

April 2018

SENATE MOVES MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENT BILL

Able-bodied Medicaid recipients between the ages of 19 and 64 who are receiving Medicaid benefits will be required to work, receive job training or education, or a combination of the three, for an average of 29 hours per week under legislation (SB 897) that passed the Senate without any Democrat support. The Democrats offered eight amendments- all of which were defeated.

Bill sponsor Senator Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake), said he expects the legislation to be altered by the House. Governor Rick Snyder may not be fully onboard with the current bill as passed.

DEMOCRATS INTRODUCE GUN CONTROL/SAFETY LEGISLATION

Senate Democrats have introduced a package of bill that would invest \$100 million in schools, with half going for grants for more counselors, social workers and school resource officers, and half would be in grants for safety measures in schools.

The package also includes universal background checks for gun purchasers, disallowing people with concealed weapons permits to openly carry guns in schools, and creating an extreme risk order which would allow a judge to order law enforcement to confiscate weapons of a person that had been determined to be a danger.

Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) said the money could come from the rainy day fund, which has a balance of nearly \$1 billion.

Governor Rick Snyder put forth a new school safety plan that sets aside \$20 million for school infrastructure projects and requires schools to create emergency plans.

However, it does not address guns or so-called “red-flag” legislation. The plan also calls for \$2 million in FY 18 for schools to require basic security upgrades.

PTL PROPOSAL DEAD...FOR NOW

The Clean Michigan Government (CMG) committee, formerly spearheaded by Lt. Governor Brian Calley, to put a part-time legislature proposal before the voters, has indicated it will not submit its signatures to the Secretary of State for consideration to appear on the November ballot.

Former Representative Tom McMillin, the principal leader behind the campaign after taking over for Mr. Calley, said the group will meet soon to decide how to move forward, “We currently don’t have the numbers to file,” he said.

Lt. Governor Calley started the part-time legislature drive in May 2017 but turned the leadership over to Mr. McMillin shortly before his formal announcement as a GOP gubernatorial candidate.

DNR GRANTS NESTLE PERMISSION TO INCREASE WATER WITHDRAWALS

Despite most public comments opposing increased usage, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has granted Nestle permission to increase its water withdrawals to 400 gallons per minute for its bottled water plant near Evart.

“We cannot base our decisions on public opinion because our department is required to follow the rule of law when making determinations,” said Heidi Grether, director of the Michigan Department of Environment Quality.

The DEQ said Nestle’s application met the requirements for approval under the Michigan Safe Water Drinking Act and after the department subjected the permit application to the “most extensive analysis of any water withdrawal in Michigan history.” The decision follows 20 months of reviews, consultations and public hearings.

SOME GOPers PONDER POT LEGALIZATION

As the Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol pushes to get the legalization of marijuana on the November 6 ballot, some Republican lawmakers are considering legalizing it through the Legislature rather than let the initiative make the ballot.

Legislative action would stifle Republican fears that the ballot measure would boost Democratic voter turnout in November since legislative approval would ensure pot legalization would become law.

The Michigan Constitution gives legislators a 40-day window to consider legislation initiated by a petition drive.

The coalition filed nearly 365,000 signatures with the Bureau of Elections in November. The signatures were not challenged. The Bureau of Elections is reviewing the signatures with likely approval to be given by the State Board of Canvassers.

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR CLASS-ACTION SUIT AGAIN UIA

Oral arguments have been ordered by the Michigan Supreme Court on a lawsuit filed by unemployment insurance claimants who were falsely accused of fraud through the state’s controversial Michigan Integrated Data Automated System (MIDAS).

The high court wants the claimants to address whether the event leading to their cause of action occurred when the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) issued its allegedly wrongful notice of redetermination or when the UIA actually seized the claimants’ property.

DEADLINE TO CHALLENGE REDISTRICTING IS SET

April 26 at 5 pm is the date and time set to challenge a sample of signatures submitted by the redistricting reform ballot committee, Voters Not Politicians (VNP).

VNP said they submitted 425,000 signatures on December 18, 2017 and have no doubt the proposal will be on the ballot November 6.

Look for a challenge.

It is being reported that opponents of the petition drive will be legally challenging it on two fronts. Complaints are likely to be filed with the State Board of Canvassers first followed by a constitutional argument to be made to the state appellate court.