



Committees Announced, Only One Third Of Puri's Recs Honored

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Four hour-long press conferences and nearly the entire month of January later, House Speaker [Matt HALL \(R-Richland Township\)](#) unveiled today his final slate of committee assignments with partisan margins nearly identical to the majority/minority split last term.

However, only a third of House Minority Leader [Ranjeev PURI \(D-Canton\)](#)'s initial requests for his members were honored, with some Democratic members in politically competitive districts given tough assignments and outspoken progressives put on committees that don't exactly match their districts or skill sets.

For example, Rep. [Reggie MILLER \(D-Belleville\)](#), who won re-election by 696 votes, has to serve as the Governor's main line of defense as the minority vice chair of the House Oversight Committee, with Rep. [Jennifer CONLIN \(D-Ann Arbor\)](#) and [Denise MENTZER \(D-Mount Clemens\)](#) to join her on the Oversight bench. Conlin won re-election by 2,682 votes and Mentzer by 721.

Republicans in vulnerable seats were set up for success, such as Rep. [Rylee LINTING \(R-Wyandotte\)](#), whose committee assignments on Communications and Technology, Energy, and Regulatory Reform put her in a position to score corporate donations. Rep. [Kathy SCHMALTZ \(R-Jackson\)](#), who won by 1,712 votes, was given similar assignments – Energy, Health Policy and Communications & Technology. She's also chairing the Families and Veterans Committee. Rep. [Jamie THOMPSON \(R-Brownstown\)](#) is the majority vice chair of Health Policy. She's also on Energy, Families and Regulatory Reform.

Democrats who are perceived as agreeable to the Republicans fared well. Rep. [Angela WITWER \(D-Lansing\)](#) will be the minority vice chair of the new House Rules Committee.

Rep. [Tullio LIBERATI, JR. \(D-Allen Park\)](#) will be the minority vice chair of the House Regulatory Reform Committee. Rep. [Peter HERZBERG \(D-Westland\)](#) will be the minority vice chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. And Rep. [Karen WHITSETT \(D-Detroit\)](#) landed where she wanted to be as the ranking Democrat on Health Policy.

Last term, there were 7.7 majority members on standing committees on average and 4.6 minority members. This term, there are 7.6 majority members and 4.6 minority members, but many Democrats did not see their names where they were hoping on that list.

Rep. [Julie ROGERS \(D-Kalamazoo\)](#), last term's Health Policy chair, was recommended to be the committee's ranking Democrat this term, but she was not assigned to the committee.

However, she was assigned to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Medicaid and

Behavioral Health, and she said that the recent federal fund freeze would be on her mind during the budget-making process.

Rep. [Matt LONGJOHN \(D-Portage\)](#) was in a similar position, not being assigned to Health Policy despite his career in the medical field.

“I certainly wanted to be connected to health-related topics, but honestly, I’m just glad to be here,” Longjohn said.

Rep. [Phil SKAGGS \(D-Grand Rapids\)](#), who was vocal last week about asking a staffer of Hall’s to be fired for his social media posts, ended up with two committee assignments, neither of which he was recommended for. He’s on Agriculture and Communications.

When Skaggs’ ask was brought up to Hall, he said that it seemed like Skaggs was “unfocused” if he was spending that much time on social media, and that he would be taking that into consideration when making committee assignments.

“Looks like I’m going down in Michigan history as the first representative to be punished for criticizing Nazi Sieg Heil salutes. Look for it in next year’s ‘On This Day In Michigan History’ in *MIRS!*” Skaggs said.

Other Democratic members on the House Agriculture Committee include Reps. [Emily DIEVENDORF \(D-Lansing\)](#) and [Veronica PAIZ \(D-Harper Woods\)](#). Rep. [Julie BRIXIE \(D-Okemos\)](#), the House Democrats’ initial preference for minority vice chair of appropriations, was not put on the committee at all. She was given Energy and Economic Competitiveness.

Former House Speaker [Joe TATE \(D-Detroit\)](#) will be the minority vice chair of Energy and sit on Economic Competitiveness. He’ll sit on both committees with Rep. [Betsy COFFIA \(D-Traverse City\)](#), one of his stronger critics on social media last term.

All Democratic members were given at least two committees, Hall said.

Hall said multiple times in the month that he thinks Minority Leader [Ranjeev PURI \(D-Canton\)](#) was punishing his members with his committee recommendations – whether they were drafts or the final product. He also said that he received six revisions of Puri’s recommendations. Jess **TRIVERS**, the Democratic caucus spokesperson, said Puri did not send six other revised lists.

“No surprise that Speaker Hall is spreading mistruths - once again,” Travers said.

Yesterday during a press conference, Puri asked over 30 of his caucus’ members if they felt they were being punished, to which they all shouted “no.”

“What does it say about a leader that he has to reaffirm himself by doing that?” Hall said.

“When the press is there, and the leader’s looking at you, and it’s like ‘I’m gonna watch who says yes and no,’ that’s not how we work in our caucus,” Hall said.

Other appointments of note on the Republican side include Rep. [Rachelle SMIT \(R-Shelbyville\)](#), a former local clerk, being named the chair of the Election Integrity Committee. Rep. [Steve CARRA \(R-Three Rivers\)](#), a conservative firebrand, is chairing an Oversight subcommittee on corporate incentives. Another conservative firebrand, Rep. [Angela RIGAS \(R-Caledonia\)](#), is heading up the Weaponization of State Government as chair.

The only two freshmen to get chair positions were Rep. [Jason WOOLFORD \(R-Howell\)](#), who is chairing an Oversight subcommittee on state and local assistance programs, and Rep. [Ron ROBINSON \(R-Utica\)](#), who is chairing the Military and Veterans Affairs appropriations subcommittee.

Rep. [Mike MUELLER \(R-Linden\)](#), a former deputy, is chairing the Michigan State Police budget. The affable Rep. [Curt VANDERWALL \(R-Ludington\)](#) is chairing Health Policy, a committee he also chaired in the Senate. Rep. [Jerry NEYER \(R-Shepherd\)](#), who campaigned with a silhouette of a tractor on his campaign signs, is chairing Agriculture.

Rep. [Tim KELLY \(R-Saginaw\)](#), who chaired the K-12 Education Subcommittee during his prior terms in the House, is back as chair again. Rep. [Mark TISDEL \(R-Rochester\)](#), who made a career in the medical liability insurance arena, is chairing the Finance committee.

Rep. [Tom KUNSE \(R-Clare\)](#), who ran against Hall for leader, did not get a chairmanship. He is ranking vice chair on Communications and is also sitting on Education, Agriculture and Transportation. Rep. [James DESANA \(R-Carleton\)](#), the only Republican to criticize Hall during a flap last session about his girlfriend, is on four committees, but also didn't get a chairmanship.

Members were informed of their assignments with a letter dropped off at their desks this afternoon during session.

“I’m happy, it was like Christmas day on the House floor, so that was pretty cool. Everybody was like, ‘What’d you get? What’d you get?’” said Rep. [Alicia ST. GERMAINE \(R-Harrison Township\)](#).