
Get It Done: Fighting Urban Poverty

GRETCHEN WHITMER'S PLAN
TO SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES
AND REVITALIZE MICHIGAN CITIES



Michigan used to be the place people flocked to for opportunity. Our cities were bustling with jobs and growing rapidly. This was the state families of varying races, nationalities and religions packed up and moved to because they knew the jobs that were available paid fair wages – regardless of the color of your skin.

This was the place where automaking jobs provided a ladder up into the middle class for thousands of Michigan families, where you could earn enough to raise a family and buy the car you built at the factory.

Michigan built the middle-class and created pathways to opportunity for people of all ethnicities who couldn't find them elsewhere.

But today Michigan cities are struggling. Municipalities across the state have suffered from drastic population loss,¹ severe cuts in state funding for essential services, economic development that fails to reach residential neighborhoods, and a state government that values profits over people – particularly in communities of color.

Many families living in Michigan cities today are struggling just to get by, much less get ahead.

In 2017, Wayne County Executive Warren Evans and I joined leaders from urban communities across the state in an Urban Listening Tour. Too many candidates talk about issues they don't understand without taking the time to have meaningful conversations with real people.



After touring the state and hearing directly from people who face these challenges every day, I have a deeper understanding of the policies our state needs to revitalize our cities, embrace our diversity as a strength and get things done that will help fight urban poverty.

Solving these problems will require a strong partnership with state, local and community leaders. As governor, I am committed to bringing people together to build strong, vibrant and healthy communities across the state, so we can build a better Michigan for everyone.

To accomplish this goal, my administration will pursue policies in the following areas:

- 1.) Pathways to Employment**
- 2.) Safe Communities and Affordable Housing**
- 3.) Ending Racial Disparities**

1) Pathways to Employment

Michigan's "economic comeback" eludes a lot of small business owners, the working class, women and people of color. At the same time, we are short on the skilled workforce that was once our hallmark. We must get more Michiganders on the path to high-wage skills, because a concentration of talent benefits all of us. Michigan must target, grow and recruit the strongest, fastest-growing industries of the future and offer the talent, place, education and infrastructure necessary to compete with the world.

To pave the path to employment, my administration will focus on:

» Affordable Auto-Insurance

- » A pathway to employment doesn't matter much if a worker doesn't have affordable transportation to get to their job. Redlining – the practice of changing the quality or value of auto insurance based on geographic area, primarily to the disadvantage of inner-cities and minority neighborhoods – is unfair and unjust. And we know redlining is being used when the same person, driving the same car, is quoted a 24 percent difference on their auto insurance rate based on whether they say they live on the northside of 8 Mile Rd. in Ferndale or on the southside of 8 Mile in Detroit (\$582/month and \$720/month, respectively).² The sad fact is that under Michigan auto-insurance laws, territory-based rate setting is just one of too many non-driving related factors that goes into how premiums are calculated.
- » As governor, I will forge a coalition to bring down auto insurance rates and maintain quality coverage by:
 - Making sure policyholders are treated fairly by auto insurers – ending discrimination and redlining, because insurance companies shouldn't determine rates based on someone's zip code and other non-driving factors.

- Reducing ever escalating costs by providing for reasonable cost controls.
- Limiting unnecessary and costly litigation.
- Reducing abuse and fraud by creating a strong fraud authority.
- Requiring insurance companies to make timely payments and penalizing them for denying claims without a reasonable basis.
- Mandating transparency around the catastrophic claims fund.

» A Commitment to Regional Transit

» As part of our strategic investments in infrastructure, placemaking, and economic development, Michigan must get serious about building regional transit systems in metropolitan areas across the state. Affordable and reliable public transit is essential for working people in urban communities to get from one place to another. But when it takes a person more than two hours to get to their job – riding three



buses plus a 30 minute walk – it's safe to say the public transit system is a failure.³ This is a problem that must be solved. As Senate Democratic Leader, I supported the creation of the Metro-Detroit Regional Transit Authority. As governor, I am committed to bringing all stakeholders together to pass a regional transit plan that everyone can support, including local elected officials, business leaders, riders and taxpayers.

» Appointing a Poverty Secretary

» About half of Michigan communities saw an increase in poverty rates over the last 10 years.⁴ Nearly 1.5 million, or 15 percent of our state population, live in poverty, ranking Michigan 36th in the nation.^{5,6} To fight this growing threat to our economic recovery, my cabinet will



include a Poverty Secretary whose job will be to steadfastly focus on the systematic issues and connections between problems with the goal of ending poverty in Michigan. Such an anti-poverty office⁷ would be able to develop effective strategies for accomplishing our anti-poverty goals, such as:

- Recruiting major employers to create hundreds of new jobs accessible to underemployed residents;
- Putting people to work redeveloping city housing inventories to break the concentration of poverty without displacing residents;
- Ensuring youth employment initiatives stay focused on combating juvenile delinquency;
- Improving financial literacy education services to help families achieve economic security and grow the middle-class.

» Food Security

- » Solving food insecurity has a positive ripple effect on many societal challenges, such as: improved workforce retention⁸; students who miss fewer classes and have better academic outcomes⁹; lower total statewide healthcare costs¹⁰; lower crime rates¹¹; and healthier communities, cleaner environments and better economies¹². It is time for Michigan to take progressive actions that target getting families on their feet and fix food insecurity at its core, like raising or eliminating the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) asset test and coordinating with the food-service industry so nothing goes to waste.
- » As governor, I will initiate a new position for food policy coordination, a Director of Food Security, who will lead the state in real change. If you spend all day trying to answer the question of “When will I have my next meal?”, you never get to ask the question “How do I find a job?”

» Restore the EITC

- » In 2015, the Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit averaged \$145, put \$109.5 million back into Michigan’s economy and helped pull more than 6,500 households above the poverty line.¹³ For decades, Michigan supported working families by matching the federal tax credit up to 20 percent. But changes made by the Snyder Administration weakened that match to only 6 percent of the federal credit. As Senate Democratic Leader, I fought those cuts to the state EITC and sponsored the legislation to return the program to 20 percent of the federal level. If we had restored the credit, recipients would have seen an average of \$337

more in 2015.¹⁴ I continue to support the expansion of the EITC and will fight for the return of a 20 percent state match as governor.

» **Reform Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency**

- » Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency needs serious reform. Under Governor Snyder, Michigan cut six weeks of unemployment benefits for people who lost a job through no fault of their own. The state also used a faulty computer system to falsely accuse 40,000 Michiganders of committing unemployment fraud. People's wages were garnished, income tax returns were seized, credit ratings were ruined and families were forced into bankruptcy. Instead of standing up for the victims, Attorney General Bill Schuette fought these Michiganders in court.¹⁵
- » In 2013, I sponsored a bill to restore unemployment compensation back to 26 weeks.¹⁶ I also voted against the legislation that originally cut the benefit period and created the computer system that's falsely accused claimants of fraud in 93 percent of the cases.¹⁷
- » While some progress has been made, victims are still far from being made whole. My administration will seek to continue improving the state's unemployment insurance system by restoring the number of benefit weeks to 26 weeks, increasing compensation benefits to reflect livable wage rates and improving dependent coverage. This will help unemployed workers get back on their feet so they can find a new job and support their families instead of falling into poverty.

» **Target TANF Funds to Help Low-Income Families**

- » The federal TANF program is supposed to help low-income Michigan families through difficult economic times so they can get back on their feet. However, every year \$100 million of this funding is siphoned off to pay for private college tuition for kids from households with incomes over \$100,000.¹⁸ My administration will redirect this money to job training and reconnection programs to help Michiganders get the skills they need to compete for good-paying jobs.

2) Safe Communities and Affordable Housing

Residents in Michigan's cities have felt neglected by Lansing over the past seven years. Cuts to local government funding in state budgets have led to a failure of basic governmental services. Lack of funding for local law enforcement has meant police departments are unable to provide adequate cultural awareness programming for officers, which makes it harder to build

strong relationships with the communities they serve. Michigan also spends far too much prosecuting minor, nonviolent drug offenses. My administration will permit collecting taxes on legalized marijuana for adults to help cover the costs of improving essential community services.

In addition to being less safe, our cities lack affordable housing options to keep and attract residents. The National Low-Income Housing Coalition's 2017 report found the average wage needed to afford a two bedroom rental in Michigan was \$16.24 an hour, but that a Michigan renter earned an average wage of just \$13.70 an hour.¹⁹ The fact is that housing in Michigan is too expensive for most renters. For example, as a percentage of their household income, a majority of Detroiters pay more than 30 percent above the national average for housing rental costs.²⁰

As governor, I will work to improve local government services and fix housing issues by:

» **Repealing the Emergency Manager Law**

» As Senate Democratic leader, I led the fight against the Emergency Manager law. This undemocratic law has led to unjust and even fatal consequences – just ask the people of Flint. When cities are facing tough financial challenges, state lawmakers should partner with local community leaders to find solutions instead of taking away local control. As governor, I will work to repeal the EM law and ensure our communities have the support and assistance they need to provide their residents with essential local services.



» **Protecting Revenue Sharing**

» Michigan has balanced its own state budget on the backs of local governments, cutting over \$8 billion in revenue sharing.²¹ As of fiscal year 2017-18, state funding for local governments was still 17 percent below where it was 13 years before in FY '04.²² Michigan cities facing budget shortfalls as a result of these state cuts are forced to shrink or



eliminate services. Cuts to local police and fire departments result in huge recruitment deterrents and leave our communities unprotected. Cuts for local government operations force downsizings of their own workforces and cause useful community programs to end. Cuts to local municipal road funding are what cause city roads to be in drastically dangerous conditions. We must have a healthy revenue sharing system in Michigan, and as governor I will introduce budgets that protect essential funding for local governments.

» Restoring Basic Government Functions

- » Local governments are the primary deliverers of service in any state, but we fail to recognize that when we make decisions about state laws. Local governments throughout Michigan experienced erosions in their tax bases as a result of the Great Recession, but due to outdated state laws it will take decades for local tax bases to return to what they were before the recession. Basic governmental functions – like road maintenance, snow plowing and salting, trash and recycling pick-up programs, effective community health systems, municipal policing and fire protection – all rely on healthy local government budgets.
- » As governor, I will push for revisions that provide opportunities for local governments to diversify their revenue streams, benefit from local economic growth and recover more quickly from a recession. Michigan's local tax structure, Prop A, is nearly a quarter of a century old and in need of revision. My administration will work to permit local governments to implement new revenue solutions, like a lost potential assessment on undeveloped or vacant property. This would incentivize land speculators to make use of their assets, or sell them to someone who will. We must give our cities fiscally responsible options to address blight and the lack of affordable housing.

» Keeping Families Together

- » Donald Trump's policy of separating children from their families is simply unconscionable. As governor, I will use my authority to keep families together by:
 - Refusing to send a single member of the Michigan National Guard to help the Trump administration tear children out of their mothers' arms.
 - Suing the federal government on behalf of the children to reunite them with their families.

- » Additionally, I would never allow Michigan to participate in a Muslim registry or any registry program from the Trump Administration, which seeks to discriminate based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

» Reversing Cuts to Parks and Recreation

- » As cities grow and become more congested, residents look towards green, open spaces to escape the noise and chaos of urban living. But cuts to local governments' revenue sharing has left many urban areas unable to maintain funding for parks and recreation programs.²³ The forced cuts on Saginaw has led the city to near complete abandonment of its parks.²⁴
- » As Michigan grows economically and in population, my administration will ensure urban residents have safe and accessible parks, playgrounds and greenspaces. Strategically placing parks where residents can enjoy them, inspiring artwork along well-traveled commuter routes and vibrant streetscapes along a lively downtown Main Streets measurably increases productivity in the local economy, lowers crime rates and improves public health.²⁵ It will also positively impact local property values.²⁶



» Decriminalizing Recreational Marijuana

- » Michigan has a chance to get marijuana legalization right. Other states are already reaping the benefits of hundreds of millions in new revenues from taxes and fees on recreational marijuana^{27,28,29}, and Colorado (the first state to legalize) has collected \$500 million since 2014 to help pay for education.³⁰ Also, legalization would save the state millions each year on expenses related to nonviolent incarcerations. After Colorado legalized marijuana, there marijuana-related arrests dropped by 95 percent.³¹
- » As governor, I will ensure we regulate marijuana so it doesn't get into the hands of our kids and tax it so the money goes toward priorities like fixing the roads and improving our schools. When marijuana is finally legalized in Michigan, I will work to expunge the records of people who were convicted of low-level, non-violent marijuana possession.

» Reducing Crime

» As Senate Minority Leader, I was proud to reach across the aisle and pass legislation to help establish Detroit's public lighting authority in 2012.³² Since then, Detroit has seen a drastic reduction in crime rates.³³ Detroit went from having 40 percent of the City's street lights burnt out to now being the "largest city in the U.S. to have 100 [percent] LED public lighting."³⁴ Now that the city is better lit, Detroit's Project Green Light is partnering local businesses with police to install and use security cameras to create a safer community for residents and visitors.³⁵ As governor, my administration will direct more public security and placemaking dollars to city programs focused on improving city lighting, expanding local security programs and employing adequate law enforcement numbers to continue lowering crime rates.

» Using Body Cameras to Improve Community-Police Relationship

» According the U.S. Department of Justice, when police wear body cameras it improves the quality of public service that is expected from officers, promotes the community's perception of the legitimacy of police actions, and improves both officer performance as well as the conduct of community members being recorded.³⁶ I know merely recording interactions will not solve every problem, but it is both important to public safety and for the rebuilding of the bond between communities and police to create a public record of law enforcement interactions. Detroit is becoming a national example for body camera implementation policies after having a successful pilot program.³⁷

» As governor, my administration will support cities' efforts to improve community-police relationships and assist municipalities that want to work with their local police departments to test or expand their own body camera pilot programs.

» Improving Cultural Togetherness Training

» Studies show that "93 percent of police work is one-on-one communication and the ability to communicate with all of the citizens in our communities is critical to successful policing."³⁸

» As governor, I will fight to ensure sufficient funding is available to local governments to recruit quality officers to serve their communities and to provide cultural sensitivity trainings and professional development to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement.

» Know-Your-Rights Training

- » In addition to making sure police are sufficiently trained to work with their communities, community members who are better prepared to interact with law enforcement will improve the quality of relationships between cops and residents. We have seen these forum trainings starting to take place with successful engagement from the public already.³⁹ I will work with local police departments and legal experts across the state to set up neighborhood “Know-Your-Rights Trainings”, where officers and attorneys provide a police-interaction education service free to the public. It is my hope that communities and police will come to better appreciate one another and residents will fully understand their legal rights and due process.

» Preventing Gun Violence

- » It’s time to get serious about ending gun violence in Michigan. In 2016 alone, there were over 1,000 firearm deaths in Michigan.⁴⁰ There are steps we can take to ensure our cities are safe to enjoy and explore: prohibiting guns in our schools, implementing universal criminal background checks, banning bump stocks and passing red flag legislation. We also need to ensure our schools have the resources needed to properly protect students and for those who struggle with mental illness. It’s time we work together to create policies that make our state safer for everyone.

» Human Trafficking

- » In 2014, human trafficking was the fastest growing criminal enterprise, valued at nearly \$47 billion in North America and the European Union alone.⁴¹ This is a sick crime whose perpetrators lack any sense of humanity. The kidnappings that funnel innocent victims into the dark world of human trafficking are, unfortunately, occurring in Michigan cities.⁴²
- » City police departments and state law enforcement need the resources, police presence and proper training necessary to stop this heinous crime. County and municipal governments need the financial capability to provide victim-centered recovery programs and employ therapy professionals who specialize in trauma.
- » My administration would work with local governments and law enforcement agencies to annihilate human trafficking and treat victims by establishing a Michigan version of the Runaway and Homeless



Youth and Trafficking Act, and by better coordinating services to provide shelter and trauma-informed services and family reunification efforts.^{43,44,45}

» **Providing More Affordable Housing**

- » Maintaining and growing the inventory of affordable housing will help lower rent prices. One way to do this is federal New Market Tax Credits (NMTC). NMTCs have supported over \$600 million in new affordable housing in our state, but will expire in 2019. My administration will consider a state NMTC program if the federal version ends, so we can continue driving the urban housing market forward and push more affordable prices for families.
- » Michigan laws should allow local governments to implement a variety of affordable housing initiatives. My administration would allow programs like inclusionary zoning (IZ), which provides incentives for developers to build affordable housing units. Metropolitan areas as large as Washington, D.C. have used IZ to effectively increase their affordable housing options, building over 15,000 affordable units in just under 30 years. IZ programs are most effective when tailored to local market conditions, so it's important our state allows local governments to decide what policies work best for their community.

» **Strengthening Renter Protections**

- » We must make changes to protect tenants from lead-based paint from rental homes,⁵⁰ from substandard housing⁵¹ and from losing their homes when landlords fail to pay tax bills.⁵² I will work with the legislature to reform laws to protect renters and require landlords to inform tenants of tax delinquency status and pending foreclosures. Also, my administration will seek to expand the successful Action Before Auction program at the Wayne County Land Bank. Helping tenants of foreclosed residential property remain in their homes limits the negative effects of the property speculation business and improves the quality of the housing market. Implementing a similar statewide Right of First Refusal will safeguard renters from delinquent landlords, help eliminate blight, promote community development and increase property values for all Michiganders.⁵³

» Removing Blight

» After blighted structures are bulldozed, too many lots sit unused and unsold by the Land Banks across Michigan. There are more than 1,400 vacant residential lots in the Michigan Land Bank right now.⁵⁴ These properties could be used to build new homes, businesses, or public spaces like parks and playgrounds. As governor, I will work with local leaders to continue rebuilding our cities in ways that turn wasted spaces into productive places.



3) Ending Racial Disparities

Michigan's urban communities have been forced to endure years of neglect and undemocratic policies under Governor Rick Snyder. In the wake of tragedies like the Flint water crisis, it's clear our government needs to do a better job of caring about the people it serves. Every Michigander deserves to live in a healthy community with a government that believes them when their quality of life is threatened. In healthy communities, residents live more active lifestyles⁵⁵ with lower healthcare costs.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, Michigan ranks in the bottom half of states in health care⁵⁷ and education.⁵⁸ Neighborhood schools have been forced to close their doors, leaving parents scrambling to figure out where to enroll their children, and communities without a place to organize and foster a common identity. In the last seven years we have seen laws that continue the institutionalization of racism through mass incarceration and criminalizing poverty.

As governor, I will work to end racial disparities in our state to build a Michigan that works for everyone. Specifically, my administration will prioritize:

» Improving Health Outcomes

- » Ending Racial Disparities in Health Outcomes.
 - Where and how we live can have a huge impact on our health. A Michigander living in an underserved urban community can have a life expectancy of 20 years less than someone living just five miles down the road.⁵⁹ Many of our urban centers experience higher rates of heart disease, asthma, obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases. Michigan spends \$3 billion⁶⁰ on obesity-related medical costs every year, and

most of our urban neighborhoods don't even have access to healthy foods at a grocery store. We can – and must – do better.

