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Advocacy & Public Affairs

UPDATES FROM THE CAPITOL **October 30 - November 10, 2023**

NOVEMBER 7TH ELECTION UPDATE

Representatives Lori Stone (D-Warren) and Kevin Coleman (D-Westland) both won their respective mayoral elections on Tuesday, November 7. The two local elections will impact the Michigan House as it creates an even split of 54 Democrat to 54 Republican seats. The two Representatives will soon resign from their current positions as they transition to their new roles as Mayor. In response to the loss of two Michigan Representatives, the Governor will hold special elections for the open seats. Amid the change, Representative Joe Tate (D-Detroit) will continue to act as the Speaker of the House for the remainder of the term. The requirement that legislation must be approved by a majority adds a layer of complexity in the now evenly split Michigan House.

In other election news, Michigan voters in Kalamazoo, East Lansing, and Royal Oak all voted for ranked choice voting for municipal elections. Ranked choice voting allows voters to rank their preferred candidates, meaning the top two candidates would ultimately receive all of the votes without splitting the votes three ways. Although the state does not allow ranked choice voting at a municipal level, there have been efforts in the past to change this voting system. Ann Arbor has previously voted for ranked choice voting as well.

The eight marijuana proposals were not favored by voters in the November 2023 elections. Most of the marijuana business proposals were concentrated in Oakland County, including Rochester and Birmingham. Voters rejected marijuana business to establish and build their facilities. Yale and Gross Pointe Park also voted against the establishment of marijuana centers.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE ACT PASSES WITH SETBACK

The Reproductive Health Care Act (RHA) passed in the Michigan House on Wednesday, November 1. Included in the RHA was the removal of the additional insurance policy to pay for an abortion, certain regulations for clinics, and language around partial-birth abortion procedures. However, this final approval of the bill package comes with amendments that ultimately passed in the closing margins of the House.

After an unforeseen no-vote in committee by Democrat Representative Karen Whitsett, Medicaid-funded abortions and the 24-hour waiting period were removed from the package to finally gain the Detroit Representative's vote.

This legislation follows the passing of Proposal 3, where Michigan residents voted in favor of abortion rights in November 2022.

CLEAN ENERGY BY 2040 PASSED IN HOUSE AND SENATE

A bill package summoning Clean Energy by 2040 passed in the Michigan House on Thursday, November 2. Originally a set of nine bills — five from the Senate and four from the House — this package was whittled down to a final seven. The House's initial four bills were consolidated into House Bills [5120](#) and [5121](#). Several amendments were made by the House before passing the final package. These amendments primarily focus on giving local government more authority over the energy projects and adjusting language within the legislation.

Senate Bills [271](#), [273](#), [502](#), [519](#), and [277](#) mandate that electric companies shall run entirely on clean energy by 2040 and will allow farmers to rent land to commercial solar projects. These projects alone could impose an additional cost of \$100 per month for Michigan residents due to new infrastructure that the projects would require, according to a Minnesota think tank. A recent press release by Governor Whitmer touts a savings of \$145 per year for each Michigander by incorporating clean energy, dampening the monthly project cost slightly. The clean energy legislation is also expected to assist in receiving \$7.8 million in federal investments and contribute to the addition of Michigan jobs.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PASSES IN THE SENATE AND HOUSE

On November 1, the Michigan Senate passed Senate Bills 613 - 616, which are collectively referred to as the Financial Disclosure Package. This legislation, stemming from the passing of Proposal 1, would require both state elected officials and their spouses to report their financial records. Specifically, elected officials and candidates will be compelled to report their income streams and assets that possess a value of \$1000 or more.

This legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, noting only two nay votes from Senator Lindsey (R-Coldwater) and Senator Runestad (R-White Lake). In the Michigan House, the Financial Disclosure Package passed after SBs [613](#) and [614](#) had two substitutes approved from the more than 20 rejected substitutions that were reviewed. The two agreed-upon substitutions require elected officials to disclose if their spouse worked with a state-registered vendor, both at present time or in the past. SBs [615](#) and [616](#) were approved favorably without substitutions. As these four bills reach the Governor's desk for signing, Michigan becomes the 48th state to require financial disclosing from their elected officials.

RICK SNYDER'S FLINT WATER CHARGES OFFICIALLY DISMISSED

Michigan's Supreme Court denied the Attorney General's appeal of former Governor Rick Snyder's charges being dismissed in the Flint Water case.

The court was not convinced to re-examine the case and stood by their decision to dismiss Snyder's charges. Snyder is only one of the seven cases that have been dismissed after the Attorney General's appeal was denied. A single misdemeanor charge against former Flint Public Works Director, Howard Croft, remains under review in the court.

The Attorney General Flint Water Crisis prosecution team plans to release a full report on the legal situation and a summary of the prosecution in 2024.

PETER MEIJER ANNOUNCES SENATE CANDIDACY

Former U.S. Representative and Iraqi veteran, Peter Meijer, announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate Race on November 7. Meijer's pursuit towards a Senate seat follows his 2022 loss to Republican primary opponent, John Gibbs. This loss has been attributed to Meijer's forthright impeachment vote against former President Trump following the U.S. Capitol riot in 2021.

Meijer will be the tenth Republican to run for Debbie Stabenow's previous Senate seat, running alongside notable candidates like James Craig and Mike Rogers.

TRUMP SUES MICHIGAN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT

Former President Donald Trump has filed a lawsuit against Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson for preventing him to appear on Michigan's presidential ballot in the upcoming 2024 election.

A Court of Claims judge ruled that Trump was not allowed to personally intervene in the case, including whether he can appear on the ballot. Although Trump had until October 30 to make a case allowing him to intervene and file a suit, Judge James Robert Redford has since denied his case.

Trump's lawyer, Robert LaBrant, is now pursuing a lawsuit with the objectives of securing Trump's name on the ballot and preventing the Secretary of State from taking further action on the situation.