



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 28, 2009

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MTA Web site: www.michigantownships.org

Please route to all interested parties in your township

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING STILL A MAJOR BUDGET ISSUE

The state is just one month away from facing another shutdown if a state budget can't be established before Oct. 1. Many local government funding issues still remain mired in the secret closed door negotiations taking place between the governor and legislative leaders. PILT, swamp tax and statutory revenue sharing have all been targeted for major cuts by at least one group in the budget negotiations. Of particular concern is that funding for local government services has been targeted for proportionately larger cuts than the rest of the state government budget. Now is the time to let your legislators know that cutting local government support to a greater degree than other programs is unacceptable. Everyone must do their part in this time of crisis, but local governments should not be expected to bear a greater share of the burden especially given the challenges we already face with our own declining property tax revenues.

HOUSE LOOKS TO AMEND PROPERTY TAX POVERTY EXEMPTION

The House Democratic Caucus has announced their plans to assist homeowners that have the potential of seeing their homes foreclosed upon based on unpaid taxes. The cornerstone bill in the package is HB 5257 offered by Rep. Gabe Leland (D-Detroit). This legislation mirrors a bill that passed the House last session that would likely result in more so called "poverty exemptions" to the payment of property taxes. The legislation specifies that any homeowner that has income and assets below levels established under the act shall receive an exemption from property taxes. However, the supervisor and board of review retain the discretion over what percentage of an exemption will be applied to the property. The bill would also allow poverty exemptions to be approved for up to two years prior to the application. Legislation would also require specific language be included with assessment notices regarding the availability of poverty exemptions.

SPEAKER APPOINTS PUBLIC EMPLOYEE HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE

House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Chtr. Twp) has created a new committee to consider his proposal to establish a single state-run insurance plan for all state and local employees within Michigan. The Public Employee Healthcare Reform Committee will be chaired by Rep. Pam Byrnes (D-Lyndon Twp.). Other committee members include: Reps. Tim Melton (D-Auburn Hills), Harold Haugh (D-Roseville), Bert Johnson (D-Detroit), Michael Lahti (D-Hancock), Daniel Scripps (D-Leland Twp.), Kate Segal (D- Battle Creek), Woodrow Stanley (D-Flint), Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair Twp.), James Bolger (R-Marshall), Bob Genetski (R-Saugatack), Matt Lori (R-Constantine Twp.) and Bill Rogers (R-Genoa Twp.). Rep. Pavlov will serve as the minority vice-chair of the committee.

SURVEY SEEKS TO FIND MANDATE COSTS

Michigan State University Extension, State and Local Government Program, is conducting an online survey for the Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates to ascertain costs associated with certain mandates for local government. Please take a moment to complete the short, eight-question online survey. We appreciate your assistance. The survey closes Oct. 1. The survey can be accessed by visiting <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229JXY9UAAC>.

GREEN BUILDING (LEED) MEETING – PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE

Last week's legislative report included information regarding The U.S. Green Building Council (Detroit Regional Chapter) hosting a meeting for local government officials on "LEED and the Benefits of Green Building for Municipalities." The meeting date has been changed to Thursday, Sept. 17, 2009 from 9 to 11 a.m. The meeting will be at the Engineering Society of Detroit, 20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, Southfield. If you plan to attend this free seminar, please contact Elana Shelef at 248-353-0735, ext. 119 by Aug. 27. More information can be found at <http://drc-usgbc.org/>.

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