

University of Michigan



Michigan Student Caucus

*Platform and Service Actions*

Presented April 14, 2011  
Michigan State Capitol  
East Lansing, MI

<http://michiganstudentcaucus.org>

## **About the Michigan Student Caucus**

The Michigan Student Caucus is an organization representing the interests of students, K-12 through post-secondary, in Michigan. It is not affiliated with any political party.

The Michigan Student Caucus began its existence as the Michigan Youth Caucus, a program developed in partnership with the Michigan Civics Institute, The University of Michigan, and The Michigan House of Representatives Special Commission on Civic Engagement. This program was originally developed by and for students to give young people a say in Michigan affairs. In its current guise, the MSC strives to represent the interests of students of all ages.

Under the leadership of former Michigan State Representative Doug Hart, the program thrived for two years, during which thousands of students around the state actively took a part in shaping policy. Resolutions were written and voted upon online using a (then) state-of-the-art website developed by students in the Instructional Project Design course at The University of Michigan; testimony was given in front of legislators in Lansing; and real legislation made it onto the books as a result of the MYC's efforts.

Beginning in fall, 2005, the project has been revived as the MSC. With the help of numerous state and local politicians, not to mention the University, our goal was once again to have the voices of young people heard in state government.

Because the work of the MSC comes out of the issues that are raised and discussed, much of the coursework depends on the collective interests and actions of the MSC community.

This year, there are five content areas in which students create legislative platforms for discussion, debate, and eventual inclusion on the semester's platform. The content areas are:

Economic Development & Community Revitalization

Arts & Culture

Human Development & Welfare

Environment & Health

Justice & Equity

In addition to the online postings, students are required to participate in an actual service activity project during the semester. Those service projects are found near the end of this document.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION**

### **Funding and Facilitating Michigan's Clean Energy Transition**

*By: Christopher Mull*

**WHEREAS** The estimated state budget deficit exceeds \$1.8 million and the clean energy industry represents a potentially lucrative revenue generator for the State of Michigan.

**WHEREAS** Governor Granholm allotted many of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA, funds to luring clean energy businesses to the state, but those funds will soon run dry and tax breaks are unfair as they create winners and losers.

**WHEREAS** Numerous battery companies have moved into Michigan or expanded operations to nearly \$6 billion total investment and potential to create over 60,000 jobs.

**WHEREAS** The state's solar industry has expanded significantly and has attracted \$4.1 billion in public and private investment. This new investment boosted solar jobs in Michigan up to 6,300, or fourth highest in the nation.

**WHEREAS** Several wind energy manufacturers have recently announced plans to build next-generation turbines and castings in Michigan.

**WHEREAS** Feed-in tariffs (FITs) are the most widely used tactic in the world to accelerate renewable energy generation, including tax incentives.

**WHEREAS** FITs are responsible for 75% of the worlds solar photovoltaic power and 45% of global wind power.

**WHEREAS** FITs would allow for business and homeowners who make more renewable energy than they sell to receive compensation for this production.

**WHEREAS** Consumers Energy of Michigan has already created an Experimental Advanced Renewable Program which features FITs that are to allow for the creation of up to 2 megawatts of (MW) and they have had applications from businesses and homeowners for more than 6.3 MW of capacity.

**WHEREAS** Feed-in tariffs are intended to push development of a renewable energy industry. The boost to the consumer market draws in manufacturers, and that in turn draws in suppliers.

**WHEREAS** CEO of Dow Corning Corp., said during an October speech in Detroit. Incentives to attract solar businesses themselves, such as tax breaks, are not enough.

**WHEREAS** FITs are most attractive to solar industrialists because solar energy is a field

that largely relies on incentives and subsidies, and FITs would attract solar companies to Michigan, thus creating jobs

**WHEREAS** "A feed-in tariff (FIT) is an energy supply policy focused on supporting the development of new renewable energy projects by offering long-term purchase agreements for the sale of RE electricity."

**WHEREAS** As per the Michigan Renewable Portfolio Standards attachment below, Michigan has the potential of creating 30,000+ manufacturing jobs between 2007 and 2030 by a scenario that meets 20% of U.S. electricity needs from wind.

**WHEREAS** In 2008, Michigan's legislature passed its first renewable portfolio standard (RPS), requiring that 10 percent of the state's energy come from renewable sources by 2015. Michigan's RPS is a regulatory reform that protects Michigan ratepayers and allows utility companies to build new electricity generation in Michigan and requires that utilities meet an additional 5.5 percent of Michigan's annual electricity demands through energy efficiency by 2015.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** This proposed legislation would be similar to the 2009 Green Energy and Green Economy Act in Ontario, Canada.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The FIT would set a minimum per kWh price that retail electricity providers must pay renewable electricity generators (both businesses and homeowners).

**BE IT RESOLVED** The feed-in tariff program "...provides standard program rules, standard contracts and standard pricing regarding classes of generation facilities differentiated by energy source or fuel type, generator capacity and the manner by which the generation facility is used, deployed, installed or located."

