

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



State Representative

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June 30, 2016

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Dear friends,

Hello and welcome to the July edition of my e-newsletter for 2016!

In June, the legislature was able to complete our work on some very important issues facing our state before beginning the Summer In-District Work Period. I am proud to say that for the sixth year in a row, we have passed a balanced state budget months ahead of schedule. The House and Senate were also able to compromise on a plan to provide a fresh start for Detroit schools.

I hope you find this email update useful and informative. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you ever have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Daniela R. García
State Representative
90th District

State Budget

Our state budget was approved by both the House and the Senate in June. For the sixth year in a row, our budget is balanced and in place months ahead of schedule in order to give our schools and local governments more time to plan their own budgets.

Michigan has been a national leader in budgeting practices over the last six years. The Fiscal Year 2016-17 State Budget is a

fiscally responsible budget that focuses on areas that are important to Ottawa County residents such as education, transportation, and investment for our veterans.

Under the budget passed by the legislature, education funding has hit an all-time high for the State for Michigan's students; growing by \$261.2 million from last year. Every school district in the 90th District will see an increase of \$120 per pupil, continuing our dedication to Michigan students. The budget includes an additional \$218 million dedicated to transportation to help fix our roads. The Grand Rapids Home for Veterans will receive \$5 million for renovations to provide high quality care. The D.J. Jacobetti Home in Marquette will receive an additional \$1.1 million. Another \$2.5 is being appropriated to fund upgrades at our National Guard Armories.

This budget funds vital public services while maintaining the fiscal responsibility that has become the new normal in our state. The overall spending increase in this budget has been held below 1%, less than half the rate of inflation. We now rank second in the nation at limiting state budget growth.

Since 2010, Michigan has added over 460,000 new jobs, eliminated more than \$22 billion of debt, and has rebuilt the rainy day fund to \$615 million. Our state's economy has turned around due in large part to responsible budgeting practices in Lansing. We have come a long way since the days of government shutdowns of the past, but we still have more work to do to ensure a better future for our state.

The Governor signed the Omnibus Appropriations Bill at the Holland State Park and remarked that it was the most beautiful Pure Michigan backdrop he has ever had to sign a bill.

Detroit Public Schools

In June, the House and the Senate reached a compromise on a solution to the academic and financial crisis facing the Detroit Public Schools (DPS) that puts students first. Following decades of mismanagement, DPS found themselves on the brink of a disastrous bankruptcy. Without legislative action, more than 40,000 students in Detroit would have found the doors closed on the first day of school this fall and Michigan taxpayers could have been asked to foot the bill for DPS' total debt.

The plan, passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor, will keep Detroit students in the classroom, provides financial stability and academic reforms for the district, and oversight for Michigan taxpayers. Under the plan, Detroit schools will receive funds to pay the operational debt over the next ten years. The schools will be placed under the Financial Review Commission that was established during the City of Detroit's bankruptcy until the district has paid off its debt and has been financially stable for 10 consecutive fiscal years.

Had DPS gone bankrupt, Michigan taxpayers would have been asked to pay off the approximately \$3 billion in total debt. The impact this would have had on school districts and local governments in West Michigan would have been nothing short of catastrophic. It was important to pass this legislation not only to keep Detroit students in school, but also to hold other schools around the state harmless.

This legislation represents a fresh start and a real academic future for students in Detroit. It frees up \$1,100 per student that is currently spent on debt obligations to go directly to children in the classroom where it will be used to improve academic achievement. We have taken significant positive action in order to solve a major problem in our state's largest city. This is a solution that puts students across Michigan first.

Summer Reading Contest

I hope that students and families across Ottawa County are enjoying their summer so far. Summer is one of the best times of the year for a child. One way to make your student's summer even more enjoyable is to encourage them to pick up a book. Reading is one of the most important skills children learn to prepare them for a successful future.

This summer, I am once again sponsoring a Summer Reading Contest for first through fifth grade students in the 90th district. After a student reads ten books, all they need to do is fill out the back of the bookmark distributed at local libraries and drop it in the box at the library to be entered into a drawing. The winner and their family will be invited to join me in Lansing as "Representative for a Day."

Bookmarks and drop boxes are available at the following locations. Additional bookmarks can be ordered from my office

or found online at www.RepDanielaGarcia.com.

- Gary Byker Memorial Library
3388 Van Buren St, Hudsonville
- Howard Miller Public Library
14 S. Church St, Zeeland
- Herrick District Library
300 S. River Ave, Holland

Summer In-District Work Period

Though the House of Representatives will not be meeting in Lansing throughout the summer months, I will be spending my time hard at work at home in the 90th District on the issues that matter most to West Michigan residents.

I plan to attend municipal meetings, meet with local officials, and connect directly with my constituents to make sure I am doing everything I can to represent them the best I can when House session resumes in the fall.

I will continue to host monthly office hours throughout the summer, typically on the first Monday of the month. Though the legislature will not be in session, my Lansing office will be open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm to assist constituents and answer questions about state government.

District Office Hours

Each month, I sponsor office hours in Hudsonville, Zeeland, and Holland. Normally, office hours take place on the first Monday of each month. However due to Independence Day, **this month's set of office hours will take place on Monday July 11**. Times and locations will remain the same:

- Hudsonville hours will take place at the Gary Byker Memorial Library (3388 Van Buren Street) at 11am.
- Zeeland hours will take place at the Howard Miller Public Library (14 South Church Street) at 1pm.
- Holland hours will take place at the Herrick District Library (300 South River Avenue) at 3pm.

No appointment is necessary. Residents who are otherwise unable to meet during my scheduled office hours may contact my Lansing office at (517) 373-0830 or by e-mailing me at DanielaGarcia@house.mi.gov.

Please stop by and say hello!

Upcoming District Events

- West Coast Chamber Early Bird Coffee
Date: Tuesday July 12
Time: 7:30am – 8:30am
Location: Baert Baron Mansion B&B, Zeeland
- West Coast Chamber Golf Outing
Date: Wednesday July 13
Time: First shotgun start at 7:30am, second at 1:00pm
Location: Macatawa Legends Golf & Country Club, Holland
- Hudsonville Chamber Connect for Lunch
Date: Thursday July 14
Time: 12:00pm – 1:00pm
Location: Pizza Ranch, Hudsonville
- Kayak the Kalamazoo River
Date: Saturday July 23
Time: 10:30am – 4:00pm
Location: DeGraaf Nature Center, Holland

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