

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF OCTOBER 16, 2017

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SENATE PASSES BILL TO SHIFT SOME MILLAGE FUNDS TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

A bill introduced by Sen. David Hildebrand (R-Lowell), and passed by the Senate this week would give charter schools access to funds from enhancement millages which were levied by intermediate school districts.

Currently, school districts use enhancement millages for various projects, including hiring teachers, technology upgrades, purchasing materials and more.

Supporters of the bill, which passed in the Senate 23-14, say that it makes funding for students more fair because it spreads these funds to charter schools in the districts.

According to the sponsor, the bill would not apply to existing enhancement millages, but it would require districts to include charter schools in millage renewals.

Critics, including Sen. Curtis Hertel (D-East Lansing) and Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) said that the bill stretches school funding too far, and that voters originally approved the millages knowing that the money would go to traditional schools.

Six counties in the state have passed them including Kent, Kalamazoo, Midland, Monroe, Muskegon, and Wayne.

BENSON ANNOUNCES FIRST DEM BID FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

Jocelyn Benson, a Democratic attorney and former dean of the Wayne State Law School, announced her bid to become Michigan's next Secretary of State this week. This will be her second run at the position – she was the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State in 2010.

Benson opened her campaign with a promise that she would set a “30-minute guarantee” to Michigan residents. “No one, no matter where they reside, should wait more than 30 minutes to renew their driver license, register their vehicle or cast a ballot,” she said.

Benson's other priorities would be improved election security, improved technology for the agency, personal financial disclosure for elected officials, and public disclosure of who is paying for all election-related advertising.

After leaving Wayne State in 2016, Benson became CEO and executive director of the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School.

LACK OF VOTES LEAVES BI-PARTISAN AUTO INSURANCE REFORM BILLS UP IN AIR

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are holding back their votes for a new bill designed to reform Michigan's no-fault auto insurance system. The bill (HB 5013) is sponsored by Rep. Lana Theis and currently sits in the House Insurance committee. It has been championed by Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and House Speaker Tom Leonard as a way to reform Michigan's no-fault system and drive down Detroit's auto insurance rates which are among the highest in the nation.

Democrats and Republicans are criticizing the bill, saying it is too extreme, has a problematic Medicare-level fee schedule, and are concerned it would move tens of millions of dollars in costs to Medicaid.

Other say it does not do enough to remove non-driving factors including credit scores and education levels from how insurers price auto insurance in the state.

A new 15-bill, bi-partisan package was introduced last week to counter the Duggan plan. The bills are designed to restrain car accident medical costs, but not cap benefits.

MEEKHOF REMOVES COLBECK FROM COMMITTEES, TAKES AWAY STAFFING AND BUDGET OVERSIGHT

Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof (R-West Olive) has not only removed gubernatorial candidate and legislator Sen. Patrick Colbeck from his committee assignments, but also took over control of his staff and office budget.

Colbeck claims that his removal from the committees is retribution for his attending a Right to Life fundraising campaign in Meekhof's district, without telling Meekhof in advance. Colbeck said that courtesy calling does not apply while is on the statewide campaign trail for governor.

Colbeck was notified by letter. Meekhof's spokesperson said he was removed for multiple reasons. Sources say that some of the reasons could include Colbeck's vocal opposition to the state's expansion of Medicaid under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and his opposition to the Common Core Standards.

SENATE VOTES TO REQUIRE EQUAL COVERAGE OF ORAL CANCER DRUGS

The Senate passed a bill this week which would require equal insurance coverage of anticancer medications whether they are given intravenously or in pill form. The bill, SB 492, passed 36-1 and was introduced to address the discrepancy in cost that can occur when chemo pills cost more than IV chemo because insure covers them differently. If eventually signed into law, Michigan would join the more than 40 states who have passed similar legislation in the past 10 years.

MM&A Briefs

Stabenow puts Republicans on notice with millions in campaign fundraising

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow is reporting \$6.9 million in cash, with more than \$1.7 million raised in the third quarter for her re-election war chest. Stabenow reported the funds ahead of the deadline for federal candidates to file third quarter campaign fundraising and spending reports. The Lansing Democrat is seeking a fourth term.

Helen DeVos, 90, remembered as generous and compassionate

Following her death this week, Grand Rapids philanthropist Helen J. DeVos was remembered for her generosity and support of children's health, Christian education, and the arts. She was 90 years old. DeVos was the wife of Rich DeVos who co-founded Amway, the mother of Dick DeVos, and mother-in-law of U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. She is also the namesake of the Grand Rapids children's hospital.

Calendar of Important Events

- Oct. 21 Rep. Tom Barrett (R-Pottersville) Fundraiser
Location: 3 p.m., Country Mill Orchards and Cider Mill, Charlotte
- Oct. 23 Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Cambria Suites, Traverse City
- Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) Fundraiser
Location: 11:45 a.m., Stafford Perry Hotel, Petoskey
- Rep. Tim Sneller (D-Burton) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Lickers Sports Bar & Grill, Flint
- Oct. 24 Rep. Mike McCready (R-Bloomfield Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Bettie Cook Scott (D-Detroit) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Brandt Iden (R-Ostemo Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Oct. 25 Rep. Tommy Brann (R-Wyoming) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstown Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

- Oct. 25 Rep. Vanessa Guerra (D-Saginaw) Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. John Chirkun (D-Roseville) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Mary Whiteford (R-Casco Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Licensed Beverage Association, Lansing
- Oct. 26 Rep. David Maturen (R-Vicksburg) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Sen. John Proos (R-St. Joseph) Fundraiser
Call 517-927-4237 to schedule a time for Mr. Proos to bring breakfast to their office
and meet with them.
- Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Oct. 30 U.S. Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Zeeland) Fundraiser
Location: 12 p.m., Dykema, Lansing
- Oct. 31 Rep. Beau LaFave (R-Iron Mountain) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Roger Hauck (R-Mt. Pleasant) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Yousef Rabhi (D-Ann Arbor) Fundraiser
Location: 10:30 a.m., Ann Arbor Distilling Company, Ann Arbor
- Nov. 1 House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Sen. Jim Marleau (R-Lake Orion) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing
- House Democrats Fundraiser
Location: 4:30 p.m., Midtown Brewing Company, Lansing
- Nov. 2 Rep. Larry Inman (R-Williamsburg) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing