



2014 LAME DUCK WRAP UP: ROAD FUNDING UP TO VOTERS; GUN BILL DIES IN SENATE

The Michigan legislature was at work until the early morning hours today hashing out a road funding bill.

Thursday was the last day of the legislative session. The work day lasted all night and didn't end until about 6:30 a.m. Friday.

They agreed to a ballot question that will ask voters to raise sales tax from 6 percent to 7 percent and remove sales tax from fuel purchases. The question could be on a ballot in May.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of MCO and members, the gun bill was not called up for a vote in the senate. HB 4133, which would have allowed COs to carry concealed pistols in gun-free zones, could be reintroduced in the next legislative session.

Legislators did pass a package of

bills that will improve the job prospects of former prisoners. MDOC will issue certificates of employability to certain inmates upon release. The bills also give employers some protections against litigation if an employer hires a felon with a certificate who later proves to be a danger.

Other bills that would have required Hepatitis C testing when inmates enter and leave MDOC custody did not pass.

Two of the sentencing reform bills passed and two failed. Bills that called for presumptive parole and changes to probation conditions failed, in part due to opposition from law enforcement and prosecutors. Bills requiring a new sentencing commission and updated reentry plans passed.

AROUND THE STATE: MORE FIGHTS AT LMF AND MBP

Warning shots are becoming commonplace at Marquette, an officer said.

A tower officer fired a warning shot Dec. 13 when a two-on-one fight broke out on the Level V yard. The attackers broke the victim's nose, but no weapons were used. Officers also deployed Tasers to stop the fighting.

All three are in segregation now.

Also at Marquette, an Aramark employee was stop ordered last week for overfamiliarization.

Pine unit at Alger was locked down three times in a little more than a week due to fighting.

Their latest lock down came after a four-inmate yard fight Sunday. One of the inmates received an incite-to-riot ticket.

The previous day, a Cedar-unit inmate was stabbed during a yard fight. His lung could have collapsed, but the weapon bent and missed the victim's lung.

Other recent events at LMF:

12/13 – Inmate-on-inmate assault. A lock on a belt was found during pack up of one of the prisoners.

12/16 – Mailroom staff find heroin.

A Pugsley officer was assaulted Tuesday by an inmate who swung a bag of contraband onions at him. The officer was able to grab the bag of onions and lessen the impact. The officer tells us this inmate was bonded out only two hours after the assault.

The prisoner had just bonded out Monday, too. He was in Monday for having dangerous contraband.

PORTAL-TO-PORTAL FIGHT CONTINUES

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has sided against MCO in the portal-to-portal case.

MCO's attorney argued officers are entitled to back pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act and wages are protected by the 14th Amendment.

A very conservative, randomly selected panel made up of three 6th circuit court judges heard arguments earlier this month. The decision was released this week. MCO leaders are meeting with attorneys to determine our next move. An option being explored now is to continue our original state action claim in the state courts rather than federal courts. We'll keep you updated.



Quick reminders

The 2014 holiday packet, which includes next year's pocket calendar, was mailed to members early this month. If you have not received your packet, please contact the MCO central office and we will get you one.

The Exchange Transfer List will be cleared in early January. Many people leave the Department or get a transfer without notifying MCO to remove their name from the list. Clearing the list once a year means the list is more useful and effective.

If your name is on the list now and you do not want it removed, please email anita@mco-seiu.org by Jan. 1.