

No. 75
STATE OF MICHIGAN
Journal of the Senate
102nd Legislature
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

Senate Chamber, Lansing, Tuesday, September 17, 2024.

10:00 a.m.

The Senate was called to order by the President pro tempore, Senator Jeremy Moss.

The roll was called by the Secretary of the Senate, who announced that a quorum was present.

Albert—present
Anthony—present
Bayer—present
Bellino—present
Brinks—present
Bumstead—present
Camilleri—present
Cavanagh—present
Chang—present
Cherry—present
Daley—present
Damoose—present
Geiss—present

Hauck—present
Hertel—present
Hoitenga—present
Huizenga—present
Irwin—present
Johnson—present
Klinefelt—present
Lauwers—present
Lindsey—present
McBroom—present
McCann—present
McDonald Rivet—present
McMorrow—present

Moss—present
Nesbitt—present
Outman—excused
Polehanki—present
Runestad—excused
Santana—present
Shink—present
Singh—present
Theis—present
Victory—present
Webber—present
Wojno—present

Senator Roger Victory of the 31st District offered the following invocation:

Lord, we come to You in prayer on this wonderful September morning, a day of Your creation, with thankful hearts. We ask for Your blessing and hand of guidance on this chamber as we do the work on behalf of the people of Michigan. As we approach the fall season, may Your hand of guidance and safety be with those gathering in the harvest throughout the state. May it be a bountiful and prosperous harvest.

This we ask in Your name. Amen.

The President pro tempore, Senator Moss, led the members of the Senate in recital of the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

Motions and Communications

Senator Lauwers moved that Senator McBroom be temporarily excused from today's session. The motion prevailed.

Senator Lauwers moved that Senators Outman and Runestad be excused from today's session. The motion prevailed.

Senator Singh moved that Senators Chang and Cavanagh be temporarily excused from today's session. The motion prevailed.

The following communication was received:
Office of Senator Lana Theis

August 26, 2024

Per Senate Rule 3.105, I request to be added as an official co-sponsor to Senate Bills 991 and 992.

Sincerely,
Lana Theis
State Senator
22nd District

The communication was referred to the Secretary for record.

The following communication was received:
Office of Senator Kevin Daley

September 12, 2024

I would like to formally request that my name be added as a co-sponsor to Senate Bills 991 and 992. Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if there are any questions.

Sincerely,
Kevin Daley
State Senator
26th District

The communication was referred to the Secretary for record.

Senator Singh moved that the Committee on Appropriations be discharged from further consideration of the following bill:

Senate Bill No. 701, entitled

A bill to amend 1939 PA 280, entitled "The social welfare act," by amending section 110a (MCL 400.110a), as added by 2018 PA 220.

The motion prevailed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, and the bill was placed on the order of General Orders.

Senator Singh moved that a respectful message be sent to the House of Representatives requesting the return of the following bill:

House Bill No. 5429

The motion prevailed.

Senator Singh moved that the rules be suspended and that the following bill, now on the order of General Orders, be placed on the General Orders calendar for consideration today:

Senate Bill No. 701

The motion prevailed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

By unanimous consent the Senate proceeded to the order of

Introduction and Referral of Bills

Senator Daley introduced

Senate Bill No. 998, entitled

A bill to amend 1941 PA 205, entitled "An act to provide for the construction, establishment, opening, use, discontinuing, vacating, closing, altering, improvement, and maintenance of limited access highways and facilities ancillary to those highways; to permit the acquiring of property and property rights and the closing or other treatment of intersecting roads for these purposes; to provide for the borrowing of money and for the issuing of bonds or notes payable from special funds for the acquisition, construction or improvement of such highways; and to provide for the receipt and expenditure of funds generated from the facilities," by amending section 2 (MCL 252.52), as amended by 2002 PA 150.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Senator Chang entered the Senate Chamber.

Senator Irwin introduced

Senate Bill No. 999, entitled

A bill to amend 1975 PA 238, entitled "Child protection law," by amending section 7 (MCL 722.627), as amended by 2023 PA 305.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Civil Rights, Judiciary, and Public Safety.

Senators Bayer, Shink and Geiss introduced

Senate Bill No. 1000, entitled

A bill to amend 2015 PA 160, entitled "Michigan achieving a better life experience (ABLE) program act," by amending section 2 (MCL 206.982).

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Senators Bayer, Shink and Geiss introduced

Senate Bill No. 1001, entitled

A bill to amend 1986 PA 316, entitled "Michigan education trust act," by amending sections 4 and 8 (MCL 390.1424 and 390.1428), section 8 as amended by 2004 PA 388.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Senator McBroom entered the Senate Chamber.

Senators Bayer, Shink and Geiss introduced

Senate Bill No. 1002, entitled

A bill to amend 2000 PA 161, entitled "Michigan education savings program act," by amending sections 2 and 16 (MCL 390.1472 and 390.1486), section 2 as amended by 2010 PA 6.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Senators Damoose, Bellino, McMorrow, Daley, Cherry, Huizenga, Lauwers, Webber, Wojno, Singh and Lindsey introduced

Senate Bill No. 1003, entitled

A bill to designate the official fruit of the state of Michigan.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and Agriculture.

Senators Klinefelt, Polehanki, Santana, Geiss and Bayer introduced

Senate Bill No. 1004, entitled

A bill to amend 1949 PA 300, entitled “Michigan vehicle code,” by amending section 675c (MCL 257.675c), as amended by 2000 PA 268, and by adding sections 40d and 674b.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Senators Huizenga, Hoitenga, Hauck, Webber, Johnson, Outman, Damoose, Lauwers, Nesbitt, Albert and Daley introduced

Senate Bill No. 1005, entitled

A bill to amend 1979 PA 94, entitled “The state school aid act of 1979,” by amending sections 11 and 31aa (MCL 388.1611 and 388.1631aa), as amended by 2024 PA 120.

The bill was read a first and second time by title and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Recess

Senator Singh moved that the Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair.

The motion prevailed, the time being 10:08 a.m.

10:51 a.m.

The Senate was called to order by the President pro tempore, Senator Moss.

During the recess, Senator Cavanagh entered the Senate Chamber.

By unanimous consent the Senate returned to the order of

General Orders

Senator Singh moved that the Senate resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole for consideration of the General Orders calendar.

The motion prevailed, and the President pro tempore, Senator Moss, designated Senator Wojno as Chairperson.

After some time spent therein, the Committee arose; and the President pro tempore, Senator Moss, having resumed the Chair, the Committee reported back to the Senate, favorably and with a substitute therefor, the following bill:

Senate Bill No. 701, entitled

A bill to amend 1939 PA 280, entitled “The social welfare act,” by amending section 110a (MCL 400.110a), as added by 2018 PA 220.

Substitute (S-1).

The Senate agreed to the substitute recommended by the Committee of the Whole, and the bill as substituted was placed on the order of Third Reading of Bills.

