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Legislature in Session for Six More Weeks

The legislature is in session until November 15. They are off for deer hunting and Thanksgiving and then back again for two to three weeks in December before adjourning until next year. The focus in Lansing right now is on no-fault insurance reform. Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and a broad coalition of folks are mandating rate relief legislation. Michigan's highest-in-the-nation auto insurance rates are in the spotlight as insurers want to lower their liabilities and become consistently profitable and hospitals, medical clinics, lawyers and injured drivers are fighting to preserve the current no-fault auto insurance.

The Michigan Supreme Court Denies Menards Inc.'s Application to Overturn Lower Court Ruling

Good news for libraries losing tax revenue due to the tax tribunal's practice of reducing tax obligations for big box stores. The method taxed thriving big box stores at the same rate as closed-down, abandoned stores. Some libraries have been forced to pay back thousands of dollars in tax revenue causing extensive hardship for them. Legislation proposed last year did not advance in the Senate but the results of the Supreme Court decision mean the lower court ruling stands. It reinforces the decision that the tax tribunal's practice of reducing the amount of taxes levied on the big box store was not appropriate. It doesn't negate past losses but it is a step in the right direction for future valuations. It also helps even the playing field for smaller retailers and helps libraries and communities hurt by the loophole allowing those big stores to reduce their tax bills.

Libraries See Reduction in Penal Fines

MLA is spearheading research into the recent wave of penal fine reductions among many libraries. Working with the Library of Michigan to document the payments and determine how the townships are compiling their numbers, our goal is to detail methods for ensuring consistent and accurate payments. Information obtained from the Michigan State Police indicates that the decrease in the revenue is a product of fewer citations being written. Apparently the MSP has been looking into the situation. They report a reduction in the total number of police officers, so departments with the ability to dedicate officers to traffic enforcement is reduced. Additionally, MSP attributes the decline to their working heavily in the Secure Cities Partnership, which is mostly disadvantaged communities. They indicate they are there for a larger purpose of reducing violent crime, and increasing community engagement so they don't emphasize writing

citations in these areas. We are awaiting additional data from the department.

We continue to research how the courts and judges are determining fines to see if there are measures that should be taken to rectify the situation in those areas.

It's important to note that while penal fines are guaranteed in the Michigan Constitution, parallel ordinances, municipalities' practice of reducing civil fines to parking tickets and constant efforts by individual legislators to redirect these funds for other uses, it is likely we will continue to see these funding levels cycle down.

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