



# MAGE

Michigan Association of Governmental Employees  
OPEIU Local 2002

## THE QUARTERLY REPORT

April 2025

### Message from the President

While at the beginning of the year we were confident that the legislation allowing some law enforcement positions to be added to the State Police Pension fund would already be signed by the Governor, as the new legislature took office, it was decided that these bills should go through additional review. As we move into April, these bills still have not been sent to the Governor's desk. This is just another example of how the jobs of State employees are directly tied to politics. We have not forgotten about this fight and continue to support the passage of these bills. The MAGE lobbyist continues to advocate for these bills as well.

I want to take a moment to address concerns regarding full time return to office. This year we have witnessed federal employees being required to return to office full time. This has led to a lot of concern amongst our members. While it is important to remember that it is an inherent management right for the Department to require either a hybrid return or a full time in office return, we do not expect there to be a blanket return to office for all State employees. It is also important to remember that there have been no official announcements of a blanket full time return to office. If you have any questions or concerns regarding return to office mandates, please call the MAGE office.

In April, MAGE Vice President Brant Wimbush and Legal Counsel Peter Neu, along with a couple of previously selected members, will attend the first of two labor management meetings with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Human Resources. These meetings will focus on pay compression and Lack of overtime pay experienced by our supervisors in DHHS. The second meeting will take place in June. Any important updates that ensue from these meetings will be provided to our DHHS members via email or posted on the MAGE website.

The MAGE labor staff has been busy this past quarter with an uptick of grievances, investigatory conferences, and disciplinary conferences. Please remember that if you ever need help, call the MAGE office!

Have a great spring!

### Labor Relations Tip!

The School and Community Leave benefit has seen an improvement. Under Regulation 5.09, each October 1<sup>st</sup>, career employees who have completed 1,040 hours of satisfactory service receive 8 hours of school and community participation leave credits.

Employees may use this leave to participate in any school-sponsored activity including tutoring, field trips, classroom programs, school committees, assisting athletic or arts programs, and school clubs. The leave may also be used to actively participate in any structured secular community activities sponsored by a governmental or non-profit community agency, but not for mere attendance at school or community events.

The use of community leave has also been expanded in 2025 to include the use of the school and community participation leave for an employee's cultural or religious observance.

This expansion is a major change to the benefits and we hope our members remember this leave benefit is available on an annual basis.

### Benefit Spotlight

Don't forget! MAGE members have access to numerous benefits! This quarter we want to highlight the OPEIU Student Debt Reduction program!

- Every April OPEIU opens the application period.
- Available to members in good standing.
- Member must have \$10,000 in student debt.
- Applicants are eligible for one \$2,500.00 lifetime award.
- Watch the MAGE website and your emails for the 2025 applications.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## HIGHLIGHTS

(Provided by MAGE Lobbyist Todd Tennis)

Despite a slow start in January, the Michigan Legislature is back up to full speed as House and Senate committees are hitting their stride. In addition to policy work being done by standing committees, we are also in the middle of budget season so the Legislature's workload is exceedingly high. Speaker Matt Hall (R-Richland Twp.) has stated that the budget process could go well into September this year, which creates a fear of a possible government shutdown should an agreement not be reached by October 1.

To prepare for that possibility, the House has also already passed initial versions of the school aid budget and the omnibus state budget – something unheard of this early in the process. The budgets are bare-bones and make severe cuts to both public schools, universities, and state government in general. Republican leaders say that they are modeled after the “essential services” proposal issued by former Governor Jennifer Granholm the last time the state missed the October 1 deadline in 2008. Regardless, the impact on public services should the Legislature and Governor fail to reach a budget agreement prior to October 1 would be devastating.

While we are observing a new federal constitutional crisis on a daily basis as the Trump administration ignores court order after court order, we are also seeing a Michigan constitutional crisis as Speaker of the House Matt Hall continues to refuse to present several bills passed in 2024 to the Governor for her signature. Among these bills are HB 6054 which reforms the so-called “80/20” law, and House Bills 4665-4667, which would allow certain classifications of state workers to opt into the Michigan State Troopers Retirement System. The resolution to that crisis is ongoing, and there are more details on it below.

### Legislation in Limbo Despite Court Ruling

Nine bills that passed at the end of the 2023-4 legislative session remain in the hands of the Michigan House clerks due to a constitutional battle between House Speaker Matt Hall and Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks. Several of these bills are of interest to public sector workers, especially state employees. Those bills include legislation that would provide increased retirement benefits for certain state workers, and major reforms to PA 152 (the “80/20” law) that would help public sector workers have a fairer chance to negotiate over their health care benefits.

Despite the fact that these bills passed the House and Senate, the House clerks failed to present the bills to Governor Whitmer for her signature before January 1 when a new

Speaker of the House took control. Speaker Matt Hall has consistently refused to forward the bills to the Governor, creating a constitutional crisis that has resulted in litigation filed by Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks. A lawsuit initiated by the Michigan Senate asked the courts to compel Speaker Hall to present the bills to Governor Whitmer as the Michigan Constitution requires.

The case was referred to the Michigan Court of Claims, where in February Judge Sima Patel ruled that the Speaker of the House had a constitutional responsibility to present bills to the Governor no later than 14 days before they would normally take effect (in this case, that date would have been March 19, 2025). However, Judge Patel stopped short of issuing an order for the House to present the bills.

On March 11, the House passed a resolution indicating that they have no intention of presenting the bills at all. Moreover, Speaker Hall stated his intention to file an appeal to Judge Patel's ruling at the Michigan Court of Appeals. On March 20, the day after Judge Patel's deadline passed with no action from the House, the Michigan Senate filed a motion with Judge Patel asking her to enforce her ruling and direct the House to present the bills to the Governor.

It looks more and more like this issue will continue to drag on, possibly for several months.

*Visit the MAGE website for the full legislative report.*

### Announcements:

- Would you like a MAGE informational meeting to be held at your office or in your local area? If you would like to set up a lunch meeting for members and potential members to speak with MAGE Labor Representatives, call the MAGE Office today! 1-800-477-6243.