

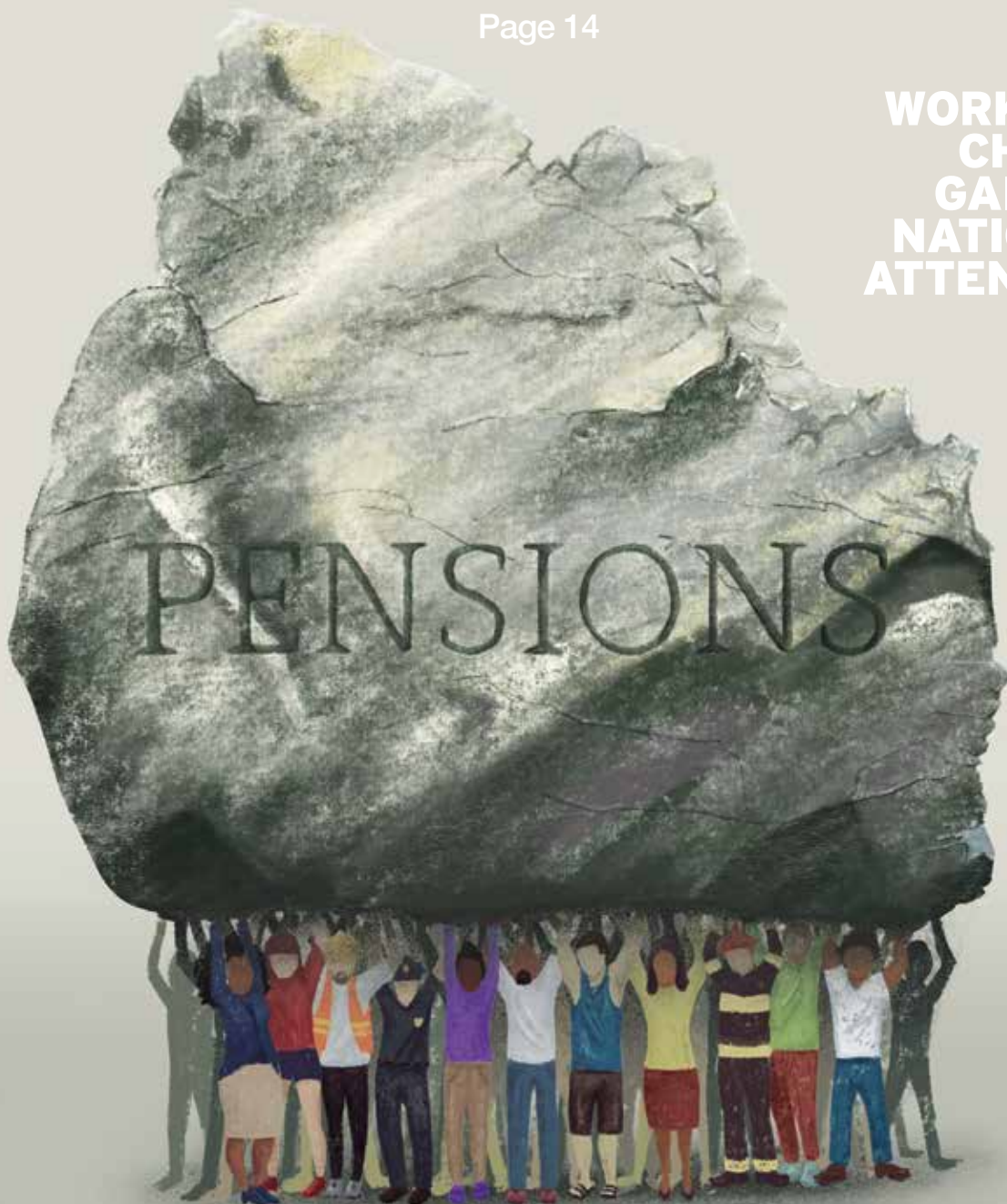
# IMPACT

## CLOSE PUBLIC PENSIONS TO PROTECT TAXPAYERS AND RETIREES

Page 14

WORKER'S  
CHOICE  
GAINING  
NATIONAL  
ATTENTION

Page 13





# 3 VOTESPOTTER Ways to Increase Your Influence!

## Learn.

1

Receive timely news and analysis on Facebook and Twitter:

**f** [Facebook.com/VoteSpotter](https://www.facebook.com/VoteSpotter)

**t** [Twitter.com/VoteSpotter](https://twitter.com/VoteSpotter)



## Discuss.

Connect with others in exploring issues that impact your daily lives. Join the conversation at:

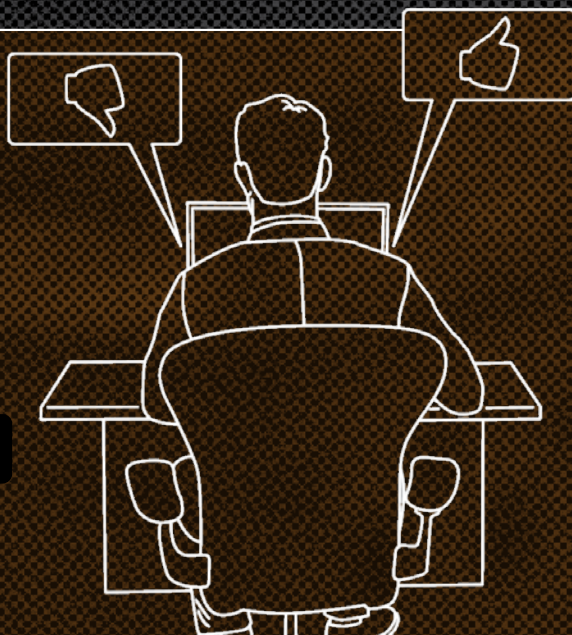
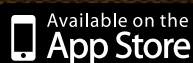
**[VoteSpotter.com/Community](https://www.votespotter.com/community)**

2

## Engage.

3

Hold your elected officials accountable. Sign up to compare your votes with their votes on your phone or desktop:





# Explore this issue

- |    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| 4  | Seven Principles of Sound Governance  | 12 | Mackinac Center's Work Softens Impact of Pro-spending Education Study     |
| 5  | Mackinac Center Educates Lawmakers on the Burdens of Occupational Licensing | 13 | Worker's Choice Gaining National Attention                                |
| 6  | Interview with a Supporter<br>This issue: Ed and Elyse Rogers               | 14 | Close Public Pensions to Protect Taxpayers and Retirees                   |
| 7  | What Makes States Rich or Poor?   | 15 | CapCon Report Provokes Outrage in Norton Shores                           |
| 7  | Celebrating the Impact of Milton Friedman                                   | 16 | Working in Detroit  |
| 8  | Introducing: the Environmental Policy Initiative                            | 18 | Survey: Schools Satisfied as Support Service Contracting Hits Record High |
| 9  | Introducing: the Criminal Justice Initiative                                | 19 | Life and Liberty<br>The Difference Between a Setback and an Opportunity   |
| 10 | Slow FOIA Response in Flint Crisis Shows Needs for More Open Government     | 20 | I'm an Ambassador for Liberty   |
| 11 | Blown Away<br>State's 21st Jobs Fund Fails to Deliver                       |    |   |

 **JARRETT SKORUP RECOMMENDS** "FREE-RANGE KIDS" BY LENORE SKENAZY

Complaints abound about "kids these days" being too obese, watching too much TV, playing too many video games and not doing as many outdoor activities as previous generations. In her book "Free-Range Kids: Giving Our Children the Freedom We Had Without Going Nuts With Worry," journalist Lenore Skenazy raises an interesting point: What if the problem isn't with kids, but parents? Objective measures show that children are far safer today than they've been for decades: Violent crime, automobile accidents and deaths by fire, poisoning and drowning are down substantially. Other common fears, like kidnapping, are extremely rare. And pull back on worrying this Halloween — despite wide reports, strangers have never poisoned candy. But parents are more worried than ever, causing them to stop their kids from riding bikes, going to the park and interacting with peers. As the parent of a 3- and 1-year-old, I can understand the draw toward worry and helicopter parenting. But the world is, in fact, getting safer. If you want your children to grow up to be independent and courageous, focus on the few things you can control that make sense — and let them play.

FROM  
THE  
WEB

## Blog

Keep up to date on the latest policy stories from Mackinac Center analysts.

**Mackinac.org/blog**

## MichiganVotes

Want to know what your legislator (and others) have been voting for?

MichiganVotes.org helps keep Michigan politicians accountable to their constituents.

**MichiganVotes.org**

## CapCon

Our flagship news source for the state of Michigan. Breaking news like never before.

**MichCapCon.com**

## Databases

Labor contracts, superintendent salaries, school grading and more. Our online databases provide easy access to important information.

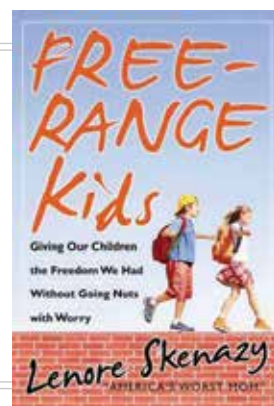
**Mackinac.org/databases**



WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING  
ABOUT THE MACKINAC CENTER

**"[A new] report identified ... think tanks like the Freedom Foundation and the Mackinac Center as key players in the drive to eliminate [union-funded] programs, especially at public colleges and universities."**

— Labornotes.org



*Joseph G. Lehman*

# Seven Principles of Sound Governance

Right principles should be backed by right actions. Public policies express the social, ethical and economic principles upon which laws are based. Governance is the act of governing, or using force, shared values or personal traits, or some combination of the three, to cause people to do certain things. Without both good public policy and good governance — principles backed by action — officials cannot govern well.

Mackinac Center supporter Jim Rodney asked me to set forth principles of governance along the lines of a great essay by President Emeritus Lawrence Reed called “Seven Principles of Sound Public Policy.” I first rolled them out at a “Friends of Liberty” dinner hosted by another supporter, and Jim’s friend, Sheldon Rose of Bloomfield Hills.

I chose seven governing actions that policymakers must perform if they hope to govern well, no matter what policy they pursue or party they prefer. Here they are in short form.

**1. Tell the truth.** Be honest in and out of season. Don’t condemn dishonesty in political opponents while conveniently overlooking it among allies. Tell the truth in one’s own dealings and also about the dealings of government, even when the truth is not what people want to hear. Be honest about how much things cost and who will pay. Don’t cherry-pick data to justify pet projects.

**2. Be faithful and fair.** Start with fidelity to the U.S. and state constitutions and to the oath of office. Don’t appeal to exotic interpretations of those documents to justify ambitious laws. Expect government to call balls and strikes but not to stretch the strike zone for some players and shrink it for others. Protect people’s rights to earn a living, speak their minds, support their causes and worship their God, if they can do so peacefully.

**JOSEPH G. LEHMAN**

**3. Embrace accountability and insist on it.** This means accountability of the government to the people, not the other way around. If an audit of a government agency turns up problems, responsible parties are held to account and the problems are fixed. No more toothless laws and no-fault audits. There is no such thing as a violation of government privacy, although some public officials would violate people’s privacy under the banner of “transparency.” Transparency is for government; privacy is for people.

**4. Respect the governed and respect the government.** Read the bills. Don’t skip votes. Explain why votes are in accord with the constitution and the public interest. Help constituents navigate labyrinthine government programs if the unnecessary ones cannot be eliminated altogether. Make government worthy of respect.

**5. Govern with humility.** Acknowledge the boundaries government should not cross. Accept the limits of government action. Judge laws by their effects, not their intentions. Do not send government on errands for which it is ill-equipped.

**6. Serve the governed, not the systems and people of government.** Put principles before politics, before party, before personality and before personal gain. Evaluate policies by their effects on all people, not just those in government and with disproportionate influence over it.

**7. Acknowledge the nature of government, and of man.** It is the nature of government to grow, and it is the nature of government to use force to accomplish its purposes. It is the nature of man to respond to incentives, and also to misbehave. If men were angels, there would be no need for government. If government were run by angels, we would have no need to limit government.

We won’t have good government without people who practice these principles. But I also believe we can be well-governed if we do. ■

## Board of Directors

**Hon. Clifford W. Taylor,**  
**Chairman**  
Retired Chief Justice,  
Michigan Supreme Court

**Joseph G. Lehman, President**  
Mackinac Center for  
Public Policy

**Dulce M. Fuller**  
Owner, Woodward and  
Maple

**Daniel J. Graf**  
Chief Investment Officer,  
Amerisure Mutual  
Holdings, Inc.

**Richard G. Haworth**  
Chairman Emeritus,  
Haworth, Inc.

**Kent B. Herrick**  
President and CEO,  
Thermogy

**J.C. Huizenga**  
President, Westwater  
Group

**Edward C. Levy Jr.**  
President, Edw. C.  
Levy Co.

**Rodney M. Lockwood Jr.**  
President, Lockwood  
Construction Company,  
Inc.

**Joseph P. Maguire**  
President,  
Wolverine Development  
Corporation

**Richard D. McLellan**  
Attorney, McLellan Law  
Offices

**D. Joseph Olson**  
Retired Senior Vice  
President and General  
Counsel, Amerisure  
Companies

## Board of Scholars

**Dr. Donald Alexander**  
Western Michigan  
University

**Dr. William Allen**  
Michigan State  
University

**Dr. Thomas Bertonneau**  
SUNY - Oswego

**Dr. Brad Birzer**  
Hillsdale College

**Dr. Peter Boettke**  
George Mason  
University

**Dr. Theodore Bolema**  
Mercatus Center

**Dr. Michael Clark**  
Hillsdale College

**Dr. Stephen Colarelli**  
Central Michigan  
University

**Dr. Dan Crane**  
University of Michigan  
Law School

**Dr. Chris Douglas**  
University of Michigan  
- Flint

**Dr. Jefferson Edgens**  
Thomas University

**Dr. Ross Emmett**  
Michigan State  
University

**Sarah Estelle**  
Hope College

**Dr. David Felbeck**  
University of Michigan  
(ret.)

**Dr. Burton Folsom**  
Hillsdale College

**John Grether**  
Northwood University

**Dr. Michael Heberling**  
Baker College

**Dr. David Hebert**  
Troy University

**Dr. Michael Hicks**  
Ball State University

**Dr. Ormand Hook**  
Mecosta-Osceola ISD

**Robert Hunter**  
Mackinac Center for  
Public Policy

**Prof. Harry Hutchison**  
George Mason  
University School of Law

**Dr. David Janda**  
Institute for Preventative  
Sports Medicine

**Annette Kirk**  
Russell Kirk Center

**David Littmann**  
Mackinac Center for  
Public Policy

**Dr. Dale Matcheck**  
Northwood University

**Charles Meiser**  
Lake Superior  
State University (ret.)

**Dr. Glenn Moots**  
Northwood University

**Dr. George Nastas III**  
Marketing Consultants

**Dr. Todd Nesbit**  
Ohio State University

**Dr. John Pafford**  
Northwood University  
(ret.)

**Dr. Mark Perry**  
University of Michigan  
- Flint

**Lawrence W. Reed**  
Foundation for  
Economic Education

**Gregory Rehmke**  
Economic Thinking/  
E Pluribus Unum Films

**Dr. Steve Safranek**  
Private Sector  
General Counsel

**Dr. Howard Schwartz**  
Oakland University

**Dr. Martha Seger**  
Federal Reserve Board  
(ret.)

**James Sheehan**  
Deutsche Bank  
Securities

**Rev. Robert Sirico**  
Acton Institute

**Dr. Bradley Smith**  
Capital University Law  
School

**Dr. John Taylor**  
Wayne State University

**Dr. Richard K. Vedder**  
Ohio University

**Prof. Harry Veryser Jr.**  
University of Detroit  
Mercy

**John Walter Jr.**  
Dow Corning  
Corporation (ret.)

**Dr. William T. Wilson**  
The Heritage Foundation

**Mike Winther**  
Institute for Principle  
Studies

**Dr. Gary Wolfram**  
Hillsdale College

140 West Main Street, P.O. Box 568

Midland, Michigan 48640

989-631-0900, Fax 989-631-0964

[www.mackinac.org](http://www.mackinac.org) [mcpp@mackinac.org](mailto:mcpp@mackinac.org)

**IMPACT** is published six times a year by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt research and educational institute classified under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

GENEVA RUPPERT Editor

ILIA ANDERSON Designer

|                             |                             |  |                               |                            |                                     |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Acupuncture                 | Cosmetologists              | Fire Alarm Specialty Technician Apprentice | Marriage and Family Therapist | purely Michigan grown)     | Property Manager (If self-employed) | Solar Heating Installer             |
| Adjuster for the Insured    | Cosmetology instructor      | Fire Suppression Installation              | Masonry                       | Nursery Grower             | Psychology                          | Specialist/AEMT                     |
| Airport Manager             | Counseling                  | Firefighter Training Instructor II         | Massage Therapy               | Nursing                    | Real Estate Appraisers              | Speech-Language Pathology           |
| Animal Control Officers     | Counselor (Insurance)       | Foresters                                  | Master Electrician            | Nursing Home Administrator | Real Estate Brokers                 | Stationary Engineer 1st             |
| Architects                  | Court Reporter              | Funeral Directors                          | Mechanic                      | Occupational Therapy       | Registered Dental Assistant         | Stationary Engineer 2nd             |
| Athletic Trainers           | Dental Specialty License    | Guidance Counselor                         | Mechanical Contractor         | Optometry                  | Registered Dental Hygienist         | Stationary Engineer 3rd             |
| Audiologist                 | Dentistry                   |  | Mechanical Inspector          | Osteopathic Physician      | Registered Nursery Dealer           | Stockbroker                         |
| Bail Bondsmen               | Driver Education Instructor |  |                               | Paramedic                  | Residential Builder Salesperson     | Substance Abuse Counselor           |
| Barbers                     | Electrical Apprentice       |  |                               | Personal Trainer           | Residential Builders                | Swimming Pools                      |
| Basement Waterproofing      | Electrical Contractor       |  |                               | Pharmacy Technician        | Respiratory Therapist               | Taxi Drivers                        |
| Boiler Inspector            | Electrical Inspector        |  |                               | Pharmacy Technician        | Roofing                             | Teacher                             |
| Boiler Installer            | Electrical Journeyman       |  |                               | Physician Assistant        | Sampler                             | Tile and Marble                     |
| Boiler Operator             | Electrologist               |  |                               | Plumber (Journeyman)       | Sanitarian                          | Towing Service                      |
| Boiler Repairer             | Electrology instructor      |  |                               | Plumber (Master)           | School Bus Driver                   | Truck Driver                        |
| Building Inspector/Official | Elevator Contractor         |  |                               | Plumbing Contractor        | Screen & Storm Sash                 | Used Vehicle Dealer (Class B)       |
| Butter Grader               | Elevator Inspector          |  |                               | Plumbing Inspector         | Securities Agent                    | Used Vehicle Parts Dealer (Class C) |
| Carpentry                   | Elevator Journeyperson      |  |                               | Police Officer             | Security Guards                     | Vehicle Wholesaler (Class W)        |
| Certified Field Person      | EMT                         |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Service Person                      | Veterinary Medicine                 |
| Certified Public Accountant | Engineer                    |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Sewage Plant Operator               | Veterinary Technician               |
| Chauffeur                   | Esthetician                 |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Sign Specialist                     | Water Operators                     |
| Child Care Provider         | Excavation                  |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Sign Specialist                     | Well Pump Installer/Well Driller    |
| Chiropractic                | Excavation                  |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Sign Specialist                     |                                     |
| Collection Practitioners    | Excavation                  |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Sign Specialist                     |                                     |
| Commercial Driver           | Excavation                  |  |                               | Sign Specialist            | Sign Specialist                     |                                     |



# Mackinac Center Educates Lawmakers on the Burdens of Occupational Licensing

Since the country's founding in 1776, Americans have held that the pursuit of happiness is an unalienable right. Understood correctly, a fundamental aspect of one's pursuit of happiness is the ability to freely pursue a profession without unnecessary restraints imposed by the government.

But American legislators have increasingly abandoned this principle, at least when it comes to occupational licensing laws. These mandates, enacted by state governments, hinder tens of millions of men and women from their pursuit of a job and a better life.

In at least 163 different Michigan occupations, people must get permission from the government to conduct business legally. To acquire this permission, an individual must complete tedious education and training requirements, take time-consuming tests, and pay expensive fees.

Consider a handyman who wants to earn extra money for his family. To paint professionally, he must acquire a maintenance and alteration contractor license. This requires 60 credit hours of education (approximately \$600), taking a test (\$90) and paying for the license itself (\$205). So before he even begins working, the handyman must spend almost \$900, not including the actual startup costs for his business.

A report commissioned by the Obama administration titled "Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policy Makers" concluded, "The costs of licensing fall disproportionately on certain populations." These populations include military families, low-income workers and ex-convicts. Consequently, occupational licensing laws inhibit these groups from providing for their families and becoming productive members of society.

These laws also hurt consumers. When government artificially increases the barrier of entry to an occupation, fewer people join it, which reduces competition and creates a higher demand for people already on the job. Due to reduced competition and higher demand, prices begin to rise. While this raises the wages for these workers, their services cost consumers more than they would otherwise willingly pay.

This phenomenon is not isolated to handymen. As the federal report said, "more restrictive State licensing of nurse practitioners raises the price of a well-child medical exam by 3 to 16 percent, and imposing greater licensing requirements on dental hygienists and assistants increases the average price of a dental visit by 7 to 11 percent." A study by University of Minnesota Professor Morris M. Kleiner agreed. It said, "standard economic models imply that the restrictions from

occupational licensing can result in up to 2.85 million fewer jobs nationwide, with an annual cost to consumers of \$203 billion." Occupational licensing is an overlooked burden on the American economy. Under the guise of promoting safety, it has quickly engulfed many industries throughout Michigan. Those who lobby for these licenses are typically those already within the occupation. They benefit from keeping their future competitors out of the market and so have an incentive to favor restrictions. Those who suffer most – the consumer and future workers in the affected industry – have little say about the legislation because they are typically unaware of the consequences.

The Mackinac Center is working to raise awareness of this issue. For years, we have published news articles and commentaries to bring attention to licensing. We are now stepping up our efforts by putting together a comprehensive study that will focus on arbitrary rules that have a disproportionate effect on Michiganders compared to residents of other states. Our staff has hosted events and met with legislators on both sides of the political aisle to share this research. Reducing burdensome, unnecessary occupational regulations will enhance job opportunities for all citizens while increasing competition and lowering prices for consumers. ■





Ed and Elyse Rogers present Mackinac Center president Joseph Lehman with a letter from Milton Friedman at Friedman Legacy Day.

## Interview with a Supporter

Each July for the last ten years, the Mackinac Center has hosted Friedman Legacy Day to honor the accomplishments and theories of the late economist on (or near) his birthday.

July 30, 2016, saw the last Friedman Legacy Day, and we were thrilled to mark it by receiving a letter written by Milton Friedman himself.

In 1987, Ed Rogers, then the president of Dow Chemical in Japan, wrote a letter to Friedman about the trade imbalance between the United States and Japan. "The question is not whether it's easy [to solve the trade imbalance] but whether it's important," Friedman wrote in his reply. "Trade imbalances are political problems, not economic problems."

Friedman closed the letter by advising Rogers to "reinforce your own faith in free and open trade. It is the correct one." Rogers and his wife, Elyse, continued to do just that, even more so a few years later when they began supporting the Mackinac Center.

The Rogers lived in Japan for the better part of a decade while Ed worked there for Dow, and say they loved it — the food was wonderful, the country safe and beautiful. They appreciated the traditional approach to society and that business wasn't vilified. But Michigan was always home. "The worst part about Michigan is the winter," said Ed. "And the best part about Michigan is also the winter, because otherwise, everyone would want to live here!"

During their time in Midland and Japan, they raised three daughters, all of whom have gone on to great accomplishments. The Rogers women have earned multiple scholarships, including a Fulbright and a historic full-ride to Indiana University for athletics. One followed in her father's footsteps to a vice presidency at Dow, and another became the first foreign-born woman to be named to the board of a Japanese company. There are also three grandchildren in the mix.

Today, the Rogers are retired. Thanks in part to Elyse's experience with the Dow Foundation, the family has started a small foundation of their own, supporting the causes they believe in, especially educational institutions. Elyse says her favorite part about the foundation is the way it brings the family together every year at Thanksgiving when they all discuss its future.

While the U.S. is home to the Rogers, they find fault with many of its policies. Ed laments the national government's insistence on taxing all U.S. citizens, even those in other countries, causing damages and difficulties he dealt with when living abroad. He believes the country is blessed but making bad decisions.

Milton Friedman's words continue to inspire the Rogers as they support the Mackinac Center. Ed says he wants "less government, but not no government," and appreciates the Center's willingness to mitigate state overreach. ■

# What Makes States Rich or Poor?

The Mackinac Center co-hosted an event Aug. 16 with the American Legislative Exchange Council titled “Rich States, Poor States,” which is also the title of a book on economic policy.

About 50 people heard Jonathan Williams, one of the co-authors of the report, discuss state public policies and how they affect the economic well-being of people and the states they live in. The report also looks at the economic incentives people face to move to or from a state. Williams, along with Arthur Laffer of “Laffer curve” fame and economist Stephen Moore first published the book in 2007 and have updated it annually.

The book features an index designed to measure the past economic performance of all 50 states and rank their economic forecasts. The index is made up of

15 variables that measure how states use different policies, including the top marginal tax rates and whether a state has a right-to-work law. Michigan’s rank has improved over time but is still a middling 22nd of 50.

Williams said that the differences between the economic prospects of the top 20 and bottom 20 states are stark and probably not a coincidence. He zeroed in on state-to-state migration. He mentioned that people are moving to three states ranked high in the index: No. 2 North Carolina, No. 8 Florida and No. 12 Texas. At the same time, people are moving out of three states that are ranked low: No. 50 New York, No. 46 California and No. 43 Illinois.

Recent research by the Mackinac Center using Internal Revenue Service data showed Florida and Texas as the top destination states for people leaving

Michigan’s three most populated counties of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb.

The takeaway from the event was that state policy matters to economic performance. Good policies create opportunity-oriented states that attract people along with their talent and money. ■



Jonathan Williams discusses state public policies at a recent event in Traverse City.

## CELEBRATING THE IMPACT OF MILTON FRIEDMAN



On July 29, two days before what would have been Milton Friedman’s 104th birthday, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and the Northwood University Forum for Citizenship & Enterprise joined hundreds of organizations around the country to celebrate the life and legacy of the late Nobel Prize-winning economist.

For the tenth anniversary of the celebration, the Mackinac Center and Northwood invited Dr. Christopher Douglas to speak at a luncheon in Midland, Michigan. Douglas is an associate professor in the department of economics at the University of Michigan-Flint and a member of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy Board of Scholars.

The luncheon began with a presentation of a letter written by Friedman and donated to the Center by the Rogers family. Douglas followed with a presentation that he called “The Lasting Contributions of Milton Friedman.” While Friedman’s most popular contributions to public debate include school

choice and tax reform, Douglas discussed the works for which he received the Nobel Prize: the permanent income hypothesis, monetary economics and the expectations-augmented Phillips curve.

The permanent income hypothesis directly opposed the prominent Keynesian idea that people make consumption decisions based on their current income. Friedman, instead, asserted that people make purchases based on how much they expect to earn.

He also made a mark in monetary policy. His book “A Monetary History of the United States” sparked major change in the economics community. Finally, his work on the Phillips curve disputed the conventional

wisdom of the day that governments can manipulate the economy to produce full employment with low inflation.

Milton Friedman’s labor laid the foundation for much of the freedom movement. Today, think tanks and activists, including the Mackinac Center, still use his work to argue for limited government. ■



Dr. Christopher Douglas presents on Milton Friedman’s contributions to economic theory and public policy.



# Introducing

## the ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INITIATIVE



Jason Hayes is the director of environmental policy at the Mackinac Center.

"Michigan's environment has dramatically improved since the 1970s, when foundational environmental statutes were enacted by the state and federal governments. ... There could have been even greater improvement at far less cost — both economic and social — had policymakers foregone centralized regulatory control

in favor of the transformative powers of market incentives and private property rights. But it is not too late for change."

Building on these opening words in the **Environment Policy Initiative Blueprint**, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy will encourage free-market-focused changes as we create an outline for developing, managing and protecting Michigan's environment and energy resources.

The **Environment Policy Initiative** will focus on key energy and environmental issues that hold the public's interest. We will answer important questions about environmental and energy policy in Michigan. For example,

- What are the unique geographical, environmental and economic features Michigan possesses?
- What natural advantages do those features give to Michigan over other states?
- How can we make the most of those advantages to promote a balance of environmental health and economic vigor?

- How can we improve or make Michigan's environment and energy regulations more efficient?
  - Are there areas of overlap in agencies' jurisdictions?
  - Do regulations not meet their stated goals?
  - Are regulations overly burdensome, or do they act as a disincentive to business?
  - Are there areas of regulation that are insufficient and need improvements?

Some areas where Michigan has a clear natural advantage include:

- Water resources — across the entire Great Lakes Basin
- Wildlife and fisheries resources
- Forest resources
- Energy production, development and storage
- Opportunities to expand competition in electricity markets
- Recreational opportunities

The **Environment Policy Initiative** will provide research and resources that show how free markets and the protection of property rights can promote development and job creation while maintaining a clean and healthy natural environment.

However, research on its own is not enough to encourage the development of free-market-based policies. The other essential part of this initiative will be to tell the stories of the people who live, work and recreate in Michigan. It will show how policies promoting liberty, property rights and free enterprise can improve their lives, create new jobs and improve environmental health.

Michigan's citizens expect the freedom to work and recreate in a safe and clean environment. It will be the work of the **Environment Policy Initiative** at the Mackinac Center to help lay out a pathway for the state to achieve those expectations. ■



# Introducing

## the CRIMINAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE



Kahryn Riley is a policy analyst at the Mackinac Center.

### **Reform is a Cause for Lovers of Liberty**

The Mackinac Center's vision is for all people to enjoy liberty and prosperity. And there is no institution where these ideals are more visibly at stake than the criminal justice system. As our executive vice president observed last year, "The state's most effective and fearsome power is the ability to penalize

a person for crimes committed. Thus the manner in which the state administers that responsibility is a fundamental issue of liberty."

It's an issue of prosperity, too. Michigan spends a lot of money enforcing laws and punishing crime, dedicating nearly \$300 million to our judiciary, \$658 million to the state police and \$2 billion to the Department of Corrections this year. So the Center has launched a new initiative to examine Michigan's approach to criminal justice and to find cost-effective strategies that make our state freer and safer.

Criminal justice issues are not new to the Center; we published our first civil asset forfeiture study in 1998 and have recently published papers on the cost of corrections,

over-criminalization, criminal intent reform and forfeiture. This work is timely, in light of the many reforms being called for by stakeholders and politicians on both sides of the aisle.

The growing bipartisanship around this issue presents an important opportunity for us to forge partnerships with unlikely allies. For example, we have worked with the ACLU of Michigan on civil asset forfeiture, and we expect to continue that relationship and forge new ones as we delve into related issues. Partnerships like these are good for the Mackinac Center. More importantly, they're good for the people of Michigan.

Although our motivations for criminal justice reform are different from those of our more liberal colleagues, we assume that all of us are doing our best to help Michiganders address a basic human question about right and wrong. And over the coming months, unifying these diverse perspectives will lead us to more effective solutions and better outcomes for offenders, victims and communities.

Times are tough. The tragic violence our nation has experienced this summer has reinforced a widely held sense that the United States has become hopelessly polarized. So any time we find common ground, we should use it as a foundation for rebuilding trust and respect. We hope that when it comes to more divisive problems, we will all be able to reflect on this collaboration and remember to keep the same presumption of good will and good work that we enjoy in this space. ■





# Slow FOIA Response in Flint Crisis Shows Needs for More Open Government

The dominant news story of the year has been the Flint water crisis, where drinking water was contaminated by lead after anti-corrosion chemicals weren't applied to the system. This has resulted in the declaration of a state emergency as well as a federal one, hundreds of millions of dollars being sent to Flint, several investigations and lawsuits, a series of resignations and firings and nine criminal indictments.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality monitors water quality in the state. Early this year, even before the attorney general filed criminal charges against some state workers, Michiganders found out that several employees in the department were transferred. It was clear that the department had determined some of its employees were at least partially responsible or had acted wrongly.

The Mackinac Center was interested in finding out what happened. Nobody knew much about the employees. What had they done and what was their punishment? Was the state going through the difficult process of trying to fire the workers? Or was it merely transferring them to another area in state government?

On March 30, we sent a Freedom of Information Act request to ask for certain

email messages from two employees — those that mentioned the word “lead.” We also asked for documentation of any workers who were transferred, reassigned, or suspended because of the Flint water issue.

The department took the maximum extension allowed by law, 15 business days, and then requested payment of \$114. After we paid that amount, the department told us — though the document search would only take a few hours — the request would not be fulfilled until July 29. So a request that would typically take a few weeks took a full four months.

We realize that this crisis is a huge burden on the department and that it is responding to many requests for information. But people have a right to transparency, even if it inconveniences a government agency. And if the decision to wait an arbitrary amount of time can stand, nothing stops public entities across the state from doing the same.

Michigan law says citizens “are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees.” We send out hundreds of FOIA requests each year, and in most cases, agencies respond within 15 business days. Even so, the court should establish a hard, reasonable deadline for

government entities to hand over public information. And if the court doesn't do so, the Legislature should clarify the law.

This is just one of several areas where legislators should enhance government transparency. Other bills in the Legislature subject Michigan's executive and legislative branches to the state's FOIA law. Michigan's official agency in charge of economic development programs has handed out billions of dollars in select tax credits. But for the past few years, it has not released the names of the companies receiving the funds.

Transparency is often a partisan issue for politicians. Most presidents, governors and even local township officials promise that they'll be transparent. President George W. Bush said that the federal government would “reinforce fundamental values like transparency and rule of law.” President Barack Obama called for “an unprecedented level of openness in government.” When both men were seen as failing to live up to these slogans, they were criticized extensively by their political opponents and typically defended by their allies.

But for us, transparency in government is not a partisan issue. Regardless of which political party is in office, the Mackinac Center will continue to push for a more open government. ■

Jarrett Skorup is a policy analyst at the Mackinac Center.

**JARRETT  
SKORUP**



# BLOWN AWAY

## State's 21st Century Jobs Fund Fails to Deliver

After a decade of testing and more than \$1 billion in spending, why can't Michigan's 21st Century Jobs Fund demonstrate that it has been successful in creating jobs in the 21st Century? This is a lesson for lawmakers as they are tempted to spend more taxpayer dollars on business projects.

Gov. Rick Snyder recently created the Build the 21st Century Economy Commission, with the hope that it will develop a "vision of Michigan's economic future." Its work should look first at what happened with older job creation projects.

Michigan residents in 2005 were feeling left out of national economic recovery after being hit hard by the 2001 recession. The state had lost a net of 285,800 jobs and they were not being replaced. State politicians — Republican and Democrat alike — felt like they needed to do something to create jobs.

What they came up with was the 21st Century Jobs Fund, \$1 billion to spend on improving the economy. They agreed

that the industries of the future were in life sciences, advanced automotive manufacturing and materials technology, homeland security and alternative energy. In addition, the state was going to partner with investment funds to start new projects, and perhaps even make a little profit from financing young companies. Then-Gov. Jennifer Granholm famously promised that we'd be "blown away" by the program's success.

It was a bad idea from the start. Selecting business projects that will take off and employ people is a difficult task, even for people risking

their own money. It's far more difficult for politicians spending other people's money.

The 21st Century Jobs Fund immediately became a political football and needed special earmarks to ensure its passage. Logging wasn't exactly what lawmakers had in mind as the jobs of the future, but the Michigan Forest Finance Authority received millions of dollars anyway. The tourism industry, likewise, was deemed part of the state's plan for the economic future and it, too, required a payoff.

While the jobs fund was never setup to succeed, lawmakers kept changing their minds about what it was supposed to do. They originally thought that the state's economic development boards would decide where to allocate the \$75 million per year available from the fund, but decided not long afterward that they would rather determine the allocations themselves. The statutes guiding the fund have changed 19 times, providing inconsistent guidance to annual spending.

Reporting on the program was atrocious. Lawmakers tried, though. They required some information to be disclosed — how taxpayer dollars were being used, who was getting them and how many jobs would be created, among other things. But the program administrators rarely shared this data, even when it was required by statute. Lawmakers have not yet asserted their mandate to the bureaucrats managing the program, but they ought to.