By unanimous consent the Senate returned to the order of

Motions and Communications

Senator Singh moved that the rules be suspended and that the following bill, now on Third Reading of Bills, be placed on its immediate passage:

Senate Bill No. 701

The motion prevailed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

By unanimous consent the Senate proceeded to the order of

Third Reading of Bills

Senator Singh moved that the Senate proceed to consideration of the following bill:

Senate Bill No. 701

The motion prevailed.

The following bill was read a third time:

Senate Bill No. 701, entitled

A bill to amend 1939 PA 280, entitled “The social welfare act,” by amending section 110a (MCL 400.110a), as added by 2018 PA 220.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 332

Yeas—36

Albert	Cherry	Johnson	Nesbitt
Anthony	Daley	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Damoose	Lauwers	Santana
Bellino	Geiss	Lindsey	Shink
Brinks	Hauck	McBroom	Singh
Bumstead	Hertel	McCann	Theis
Camilleri	Hoitenga	McDonald Rivet	Victory
Cavanagh	Huizenga	McMorrow	Webber
Chang	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—0

Excused—2

Outman	Runestad
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Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Moss

The Senate agreed to the title of the bill.

Senator Singh moved that the Senate return to consideration of the following bill:

Senate Bill No. 834

The motion prevailed.

The following bill was read a third time:

Senate Bill No. 834, entitled

A bill to amend 2004 PA 46, entitled “Public safety officers benefit act,” by amending section 4 (MCL 28.634).

The question being on the passage of the bill,

Senator Hertel offered the following substitute:

Substitute (S-1).

The substitute was adopted, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 333

Yeas—36

Albert	Cherry	Johnson	Nesbitt
Anthony	Daley	Klinefelt	Polehanki

Bayer	Damoose	Lauwers	Santana
Bellino	Geiss	Lindsey	Shink
Brinks	Hauck	McBroom	Singh
Bumstead	Hertel	McCann	Theis
Camilleri	Hoitenga	McDonald Rivet	Victory
Cavanagh	Huizenga	McMorrow	Webber
Chang	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—0

Excused—2

Outman Runestad

Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Moss

The Senate agreed to the title of the bill.

Senator Hertel asked and was granted unanimous consent to make a statement and moved that the statement be printed in the Journal.

The motion prevailed.

Senator Hertel's statement is as follows:

Every day in communities across our state, there are first responders who step forward and answer the call to serve. While many professions are safe, they're steady, they're predictable, the work our public safety officers do is anything but that. Their work is defined by uncertainty, yet they choose to sacrifice their own comfort and safety for the security of their community. These are individuals who run into burning buildings, who rush toward danger when others flee, and who put their lives on the line every single day to protect their neighbors without hesitation.

They do not answer the call to serve alone, however. While they may not have put on the uniform, their families stand right alongside them providing comfort and support, spending days and nights worrying about the well-being of their loved ones and whether or not they will return home. When tragedy strikes, they are the ones who are left to pick up the pieces. We unfortunately just saw this in the tragedy that occurred in the death of an officer this weekend.

Currently in our state, the Public Safety Officers Benefit Act provides a one-time payment of \$25,000 to an officer's surviving spouse and dependents if the officer dies or is permanently disabled in the line of duty. This amount has not been updated for two decades, since the fund was created in 2004, failing to keep up with the increased cost of health care and funeral arrangements. The bill in front of us seeks to rectify this issue by doubling the benefit amount to \$50,000 to ensure the adequate support of the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, providing them with the financial stability and recognition they deserve for their loved one's service. While no amount of money can ever fully repay the debt we owe to the brave safety officers or the families they leave behind, we can and we must do better by them.

I ask my colleagues here today to vote in favor of Senate Bill No. 834 and get this done for the families of fallen heroes across our state.

Senator Singh moved that the Senate return to consideration of the following bill:

Senate Bill No. 401

The motion prevailed.

The following bill was read a third time:

Senate Bill No. 401, entitled

A bill to create a state voting rights act; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and entities; to provide for a court-appointed monitor under certain circumstances; to prohibit certain discriminatory activity and to prescribe civil sanctions; to create a fund; to provide remedies; to prescribe penalties; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The Assistant President pro tempore, Senator Geiss, assumed the Chair.

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 334

Yeas—21

Anthony	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Bayer	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Brinks	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Camilleri	Irwin	Moss	Theis
Cavanagh	Klinefelt	Polehanki	Wojno
Chang			

Nays—15

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Victory
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Webber
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	

Excused—2

Outman	Runestad
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Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

Protest

Senator McBroom, under his constitutional right of protest (Art. 4, Sec. 18), protested against the passage of Senate Bill No. 401 and moved that the statement he made during the discussion of the bill be printed as his reasons for voting “no.”

The motion prevailed.

Senator McBroom’s statement is as follows:

Mr. President, I find that these bills, as some have earlier mentioned, do a lot of mirroring of the federal Voting Rights Act and have a lot of concepts that aren’t necessarily foreign to anyone’s understanding of how our elections work—we provide support for foreign language, we provide notice, we provide emergency ballots. We do many of these things, and yet these bills create a huge amount of new burden for our local units of government. They create additional reporting requirements and mandates upon our local clerks. They also include the opportunity for distribution of materials at polling places and other issues that just seem completely superfluous to the opportunity of people exercising their right to vote.

The opportunities in these bills are very clear for lawsuits against our local communities. They even mandate that counties create liaisons to go between. I think that a lot of these are very unnecessary and dangerous, and weren't asked for by our local election administrators—to whom we owe the greatest amount of attention before changing election laws, the people who are actually out in our communities facilitating the elections.

We, I believe, are moving these pieces of legislation forward due to a faulty premise, and that premise is that there is a vast cabal within the state of Michigan who can't wait to suppress the vote. That has become a very popular election trope as well. Just like another party offers its own series of election tropes and inflammatory propaganda in order to stir up the base. Whether it's election fraud is rampant and is just hidden around every corner or election suppression is rampant and hidden around every corner; and the other party can't wait to suppress the vote, and the other party can't wait to defraud the vote—these are playing to the lowest common denominator and creating fear in our popular elections. To exacerbate that at this moment, just weeks before another election, is so unwise and so unnecessary. It doesn't bring more trust.

Let's consider for just a moment the 2020 election and as we ramped up to that, the rule changes that secretaries of state in numerous states and legislatures in numerous states did just in the runup to that election. Whether you justify it because COVID was happening or any other changes—constitutional changes even—that were adopted here in Michigan, it just led to missed trust amongst the electorate. These things should not be hurried along and they should not be adopted in a single partisan manner. It doesn't make the electorate more comfortable or more confident in their elections. Especially when we use that lowest common denominator of fear to drive them to vote, we only encourage more mistrust. It's unwise to pass these at this time, and our local elected officials say they are unnecessary. I encourage a “no” vote.

Senators Camilleri, Chang, Geiss and Moss asked and were granted unanimous consent to make statements and moved that the statements be printed in the Journal.

The motion prevailed.

Senator Camilleri's statement is as follows:

In 1964, the year before the passage of the federal Voting Rights Act, a woman named Rosie Head was chased away from her local clerk's office in Mississippi by police dogs when she tried to register to vote. She was told by local officials that—quote—people like her didn't need to be there voting. Later that year, three civil rights workers were tortured and murdered by the KKK for their efforts to register voters during the Freedom Summer. In 1965, Viola Liuzzo, who drove from Detroit to Selma to join the march on Montgomery, was targeted and shot in the head by Klansmen. All of these people were seeking the freedom to vote for all.

For those who wonder why the federal Voting Rights Act was necessary in 1965, you need to look no further than stories like these, but there are countless others like it. That year, our national leaders rose to the occasion and passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which was the most significant change in voting rights policy since the Reconstruction period that followed the Civil War. Fast forward to 2020—almost 60 years later—and the right to vote was under attack right here in Michigan when members of the then-Republican majority invited election deniers like Rudy Giuliani to the Legislature to undermine the results of the presidential election. They wanted to throw out the votes of Detroiters and install their preferred candidate, Donald Trump. It was a clear attempt to throw out the votes of Black Michiganders. I was on that House Oversight Committee and we fought back and won. But the seed was planted that day to continue the attack on our democracy by forces on the far right who believe that only certain votes should be counted, that opposing views should be silenced, and that the outcome of democratic elections are only legitimate if certain candidates win.

We're seeing the results of those tactics play out now. Just last spring, news broke that a network of extremist activists calling themselves election investigators were challenging thousands of voter registrations here in Michigan. In Waterford, a clerk wrongfully removed over 1,000 voters from the rolls in response to a request from one of these activists. One of those voters was an active-duty Air Force officer serving in Illinois. Shockingly, state officials were unaware of this attempted purge until a national news outlet broke the news to the public. Thankfully, swift action from our Secretary of State reinstated the voters in Waterford, but there are multiple examples of Michigan cities and townships being pressured by extremist groups to remove specific lists of voters from their rolls. These attacks on our democracy have had real consequences and the right to vote needs to be further protected.

Hence, why I introduced the Michigan Voting Rights Act which is what we're passing today. The Michigan Voting Rights Act will provide pathways for voters of color and protected classes to protect their voting rights and their right to fair political representation. It will ban voter intimidation and voter suppression. It will expand language translation for communities who need it. It will empower disabled voters with

additional ways to exercise their vote in person and these bills will protect Michigan voting rights for decades to come, regardless of what happens at the federal level. What's happening at the federal level is not good for voting rights. Since 2020, more than 40 restrictive laws have been passed in over 21 states, with many more considering additional anti-voter legislation while Congress sits idly by. Again and again, the Supreme Court has weakened the federal Voting Rights Act—the *Shelby County v. Holder* case for example, or another case in 2021 that upheld discriminatory laws in Arizona—and with the Supreme Court's recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, it is clear that we can no longer rely on the federal government to protect our rights at the national level. The Supreme Court just may not do that. That's why we need the Michigan Voting Rights Act. We need it for transparency and data collection that gives us an accurate picture of how elections are conducted over time. We need it for the grandma in Melvindale who loves this country but can't fully understand the complicated ballot proposals she's faced with. We need it for the disabled veteran in Detroit who forgot to request an absentee ballot and wants to make his voice heard in person. We need it for the Arabic and Spanish speakers in communities like Canton and Sterling Heights who will be able to make their voice fully heard when ballot translations are expanded. And we need the MVRA for all Michiganders who care about democracy so that we will be protected against future attempts at undermining our elections.

Senator Chang's statement is as follows:

Before I begin, I just want to point out that the federal Voting Rights Act when it was passed in 1965 had 20 Republican co-sponsors, 30 Republicans in the Senate voted for it, and 112 Republicans voted for it in the United States House, so voting rights has been a bipartisan issue. We can make it a bipartisan issue today, depending on what the choice is on the other side of the aisle.

Voting rights are fundamental to the strength of our country and today's vote is an important moment in Michigan's history. Michigan is becoming a more diverse state and includes a large and growing immigrant population. According to the United States Census, 38.9 percent of Michiganders speak English less than very well. I'm excited that Senate Bill No. 403, part of this package, will help Michigan voters regardless of how well they can read or understand English to be able to accurately cast their ballot by requiring more jurisdictions to provide reasonable language access in elections. Translating election materials and hiring more bilingual poll workers not only helps Michigan voters who are English language learners and creates a more welcoming community, it also boosts our entire democratic process and strengthens the integrity of our elections.

Senate Bill No. 403 builds on and fills in gaps within the federal Voting Rights Act, ensuring that a greater number of folks are able to receive access in their language. Under section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act, a jurisdiction becomes required to provide language access when more than 5 percent or 10,000 of the voting age citizens in a jurisdiction belong to a single language minority community and are limited English proficient and when there's a high illiteracy rate. One of the major gaps is that it doesn't include languages like Arabic or Haitian Creole and our bill fills that gap and builds on work being done in Dearborn and in Hamtramck right in my district to provide these ballots. Under Senate Bill No. 403, after five years of working with the election institute and the Census Bureau to pinpoint precise precinct-level data, local jurisdictions will be required to provide language assistance for elections if they have 600 or more individuals or 2.5 percent of the population who speak a language other than English and are limited English proficient. With the passage of this bill, covered jurisdictions will be required to provide translated election materials including registration or voting notices, instructions, assistance, ballots, absent voter ballot applications, signage, and other materials. We specifically state that the materials must be prepared by a certified translator and not an automated service to ensure accuracy, with clear language that this will be of equal quality to the English version.

One of Michigan's greatest strengths is our growing diversity which includes immigrants from all over the world who become naturalized citizens and choose to make Michigan their home. Just this weekend I met a South Asian American voter who became a citizen recently, registered to vote, and will be voting for the first time this November. Research shows that by expanding language access in our elections, there is a significant increase in voter turnout. According to the 2022 Asian American Voter Survey, 42 percent of limited English proficient Asian American voters expressed that they would be more likely to vote if they had in-language materials.

I want to thank the Senators from the 1st, 4th, and 7th districts for their hard work on this bill package and also to express my gratitude to the many civic organizations, clerks, Secretary of State staff, and legislative staff who made this bill package the sound policy that it is. Michiganders from immigrant communities are strong, they are resilient, and those eligible to vote will now have greater access to our democracy thanks to this bill package. I am proud to be part of this historic effort that will increase accessibility in elections for Michigan voters and ensure that every voter, regardless of their race or disability status or language ability, has equal access to the ballot and therefore a fuller, stronger democracy.

Senator Geiss' statement is as follows:

As we've already heard, this package is historic and I am thrilled to be part of it. Senate Bill No. 404, which is my bill in the package, codifies and strengthens an existing ability for voters who go to vote in person on Election Day at the polls but find they are unable to physically get to the poll itself to call a clearly-posted phone number to have their ballot brought out to them by an election worker and then safely and securely insert it into the tabulator, and confirmation of their vote being successfully tabulated being provided to the voter by the election worker. It's simple. This is necessary to ensure that people, especially those with disabilities, are able to cast their vote in person if they are going to vote in person, especially if their polling location turns out to not be as accessible as they need. We've seen this happen where people went to their polling location and that day the elevator was not working or the building itself might have been accessible but getting into the building was not. It's necessary that we do not deny the ability of any of our residents, our citizens, who are able to vote, who are eligible to vote, to be able to cast those ballots.

Senate Bill No. 404 also allows for the provision of food, beverages, and other comfort items like hot hands in the winter—could be cold in November—or cooling items in the summer—as we all know, it can be ridiculously hot here in Michigan—for people waiting in line to vote as permitted by the election officials. It would not permit electioneering inside the polling location or within that 100 feet, which is already the law. The freedom and right to vote should not be abridged or denied to those who want to exercise their enfranchisement. Every voter in our state should be able to safely and confidently exercise their fundamental right to vote, and we all deserve access to a welcoming democratic process without fear of intimidation or discrimination in any form.

With the passage of this bill package, Michigan will be one step closer to achieving that reality and I urge a “yes” vote on this package which bends the moral arc of the universe further toward justice.

Senator Moss' statement is as follows:

About a decade ago, the U.S. Supreme Court gutted key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and as we all know, the current composition of the Supreme Court clearly feels compelled to further erode our longstanding laws, precedents, and norms. In the last several years here in Michigan, election deniers have promoted conspiracies targeting communities of color and have pushed for policies here that would restrict voting access. These ongoing threats, both federally and here at home, must compel action from our Legislature to safeguard the fundamental right to vote, free from discrimination and intimidation.

The Senate Elections and Ethics Committee that I chair has worked hard to restore honesty, truth, and data when hearing voting-related legislation. Last year, we uplifted the clerk community which faced relentless unjustified attacks and we leaned into their expertise to meet the deadline to implement Proposal 2 and expand voting options here in Michigan, including nine days of early voting. Now our committee is listening to a diverse array of constituency groups that have faced historic barriers to voting. Our committee heard exhaustive testimony about the need to secure access to the ballot box for all qualified voters.

After working intently with voting rights advocates and election administrators, I'm proud that we now have before us this comprehensive Michigan Voting Rights Act for consideration. We did not take this task lightly, and the Senator from Downriver led us on this project to ensure that neighborhood, language, and mobility are not used as factors to deny someone their voting rights. I'm especially pleased that my bill establishes the Michigan Voting Institute and Elections Database to increase transparency, centralize and make more convenient accessing publicly-available elections data, and provide nonpartisan technical assistance and research for all Michigan elections at all levels. This will help future Legislatures be even more responsive to assess the need to improve voting access.

Ultimately, if we want our election results to be the most accurate reflection of the will of Michigan voters, we have to reduce the barriers so that all legal voters have the same path to participate. Our Senate majority is taking the critical steps to make certain that every vote is counted and every voice is heard through our safe and secure elections process. I want to thank the dozens of officials and organizations, the Secretary of State and her team, my fellow bill sponsors, our dedicated staff, and many more for putting in countless hours to get us here. I urge a “yes” vote on all four bills in this package.

The following bill was read a third time:

Senate Bill No. 402, entitled

A bill to create a voting and elections database and institute; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and entities; and to provide remedies.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 335

Yeas—20

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Victory
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	Webber

Excused—2

Outman	Runestad
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Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

The Senate agreed to the title of the bill.

The following bill was read a third time:

Senate Bill No. 403, entitled

A bill to provide for language assistance for elections; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and entities; to create the language access advisory council; and to provide for remedies.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 336

Yeas—20

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Victory
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	Webber

Excused—2

Outman Runestad

Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

The Senate agreed to the title of the bill.

The following bill was read a third time:

Senate Bill No. 404, entitled

A bill to amend 1954 PA 116, entitled “Michigan election law,” by amending sections 726, 736, and 751 (MCL 168.726, 168.736, and 168.751), and by adding sections 653c, 653d, 653e, 726a, and 753a; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

Senator Johnson offered the following amendment:

1. Amend page 10, line 12, after “**vote**” by striking out “**inside or**”.

The question being on the adoption of the amendment,

Senator Lauwers requested the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered, 1/5 of the members present voting therefor.

The amendment was not adopted, a majority of the members serving not voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 337

Yeas—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Victory
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	Webber

Nays—20

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Excused—2

Outman Runestad

Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

Senator Johnson offered the following amendments:

1. Amend page 10, line 17, after “**process**” by inserting a comma and “**and must not directly or indirectly make reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question**”.

2. Amend page 10, line 17, after “**process.**” by inserting “**An individual who provides food, warmth, or other necessities to electors as described under subsection (1) must not be a current candidate in that jurisdiction or the immediate family member of a current candidate in that jurisdiction.**”.

The question being on the adoption of the amendments,

Senator Lauwers requested the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered, 1/5 of the members present voting therefor.

The amendments were not adopted, a majority of the members serving not voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 338

Yeas—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Victory
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	Webber

Nays—20

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Excused—2

Outman	Runestad
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Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 339

Yeas—20

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis

Bumstead
Daley

Hoitenga
Huizenga

Lindsey
McBroom

Victory
Webber

Excused—2

Outman

Runestad

Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

The Senate agreed to the title of the bill.

Protests

Senator Johnson, under her constitutional right of protest (Art. 4, Sec. 18), protested against the passage of Senate Bill Nos. 401, 402, 403, and 404 and moved that the statement she made during the discussion of Senate Bill No. 401 be printed as her reasons for voting “no.”

The motion prevailed.

Senator Johnson’s statement is as follows:

These bills would place enormous new burdens on our clerks and on our local units of government. They would create a huge new bureaucracy under the Secretary of State with the primary purpose, it would seem, to facilitate lawsuits against our local units of government and our hard-working clerks. These bills would cost taxpayers millions of dollars and create new obstacles for our clerks and local units of government that are simply unnecessary. These bills would go far beyond the protections already afforded to all citizens under both the U.S. and Michigan constitutions, as well as current federal and state law. They would also set a dangerous precedent and eviscerate longstanding norms about the sanctity of polling places by allowing individuals who are not voters to actually enter polling locations and interact with voters who are waiting in line just moments before entering the voting booth to distribute food and beverages. For these reasons, I am voting “no.”

Senators Johnson and Moss asked and were granted unanimous consent to make statements and moved that the statements be printed in the Journal.

The motion prevailed.

Senator Johnson’s first statement is as follows:

Senate Bill No. 404 would break longstanding precedents about the sanctity of polling locations, allowing for individuals to enter buildings where voters are waiting to cast their ballot and even to distribute items to voters such as food or beverages moments before voting. The voting process is a personal and private opportunity for citizens to express their preferences without undue influence or distraction. Once already inside the polling location, there is no good justification to say that during the brief duration of their visit, there is need for food or beverages to be distributed that would outweigh the rights of voters to privacy and the absence of any activity that might seek to influence their preferences even while they’re entering the voting booth.

My amendment would strike the words “inside or” to allow for this activity outside a voting location but not physically inside the building of a voting location. I ask my colleagues for their support of this common-sense amendment.

Senator Johnson’s second statement is as follows:

As I previously stated, Senate Bill No. 404 would break longstanding precedents about the sanctity of polling locations, allowing for individuals to enter buildings where voters are waiting to cast their vote and even to distribute items to voters such as food and beverages while they’re waiting to enter the voting booth.

This amendment would prohibit a current candidate in the jurisdiction or their immediate family members from entering a polling location to distribute food or beverages to voters. It would also prohibit any individual entering a polling location to distribute food or beverages from discussing the election or referencing any of the candidates or ballot questions.

The current statutory language preventing electioneering within 100 feet of a polling location states that an individual will not “persuade or endeavor to persuade a person to vote for or against any particular candidate or party ticket or for or against any ballot question that is being voted on at the election.” However, without my amendment, for example, I could enter a polling location and—even as a candidate on the ballot—say, Hi, I’m Ruth Johnson, please accept this snack while you’re waiting in line to vote, just moments before you enter the voting booth. Similarly, without this amendment, a volunteer for my campaign could enter a polling location and say, Please accept this hot dog or cup of coffee from Ruth Johnson. While not explicitly attempting to persuade a voter under current Michigan law, it is to support Ruth Johnson. I feel strongly that the vast majority of people would agree that this type of activity would be inappropriate inside a polling location. Yet, if Senate Bill No. 404 is passed without this amendment, it will make this exact thing legal.

Again, I ask my colleagues for their support of this common-sense amendment.

Senator Moss’ first statement is as follows:

I was going to let some of these amendments go but there were so many fantasies that were just created in the explanation of those amendments that have to be responded to. I think one of the more shameful episodes out of Election Day in 2020 were probably contrived efforts to create long lines around the country. I think specifically in Georgia it was in focus, where communities of color faced disproportionate barriers and long lines in order to exercise their right to vote. One of the efforts made by Republicans was to even prevent them from getting water or food while they waited and endured throughout the balance of the day to exercise their right to vote. I saw a lot of videos of voters who were resilient and still stayed in line because they knew how important that election was. This argument that somehow food and water is a luxury item while the same people want to create long lines to create a barrier for people to wait in those lines and exercise their right to vote makes your head spin.

In terms of the actual content of this amendment, where somehow there would be electioneering inside the poll or that somebody getting a bottle of water mere moments before voting is somehow going to sway your vote in the privacy of the voting booth is not only untrue, but it’s not even the current practice right now in our law which is strong enough already. Clerks do not allow electioneering in the polling location. The law does not allow electioneering inside the polling location. To use items like food and water for voters who may have to, disproportionately because of systemic problems, wait in line in their community and to prevent them from those items while waiting to vote and to use that as a weapon to say that somehow there’s going to be electioneering in the voting location is preposterous. I urge a “no” vote on this amendment.

Senator Johnson’s third statement is as follows:

I just want to clarify something. This bill has nothing to do with giving food or water or anything else in the voting precinct—nothing. I think that needs to be clarified. All it says is that I would not be able to go up to someone or my friend or someone working for me and say, This hot dog and water is from Ruth Johnson who’s running for Senate. There’s a very fine line between electioneering. You can right now if you want, it’s not considered electioneering, say, Call Joe and tell him to quit torturing puppies. That is not considered electioneering, but we all know it does make a difference. It does change things. There is a mistaken thought on this. It doesn’t stop it, it just stops someone from saying, This is from a candidate. That’s all. It doesn’t stop any of those particular things that were mentioned.

Senator Moss’ second statement is as follows:

I have great news for the sponsoring Senator of this amendment. The clerk will already not allow that activity to take place in the polling location.

Senator Singh moved to reconsider the vote by which the following bill was passed:

Senate Bill No. 401, entitled

A bill to create a state voting rights act; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and entities; to provide for a court-appointed monitor under certain circumstances; to prohibit certain discriminatory activity and to prescribe civil sanctions; to create a fund; to provide remedies; to prescribe penalties; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

The motion prevailed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

The question being on the passage of the bill,

The bill was passed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 340**Yeas—20**

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Victory
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	Webber

Excused—2

Outman	Runestad
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Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

The Senate agreed to the title of the bill.

By unanimous consent the Senate returned to the order of

Messages from the House

Senator Singh moved that the Senate proceed to consideration of the following bill:

Senate Bill No. 911

The motion prevailed.

Senate Bill No. 911, entitled

A bill to amend 1980 PA 300, entitled “The public school employees retirement act of 1979,” by amending sections 41 and 43e (MCL 38.1341 and 38.1343e), section 41 as amended by 2023 PA 198 and section 43e as amended by 2012 PA 300.

The House of Representatives has substituted (H-3) the bill.

The House of Representatives has passed the bill as substituted (H-3), ordered that it be given immediate effect and pursuant to Joint Rule 20, inserted the full title.

Pending the order that, under rule 3.202, the bill be laid over one day,

Senator Singh moved that the rule be suspended.

The motion prevailed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

The question being on concurring in the substitute made to the bill by the House,

Senator Camilleri offered the following substitute to the House substitute:

Substitute (S-2).

The substitute to the substitute was adopted, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

The question being on concurring in the House substitute as substituted,

The substitute was concurred in, a majority of the members serving voting therefor, as follows:

Roll Call No. 341**Yeas—20**

Anthony	Chang	Klinefelt	Polehanki
Bayer	Cherry	McCann	Santana
Brinks	Geiss	McDonald Rivet	Shink
Camilleri	Hertel	McMorrow	Singh
Cavanagh	Irwin	Moss	Wojno

Nays—16

Albert	Damoose	Johnson	Nesbitt
Bellino	Hauck	Lauwers	Theis
Bumstead	Hoitenga	Lindsey	Victory
Daley	Huizenga	McBroom	Webber

Excused—2

Outman	Runestad
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Not Voting—0

In The Chair: Geiss

Protests

Senators Albert and Nesbitt, under their constitutional right of protest (Art. 4, Sec. 18), protested against concurring in the House substitute as substituted to Senate Bill No. 911 and moved that the statements they made during the discussion of the substitute be printed as their reasons for voting “no.”

The motion prevailed.

Senator Albert’s statement is as follows:

I’m going to keep my remarks on the floor-funding portion of this bill. I know there are a couple different aspects that deal with the districts, with their contribution rate and with the employee contribution for the OPEB. Those two issues aside, those are just policy decisions, they don’t affect how well the system gets funded over time, but the floor funding does, so I’m going to keep my remarks specific on the floor-funding provision. The idea of getting rid of the floor, or not paying the floor, is a really bad idea. It’s going to be very costly over time. The pension system is still over \$30 billion in debt.

In previous legislation that I sponsored and got implemented, there were two mechanisms that were put in place to make the plan healthier and more solvent over time. The first was to lower the payroll growth assumption, and that’s pretty boring and technical and we didn’t lower it that much—we went from 3.5 percent down to zero, so it doesn’t sound like it’ll be that big of a deal, but little changes in that make a big deal. The other mechanism that was put in place was a floor-funding provision. We wanted to make it so we didn’t pay this amount this year and then the next year we pay less and we whipsaw back and forth.

If you look from 2000-2017 when I was working on this stuff, our annual payments would fluctuate up and down every year by large degrees. There’s a couple years where we were off by almost 30 percent, we underpaid what our payment should have been by almost 30 percent. So this was to try to help prevent that underfunding from happening. Well, I find it interesting that both of those mechanisms have been undermined by Michigan Democrats. I fought for years and spent a ton of political capital to get the payroll growth assumption back to where it should be, so I was able to stop the rate of the pension fund once, and that was through House Bill No. 6357 of 2022. This time, the Democrats are doing it through a different way. They are undermining the floor-funding provision, and it’s to fulfill their insatiable appetite to spend \$670 million

that should be going into the retirement system—a system that’s over \$30 billion in debt. It’s not going to go there; it’s going to be redirected elsewhere. These costs are not going to go away. They are only being pushed down the road. When they’re pushed down the road further, you incur more interest cost—it’s more expensive, puts retirees benefits at risk, and it takes money out of the classroom to help educate our kids.

This is really bad policy. All of this maneuver hinges on ORS’ interpretation that the floor funding that I got put in place has two floors—one for the retiree healthcare and one for the pension. I’m getting tired of talking about it; I talked about it multiple times here on the floor. I asked ORS in April, over five months ago, for how they came to that legal opinion. They said in committee they talked to the Attorney General’s office. I still haven’t heard any word. It would have been nice to know their legal justification before we voted on a bill like this, so if their arguments had any merit we would know, and as legislators we would have a better idea of the full picture. Nope, still left in the dark. It’s the way bureaucrats work— withhold information, wait legislators out. Well, at least I’m still here for now. I stopped the pension rate once, I’ll try to do it again. I hope I’m successful. It’s not going to happen this term, I can tell you that—not if this bill gets put into effect.

At the end of the day, language aside, it doesn’t matter what we put in this bill. What matters is conceptually—is it a good idea or a bad idea? It is a bad idea. Failing to pay your obligations has long-term implications. It makes it harder to fund education in the future and it makes it harder for us to make sure we can pay our retirees the benefits they earned and are constitutionally protected. I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this bill.

Senator Nesbitt’s statement is as follows:

Madam President, just when you think things couldn’t get worse for education in this state, the Democratic majority proves you wrong with a bill like this. They gutted reading standards, and now reading scores are at an all-time low. They failed to increase per-student funding for the first time in nearly a decade and a half. They refused to use student growth to evaluate teachers. They slashed school safety and student mental health funding by 92 percent—92 percent. Apparently that’s not enough; apparently they’re not done yet.

The bill before us is everything that is wrong with government—a cynical money grab whose victims won’t notice it until the thieves are long gone out of this building. Another empty win for the tax takers over the taxpayers. A raw deal dressed up to look like a good one. A shameless attempt to fool people, the same people who step up to teach our children. The bill is theft, pure and simple. A complete failure of leadership.

I ask for your “no” vote.

Senators Camilleri and Polehanki asked and were granted unanimous consent to make statements and moved that the statements be printed in the Journal.

The motion prevailed.

Senator Camilleri’s statement is as follows:

This substitute is fairly simple. It will adjust the timeline with which the rate reduction will take place. The current bill sees a gradual increase over time to reduce that rate. What this bill is now going to do is automatically codify a 5.75 percent rate reduction starting in fiscal year 2026, with when you combine our budget from fiscal year 2025, we have now completely codified the 5.75 percent rate reduction right away which will put hundreds of millions of dollars back into the classroom immediately and for the long term. I urge a “yes” vote on this substitute.

Senator Polehanki’s statement is as follows:

I am proud to rise in support of the legislation before us. From the onset of our new majority, my Democratic colleagues and I have been staunch advocates for our public schools and we’ve done everything in our power to ensure that Michigan students, teachers, and schools have what they need to thrive. Senate Bill No. 911 is a continuation of these efforts. Although the health care portion of the Michigan Public School Employee Retirement System—called MPSERS—has been fully funded since last year, educators would have still been required to pay a percentage of their paycheck into this fund. In this year’s state budget, we reduced MPSERS payments instead, directing \$600 million more state dollars right back into our schools. This is the average equivalent of approximately a \$400 per student increase statewide. We also delivered a 3 percent pay increase for teachers who hired in before 2012 by removing the requirement of paying into this fully-funded system. These teachers will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets.

By passing the legislation before us today, we’re making these common-sense changes permanent. This bill will grant school districts more flexibility in deciding how to use these surplus funds, including but not limited to investing in student mental health and school safety, paying teachers more, staff more, and specialized academic interventions to meet unique school needs. Together let’s continue building up our public schools to not only support our invaluable educators for all they do, but to also set our students up for successful futures full of opportunity. I urge a “yes” vote.

By unanimous consent the Senate proceeded to the order of
Resolutions

The President pro tempore, Senator Moss, resumed the Chair.

Senator Singh moved that rule 3.204 be suspended to permit immediate consideration of the following resolutions:

Senate Resolution No. 137

Senate Resolution No. 138

The motion prevailed, a majority of the members serving voting therefor.

Senator Geiss offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 137.

A resolution to designate September 2024 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Whereas, According to the American Childhood Cancer Organization, an estimated 15,780 children between the ages of birth through 19 are diagnosed with cancer each year; and

Whereas, In 2024 alone, an estimated 9,620 new cases have been diagnosed; and

Whereas, Our goal is to increase awareness about childhood cancer, which is the leading cause of death by disease for children under the age of 14; and

Whereas, We honor the extraordinary resilience, courage, and strength of those who this harmful disease has effected; and

Whereas, Children's cancer affects all ethnic, gender, and socio-economic groups; and

Whereas, Since the mid-1970s, advancements have been made in the fight against childhood cancer. Due to major treatment strides in recent decades, more than 80 percent of children with cancer now survive five years or more; and

Whereas, Increased awareness, support, and research will help to further improve outcomes and protect children from these serious diseases; and

Whereas, We must renew our commitment to curing childhood cancer and offer our support to the brave young people who are fighting this disease; and

Whereas, To honor the memory of every young person lost to cancer, we must unite behind improved treatment, advanced research and data, and brighter futures for young people; and

Whereas, We recognize the amazing strength, perseverance, and optimism of the families and friends of children who suffer from these devastating illnesses; and

Whereas, We acknowledge the medical professionals, researchers, and others who dedicate their time to search for new and safer treatments and cures; and

Whereas, All children deserve the chance to be healthy and find joy and fulfillment in their childhoods, as they deserve the chance to realize their full potential and grow into adults; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative body designate September 2024 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

The question being on the adoption of the resolution,

The resolution was adopted.

Senators Anthony, Bayer, Brinks, Camilleri, Cavanagh, Chang, Damoose, Irwin, Klinefelt, McCann, McMorrow, Moss, Polehanki, Singh, Webber and Wojno were named co-sponsors of the resolution.

Senator Geiss asked and was granted unanimous consent to make a statement and moved that the statement be printed in the Journal.

The motion prevailed.

Senator Geiss' statement is as follows:

I rise to offer Senate Resolution No. 137, recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. This time last year, I offered the same resolution, the first time that such recognition was given to this harrowing set of pediatric illnesses. In full disclosure, I started drafting these remarks yesterday, while sitting in the waiting area of the blood draw station to be called in for my daughter's weekly labs.

These blood draws are part of the routine of an oncology family and the weekly jaunts—more, for some patients—to star in the human pin cushion show that are the least-perilous part of being a pediatric oncology patient. Parts that include surgeries, chemotherapies, sometimes radiation—and the range of side effects of both—ultrasounds, CT scans, echocardiograms, PET scans, and so much more. Not to mention, the hospitalizations both for the cancer itself or the side effects and adjacent illnesses because of being significantly

immunocompromised, and the missed school days and other things. Even while trying to keep things as normal as possible, squeezing any ounce of joy one can find, there is the constant hypervigilance, the persistent fear, none of which can be described adequately in five minutes or less. While every patient and set of treatments are unique, these are the general things we do share. Even the sniffles hit different when you have a child who is immunocompromised because of having cancer.

According to the American Childhood Cancer Organization, an estimated 15,780 children between the ages of birth to 19 are diagnosed with cancer each year. This year alone, an estimated 9,620 cases of a broad range of childhood cancers will be diagnosed. And since the mid-1970s, significant advancements have been made in the fight against childhood cancer. Because of major treatment strides over the last half century, more than 80 percent of children with cancer now survive five years or more. Yet despite this survival rate, the concept of five years or more should still be alarming when one considers the fraction that five years is of one's natural average lifespan. Let that sink in for a second. And that survival rate is not the same for all pediatric cancer diagnoses, as cancer is the leading cause of death by disease for children under the age of 14. We continue to be among the relatively lucky ones, but there have been times throughout this journey that we sincerely wondered whether that would remain the case.

I applaud the countless researchers and oncology medical professionals working to find better treatments and cures. We take care of our kids every single day. Every bit of data we gather offers hope; every new treatment offers hope; every new clinical trial offers hope; every researcher, nurse, doctor, radiology, pathology and oncology team, every pediatric oncology social worker and therapist, every tumor board, offer hope. Every organization working to find cures and help pediatric cancer patients and their families with wrap-around services are hope—hope for not only treating existing patients to the point of full remission, but hope for cures and a day where childhood cancer ceases to exist and there is no longer a need to recognize a month dedicated to the awareness of childhood cancer. Until then, we must recognize it and work to eradicate childhood cancer so that all kids can have a childhood free from these illnesses.

Today, my hope is that you will join me in recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and in honoring the children who have experienced and are experiencing pediatric cancer, recommitting efforts to find cures and safer treatments, and offering our support to the brave young people fighting cancer and acknowledging the strength of the families, friends, and communities of these amazing little warriors.

Senator Camilleri offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 138.

A resolution to recognize September 21, 2024, as Maltese American Heritage Day.

Whereas, Malta is a country in the central Mediterranean Sea with a rich and unique history dating back thousands of years; and

Whereas, Because of its strategic location, this archipelago of six islands has been a naval asset for centuries and was also instrumental in World War II. After coming under siege by Axis Powers, the ensuing Allied offensive to regain the island was successful and instrumental in the following North African campaign; and

Whereas, Malta would eventually gain its independence from the United Kingdom on September 21, 1964 and became a republic in 1974; and

Whereas, September 21, 2024 marks the 60th anniversary of Malta's independence. Today, Malta is a unitary multiparty republic, with a parliament consisting of a unicameral House of Representatives; and

Whereas, Despite its small geographic size, Malta is the fourth most densely populated country in Europe and the eighth most in the world, with a population of nearly 450,000 spread across approximately 121 square miles; and

Whereas, Among other unique attributes, Malta boasts three United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage sites, delicious cuisine, world-renowned diving, and other recreational opportunities on its stunning coastline, with some of the oldest freestanding structures in the world; and

Whereas, The United States is fortunate to be home to more than 38,000 Maltese Americans. The 2013 American Community Survey estimates that over 12,900 Michiganders are Maltese immigrants or children of Maltese immigrants, making the Metro Detroit area the largest concentration of Maltese Americans in the nation; and

Whereas, Michiganders of Maltese descent, from the auto workers that helped build Michigan into an industrial powerhouse, to the entrepreneurs who opened restaurants that are still serving the Metro Detroit community today, have employed the Maltese values of creativity, perseverance, and relentless hard work to build a better future for their families and the communities they call home; and

Whereas, Both the state of Michigan and the United States of America have been enriched by the contributions of Maltese Americans in all facets of life, including the arts, sciences, business, education, and philanthropy; and

Whereas, Maltese American residents are proudly served in Michigan by the Maltese American Benevolent Society in Detroit and the Maltese American Community Club in Dearborn; and

Whereas, Michigan views cultural diversity as a strength and welcomes the opportunity to honor our fellow Michiganders of Maltese descent for their lasting and expanding imprint upon our state; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative body recognize September 21, 2024, as Maltese American Heritage Day. We encourage all citizens to celebrate the individual and collective contributions of Maltese Americans to this state and to this country.

The question being on the adoption of the resolution,

The resolution was adopted.

Senators Anthony, Bayer, Brinks, Cavanagh, Chang, Geiss, Irwin, Klinefelt, McCann, McMorrow, Moss, Polehanki, Singh and Wojno were named co-sponsors of the resolution.

Statements

Senators Huizenga, Chang and Hertel asked and were granted unanimous consent to make statements and moved that the statements be printed in the Journal.

The motion prevailed.

Senator Huizenga's statement is as follows:

Last week, our country and state honored the memory of the September 11 tragedy. On that day, we saw one of the greatest losses in our country's history. Yet, out of the sadness, the smoke and ash, arose a renewed patriotic spirit. While the tragedy of that day will forever be etched in our minds, it will also be a day that unites us as Americans.

The spirit of patriotism for our country after that event was incredibly strong. That spirit continues strongly in Grand Rapids. Each year, the Scouting America's Michigan Crossroads Council marks that day with their annual community day of remembrance and a Scout salute. The Scout salute starts at dawn and goes to nightfall, and honors the victims of that tragedy. Scouts and members of the community are invited to the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids to take turns saluting the flag for the entire day. I am proud to be a member of the scouting caucus and honor them for the work they do every day in our community, and especially for keeping this tragic date relevant for all of us.

We will always remember the selflessness of the United 93 passengers who sacrificed themselves to prevent further tragedy, and the first responders who ran into the towers to save lives—and never returned home. To our firefighters, police officers, and soldiers who protect our communities and nation every day, I commend you for your courage, dedication and service, and give you each my deepest heartfelt appreciation.

May God continue to bless America, our troops, and our first responders.

Senator Chang's statement is as follows:

Immigrant stories are American stories. In Detroit, we are fortunate to have a number of service organizations that do a tremendous job working with immigrants who have found their way to our great city. I'd like to share the story of one such family.

Carmen and her two kids left Venezuela due to extreme poverty and violence in her home country. They tried living in Colombia and other parts of Latin America, but could not make more than a bare subsistence wage or find the safety that she was seeking. She then decided to try coming to America. She crossed through the Darién Gap, a 66-mile stretch of jungle, where there are fears of extortion, rape, kidnapping, or being killed. She walked through rainforest, over mountains, and through swamps. She almost drowned in a river while carrying her baby. Luckily, they survived. One of our service providers stated, "No one takes that kind of journey if their homeland was safe. These people really cannot go back, their countries have collapsed, it's too dangerous." When she arrived in America, Carmen said, "I was overcome with a sense of peace when I got to the United States. I felt safe."

In Springfield, Ohio, Haitian immigrants have trickled in to work in produce packaging and machining factories; they started restaurants. Business owners in Springfield were desperate to find workers due to the labor shortages after the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers have talked about how hard the Haitian immigrants work, how they'll stay at their machines, and how they wish they could actually hire more immigrants. The vast majority of Haitians in the United States are with Temporary Protected Status that they were allocated due to the violence and unrest in Haiti. There is a Haitian Flag Day that takes place

at a local park every May now in Springfield, and there is a thriving Haitian community organization serving the community.

In New York, Wang, a 36-year-old Chinese immigrant, rises early to try and find work every day. He left China after making that decision, after making comments critical of the Chinese government on Twitter. He then traveled several weeks, once he got to the Americas, from Ecuador to the United States border and spent two days in an immigration detention facility. He says, “It is impossible that they would walk on foot for over one month for the purpose...” of endangering Americans. “We came here to make money.”

Recent Chinese migrants came to America to escape poverty and financial losses from the strict lockdown in China. Some came to escape the threat of imprisonment in China where they cannot speak freely. Another Chinese migrant in New York described: “This trip is deadly. People die. The trip isn’t suitable for women—it’s not suitable for anyone.”

Alla and Maksym lived in Ukraine, 17 miles from the Russian border. On February 24, 2022, when the Russian army invaded Ukraine, they woke up to a red sky and the sound of bombs exploding. They lived in a crowded basement without heat, electricity, food, or medicine. Alla gave birth to a baby on the fourth day of the war. The family was sponsored by a couple in Saline, who involved 100 local volunteers to help receive them here in Michigan. Maksym says they are “starting from zero.” One of the parents works hard for Comcast and the other is trying to rebuild a family business. They are supporting themselves, as well as their families in Ukraine. They say, “we are like a light in the darkness for them.”

September 13-22 marks Welcoming Week across the country, an important time for us all to recognize the contributions of immigrants to our economy, our tax base, and the vibrancy of our communities. And most importantly, it is a time for us to recognize the humanity of people seeking refuge and the American Dream.

Despite the lies, fearmongering, and hate, immigrant communities will survive and persevere, just like we always have. Immigrants and refugees have endured war, poverty, economic desperation, violence, and dangerous political turmoil in their home countries. Immigrants and refugees have crossed rivers, jungles, deserts, and oceans, because of the dream and the promise that America has long provided to people around the world.

So I say that immigrant stories are American stories. And this Welcoming Week, I know that the incredible strength and resilience of immigrant communities, along with the support of our allies, will get us through and will continue to help make our nation a better place.

Senator Hertel’s statement, in which Senator Johnson concurred, is as follows:

I stand here today with a heavy heart to share the tragic news of the loss of Motor Carrier Officer Daniel Kerstetter, a dedicated public safety officer and a member of the Grosse Pointe community. As I’m sure we all have seen in the news over the weekend, on Friday, Officer Kerstetter sustained fatal injuries while being struck in a patrol vehicle while on a traffic stop.

Officer Kerstetter, originally from Auburn, New York, moved to Michigan in 2009 where he met his wife, Catherine, and worked as an assistant equipment manager for the Detroit Red Wings. He then became a motor carrier officer with the Michigan State Police in January of 2023, and he helped keep the public safe on our roadways across the state. A graduating member of the 26th Motor Carrier Officer Recruit School, Officer Kerstetter was assigned to the Metro North Post. He is survived by his wife and three young children.

Every day, Officer Kerstetter willingly put his own well-being on the line to ensure the safety of our community. Today, we not only mourn his passing, but we also celebrate his life and honor the extraordinary courage and dedication he exemplified throughout his service. Even in his passing, he continued his service to others as he donated his organs and provided the gift of life to others.

May our thoughts and prayers surround the Kerstetter family, as well as their friends and their colleagues as they navigate unimaginable loss. In honor of Officer Kerstetter’s sacrifice and service to our state, I would ask for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Officer Daniel Kerstetter.

Announcements of Printing and Enrollment

The Secretary announced that the following bills were printed and filed on Wednesday, September 11, and are available on the Michigan Legislature website:

**House Bill Nos. 5913 5914 5915 5916 5917 5918 5919 5920 5921 5922 5923 5924 5925
5926 5927 5928 5929 5930 5931 5932 5933**

Scheduled Meetings

Civil Rights, Judiciary, and Public Safety – Wednesday, September 18, 11:00 a.m., Room 1200, Binsfeld Office Building (517) 373-5312

Regulatory Affairs – Wednesday, September 18, 12:30 p.m., Room 1100, Binsfeld Office Building (517) 373-1721

Senate Fiscal Agency Governing Board – Wednesday, September 18, 8:45 a.m., Harry T. Gast Appropriations Room (517) 373-2768 (CANCELLED)

Veterans and Emergency Services – Wednesday, September 18, 10:15 a.m., Room 1300, Binsfeld Office Building (517) 373-5312

Senator Singh moved that the Senate adjourn.

The motion prevailed, the time being 12:23 p.m.

The President pro tempore, Senator Moss, declared the Senate adjourned until Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

DANIEL OBERLIN
Secretary of the Senate

