



MAGE

Michigan Association of Governmental Employees
OPEIU Local 2002

THE QUARTERLY REPORT

October 2024

Message from the President

Can you believe our beautiful Michigan summer has already come to a close? I hope all our members had an opportunity to enjoy some of the incredible destinations Michigan has to offer. As quick as our summer went, the Coordinated Compensation season has come upon us just as fast.

The MAGE team has been working diligently all summer convening meetings not only with members but also the Office of State Employer (OSE) to try and find common ground in regards to the astounding pay compression we are experiencing in our Department of Corrections and Health and Human Services. In meeting with OSE it is our hope that bringing specific details of the pay compression to their attention, OSE and Civil Service will be more likely to address the issue. Whether that be an overall larger pay increase for NERE employees, or specific pay increases for positions in the most dire state of compression. The MAGE team will round out the year with the Coordinated Compensation Panel. Position statements will be submitted in October and the Coordinated Compensation meeting with Civil Service will take place in December. Make sure to watch the MAGE webpage for updates around that time.

MAGE District 6 held a general meeting at Fiesta Chara in East Lansing Michigan on August 8th. The district had a great turn out of both current State employees and retiree members. This meeting offered the opportunity to meet and greet with other MAGE members and to provide a general information update. Be sure to watch the MAGE webpage and Facebook for future membership meetings!

MAGE had the opportunity of awarding a total of 4 MAGE scholarship and student debt reduction awards! Please remember that the scholarship and student debt reduction application period will re-open next June! A MAGE member was also the recipient of the Howard Coughlin Memorial part-time scholarship. All of us here at MAGE would like to congratulate the winners of both awards!

Labor Representatives in Action

The MAGE Labor team participated in two corrections trainings this past summer to promote MAGE membership. We also participated in meetings at our DHS facilities that were facilitated by members to provide informational updates and answer questions for members and non-members. As the summer has come to an end our representatives have been quite busy with the uptick in grievances and discipline. Remember, if you run into any trouble at work, MAGE is here to help you!

Labor Relations Tip!

Did you know as a state employee you have access to the Employee Services Program (ESP). Employee Services aids employees on matters ranging from work related to family or personal concerns. This assistance is confidential and provided by licensed counselors. ESP is 100% no cost to the employee. These services are provided both via telephone or in person. While ESP is not able to provide mental health treatment, counselors can assist an employee with finding the right treatment provider. Visit the [ESP webpage](#) for more information.

Benefit Spotlight

Don't forget! MAGE members have access to numerous benefits! This quarter we want to highlight the benefits available for our enhanced retirees!

Enhanced retirees are those retiree members paying dues in the amount of \$60.00 per year. All MAGE enhanced retiree members have access to the following benefits:

- \$2,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy.
- Towing benefit (2 calls per year up to \$100 each)
- Identity theft protection.
- Access to the union plus discounts through [unionplus.org](#).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

HIGHLIGHTS (Provided by MAGE Lobbyist Todd Tennis)

Lansing has been a virtual ghost town since the August 6 primary as House members have used the summer recess to campaign for reelection. The House held session on September 25 where they did take action on several bills, but it is likely that this will be the only House session day until after the election. The Senate could possibly meet for one or more days between now and November, but both chambers seem to be waiting for the Lame Duck session before they act on further legislation.

The intensity of a Lame Duck session will depend a great deal on the outcome of the Michigan House races. Presently, Democrats hold majorities in both the State Senate and the State House, which along with Democratic Governor Whitmer give them the “trifecta” in terms of being able to pass partisan legislation. The Governor and Senate are not on the ballot this year, but if the House majority changes, Democrats will only have until the end of this year to implement their legislative goals. If that is the case, we expect Democratic leaders to plan for a frantic session schedule between the election and the close of session in late December.

On the other hand, if Democrats keep the majority in the House after the election results are tallied, we expect a much lighter “Lame Duck” session schedule since there will be a strong sentiment among Democratic lawmakers to push some of the work off until next session. If Democrats manage to add to their current one-seat majority in the House, the likelihood of waiting until next year to tackle controversial issues goes up even more.

Rep. Koleszar Preparing Drafts for MSERS Changes

Representative Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth) has been working on legislation that would allow state employees to have a similar pension system as is currently offered to public school employees. Public school workers in Michigan currently have the option of a hybrid retirement plan that combines elements of a traditional pension (also known as Defined Benefit or “DB plan”) and a 401(k)-style system (also known as Defined Contribution or “DC plan”). State employees hired before 1997 were part of a traditional defined benefit pension plan. However, since 1997, state workers have only been offered a 401(k)-style defined contribution plan which places a substantial amount of risk on individual employees.

Defined benefit plans are typically seen by retirement experts as a safer and more substantial retirement benefit than a defined contribution system. A traditional DB pension factors in years of service and final average compensation to provide a retiree with a defined percentage of their former income that will be paid out until their death. A DC plan, however, is based upon a retirement savings account that is filled up over the course of an employee’s working years by a combination of contributions from their own earnings and contributions from their employer. While a personal investment retirement plan is a good idea for most workers, a traditional pension is far more secure and stable and there is no risk of outliving your retirement savings.

In addition, the ability to obtain a stable defined benefit pension after working a minimum number of years (usually 10) is a draw that attracts potential employees and incentivizes them to continue their employment in the same place. The State of Michigan is dealing with a severe staffing shortage across most state departments, and it is particularly severe in Michigan’s correctional facilities, state hospitals and regulatory agencies. Representative Koleszar’s efforts not only seek to provide a more stable retirement benefit for state employees, but to help stop the bleeding in state staffing levels.

Visit the MAGE website for the full legislative report.

Announcements:

- Benefits Open Enrollment will take place October 14 through November 1st 2024. Make sure you review your plans as there will be rate increases!
- Would you like a MAGE informational meeting to be held at your office? 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.