

## CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF APRIL 3, 2017

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### **SENATE AND HOUSE TAKE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO EMERGENCY SINKHOLE DOLLARS**

The House voted again last week to give Macomb County a \$3 million grant to use for its sinkhole emergency, before leaving for a two-week spring break. The 101-7 vote on Thursday, March 29 restored the House's original intent, which was that the money be in the form of a grant rather than a loan.

The Senate was pushing to provide the money in the form of a \$5 million no-interest loan, repayable by the county. Senate leaders have voiced concerns that a grant would set a precedent for how other communities with infrastructure problems want to fund their repairs.

The Senate had already adjourned by the time of the House vote, however, and will wait until after the break to vote on the bill.

House leaders said a grant is more effective because a loan could affect the county's plan to bond \$140-170 million for total repairs. They also said the sinkhole is an emergency situation, and giving a grant for such a situation will not set a precedent for communities who want to rebuild their systems in a non-emergency setting.

The grant money would go toward building a temporary bypass.

### **INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR UNIVERSITIES COMES OUT BELOW GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

The House higher education budget would give the state's 15 universities a 1.9 percent budget increase—but the increase is still \$9 million less than Gov. Rick Snyder recommended in his budget.

Reported out of the House Appropriations and Higher Education subcommittee on Thursday, the bill does, however, concur with Gov. Snyder's plans to restrain tuition and his performance formula. Under the bill, tuition increases would be capped at 3.8 percent or \$475, whichever is greater.

At \$1.62 billion, the House higher education budget is a 2.3 percent increase from the current year, but less than the Governor's recommended \$1.64 billion.

The Senate's higher education bill would instead give a 2.5 percent increase to universities, which amounts to \$7 million under the Governor's proposed budget.

The Senate's bill also keeps the Governor's suggested tuition restraint at 3.8 percent or \$475, whichever is higher. The bill also reduces an increase to the Michigan State University AgBioResearch and an increase in funding for MSU extension.

Both budgets will now go to conference committees and leadership meetings to decide where the savings gained from a reducing the Governor's recommended higher education budget would be used.

### **COLLEAGUES COULD FACE SHOWDOWN IN 38<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT RACE**

When Sen. Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba) leaves his term-limited seat in the Senate in 2018, two sitting representatives and one former representative will be jockeying for the position.

Rep. Scott Dianda (D-Calumet) recently announced his campaign for the 38th District, Rep. John Kivela (D-Marquette) is planning to, and former Rep. Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) has already formed a campaign committee. Both Dianda and Kivela are term-limited in the House.

Pundits are calling this as a potential race to watch. The 38th Senate seat includes the western portion of the Upper Peninsula: Alger, Baraga, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, and Schoolcraft counties.

Dianda, Kivela, and McBroom cover the entire geographic area of the Senate seat, where the three are also fairly split in terms of registered voters.

### **MM&A Briefs**

#### **Justice Robert Young Jr. to retire**

Justice Robert Young Jr., a leader in the Michigan Supreme Court for the last 18 years, said he will retire by the end of April. He plans to return to private practice with the firm Dickinson Wright, where he practiced after graduating from Harvard Law School in 1978. A Republican-nominated justice, Young served as chief justice of the court from 2011 to 2017. The timing of his retirement will allow Gov. Rick Snyder to fill the vacancy by appointing a justice, who will then be able to run as an incumbent for a full eight-year term in 2018.

#### **Former convicted Johnson staffer was paid \$24,000**

As the FBI and Michigan Department of State Police raided Sen. Bert Johnson's (D-Highland Park) home and Lansing office on Monday, there are also reports that a former contractor who pleaded guilty to bribery as part of the Detroit Education Achievement Authority corruption scandal, was paid \$24,092 during the nine months she was on Johnson's staff, according to Gongwer news service. The FBI and State police investigation focusing on Johnson is looking into whether his employees actually worked at his office, and if they did not do work, whether or not he received some type of kick-back from their compensation.

## **Calendar of Important Events**

- March 28 Rep. Edward Canfield (R- Sebewaing) fundraiser  
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Kristy Pagan (D-Canton) fundraiser  
Location: 8:30 a.m., 208 North Capitol Avenue, 1st Floor, Lansing
- Eastern Michigan University Legislative Day  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Capitol Building, Lansing
- Rep. Jim Ellison (D-Royal Oak) fundraiser  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Lansing
- Secretary of State Ruth Johnson (R) fundraiser  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- University of Michigan Wolverine Forum on Detroit Schools  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Joe Bellino (R-Monroe) fundraiser  
Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, Lansing
- March 29 Rep. Triston Cole (R-Mancelona) fundraiser  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Kelley Cawthorne, Lansing
- Rep. Steve Marino (R-Harrison Twp.) fundraiser  
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Thomas Albert (R-Belding) fundraiser  
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Leslie Love (D-Detroit) fundraiser  
Location: 8:30 a.m., McAlvey-Merchant Loft, Lansing
- Americans for Prosperity Citizen Day at the Capitol  
Location: 9 a.m., Mackinac Room, Anderson House Office Building, Lansing
- Rep. Erika Geiss (D-Taylor) fundraiser  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, Lansing
- Rep. Robert Kosowski (D-Westland) fundraiser  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Sen. Vincent Gregory (D-Southfield) fundraiser  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

Rep. Darren Camilleri (D-Brownstone Township) fundraiser  
Location: 12 p.m., Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Lansing

March 30 Rep. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington) fundraiser  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Governors Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing

Rep. Holly Hughes (R-Montague) fundraiser  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing

Rep. Mary Whiteford (R-Casco Twp.) fundraiser  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Glazed and Confused, Lansing

Rep. Scott Dianda (D-Calumet) fundraiser  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Lansing

Rep. John Kivela (D-Marquette) fundraiser  
Location: 10 a.m., Governors Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing