

THE JACOBS CAPITOL REPORT

GILDA Z. JACOBS
MICHIGAN SENATE
Democratic Caucus Chair
FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
March 9, 2007

Contact: Matt Levin
(248)-943-6975

Governor: Budget Deadline is March 15 Dillon & Bishop Form Bi-Partisan Work Group

Governor Granholm has imposed a March 15 deadline for a new budget agreement. In the meantime, House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) and Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop have formed a bi-partisan work group of legislators to craft recommendations.

April spring break is fast approaching, and the governor made it clear that she wants the budget situation resolved before legislators leave for vacation. "We have to have a deal before they go," she said. "When you're in the middle of a crisis, to go off on break . . . would not be a good decision."

The bipartisan work group will be comprised of six lawmakers representing both chambers of the Legislature. The group's pre-established deadline for recommendations is also March 15.

The current fiscal year budget deficit stands at \$1 billion.

Jacobs Leads Mental Health Plan Bipartisan Plan Requires Parity

State Senator Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods) joined Senators Hanson Clarke (D-Detroit), Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor), Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing), and House members Bert Johnson (D-Detroit), Mark Meadows (D-East Lansing), Ted Hammon (D-Burton) and Fran Amos (R-Waterford) in introducing a plan that requires mental health insurance parity in Michigan.

"At a time when we are deeply concerned about Michigan's economic health, we must consider Michigan's mental health as well," Jacobs said. "When mental illness is treated responsively and quickly, those who suffer from it become better parents, better spouses, better students, and better workers."

"Michigan is one of only eight states without mental health parity laws," Rep. Johnson said. "People who have mental illness are trapped in the revolving door of homelessness, occasional treatment, and jail. Our plan

will ensure that those suffering from mental illnesses will have access to the treatment they need and deserve.”

The plan, introduced in both the Michigan House and Senate, will require health insurers in Michigan to offer mental health benefits on par with coverage for other medical conditions. Mental health would be treated no differently than other medical conditions, and insurance companies would have to cover mental health services in the same manner they cover physical health treatments.

As of January 2007, 42 states have enacted mental health parity laws. In 2006, six states, including Ohio, New York and Idaho, enacted mental health parity laws. Ohio and New York passed their laws during lame duck sessions.

“In recent years, a large percentage of the state’s mental health spending has gone to Medicaid recipients, but only about half of Michigan citizens with mental health needs are eligible for Medicaid,” Meadows said. “Michigan residents who don’t qualify for Medicaid need insurance that covers their mental health services. Rebuilding the mental health system will not be an easy task, but it is a challenge we must tackle.”

“Lack of parity is a blatant discrimination against people who have mental illness,” Hammon said. “This discrimination would never be tolerated for conditions like heart disease or cancer. Our citizens deserve better. The time for parity is now.”

Governor Granholm Highlights Nursing Corps Initiative Plan to Address Michigan Nursing Shortage

In an address this week, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm highlighted a key initiative in her plan to provide Michigan workers with the training they need to succeed in a global economy. The Michigan Nursing Corps initiative, unveiled in the State of the State address last month, will help alleviate the state’s chronic nursing shortage. The governor made her remarks during a rally held on the steps of the state Capitol in Lansing.

“Training workers to fill the good-paying jobs available right now in health care facilities across the state is a key component of our plan to revitalize Michigan’s economy,” Granholm said. “By expanding our capacity for training nurses and accelerating the training, we are not only placing workers in jobs, we are helping to ensure every Michigan citizen receives world-class health care.”

The Michigan Nursing Corps initiative will train 500 additional nursing

instructors and graduate more than 3,000 additional nurses over the next three years. Current estimates show Michigan on track to have a nursing shortage of 18,000 by 2015. Granholm's nursing corps initiative will address this shortage by expanding the number of faculty in the state's nursing programs, increasing clinical placement opportunities, and providing accelerated degree programs for workers choosing nursing as a second career.

Additionally, the Granholm administration has invested \$30 million through the MI Opportunity Partnership in Michigan universities and community colleges for programs to produce additional nursing graduates. Also, twelve of Michigan's Regional Skills Alliances are focused on recruitment, employee development, retention, and collaboration in health care professions, including nursing.

The Michigan Nursing Corps is part of the governor's economic plan designed to diversify the economy, expand affordable college education and training to every student, put thousands of people to work improving Michigan's infrastructure, hold schools to higher standards, extend access to health care to every family, and grow our cities.

WIT, WISDOM, ETC . . .

Quotables

"I would rather regret the things that I have done than the things that I have not."
-Lucille Ball

"The only statistics you can trust are the ones you falsified yourself."
-Winston Churchill

Quote of the Week: John Glasworthy
"Idealism increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem."

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at
<http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/> .

If you'd like to be removed from this distribution list, simply reply to
jacobsreport@aol.com with "remove" in the subject header.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Campaign & Election Oversight Committee. She also serves on the Finance, Economic Development & Regulatory Reform, and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

This newsletter is produced in single-space form in order to save paper and transmission costs.

####