

Capitol Capsule



MIRS Capitol Capsule, Monday, April 3, 2023

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The more that you have President (Donald) TRUMP saying the FBI is crooked, the Justice Department's crooked ... that will have an impact on normal everyday cases."

- Honigan Partner Matthew **SCHNEIDER**, former U.S. Attorney in Michigan's Eastern District, on the impact of the former president casting aspirations on the legal system for him being indicted.

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Past U.S. Attorney: Trump's Indictment Has Spillover Effect On Prosecutors' Cases

Former President Donald **TRUMP**'s claim that last week's indictment against him was politically motivated has the "real spillover effect" of current and future jurors not trusting prosecutors during criminal trials, previous U.S. Attorney Matthew **SCHNEIDER** said on this week's *MIRS Monday* podcast.

"When Trump says the FBI is dishonest, when Trump says the Justice Department is crooked ... I've been having conversations with local federal prosecutors and they're telling me that's impacting their cases," Schneider said. "It was where people distrusted police officers, now they're starting to distrust prosecutors It's kind of a Rubicon that we haven't quite crossed yet."



On the last day of March, Trump's name dominated the headlines when he was indicted by a New York grand jury.

The Manhattan District Attorney's office kicked off its investigation of Trump while he was still in the White House, zooming in on a \$130,000 payment made by the past president's then-personal

attorney Michael **COHEN** to adult film actress Stormy **DANIELS** in October 2016.

What started as claims that hush money was utilized to cover up an alleged affair – that could have occurred around a decade before the 2016 presidential election – has evolved into an indictment with more than 30 counts to be made against Trump in relation to business fraud.

Currently, Trump is expected to appear in court Tuesday afternoon for his arraignment. Schneider, the former U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan and Honigman law firm partner, said the issue of transparency surrounding what the charges are will be temporary.

"That's not all that uncommon where somebody will be charged with a crime and it's placed under seal, and that's done where people take that indictment, they seal it up, they do it to make sure that witnesses don't flee or the defendant doesn't flee ... that's not going to happen in this case, but in such a circumstance like this, this is not some kind of ordinary arraignment," Schneider said.

He said there are all kinds of mechanisms occurring ahead of Trump's anticipated Tuesday arraignment when the charges will come out.

"Because of the Secret Service, because of who it is, because of the possibility for protests ... that's probably why I think it's more logistically done," Schneider said, later clarifying "none of this impacts the president's ability to run."

Schneider told *MIRS* there was an opioid drug distribution case where, because jurors were being told not to trust the FBI, members of the jury pushed for an individual who was reportedly placing opioid drugs onto the streets and being connected to overdose deaths not to be convicted in the case.

"Now that's very, very bad for the American justice system, and so the more that you have President Trump saying the FBI is crooked, the Justice Department's crooked ... that will have an impact on normal everyday cases," Schneider said.

He said in "the older days," someone would look at the evidence and look at the facts to find out if somebody robbed a bank. However, he said jurors now would question if an individual actually robbed the bank because the investigation was conducted by a government entity they no longer trust.

"And I think that's a real tragedy, because I think that will have a big impact on the American justice system moving forward," he said.

The Trump campaign reported that during the 24 hours immediately after the previous president was officially indicted, it received more than \$4 million in contributions to the Trump Save America Joint Fundraising Campaign (JFC), which dedicates 90% of donations to Trump's 2024 presidential primary race.

The campaign's website is also asking backers to pledge their "early support in peaceful DEFENSE of President Trump" ahead of his Tuesday arraignment. Another report made to **NBC News** by a Trump campaign official stated 16,000 volunteer sign-ups were additionally received following the indictment.

Schneider said the first "very disturbing thing" he saw was how people, mainly on the political right, were describing the indictment as unbelievable, although no one currently knows what the charges are and that "the only thing we know is what has been reported in the media."

"I'm a Republican, and I like to adhere to the rule of law. I always thought the rule of law meant knowing what the law was before you started talking about it," he said. "We don't even know what he's being charged with ... so how can you jump to somebody's defense and say this is unconscionable?"

He said he can see that there are reasons why people are mad about the indictment, particularly because Manhattan District Attorney Alvin **BRAGG** Jr. has developed a track record of hitting Trump.

For example, while serving with the New York Attorney General's office, Bragg was involved with civil lawsuits like the 2018 lawsuit claiming the Trump Foundation, which was founded in 1988, of misappropriating its tax-exempt funds to support Trump politically and personally. After the foundation agreed to close under court supervision, Trump was ordered by a New York court to directly pay \$2 million to settle the suit in 2019.

"But I think cooler heads should prevail a little bit, and before we all jump to conclusions, let's find out what the charges actually are, what the evidence is," Schneider said.

A survey conducted for CNN over the recent weekend using the SSRS Text Message Panel, which heard back from 1,048 respondents from throughout the United States, found 60% approved of the decision to indict Trump and 40% disapproved (with 15% somewhat disapproving the decision and 25% strongly disapproving it).

Thirty-seven percent of respondents expressed viewing the reported payment to Daniels as illegal, 33% thought it was unethical but not illegal and 10% saw it as "not wrong at all."

When it came to believing politics had an influence on the decision to indict Trump, 76% expressed thinking that it did.

Line 5 Shutdown Could Mean No Michigan-Made

Insulin

In a Diabetes Alert Day press release last week, Enbridge, operator of the Line 5 pipeline, highlighted the necessity for light oil and natural gas to manufacture medications, exercise equipment, blood sugar meters, injection pens and insulin pumps used by those diagnosed with diabetes.

Lauren **BROWN**, Enbridge's community engagement advisor, said "we take pride knowing Line 5 plays a critical role in an effort to help those with diabetes," a number at around a million Michiganders.

That raised the question: How large of a role does the Line 5 oil pipeline play in the manufacture of diabetes products or medications?

MIRS first asked Enbridge's Media Relations Strategist Ryan **DUFFY**, who cited statistics that area refineries and manufacturers rely on the Line 5 pipeline to help create over 6,000 everyday products, including medical products, deodorant, dishwashing liquid, cars, crayons, tires, toothpaste and gasoline.

However, Duffy said Enbridge did not have statistics pertaining to insulin specifically, so *MIRS* then asked the Michigan Chemistry Council (MCC).

Former Rep. Sara **CAMBENSY**, also a diabetic and now-executive director of the MCC, said that the short answer is none . . . right now.

Cambensy said that could change, but not without Line 5.

During her time in the Legislature, Cambensy said she spent a great deal of time looking at the high price of insulin and trying to lower it for Michiganders.

Through her work with insurance companies, she came to understand that the problem was that the manufacture of insulin was kept to a minimum, with just a few companies in the U.S.

Along with now-Rep. **Curt VANDERWALL (R-Ludington)**, the two began to look into the process of attracting businesses that produce insulin to Michigan and to manufacture it in-state, which would be much more effective and provide more cost relief.

However, Cambensy said the ongoing process to start insulin production in-state requires industrial loads of energy, as it can't be overheated or frozen.

"You need to be well-connected," she said, and that is the connection that Enbridge is making.

Cambensy said that as the state looks at insulin production and tries to partner with manufacturers, the biggest problem is how and where it can be produced.

If Michigan were to start manufacturing the drug, the state would need a solid energy source, she said, and "if we shut down a major source like Line 5, it hurts our chances."

Cambensy said the state isn't likely to go out, build a facility and build production, but Michigan could put out bids and see where interest is.

At that point, companies are going to decide if it's cost-effective for them to locate in Michigan, she said.

"Anything we do to take away our chances, if we shut down Line 5, it does send a signal to businesses that we're not as serious about attracting new businesses that need that load," she said.

Cambensy said VanderWall is still working on the issue and has had several meetings with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, to look at taking next steps, as well as looking at states with manufacturing laws currently in place.

"We're in the early stages," she said, "but this is something that so many Michiganders are impacted by."

Cambensy said there is other legislation to cap insulin, which she introduced last term and which Rep. **Jennifer CONLIN (D-Ann Arbor)** reintroduced with  **HB 4015**, which sets a \$50 limit on co-pays for a 30-day supply of prescription insulin.

Federal provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act have also capped the co-pay for Medicare recipients at \$35 monthly.

However, Cambensy said the impact of state legislation is limited to only the insurance the state can control.

Her bill would have impacted only 15% of diabetics, Cambensy said, whereas if insulin was manufactured in Michigan, the price reduction could help even those without insurance.

Cambensy said a large part of the debate surrounding Line 5 starts with environmental concerns, but she said her perspective was changed when she thought about all her materials to treat diabetes.

They're all made of plastic, she said, and even though we don't manufacture that in Michigan, other people in other places do. When we got into the Line 5 debate, I was able to look at just how much I depend on other people having a pipeline to manufacture something I need.

"I don't know exactly where every drop of oil from Line 5 is going," Cambensy said, "but I know it's going to manufacture something we all need and use every day."

Harper Launch Pushed Back For Video

The most likely African-American primary opponent to U.S. Senate candidate **Elissa SLOTKIN (D-Holly)**, Hill **HARPER**, will not be launching a campaign this week as had been originally hoped.

The unconfirmed word is Harper, known as Dr. Sheldon **HAWKES** on "CSI: NY," is "hoping for some time this month, but it depends on one major factor: A launch video that is comparable to that from the Slotkin campaign.

"She did a great launch. It was about as good as it gets," conceded a Democratic source. The last thing Harper wants to do is air his own launch that experts declare is wanting in comparison.

Nothing is in the can because the video has not been produced as of this read. Minus that, it's anybody's guess on when he will officially get into the Democratic U.S. Senate primary for the opportunity to replace outgoing U.S. Senator **Debbie STABENOW (D-Lansing)**.

Meanwhile, more Democrats are slowly moving over to the Slotkin camp, with one Detroit source saying that unless Harper opens up his wallet to draw dollars and donors his way, his campaign may be permanently stuck in neutral.

Every day Harper lets Slotkin have the field to herself and longshot business executive Nasser **BEYDOUN**, is another day wasted, the source said, adding "In politics, the longer you wait, the harder it is to get started."

Root Canals, Crowns Now Covered By Medicaid

Adult Medicaid recipients 21 and over will now be able to get root canals, crowns, gum care and deep teeth cleanings, under expanded dental coverage budgeted at \$85.1 million, which was announced today by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The new coverage, which started April 1, will also include sealants. Currently, Medicaid covers X-rays, teeth cleanings, fillings, extractions and dentures, according to DHHS Director Elizabeth **HERTEL**.

The redesign was proposed during the Fiscal Year 2023 budget and the policy that boosted Medicaid payments went into effect Jan. 1. That allowed providers to be paid at 100% of the

average commercial rate, which incentivized providers to treat Medicaid patients (See "[Adult Dental Medicaid Payments Get Raise After 30 Years](#)," 12/1/22).

Michigan Dental Association President Dr. Vince **BENIVEGNA** said there was no incentive prior to the change for dentists to treat Medicaid patients.

"Dentists would lose money by treating adult dental Medicaid patients. As small business owners this was not sustainable," Benivegna said.

Michigan Association of Health Plans Executive Director Dominick **PALLONE** hailed the move and said the association was fully behind it.

"This change will lead to more positive health outcomes for Michigan residents by ensuring that routine dental services are covered while also enhancing provider care coordination," Pallone said.

Time To Teach Gambling Addiction In The Classroom?

Sen. [Joseph BELLINO JR. \(R-Monroe\)](#) wants Michigan classrooms to caution teenagers about the risks of addiction and dangers associated with gambling, especially after Michigan's legal access to online casinos reached its two-year anniversary in January.

In Michigan, residents must be at least 21 to use online casinos, betting apps and online poker sites. They can visit various tribal casinos at 18 and must be at least 21 to visit one of the Detroit casinos regulated by the Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB).

However, despite the legal age of gambling ranging from 18 to 21 throughout the United States, [the National Council on Problem Gambling](#) published reports finding that at least 60% of high school students have shared that they gambled for money during the past year. Moreover, up to 6% of those students show signs of being a pathological gambler.

Although the [American Gaming Association \(AGA\)](#) describes the legal gaming industry as being "among the most highly regulated industries in America," it is estimated that the use of illegal and unregulated operators – where age verification might not be necessary – costs state governments throughout the country \$13.3 billion in tax revenue. The legal industry loses \$44.2 billion in gaming revenue.

Bellino told *MIRS* his bill, [SB 54](#), would require sixth graders in Michigan to receive one lesson designed by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) on the risks associated with gambling.

Under the legislation, the MDE would need to make the age- and grade-appropriate program available starting July 1, 2024.

"When I talked to people at the department, I said I don't want six weeks. One lesson plan is all you need," Bellino said. "Let them write something on it . . . and bring subjects in from the outside who have gone through this, because whether you know it or not, there's a lot of people in America going to (Gamblers Anonymous)."

The Republican senator has often spoken about his own experiences with alcohol and drug addictions. He said that 10 years ago, a good friend he met at Alcoholics Anonymous died, explaining he had a big gambling problem as well "but he held it at bay until they built the casinos in Detroit.

"He needed to tackle that too, along with his alcohol and drug addiction . . . so we've got these casinos all around us. Now we have online gambling, and I think we should tell the kids and teach the kids what can happen if you partake in this," he said.

He said through speaking with some school principals and superintendents, he's experienced no negative comments on 🐾 SB 54 , expressing "they know it's going to be a problem if it isn't a problem today."

Although his legislation has not received a committee hearing, Bellino's already found co-sponsorship from Sens. **Mallory MCMORROW (D-Royal Oak)**, **John CHERRY (D-Flint)** and **Roger VICTORY (R-Hudsonville)**.

Additionally, he said there were no outside stakeholders that brought the issue to his attention.

"I know what I went through with alcohol and drugs. I know what was not presented to me back in the '60s and '70s. I know what people are doing today with alcohol and drugs (through) education and it helps a lot," Bellino said. "We don't know if you're predisposed to be a gambler or an addict . . . but it happens, and we need to give the kids a little bit of education."

According to the MGCB, commercial and tribal internet casino gaming and internet sports betting operators reported a combined \$1.98 billion in total gross receipts last year, representing a 41% increase compared to the \$1.4 billion in gross receipts reported in 2021.

Bellino agreed that with gambling now being accessible through an app, youths might view it more as a video game.

"It makes it really easy, that's for sure. Who would have thought that 20 years ago we'd be doing this?" he said.

Young Is First Dem To Announce District 10 Congressional Run

Democrat Diane **YOUNG** launched her campaign to run for Michigan's 10th Congressional District on Monday, making her the first Democrat to announce a run against Republican U.S. Rep. [John JAMES \(R-Farmington Hills\)](#) for the Macomb County-based seat in 2024.

Young, a financial planner who grew up in Romeo, ran for Michigan's 36th state House seat in 2016, where she was defeated by incumbent former Rep. Peter **LUCIDO** with 28.16% of the vote.



During her first campaign, her top issues were improved roads and infrastructure, schools and improving the economy for the middle class.

As the daughter of a secretary and a union carpenter, Young has continued her message to middle class Michiganders with her campaign slogan, "It's time to rebuild the middle class."

Her platform also highlights a promise to protect Social Security, Medicare and retirement for Michiganders; streamline the tax code to give middle class families a break and continue to protect women's reproductive rights.

She's running in the MI-10 seat currently held by James, which includes southern Macomb County, Rochester and Rochester Hills in Oakland County.

