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Legislative Update

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Busy Lame Duck Expected

The 2023-2024 Michigan Legislature is currently in the midst of its lame duck session—the period between the election and the end-of-year adjournment. While Republicans regained control of the State House by flipping four seats in the November 5 election, the shift in power won't take effect until the new Legislature is seated in January. Thus, Democrats retain their trifecta—control of the State Senate, House, and governorship—until the end of the year. The next election for Senate and gubernatorial seats will take place in 2026.

After the upcoming two-week Thanksgiving break, the House and Senate will return to Lansing on December 3 for what is expected to be a busy nine days of committee meetings and sessions. Any bills not passed by the Legislature's year-end adjournment will expire and must be reintroduced in the 2025-2026 legislative session to be considered by the incoming Legislature.



Curriculum Modification Proposal Heard in Committee

The House Education Committee heard testimony this week on legislation that would modify math, social studies, and science course requirements for high school graduation. **House Bill 5735** seeks to amend the Michigan Merit Curriculum by removing the specific course names while maintaining curriculum standards and knowledge requirements. The committee did not vote on the bill.

Labor Reform Bills Introduced in House and Senate

Bills were introduced in both the House and Senate this week that would impact public school employee healthcare benefits and retirement. They were referred to the Labor Committee in their respective chamber.

House Bills **6058** and **6136** and Senate Bills **1129** and **1130** seek to amend the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act by, among other things, increasing allowable employer contribution rates and caps starting in 2025 and allowing for negotiated exceptions in collective bargaining.

HB 6060 proposes amendments to the Public School Employees Retirement Act of 1979, offering new and existing qualified participants specific options regarding their retirement plan membership.

These options would allow participants to move between two tiers, with detailed rules about the election process, timing, and consequences, such as the impact on service credits and tax compliance.

Incoming Legislative Leaders Announced

Last week, the House Republican and Democratic caucuses elected their leaders for the upcoming 2025-2026 legislative session. When Republicans take 58-52 control of the State House in January, **Representative Matt Hall** (R-Richland) will be Speaker.

As Speaker, Representative Hall will have authority to decide which bills come to the floor for a vote and oversee legislative committee assignments for the chamber.

His caucus' priorities for the upcoming session focus on advancing the Republican Campaign Committee's 10-point **"Mission for Michigan"**, including:

- Expanding access to affordable and local child care options
- Preparing students for the future by teaching real-life skills and improving school safety
- Attracting high-paying jobs to the state by improving workforce training and investing in education and skilled trades
- Prioritizing mental health, the fight against addiction, and improving healthcare access
- Growing Michigan's economy by creating a favorable environment for career providers to flourish, supporting innovation, and fostering entrepreneurship
- Bringing greater transparency to the state budget process


Rep. Matt Hall


Rep. Raneev Puri

Democrats elected **Representative Ranjeev Puri** (D-Canton) to serve as House Minority Leader.

Other legislators elected to House leadership positions include:

- **Representative Bryan Posthumus** (R-Rockford) – Houser Majority Floor Leader
- **Representative Rachelle Smit** (R-Shelbyville) – House Speaker Pro Tempore
- **Representative Jay DeBoyer** (R-Clay) - Associate Speaker Pro Tempore
- **Representative Brian Begole** (R-Perry) - Assistant Majority Floor Leader
- **Representative Mike Harris** (R-Clarkston) – Majority Whip
- **Representative Joseph Aragona** (R-Clinton Township) – Chief Deputy Whip
- **Representative Ken Borton** (R-Gaylord) Caucus Chair
- **Representative-elect Nancy Jenkins-Arno** (R-Clayton) - Caucus Vice Chair
- **Representative John Fitzgerald** (D-Wyoming) – House Minority Floor Leader

Charter School Transparency Proposals Headed to Senate Floor

When it met on November 13, the Senate Education Committee approved four bills that would require charter schools to publicly disclose salary information, financial audit statements, and lease or purchase agreements.

Key provisions of Senate Bills **943**, **944**, **946**, and **947** include:

- Extending financial disclosure requirements to strict discipline academies (charter schools focused on at-risk students).
- Requiring agreements between charter schools and Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) to include (and be posted on the school's website) audited financial statements from EMOs and a list of fringe benefits for any employee, officer, or board member earning over $100,000 annually.
- Requiring school districts and ISDs to post audited financial statements from EMOs managing charter schools, along with detailed accounting of fees and expenditures by the charter school's authorizing body and notices of noncompliance with education standards.
- Removing the penalty that previously allowed the state to withhold funding from districts or charter schools that failed to comply with transparency requirements.
- Establishing new rules for charter schools to ensure their real estate agreements reflect market conditions and prevent conflicts of interest with EMOs.

The bills passed the committee on party-line votes (4-2) and now move to the Senate for further consideration. If approved by the Senate, they will need to pass the House before going to the Governor for approval.

Meanwhile, the House passed legislation already approved by the Senate that would require charter schools to list the name of their authorizing body and primary EMO on property signage, advertising, public websites, and student applications, and to post the average salary for teachers and support staff on their public websites by November 1 of each year. House Bills **5231** and **5269** now head to Governor Whitmer for her signature.

House Passes Safe Storage Information Bills

The Michigan House passed a two-bill package that proposes mandating all schools across the state to distribute information on safe storage of firearms to students' families.

Under House Bills **5450** and **5451,** beginning October 1, 2025, and by October 1 each year thereafter, schools would be required to distribute information and best practices regarding firearm storage. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services would be responsible for developing the information, which would be provided to schools through the Michigan Department of Education. The information would need to include frequently asked questions and guidance on where parents can obtain gun locks and gun safes.

The bills now move to the Senate for consideration.