

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2021



McAlvey Merchant
& ASSOCIATES

DHHS DIRECTOR SAYS CASES TOO LOW FOR STATEWIDE COVID-19 ORDER

Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services Director Elizabeth Hertel said this week that the number of current coronavirus case rates in the state is not high enough to trigger a statewide epidemic order.

Hertel said that although there has been a clear rise, it is not a surge resulting in overcrowded hospitals as earlier in the pandemic.

"I continue to watch our case rates every day. We're seeing somewhat of an increase, but at this point, nothing is indicative of a spike that I think would require any sort of action," she said. "But that's today. And again, I continue to watch these very closely, as you would imagine and I can't predict the future."

Hertel and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer have been criticized for not issuing a new order, or even a statewide mask mandate for K-12 students, leaving it up to county health officers and school districts to issue orders.

Hertel acknowledged that although a statewide order would take the pressure off local health and school officials, "the science today does not lead me to believe that we need action statewide."

LEONARD TO RUN FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

The 2018 Republican nominee for Michigan's Attorney General—former House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt)—announced today that he will be running again for the Republican nomination in next year's election.

Leonard, who lost the race to Attorney General Dana Nessel by less than 3 percentage points, is currently a private practice attorney who previously was an assistant prosecutor in Genesee County.

To gain the Republican nomination, Leonard will first need to beat out Kalamazoo Republican, Attorney Matt DePerno, who is endorsed by former President Donald Trump. State Rep. Ryan Berman (R-Commerce Twp.) is also seeking the Republican nomination.

"Michigan voters are going to decide whether they want an attorney general who refuses to defend our police and uses the office for political activism or an attorney general who stands with our police officers and believes in the rule of law," Leonard said. "I've served alongside law

enforcement. I've worked with crime victims and their families. I know what it takes to get the job done and keep people safe. When I am Michigan's next attorney general, we are going to put a stop to the political games and finally use that office as a force for good."

LEGISLATURE SENDS \$70B STATE BUDGET TO WHITMER

After negotiations between Republican legislative leaders and the administration, the Legislature passed two bills on Wednesday that included funding general government and higher education to meet its deadline to have a budget in place before the fiscal year 2021-22 begins on Oct. 1. Both sides have stated they are pleased with the outcome.

Senate Bill 82 for general government funding passed the Senate 35-0 and the House 99-6. House Bill 4400, which funds higher education, passed the Senate, 34-2 and the House, 97-8. A \$17 billion budget for K-12 education was previously passed in July.

Although billions have been approved, legislative leaders and the Administration still have another \$5.77 billion in federal relief funds to be appropriated, mostly from President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan and \$2.1 billion ARPA funds that already have specific purposes. By using the federal funds to pay for many state operations, there is about \$2.86 billion in state revenues to be appropriated.

"We made a huge investment with this budget, and we've gotten a lot of things accomplished," said Gov. Whitmer. "I think the coverage in today's papers across the state ... shows precisely all the different priorities, whether it's childcare, obviously we all know about the education, closing the skills gap, support for small business. We've done an incredible amount with this budget. But our work's not done, of course. I mean, this was a critical time. It's got to be done before October 1st. It's going to be done before October 1st. But we're not leaving the table and waiting until next year's budget to continue conversations around the next set of investments."

Agencies such as the conservative National Federation of Independent Business of Michigan supported the \$150 million in state funding which was deposited into the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. While liberal organizations including the Michigan League for Public Policy were pleased with the support for childcare.

While the two sides agreed on most of the budget items, Gov. Whitmer said "some of them we still don't see eye to eye on. That's OK."

"The Legislature's doing their work this week, they're going to send it to us. As soon as it comes, we will do our task of going through line by line of the budget, see what is enforceable, what might not be enforceable and then I will do my action and get it signed and make some changes, if necessary. There (is) going to be a very clear look at some of that language," she said.

One of these could be the boilerplate language in the budget bills that would bar certain vaccine mandates as well as some mask rules for K-12 students. The boilerplate language can be made unenforceable by Whitmer.

REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD MAP COMPLETION

The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission continues to work on draft House districts, after completing a Senate redistricting map and working on the U.S. House map. The commission aims to complete the mapmaking soon to allow time for Voting Rights Act analysis, a racial bloc voting analysis, and a partisan fairness evaluation after the maps are completed. The commission is also receiving real-time VRA analysis and racial bloc voting analysis.

The commission is facing extra pressure to complete the maps due to several factors including U.S. Census data delays, concerns about the transparency of the process, and problems making the maps available to the public.

MM&A BRIEFS

FORMER REPRESENTATIVE JACK MINORE, 82, DIES

Former Democratic Representative Jack Minore, from Flint, died last week at the age of 82. Minore was committed to the causes of organized labor and public education. A member of the first class of legislators in the state after term limits were enacted, Minore also staunchly opposed term limits.

After years on the Flint City Council, Minore served in the House from 1998 to 2004. Born in Flint, Minore went to Mott Community College and obtained his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan-Flint. He earned a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University.

CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

- Sept. 25 Rep. Stephanie Young (D-Detroit) Prayer and Laughter Breakfast**
Location: 9:30 a.m., Historic Pure Word MBC, 20011 Grand River Ave., Detroit
- Sept. 27 Rep. Bryan Posthumus (R-Oakfield Twp.) 1st Annual Golf Outing**
Location: 8 a.m., Scott Lake Golf & Practice Center, 911 Haynes Road NE,
Comstock Park
- Rep. John Cherry (D-Flint) - 3rd Annual Sporting Clay Shoot**
Location: 9 a.m., Grand Blanc Sportsman Club, 9046 Irish Road, Grand Blanc
- Rep. Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing) for State Senate**
Location: 5:30 p.m., Leroy's Classic Bar & Grill, 1526 South Cedar St., Lansing
- Sept. 28 Rep. Mark Tisdell (R-Rochester Hills) Breakfast Reception**
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association, 225
W. Washtenaw St., Lansing

Friends of Rep. Mari Manoogian (D-Birmingham)

Location: 8 a.m., Karoub Associates, 121 West Allegan St., Lansing

Rep. Tim Sneller (D-Burton) Fall Fundraiser

Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend St., Lansing

Rep. Padma Kuppa (D-Troy) Fundraiser

Location: 4:30 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend St., Lansing

Children's Trust Fund 19th Annual Pam Posthumus Auction

Location: 7 p.m., Virtual Auction (registration required),

Sept. 29

Rep. Diana Farrington (R-Utica) Breakfast Reception

Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, First Floor, 208 North Capitol Ave., Lansing

Rep. Yousef Rabhi (D-Ann Arbor) Fall Pizza Party

Location: 11 a.m., Karoub Associates, 121 West Allegan St., Lansing

Friends of Sen. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit)

Location: 4 p.m., Midtown Brewing Company, 402 South Washington Square, Lansing

Rep. Nate Shannon (D-Sterling Heights) Fall Fundraiser

Location: 4:30 p.m., Kelly's Downtown, 220 South Washington Square, Lansing

Rep. Laurie Pohutsky (D-Livonia) Pizza Party

Location: 5 p.m., Karoub Associates, 121 West Allegan St., Lansing

Senate Republican Campaign Committee

Location: 5 p.m., Oak Pointe Country Club, 4500 Club Dr., Brighton

Sen. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake) for State Senate

Location: 6 p.m., Steinway Piano Gallery, 2700 E West Maple Road, Commerce Charter Twp.

Sept. 30

Rep. Jack O'Malley (R-Lake Ann) Reception

Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, 121 West Allegan St., Lansing

**Breakfast Reception with the Lansing Regional Chamber-PAC
Candidates**

Location: 8 a.m., Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, 500 E Michigan Ave.,
UNIT 200

Oct. 1 Sen. Roger Victory (R-Georgetown Twp.) for Senate

Location: 9 a.m., Pigeon Creek Golf Course, 10195 120th Ave., West Olive

Oct. 3 Sen. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit) Grosse Pointe Farms Reception

Location: 3 p.m., 63 Cloverly Road, Grosse Pointe Farms