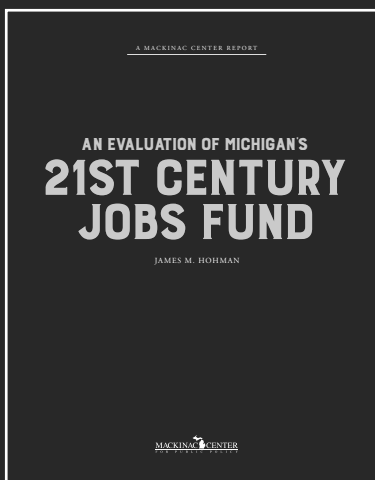
Yet additional transparency would only show that the program does not have the right strategy in the first place. The state is constantly adding and losing jobs. In the most recent quarter, 218,548 jobs were created and 192,282 jobs were lost. That is a turnover of around one out of every 16 jobs. In contrast, the 21st Century Jobs Fund claims it helped create roughly 5,000 jobs created over the 10-year life of its programs. Michigan has created plenty of jobs in the 21st century, but few of them came from the 21st Century Jobs Fund.

State policy cannot improve the economy by picking a handful of winners and luring them with money paid by everyone else. In contrast, broad-based reforms improve the business climate for all. ■

James Hohman is assistant director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center.

JAMES  
HOHMAN

Read the Mackinac Center's new study on the 21st Century Jobs Fund online at [mackinac.org/s2016-05](http://mackinac.org/s2016-05)



# Mackinac Center's Work Softens Impact of Pro-spending Education Study

The summer release of Michigan's adequacy study was supposed to fuel the case for a major increase in school funding, as similar studies have done in other states. But any momentum for a lawsuit or legislative action was lost in the study's dense pages.

**BEN  
DEGROW**

The \$399,000 taxpayer-funded report from the Colorado-based firm Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) buried the lead. The large price tag found in most adequacy studies the firm has done for other states was omitted from the recommendations for Michigan. A state agency released the study in late June with little fanfare or guidance for lawmakers.

Reporters were left to piece together the proposal and the reasoning behind it. At the Mackinac Center, our team was prepared to help them do their homework by highlighting key points and omissions in the study and comparing it with the results of our work.

It was easy for people to latch onto \$8,667, the "base per pupil" funding level APA recommended. It was generated from an analysis of 54 Michigan school districts deemed "notably successful." The report's analysts estimated the cost of educating each student enrolled in a public school, and then added funds for low-income or special education students.

The study gave the Center an opportunity to explain how a school district's foundation allowance, the most commonly reported number in school finance, represents only a part of school spending. (In 2014-15, schools spent on average more than \$11,000 from all sources on each student.)

Some of the study's own observations and conclusions undermined the case for an aggressive school funding increase. I repeatedly highlighted the fact that 19 of the 54 successful districts spent an average of 10 percent less than the amount the study recommended. Someone had to challenge its attempt to brush aside these districts' more efficient approach. If not us, who?

Our earlier research had already cast reasonable doubt on the solution that status quo interests called for and anticipated from the study. Days before the study's scheduled March 31 release date (later delayed to June 27), the Mackinac Center published the results of its rigorous, multiyear, building-level analysis.

My co-author Edward Hoang and I found no connection between increased spending and better performance on 27 out of 28 different academic indicators.

While APA's adequacy study claimed more confidence than we have in the relationship between spending and achievement, its results deflated hopes that more money would overcome Michigan's flagging educational performance. APA found that every additional \$1,000 spent per pupil would lead to a 1 percent gain in proficiency on state tests. At that rate, doubling state funding to K-12 education would not be enough to ensure even one-third of the state's 11th-graders met the mark in math.

The Center for Michigan's Bridge magazine published a story on the study, featuring the weak return on investment as one of its three big "head-scratchers." The magazine estimated that it would take an extra \$100,000 to enable one student to achieve at grade level. Senior writer Ron French aptly observed that such calculations would "be used like a club by budget hawks in Lansing every time an education advocate brings up the adequacy study as a reason to increase school funding."

Detroit Free Press editor Stephen Henderson lamented that the adequacy study "landed with the force of a feather on desks in Lansing." Like Henderson, most observers could conclude that lawmakers would find nothing in the report to compel drastic changes in the state's financing system.

The response from Gov. Snyder's office was "that a more equitable funding system is needed and more needs to be done to measure education funding and outcomes." While some points of the APA study may merit consideration, the push for more money didn't resonate. Only a day earlier, the governor signed into law the latest school aid budget bill, based on a 1.8 percent increase. The budget also continued the trend of giving lower-funded school districts larger increases in the foundation allowance than other districts.

A push to turbocharge taxpayer funding for Michigan schools may have run out of gas. The time has come to leave this misguided detour and get back on the road of more serious discussions about education reforms. ■

Ben DeGrow is director of education policy at the Mackinac Center.

Read the Mackinac Center's new study on school spending online at [mackinac.org/s2016-02](http://mackinac.org/s2016-02)







## WORKER'S CHOICE GAINING NATIONAL ATTENTION

On September 7th Rep. Gary Glenn, R-Midland, introduced House Bill 5829 to bring Worker's Choice to Michigan. Worker's Choice is a solution first championed by F. Vincent Vernuccio, director of labor policy for the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and is quickly gaining national attention. It would allow workers to represent themselves in right-to-work states and relieve unions of having to represent workers who don't pay them.

In August, Worker's Choice played a role in National Employee Freedom Week, a collaborative effort of more than 100 organizations dedicated to informing employees about their rights to stay in or leave a union.

A national survey conducted by the campaign's sponsors found that nearly 67 percent of union members support Worker's Choice. In Michigan, the number was over 70 percent.

Vernuccio served as a national spokesman for the effort and was quoted by several publications around the country. He appeared in a video hosted by The Wall Street Journal's Opinion Journal, to talk about the survey and Worker's Choice. Mary Kissel, host for the Journal, ended her interview by saying "Worker's Choice, sounds like common sense to me."

The Hill published an op-ed co-authored by Vernuccio with Mackinac Center Adjunct Scholar Jeremy Lott. By the end of National Employee Freedom Week, the article garnered over 1,100 comments.

Politico noted Worker's Choice is a new idea that is untested in the courts. It said that popular support for the idea was one interesting finding of the survey. It added that "eliminating unions' obligation to represent nonmembers is an idea that has intrigued a few pro-union commentators as well."

Worker's Choice and employee freedom week also received coverage in the Washington Free Beacon, The Washington Examiner, The Washington Times, The Blaze and several other publications. Grassroots and policy organizations from around the country wrote about the concept or the survey results, including Americans for Prosperity, the Yankee Institute, the Nevada Public Policy Institute, the Illinois Policy Institute and the Civitas Institute.

Back in Michigan, Ingrid Jacques, Deputy editorial page editor at The Detroit News dedicated her Labor Day column to Worker's Choice, writing "for the workers who do want out, it's fairer for everyone involved if they can negotiate pay and compensation directly. Unions could finally kiss freeloaders goodbye."

Thanks to National Employee Freedom Week and the hard work of the Mackinac Center's communications staff, Worker's Choice has gone from a white paper to the start of a national movement. ■

# Close Public Pensions to Protect Taxpayers and Retirees

Retirees, taxpayers and local governments across Michigan face a threat from unfunded pension liabilities. These obligations divert resources away from public health and safety services and could lead to tax increases or benefit cuts.

Politicians have promised billions of dollars to retirees, but the money is not there – and someone has to pay the bill.

