

THE JACOBS CAPITOL REPORT

GILDA Z. JACOBS
MICHIGAN SENATE
Democratic Caucus Chair
FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

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Contact: Matt Levin
(248)-943-6975

HOUSE DEMOCRATS REVEAL BUDGET—SORT OF Ideas Floated without Details

Michigan House Democrats announced their plan to add more than \$1 billion to state coffers through a combination of reforms, cuts, and tax increases whose details are to be unveiled later. The highly anticipated rollout was short on specifics and contained spending programs aimed to improve the state's schools and downtowns.

House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Township), originally reluctant to embrace Governor Granholm's two percent tax on services, did say that higher taxes would be part of the mix.

"Let's fix the problem, rather than do what's politically popular," Dillon said. Flanked by more than a dozen of his House Democratic colleagues, he also said that an increase in the state income tax was not out of the question.

The full plan, which is to be released next week, includes a shift of the business tax liability to companies that do business in Michigan without an in-state plant or workforce. It will also call for school districts and local governments to consolidate, while requiring state employees to give up a percentage of their health care benefits. Tweaks to the prison parole system were also discussed.

Surprisingly, the House Democrats' plan included new spending, proposing a \$100 million investment in Michigan's downtowns. It would also establish a new program providing iPods or MP3s to Michigan students to be used as a learning tool. Estimates on the costs of these items have not yet been offered.

The plan faces a hard sell in the Senate. The Republican-controlled body has already rejected the governor's service tax, insisting that budget cuts must be made prior to any discussion of a tax increase.

SECRETARY OF STATE OFFERS SELF-SERVICE Stations Prove Popular with Customers On the Go

The number of customers choosing Self-Service Stations to renew their license plate tabs has more than doubled in the program's second year, according to the Secretary of State office.

The stations, which are similar to cash machines, logged almost 30,000 transactions and \$3 million in revenue in their first 12 months. Since then, the stations have become even more popular, racking up more than 75,000 transactions totaling \$7.5 million in revenue in the second year. Since their inception, there have been more than 105,000 transactions and \$10.6 million in revenue.

Many of the stations are accessible day and night. The added convenience of the stations also benefits branch office staff because they have more time to help customers with more complex service needs.

The stand-alone stations feature simple touch-screen instructions, dispense new license tabs in just moments, and accept Discover, Visa, and MasterCard debit and credit cards.

Customers simply scan the bar code on a renewal notice with their correct name, address, vehicle information and personal identification number before paying.

Motorists still can renew their tabs online, by phone or mail, or from a branch office customer service representative.

Visit the department's Web site at www.Michigan.gov/sos for more information about offices and services.

UNITED STATES STEEL FUN FACTORY OPENS **Detroit Science Center Features 39 Manufacturing Exhibits**

The Detroit Science Center and the United States Steel Corporation have joined forces to take visitors into the world of manufacturing. The United States Steel Fun Factory exhibit collection, which opened last week, is the only place in Michigan where visitors can learn how a variety of manufacturing processes turn an idea into reality with the help of computer design, prototypes, simulations, conveyors, robots, statistics, and more.

“The State of Michigan grew and prospered around the great factories of the automotive industry and manufacturing remains a vital part of the State’s economy. The United States Steel Fun Factory will help to keep alive that great legacy by igniting a passion for manufacturing and inspiring our young visitors to pursue careers in engineering,” said Kevin F. Prihod, President & CEO of the Detroit Science Center.

The Fun Factory, with 39 hands-on exhibits spanning 2,800 square-feet, will take Science Center visitors into the world of manufacturing with three different exhibit areas. Fun, interactive exhibits will offer something for all ages. Young children will love the excitement of moving conveyors, robots, and all the hands-on exhibits. Older children will enjoy learning about the amazing technology required to design and build parts in the automotive industry and will appreciate how math and science are applied to make the products they use everyday. Adults will appreciate the sophistication and complexity of manufacturing and its importance in

everyone's daily lives.

For more information, please call 313-577-8400 or visit the website,
<http://www.detroitssciencecenter.org>.

WIT, WISDOM, ETC . . .

Quotables

“There is a distinct difference between having an open mind and having a hole in your head.”

-James Randi

“Science knows no country because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world.”

-Louis Pasteur

Quote of the Week: Henry Miller

“Whatever needs to be maintained through force is doomed.”

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All Michigan legislation can be tracked at

<http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/> .

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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.

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