The contested seat put Democrats within 1,600 votes last November, but Republican spending efforts helped push James ahead, where he defeated Democrat Carl **MARLINGA** with 48.8% of the vote.

When asked if he would also be tossing his hat into the ring, Marlinga said he's started to raise money but isn't ready to announce a campaign.

Marlinga is currently leading Attorney General **Dana NESSEL**'s Elder Abuse Task Force, and he said he isn't able to be a candidate at the same time.

However, he said he's looking forward to the possibility of running.

Monday was a big day for Michigan's District 10 Congressional Democrats, as the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) announced its initial "Districts In Play" for the 2024 cycle, a list that included Michigan's 7th and 10th Congressional Districts as offensive targets.

The Districts In Play are competitive Republican-held or open districts nationwide that serve as battlegrounds for the majority, according to the DCCC.

Along with the 7th District seat left open by U.S. Rep. **Elissa SLOTKIN (D-Holly)**'s U.S. Senate run, the James seat is considered vulnerable by the DCCC because of the close nature of the 2022 race, along with his previous 2018 and 2022 losses while running for U.S. Senate.

DCCC Spokesperson Tommy **GARCIA** said, "John James is a MAGA sympathizer more focused on empowering far-right extremists, partisan investigations, pushing out-of-touch legislation, rolling back reproductive freedom and protecting wealthy corporations than working for everyday Michiganders. The DCCC will work every day to ensure voters have a clear choice in 2024."

The DCCC also announced that the 2024 cycle will mark the first time the DCCC has launched nominee fund pages, which allow grassroots donors to donate now and contribute to the eventual Democratic nominee in these districts.

In response to Young's announcement, National Republican Campaign Committee Midwest Press Secretary Chris **GUSTAFSON** said, "John James flipped his seat by focusing on issues that matter

to Michiganders, and he's delivering. Meanwhile, extreme House Democrats are coddling violent criminals and opposing relief."

Young said she believes her experience as a lifelong Michigander and financial planner will help her understand and address the financial problems Michiganders face.

"As a born-and-raised Michigander and a financial planner, I know just how hard it's become for Michigan families to afford a middle class life," Young said. "I'm running for Congress because my community needs someone who'll fight to rebuild the middle class. That means protecting Social Security, reproductive freedom and making more things in Michigan again. I'm running for Congress because when my neighbors need help, I refuse to stand on the sidelines."

Young began her career in the financial services industry in New York in 1989, after attending Oakland University and moving to the city with her husband.

She moved back to Michigan to raise her two children, opening the downtown Rochester financial planning firm Athena Financial Group four years later.

Young has since authored a financial planning book, along with writing articles for Rochester Suburban Lifestyles, Living Better Magazine and National Underwriter.

She has taught financial planning credentialing courses at New York University and has also held volunteer leadership positions with the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan, Paint Creek Center for the Arts, Inforum, the Rochester Rotary Charities Board, the Warren Symphony Orchestra and the Financial Planning Association of Michigan.

Which Preventative Care Does ACA Court Decision Knock Out?

Gov. **Gretchen WHITMER** asked the state's Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) today to promptly guide Michiganders on which preventive care services are affected by a federal court's decision impacting the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

She wants the department to also determine what steps can be taken to ensure that Michigan families continue to have affordable coverage for healthcare services.

U.S. District Judge Reed **O'CONNOR**'s decision in *Braidwood Management v. Becerra* applies nationwide and potentially affects millions of Americans' access to no-cost preventive health care (See "Texas Federal Judge Strikes Down Nationwide ACA Preventive Health Care Services," 3/20/23).

The directive also orders DIFS to develop recommendations as to other ways the state can take action to ensure every Michigander continues to receive preventive healthcare now and in the future.

"Protecting access to affordable early detection screenings for colon and skin cancer, high blood pressure, and other preventive health care services will save lives, reduce overall health care costs, and ensure a stable, healthy workforce for Michigan employers," Whitmer said in a press release. "The recent federal ruling striking down requirements for insurers to cover these services will put people's health at risk and could raise their bills.

"That's why I am taking action today to protect preventive health services that have long been covered by their insurance so Michiganders can get the care they need without worrying about whether they can afford it," she added.

DIFS Director Anita **FOX** said the department will "work with fellow regulators across the country, the industry, and any other partners as appropriate to ensure that Michigan families continue to have affordable coverage for these lifesaving healthcare services."

A White House spokesperson earlier said the U.S. Department of Justice will appeal O'Connor's ruling.

Stabenow-Buttigieg Dual Gig On Tap

Donors willing to pop \$15,000 will earn the title of Co-Chair of the Michigan Victory Fund fundraiser to honor outgoing U.S. Sen. **Debbie STABENOW (D-Lansing)**, so says an invite from Stacy **FOX** along with Kelly and Amanda **NEUMANN** set for April 30 in Detroit.

The Victory Fund was established by the senior Michigan senator to promote, "a strong One Campaign for Michigan, including a strategic communications operation, support for the U.S. Senate candidate and to win up and down the ticket" in 2024.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete **BUTTIGIEG** and Chasten **BUTTIGIEG** will be sharing the stage as the "special guest" at this "special reception" with Stabenow from 4 to 6 p.m. on that date with the location to be revealed via RSVP.

Sixty percent of the donations will go to the Democratic State Central Committee with the remaining 40% earmarked for the Great Lakes PAC, which is a PAC connected to Stabenow. But, in an unusual twist, the donor can also direct his or her contribution to a "particular participant" by contacting the Victory Fund office in Lansing.

A \$5,000 check gets you a "Reception Host" title. Another \$1,000 is "Reception Sponsor" and you get called a "Guest" for \$250. It's not revealed what they call you if the money is below that amount.

As for the hosts, Kelly Neumann is a notable Traverse City attorney, while her new wife is the former Amanda **GUISE**, who starred in a streaming television program called "Amanda to the Rescue," in which the star assists abandoned pets.

Fox is a corporate and restructuring attorney and executive advisor to CEOs and boards. She joined DuPont in October 2014. Previously, she was deputy emergency manager of the city of Detroit, helping to guide the city through the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history under Kevyn **ORR**.

Developer Wants \$11M From EMU Over Parking Ramp Dispute

A Louisiana not-for-profit company filed a nearly \$11 million lawsuit against the Eastern Michigan University (EMU) Board of Regents over a dispute involving the university's four-story parking structure located in the center of campus.

The Provident Group-EMU Properties LLC's lawsuit, filed in the Court of Claims, alleges the university breached its contract by saying there were 9,633 parking spaces when there were only 9,495, according to a 2020 audit – resulting in Provident suffering a pro rata loss in value of more than \$787,900.

Provident, incorporated in Arizona and headquartered in Baton Rouge, also alleges EMU underplayed structural issues with the parking garage and the closure has cost it more than \$4 million.

Provident first sued in federal court on March 20, but U.S. District Judge Victoria **ROBERTS** quickly dismissed the suit, holding it was filed in the wrong court.

In an online statement, the university said the lawsuit "is entirely without merit."

"We will defend ourselves against the dubious claims and plan on filing a counterclaim for breach of contract," said **Walter KRAFT**, vice president for communications. "Provident is attempting to rewrite the contract it signed."

In 2017, EMU became the first public university in Michigan and in the United States to enter a public-private partnership to operate its campus parking operations.

The university contracted with Preston Hollow Community Capital (PHCC), a named plaintiff, in January 2018 and that agreement called for \$55 million paid to the university and \$4.2 million in capital expenditures to enhance university parking. The agreement also gave PHCC the "exclusive and irrevocable right" to operate the parking system for 35 years.

PHCC assigned Provident EMU as a concessionaire in charge of much of the university's parking system. Provident closed the parking structure in September, shortly after the start of the fall semester, saying repairs were needed.

