



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

HOUSE ACTION ASSURES BALLOT QUESTION ON FELONS HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

The House passed a joint resolution on Thursday that calls for a change in the state's constitution to place further limits on convicted felons from holding public office. House approval of the resolution followed action by the Senate last week. Each body approved SJR V by the required two-thirds vote needed to place the item on the November general election ballot. Since SJR V is a constitutional resolution, it bypasses the governor and goes directly to the ballot. SJR V, sponsored by Sen. Tupac Hunter (D-Detroit), would limit certain felons from running for public office or being appointed to a public 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 understood to mean convicted of any felony. However, while current law removes the person from office, it is silent on the ability of the person to run for office after he or she has been removed from his or her position.

HOUSE HEARING HELD ON CREATION OF STATE INTERGOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY OFFICE

The House Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs held a hearing this week on HB 5930, a bill that would create a state intergovernmental advisory office (IAO). Committee Chair Marie Donigan (D-Royal Oak) is the sponsor of the bill. Creation of the IAO is one of the recommendations of the state efficiency commission that was created by the Legislature two years ago. Under HB 5930, the IAO Director would be appointed by the governor and would be allowed to appoint deputies and other employees. The legislation states that the IAO would be charged with evaluating state laws to determine whether state statutes create impediments or barriers to collaboration and cooperation between local units of government. A few of the other duties charged to the IAO would be to "develop common minimum operational standards for all local units of government" and to identify and catalogue specific base-level services rendered by local government as a basis for revenue sharing. MTA testified before the committee with a long list of concerns. No action was taken on the bill.

EMERGENCY SERVICES BINDING ARBITRATION PROCEDURES MOVING FORWARD

The House Labor Committee reported legislation this week that would modify PA 312, the law that calls for binding arbitration to be used when an impasse occurs when negotiating contracts with public safety unions. SB 1072 was opposed by local government organizations, including MTA as well as many of the major business organizations in the state. One of the big issues identified in the legislation was the expansion of binding arbitration into emergency services that are operated at an authority level. Current law specifies that binding arbitration is to be offered in police and fire or EMS personnel contracts in departments operated by cities, counties, villages or townships. The change in law would mean that departments, which are operated by authorities that are currently not subject to this law, would have to deal with its implications in the future. The legislation passed out of committee split on party lines and could be considered by the full House as early as Tuesday.

A FORM OF EARLY VOTING BY RULE MAY BECOME REALITY

It was revealed this week that Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land is working to implement "absentee voting in person" through the administrative rule process. The process would combine absentee voting with early voting to allow voters to cast their absentee ballot in person seven days prior to an election. Under the proposed rules, cities and townships would have the ability to decide the days and hours to employ the voting process. The rules still need to go through a public hearing and possible review of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) of the state Legislature before being implemented.

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