

— LEGISLATIVE —
TESTIMONY

February 19, 2026

JARRETT SKORUP

**Michigan Can't
Subsidize Its Way to
Growth – It Must Build
Its Way There**

Michigan House Regulatory Reform
Committee

Mackinac Center testimony before the Michigan House Regulatory Reform Committee in support of housing package

Chair and members of the committee,

Michigan used to be a growth state. During the decades when our population, income and job growth ranked among the best in the country, housing remained affordable because we built enough to meet demand. It was legal. It was straightforward. It was possible.

Today, we are falling behind. One major reason is the steady rise of local zoning and regulatory barriers that make it difficult, expensive or outright illegal to build the kinds of homes that once defined our communities.

In Detroit, much of the historic housing stock could not be built under today's zoning code. Surrounding communities have adopted some of the most restrictive land-use rules in the region. Across Michigan – cities, suburbs and rural townships alike – minimum lot sizes, excessive setback mandates, parking minimums and even minimum home size requirements block new housing. These rules are often unrelated to public health or safety. They simply serve to suppress supply.

The bipartisan package before you addresses that directly. It would:

- Prevent local governments from banning duplexes and accessory dwelling units.
- Limit endless studies and protest petitions that delay projects for years.
- Rein in unnecessary mandates on parking, setbacks and minimum house sizes.

Michigan is not alone in recognizing the need for reform. Other states – red and blue – have already acted.

California enacted a statewide act to legalize duplexes and limit local obstruction. Oregon and Montana require cities to allow duplexes and fourplexes in single-family zones and limit parking mandates. Texas caps local lot size rules and has curbed protest petition abuses. Florida has preempted local governments from blocking affordable housing through restrictive zoning. Maine and New Hampshire require municipalities to allow accessory dwelling units. Washington has limited parking minimums near transit and required broader housing types.

These reforms reflect a growing consensus that states must act when local rules choke off supply. Local government associations exist to act on behalf of their members – but municipalities are creatures of state government. It is the job of state lawmakers to think about what is good for the whole state, and these bills help ensure that a basic need, housing, is available for more people.

Michigan used to build enough to keep housing affordable for our population. Today, we build less than any of our neighboring states and far less than most of the country.

We cannot subsidize our way to growth if we prohibit building. If we are serious about attracting families, workers and investment, we must make it legal and feasible to build again.

I urge you to pass this reform package and restore Michigan as a state where growth is possible again.



The Mackinac Center for Public Policy is dedicated to improving the understanding of economic principles and public policy among private citizens and public officials. A nonprofit and nonpartisan research and education institute, the Mackinac Center has grown to be one of the largest state-based think tanks in the country since its founding in 1987.

Additional information about the Mackinac Center and its mission to improve the quality of life in Michigan through sound public policy can be found at www.mackinac.org.

© 2026 Mackinac Center for Public Policy

140 West Main Street P.O. Box 568 Midland, Michigan 48640

989.631.0900 Mackinac.org mcpp@mackinac.org