

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 17, 2020

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GOVERNOR WHITMER'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATION PRESENTATIONS GET ROLLING

House and Senate higher education appropriations subcommittees met this week to discuss Whitmer's budget recommendations and pick apart portions including the student loan refinancing program and tuition restraint.

Members of a Senate appropriations subcommittee questioned officials from the Department of Treasury, asking if the Governor's proposed \$10 million student loan refinancing program is really necessary.

The House Appropriations Universities and Community Colleges Subcommittee and the Senate Appropriations Universities and Community Colleges Subcommittee met separately Thursday to discuss the higher education budget with leading university and community colleges and pick apart portions of the higher education budget with the Senate focusing on the Indian Tuition Waiver and the proposed loan refinancing program.

The House appropriations higher education subcommittee heard from leading higher education associations that opposed the language in Whitmer's budget on tuition restraint.

Governor Whitmer proposed a \$1.7 billion higher education budget for the fiscal year 2020-21.

PURE MICHIGAN HOPES FUNDING CAN BE RESTORED

There is movement to restore Pure Michigan funding in the current budget cycle, with Travel Michigan and legislators holding out hope they will be able to continue the successful advertising campaign yet this fiscal year.

Whitmer recently told reporters that a potential spending bill directing money to funding to Pure Michigan was "very possible." She also added that there are some resources to put into Pure Michigan to enable the campaign to do some ad buys still this spring.

Vice President of Travel Michigan David Lorenz spoke at the 2020 Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism this week saying that he is confident the campaign will still get funding for this year.

Whitmer line-item vetoed Pure Michigan funding as part of nearly \$1 billion in line-item vetoes in the budget last fall. She then then proposed restoring \$15 million in funding for the next fiscal year, less than half of what it was slated to get before the veto.

Legislative supporters of Pure Michigan funding include northern Michigan Republican Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), who is advocating for between \$15 and \$20 million for the Fiscal Year 2020 to purchase ads to draw visitors in late summer and early fall.

The campaign currently has no paid advertising running, with all campaigns ending at the end of 2019.

Any funding for this year would be separate from the \$15 million in the Governor's latest budget proposal.

Travel industry and some legislators have called for the Pure Michigan budget to be fully restored, or at least \$30 million for the next fiscal year.

Others, including Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clark Lake) are suggesting the remainder, or even most, of the funding for the tourism campaign should come from the travel industry itself.

RUNESTAD BILL WOULD ALLOW ATTORNEYS' FEES FOR OPEN MEETING ACT VIOLATIONS

Senate Bill 104, sponsored by Sen. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake) would restore the ability of courts to award attorney fees and court costs in cases when government boards violate the Open Meetings Act.

Proponents of the bill say it would restore an important option for residents to ensure government accountability. Opponents argue that the bill could cost taxpayers more to settle cases and would open the door to punishing local governments for simple human errors.

Under the law, a civil action to compel compliance with the Open Meetings Act could be initiated by the Department of Attorney General, the county prosecutor in which the county the alleged violation occurred, or a private citizen.

"The court's decision has resulted in a deterioration of protections for citizens who cannot afford to bring a case and attorneys are unable to take cases because the public body can appeal the decision far beyond a normal citizen's ability to pay," Runestad said. "A climate has developed where citizens are unable to hold their townships, municipalities, counties and school boards accountable."

Opponents of the bill, including local governments, say that often governments are not intentionally trying to violate the law and that many compliance violations are due to underfunding, understaffing and simple human errors that result in a meeting notice being filed after the deadline, or errors in information.

NCAA ATHLETE PAY BILLS HEAT UP WITH "IMAGE AND LIKENESS" DISCUSSION

A Senate Panel listened to former student athletes testify that they should be able to own the rights to their own likeness during their time as amateur athletes when they can benefit from their skills, and that even minimal compensation for their name and likeness would be helpful.

Sponsored by Sen. Adam Hollier (D-Detroit), Senate Bill 660 would prohibit sports organizations from blocking student athletes from receiving compensation for the use of his or her name, image or likeness. Hollier said that student athletes are the only individuals who are not allowed to

receive compensation and benefit from their talents until they become professionals. The bill would address organizations including high schools, public and private institutions of higher education, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The bill includes the potential of these organizations receiving a civil fine of up to \$100,000 if they violate the proposed changes. Recently, the NCAA announced it would work toward allowing compensation of student athletes, with several states introducing similar legislation.

OSCODA-WURTSMITH POTENTIAL SITE FOR SPACE LAUNCH

The Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association announced this week that the Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport would be the most likely candidate for a potential horizontal, low-orbit spaceport in Michigan based on an eight-month site selection process.

