



## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

June 25, 2010

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

### **HOUSE PASSES PA 312 BINDING ARBITRATION AMENDMENTS**

For years, local governments have argued that PA 312, which calls for binding arbitration for settling police and firefighter union contracts, has been too lopsided in awarding settlements that are unaffordable to local governments. The Senate Reform Committee, chaired by Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester), was formed to pass legislation to cut the cost of government. One of the first bills passed out of the committee was SB 1072, authored by Sen. Randy Richardville (R-Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.). The legislation requires additional training for arbitrators and changes the time limit that the issue may be in front of the arbitrator, because the current time limit is frequently ignored. The legislation did not touch the chief issue espoused by local governments, which was ability to pay. Instead, the legislation expanded binding arbitration into authorities and other minor forms of government. As a result, local fire authorities may now be exposed to binding arbitration; the legislation may also open up entities such as the Huron-Clinton Metroparks authority, airport authorities, and even some community college programs that employ law enforcement personnel. While the legislation passed with overwhelming support in the Senate, it saw 42 no votes in the House, coming mainly from Republicans. As a result, the first legislation that has passed the Legislature to cut government spending was opposed by all local government entities because they believe it will actually increase the cost of local government.

### **SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS NOXIOUS WEED BILL**

On Tuesday, the Senate Local, Urban and State Affairs Committee reported legislation to fix a flaw in state statute to allow all townships the ability to regulate noxious weeds in their communities. HB 5573, introduced by Rep. Jase Bolger (R-Marshall), would delete the current population threshold of more than 5,000 in order for townships to enact an ordinance for the purpose of controlling and eradicating noxious weeds in a subdivision. This would apply if the owner has failed to do so after proper notice. The bill had earlier passed the House by a vote of 106-0 back in late April. MTA is hopeful that the full Senate will take up the legislation in the near future and that it will soon be on its way to the governor as many smaller townships have expressed the need for the statute change.

### **LACK OF FEDERAL ACTION COULD WREAK HAVOC ON STATE BUDGET**

News that \$500 million in Medicaid match money, which Michigan was counting on, may not be coming from Washington raised concerns about completing the FY '11 state budget anytime soon. The Federal Medical Assistance Percentages money is tied up with an extension of unemployment benefits in Congress. Senate Republicans have filibustered the extension concerned over upping the federal deficit.

### **MTA-PAC COMMITTEE MAKES PRIMARY ENDORSEMENT DECISIONS**

The MTA-PAC Committee has made endorsement decisions in 128 out of 148 House and Senate races for the Aug. 3 primary election. The list of endorsements will be published in the July editions of *MTN* and *Capitol Currents*. Starting on Monday, the endorsement list will also appear on the MTA website at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org). MTA-PAC Committee members wish to thank all those candidates who returned the candidate questionnaire as well as those township officials who provided input on races in their districts. Township officials are encouraged to assist endorsed candidates as much as possible. However, remember that all political activities must take place outside of public office and may not involve public resources or funds in any manner.

### **POLICY PLATFORM RESOLUTIONS DUE BY SEPT. 1**

Do you have a good policy platform idea for township government? MTA is accepting resolutions from member townships and county chapters for presentation at the 2011 MTA Annual Meeting, to be held on Friday, Jan. 28, 2011. The deadline for submittal is Sept. 1, 2010. For additional information, contact MTA Legislative Liaison David Bertram at 517-321-6467 or at [david@michigantownships.org](mailto:david@michigantownships.org).

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