

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF MAY 21, 2018

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HOUSE MOVES QUICKLY TO PASS SEXUAL ASSAULT BILLS

After many weeks of testimony, the House voted on and passed a bipartisan package of nearly 30 bills today aimed at preventing sexual assault in Michigan—just one day after the bills came out of committee.

Created after the Larry Nassar sex scandal at Michigan State University, the bills seeking to prevent sexual assault and extend the statute of limitations for civil and criminal cases of sexual assault. The House committee also made last minute additions to the bills on Wednesday, including adding back athletic trainers to the list of Mandatory reporters, which also includes physical therapists and their assistants. Other bills which were changed also provide more exemptions for routine medical treatments.

Although the bills still extend the statute of limitations from current law, the House version reduced the statute from what is in the Senate version.

Several bills that included getting rid of governmental immunity in certain sexual misconduct cases (SB 875, SB 876 and SB 877) did not have enough support in the committee to pass.

Gov. Rick Snyder has said he supports the package of bills and appreciates lawmaker's efforts to "very carefully consider how new laws can best help support those who have suffered, while also aiming to prevent further sexual assaults all across the state of Michigan." Mr. Snyder said.

SCHOOL SAFETY BILLS MOVE THROUGH SENATE COMMITTEE

A Senate committee passed several bills this week designed to strengthen partnerships between schools and law enforcement agencies to increase preparedness and security in schools, following a string of mass shootings at schools across the country.

The legislation would require schools to report thwarted but attempted acts of violence or threats to the State Police; develop training standards for law enforcement to handle active-shooter situations in schools, require districts to talk to local law enforcement before constructing or renovating a building, create an Office of School Safety within the Department of State Police; and create a school safety grant program.

The bills, SB 958, SB 959, SB 982, and HB 5278 moved quickly through the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday following brief testimony.

HOUSE AG APPROVES LEGISLATION TO LIMIT LOCAL ORDINANCES ON PET SHOPS

Approved last week by the House Agriculture Committee, HB 5916 and 5917 create a new designation for qualified pet shops that ensures animals are protected by a USDA-approved organization, while limiting local governments from implementing more regulations on the qualified businesses.

The bills are sponsored by Rep. Hank Vaupel (R), a veterinarian from Fowlerville.

Under the bills, complaints could be filed with either the local government or the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The department would handle complaints dealing with illness and would refer other complaints to local officials.

SHIRKEY STRIKES DEAL ON MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS

Sen. Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) reported earlier this week that lawmakers are removing the unemployment provision from Senate-passed Medicaid legislation saying it would've been too difficult to administer.

The controversial provision would have allowed recipients living in counties with 8.5 percent or higher unemployment meet the requirement by actively looking for work unless the jobless rate drops below 5 percent.

Opponents alleged the provision would benefit white residents in rural areas in counties with high unemployment rates, but disproportionately hurt beneficiaries in largely black cities like Detroit and Flint, where the jobless rate is high but the countywide rate is low.

Shirkey denied any allegations of racism, and said the unemployment provision was changed after Gov. Snyder's office pointed out the complexity of tracking the unemployment rate in all 83 counties on an ongoing basis.

In additional changes, Shirkey said a new version of the bill could lower the proposed 29-hours-per-week workforce engagement requirement for able-bodied adults to close to 20-hours, which is closer to the Medicaid work laws enacted in other states and with Michigan's work requirement for food assistance beneficiaries.

The workforce engagement requirement would need to be met to qualify for state-funded health insurance, employment, education, job training, vocational training, an internship, or participation in substance abuse treatment. Anyone deemed noncompliant during a month would be issued a warning. If they did not become compliant within 30 days, they would be barred from Medicaid for a year.

Shirkey said the intent is not to punish who misses a reporting deadline by a day or two, but on trying to prevent a person fraudulently claiming to be working or seeking work.

MM&A Briefs

Snyder issues emergency “no-anchor” order in Straits of Mackinac

Gov. Rick Snyder issued an emergency order today that prohibits boats and ships from deploying, dragging, setting or otherwise using an anchor in a defined area of the Straits of Mackinac, unless it is an emergency, or the ship has prior written permission.

The order follows an April anchor strike in the area which dented an oil pipeline and broke transmission cables. The new rule was signed by Snyder and Department of Natural Resources Director Keith Creagh.

The state is also working with the U.S. Coast Guard to create more permanent measures.

Debate set for Democrat gubernatorial candidates

All three candidates for the Democratic nomination for governor will take part in two debates scheduled for Wednesday, June 20 at WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids; and Thursday, July 19 at WDIV-TV in Detroit. The debates will be televised and will include former Senate Minority Leader Gretchen Whitmer, former Detroit Public Health Director Dr. Abdul El-Sayed and former business executive Shri Thanedar.

Calendar of Important Events

- May 29 Rep. Sherry Gay-Dagnogo (D-Detroit) Fundraiser
Location: 10:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Sara Cambensy (D-Marquette) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- May 30 Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof (R-West Olive) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Yankee Rebel, Mackinac Island
- May 31 Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) Fundraiser
Location: 10:30 a.m., Millies on Main, Mackinac Island
- Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) Fundraiser
Location: 11 a.m., Yankee Rebel Tavern, Mackinac Island
- 11th U.S. House District Candidate Sen. Mike Kowall (R) Fundraiser
Location: 12 p.m., Mustang Lounge, Mackinac Island
- Sen. Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) and Rep. Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) Reception
Location: 12 p.m., Island House Hotel, Mackinac Island
- House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) and House Republican Caucus Reception
Location: 1:30 p.m., Chippewa Hotel, Mackinac Island
- 21st Senate District Candidate Rep. Kim LaSata (R-Bainbridge Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 3 p.m., Island House Hotel, Mackinac Island
- Detroit Progress Fund Reception
Location: 4 p.m., The Stroh Cottage, West Bluff, Mackinac Island
- Senate Republican Caucus Reception
Location: 8 p.m., Deck, Chippewa Hotel, Mackinac Island
- June 5 Rep. Ronnie Peterson (D-Ypsilanti) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- June 6 Rep. Eric Leutheuser (R-Hillsdale) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Restaurant Association, Lansing
- 26th Senate District Candidate Aric Nesbitt (R) Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Brandt Iden (R-Oshtemo) Fundraiser
Location: 12 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

June 7

Rep. Beth Griffin (R-Mattawan) Fundraiser

Location: 7:30 a.m., Grand Traverse Pie Company, Lansing

Rep. Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Twp.) Fundraiser

Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing

Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) Fundraiser

Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing

Rep. Jim Lower (R-Cedar Lake) Fundraiser

Location: 10:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing

Rep. Sheldon Neeley (D-Flint) Fundraiser

Location: 10:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing