

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2018

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LEGISLATURE APPROVES MINIMUM WAGE HIKE, PAID SICK LEAVE WITH INTENT TO AMEND

The House and Senate approved a minimum wage hike and paid sick day initiatives on Wednesday, removing either issue from being on the November ballot and giving lawmakers an option to change the legislation later.

In the House, Democrats were divided with a 78-28 vote, but in the Senate the Democrats voted against the measures.

The proposals, which were slated for the Michigan ballot in November, are the Michigan One Fair Wage—a move to gradually raise Michigan’s minimum wage to \$12 an hour and include tipped workers; and MI Time To Care—a mandate to ensure employers give workers the opportunity to earn one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked.

With approval in both the Senate and House, the proposals do not need a signature from the governor. The vote also enables the legislature to amend the laws in the future with a simple majority vote instead of the three-fourths vote they would have needed to amend a voter-approved proposal. The legislature reportedly plans to amend the proposals before December.

Democrats plan to challenge in court any attempts to amend the laws before the end of the 2017-18 term, saying any amendments would violate Article 2, Section 9, of the Michigan Constitution by adopting and changing a law in the same session.

AUDIT SHOWS CPS FAILING TO PROTECT KIDS

An audit of Michigan’s Child Protective Services found troubling issues including too many cases with delayed investigations, failure to perform criminal background checks, and unsafe conditions for state investigator, according to the staff of Auditor General Doug Ringler. The audit was conducted between May 2014 and July 2016.

Republicans and Democrats were livid about the assessment which included troubling findings such as:

- Suspected child abuse or neglect investigations taking longer than the required 24 hours
- Missing criminal history checks of required individuals
- Failure to document complete CPS history of affected family and household
- Inconsistent face-to-face contact with the child victims within 72 hours
- Not referring CPS cases to the county prosecutor
- Not accurately assessing the risk of future harm to children in an investigation

- Failure to add confirmed perpetrators to a required central registry – 257 confirmed perpetrators were missing from the central registry in the cases reviewed.

The Department of Health and Human Services said it will improve training, look at staff levels, and consider asking the Legislature and the Executive Office to increase funding to hire more staff members. The law requires the audited agency to develop a plan to meet the requirements and submit them within 60 days to the Office of Internal Audit in the State Budget Office.

EX-SENATOR BERT JOHNSON SENTENCED TO 90 DAYS

Former Senator Bert Johnson was sentenced to 90 days in jail Thursday for stealing more than \$23,000 from a federally funded program by having a “ghost employee” on his Senate payroll.

Federal prosecutors were seeking the maximum sentence for Johnson of 12 months in prison. U.S. District Judge Matthew Leitman called the crime a serious offense but gave Johnson credit for his mentoring and community service.

Johnson must also serve 90 days confinement, spend two years on supervised release, and pay at least \$23,134 restitution to the state. In addition, he’ll be required to serve 480 hours of community service in his former Senate district.

Johnson was accused of putting the ghost employee on his payroll to steal more than \$23,000 between March 2014 and January 2015. He used the money to pay debts including his son’s private-school tuition at University of Detroit Jesuit High School and his own tuition at the University of Detroit-Mercy.

CRIMINAL CHECKBOX REMOVED FROM STATE DEPARTMENT JOB APPLICATIONS

Gov. Rick Snyder took his “smart justice” a step further today by signing an executive order preventing state departments from using criminal history as an initial screen for applicants – “banning the box” generally used to ask job applicants if they’ve been convicted of a felony.

Snyder hopes the move will help return formerly convicted felons to the workplace and move employers across Michigan to do the same. Unless required by state or federal law, the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs will also remove all criminal history questions from licensing applications.

FEDERAL APPEALS COURT DECISION MEANS NO STRAIGHT TICKET VOTING IN NOVEMBER

Voters won’t have the option to cast a straight ticket ballot in the Nov. 6 general election in Michigan, because of a federal appeals court ruling Wednesday.

In a 2-1 decision, the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals effectively upheld a law banning straight-ticket voting that was passed by the legislature in 2016. U.S. District Court Judge Gershwin Drain had issued a permanent injunction on the law in August, claiming it unfairly discriminated against African-American voters who vote straight ticket at a higher percentage than white voters.

Secretary of State Ruth Johnson had appealed this decision with the U.S. 6th District Court of Appeals, with Judge Danny Julian Boggs and Judge Raymond Kethledge ruling against Drain. With a short amount of time before the ballot is finalized, there is no immediate information about a further appeal of the ruling.

MM&A BRIEFS

Richard DeVos, Amway co-founder, Republican supporter, dies at 92

Amway co-founder and billionaire, Grand Rapids philanthropist and leading Republican supporter Richard M. DeVos Sr. died Thursday from complications from an infection. He was 92.

DeVos co-founded Amway with his lifetime business partner the late Jay VanAndel. Forbes magazine named DeVos the 379th -richest billionaire in the world in March, with a net worth of \$5.4 billion.

Known for his political and philanthropic giving, DeVos was instrumental in the development of Grand Rapids and donated millions of dollars to community organizations, Christian ministries and churches, and Michigan colleges such as Calvin College and Grand Valley State University. He also owned the NBA team, Orlando Magic.

Calendar of Important Events

- Sept. 8 13th Senate District Candidate Mallory McMorrow (D) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., 28342 Dartmouth Dr., Madison Heights
- Sept. 9 U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D) Fundraiser
Location: 4:30 p.m., 1408 Cambridge Road
- Sept. 11 Rep. Ben Frederick (R-Owosso) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., 2050 West Bennington Road, Owosso
- Sept. 12 Michigan Sustainability Conference by Department of Environmental Quality
Location: 7:45 a.m., Lansing Center, 333 East Michigan Ave., Lansing
- Rep. Jason Wentworth (R-Clare) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association, Lansing
- Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 4 p.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- 24th Senate District Candidate Kelly Rossman-McKinney (D) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., 317 South Elm St., Suite 201, Owosso
- Sept. 13 Rep. Michael Webber (R-Rochester Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., Royal Park Hotel, 600 East University, Rochester
- Sept. 14 Rep. Terry Sabo (D-Muskegon) Golf Fundraiser
Location: 12 p.m., Lincoln Golf Club, 4907 Whitehall Road, Muskegon
- Sept. 15 13th Senate District Candidate Mallory McMorrow (D) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., 2141 Franklin Road, Berkley

- Sept. 16 13th Senate District Candidate Mallory McMorrow (D) Fundraiser
Location: 3 p.m., 954 Canterbury St., Birmingham
- Sept. 17 Sen. Curtis Hertel (D-East Lansing) Fundraiser
Location: 4:30 p.m., Red Cedar Spirits, 2000 Merritt Road, East Lansing
- Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., The Maple Theatre, 4135 West Maple Road, Bloomfield Twp.
- Sept. 19 U.S. Rep. Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) Fundraiser
Location: 4 p.m., Lansing Brewing Company, 518 East Shiawassee St., Lansing
- Sept. 20 13th Senate District Candidate Mallory McMorrow (D) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., 1361 Afford Place, Rochester Hills
- 24th Senate District Candidate Kelly Rossman-McKinney (D) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., 12777 Hamersley Drive, Bath
- Citizens Research Council of Michigan Public Policy Dinner
Location: 5:30 p.m., The Dearborn Inn, 20201 Oakwood, Dearborn
- U.S. Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Zeeland) Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 p.m., Macatawa Legends Golf Course, Holland