MAMA officials said that the location meets the needs of a possible site to support space launching capabilities due in part to its infrastructure, business capacity and safety track record. The airport was one of eight sites considered. The study was conducted after the Legislature approved \$2 million in June 2019 for a feasibility study of developing launch sites in the state. The MAMA is expected to submit its feasibility study to the MEDC by the second quarter of this year.

MM&A Briefs

Fourth Vaping Related Death Reported in Michigan

The Department of Health and Human Services announced this week that a fourth person has died in Michigan from a vaping related illness. The adult woman's death was reported on Feb. 19. The state has had 73 probable and confirmed vaping related lung injury cases since August 2019 in people ages 15 to 67.

Poll Shows Dems Leading or Close to Trump in Michigan

A new poll of Michigan voters released Thursday shows the presidential race is close in the state with all of the top Democratic presidential candidates topping Trump.

The poll, by Quinnipiac University also showed Trump leading in Wisconsin, but trailing in Pennsylvania. All three state narrowly backed Trump in 2016.

According to the poll, in Michigan each of the Democrats were leading in close matchups with Trump, even though some were within the 3.4-percentage-point margin of error.

The Democratic candidates' leads:

- Bernie Sanders, 48% to Trump's 43%
- Mike Bloomberg, 47% to Trump's 42%
- Joe Biden, 47% to Trump's 43%
- Elizabeth Warren, 45% to Trump's 43%
- Pete Buttigieg, 45% to Trump's 44%
- Amy Klobuchar, 45% to Trump's 44%

The poll also shows Trump's job approval rating among Michigan voters as 54 percent disapproving and 42 approving of Mr. Trump's four years in office.

Calendar of Important Events

- Feb. 25** **Sen. Kevin Daley (R-Lum) Fundraiser**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Karen Whitsett (D-Detroit) Fundraiser**
Location: 10 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Pamela Hornberger (R-Chesterfield) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 11 a.m., Governor's Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Beth Griffin (R-Mattawan) Fundraiser**
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth) Fundraiser**
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing
- Rep. Brenda Carter (D-Pontiac) Fundraiser**
Location: 4 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Friends of Mackinac Reception**
Location: 5 p.m., Kelley Cawthorne, Lansing
- Rep. Joe Tate (D-Detroit) Fundraiser**
Location: 5 p.m., Kelly's Downtown, Lansing
- Senate Republican Campaign Committee Fundraiser**
Location: 5 p.m., Cascade Country Club, 3725 Cascade Road, SE, Grand Rapids
- Feb. 26** **Rep. Gary Eisen (R-Saint Clair Township) Fundraiser**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Sen. Tom Barrett (R-Charlotte) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 11:30 a.m., Governor's Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr. (D-East Lansing) Fundraiser**
Location: 4 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Feb. 27** **House Speaker Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 8 a.m., Governor's Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Sheryl Kennedy (D-Davison) Fundraiser**
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing
- Rep. Thomas Albert (R-Lowell) Fundraiser**
Location: 8 a.m., Grand Traverse Pie Company, Lansing

- Feb. 27** **9th Annual Legislative Polar Plunge**
Location: 3 p.m., East steps of the Capitol, Lansing
- March 2** **Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 4:30 p.m., Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss American Center, 27777
Franklin Road, Suite 2500, Southfield.
Special guest: Governor Gretchen Whitmer
- Rep. Bill Sowerby (D-Clinton Twp.) Fundraiser**
Location: 5:30 p.m., Ms. Mary's and Pete Too Restaurant,
34000 South Gratiot Ave., Clinton Twp., 5:30 p.m.
- March 3** **Rep. Doug Wozniak (R-Shelby Twp.) Fundraiser**
Location: 4 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Room, Lansing
- Sen. Sylvia Santana (D-Detroit) Fundraiser**
Location: 5:30 p.m., 18426 Plymouth Road, Detroit
(Comedy Hour Fundraiser until 8:30 p.m.)
- March 4** **Rep. Hank Vaupel (R-Handy Twp.) Fundraiser**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Rep. Jack O'Malley (R-Lake Ann) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Sen. Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Twp.) PAC Fundraiser**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Governor's Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Rep. Ryan Berman (R-Commerce Twp.) Fundraiser**
Location: 10:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- House Democratic Fund Fundraiser**
Location: 5 p.m., Radisson Hotel Lansing, 111 North Grand Ave., Lansing
(Special guest: Governor Gretchen Whitmer)
- Rep. Scott VanSingel (R-Grant) Fundraiser**
Location: 5 p.m., Governors Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing
- March 5** **Rep. Sarah Lightner (R-Springport) Fundraiser**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing
- Sen. Kim LaSata (R-Bainbridge Twp.) Fundraiser**
Location: 8 a.m., Governor's Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing
- Sen. Dayna Polehanki (D-Livonia) Fundraiser**
Location: 11:30 a.m., Governor's Room, Karoub Associates, Lansing