

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**



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*Hello and welcome to the latest edition of my e-newsletter!*

*I hope that you all have had a safe and happy summer. It has been a very busy summer for me. I held office hours and senior educational events all around the district and attended many community events. I was also busy going door-to-door and meeting many of you. Thank you for your input and I appreciate your concern for our state and its future. If I didn't get a chance to talk to you, I will continue walking the district neighborhoods and holding office hours while we are in session this fall.*

*We were also busy in the legislature and detailed below is the most recent legislation that was enacted to help Michigan on the road to recovery.*

## **Legislative News**

### Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act

This bill limits the amount of money a **taxpayer-funded employer** is allowed to pay for employee health care. Public employers have the option to pay 80 percent of employee health care costs. The other option is a limit on the dollar amount spent for individual health care. A public employer cannot pay more than \$5,500 annually for individual employee health care, \$11,000 for a married couple or \$15,000 for a family plan.

With the passing of this legislation, Michigan taxpayers will now pay less of the cost of health insurance for legislators, teachers and local government employees.

### Welfare Reform

This package of bills creates a permanent, cumulative, 48-month lifetime limit on Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits for **able-bodied individuals**. Michigan did not have a "hard cap" for benefits, and most of its exemptions were not related to an individual's ability to work. This legislation corrects those issues.

The Welfare Reform package also incorporates new sanctions imposed on recipients who fail to meet program requirements. And also, requires the department to verify the residency status of each applicant.

This package of bills ensures that those who truly need assistance will receive it and those who have cheated the system will no longer be able to do so.

### Reforms bring higher credit rating for Michigan

Fitch Ratings has revised the State of Michigan's Rating Outlook for all bonds to 'Positive'. Fitch, an international rating agency, also affirmed Michigan's General Obligation Credit Rating "AA-."

According to the agency, Fitch's 'Positive Outlook' for Michigan "reflects prudent budgeting and efforts to grow reserve levels in the context of an economy beginning to slowly rebound."

My colleagues and I are committed to bringing Michigan to a 'AAA' Credit Rating.

### Leading by Example

The House of Representatives and its employees are also making sacrifices. Office budgets were cut an additional 13.9% this past month. Over the past two years, the member office expenses have been cut up to 28.9% along with making additional staff cuts.

The Legislators' pay was cut by 10% and they eliminated their own retirement health benefits.

While House spending makes up only a small portion of the overall state budget, it is important that lawmakers and legislative employees lead by example. You can find more House budget information at [www.house.mi.gov/financials.asp](http://www.house.mi.gov/financials.asp).

## **District Happenings**



Rep. Somerville with Lt. Governor Calley and Senator Colbeck at the Brownstown Business Expo.



Rep. Somerville listening to a presentation on scams perpetrated against senior citizens by Angela Branch from the Attorney General's office at the Woodhaven Community Center



Rep. Somerville speaking with senior citizens at the Attorney General's Senior Brigade event in Gibraltar

## **Around the District**

September 10th and 11th

### **64th Annual Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival**

Games, raffles, food, prizes, and seminars. All proceeds benefit the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area. For more information:

<http://www.miwaterfowlfest.org/>

September 15th

**Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber Annual Steak Roast**

Woodhaven Community Center

Doors open at 4:30 pm

Dinner Served 5-8 pm

(734) 284-6000 for information

Tickets (non-refundable): \$30/person in advance, \$35/person at the door

<http://www.swcrc.com/>

September 17th

**Flat Rock Riverfest**

Huroc Park in Flat Rock

9am to 9pm

<http://downtownflatrock.com/featured/riverfest/>

September 17th

**Grosse Ile 2nd Annual Veteran's Gala - Honoring Korean War Veterans**

4pm to 9pm

Tickets available only at the Grosse Ile Township Hall

9601 Groh Road

(734) 676-4422

<http://www.grosseile.com/html/community/VeteransGala.html>

**Contact Information**

Thank you for your interest in my e-newsletter.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. You can email me at

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Please visit my website for more

<http://www.reppatsomerville.com/>

I also have a facebook page that I frequently update. Just search for Representative Pat Somerville.