



## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

June 11, 2010

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### **SENATE LOOKS TO LIMIT FELONS FROM HOLDING OFFICE**

The Senate passed a joint resolution this week that calls for a change in the state's constitution to place further limits on convicted felons from holding public office. SJR V, offered by Sen. Tupak Hunter (D-Detroit), would limit certain felons from running for office or being appointed to an office. The resolution prohibits a person from running for office or from being appointed to certain public offices if that person has been convicted of a felony involving dishonesty, deceit, fraud or a breach of the public trust while holding public office. The ban from public office would extend for 20 years after the conviction. Current state law requires that an office be vacated if the person holding the office is convicted of an "infamous" crime. That is generally interpreted to mean any felony. However, while the law removes the person from office, the statute is silent on the ability of the person to run for office after they have been removed from their position. The resolution now moves to the House for consideration. The House must approve the resolution with a 2/3rds majority for the issue to be placed before the voters this November.

### **HOUSE LABOR COMMITTEE TO TAKE UP BINDING ARBITRATION BILL**

The House Labor Committee is scheduled to hear testimony on legislation regarding binding arbitration (PA 312) as well as legislation on the Urban Cooperation Act and the Intergovernmental Transfers of Employees and Authorities Act. The bills in question are SBs 1072, 1085 and 1086. The legislation was introduced in response to the disadvantage local governments are placed in when negotiating contracts with emergency service workers as well as the handcuffs state laws place on public employers when creating cooperative service agreements. Unfortunately, the bills, as passed by the Senate, do not assist local governments in forming cooperative services. In the best-case scenario, most townships would find the proposed changes meaningless. However, for some communities the new bills would expand the use of binding arbitration. At issue are situations where authorities for police or fire protection are formed. Under current law, binding arbitration is not extended to authorities. The proposed legislation, as passed by the Senate, would extend binding arbitration into this service delivery model. If this legislation passes, it could create a significant deterrent to forming police or fire authorities in the future. Of course, it is the Legislature that is continually talking about how cooperative ventures should be established to save money. The committee hearing is at noon on Wednesday in the Anderson House Office Building.

### **LEGISLATURE LIMITS PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP**

When the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act was being discussed, it was concluded that it was appropriate to allow one person who was not an "eligible elector" to serve on the planning commission. The issue was to allow for situations that might involve an active business leader to serve on the commission even though their home may be in a different community. An alternative situation might involve a person who might want to serve on a planning commission in an area where they own a second home. Unfortunately, while everyone was contemplating the term from the perspective of the commissioner not being a resident, it could also mean that one commissioner could be less than 18 years old. SB 726, authored by Sen. Patricia Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp.), is on the way to the governor for signing. The new law would specify that you must be at least eighteen to serve on the commission.

### **COMPLETE STREETS CAUSING CONCERNS**

At a time when most local governments are scrambling to find enough money to plow roads and fill potholes, much less find the funds to repave our crumbling roads, the Legislature is looking to implement requirements to consider complete streets concepts in our communities. Complete streets focus on the needs of mass transportation, pedestrians and bikers. HB 6152 is likely to be voted upon by the House Transportation Committee next week, which would require the concept of complete streets be incorporated into any master plan that considers transportation issues.

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