- By restoring prevention funding in the state budget, we can reduce chronic diseases and our state's healthcare costs at the same time.⁶¹ We should be combining and aligning resources to combat issues of infant mortality.⁶² We should be helping the nearly 1.8 million residents – 300,000 of whom are children – who live in communities with limited or no access to fresh fruits or vegetables get those foods they need to develop better eating habits.⁶³ As governor, I will expand the Office of Minority Health⁶⁴ to spearhead task forces, partner with community leaders and collaborate with our research universities to develop research on health disparities and how best to combat them.

» Addressing Childhood Lead Poisoning.

- Dozens of water systems in Michigan have higher lead levels than Flint.⁶⁵ My [infrastructure plan](#) details how we can ensure another man-made disaster like Flint never happens again, but in the meantime, we must implement policies to mitigate the effects of lead poisoning for those who have already been exposed. We must continue to test water for lead in our schools and child care settings, and my administration will also insist that all children are tested for lead during their annual check-ups. Any child found to have suffered from lead exposure should have the appropriate educational resources and dietary foods that mitigate the effects of lead poisoning.^{66,67} Addressing lead poisoning for every Michigander – but especially in children – will be of the highest priority for my administration.

» High-Deductible Medicaid (AKA Medicaid Spend-Down).

- Too often Michiganders with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families are forced to spend-down exorbitant amounts of their income to remain eligible for Medicaid assistance. With the income limits in certain parts of the state being as low as \$341 per week, this spend-down requirement leaves vulnerable residents without sufficient household budgets to afford necessities like monthly rent, food, utilities, transportation and education costs.⁶⁸
- Forcing families to spend-down what limited savings they can build up only makes it more difficult for them to recover when times get tough. With most other states having eliminated their asset tests for eligibility, our laws currently put Michigan at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to growing our population.⁶⁹ High-deductible Medicaid spend-down requirements run counter to the goal of helping families work to get off government assistance.
- As governor, I will work with the legislature to repeal PA 79 of 2012,

but if legislators fail to repeal this overburdensome law, state agencies in my administration will be empowered to apply an asset test that encourages Michiganders to grow their assets, seek higher wages and save for their futures.

» Improving Education Outcomes

» Improving Education and Community Schools.

- As governor, I will fight for changing Michigan's childcare system to increase the equality of academic outcomes and establish a more equal school funding system. You can read more about my full education plan for Michigan students and schools [here](#).
- I will protect students in local school districts from the Betsy DeVos-backed failed experiments of emergency managers, the School Reform Office and the Education Achievement Authority. As governor, I will ensure democratically elected school boards have authority and resources to solve local problems.
- I will create our state's first-ever universal preschool program. Getting more families involved in early childhood development programming will foster a culture of education in urban households. When parents have the peace of mind and the time, they will be more likely to find a better-paying job, pursue a promotion, or go back to school themselves.
- I will raise Michigan's child care eligibility and reimbursement rates from one of the lowest in the country to a competitive level that will remain year after year so parents can make long-term plans for their children. It will also give parents the time and peace of mind they need to get a job, pursue a promotion or go back to school themselves.
- I will reverse cuts to the state's School Aid Fund and give schools back the ability to hire quality art and physical education teachers, coaches and extra curricular directors.





