



Capitol Corner An ECIC Legislative Update May 2, 2008

Under the Dome

Passage of School Aid Budget on Hold

This Wednesday, School Aid and Education Committee Chair Matt Gillard announced that he is in no hurry to pass the House version of the School Aid Fund budget. Gillard, who is planning on two more weeks of testimony, said the results of the next Revenue Estimating Conference in May has nothing to do with his decision.

“I’m not concerned about putting it out before or after the May Revenue Estimating Conference,” reported Gillard. The Chairman went on to say that the House version would be based on the same state budget estimates as the Senate version.

In April the Senate passed their version of the budget that pared back the Governor’s proposed budget by \$140 million. Her plan for full-day kindergarten and funding increase for smaller high schools were also excluded. The administration will be testifying at next weeks House committee meeting.

At Wednesday’s School Aid and Education Subcommittee hearing, several education groups addressed the committee on issues related to the School Aid Fund. Groups included Michigan’s Children, the Crawford AuSable Schools, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies and the Michigan After-School Partnership.

There will be at least one more Subcommittee hearing to take testimony from the Department of Education and anyone wishing to testify from the public.

In the News

Number of Children in Michigan Declines

While this headline is not a shocker to those who work with children on a daily basis, the Detroit News’ recent feature on the impact of children leaving the state will surely be an eye-opener for many. According to the News, in 2007, Michigan had nearly 39,000 fewer

children under the age of 5 compared with 2000. This decline is primarily due to the state's struggling economy, which has forced tens of thousands of families to flee the state in search of jobs. What is uncertain is the impact this decline will have on the future of the state's schools, retailers and job market.

The News stopped short of saying that the "sky is falling" but alluded to the long term challenges this continued decline will cause. The paper cited that everything from physicians, youth sports teams and churches would be affected.

Michigan's drop of young people is the second highest percentage behind Louisiana.

Of course, as the News dutifully reported, the primary concern of those closest to the situation is the impact on kids. Sandy Calcagno, director of the KinderCare in Utica, told the paper she's had to counsel numerous families choosing to move out of Michigan in recent months and cited the impact of such a move on children who might have a hard time adjusting to life elsewhere.

Monroe Area Advocates Call on State for Early Childhood Investment

The Monroe Evening News reported that on Thursday night, ECIC director Judy Samuelson, Monroe County Intermediate School District Superintendent Don Spencer and others rallied in recognition of local early childhood education efforts.

The event, Be Their Hero From Age Zero, was a combination dinner and teaching program where businesses and individuals were given awards for their support of the Be Their Hero Task Force. The task force, which started in 2002, spreads the word about early childhood education.

At the event, Ms. Samuelson addressed the crowd about statewide efforts to bring awareness to early childhood care, education and development and acknowledged the accomplishments in Monroe County. Superintendent Spencer didn't mince words expressing the importance of a continued investment in early childhood education by our leaders in Lansing.

We have to convince the Legislature that any cut to funding for early childhood education is the wrong thing to do," Spencer said.

Around the Capitol

Governor Undergoes Emergency Surgery

On Tuesday evening, Governor Granholm underwent emergency abdominal surgery for a bowel obstruction. Granholm had fallen ill on Sunday night at the NAACP's Freedom Fund dinner but steadfastly maintained a full schedule until seeing her physician on Tuesday. It's believed the condition stemmed from a 1993 auto-related accident where

the Governor sustained intestinal injuries. The surgery is performed on approximately 10% of patients following such an injury.

While the Governor remains in good spirits, and fully in charge of Chief Executive responsibilities, she was forced to cancel an historic mission to the Middle East with the MEDC where she would be working to foster economic relationships. It is expected that the trip will be rescheduled.

Please keep Governor Granholm in your thoughts and prayers as she makes a full, and speedy recovery.

Recall Petitions Submitted, Speaker Dillon Finds Bi-Partisan Support

On Thursday, the Michigan Taxpayers Alliance submitted 15,498 signatures in attempt to recall the Redford Township lawmaker, practically double the number required to place the question on the August ballot. Despite this, Speaker Dillon steadfastly refused to let the effort intimidate him. At a press conference surrounded by fellow Democrats, and Republicans, Dillon questioned the motives and methodology of the recall proponents. Dillon alluded to the fact that the out of state signature collection firm had several previous efforts fail because of fraud. Lansing insiders are speculating that even if he happens to be recalled in August, Dillon will be re-elected in the November general election.

Other News

Star Power Rally and Legislative Day at the Capitol, May 21, 2008

On Wednesday, May 21, parents, teachers, advocates – and kids – from all around the state will join the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and the Great Start Collaboratives in Lansing to educate state legislators on the value of investing in early childhood development, education and care. Join ECIC on this star-filled day as we salute the champions of early childhood initiatives – our rising stars. We will also have an opportunity to engage our state lawmakers and help to further their education on how they can impact early childhood services and programs for all of Michigan's kids.

Register online at: http://www.ecic4kids.org/star_power.cfm

Plug into the ECIC Policy Center to Get Involved

The ECIC web site has a new and improved policy center where you can stay informed and get involved.

http://www.ecic4kids.org/policy_advocacy_center.cfm

From the Policy and Advocacy Center you can review the current and all past editions of Capitol Corner. Use our Advocacy Center to get involved:

- Send an [email to your legislator, senator, and the governor](#)
- Send a ["letter to the editor" email to your local media & newspapers](#)
- Get more information on [early childhood issues, bills, legislation](#)

You can also sign-up for our new Action Alerts at:

http://capwiz.com/ecic4kids/issues/alert/?alertid=10904976&type=ML&show_alert=1

and much more. Take the time to see what this site has to offer and how you can be involved.