Only defined benefit pension plans have unfunded liabilities. Their benefits are guaranteed and not based on what an employee contributed. In contrast, defined contribution plans – like 401(k)s – are paid out to employees as they are earned. For governments to stop accumulating new pension liabilities, they need to enroll new employees in defined contribution plans.

An unfunded pension liability represents the amount of money a government has promised to retirees in benefits but for which it does not have the funds. In a defined benefit system, state and local governments make payments to employees’

simply to pay down its unfunded liability. To put it another way, it only saves 13 percent of its funding for the current generation of employees who are paying into the system. This backward method of funding spends more and more on retirees and

neglects saving for active employees.

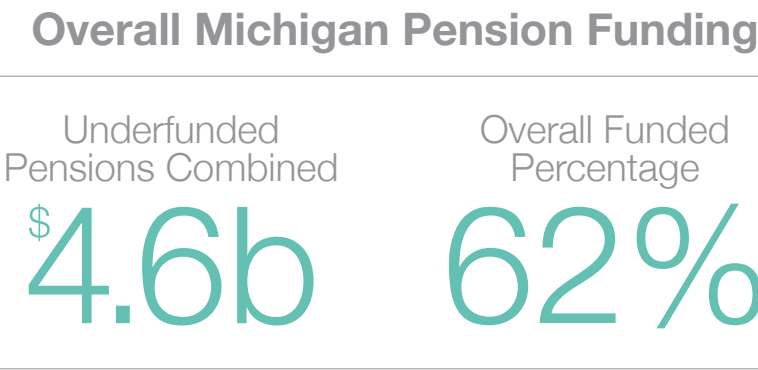
The school system has an unfunded pension liability of \$26.7 billion and is only 60.5 percent funded.

This issue extends far beyond the school system.

City and county pensions face similar problems with their defined benefit plans.

Michigan’s 100 largest cities have saved 69 percent of what they need. Combined, these city pensions are \$4.2 billion short.

Some city pensions look much better than others. Consider, for example, Michigan’s second- and third-largest



pensions while they work. Then, by the time the employees retire, their benefits have been saved.

But governments are behind on their payments. The state of Michigan and most local governments have not been putting away enough money each year.

The Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System used 87 percent of its funding this year



cities. Grand Rapids is 97 percent funded and needs \$29 million to catch up. Warren is 67 percent funded and has a \$206.6 million unfunded liability.

At the county level, pensions are only 76 percent funded. Michigan's 83 counties together are \$2.5 billion short of being fully funded.

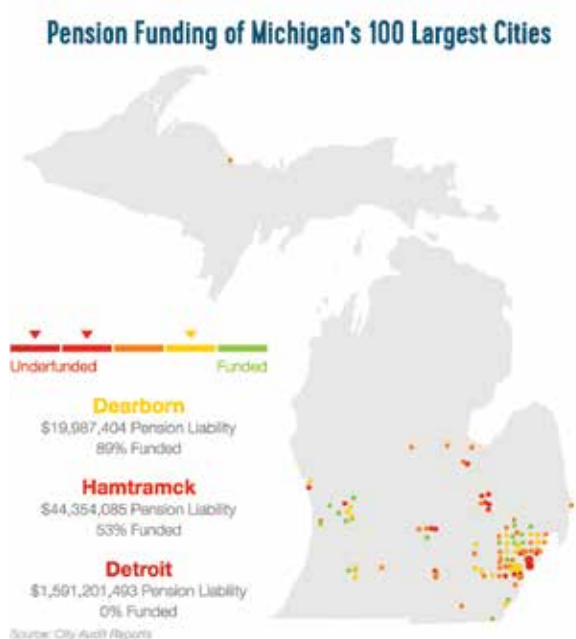
Wayne County has less than half – 49 percent – of the money it needs to make good on its promises. That's the lowest percentage in the state and gives the county an unfunded liability of \$846 million.

Neighboring Oakland County's defined benefit plan has 98 percent of the money it needs, with an unfunded liability of \$12.7 million. The county closed that plan in 1994 because it expected a problem with unfunded liabilities in the future. It now offers a defined contribution plan to new employees. By contrast, Wayne County's defined benefit plan is still open to new hires.

Michigan's Constitution says that promised pensions must be paid. But it also says governments need to put enough money away for their systems. Right now that isn't happening.

Politicians of all stripes and government officials in most communities have shown that they cannot be trusted to fully fund defined benefit plans. The solution is simple: Shift all new employees to 401(k)-type plans. Doing so will force public entities to pay for a secure retirement without piling up liabilities for future citizens.

Local governments in Michigan must keep their promise to current retirees and workers. But they need a different retirement system for new workers. ■



Be sure to visit the Mackinac Center's website on pensions and pension reform at [mackinac.org/pensions](http://mackinac.org/pensions).

## CapCon Report Provokes Outrage in Norton Shores

Cities across Michigan are being suffocated by pension debt. A recent report on the issue by Michigan Capitol Confidential has motivated residents in one community to demand a fix.

Norton Shores resident Jim Riley read that his city has only 49 percent of the funds it needs to cover its obligations to current and future retirees. Concerned about the implications, Riley rallied some of his neighbors to join him at a recent city council meeting. During the public comment period, he called on city officials to address the city's more than \$20 million unfunded liability.

Riley told the Mackinac Center's Community Engagement Manager Anne Schieber that cities with significant unfunded liabilities have few options. "You can increase taxes, you can cut back on city services significantly, or you can attack the current union contracts and you can attack the wages of the current employees and reduce those wages and benefits."

Schieber explained to Fox 17 News, which covered the meeting, that Norton Shores and the other 79 pension systems in Michigan that are underfunded should close their defined benefit plans to new employees. Newly hired employees, she continued, should be enrolled in defined contribution plans similar to 401(k) retirement accounts.

Riley and another concerned resident continue to meet with city officials. They aim to encourage them to follow in the footsteps of the state's 20 cities that have adequately funded their pension systems. ■

# WORKING IN DETROIT

Now that Michigan's largest city has emerged from bankruptcy and endured some painful lessons about sound, limited government, there is renewed hope that Detroit can become the economic engine it once was. Bankruptcy did not destroy Detroit's entrepreneurial spirit. In the city's downtown, blight is giving way to construction cranes, and the city's neighborhoods are coming back.

This year, the Mackinac Center launched "Working in Detroit," a video series produced by Community Engagement Manager Anne Schieber. It highlights individuals and ideas that reflect the values of entrepreneurship and civil society: vision, private investment, risk, customer service, competitive advantage and the American dream.

Some of the people featured in the series are new to the city. Others have been around for decades, quietly succeeding and overcoming numerous obstacles, not the least of which has been the city's population and economic decline over the past 30 years. The videos have had a wide reach. Two of them attracted nearly 150,000 views each within weeks of their release.

**Going the Extra Mile** shows how private investment from an ardent fan base can help a sports club grow to new levels.

It features Detroit City FC (DCFC), a four-year-old soccer team that quickly outgrew the stadium it was leasing. Building a new stadium was financially out of the question, so the team turned to its fans and supporters. From them, the team raised money to fix Keyworth Stadium, owned by the Hamtramck school district. Keyworth was built nearly 70 years ago and



Tracey Garley owns Zarkpa's Purses and Accessories.



Rebecca and Arthur Green are just two of the investors in Keyworth Stadium, the new privately-funded home of Detroit City FC.



hardly in move-in condition. DCFC raised money from small investors using the MILE Act, an acronym for Michigan Invests Locally Exemption. The team was able to bypass lengthy and expensive federal securities requirements to raise \$741,250 in less than 12 months. The video shows the team's explosive home opener at Keyworth, which attracted more than 7,000 fans.

