



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

GOVERNOR TO ISSUE EXECUTIVE ORDER CUTS ON TUESDAY

While legislative leaders are still negotiating with Gov. Jennifer Granholm on cuts to the current fiscal year budget, the governor has announced that an executive order will be issued next Tuesday to make cuts to help balance this year's budget. State leaders received terrible news earlier this week when the state budget director announced that revenues for April were continuing to come in at a very low level. Estimates that the budget was \$785 million short have now ballooned into the neighborhood of an approximate \$1.3 billion hole. While federal stimulus dollars can be used to bridge some of the gap, all leaders have indicated that significant cuts will be necessary. Prior to this week's revelation, cuts were expected in the range of \$200-\$300 million. The latest news of severe revenue shortfalls will likely increase the level of cuts that will be proposed. It appears that everything is on the table for possible cuts. The extent of the cuts will be revealed on Tuesday. Adding to the state's woes is news that Chrysler is filing for bankruptcy and GM continues to struggle. Job losses from the two automakers are likely to continue to increase Michigan's unemployment rate and bring further pressures on the current and future state budgets.

HOUSE APPROVES NO-REASON AV LEGISLATION

By a vote of 79-30, the House passed a bill to eliminate the six current legal reasons for requesting an absentee voter (AV) ballot and instead allow voters the ability to request an AV ballot for any reason (or no reason). The bill would give voters the option of voting an AV ballot without providing an excuse. While two identical bills came out of the House Ethics and Elections Committee last week on this subject, it was [HB 4367](#), introduced by Rep. Woodrow Stanley (D-Flint) that moved forward. The bill now moves over to the Senate for consideration. MTA strongly supports the legislation and would urge you to contact your senator to encourage his or her support.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO CHANGE DEFINITION OF PART-TIME POLICE OFFICERS

Roughly a year ago, the Michigan Council on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) adopted a rule that police officers in Michigan must work at least 520 hours annually in order to maintain their certification as a law enforcement officer. The new requirement is scheduled to take effect in 2012 as current law has no minimum-hours-worked provision for law enforcement officers. The new definition is drawing significant opposition from MTA and a group of small department police chiefs as the change would declassify nearly 400 law enforcement officers in the state. Concerns center on losing qualified law enforcement personnel who are often working in part-time or temporary positions. The new definition could have profound cost increases for small police departments found in many townships. As chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Emerging Technologies Committee, Sen. Cameron Brown (R-Fawn River Twp.) held a hearing on the issue in early March at the state Capitol to study the impacts of the new rule. On April 21, Sen. Brown introduced [SB 449](#) to address concerns about the new MCOLES definition. [SB 449](#) would lower the hours-worked requirement to 120 hours and allow for police departments to file a waiver if this provision proves to be burdensome.

HOUSE DISCUSSES SOLUTION TO WPW COURT CASE

In recent years, the state Supreme Court has ruled that some of the current provisions of the property tax law that define what is an addition for the purpose of adding value to the property assessment are unconstitutional. In particular, this impacts properties that are assessed on an income approach and a recent court case involving values association with public infrastructure. The House Tax Policy Committee took testimony this week on the issue. Signs are pointing to legislation that would return the definition of additions and losses to its pre-Proposal A state, which would conform to court rulings and which is supported by MTA policy adopted by its members.

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