



# 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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**SENATE DEMS ANNOUNCE LEADERSHIP TEAM** – On Wednesday, *Senate Democrats* announced their leadership team for the 2023-2026 legislative term.

*Senator Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids)*, the next Senate Majority Leader, issued a press release announcing the new leadership team. The *Senate Democratic* leadership team includes: *Senator Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield)* will serve as President Pro Tempore; *Senator-elect Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstown Township)* will assume the role of assistant majority leader; *Senator Mallory McMorrow (D-Royal Oak)* will serve as majority whip; *Senator Dayna Polehanki (D-Livonia)* will be majority caucus chair; and *Senator Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit)* will be the caucus’ policy and steering chair. It was announced last week that *Senator-elect Sam Singh (D-East Lansing)* will serve as Majority Floor Leader, rounding out the *Senate Democrats* leadership team.

*Senator Brinks* also announced current *Representative* and *Senator-elect Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing)* will chair the *Senate Appropriations Committee*. *Representative Anthony* will make history as the first Black woman to serve as *Senate Appropriations Chair*.

*Senator Brinks* released a statement on announcing the leadership team, saying, “This is truly a leadership team and caucus that reflects Michigan: we are diverse, we have broad expertise, and we are ready to hit the ground running to deliver for the people of Michigan. Each member of this leadership team has a strong record and together they are champions for the people of Michigan. I am proud to stand with them as we pursue an aggressive people-first legislative agenda.”

**CANDIDATES FOR MI GOP CHAIR BEGIN THROWING HATS IN THE RING** – With the dust settled from Michigan’s 2022 General Election, *Republican* candidates who came up short in November are now announcing their candidacy for the *Michigan Republican Party Chair*.

The *Michigan Republican Party* will elect a new chair in February for a two-year term at the state party convention. Current *Michigan Republican Party Chair Ron Weiser* has already stated he will not seek re-election. With the door open, multiple candidates have begun announcing they are seeking the position. To date, two individuals have thrown their hat into the ring: recent Attorney General candidate *Matt DePerno* and *Tuscola County Republican Party Chair Billy Putnam*. In addition to *Mr. DePerno* and *Mr. Putnam*, multiple big Republican names are contemplating a run. Former gubernatorial candidate *Tudor Dixon* and former *Detroit Police Chief James Craig* have both stated they are considering a run.

Following the news of *Mr. DePerno*, who lost to *Attorney General Dana Nessel* by 8.5 percentage points announcing his campaign – as well as *Ms. Dixon* indicating she is considering a run – many Republican commentators offered criticisms. *Paul Cordes*, the chief of staff in the *Michigan Republican*

*Party*, issued a memo that in part criticized the issues *Ms. Dixon* supported during her campaign. *Dan Wholihan*, a longtime Republican consultant from Livingston County, offered critiques of both *Mr. DePerno* and *Ms. Dixon* by retweeting *Mr. DePerno's* announcement and commenting, "No. Losing by 9 percent is unacceptable. No to Dixon as well for this. 10 percent loss is unacceptable."

In addition to the individuals listed above, other names are also being circulated as possible candidates. This includes recent Congressional candidate and current *Senator Tom Barrett (R-Charlotte)*, as well as *Michigan Republican Party Co-Chair Meshawn Maddock*. Neither *Senator Barrett* nor *Ms. Maddock* have indicated whether they would run for state party chair.

### **SPEAKER-ELECT JOE TATE FORMS COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES, CAMPAIGN TEAM**

– *House Speaker-elect Joe Tate (D-Detroit)* announced the members of the Committee on Committees Monday to help determine which legislative committees will operate during the next legislative term as well as member assignments. Additionally, *Representative Tate* announced the leadership for the 2023-2024 House Democratic campaign.

The Chair of the committee will be *Representative Angela Witwer (D-Delta Township)*, who just won her third term in the *House*. The other members on the committee include current *Representatives Stephanie Young (D-Detroit)*, *Carol Glanville (D-Walker)*, and *Cynthia Neeley (D-Flint)*, as well as *Representative-elects Natalie Price (D-Berkely)*, *Will Snyder (D-Muskegon)*, and *Mike McFall (D-Hazel Park)*. While the committee on committees was formed, it remains unclear if there would be any changes to committee structure or when committee appointments would be finalized. Typically, the legislature announces committee assignments sometime in January.

