



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

February 19, 2010

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORTS RECOUNT REFORM LEGISLATION

On Wednesday, the House Ethics and Elections Committee reported legislation to the House floor to require those requesting recounts to pick up more of the tab. The bill, HB 4821, introduced by Rep. Dan Scripps (D-Leland Twp.), raises from \$10 to \$25 the amount per precinct that a recount petitioner would need to deposit with the clerk. In addition, in races where the difference between the winning candidate and the losing candidate is more than 50 votes or 0.5 percent of the total number of votes cast in the race, whichever is greater, the recount petitioner would need to deposit with the clerk \$125.00 for each precinct being recounted. Sections of the bill also apply the new threshold to races where more than one candidate is elected (i.e. township trustees) and ballot proposals. MTA testified in support of the legislation citing numerous examples following the 2004 election where recounts were requested and/or conducted despite no possibility that the results would be overturned. The bill was amended to delete wording that would require the recount petitioner to pay the entire cost of the recount (where the margin of difference was greater than 0.5 percent or 50 votes) if the results were not overturned. Despite this change, MTA believes that the bill is a step in the right direction to curtailing frivolous recounts by requiring losing candidates to pay a larger portion of the recount costs. The bill is expected to be taken up on the House floor in the near future.

GOVERNOR ORDERS STATE HEALTH PLANS OPEN TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Gov. Jennifer Granholm issued Executive Directive 2010-1 this week to clear the way for all local governments, including schools and universities, to participate in the state of Michigan health care benefit plans offered to state employees. The directive gives the director of the Department of Management and Budget and the director of the Office of the State Employer until June 30 to identify and remove any barriers to participation in the state's health care benefit plans by local units. Under the governor's directive, being part of the state administered health plan is totally voluntary on the part of local governments. This differentiates the governor's plan from some of the plans that have been proposed legislatively that would **require** local governments to receive health insurance from a new plan administered by the state or that would require employees to pay a certain percentage of health care premium costs. The directive does not require legislative approval.

HOUSE INTRODUCES BILL PACKAGE TO ADDRESS PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Legislation was introduced on Thursday to provide options for townships related to requirements to publish legal notices in newspapers. HBs 5845 and 5847, sponsored by Reps. Joe Haveman (R-Holland) and Sharon Tyler (R-Niles), respectively, would amend current law for both charter and general law townships to allow for the posting of township legal notices on the township's Web site or on a Public, Education and Government (PEG) channel operated in the township. The bills are part of a coalition effort by local governments to help defray expensive costs related to newspaper legal notices. The bills state that in order for townships to satisfy the posting requirement for legal notices, it must be posted in the clerk's office and on at least one of the following: township's Web site, newspaper's Web site or on a PEG channel operated within the township. The bills have been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. One of the bills has as many as 26 co-sponsors.

RESERVE THE DATE: 2010 MTA CAPITOL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

The bi-annual *MTA Capitol Conference* brochure has just been sent out and should be arriving in your mailbox in the coming days. The conference will be held Wednesday, April 21 at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Lansing. It is a perfect opportunity to meet with your legislators and to learn more about key legislative issues impacting your township including: government reforms, state changes to the assessing process, the 2010 election and health care reform to mention a few. For more information, or to register, call us at (517) 321-6467 to go to www.michigantownships.org/capitolconf.asp.

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