- My administration will combat the growing teacher shortage by raising educator pay and compensation packages to competitive levels, and pilot innovative policies, like a Grow Your Own teacher program.
 - I will fight to end the over-testing of students and replace standardized tests that disadvantage minority students.
 - I will work to increase our investment and remove barriers to local financing for things like pupil wraparound services, truancy officers, school nurses, social workers, school security and school buses.
 - I will invest in people by offering our young adults an opportunity to get the skills they need through the MI Opportunity Scholarship, a two-year debt-free talent investment that may be used towards a community college degree, the first two years of a four-year degree, or a skilled trades apprenticeship program. In addition, I will create the same opportunity for those seeking retraining skills or the opportunity later in life to attend a post-secondary institution with a Reconnect Program. We will ensure every student has a path to a high-wage job, whether college is right for them or not.
- » Teaching Civil Rights in Social Studies.
- Publications from the 'Teaching Tolerance' organization report that too few schools in our country adequately teach about issues like the civil rights movement and black history, which are more than mere historical events, but pivotal eras in American history that every student should learn about.⁷⁰ I oppose the changes that have been proposed by state Sen. Patrick Colbeck to our state social studies standards that would prevent our students from getting a full understanding of American history. Learning landmark Supreme Court cases, catalysts of the Civil Rights Movement and the ideals on which our laws are built is critical to a well-rounded education. My administration would never give in to extremist politicians who would rewrite history to fit a partisan political agenda. If we want our next generation of leaders to be able to take on the challenges we'll face in the future, we've got to make sure they have a well-rounded understanding of America's past.
- » Providing Safe School Transportation.
- When students cannot get to school due to inadequate access to transportation, it makes learning that much more difficult.⁷¹ Access to effective busing and school transportation is especially important in Michigan's urban centers given our cold winter weather and that some neighborhoods are not safe for young children to walk through alone. As governor, I will fight to remove barriers to local financing for things like school transportation.



» Reforming Our Criminal Justice System

» Improving Indigent Defense.

- The U.S. Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to an attorney. But that right doesn't exist in the real world for many who cannot afford lawyers. The fact is that court-appointed attorneys are overworked, have limited time with clients and often have no private setting to discuss things confidentially. There were shocking findings in the 2012 Michigan Advisory Commission on Indigent Defense, but none more than that Michigan has “no promulgated statewide standards for defining and ensuring constitutionally adequate defense counsel for indigent defendants.”⁷² How can we ensure legal rights enshrined by our Constitution are being protected if we do not even define them?
- As governor, I will fight to adopt the Commission's recommendations to ensure that the money in your pocket does not determine the quality of justice you receive.

» Expanding Opportunities for Returning Citizens.

- Drug Treatment Courts: As Ingham County Prosecutor, I established policies to ensure people with addictions got connected to treatment instead of going to jail. Drug treatment courts reduce crime rates and reduce recidivism rates for drug-addicted offenders.^{73,74} Enhancing restorative justice practices makes the system more proactive both for the betterment of the people involved and for curbing costs of the system itself, saving taxpayer dollars. As governor, I will continue to fund and support treatment courts.
- Ban the Box: Recent actions by Lansing Republicans to prohibit local ban-the-box laws⁷⁵ are anti-worker, discriminatory and take away local control. The state of Michigan and local governments should eliminate checkboxes on job applications that require potential employees to indicate whether they have a criminal background. Having stable, legal employment after being incarcerated is the best way to stay out of prison.⁷⁶ Banning the boxes on government employment forms would help reduce our prison populations, save taxpayer dollars on corrections facilities, add more skilled trade workers to our labor force and reduce discrimination against communities of color.⁷⁷ Banning the box does not mean prohibiting criminal background checks. It simply means saving that conversation until a potential employer has had a chance to get to know a potential employee. Ending this discriminatory practice will help put thousands of people back into stable, good-paying jobs.
- Handcuffs to Hardhats: In Escanaba, Michigan there is a spectacular reentry program helping divert drug offenders away from prisons and into skilled trade apprenticeships.⁷⁸ Their prosecutor has partnered with



local trade unions to establish the “Handcuffs to Hardhats” program, which gives ex-offenders who have demonstrated long-term sobriety and compliance with their probation a new chance at life. This program takes former drug addicts, trains them up through the trade unions that pay wages as trainees learn, and produces skilled trades employees such as electricians, laborers and ironworkers. My administration will work with prosecutors across the state to expand reentry programs like Handcuffs to Hardhats, and establish reporting and accountability requirements for state-funded reentry programs so we can start to rebuild our labor pool with skilled workers, reduce crime, reduce prison costs and improve the lives of everyone involved.

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