For the *House Democratic campaign*, *Representative Tate* selected the team that will focus on expanding the Democratic majority in 2024. *Representative Regina Weiss (D-Oak Park)* will chair the board, and *Representative-elect John Fitzgerald (D-Wyoming)* will act as vice chair. *Representative Samantha Steckloff (D-Farmington Hills)* will be the finance chair, and *Representative-elect Philip Skaggs (D-East Grand Rapids)* will be the finance vice chair. *Representative Ranjeev Puri (D-Canton)* will serve as strategy chair and *Representative-elect Joey Andrews (D-St. Joseph)* will be the strategy vice chair. The outreach chair will be *Representative-elect Penelope Tsernoglou (D-East Lansing)* and the outreach vice chair will be *Representative-elect Donovan McKinney (D-Detroit)*.

*Representative Tate* released a statement when naming the *House Democratic* campaign team, saying, "Majorities are fought for and won by exceptional leadership. I could not be more confident in this team's ability to lay the groundwork to expand our majority in 2024 and that work starts right now. *Representatives Weiss* and *Steckloff* were instrumental to our winning program in 2022 and I know they will lead our caucus to victory next cycle."

### **ODDS AND ENDS**

- *Speaker-elect Joe Tate (D-Detroit)* announced this week that *Representative Laurie Pohutsky (D-Livonia)* will serve as Speaker Pro Tempore in the upcoming legislative session. To view *Representative Tate's* announcement on the complete list of the 2023-2024 Democratic leadership team, please click [here](#).
- *House Speaker Jason Wentworth (R-Farwell)* told reporters this week that the *House* took action to hire a third party to investigate the conduct of *former Speaker Lee Chatfield*, but was asked to delay the investigation by the *Department of Attorney General*. Specifically, the Department asked the *House* to wait until their criminal investigation concluded to prevent any impacts on the AG's ongoing efforts.

- An investigation into alleged signature fraud from 2016 against **Senator Jon Bumstead (R-North Muskegon)** has surfaced. **Brooks Township Clerk Jennifer Badgero**, told a reporter at the Michigan Advance that she filed a report with the **Department of State Police** on November 7, 2016, alleging that **Senator Bumstead** had forged absentee ballots at least twice. The **Department of State** declined to comment on the pending investigation.
- The **Michigan Supreme Court (MSC)** adopted an administrative rule amendment this week that will move the **MSC** closer to its goal of designing and implementing a statewide electronic filing system, with the amendment specifically affecting personal protection orders. Specifically, it provides courts with necessary protected personal identifying information in what it deems as a more appropriate format and would reduce clerk or office staff workload while preparing personal protection orders. The adopted amendment is to Michigan Court Rule 3.703, which will become effective on January 1, 2023.
- A group of Republicans are launching a new political action committee, **The Grand New Party**, designed to fix the GOP, which they see as “too moderate” and “too passive.” **Representative Steve Carra (R-Three Rivers)**, chair of the new PAC, is placing the blame of the GOP’s recent election losses on the Republican establishment, which he called “milquetoast” during a press conference on Tuesday announcing the PAC.
- **Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) Director Julia Dale** announced **UIA** is upgrading its system from the **Michigan Integrated Data Automated System (MiDAS)** to a new system led by Deloitte. **Director Dale** said on Tuesday the switch will help the agency focus on a “customer-centric approach.”
- **Senator Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids)** announced this week that **Kathleen O’Reilly Farhat** will serve as her chief of staff in the next legislative term when she assumes the role of Senate Majority Leader. **Ms. Farhat** currently serves as term limited **Senator Curtis Hertel’s (D-East Lansing)** chief of staff.
- The **Michigan Board of Education** met this week and received an annual update of the state’s Top 10 Strategic Education Plan from **Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Rice**. **Superintendent Rice** emphasized that improvements can be expected thanks to the historic state funding in the fiscal year 2022-23 budget.
- A study conducted by a **Michigan Supreme Court**-sanctioned committee found that debt collection cases appear to dominate the state’s civil court dockets. Specifically, the group, **Justice for All Commission**, found that over the last decade, more than 1.9 million debt collection cases were filed in Michigan’s various district courts and that half of all debt suits were brought against those living in low-income and majority Black neighborhoods.

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