In March, the university issued a **notice of default** to Provident for that closure.

Brixie Talks MI-07 Congressional Run, Additional Gun Reform Bills

Though she hasn't yet committed to a potential run for Congress, District 73 Rep. **Julie BRIXIE (D-Okemos)** said she hasn't said no to Michigan's 7th Congressional District either.

Brixie, who appeared on the *MIRS Monday* podcast, said, "Never say never" when asked if she would consider a run.



She told *MIRS* she left her science background and entered politics after seeing a clear and obvious need to step forward in her community. That first role was in local government, taking appointments to the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, followed by a position as Meridian Township trustee and three terms as Meridian Township treasurer. (See "**Brixie 'Fell' Into Local Politics; Driven Into State Politics,**" 8/23/18).

Brixie said she worked her way up to state government by filling those needs, and if she felt there was a need that she could fill in MI-07, she would "really look very hard at examining that opportunity."

U.S. Rep. **Elissa SLOTKIN (D-Holly)** was a strong candidate who has done a good job, she said, and it's important to make sure we keep that tough seat for Democrats.

Brixie said that includes conversations with stakeholders and constituents within the district to work together and find the best potential candidate.

She did share that her Master's degrees in crop and soil sciences and environmental toxicology resonated with a lot of people in her new House district, which is more rural.

"I felt very welcome in the rural parts of my district, and was able to feel really right at home there, she said.

"I am, by nature, a public servant," she added.

But as long as she continues in the state House, that public service includes a strong focus on gun safety legislation, including a package of bills making all state-owned or leased buildings weapons-free zones.

Brixie's 🗳️ **HB 4149** and Rep. **Cynthia NEELEY (D-Flint)**'s 🗳️ **HB 4150** would ban weapons, including concealed carry, in all state-owned buildings and on the Capitol lawn.

Brixie said legislators would be included under this blanket reform, which she called a step further than the gun safety legislation that Democrats have been pushing through both chambers since mid-February.

The first three buckets, including red flag legislation, safe storage and background checks, are "just the beginning," Brixie said.

It's also necessary to make changes to the current mental health supports and make sure legislation allows for adequate resources, she said.

These things are necessary to help families that Brixie said are changed forever by the impact of a shooting and, in her case, this comes from personal experience.

Brixie said she lived down the street from the Forbush family in Meridian Township, and has known Troy **FORBUSH**, an Okemos High graduate and one of the eight MSU students shot on Feb. 13, his entire life.

Forbush was hospitalized and ultimately survived the shooting, but Brixie said she couldn't explain the sinking feeling of first hearing he was involved.

When asked if there's anything additional outside red flag legislation or student support systems that could help a troubled individual in a case like the MSU shooting, Brixie said looking at only specific instances and not the full picture is why nothing has gotten done so far.

She added that in more than one individual case, it's necessary to address a culture surrounding guns that focuses on intimidation.

Brixie recalled riding an elevator in the House Office Building during the Capitol's open carry day, surrounded by men with guns and accompanied by one Jimmy John's delivery driver.

"He looked terrified, she said of the young man.

"That's what open carry at the Capitol is all about," Brixie said. "It's about intimidation."

People don't want their kids to go on a field trip to the Capitol and encounter a 65-year-old man with a giant weapon, she said.

The culture surrounding guns stems back to a powerful federal gun lobby, she said, that has made it difficult to even collect information on the manufacture of guns or the deaths caused by them.

But Brixie said she believes change will be possible this term, in large part due to the record number of incoming lawmakers.

Many of them have different life experiences and fit into a younger age bracket, she said, which will likely change the way gun safety is addressed in the coming months, in addition to a change in leadership.

Whitmer Sees Off 84 Middle East-Bound National Guard Soldiers

Gov. **Gretchen WHITMER** gave an address to Michigan Army National Guard soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 182nd Field Artillery Regiment before they were deployed to the Middle East.

