

# The Ehlers e-Newsletter

Monday, July 14, 2003

## *Last Week in the U.S. House of Representatives*

**HOUSE PANEL REQUESTS REPORT ON MSA CHANGES** – Responding to inquiries by West Michigan Congressmen Vernon J. Ehlers and Pete Hoekstra, the House Committee on Government Reform has asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) to report on the potential financial impact of regulations that threaten to break up the Kent-Ottawa-Muskegon-Allegan Metropolitan Statistical Area. In a July 3 letter, Congressman Adam Putnam, chairman of the committee's Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census Subcommittee, and ranking Democrat William Lacy Clay, requested the GAO for a comparison of Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSAs) standards issued in 1993 to those issued in June, specifically how they will affect federal funding and federal statutes applied to MSAs.

*For more information, please read the full press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/071003MSAlettertoGAO.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/071003MSAlettertoGAO.html)

**HOUSE APPROVES LEGISLATION TO HELP TEACHERS** – Math, science, special education and reading teachers would get a boost thanks to legislation approved Wednesday by the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers said. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003 (H.R. 438) was approved by the House on an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 417-7, with Ehlers joining the majority. It now moves to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

*For more information, please read the full press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/070903Teachers.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/070903Teachers.html)

**MICH. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CALL FOR SENATORS TO ALLOW HEARINGS ON JUDGES** - Members of the Michigan Congressional delegation Wednesday sent a joint letter to Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow urging them to allow four Michigan judicial nominees to have hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. President Bush has nominated four judges, Honorable Richard Allen Griffin, Honorable David McKeague, Honorable Susan Bieke-Neilson and Honorable Henry William Saad, to serve on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Senators Levin and Stabenow, however, have taken advantage of "blue slip" rules allowing them to prevent the judges from receiving hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee and holding a vote.

*For more information, please read the full press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/070903judges.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/070903judges.html)

## **THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MONDAY, JULY 14, 2003**

*On Monday, the House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for morning hour and 12 noon for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.*

**H.R. 2673 - Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004: Appropriates \$17.005**

billion (\$60.488 billion total mandatory) for FY 2004, which less than the FY 03 Funding Level of \$17.877 billion (\$56.705 total mandatory) and less than the President's Request of \$17.141 billion (\$60.488 billion total mandatory).

**Suspensions (3 bills):**

*(Bills on suspension are generally considered non-controversial and have reduced debate time, but require a two-thirds majority vote to be passed.)*

- 1) **H.Con.Res. 215 - Honoring and congratulating chambers of commerce for their efforts that contribute to the improvement of communities and the strengthening of local and regional economies**
- 2) **H.Res. 296 - Recognizing the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Harley-Davidson Motor Company, which has been a significant part of the social, economic, and cultural heritage of the United States and many other nations and a leading force for product and manufacturing innovation throughout the 20th century**
- 3) **H.R. 2330 - Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003:** Intended to strengthen democratic forces in Burma and to sanction the ruling Burmese military junta. The bill includes a series of findings detailing the Burmese regime's repression and misdeeds; a trade ban on the import of Burmese goods into the U.S.; and a freeze on Burmese regime assets in U.S. financial institutions. It also includes a codification of the current policy opposing new loans or technical assistance to Burma.

**Motion to go to Conference on H.R. 1 - Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003 and Possible Democrat Motion to Instruct Conferees**

**TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2003**

*On Tuesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for morning hour and 10 a.m. for legislative business.*

**Suspensions (4 bills):**

- 1) **H.Res. XXX - Dismissing the election contest relating to the office of the Representative from the 2nd Congressional District of Hawaii**
- 2) **H.Res. XXX - Dismissing the election contest relating to the office of the Representative from the 6th Congressional District of Tennessee**
- 3) **H.Con.Res. 236 - Permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to commemorate the unveiling of the statue of Sakakawea provided by the State of North Dakota for display in Statuary Hall**
- 4) **H.R. 2195 - Smithsonian Facilities Authorization Act**

**H.R. 1950 - Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005:**

Establishes important guidelines for U.S. foreign policy during FY 2004 and 2005 by addressing numerous issues including missile non-proliferation policies; security assistance; public diplomacy reform; accountability within the Broadcasting Board of Governors; guidance on reentry into UNESCO; support for Colombianization of the U.S. assistance program and countering threats from Colombian heroin and narco-terrorism;

Afghanistan assistance; policy towards the Middle East and Cuba; State Department personnel matters; and embassy security and construction.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2003 AND THE BALANCE OF THE WEEK**

*On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Thursday, the House will recess at approximately 2:30 p.m. and reconvene at 4 p.m. in a Joint Meeting with the Senate for the purpose of receiving the Right Honorable Tony Blair, M.P., Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business.*

**H.R. 2122 - Project BioShield Act of 2003:** Provides the Secretary of Health and Human Services with greater authority and flexibility to facilitate the research and development of biomedical countermeasures; authorizes the appropriation of funding for the procurement of security countermeasures through the creation of a special reserve fund; and authorizes the emergency use of unapproved drugs, devices, and biologics and the emergency unapproved use of approved drugs, devices, and biologics.

**H.R. 2691 - Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004:** Appropriates \$19.6 billion in new FY 2004 budget authority, (\$186 million less than last year's enacted level and \$110 million more than the President's request). Almost half the bill's funding, \$9.67 billion, finances Interior Department programs to manage and study the nation's animal, plant, and mineral resources and support Indian programs. The balance of the measure's funds support other, non-Interior agencies that perform related functions. These include the Forest Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, conservation and fossil energy research programs run by the Department of Energy, the Indian Health Service, and the Smithsonian Institution and other cultural organizations.

**H.R. 2210 - School Readiness Act of 2003:** This reauthorization of the preschool Head Start program would strengthen Head Start's academic standards by emphasizing cognitive development and the results of scientifically-based research in topics critical to children's school readiness (including language, pre-reading, pre-mathematics, and English language acquisition). The changes would be similar to those adopted with strong bipartisan support for President Bush's Reading First and Early Reading First initiatives, established in the No Child Left Behind Act for K-12 education. By strengthening the academic components of Head Start and maintaining comprehensive services, the legislation improves upon the good work that Head Start is doing in centers across the country. It also seeks to improve teacher quality in Head Start. The bill would ensure that a greater number of Head Start teachers are adequately trained and educated in early childhood development, particularly in teaching the fundamental skills of language, pre-reading, and pre-mathematics. It would require all new Head Start teachers to have at least an associates degree in early childhood education or a related field within three years, and 50 percent of Head Start teachers nationwide to have at least a bachelors degree by 2008. Provide incentives for states to maintain or expand funding for early childhood education. It also would shield Head Start and other early childhood education programs against state budget cuts and increase Head Start funding. The bill would

authorize a \$202 million increase in funding for Head Start – to \$6.87 billion, meaning Head Start funding will have nearly doubled in the past seven years. Funding for Head Start in FY 1996 was approximately \$3.8 billion. H.R. 2210 would ensure that each current Head Start center receives more money for the next five years than they received in 2003.

### **Other Possible Motions to go to Conference**

#### **Historical Tidbits**

##### **On July 15 ...**

**1870** - Georgia became the last of the Confederate states to be readmitted to the Union.

**1971** - U.S. President Nixon announced he would visit the People's Republic of China to seek a "normalization of relations."

##### **On July 16 ...**

**1790** - The District of Columbia, or Washington, DC, was established as the permanent seat of the United States Government.

**1969** - *Apollo 11* blasted off from Cape Kennedy, FL, and began the first manned mission to land on the moon.

##### **On July 17 ...**

**1862** - National cemeteries were authorized by the U.S. government.

**1975** - An *Apollo* spaceship docked with a *Soyuz* spacecraft in orbit. It was the first link up between the U.S. and Soviet Union.

##### **On July 18 ...**

**1947** - U.S. President Truman signed the Presidential Succession Act, which placed the Speaker of the House and the Senate President Pro Tempore next in the line of succession after the vice president.

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(Please do not respond to this e-mail. To send a message to Congressman Ehlers, please visit our website at <http://www.house.gov/ehlers> and click on "Write Your Rep.")