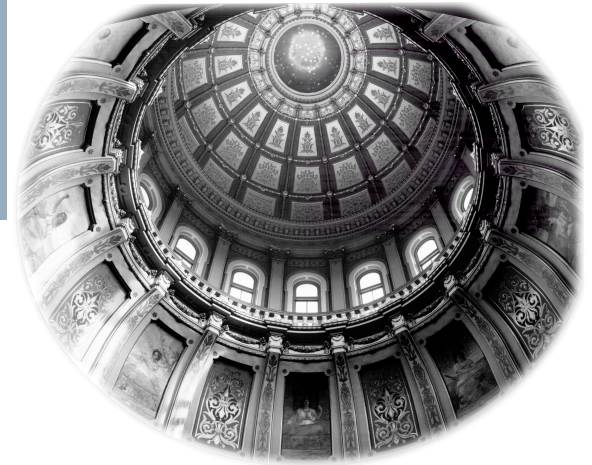


# CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 15, 2013

*Individual Attention. Precision Strategy. Proven Results.*



## **COURT OF CLAIMS TO MOVE**

With the stroke of his pen, Gov. Rick Snyder signed into law legislation (SB 0652) that moves the Michigan Court of Claims from Ingham County Circuit Court to the Michigan Court of Appeals.

His signature is on condition that lawmakers pass a trailer or repair bill dealing with right to trial by jury that would leave the current jury trials in circuit court. The House immediately introduced legislation (HB 5156) to clarify that concern. It was referred to the House Government Operations Committee.

Before the bill, which moved like lightning through the Legislature, there was hot debate, particularly in the House where the measure passed 57-52.

Proponents argued the move would allow judges to represent a broader portion of Michigan than just Ingham County to decide cases before Court of Claims which handles suits brought against the state.

House Democrats described the legislation a “hijacking of the Court of Claims” and “a political power grab.”

## **HIGH COURT NAMES COURT OF CLAIMS JUDGES**

The Michigan Supreme Court unanimously appointed four Court of Appeals judges to the new Court of Claims – two Democratic appointed COA judges and two GOP appointed COA judges.

Those appointed to the Court of Claims are Judges Pat Donofrio, Amy Ronayne Krause, Deborah Servitto and Michael Talbot.

Former Gov. John Engler appointed Donofrio and Talbot to the Court of Appeals. Krause and Servitto were appointed by former Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

## **CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS LIMITS INCREASED**

Legislation (SB 0661) that would double campaign contribution limits and triple campaign filing requirements in the off-years sailed through the Senate.

Two other campaign finance bills (SBs 0440 and 0441) were also fast-tracked through the upper chamber.

They would require committees to file campaign reports electronically if it received or spent at least \$5,000, rather than the current standard of \$20,000; extend the statewide electronic filing system to counties, if they chose to adopt it.

## **NO-CARRY ZONE, AMMO BILLS FIRE THROUGH THE HOUSE**

With bi-partisan support, the House passed legislation (HBs 4133, 4134, 4350 and 4715 through 4717) that expands the number of people who can carry firearms in gun-free zones and prohibit felons from carrying ammunition.

The first three bills allow active or retired corrections officers, certain federal law enforcement officers, active or retired probation officers and current or former prosecuting attorneys to carry pistols in designated “no-carry” areas like schools and day care centers.

The latter bills ban ex-felons from possessing ammunition, which goes along with current law that prohibits ex-felons from possessing guns.

### **LIQUOR CONTROL BILLS CLEAR THE SENATE**

A seven-bill package of legislation (SBs 0504 through 0507, SBs 0650 and 0651, and HB 4772) fast-tracked through the Senate last week.

The bills amend the Liquor Control Code, including one bill that codifies the state's current ban on secondary item that is currently under examination by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC).

Currently, MLCC rules prevent secondary items from allowing business owners to have a choice about whether or not to have logoed barware but the commissioners are reviewing those rules and considering changes.

