Michigan Township INSIGHTS

June 19, 2026

State Voting Rights Act package approved by Senate

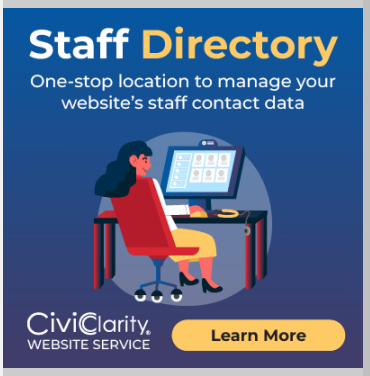


A package of bills to create a state Voting Rights Act was approved by the Senate this week on a party-line vote. Proponents of the four-bill package, Senate Bills 961, 962, 963 and 964, state the bills are necessary to protect Michigan voters from the erosion of federal election law. The bills are similar to legislation passed last session in which MTA engaged in negotiations and many changes were made. MTA opposes the main bill, SB 961, as it includes provisions beyond federal requirements and would establish a complaint process for individuals or groups who feel a local government is in violation of the provisions. MTA supports SB 962, which would establish the Michigan Voting Database and Institute for the purpose of having one location for people to access voting data and information. The Secretary of State (SOS) would provide the institute with voting data that local clerks already submit to the SOS. If the SOS requests any additional publicly available information for the institute, the local government would be reimbursed. The institute would also become the depository for any election-related data that it receives. If local governments were to receive a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for this information, they could then refer the requester to the institute. The two remaining bills, SBs 963 and 964, would create the Language Assistance for Elections Act and establish new notice requirements for certain election-related activities. MTA is neutral on SB 963, which would require local governments that meet a certain threshold of voters with limited English proficiency to provide language assistance for elections, and opposes SB 964 to establish new notice requirements for certain election-related activities to the SOS. The bills advance to the House; however, no action is anticipated by the House chamber.

Senate advances bills for low-income housing tax credit

A three-bill package, Senate Bills 966, 967 and 968—sponsored by Sen. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor) and supported by MTA—was approved by the Senate this week to create new state tax incentives for affordable housing development. The legislation would establish the Michigan Housing Opportunity Tax Credit, allowing developers, investors and insurers to claim a credit against their individual income, corporate





UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

June Election Ready afternoon workshops:
· **June 23** – Frankenmuth, Bavarian Inn Lodge
· **June 25** – Online, 1-5 p.m.

July 14-15: Summer Academy, Bay Valley Resort in Bay City:
· Creating a Vision
· Linking with the Community
· Strategic Planning

July 15: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Summer Update: Legislative News from the Capitol

Coming to three locations this August, Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning evening workshops:
· **Aug. 18** - Frankenmuth, Bavarian Inn Lodge
· **Aug. 26** - Gaylord, Treetops Resort & Convention Center
· **Aug. 31** - Lawrence, Van Buren ISD

income or flow-through entity taxes. To qualify for the proposed state credit, a development must first qualify for the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. The bills would also reserve at least 30% of annual awards for rural areas. The legislation builds on the federal credit by adding a state incentive designed to reduce barriers to private investment in affordable housing and help close financing gaps that often stall development projects. A similar package of bills, House Bills 5805, 5806 and 5807, sponsored Reps. Joe Aragona (R-Clinton Twp.) and Kristian Grant (D-Grand Rapids), are also before the House for consideration.

House approves 22-month retention of electronic pollbook flash drives

Clerks could soon be required to preserve data contained on an electronic pollbook flash drive in a primary or general election for 22 months. House Bill 5845, sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Wortz (R-Quincy Twp.), passed the House this week and would amend the Michigan Election Law to increase the existing period. Under the bill, the data from an electronic pollbook could be erased and the flash drive could be reused once 22 months have elapsed since the election. The bill advances to the Senate for review.



Bill to cap marijuana licenses



Legislation to cap the number of marijuana licenses that can be approved in a community based on population was presented in a Senate committee this week. Senate Bill 597, sponsored by Sen. Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), would also require licensees to pay all their state taxes and permit the Cannabis Regulatory Agency the authority to suspend licenses as an emergency action if risks to public health or safety exist. The new version also includes provisions governing the amount an individual can purchase at a time to align with the maximum amount that an individual can possess in their home. Auditing provisions are also included, along with increased fines for noncompliance with audits. The bill is expected to be considered by the committee in the near future.

Measure would expand 'missing middle' housing program

A state financing program for low-income housing could see restrictions lessened to allow for the development of middle-



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income housing under a bill approved by the Senate Housing and Human Services Committee this week. Senate Bill 278, sponsored by Sen. Sue Shink (D-Northfield Twp.) and supported by MTA, would amend the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund statute to remove the requirement that percentages of the fund be earmarked for specific income thresholds and housing types. Currently, there are few tools available to address the "missing middle" tier of housing. By expanding the scope of the program, the bill would allow the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to better meet housing needs with the option to invest in low- or middle-income housing with the fund. The bill proceeds to the Senate floor for a vote by the full chamber.



Committee considers measure to require granting of municipal request for lakes without public access

A Senate committee heard from municipal officials and landowners on a bill to require the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to grant a political subdivision's request for a rule on a body of water controlled by the local unit if the request concerned a lake without public access. Senate Bill 526, sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Bloomfield Twp.) and supported by MTA, would amend Part 801 (Marine Safety) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require approval if the request were supported by 75% or more of the properties with riparian rights. The bill is expected to be considered by the Senate Local Government Committee at its next meeting.

