



UPDATES FROM THE CAPITOL

March 2 - 31, 2024

FEDERAL COURT APPROVES DETROIT REDISTRICTING MAP

The federal panel overseeing the redistricting of several Detroit-area House districts has approved the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's Motown Sound remedy map for the upcoming 2024 elections. The court ruled that the commission's map complies with federal law, rejecting arguments for an alternative map. The Motown Sound map will be used for the upcoming elections after changes were made to 15 districts following the ruling that seven were unconstitutional. Read more about the redistricting and Supreme Court ruling [here](#).

[See the Michigan Motown Sound Final House District Map Here.](#)

GOVERNOR WHITMER SIGNS LEGISLATION IMPROVING CAR SEAT SAFETY FOR MICHIGAN KIDS

Last Thursday, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed HB 4511 and HB 4512, aimed at updating Michigan's child car seat restraint requirements.

[HB 4511 \(now PA 21 of 2024\)](#), aligns Michigan law with federal safety guidelines, providing additional protections for properly restrained children during travel. Sponsored by Rep. Carrie Rheingans (D-Ann Arbor), the bill received support from the Department of State Police and medical professionals, emphasizing the importance of proper child safety restraints in vehicles. Similarly, [HB 4512 \(now PA 22 of 2024\)](#), sponsored by Rep. John Fitzgerald (D-Wyoming), allows courts to waive fines or assessments for child restraint system violations if individuals can demonstrate evidence of receiving education on child safety restraints.

By aligning state standards with federal guidelines and providing avenues for education on child safety restraints, Michigan aims to create a safer environment for families and young passengers during travel.

OVER 1.4M MICHIGAN RESIDENTS RENEW MEDICAID COVERAGE; ADDRESSING COVERAGE CHALLENGES FOR 700,000+

In February, over 140,000 Michigan residents saw their Medicaid coverage renewed, bringing the total renewed coverage under Medicaid and the Healthy Michigan Plan to over 1.4 million individuals, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). However, an additional 14,688 individuals were removed from the rolls due to eligibility or procedural issues, resulting in a total of 701,589 residents who have lost their Medicaid health coverage since June 2023.

The post-pandemic purge has exceeded earlier predictions, with more than triple the predicted 200,000 cuts forecasted by the Michigan House Fiscal Agency last year. Despite these challenges, efforts are underway to maintain health care coverage for eligible residents, with the department

extending renewals and providing additional support to ensure continued access to care.

With ongoing renewal efforts and extensions, Medicaid recipients are encouraged to submit their paperwork and utilize available resources to maintain their coverage.

2024 WILL SEE HIGHER PERSONAL INCOME TAX RATE, MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS DECIDES

In a recent ruling, the Michigan Court of Appeals upheld setting the state's personal income tax rate to 4.25%, dismissing appeals for a return to the 4.05% rate that we saw in 2023. The three-judge panel's unanimous decision was grounded on an absence of legislative language declaring that the rate reduction would be permanent. The court also noted that including such verbiage would introduce the potential for compounding reductions that could jeopardize the existence of an income tax altogether.

The case, initiated by a coalition including two lawmakers and various taxpayers, contested Attorney General Dana Nessel's opinion that the reduced rate only applied to 2023. The Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which led the suit, plans to appeal based on the implication that the bill's language necessitates a permanent tax cut. Stay tuned for further developments as the appeal progresses.

SENATE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ADVANCES FOIA EXPANSION BILLS

The [Senate Oversight Committee](#) has reported SB 669 and SB 670, legislation aimed at expanding the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to cover the Legislature and Governor's office. Both bills received bipartisan and unanimous support from committee members, with only one abstention. If passed, the legislation lists exemptions for sensitive records, such as communication with constituents, internal investigations, and caucus counsel records. Exemptions for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor would also include information regarding appointments and personal safety concerns. Also outlined in the legislation are procedures for appointing FOIA coordinators and handling FOIA appeals.

With the passing of [SB 669](#) and [SB 670](#) out of committee, Michigan is one step closer to improving legislative transparency and accountability within our state government. After nearly a decade of unsuccessful attempts at passing similar legislation, the bills now face deliberation by the entire Senate. This upcoming vote will collectively decide the fate of the bills, representing the latest effort to increase government transparency in Michigan.