

# CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022



McAlvey Merchant  
& ASSOCIATES

## **MDHHS ENDS MOST INDOOR MASK MANDATES**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services made changes to its COVID-19 mask guidance this week by dropping the public health recommendations for masks in most indoor public spaces and K-12 schools. The department said that the state is moving to a recovery phase of the pandemic which happens after a surge. The terms used to identify the other two phases of the pandemic are Response phase (when local and state public health departments implement rapid response to a surge) and Readiness phase (when there are possible new risks, or a surge in cases is expected.)

The department is still advising that the public wear masks in “high-risk congregate care settings, including health care facilities, long-term care facilities and jails.”

Although most county health departments have withdrawn mask mandates for K-12 schools, the state and local health guidance still allows school districts to implement mask mandates for their buildings.

## **STATE LAUNCHES \$409M GRANT PROGRAM FOR BUSINESSES FACING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP FROM PANDEMIC**

The Michigan Department of Treasury announced that it will be administering a \$409 Million Afflicted Business Relief Grant Program for businesses that faced financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses impacted by the pandemic can apply for a grant up to \$5 million.

Businesses that were operating before Oct. 1, 2019 are eligible to receive a grant of up to \$5 million based on the percentage of decline in year-to-year sales in Michigan for 2020 from 2019. Businesses that began between Oct. 1, 2019 and June 1, 2020 are also eligible, and may receive a grant of 25% of their “financial hardship,” which includes their 2020 fixed costs.

“This program will support Michigan businesses that were impacted by COVID-19 and help us build on our economic momentum,” Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said in a statement.

The funding, which is from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, will be administered through the Michigan Department of Treasury. Also, if needed, grants may be prorated on an equal basis to all eligible businesses.

According to the Department of Treasury, applications will be available to businesses starting on Tuesday, March 1 at a.m. at [Michigan.gov/abr](https://www.michigan.gov/abr). The applications will remain open until 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, with grants to be distributed by July 1. The department is also holding informational webinars next week for businesses interested in applying.

### **STATE SENATE PASSES PERSONAL AND CORPORATE INCOME TAX CUTS**

On Tuesday, state Senate Republicans approved a \$2 billion tax cut proposal that would lower Michigan's individual and corporate income tax rates to 3.9 percent.

Senate Bill 768 passed the Senate 22-16 along party lines. Supporters of the bill say it will help families and businesses who were impacted by the pandemic.

Sponsored by Sen. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton), the bill would lower the state income tax rate to 3.9 percent from 4.25 percent for individuals and 6 percent for corporations, beginning January 1, 2022. In addition, it would offer a \$500 tax credit per child to families.

The passed bill also included an increase in the deduction someone can claim on retirement benefits, providing tax relief for senior citizens ages 67 and older. The proposal would lower the taxable income by \$30,000 for a single return and \$60,000 for a joint return. Beginning in the 2023 tax year the deduction would rise with inflation, rounded to the nearest \$100 increment.

Opponents of the bill said it offered little to residents and shifts the tax burden from corporations to people.

House Republicans have reportedly said they are also putting together their own proposal.

Both Republicans and Democrats have been considering tax cuts. Gov. Whitmer has proposed restoration of exemptions on retirement income and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit which was cut in 2011.

### **MM&A BRIEFS**

#### **FORMER FLINT MAYOR AND STATE REP. WOODROW STANLEY DIES**

Former Flint Mayor and State Rep. Woodrow Stanley (D-Flint) died at Hurley Hospital on Tuesday at age 71.

Stanley was mayor of Flint from 1991 until he was recalled from office in 2002 due to the city's financial and economic difficulties. Stanley won election to the Genesee County Board of Commissioners in 2004 and served on the board until 2008. He was then elected to the Michigan House of Representatives where he served for six years starting in 2008. Stanley was also President of the Michigan Municipal League.

## **WEISS MOVES TO CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Kurt Weiss, a long-tenured public information officer will be moving from his seven-year post in the State Budget Office to the Civil Service Commission. In addition to working with the State Budget Office, Weiss has served as public information officer for the Department of Technology, Management and Budget and before that the Department of Information Technology. In his role as public information officer, he has served as spokesperson for departmental directors for appointed by Governors John Engler, Jennifer Granholm, Rick Snyder and Gretchen Whitmer.

## **WHITMER CHANGES NAME OF STATE ARTS COUNCIL**

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced on Feb. 11 that the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs is changing its name to the Michigan Arts and Culture Council. "After years of knowing we needed to update our name, we are looking forward to moving ahead with a new name and soon, a new logo," said MACC Director Alison Watson. The agency is housed in the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. In fiscal year 2021, MACC made a total of \$9.1 million in 766 grant awards to arts and culture organizations in 72 of Michigan's 83 counties.

## **CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT EVENTS**

### **Feb. 22 Sen. Doug Wozniak (R-Shelby Twp.) Breakfast Reception**

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

### **Sen. Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids) for State Senate**

Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend St., Lansing

### **Rep. Samantha Steckloff (D-Farmington Hills) Winter Fundraiser**

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

### **Feb. 23 Sen. Roger Victory (R-Georgetown Twp.) Breakfast on the Farm**

Location: 8 a.m., The Freedom Embassy, 6th Floor, 123 West Allegan St., Lansing

### **Sen. Paul Wojno (D-Warren) for State Senate**

Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend St., Lansing

### **Rep. Cynthia Neely (D-Flint) Winter Luncheon**

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

### **43rd House District Candidate Lindsay Kronemeyer (R) CTE**

Location: 4 p.m., Kindsvatter, Dalling and Associates, 629 W. Hillsdale St., Lansing

### **Kent County Treasurer Peter MacGregor (R) MAC PAC Fundraiser**

Location: 5 p.m., Kelly's Downtown, 220 S. Washington Sq., Lansing

**Rep. Sarah Lightner (R-Springport) Margaritas for Majority**

Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend St., Lansing

**Rep. John Damoose (R-Harbor Springs) for State Senate**

Location: 5 p.m., Capitol White House, 322 West Ottawa, Lansing

**Feb. 24 Rep. Luke Meerman (R-Coopersville) Breakfast Reception**

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

**Rep. Kevin Coleman (D-Westland) 2022 In-District Kickoff**

Location: 5:30 p.m., Los Amigos Restaurant, 7667 North Wayne Road, Westland

**Feb. 25 Rep. Brenda Carter (D-Pontiac) Mardi Gras**

Location: 5:30 p.m., The Crofoot, 1 South Saginaw, Pontiac

**March 1 Sen. Ruth Johnson (R)**

Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend St., Lansing

**Rep. Alex Garza (D-Taylor) - Lunch Fundraiser**

Location: 11:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, 121 West Allegan St., Lansing

**Rep. Brenda Carter (D-Pontiac) -Mardi Gras Cook-Off**

Location: 5:30 p.m., Gregory's Soul Food, 2510 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing

**March 2 Rep. Andrew Fink (R-Hillsdale) Leadership Luncheon**

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

**Rep. Michele Hoitenga (R-Manton) Evening Reception**

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

**March 3 Rep. Bronna Kahle (R-Adrian) Breakfast Reception**

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

**Rep. Julie Rogers (D-Kalamazoo) "Fat Thursday"**

Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Association of Counties, 2nd Floor, 110 West Michigan Ave., Lansing

**House Speaker Jason Wentworth (R-Farwell) Leadership Breakfast  
Reception**

Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, 332 Townsend  
St., Lansing

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