFS

TRUMP CALLS OUT SHIRKEY, MCBROOM FOR ELECTION REPORT

An email message from Former President Donald Trump today criticized Republican Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) and Oversight Chairman Sen. Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) for releasing a report concluding that no fraud occurred in the 2020 election.

Trump claimed the Michigan Senate Republican's eight-month investigation into the election was a "cover up." He also said Shirkey and McBroom were "doing everything possible to stop Voter Audits in order to hide the truth about November 3rd."

The former president also told supporters to call the Senators to "get them to do the right thing or vote them the hell out of office."

McBroom, the primary author of the report, could run for another term in the Legislature. Shirkey, however, is term-limited.

CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

- June 28** **Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) Fundraiser**
Location: 9 a.m., Grand Traverse Resort-The Bear, Valleyway Dr, Williamsburg
- June 29** **Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 9 a.m., Masterpiece, Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Rd, Gaylord
- Rep. Julie Brixie's (D-Okemos) Summer Bash**
Location: 5 p.m., Meridian Twp. Central Park Pavilion, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos
- June 30** **Michigan Senate Democratic Fund**
Location: 6 p.m., Rooftop at the Madison, 1555 Broadway, Detroit
- July 7** **Rep. Graham Filler (R-DeWitt) Reception**
Location: 6 p.m., The Filler Residence, 12705 Warm Creek Drive, Dewitt