

September 2017

BIPARTISAN COALITION UNVEILS AUTO INSURANCE REFORM

A bipartisan coalition of 15 House members have put forth their auto insurance reform plan—the “Fair and Affordable No-Fault Reform Package”- and claim it will reduce auto insurance rates 20 to 30 percent without reducing benefits.

The plan, currently consisting of 12 bills, is being drafted and is expected to be introduced in the next week or two, according to Representative Ben Frederick (R-Owosso).

Representative Tim Greimel (D-Auburn Hills) said that by addressing fraud prevention, including fee schedules, coordinating policies with health insurance, reforming non-driving factors and by putting reasonable regulations in place for home health care, a rate reduction of 20 to 30 percent for Michigan drivers without reducing benefits can be attained.

The coalition is comprised of nine Republicans and six Democrats.

House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) is helping Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan with his plan that would cut rates 30 percent, include hospital fee schedules for accident victims and personal injury protection plan options (PIP).

Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof (R-West Olive) says that proposal is dead on arrival in the upper chamber calling the Duggan plan “price fixing.”

MCRC TO SCHUETTE: CAN THE COMMISSION LEGALLY INTERPRET ELLIOTT-LARSEN?

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) will ask for a formal opinion from Attorney General Bill Schuette on whether it can legally make an interpretive statement saying the state’s civil rights law bars discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

While it is not a formal opinion, Ron Robison, the AG-provided legal counsel for the MCRC, said it is his opinion that such an action would cross into the legislative realm, and the MCRC would waive its governmental immunity, be prone to being sued, and be without the help of the Attorney General.

DEMS PROPOSE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT

A seven-bill package has been introduced by a group of Democrat lawmakers that would create a plan to annually test water and air quality in every Michigan school. The measures would also create an environmental task force.

Specifically, the bills would:

- Require environmental assessments be conducted for any proposed school construction site.
- Require the State Board of Education to revise its local wellness policy to include a plan for testing water and air quality in every school.
- Create a one-time, \$9 million supplemental appropriation for water-and air-quality testing and remediation in schools.
- Encourage each school building in a district to conduct an energy audit every three years to identify potential efficiencies and conservation improvements.
- Create a task force to develop curriculum to help students understand and address environmental challenges.

CURRENT POT SHOPS MAY NOT BE LICENSED, IF...

According to the emergency rules the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs intends to push forward, medical dispensaries still operating after December 15, 2017 could have trouble getting licensed.

The Medical Marijuana Licensing Board Chairman pushed for an earlier date, saying if that date sticks it means “everyone up to then is really getting amnesty” and added he would have a “real hard time” voting to approve a license for any dispensary operating past December 15, 2017.

LAWMAKER WANTS TO LEGALIZE AND REGULATE INTERNET GAMING

Internet gaming would be legalized and regulated under legislation (HB 4926) that has been introduced by Representative Brandt Iden (R-Oshtemo Twp.), Chair of the House Regulatory Reform Committee.

Currently, Representative Iden said it is happening illegally, using out-of-state or overseas sites that leave Michigan gamers susceptible to fraud, ID theft and cheating.

Representative Iden’s bill allows only those already licensed to operate a casino in Michigan to launch an online gambling site. Internet sites would be put under Michigan Gaming Board control and would need software to keep away youngsters along with protections to keep out problem gamblers.

SENATE PASSES SUPER PAC REGULATIONS

On a mostly party-line vote, the Senate has passed legislation (SB 335 and SB 336) that would allow Super PACS to exist under state law. Super PACS are independent committees able to raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions and other entities.

The legislation was driven by a concern that, by next month, the Secretary of State could begin issuing heavy fines against the dozens of individuals and entities who gave at least \$500 to a Super PAC, but didn’t register themselves as a committee.

BILL BEING PREPPED TO OVERRULE MPSC

According to Representative Gary Glenn (R-Midland), legislation is in the works to prohibit the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) from putting in-state generation rules on alternative electricity suppliers. Representative Glenn said he won't be the sponsor but would not say who the sponsor will be. However, Representative Glenn, who chairs the House Energy Committee, said the legislation would get a quick hearing.

SHIRKEY- STAMAS MAKE A DEAL

Senator Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) and Senator Jim Stamas (R-Midland) have reached an agreement that IF working together as a team with the other returning Republicans for the 2018 election cycle and the team is successful in retaining the majority, and IF they can earn the support of the incoming freshmen THEN Senator Shirkey will be the majority leader candidate and Stamas will be Senator Shirkey's pick for Senate Appropriations Committee Chair.

Republicans currently hold a 27-11 supermajority in the Senate, but with 19 Republicans term-limited, the incoming members would hold the numerical edge.

UPTON THINKING YES, SCHUITMAKER SAYS NO, AND EPSTEIN SWITCHES

U.S. Representative Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) appears to be moving closer to making a bid for the U.S. Senate in 2018. However, he will not be making an announcement at the Republican leadership conference on Mackinac Island this weekend and doesn't seem to be in any rush to make a final decision.

Senator Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Lawton) has removed herself from any bid for the Republican Secretary of State nomination, but as for Attorney General she says, stay tuned. House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) is known to be making behind the scenes moves for a likely Attorney General run.

Businesswoman Lena Epstein, a Republican from Oakland County, who had her eye on the U.S. Senate seat against incumbent U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Delta Twp.) in 2018, has decided instead to run in the 11th Congressional District. Incumbent U.S. Representative Dave Trott (R-Birmingham) announced he would not seek re-election.

Also throwing their political hats in the 11th Congressional race are Andrew Rocky Raczkowski and Representative Klint Kesto (R-Commerce Twp.) Representative Kesto has not officially announced but said he is definitely running.

On the Democrat side, former U.S. Attorney Patrick Miles has filed a campaign committee for the post of Attorney General and Senator Steve Bieda (D-Warren) says he is actively exploring the possibility of seeking the Democratic Party's nomination for Attorney General.