Whitmer gave her remarks to the 84 Guard members and their families at the Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church before they are expected to be deployed for up to a year for Operation Spartan Shield, which is protecting Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq from any Iranian hostilities; and Operation Inherent Resolve, which is the military operation against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

"Our soldiers operate the High Mobility Rocket System and will integrate into joint exercises and security cooperation activities to help bring stability to the region," Army Maj. Richie **SANDS** said.

Sands is the regiment commander and said the National Guard would provide artillery support against ISIS.

Whitmer said it was an honor to join the regiment before deployment.

"The Michigan National Guard is known nationwide for their professionalism and dedication, and they have stepped up to protect and serve us all through unprecedented challenges over the last few years. As they once again answer the call of duty, our responsibility is to have their backs," she said.

Bits And Tidbits

AG Coalition Calls On Court To Allow States To Prohibit Threats Of Violence

Sixteen states, including Michigan, filed an **amicus brief** with the U.S. Supreme Court supporting states' efforts to protect their residents from violent threats.

The brief was filed in support of Colorado in *Counterman v. Colorado*, which is pending with the U.S. Supreme Court. The case involves a Colorado man who was convicted of stalking a local singer-songwriter after he sent her threatening messages, including death threats, over the course of two years.

The question before the Supreme Court is whether the man's statements were protected speech and could not be used to convict him. The man argues that a state is required in criminal cases to prove that he intended to frighten the victim; whereas, Colorado argues a jury can look at context to determine whether the threat was a so-called "true threat."

"Messages like those sent by the defendant in this case can have no other purpose than to terrorize the recipient. Speech that expresses a serious intent to do harm to another person is not protected by the First Amendment," Attorney General **Dana NESSEL** said.

Jill Biden Visit To Delta College Postponed After Plane Trouble

The Michigan visit by First Lady Jill **BIDEN** to a community college in Bay County this afternoon was postponed after trouble with her airplane.

Biden's visit was expected to be rescheduled after her plane was diverted back to Denver, Colorado, according to a White House press release. She was en route to the Freeland Airport, where she was scheduled to land and meet with Rep. **Dan KILDEE (D-Flint)**.

She was also expected to tour the main campus of Delta College, in University Center near Bay City, at 4 p.m. and talk about the workforce training programs and something called the "Biden Education Pathway."

The pathway touted by the Biden Administration would allow for universal preschool and provide two years of community college, which would allow high school students to connect with careers and jobs that fit them and their needs.

In Other News:

- Lake Superior State University President Dr. Rodney **HANLEY** is stepping down from his post after nearly five years at the helm in order to pursue another opportunity. LSSU Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Lynn **GILLETTE** was appointed interim president effective immediately. A national search is beginning to find a permanent replacement.

- Lesley **SLAVITT**, Ph.D., an Illinois native with nearly three decades of experience in philanthropy and higher education, has been named the executive director of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University.

- Gov. **Gretchen WHITMER** awarded a \$790,000 state Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) grant to upgrade Shelby Road in Oceana County to an all-season road, so that Perdue Farms and Peterson Farms can expand their businesses. The grant will support a total of 128 new jobs and will enable \$31 million in private investments in the Village and Township of Shelby in Oceana County, according to the Governor's office.

On This Day In Michigan History

On April 3, 1903, Benjamin **PURNELL**, an itinerate preacher, along with his wife, Mary, created the Israelite House of David, a religious colony, in Benton Harbor with land donated by devout followers. Within a few years, the colony had close to five hundred members living on the colony grounds.

Though small in number, their accomplishments were many. They were strong contributors to the agricultural community around them. It is thought that they developed one of the first cold storage facilities in the country and were the first to preserve jellies in jars. As early as 1908, they established a pre-Disney type amusement park, complete with miniature trains. A zoo and aviary were soon added to the park.

They were also credited with inventing the automatic pinsetter used in their bowling alley. One of the tenets of their faith was vegetarianism, and the colony restaurant, serving original recipe

vegetarian meals, was credited with producing the first "sugar cone."

Source: *Michigan Day By Day*