

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF MAY 7, 2018

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HOUSE AND SENATE PASS BUDGETS, WAIT FOR REVENUE CONFERENCE BEFORE FINAL NEGOTIATIONS

Michigan's House and Senate have both passed their budget bills, leaving significant differences to negotiate in conference committees and with Gov. Rick Snyder. The Legislature and Gov. Snyder will attempt to complete the budget between the Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference May 16, and the Mackinac Policy Conference which begins on May 29.

Senate Republicans were pleased with their \$56.6 billion budget plan, which would increase base aid for lower-funded school districts and decrease other state spending, while several Democrats said they were disappointed with the budget's "missed opportunities."

Part of the Senate plan includes a \$230 per-pupil increase for lower-funded school districts and a \$115 increase for higher-funded districts.

Some of the key differences between the House, Senate, and Gov. Rick Snyder's plans include:

--Several issues related to Corrections. The Senate and House recommend closing an additional prison. Neither Snyder nor the Dept. of Corrections recommended this.

Both chambers want to get rid of the prison food contract and replace it with state employees. The Senate, however, did not approve \$13.7 million which Snyder estimated would be necessary to transition the service.

The Senate included money to privatize more than 300 registered nurses in the corrections department, but the House and Gov. Snyder did not include this in either of their budgets.

-- Gov. Snyder recommended increasing landfill tipping fees to raise \$79 million in environmental clean-up funds. The House appropriated \$25 million for environmental clean-up but not from tipping fees. The Senate did not project any increase above the \$5 million currently raised from tipping fees.

-- The Senate budget tied its Medicaid work requirement bills to the Dept. of Health and Human Services budget by requiring the salaries of top department officials to be withheld unless the federal government approves a waiver requiring able-bodied Medicaid recipients to find jobs.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT BRIAN WHISTON DIES AT 56 AFTER LOSING BATTLE WITH CANCER

State Superintendent Brian Whiston died on Monday after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Whiston, who was appointed state superintendent in 2015, announced his diagnosis in January. Whiston had begun a medical leave days before he died.

As state superintendent, Whiston was well respected by members of the education community and state government. Gov. Rick Snyder said in a statement that Whiston "was an outstanding partner who understood that, just as teachers work every day to challenge their students to do better, we all need to challenge ourselves to do

better for students. The partnerships to help struggling districts, his work to help implement the Marshall Plan for Talent, his Top 10 in 10 program, and many other initiatives he undertook during his career will be part of Brian's longstanding efforts to make Michigan a national leader in education. I will miss working with him greatly."

Before becoming state superintendent, he had been superintendent of Dearborn Public Schools since 2008 and spent 10 years as director of government and community services for the Oakland County Intermediate School District.

THEANDER AND WHITMER LEAD SCHUETTE IN NEW POLLS

Polls from EPIC-MRA and the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research show that Democrats are currently racing ahead of Republican candidates in the battle for Michigan's next governor. Democrat Shri Thanedar was ahead of Attorney General Bill Schuette by 44 to 38 percent and Democrat Gretchen Whitmer was ahead 43 to 38 percent according to EPIC-MRA survey. Polls are also showing that Thanedar's name recognition is higher than Whitmer's and nearing Schuette's.

STATE ELECTIONS OFFICIALS SAY EL-SAYED ELIGIBLE TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR

The state Bureau of Elections rejected challenges to Dr. Abdul El-Sayed's eligibility to run for Michigan's next governor earlier this week. The elections officials said that El-Sayed, a former Detroit health department director, was registered to vote for at least the requisite time before potentially taking office.

Michigan's Constitution requires candidates for governor to be a registered voter in Michigan for at least four years prior to taking office.

Abdul El-Sayed was registered to vote in New York state from 2012 until 2015. Michigan Election officials, however, say the state Qualified Voter File (QVF) record for Dr. El-Sayed shows he has been continuously registered to vote in Michigan since 2003.

According to officials, Dr. El-Sayed's voter registration record could not have been canceled unless "the state received specific written confirmation that he had changed his residence for voting purposes or until two consecutive federal general elections passed without him voting in Michigan. Neither of those necessary events occurred."

El-Sayed's campaign welcomed the decision.

Fellow Democratic gubernatorial candidate Shri Thanedar was the one who had challenged El-Sayed's candidacy. El-Sayed is also challenging Thanedar's petition signatures.

SCHUETTE AND CALLEY ON THE ATTACK AT FIRST DEBATE

Things heated up between Michigan's top Republican candidates for governor at their first gubernatorial debate on Wednesday, as Lt. Gov. Brian Calley and Attorney General Bill Schuette traded accusations about the Flint Water Crisis and President Donald Trump.

Calley made the first move, accusing Schuette of using the criminal investigation into the Flint Water Crisis as a political maneuver. "The attorney general has used it as though it is some kind of launching pad for a campaign for governor," Calley said.

Schuette went on to remind viewers that the investigation "is all about accountability and justice," saying to Calley, "to think ... you could try to sweep it under the rug and pretend it didn't happen, (it's) the height of arrogance."

Organized by the Michigan Republican Party, the event at WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids featured all four Republican candidates for governor, including Schuette, Calley, Sen. Patrick Colbeck (R-Canton), and Dr. Jim Hines from the Saginaw area.

MM&A Briefs

Former state legislator and environmental champion Patricia Birkholz dies

Former legislator Patricia Birkholz, a Republican from Saugatuck, died early last week at 74 from cancer. Birkholz was known for her involvement in major environmental policy changes during her 14 years in the Legislature.

Birkholz served in the House from 1997-2002 and in the Senate from 2003-10, and was the first woman elected speaker pro tem in the House. She also served as chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. A few of her major bills during her time in the Legislature include: the 2010 recreation passport bill; the 2008 Great Lakes Compact; a bill requiring utilities to produce 10 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2015; wetlands protection law, an income tax checkoff for breast cancer research, and the law that allows a mother to surrender her newborn child safely instead of abandoning it.

After being term-limited, Birkholz served two years as director of the Office of the Great Lakes, a position appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder. She also worked for the Michigan League of Conservation Voters.

Calendar of Important Events

- May 12 8th U.S. House Candidate Elissa Slotkin (D) Open House
Location: 11 a.m., 1454 East Michigan Ave., Lansing
- May 14 Rep. Kim LaSata (R-Bainbridge Twp.) 21st Senate District Campaign Fundraiser
Location: 10:30 a.m., The Dunes Club, New Buffalo
- Rep. Mary Whiteford (R-Casco Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 4 p.m., 439 River St., Allegan
- May 16 Rep. Michael Webber (R-Rochester Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference
Location: 9 a.m., House Appropriations Room, Third Floor, Capitol, Lansing
- Rep. Bronna Kahle (R-Clinton) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Pam Hornberger (R-Chesterfield) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- 2nd Senate District Candidate Adam Hollier (D) Fundraiser
Location: 12 p.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

- May 17 Rep. Jason Sheppard (R-Temperance) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Scott Van Singel (R-Grant) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Kristy Pagan (D-Canton Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., Summit on the Park, Canton
- May 21 House Republican Campaign Committee Golf Outing
Location: 2 p.m., Eagle Eye Golf Course, Bath
- May 22 Rep. Jason Wentworth (R-Clare) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- May 23 Rep. Julie Alexander (R-Hanover) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. LaTanya Garrett (D-Detroit) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing
- Rep. Tommy Brann (R-Wyoming) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m. TBD
- Rep. Daire Rendon (R-Lake City) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing