



# MAGE

Michigan Association of Governmental Employees  
OPEIU Local 2002

## THE QUARTERLY REPORT

April 2024

### Message from the President

I hope that all our members have had a wonderful start to your spring! As you may remember from the last quarterly report, coming into the new year we were still working on securing a special \$2,250 bonus for NERE's that was originally denied. I am happy to share that at the commission meeting that took place on February 7, 2024, we were able to secure the bonus for NERE's! NERE's should have noticed this in their pay checks already.

We may still be celebrating the win of securing the bonus, but we still have work to do! Over the summer, MAGE will begin participating in Committees with the Office of State Employee to take a closer look at many of our supervisory positions that are experiencing tremendous pay compression issues. MAGE currently has a list of many members who are interested in helping in anyway they can. If your assistance is needed, you can expect to be contacted by MAGE Legal Counsel and Labor Representative, Peter Neu. In addition to participating on these committees, MAGE will also begin our preparations for our next Coordinated Compensation Proceeding.

During the month of February, I had the chance to attend a couple of our MAGE district meetings. It was great to see so many members excited to participate at this year's General Council.

OPEIU has also recently announced that the application period for both their Student Debt Reduction program and the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Summer camp program are now open! The dead line for the Student Debt Reduction application is June 28, 2024. The deadline for the summer camp application is April 30, 2024. You can find more detailed information regarding both on the MAGE website. If you are interested in either, make sure you submit you application as soon as possible to the MAGE office.

Have a great spring!

### Labor Representatives in Action

Over these past three months, MAGE attended 2 MDOC Trainings to speak with potential members. Our Labor Relations Director also had the chance to stop in at a couple of our district meetings to provide an update to members.

### Labor Relations Tip!

Do you know when you can use administrative leave? Civil Service Regulation 2.03 provides that administrative leave may be used for the following:

An employee is summoned to jury service, workstation closure, engaging in qualifying labor relations activities, misses regularly scheduled hours due to work-place injury, or is absent due to providing disaster relief services.

Remember, there may be additional rules regarding administrative leave for each department. Always remember to review your employee hand book or call the MAGE office.

### Benefit Spotlight

Don't forget! MAGE members have access to numerous benefits! This quarter we want to highlight Scholarship and Student Debt Reduction Award!

Every year beginning on June 1 and running through the last weekday of August, the application period opens for the MAGE Scholarship and Student Debt Reduction Awards. These awards are in the amount of \$1,000 dollars.

MAGE has been able to provide multiple awards each year for the past several years. We hope that all who are eligible for this award submits an application! Watch the MAGE website for mor information.

Please note you may only be a recipient of this award one time.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## HIGHLIGHTS (Provided by MAGE Lobbyist Todd Tennis)

The Michigan Legislature, after a very fast-paced 2023, has perceptibly reduced the number of bills passing back and forth between chambers in 2024. This is primarily due to the 54-54 partisan split in the Michigan House (with two vacancies). It is also partially related to a larger focus on budget priorities as the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees begin their work building the 2024-5 state budget. We expect the pace to slowly start picking up again as we move through the budget process, and especially when the vacant House seats are filled after an April special election.

Work in Lansing is primarily focused on the appropriations process, as House and Senate budget committees are preparing their responses to the Governor's budget proposal. In February, Governor Whitmer announced several new initiatives that she hopes the Legislature will fund. These include universal Pre-K education, no-cost community college and career post-secondary schooling for Michigan residents, and a \$5,000 family care giver tax credit.

Labor groups in Lansing are also working to pass further legislation that benefits working families. Efforts are underway to improve Michigan's unemployment system (including increasing maximum benefit levels for unemployed workers), strengthen Michigan's Workers' Compensation system, and (of key importance to public employees) repeal PA 152 which requires public workers to pay at least 20% of their health care costs (known as the 80/20 law). Much of this work is on hold until after House special elections take place in April.

### **Gridlock Stymies Michigan House**

Last November, two members of the Michigan House of Representatives won local elections to become mayor of their home towns. Representative Lori Stone (D-Warren) and Representative Kevin Coleman (D-Westland) gave up their House seats to take the office of mayor. This left an even 54-54 partisan split in the Michigan House.

Special elections will take place on April 16 in Warren and Westland to fill these vacancies. Until then, however, Democratic Speaker Joe Tate (D-Detroit) has had difficulty convincing the Republican caucus led by Matt Hall (R-Richland Twp.) to give the necessary votes to pass more than a handful of bills. Representative Hall has insisted that since the two parties have an equal number of members in the House for the moment that the chamber adopt a co-leadership model.

Democrats have rejected that notion and have elected instead to wait until the two vacancies are filled in April on the assumption that both will be won by Democratic candidates. Should that occur, the Democrats will return to a 56-54 majority and again be able to pass bills without Republican assistance.

Most pundits speculate that the two vacant House seats will be won by Democrats. However, special elections in April come with a predictably low turnout. This means that, while unlikely, it is not out of the realm of possibility that a Republican candidate could win one or even both seats. Candidates in Warren and Westland will be working furiously over the next few weeks until the election. In Warren, Republican Ronald Singer will face Democrat Mai Xiong; for the 13<sup>th</sup> House District and in Westland, Democrat Peter Herzburg will vie with Republican Josh Howell for the 25<sup>th</sup> House district.

If the Democrats are both victorious, Democrats will once again have control over the Michigan House, Senate and Governor's Office. If Republicans win one or both seats, however, the power dynamic will shift in a major way. Republicans would be able to exert more control over the process – particularly when it comes to the budget – than they have been able to do for the past 15 months.

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

### **Announcements:**

- MAGE General Council: May 4, 2024.
- 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.