Brian DeBano, president and CEO of the Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) expressed disappointment with what he called the "unanticipated action" adding, "I will be sure to consult with the [GOP] caucus the next time my members want to change ketchup brands to make sure they approve."

### **HOUSE PASSES BOOZE BILLS**

The House bellied up to the bar and passed a six-bill package of legislation (HBs 4709 through 4711, HB 4257 and HBs 5046 and 5140) that would bring several changes to state law regulating alcohol sales.

The first three bills would increase the amount of beer microbrewers can brew from 30,000 to 60,000 barrels per year, allow one brewpub to have a financial interest in up to five other locations, and allow a brewer to sell its beer at two tasting rooms instead of one.

The other legislation would open the door to customers at liquor-licensed restaurants to bring their own wine to dinner, allow for intra-county transfer of specially designated distributor licenses, and allow the Liquor Control Commission (LCC) to issue liquor licenses above current quota applicants within redevelopment project areas.

### **HOUSE PASSES BRIDGE CARD ATM BILLS**

Holders of Bridge Cards who want to access cash at ATMs located in a strip club, a casino, a liquor store or race track will be out of luck under a four-bill package if legislation (HBs 4858, 4859, 5014, and 5015) that has passed the House.

The Senate passed similar legislation in October.

### **NURSE PRESCRIPTION BILL GETS SENATE APPROVAL**

On a narrow 20-18 vote, legislation (SB 0002) that allows nurses with advanced degrees to write prescriptions and give referrals cleared the Senate.

Democrats offered several amendments but only one was adopted. It would require an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) to be held to the same standards as a physician when it comes to malpractice or licensure removal proceedings.

### **NO PROSE ON CON**

A House workgroup on Certificate of Need (CON) has concluded that the process is fair at this time, but more in-depth vetting is needed if changes are to be made.

Rep. Margaret O'Brien (R-Portage), co-chair of the workgroup told the House Health Policy Committee last week that if changes are to be recommended the issue has to be looked at holistically and intended and unintended consequences need to be understood.

Committee Chair Gail Haines (R-Waterford) has promised more discussion on CON.

## REVENUES ROLL IN

Based on the October 2013 revenue collections and on a year-to-date basis, the Senate Fiscal Agency (SFA) is reporting that state tax receipts are \$440 million over the May 2013 Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference estimates.

According to SFA, the above-forecast revenue is primarily reflected in collections from the State Education Tax (SET) and the repealed Michigan Business Tax (MBT).

General Fund collections are \$244.1 million higher and School Aid Fund collections are \$215.5 million higher than expected.

## POLITICS AND POLLS

**Steele won't run.** Ann Arbor-area physician Rob Steele says he will not seek the open U.S. Senate seat in 2014 as Republican. His decision leaves Republican National Committeewoman Terri Lynn Land, the former Secretary of State, as the only candidate in the Republican field.

## M M & A BRIEFS

**Senate passes Rx pot bill.** Legislation (SB 0660) that would treat medical marijuana like a pharmaceutical has passed the Senate. The measure advocates medical marijuana be treated like a medicine and sold in a pharmacy like setting, although the current caregiver system would also stand and run concurrently. The bill, if it becomes law, would not go into effect unless the federal government rescheduled marijuana from a Schedule I to a Schedule II substance.

**State obtains lease to Belle Isle.** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold a 30-year lease on Detroit's Belle Isle as a result of an agreement approved by the Michigan Treasury's Emergency Loan Board. (ELB). DNR Director Keith Creagh said the 30-year lease gives the DNR a better chance to secure grant opportunities. Detroit City Council members proposed a 10-year lease

## CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

Nov. 15/

Dec. 2 House and Senate on Fall Break

Dec. 3 Sen. Mike Nofs (R-Battle Creek) Lunch Reception  
Location: 11:30 a.m., Governor's Room, Lansing