

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 6, 2017

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McMILLIN TO TAKE OVER PART TIME LEGISLATURE CAMPAIGN

Lt. Governor Brian Calley shifted the leadership of the Clean Michigan Committee to Tom McMillin on Friday. McMillin is a State Board of Education member who formerly served with Calley in the House where they co-sponsored a part-time legislature resolution.

Calley said he believes a part time legislature “would give our state a more efficient and limited government.” Clean Michigan Committee members will include Dave Agema, former Republican National Committeeman; David Dishaw, Kent County GOP Chair; Norm Kammeraad, who lead a past part-time legislature effort; and CJ Galdes, deputy director of President Donald Trump’s campaign in Michigan.

NO-FAULT HITS ROADBLOCK IN HOUSE

The latest attempt to reform Michigan’s no-fault auto insurance system by changing the lifetime unlimited medical benefits currently provided, failed to overcome fierce disagreements on both sides of the aisle earlier this month.

The bill, HB 5013 sponsored by Rep. Lana Theis, was 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 some of the highest in the nation.

Reports say Duggan and Leonard got within three to five votes of passing the bill, however the final vote was 10 short of passage, garnering 45 yes votes and 63 no votes. Only four Democrats, all from Detroit, voted yes on the bill including Rep. Wendell Byrd, Rep. Leslie Love, Rep. Sylvia Santana and Rep. Bettie Cook Scott.

Both sides have said the bill was too extreme, with a problematic Medicare-level fee schedule and the potential to move millions of dollars in costs to Medicaid. Others said it did not do enough to remove non-driving factors including credit scores and education levels from pricing.

BILLS PERMITTING CONCEALED GUNS IN SCHOOLS PASSES SENATE

Anyone with a concealed pistol license could be allowed to carry in gun-free zones with additional training, according to legislation passed this week by Senate Republicans. Senate Bills 584-586 each passed with a vote of 25-12, with Sen. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) the only Republican to vote no.

Gun-free zones in Michigan include schools and houses of religious worship. The bills passed days after a mass shooting in a Texas church. Democrats. Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof (R-West Olive) said the legislation came about because of these mass shootings, and that it would be a deterrent

to people who target large gatherings. Democrats strongly opposed both the timing and content of the legislation.

The new legislation would require an additional eight hours of firearms training, in addition to the current eight required for a concealed pistol license, to obtain the enhanced license. Substitutes were adopted in committee that would ban the open carrying of firearms in current gun-free zones. Current law allows for open carrying of firearms in those venues.

Meekhof plans to meet with Gov. Snyder, who previously opposed gun legislation

KELLY FEDERAL NOMINATION PULLED

U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos pulled Rep. Tim Kelly's (R-Saginaw Twp.) nomination as a U.S. Department of Education assistant secretary this week after past blog posts written by Kelly surfaced. The posts included statements about Muslims being put on the no-fly list, and also criticizing Head Start and government programs that encouraged more women to get involved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

Kelly's nomination hearing was scheduled for Nov. 15. President Donald Trump had officially announced his plans to nominate Kelly for assistant secretary for career, technical and adult education in October.

In Michigan, Kelly currently chairs the House Education Reform Committee and the House Appropriations Subcommittees for school aid and the Department of Education.

MM&A Briefs

Ex-Sen. Allen surprisingly appointed to USDA post

In an unexpected move, President Donald Trump named former Sen. Jason Allen as the new Michigan director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture last week, putting out Sen. Mike Green (R-Mayville) who had previously been told by the White House and USDA that the post would be his.

Trump also named former Republican Rep. Joel Johnson, from Clare as Farm Service Agency director in Michigan.

Allen, who lost a bid for Congress in 2016 had been named to a development specialist post in the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in February after years of working on veteran's issues under Gov. Rick Snyder.

Green will now remain in the Senate for the rest of his term which goes through 2018. The field for his seat includes Rep. Gary Glenn (R-Williams Township) and former Rep. Kevin Daley (R-Lum).

Cambensy wins 109th District

Democrat Marquette City Commissioner Sara Cambensy won the 109th House District with 57 percent of the vote in a special election on Nov. 7. She defeated Republican Rich Rossway, president of the Marquette Area Public Schools Board of Education. Rossway had 42 percent of the vote.

Cambensy is only the third woman to be elected to the House from the Upper Peninsula. Her victory is notable because the same area voted for President Donald Trump one year ago.

Judge rules enough evidence for Courser to be tried on misconduct

Former Rep. Todd Courser will face a charge of misconduct in office after a judge ruled that there was probable cause and enough evidence exists for him to stand trial. The charge stems from Courser asking one of his then legislative aides to send an email that was supposed to work as a diversionary ploy.

Courser also continues to face a felony perjury charge in the Ingham Circuit Court.

Calendar of Important Events

Nov. 15 Institute for Public Policy and Social Research Forum on Vaccine Waivers
Location: 11:30 a.m., Anderson House Office Building, Lansing

10th Senate District Candidate Michael Shallal (R) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., Penna's of Sterling, Sterling Heights

Nov. 16 30th Senate District Candidate Joe Haveman (R) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Restaurant Association, Lansing

Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Knollwood Country Club, West Bloomfield Twp.

Rep. David LaGrand (D-Grand Rapids) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., 326 Madison Avenue, SE, Apt. 1, Grand Rapids

Nov. 28 Rep. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington) Fundraiser
Location: 4:30 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Rep. Jeff Noble (R-Plymouth) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Association of Counties, Lansing

Nov. 29 Rep. Jason Wentworth (R-Clare) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Sen. Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D-Taylor) Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

Rep. Brandt Iden (R-Oshtemo) Fundraiser
Location: 12 p.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

Nov. 30 Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr. (D-East Lansing) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Boji Tower Conference Center, Lansing