

UPDATES FROM THE CAPITOL

September 14-26, 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

Michigan Constitutional Budget Deadline

GOVERNOR WHITMER DELIVERS ECONOMY SPEECH, HINTS AT A BUDGET WORTH SIGNING

Governor Gretchen Whitmer delivered a major address on Michigan's economy last week, underscoring the vital role that middle class jobs have played in the state's success. She pointed to recent progress that includes adding or retaining nearly 1,000 jobs across multiple municipalities that led to a \$200 million boost to the state economy. Whitmer also spoke on securing a fighter mission for Selfridge Air National Guard Base protecting 30,000 jobs and nearly a billion dollars in statewide commerce. She outlined long term investment projects in infrastructure, childcare, housing, and education made possible through bipartisan cooperation, noting that more than 1,500 bipartisan bills have been signed to support working families and strengthen communities.

The governor also raised concerns about what she called a "man-made storm of uncertainty" caused by chaotic national tariff policies and delays in finalizing a state budget. Consequences of this storm include rising prices on groceries and household goods for families, while steep costs, outsourcing, and lower sales threaten Michigan farmers and automakers. Without action, she warned, progress on roads, schools, and public safety could be rolled back, putting thousands of good-paying jobs at risk. Whitmer closed her speech by reminding lawmakers of the value in working across the aisle to sign a balanced budget. What should this compromise look like? According to the governor, a signable budget covers Senate priorities to protect Medicaid, feed kids at school, and support moms and babies and also includes House priorities like cutting spending, fixing local roads, and increasing transparency.

MDHHS DIRECTOR SHARES STATEMENT ON HOUSE GOP BUDGET

According to a statement released by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director, Elizabeth Hertel, the meager budget passed by House Republicans would have dire consequences on Michigan residents. Hertel highlighted that the budget's \$4.95 billion reduction in MDHHS funding would lead to significant staff reductions impacting child protective services workers, benefits specialists, disease specialists, and fraud, waste, and abuse investigators.

The director also reported that the budget cuts would curb certain service programs such as removing \$20 million in adult dental coverage, \$10 million to hospitals for maternal health care, \$7 million for the Office of Community Violence and their gun violence reduction efforts, \$6.8 million to state psychiatric hospitals, and \$4 million toward addressing homelessness.

Hertel stressed that the eliminated funding would negatively impact behavioral health services by increasing wait times and decreasing the state's patient capacity capabilities. The cuts would also erase Medicaid coverage for approximately 33% of residents in rural communities, placing an extra burden on local hospitals and resources posed with absorbing the costs of their care.

OVER HALF A MILLION MICHIGANDERS CAN EXPECT TO SEE HIGHER HEALTHCARE COSTS

According to the Citizens Research Council (CRC), approximately 530,000 Michiganders are set to see higher healthcare costs due to the expiration of federal tax credits for health insurance purchased through Patient Protection or the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Congress failed to extend these tax credits when passing the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Currently, around 350,000 Michigan residents are covered by tax credit supported plans supported by the federal government. After the credits expire, estimates point to a 70% increase in premiums on the marketplace. Additionally, 200,000 Michiganders are set to lose insurance coverage under the ACA.

The CRC warns that these coverage losses could create ripple effects across the state. Residents who forgo coverage will face greater financial and health challenges, while the departure of healthy enrollees from the marketplace will drive up costs for those who remain. Even employer-sponsored plans could see higher premiums as the marketplace shifts. Many will wait to seek healthcare until it requires a visit to the emergency department. However, those delaying care are mostly likely to be unable to afford its cost, thereby causing uncompensated care costs to rise.

The CRC cautioned that the state will have to grapple with the impacts of fewer people having health insurance, higher premiums, and increasing uncompensated care for hospitals. CRC suggested a state tax credit or healthcare incentives, but any move would require more state spending. Given the tight budget climate, lawmakers may resist, but inaction could result in daunting consequences for Michigan residents.

GOV SIGNS COVID VACCINE EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE, CHIEF MEDICAL EXECUTIVE SHARES STANDING RECOMMENDATION

As we prepare for the upcoming cold and flu season, Governor Gretchen Whitmer has taken steps to expand access to the COVID-19 vaccine through instructions in a recently-signed executive directive. Within the directive, Whitmer advised departments to give clear public and provider guidance on COVID-19 vaccine safety, ensure providers promote and administer the vaccines, remove barriers to access, and require coverage by all health plans under the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS), including Medicaid and private insurers.

Michigan's Chief Medical Executive, Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, also stressed the importance of vaccine accessibility in her Standing Recommendation issued shortly after the executive directive. According to the FDA's vaccine administration guidelines, the vaccine is approved for individuals over the age of 65 and for those between age 5 and 64 with conditions that place them in a high risk category. Dr. Bagdasarian noted, however, that the FDA did not define which pre-existing conditions qualify an individual as high risk. As such, Dr. Bagdasarian's recommendation designates that any individual age 6 months or older without contraindications may be eligible to receive the vaccine since any pre-existing or latent condition, including not previously being vaccinated against COVID-19, may qualify someone as high-risk.

2026 STATE ELECTION UPDATES

The 2026 primary and general elections are still over a year away but that is not stopping political movers from announcing candidacies and endorsements in hopes of shaking up the political makeup of Michigan. Here are a few new and familiar names worth mentioning:

Gubernatorial

- Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson (D-Detroit)
- Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II (D-Detroit)
- Chris Swanson (D-Fenton) - Genesee County Sheriff
- U.S. Representative John James (R-Shleby Township)
- Former Attorney General Mike Cox (R-Livonia)

Secretary of State

- Monica Yatooma (R-Oakland County) – Executive committee member of the Oakland County Republican Party
- Former State Senator Adam Hollier (D-Detroit) – Announced he is dropping out of the U.S. House Race for the 13th District to instead run for Secretary of State
- Articia Bomer (R-Detroit) – Previously ran in elections for Detroit City Clerk (disqualified, 2025), Wayne County Sheriff (2024), Governor (2022), Congress (2020), Michigan House of Representatives (2018), and Mayor of Detroit (2016)

U.S. Senate

- Current U.S. Representative Haley Stevens (D-Birmingham)
- Current State Senator Mallory McMorrow (D-Royal Oak)
- Former Wayne County Health Director Abdul El-Sayed (D-Ann Arbor)
- Former U.S. Representative Mike Rogers (R-White Lake) – Current polling has Rogers leading by a far margin against other declared GOP candidates

U.S. House

- 4th District
 - Current State Senator Sean McCann (D-Kalamazoo)
 - Jessica Swartz (D-Kalamazoo)
 - Diop Harris (D-Battle Creek)
- 7th District
 - Incumbent U.S. Representative Tom Barrett (R-Charlotte)
 - Bridget Brink (D-Lansing)
 - Josh Cowen (D-Williamston)
 - William Lawrence (D-Lansing)
 - Matt Maasdam (D-Ann Arbor)
- 10th District
 - Mayor of Pontiac Tim Greimel (D-Rochester Hills)
 - Christina Hines (D-Warren)
 - Eric Chung (D-Sterling Heights)
 - Former Prosecutor Robert Lulgjuraj (R-Sterling Heights) – Recently entered the race
 - Of Note: Captain Michael Bouchard (R-Rochester Hills) – currently deployed overseas in the U.S. Army – has received endorsements from former Attorney General Bli Schuette and former-Gov. John Engler, despite the fact that he has not yet announced a campaign

- 11th District
 - Current State Senator Jeremy Moss (D-Bloomfield Township)
 - Aisha Farooqi (D-Sterling Heights) – Previously ran for Michigan House district 57 in 2022 and 2024
 - Don Ufford (D-Bloomfield Village)
- 13th District
 - Incumbent U.S. Representative Shri Thanedar (D-Detroit)
 - Current State Representative Donovan McKinney (D-Detroit)

Michigan Senate

- 2nd District
 - Current State Representative Erin Byrnes (D-Dearborn)
 - Current State Representative Tullio Liberati Jr (D-Allen Park)
- 3rd District
 - John Conyers III (D-Detroit) – previously ran for U.S. House of Representatives 13th District
- 5th District
 - Current State Representative Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth)
- 7th District
 - Current State Representative Jason Hoskins (D-Southfield) – running to replace term-limited Sen. Jeremy Moss
- 10th District
 - Current State Representative Natalie Price (D-Berkley)
 - Amanda Treppa (D-Royal Oak)
- 13th District
 - Sean Carlson (D-Commerce Township)
- 15th District
 - Former State Representative Felicia Brabec (D-Ann Arbor)
- 19th District
 - Current State Representative Julie Rogers (D-Kalamazoo)
- 20th District
 - Kenny Clevenger (R-Casco Township)
- 22nd District
 - Mike Murphy (R-Howell)
- 23rd District
 - Current State Representative Donni Steele (R-Orion)
- 29th District
 - Current State Representative Phil Skaggs (D-East Grand Rapids)
- 30th District
 - Incumbent State Senator Mark Huizenga (R-Walker)
 - Current State Representative Carol Glanville (D-Walker)
 - Richard Kreuzer (D-Grand Rapids)
- 32nd District
 - Rebecca Amidon (D-Manistee)
 - Jay Kilgo (D-Muskegon)
 - Mason County Sheriff Kim Cole (R-Ludington) – running to replace term limited Sen. Jon Bumstead (R-North Muskegon)

- 33rd District
 - Current State Representative Gina Johnsen (R-Portland) – seen as the early favorite with endorsements by numerous senators and other republican officials
 - Current State Representative Joseph Fox (R-Fremont)
 - Kent County Commissioner Katie DeBoer (R-Rockford)
- 35th District (Special Election)
 - Christian Velasquez (R-Midland)
 - Dr. Martin Blank (D-Saginaw) – A surgeon and former Republican candidate, announced he is switching parties to run as a Democrat
 - Of Note: Current State Representative Timmy Beson (R-Bay City) has expressed interest in running.
 - Of Note: Current State Representative Bill G. Schuette has decided not to run for the 35th district Senate race, instead running for reelection in the House