



# MAGE

Michigan Association of Governmental Employees  
OPEIU Local 2002

## THE QUARTERLY REPORT

April 2023

### Message from the President

I am excited to introduce the new MAGE newsletter that we will be providing to our members. The new Quarterly Report will be sent to members via email quarterly. This newsletter will also be posted on the MAGE website as well. We hope that this newsletter will prove to be beneficial to all our members keeping you all updated on current events. Please feel free to share this news letter with your colleagues.

As the year got off to a fresh start, MAGE was able to provide good news to our specially licensed members. After the new Legislature took their seats in the House and Senate they quickly got to work and passed the concurrent resolution we had been waiting on that allowed a 20% raise for some licensed professionals to go into effect. While this is great news, we still have work to do. This raise creates a new pay compression issue for supervisors of the classifications that are receiving this raise. MAGE will be addressing this at the upcoming Coordinated Compensation Panel this fall. We will advocate for a solution.

As our corrections supervisors know, the Department of Corrections agreed to award the rank and file a \$3,000 retention bonus and did not find it necessary to include NERE's. The Department continues to award the rank and file while the Supervisors who not only have more responsibility daily but they also have more liability hanging over them are left with nothing. MAGE advocated for the NEREs in the DOC to receive the same \$3,000 bonus however the panel did not agree. We have not and will not stop fighting to right this injustice and do all we can to convince the panel that the NERE's are deserving of this bonus.

Members are encouraged to watch their emails and the MAGE website for upcoming scholarship and student debt reduction opportunities. The OPEIU Student Debt Reduction application period will be opening in April. The MAGE Scholarship and Student Debt Reduction will open June 1<sup>st</sup>. Members will receive an email notification when these applications are active.

Finally, watch your emails and the MAGE website for information on the new MAGE membership drive we will be running from April 1 through September 30. You could win up to \$500!

### Labor Representatives in Action

MAGE recently won a very important case defending a members' freedom of speech under the First Amendment. In this case, the member was terminated because the DHHS officials did not like what the member stated in a Tik Tok post. Making the Department's actions extreme was the fact that the member made no reference to the state or employment with the state in publication. Although, this case was a victory; I encourage all members to review their department's public relations policies and their social media policies before posting video or commentary on any social media platform or before making any statements to the press.

### Labor Law Update:

On March 16, 2023, Governor Whitmer signed into law an amendment to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. The amendments expand Michigan civil rights protections for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, outlined in the Public Act 2023 PA 6. Under this amendment, the new law, MCL 37.2103(f), defines "Gender identity or expression" to mean, "having or being perceived as having a gender-related self-identity or expression whether or not associated with an individual's assigned sex at birth." And, MCL 37.2103(k), defines "Sexual orientation" to mean, "having an orientation for heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality or having a history of such an orientation or being identified with such an orientation." These amendments will allow individuals to file discrimination complaints with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in employment, housing, education, and access to public accommodations. [https://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(zjojr4eauh1hgz5zwnf3ulh\)\)/documents/2023-2024/publicact/pdf/2023-PA-0006.pdf](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(zjojr4eauh1hgz5zwnf3ulh))/documents/2023-2024/publicact/pdf/2023-PA-0006.pdf)

### Benefit Spotlight

Don't forget! MAGE members have access to numerous benefits!

This quarter we are spotlighting Orlando Employee Discounts! Members can save 35% on Orlando Vacation Packages! You can enjoy discounts on Orlando hotels and vacation homes near Disney World and other theme parks as well as vacation packages for Disney World, Sea World and Universal Studios! Check out <https://www.orlandoemployeediscounts.com/index-new/> for more information!

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## HIGHLIGHTS

(Provided by MAGE Lobbyist Todd Tennis)

The Legislature identified six top priorities when session began: repealing the so-called “Pension Tax”; increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit; expanding civil rights protections to the LGBTQ+ community; repealing the 1931 state law restricting reproductive freedom; reenacting the Michigan Prevailing Wage Law; and repealing the so-called “Right to Work” law that suppresses workers’ rights. They also added a new priority – firearms safety legislation – after the tragic mass shooting that occurred at Michigan State University. They are on track to pass all of these priorities before the spring recess.

### **Bills Reopening Pension Access for Some State Workers Introduced in State Senate**

Two separate packages of bills aimed at allowing certain state workers to opt into the State Police Retirement System. Senate Bill 156 and Senate Bill 157 – sponsored by Senator Santana (D-Detroit) and Senator McBroom (R-Vulcan), respectively – would allow corrections officers to transfer into the Michigan State Police Retirement System. Senate Bill 165 and Senate Bill 166 – sponsored by Senator Cherry (D-Flint) and Senator McDonald-Rivet (D-Bay City), respectively – are similar but also extend to other state workers including conservation officers, capitol security officers, and some other classifications that relate to law enforcement. Unfortunately, we cannot provide full details on these bills at the moment because the Michigan Legislative website is not functioning. We will provide drafts of the bills as soon as they are available.

While these bills are a step in the right direction, they leave the majority of state workers trapped in a low-benefit defined contribution plan that has been shown to provide insufficient support for a secure retirement. The Coalition for Secure Retirement – MI, which includes members such as AFSCME, SEIU, MEA and AFT-MI, has been working to craft a plan to provide better retirement options to all state workers similar to the hybrid pension plans currently administered by the state for state police officers or public school employees. If properly administered, a hybrid pension option for state workers would greatly increase the likelihood of a secure retirement for state employees while keeping additional state costs to a minimum.

We expect Senate Bills 165 and 166 to receive a hearing in the Senate Labor Committee as early as April.

### **Right to Work (for less) Laws on Verge of Repeal, but of Little Benefit to Public Employees**

Ten years ago, the Michigan Legislature enacted legislation that allows members of a collective bargaining unit to enjoy the benefits of a union contract without having to pay for any share of the work that goes into crafting and enforcing it.

The so-called “Right to Work” law was touted as a way to protect the rights of workers on the job, but in practice only diminishes the collective bargaining power of unions to the detriment of all workers in Michigan. One of the top priorities of the new Democratic-led majorities in the Michigan House and Senate was to overturn these unfair laws, and the Michigan Legislature has sent bills to the Governor that would do just that. We expect Governor Whitmer to sign them any day now.

### **Retirement Tax Issue Gets Connected to Larger Package**

One of the issues most observers predicted would receive bipartisan support going into this year was a repeal of the so-called “Pension Tax” that was enacted early in the administration of former Governor Rick Snyder. Many politicians on both sides of the aisle had campaigned on it, including Governor Whitmer herself. The very first bill introduced in both the House and Senate this year (HB 4001 and SB 1) addressed the issue, and they each passed with at least some bipartisan support. However, after HB 4001 passed the House, there was a decision by Democratic leaders in both chambers to combine the issue with other priorities, such as the increase to the Earned Income Tax Credit and a deposit into the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve fund (SOAR). They also added in a one-time \$180 tax credit for each household to sweeten the deal.

*Visit the MAGE website for the full legislative report.*

### **Announcements:**

- Watch your emails and the MAGE website for information about the membership drive MAGE will be running from April 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023. You could win up to \$500!
- Would you like a MAGE informational meeting to be held at your office? If you would like to set up a lunch meeting for members and potential members to speak with MAGE Labor Representatives, call the MAGE Office today! 1-800-477-6243.