**It's All About Customer Service** demonstrates the mantra at U.S. Ice, Detroit's largest independent ice manufacturing and distribution company. Saad Abbo, the company's president, describes how his father founded the company some 30 years ago because he couldn't get reliable ice delivery at his grocery stores. Through endurance, smarts and hard work, the Abbo family built the company to its current base of 3,000 customers. The business survived the city's struggling economy and population loss. Today, it has plans to expand in cities throughout Michigan.

**Belief in the American Dream** features 27-year old Tracy Garley, who moved to the U.S. from Liberia when she was 11 years old with dreams of owning her own business. Today, she runs a small shop, Zarkpa's Purses and Accessories, and shares the trials and joys of being a young entrepreneur. She shows enormous creativity and spirit in dealing with the typical obstacles faced by a new business owner, and her story is inspiring. She has dealt with theft, including a stolen air conditioner, and the challenges of running a brick and mortar retail outlet in a recovering neighborhood.

**Skin in the Game** is about Zak Pashak, who is betting on the Detroit name and its history of manufacturing excellence to build bikes. He took a big risk, leaving behind successful entertainment ventures in his hometown in British Columbia to start Detroit Bikes in a reconstituted factory on the city's west side. His factory employs more than 30 workers, assembling and distributing bikes for commuters, hobbyists and the urban bike-leasing industry. His dream is to make cycling enjoyable and accessible, and he believes he can succeed with no special favors from government.

**Tuning into Competitive Advantage** examines breaking into the music industry, which is challenging enough for newcomers without also being left with crushing student debt. The Detroit Institute for Music Education, or DIME, was started by two music industry veterans from the U.K. and gives students a competitive advantage by offering them an affordable option for training and success. This private, for-profit training institution offers a four-year degree at a price comparable to in-state tuition at Michigan's public universities. Its curriculum is geared for the commercial market rather than classical music or jazz performance, where traditional university and conservatories programs focus. The video features some of the emerging artists training at the school and explores how the concept of an explicitly market-driven college may work for other higher education programs. ■



Zak Pashak is the founder of Detroit Bikes.



Saad Abbo is the president of U.S. Ice.



Matt Sauter is a student at the Detroit Institute for Music Education.





# SURVEY: SCHOOLS SATISFIED AS SUPPORT SERVICE CONTRACTING HITS RECORD HIGH

School district officials ought to look hard for ways to stretch public dollars. Yet they used to be afraid to contract out support services — and with good reason. Sending out a request for proposals was often met with protests by the district’s own employees. But things have changed in recent decades, as the Mackinac Center’s privatization survey has documented.

In 2001, contracting out was a controversial practice, but we knew then that some districts did it. So we did a survey to find out just how much contracting was taking place. We found that 31 percent of districts contracted out food, custodial or transportation services. Our 2003 survey found that most contracting out was for food services. Only

6.6 percent of districts contracted out for custodial services, and 3.9 percent contracted out for transportation.

**JAMES  
HOHMAN**

Our latest survey found that 70.1 percent of districts contract out for at least one of these services, up slightly from 69.7 percent in 2015. And the practice is no longer concentrated in food services.

Custodial work is the most frequently contracted out service, with over half the districts using a private vendor.

Districts that contract out tend to be satisfied with their service

providers. We found a satisfaction rate of 89.3 percent. Districts that did not report being satisfied were often uncertain because they had a new vendor.

The high level of satisfaction is not uncommon. As one district official bluntly responded, “We’ve had them for many years, so if we’re unhappy with them, we just yell at them.”

This is the 14th year we’ve performed this survey. During that time, we’ve seen contracting out go from a controversial practice to a common one. ■

James Hohman is assistant director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center.







## The Difference Between a Setback and an Opportunity

Have I mentioned before that I'm a control freak? I like to think I've gotten better about it over the years, but lately I'm not sure that's the case. It is interesting, though, to consider whether that makes me better or worse at promoting my goals for public policy.

At first, I recoiled at the thought of being a control freak. You can't have control without having something that is controlled, so "control freak" quickly sounds like a euphemism for "bureaucrat."

But it's just as easy to interpret it a different way, as "someone who wants control over her own life and feelings, even if external factors make that impossible." The term describes me far more effectively with this second definition.

For the people who work in our cause, control can certainly seem like an illusion. No matter how many victories we win for individual rights and limited government, we still hear stories every day about arbitrary or ill-advised rules and regulations making life difficult or impossible for our fellow Michiganders. It can be disheartening.

Life outside of work has its own challenges. Much as I might like to, I can't schedule the shifts at my fiancé's company, keep drain sludge from building up under the kitchen sink or control the price of

blueberries. I can't even control the temperature in my office!

I recently took a step back from all these problems and gave myself an attitude adjustment with the help of Viktor Frankl. So much of our lives is focused on the decisions we aren't allowed to make. Too often, we forget the most important decisions we make each day: how to respond to what we cannot change. So it isn't my purpose to control the state, drain sludge or anything in between. My purpose is to respond to those obstacles in a constructive way.

My response to government overreach is to work at the Mackinac Center. My response to my fiancé's new schedule is to look for opportunities to better use our limited time together. When the office is too cold for me — "every day," my colleagues will say — I wrap up in a blanket. It isn't always easy to look at setbacks as opportunities (see: clogged kitchen sink), but I'm much happier (and more fun to be around), when I make the effort.

I am certain the next few months will be chaotic, both for me as a person and for the world. But having recently challenged myself to look for the positives, I will try to remember to do just that. Opportunities are hard to use when they are unseen and it is difficult to make the world a better place through negativity and bitterness. ■

### BY THE NUMBERS 21ST CENTURY JOBS FUND

**0.08 percent**

Proportion of jobs created by the 21st Century Jobs Fund as a percent of total state job creation.

**\$75 million**

Annual spending on the 21st Century Jobs Fund.

**2019**

When the funding sunsets, though lawmakers have extended this date in the past.



Caleb Hortop is regional director of strategic partnerships at the Mackinac Center.

## *I'm an* **Ambassador for Liberty**

I have worked for politicians and a university advancement team and held various private sector jobs, but when I approached the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, something unusual happened. I stated that I was a classical liberal, and – for the first time in my life – my prospective co-workers and boss did not express concern or confusion. Today, my colleagues not only understand the nuances of conservative or libertarian ways of looking at policy, but they get excited about them, and we intellectually sharpen one another. So when I think of serving as regional director of strategic partnerships for the Mackinac Center, I get a sense of enthusiasm and wonder.

Standing for sound policy can lead to positive change for ourselves, our families and our neighbors. It involves listening to stories of people who believe in our mission and sharing the stories of those who have been in the crosshairs of an expansive government and persistent bureaucracies. Our lives have stories of

opportunity and stories of struggle. I ardently believe that advancing liberty through sound public policy generates more opportunities and fewer, or at least less onerous, struggles.

In my work, I have the opportunity to cultivate relationships that will spread the message of freedom and help lead to sound policy for the people of Michigan. I am amazed and humbled by the thought. For me, the key motivation is that I can help people gain an understanding of what civic education and engagement can produce. My dream is to be a voice for people who are now unheard. When someone remarks that the people of the Mackinac Center are zealous for liberty, I can discuss what we are doing to advance it, usually in something that the person is passionate about. As the regional director for strategic partnerships, I can help our donors pursue liberty and increase their civic engagement and education. ■

**CALEB  
HORTOP**