

# CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF AUGUST 19, 2019

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## **WHITMER SETS FRIDAY DEADLINE FOR PROGRESS ON BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Despite optimism from Republican leaders on their budget proposals, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer warned this week that progress towards a consensus on the 2019-20 budget must be made by the end of Friday, or her administration would begin preparing for a possible partial government shutdown Oct 1.

Republican leaders met with the Whitmer administration on Thursday, with House Speaker Lee Chatfield telling reporters that he was “very encouraged” by the meeting. “What we did today was we continued to present different ideas and alternatives to what we think would fix the roads and spend the taxpayers' dollars responsibly,” he said.

Whitmer’s spokesperson, Tiffany Brown, however, said that the Republican plan involved cutting education spending by \$400 per pupil and that this core element is one “that the governor has long said she will not support.”

Brown said this would happen if the Republican proposal to cut the 6 percent sales tax on fuel and replace it with a new road tax. Currently, the fuel tax goes mainly to k-12 schools. The question facing Republicans is how to fill in the \$850 million in revenues which would be lost from the fuel tax. The Republican plan attempts to maintain revenue in the first year by keeping School Aid Fund money with K-12 schools.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey issued a statement and tweeted a response. “I’ll be keeping the details of our negotiations confidential, as we each agreed to do, but nothing we have discussed would cut the record funding Republicans have provided for schools,” Shirkey said on Twitter.

## **OPIOID TASK FORCE CREATED TO ADDRESS CRISIS**

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive order this week forming the Michigan Opioid Task Force to address Michigan’s opioid crisis. The advisory group will include a range of state government leaders.

“As governor, my number one priority is protecting our families and our overall public health,” Whitmer said. “Right now, Michigan is among the states with the highest levels of opioid prescriptions and overdose deaths, with 2,053 overdoses in 2017 alone. This task force will bring us one step closer to finally ending the opioid epidemic in Michigan and keeping families safe.”

The task force will be led by Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Michigan’s chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The task force will focus on identifying root causes of the epidemic, creating solutions to help residents struggling with addiction to get the services they need, public awareness, increasing access to medication assisted treatment, harm reduction and treating specialized populations.

### **GAGLIARDI, LASHER APPOINTED TO LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer appointed Democrat Patrick Gagliardi and Republican Geralyn Lasher to full-time positions on the Michigan Liquor Control Commission this week.

Gagliardi will serve as chair of the five-person committee.

The appointees will replace Commissioner Teri Quimby and former Liquor Control Commission Chair Andy Deloney, whose terms expired in June.

Gagliardi served in the House from 1983 to 1998, and was previously appointed to the Liquor Control Commission by former Gov. Jennifer Granholm in 2003 and served until 2011.

Lasher was the communications director for former Gov. Rick Snyder.

### **COULTER APPOINTED NEW OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Following several weeks of aggressive political jockeying, Oakland County has a Democrat County Executive for the first time in 27 years. Dave Coulter resigned as mayor of Ferndale on Aug. 20 and was sworn in to serve out the remainder of the late L. Brooks Patterson's term the same day. The term runs through the end of 2020.

After Patterson's death in early August, Coulter was selected by the Oakland County Commission's small Democratic majority. Coulter, unlike others in the running, had not been vying for the position. Coulter was planning to run for state legislature before his new role.

### **MM&A Briefs**

#### **Former House Speaker Tom Leonard nominated for U.S. Attorney in Grand Rapids**

The White House has tapped Former Michigan House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) to be the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Michigan.

Leonard, who served three terms in the state House, was an assistant prosecutor in the Genesee County Prosecutor's Office and an assistant in the state Attorney General's Office, before running for the legislature.

After leaving the House at the end of 2018, Leonard opened a consulting firm, and ran for Michigan attorney general in 2018, losing to Democrat Dana Nessel.

#### **Former Legislator and State Budget Director, Don Gilmer, dies at 73**

Kalamazoo politician, longtime state representative, and former budget director Don Gilmer, died on Aug. 12 at the age of 73.

Gilmer, an apple farmer, began his career in 1973 as a Kalamazoo County commissioner. He later served as a state Representative from 1976 to 1998 and became a strong advocate for education. At

the time, Gilmer was the first House Republican to chair the Appropriations Committee in more than 20 years. After leaving the House, Gilmer was the state budget director under Gov. John Engler.

### **Calendar of Important Events**

**Aug. 28      Sen. Kevin Daley (R-Lum) Fundraiser**  
Location: 6 p.m., Bednarski Farms, 60 West Cass City Road, Unionville

**Sept. 4      Rep. Mary Whiteford (R-Casco Twp.) Fundraiser**  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing

**Sen. Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Twp.) Fundraiser**  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

**Rep. Beth Griffin (R-Mattawan) Fundraiser**  
Location: 12 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

**Rep. Padma Kuppa (D-Troy) Fundraiser**  
Location: Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing, 4:30 p.m.

**Michigan Republican Party Fundraiser**  
Location: 5 p.m., Troppo, Lansing

**Sept. 5      Sen. Tom Barrett (R-Charlotte) Fundraiser**  
Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

**Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) Fundraiser**  
Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing

**Rep. Isaac Robinson (D-Detroit) Fundraiser**  
Location: 10:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

**House Democratic Fund Fundraiser**  
Location: 5:30 p.m., Creston Brewery, Grand Rapids

**Sen. John Bizon (R-Battle Creek) Fundraiser**  
Location: 5:30 p.m., 114 Castle Ridge Drive, Battle Creek