

MEA-RETIRED Tribune

October 2016

DeVos to Legislature: Time to End School Pensions from the **Detroit Free Press**

The Mackinac Center has pushed for years to shut down the state pension program system. Pressure has been building. Giving substance to rumors of a push during the next lame duck session, Amway President Doug DeVos announced to attendees at the West Michigan Policy Forum that ending public employees' pension benefits is No. 1 public policy priority.

In the past, the powerful DeVos family and others have helped persuade the Republican-controlled Legislature to make Michigan a right-to-work state and reform the state's business tax system.

"And we take these (votes) very seriously; we move them forward with all of our might," DeVos said. "Obviously, all of you felt that we need to go in a different direction."

Attendees at the Grand Rapids policy forum on Monday voted in favor of restructuring government employees' retirement benefits to a 401(k)-style benefit plan, which lessens the financial burden on the government employer and requires employees to contribute more money to their retirement plan.

Groups will likely lobby GOP lawmakers to make pension reforms for local governments happen.

"I think you can kind of get a good feel from there about where we're going," DeVos said.

"And our group is pretty simple," he continued. "We can only have about five topics we can deal with" at a time. "What this does, is it sends a message to all of our elected officials. It helps clarify the issues."

The DeVos family is a major donor to Michigan and national and Republican causes.

In the months leading up to the August primary, the DeVos family funded two of the state's top six most active political action committees, according to the Michigan Campaign Finance Network. That's \$1.45 million in contributions to state candidates, PACs and Republican organizations.

Mentors needed to Assist Student MEA Members

Opportunities to assist teachers of the future await! We are looking for a few good MEA-Retired members to assist student interns from universities around the state. Remember all those questions you had when you stepped into the classroom for the first time and had no one to turn to for answers? You could be that person with all of your experience and knowledge to share, to help out a struggling student teacher or pre-student teacher. We will match mentors with mentees in areas closely matching their subject areas, level, and location. Isn't it worth giving a few hours of your time to make a difference, not only for an individual embarking on a new chapter of their future, but also for generations of students to come? *Please contact Peg Schroder at PegSchroder@comcast.net*

Important Voter Information for November's Election

You must be registered to vote 30 days before the election.

You must be 18 years old on Election Day to be eligible to vote.

It is not necessary to bring your photo I.D. with you to the precinct, but it will expedite the process to issue a ballot.

The courts have upheld the right for Michigan citizens to vote a straight party ticket this year.

Because the lines for a presidential election are usually long and November weather is unpredictable, you may want to request an absentee ballot. You must meet at least one of the following criteria for absentee voting:

1. 60 years of age or older.
2. Physically unable to attend the polls without assistance.
3. Appointed as an election inspector.
4. Expected to be absent from the community between 7:00 am and 8:00 pm on Election Day.
5. Cannot attend due to religious tenets.
6. Cannot attend, confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial.

Did You Know:

- Seven new charter schools opened this fall as six are closed. The total number of charters remains at about 300. Michigan has no limit on charters.
- The legislature is on campaign/election break. They will return for one day on October 19 and again on November 9 and 10. Lame Duck session begins November 29 and ends December 15.
- Attorney General issued a ruling that law allows the state to close low performing schools this year in new Detroit Community Schools.

CALENDAR

October 11, 2016 – Last day to register to vote in November General Election

November 5, 2016 – Deadline to request Absentee Ballots for November General Election

November 8, 2016 – MICHIGAN GENERAL ELECTION

November 10, 2016 – President's Conclave

January 9, 2017 – Deadline to request a paper ballot for the MEA-Retired on-line voting