



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 24, 2007

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

MICHIGAN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY MOVING UP TO JANUARY 15, 2008

On August 22, the Senate amended and passed SB 624 to hold the Michigan presidential primary election on January 15, 2008. The bill, introduced by Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Leland Twp.), originally set the primary election date for January 29, 2008. The bill was amended unanimously to insert the date of January 15, even though the final vote was 21-17 on partisan lines (Republicans voting in favor). Should the House adopt the measure, it would make Michigan the earliest presidential primary currently scheduled for next year. However, New Hampshire and Iowa would be expected to move their primaries to earlier dates. Before the final vote, two additional amendments were offered by Democrats. The two amendments would have allowed for no-reason absentee voting and for college students to have a separate address for voting other than their permanent driver's license address. Both amendments were rejected along straight party lines.

Both Republican and Democrat Party officials in the state want to make Michigan relevant in next year's presidential election. Negotiations have been ongoing between the state party chairs to agree on a joint presidential primary. Senate Democrats voted against SB 624 because those negotiations have not concluded as some details are yet to be worked out. Under the bill, the party chairs could agree to move the election date up to as early as January 8 or as late as February 26. The two party chairs could also agree to cancel the presidential primary. Both actions would have to occur by each party chair filing an affidavit with the secretary of state by September 15 of this year. It should also be noted that under SB 624, those wishing to vote in the presidential primary election would need to request either a "Republican ballot" or a "Democrat ballot." This is an effort to accommodate national Democratic rules so that Republicans or Independents cannot "cross over" and vote in the Democratic primary.

LEGISLATURE MOVES BUDGETS WITHOUT ANY AGREEMENTS

Both the Michigan House and Senate spent long hours in full sessions on August 22-23 moving budget bills with an October 1, new fiscal year looming very close. The Senate spent 12 hours in session on August 22, while the House went for more than 16 hours on August 22 through 5:00 a.m. on August 23. It was the first all-night session for the House in roughly three years. The actions by either body, however, don't reflect any on-going budget talks or agreements between legislative leaders and the governor and appear to be efforts to put each body in the best political position. The 10 budgets approved by the Senate call for \$163 million less than Governor Granholm's budget recommendations made way back in February but don't specifically outline how departments are supposed to make cuts. Further, the Senate showed little of their hand in relation to possible reforms to save money. Most departments were cut by 1.2 percent and included hiring freezes through all of the next budget year under senate actions. House approved budgets amazingly called for almost \$500 million more than the governor's budget recommendations, largely coming in the way of increases in education funding. Recent state revenue projections, however, demonstrate that the state will take in less money in fiscal year 2008 than originally anticipated. Revenue sharing payments for local governments in fiscal year 2008 also received attention during the lengthy Senate session. While more than \$400 million was approved in total statutory revenue sharing, an amendment that was approved to strip \$5 million out was later reversed as \$5 million from the Michigan Lottery advertising funding was earmarked for revenue sharing. The actions may mean little in the final outcome as revenue sharing coming from constitutional (sales tax collections) is now projected at \$12 million lower than originally expected. Advice from MTA to townships: Hold on because nothing has been settled.

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