



This Week in Lansing

MHSA • Muchmore Harrington Smalley & Associates, LLC

Highlights of the Latest Major Legislative, Administrative and Regulatory Activity in the State Capitol

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REMEMBERING KATHY WILBUR – *MHSA* is profoundly saddened by the loss of **Kathy Wilbur**, a longtime friend of the firm and a mentor to countless individuals within and around the Capitol community. **Kathy** was a beloved, highly respected, and accomplished figure in and around politics with a career that spanned nearly 50 years. **Kathy** began her professional journey in the 1970s in the Senate, serving as Chief of Staff to **Senator Bill Sederburg**. She went on to serve as a trustee of Michigan State University, a department director for multiple state agencies, and lead two universities governmental relations programs, to name only a few of her many accomplishments.

Kathy will be deeply missed by the Capitol community. **Kathy** passed last Sunday at the age of 70 surrounded by her family. *MHSA* sends our deepest condolences to **Kathy's** family and friends, especially her husband **Tom**, and her four children **Tom, Will, Sam** and **Ray**.

REMEMBERING KATHY POWER – *MHSA* is also deeply saddened by the loss of **Kathy Power**, the co-founder of the Center for Michigan. **Kathy** and her husband **Phil** founded the Center for Michigan in 2006 with the goal of making Michigan better through high-quality, nonpartisan journalism and engagement. Over *MHSA's* years of working with the Center of Michigan, we were lucky enough to see first-hand her and **Phil's** philanthropic contributions and positive impact on the world.

Kathy passed on November 19th at the age of 78. We send our deepest condolences to **Kathy's** husband and family.

GOV WHITMER ANNOUNCES SPECIAL ELECTIONS – Over last week's holiday weekend, **Governor Gretchen Whitmer** announced the special elections to fill the vacancies left by **current Mayors Kevin Coleman** and **Lori Stone** will be held in January and April.

The bigger picture: **Mayors Coleman** and **Stone** resigned from the **House** in November after winning mayoral elections in their respective hometowns, leaving the **25th** and **13th House Districts** vacant. **Governor Whitmer** called for the special primary election to fill the seats to be held on January 30th, 2024, with the special general election scheduled for April 16th, 2024. Both districts are considered safe **Democratic** holds.

To read more, please click [here](#).

GOV WHITMER SIGNS COUNTLESS END OF SESSION BILLS INTO LAW – With the **Legislature** Sine Die adjourned, **Governor Gretchen Whitmer** has been busy signing countless pieces of legislation passed in the final weeks of this year's session into law.

Why it matters: At the end of a legislative session, a **Governor** has 14 days from the day a bill is presented to sign it into law before the bill is automatically vetoed, which is dubbed a “pocket veto.” With the fast-paced end of session in 2023, **Governor Whitmer** has signed over 40 bills to date, to ensure they take effect and do not fall victim to a veto. Legislation signed thus far includes bills to repeal previous abortion laws, change teacher performance measures and enact a clean energy standard in Michigan.

To read more, please click [here](#).

GOV WHITMER LAUNCHES NEW STATE DEPARTMENT, MILEAP – Today **Governor Gretchen Whitmer** launched operation of the **Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential**, or **MiLEAP**.

The bigger picture: The new department was established by Executive Order in July and is tasked with improving outcomes from preschool through postsecondary education. **MiLEAP** will take over several early learning, higher education, and education partnership responsibilities from other state departments, and will inherit over 300 staff members. **Michelle Richard** will serve as acting Director.

To read more, please click [here](#).

ELECTIONS

- **State Board of Education President Pamela Pugh** is now running for the **8th U.S. House District** in Michigan, switching from her bid for the open **U.S. Senate** seat in 2024. **Congressman Dan Kildee (D-Flint)** announced he is not seeking reelection in 2024, leaving a key **U.S. House** seat open in a contested district. **Ms. Pugh** released a statement on switching races, saying, “After hearing from several community leaders and stakeholders, I have decided to become a candidate for Michigan’s 8th congressional district instead of continuing a campaign for the United States Senate. My decision to seek federal office was always rooted in two goals. I wanted to ensure that communities like my hometown had a strong, capable, and experienced voice in Washington and I wanted to ensure Michigan added more women to the ranks of power. We can do both in Michigan’s 8th congressional district.”

ODDS AND ENDS

- A federal judge ruled this week that the former operator of the Edenville Dam that failed in 2020 and caused catastrophic flooding in Midland is liable for \$119.8 million in damages. **U.S. District Judge Paul Maloney** of the Western District of Michigan ruled that the operators of the dam failed to act on preliminary plans to prevent an embankment collapsing, which inevitably caused the widespread damages.
- The state’s chief growth officer, **Hilary Doe**, along with the **Growing Michigan Together Council** released a report this week that highlights infrastructure improvements, including broadband, roads and water, are the top priority for Michiganders to stay in Michigan. The **Growing Michigan Together Council’s** final report to **Governor Gretchen Whitmer** is due December 15th, which is aimed to advise the **Governor** on specific policies to grow Michigan and identify a population goal for 2050.

MHSA

Muchmore Harrington Smalley & Associates, LLC

Sandra Jones
sjones@mhsa.com

Adrian Cazal
acazal@mhsa.com

Bret Marr
bmarr@mhsa.com

Evelyn Zois Sweeney
esweeney@mhsa.com

Malcolm Kletke
mkletke@mhsa.com

Mandy Bolter
mbolter@mhsa.com

Patrick Harrington
pharrington@mhsa.com

Jon Smalley
jsmalley@mhsa.com

124 West Allegan St., Suite 1900 | Lansing, MI 48933 | Phone: 517-484-8800 | Fax: 517-484-4442 | Email: rsmith@mhsa.com
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