Golf cart ordinance changes progress

A second chamber has passed a bill allowing golf carts on streets in larger municipalities. Under current law, cities, villages and townships with a population under 30,000 may allow the operation of golf carts on their streets via a resolution. Senate Bill 900, introduced by Sen. Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores), raises the population threshold to 65,000, increasing the number of municipalities that could opt to allow golf cart operations on their roads. The bills do not alter existing provisions allowing a county board of commissioners to disapprove of the operation of golf carts on the roads within a township. The House version of the proposal, HB 4644, passed the House earlier this month, setting up a possible negotiation between the chambers for which bill could be sent to the governor's desk.

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Precinct consolidation proposal approved by the Senate

Municipal clerks could increase precinct consolidations under a bill approved by the Senate this week. Senate Bill 820, sponsored by Sen. Paul Wojno (D-Warren), would increase the population limit for a consolidated precinct from 5,000 to 15,000 active registered electors. The bill requires election commissions to consider the distance between polling locations and access to public transportation in addition to existing criteria before any precinct consolidations. The legislation moves to the House for continued discussion.



Sunset extension for OPRA advances

The expiration of the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) is approaching at the end of 2026, and lawmakers have taken action to extend the program another 10 years. The Senate Regulatory Affairs Committee approved Senate Bills 792 and 793 this week to delay the sunset of the program allowing tax incentives for redevelopment and rehabilitation of industrial facilities and commercial properties until Dec. 31, 2036. The bills, sponsored by Sen. Paul Wojno (D-Warren), also increase the number of yearly exemptions able to be granted by the State Tax Commission from 25 to 45. Local government approval would still be required for the tax exemption. The bills now await a vote by the full Senate.

Senate signs off on expansion of brownfield program

Senate Bills 898 and 899, sponsored by Sen. Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), would update Michigan's brownfield redevelopment program intended to help communities clean up and redevelop contaminated or blighted properties. Under the bills, local governments are eligible for increased grants and a revolving loan fund each with a cap of $2 million per project. The bills also eliminate the 50% local match for grants and limit of one project per local government per year. The bills have been transmitted to the House for consideration.

Bill limiting EGLE's ability to seek changes to wetland permits approved by House

Legislation to establish a limited timeline for the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to request changes to a Part 303 wetlands protection permit was passed this week. Under Part 303, wetlands may not be filled, dredged, drained or developed without a permit from EGLE. The department has 30 days to review a permit

application, after which the application is considered administratively complete. HB 6038, sponsored by Rep. Jay DeBoyer (R-Clay Twp.), stipulates that if EGLE does not conduct a site visit within the first 30 days, it may not require changes to the permit application. The legislation is tied to three additional bills pending in the House: HBs 5936, 5937 and 5938, which would increase the amount EGLE must reimburse permit applicants when applications are not acted upon within statutory deadlines, require EGLE to make an administrative completeness determination within seven days for certain applications, and establish a process through which an applicant may seek changes to a permit, respectively. HB 6038 now moves to the Senate for further debate.

House committee approves expansion of school zone speed limit enforcement

The Michigan Vehicle Code currently allows a school speed limit to be enforced on state highways within a school zone for up to 30 minutes before and after dismissal during regularly scheduled school session and during off-campus lunch periods. During these periods, the speed limit may be decreased by up to 20 miles per hour with a floor of 25 miles per hour. House Bill 5651, sponsored by Rep. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington), would extend the enforcement period to 60 minutes and provide discretion for the superintendent to designate additional enforcement periods for times when students go off campus for field trips, or to attend classes at another school, career and tech center, or local university. The bill now moves to the full House for consideration.

Reminder! Q2 UIA wage reports due by July 27

Applicable employers must file their next quarterly wage reports by Monday, July 27. An instructional video on completing the report is available via MiUI YouTube channel, as well as resources from MiUI University. For any additional questions ahead of the filing deadline, employers may contact the Office of Employer Ombudsman at (855) 484-2636 and selecting Option 4.

U.S. Department of Justice public safety grant opportunities for townships

- **Law enforcement hiring.** Funding is available via the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program for law enforcement agencies to hire sworn law enforcement officers with a focus on implementing community policing strategies. Awards are capped at $125,000 per position and cannot represent more than 20% of an agency's sworn officer force. Initial applications are due July 23.
- **Trauma-informed domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking training for law enforcement**. The Abby Honold Grant Program, administered by the federal Office of Violence Against Women, is offering funding for law enforcement agencies to train officers in victim-centered techniques for conducting

interviews, managing complex cases, the development of multi-disciplinary teams and correctly classifying applicable crimes. Initial applications are due July 27.

- **Law enforcement mental health**. Additional COPS funding via the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act program provides funding to implement or enhance programming that offers training and services designed to support officers emotional and mental health. Initial applications are due by July 30.
- **School violence prevention.** A third COPS program grant is available to fund evidence-based school safety programing and equipment. Townships in partnership with local school districts or public safety agencies can access this funding to support coordination between schools and local law enforcement, training for law enforcement and the purchase of safety equipment. Initial applications are due by Aug. 4.



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

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