

MEA-Retired Tribune

February 2015

ROAD UPDATE PASSED IN LAME DUCK

The legislature completed work on a package of legislation, HJR UU that would raise more than \$1 billion for transportation infrastructure. This legislation will be put before the voters as a statewide ballot proposal on May 5, 2015. In addition, the package would raise \$300 million in new revenues for public education.

If voters reject the plan, only the legislation regarding internet sales tax (known as the Main Street Fairness Plan) will remain in place. The plan is made up of the following parts:

- The sales tax on gasoline will be eliminated (tax reduction of approx. \$700 million)
- Michigan sales tax would be increased from 6 percent to 7 percent (tax increase of \$1.34 billion)
- Increased driver registration fees and overweight truck fees (tax increase of \$95 million)
- “Main Street Fairness” legislation included in plan: companies with a “nexus” in Michigan must collect sales tax revenue for online sales (tax increase of \$40 million)

SOME BILLS IN THE MAKING

- An elimination of straight-ticket voting which now allows people to fill in one box on the ballot to vote for all Republican or Democratic candidates. Republicans tried to repeal straight-party voting in 2001, but Democrats launched a petition drive against the measure and voters repealed the law by a 60%-40% margin in 2002.

"The voter should know the individuals they're voting for, and with straight-ticket voting, they don't know who they're voting for," said state Sen. Marty Knollenberg, R-Troy, a sponsor of the bill.

In Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties, 627,968 people — 233,304 Republicans and 394,664 Democrats — voted a straight-party ticket and could have swayed the races for education boards overwhelmingly for Democrats.

- A deduction in the pay for lawmakers who are absent when the Legislature is in session.
- An installation of tracking devices on all state-owned vehicles
- Bills introduced that would require companies to give four weeks of paid leave for parents of newborns or adoptive parents and prohibit parents from leaving their children in day care for more than 11 hours at a time.
- An elimination of the tax on retiree pensions that was passed in 2011 and a reduction in the state's income tax, from 4.25% to 4.05% after Jan. 1, 2016.
- The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which would allow for legal protections for people with sincerely held religious beliefs. The example used most frequently is the baker who faced a complaint with the Colorado civil rights commission for refusing to bake a cake for a same-sex couple's wedding

DID YOU KNOW?

- March 16-27, 2015 – Reading of MEA Scholarships. If you would like to read, please contact Carol Price at 1-800-292-1934.
- Michigan was 178 years old on January 26, 2015.
- We are sorry to see Carol Price leave us. Her last day as MEA-Retired Secretary is February 27. Enjoy your retirement.
- Michigan officials considering a 10,000 acre land deal in the UP. Graymont, a British Columbia-based limestone company, wants to acquire 10,000 acres spread over three counties. The DNR will make the final decision.
- Between 2009 and 2012, Michigan's top 1% earners saw their average real income grow by 47.3%. For the bottom 99% of Michiganders, income grew by 1.8%. *from mlive*
- "In Appropriations Committee today I learned that for 2014, Michigan business taxes amounted to \$183 million out of \$9 billion dollars collected in taxes. Everyday people paid more in taxes in 2014 and business paid far less. How is that fair?" Representative Sarah Roberts

BE SURE TO VOTE IN THE MEA-RETIRED ELECTION. Directions on p. 3

Dates to Remember:

March 16-27, 2015 – Reading of MEA Scholarships

March 18, 2015 – MEA-Retired Board Meeting

March 24-26, 2015 - NEA-Retired Organizing Conference

April 7, 2015 – MEA-Retired Annual Meeting

"OH THE PLACES YOU WILL GO"

It's not too early to start thinking about NEA's 17th annual Read Across America Day celebration on March 2. This year's theme honors the Dr. Seuss classic, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" MEA is providing materials to help you showcase your efforts to promote reading. This initiative is more than just a one-day event. It's an opportunity to focus on the every-day accomplishments of MEA members to develop life-long learners and readers. MEA is once again offering bookmarks and notepads for your celebrations. Go to www.mea.org/merchandise to place an order by Feb. 9. Additional materials, such as lessons, event ideas, and other resources are available from NEA at www.nea.org/readacross.



MEA-Retired Online Voting Instructions

February 16-27, 2015

Beginning February 16, 2015, MEA-Retired members will begin casting their ballots for MEA-Retired delegates to the MEA Representative Assembly, the NEA Representative Assembly, and the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting as well as Region Directors, if needed.

Online voting will continue until 4 p.m. EST on February 27, 2015.

Here's how – using your computer, your neighbor's, your grandchildren's or one at your local library:

1. Go to the MEA website at www.mymea.org/online voting.
2. Follow the login directions:
 - First Name (often your legal first name)
 - Last name
 - Last four digits of your Social Security Number
3. Click the “Login” button.
4. If your record is found and the polls are open, your ballot will be displayed.
5. Select the people you would like to vote for. Clicking the “Additional info” link next to the ballot item will allow you to read biographical information on the candidate if it is submitted.
6. Once you have made your selection, click the “Confirm Ballot” button.
7. A preview of your ballot selections will be shown. To modify any of your selections, click the “Modify Ballot” button.
8. To cast your ballot, click the “cast Ballot” button. Once your ballot is cast, you will see a confirmation page.
9. Click the “Sign Out” link to log out of the system.

If you have any problems using the MEA Online Voting application, please contact the MEA IT Department at 517-337-5440 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you call after hours, please leave a voice mail, and they will return your message as soon as possible.