**BE IT RESOLVED** The Michigan Public Service Commission and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will have the authority to designate goods, services, and technologies in order to promote energy conservation

**BE IT RESOLVED** The Michigan Public Service Commission and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality may require prescribed consumers to prepare an energy conservation and demand management plan to set objectives for Renewable Energy generation.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan Bureau of Energy Systems may require consumers to achieve prescribed targets and meet prescribed energy and environmental standards, including standards for energy conservation and demand management.

**BE IT RESOLVED** We would establish a cost-based payment structure, by differentiating the payment structure according to the features and specific costs of renewable energy

technological installations.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The feed-in tariff program will be funded through a customer differentiation system that will include "limits on the total rate impact for certain sectors of the economy, which effectively shelters them from some/all of the electricity rate increases that result from a FIT policy". Customer differentiation effectively shelters energy-intensive industries from price increases.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Furthermore, oversight from the Michigan Public Service Commission and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will be necessary to ensure that both Renewable Energy objectives and ratepayer funding is equitably distributed across customer classes.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The FIT program would supplement the Michigan Renewal Portfolio Standard through promoting more renewable energy generation.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Customers can be differentiated in the following ways: class and type of their electricity tariff, specific class of customer (low-income, high-income, etc.), voltage level of customer, customer's total annual electricity consumption (compared to person or firm's revenue or gross value).

**BE IT RESOLVED** We will want to retain some flexibility in funding in order to make the proposal politically viable. This way we will be able to allocate burdens in response to the political pressures different interests can exert.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Contracts would be at least 20 years long, in order for customers to be able to more easily make back their investments in the projects.

## **Support Made in Michigan**

*By: Callie Robins & Sarah Sincoff*

**WHEREAS** Consumers see the need to support local business.

**WHEREAS** Consumers lack information about and access to Michigan made products and services. Many Michigan residents do not know which products are grown or manufactured in Michigan unless they are labeled as such.

**WHEREAS** When \$1 is spent locally, that \$1 impacts 3 to 7 different local businesses before leaving the local economy.

**WHEREAS** The impact of Michigan agriculture on our state's economy is \$63.7 billion and growing.

**WHEREAS** Production agriculture, food processing, and related businesses employ more than 1 million Michigan residents.

**WHEREAS** Buying locally will stimulate the economy, by generating revenue and keeping it in the state thus supporting local businesses and farmers.

**WHEREAS** Small businesses make up 98% of all Michigan employers.

**WHEREAS** Already some local grocers have joined organizations to help support local farmers and the economy. This is not required by any means, but government does provide "Think Local" or "Michigan Grown" stickers for locally grown product to those that are members of the organization and support the local cause.

**WHEREAS** Buying from local farmers and Michigan products is significantly cheaper for stores because middle man is completely avoided.

**WHEREAS** If every Michigan household spent just \$10 of their weekly food budget on Michigan Made or Michigan Grown products we would contribute \$36 million per week into our state economy.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** The program would create a centralized catalog or website for Michigan made products to register. This should be offered at no cost to the Michigan companies and it would connect Michigan businesses with customers statewide to promote Michigan made products. This would be a small start-up cost to the legislature and would be controlled by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The program should include an advertisement campaign to encourage Michigan natives to pledge to spend \$10 a week on Michigan made products.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Increase customer awareness through the use of one common Made in Michigan and Grown in Michigan sticker that Michigan grocers and store owners can place on their goods to ensure customers know that they are supporting Michigan's economy.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan companies will sell more product in their home state with the heightened awareness from the catalog and stickers that they're produced in Michigan. Consumers will have the choice to directly and positively grow their state's economy by purchasing Michigan made and grown products, keeping Michigan residents working and spending, and Michigan businesses thriving and hiring.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The state should provide tax incentives to those businesses that are registered on the central database and make use of the "Support Local First" stickers provided. Michigan residence would benefit from lower sales tax on locally produced items; consumers would benefit from purchasing cheaper products that are Made in Michigan.

**BE IT RESOLVED** All grocers in the state of Michigan will be provided with "Michigan Grown" or "Think Local First" stickers to place on their Michigan produce. The state will encourage grocers to buy local when applicable, place the stickers on those items, and educate shoppers about the importance to buy local and the effect on the economy.

**BE IT RESOLVED** This program should be run through and funded by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation as their job is to assist and help grow Michigan businesses. They supply customized economic development services to help companies find success in a very competitive global environment.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The program will provide these registered companies with a standard "Made in Michigan" sticker that would be then placed on the product. These stickers would inform shoppers that the product they are purchasing has been made within the state of Michigan.

## **ARTS & CULTURE:**

### **Keeping Art Programs in Schools Until High School**

*By: Matt Kovner*

**WHEREAS** Art can help a child recognize his or her interests and have the opportunity to explore his or her passions

**WHEREAS** Art is a subject that has been overlooked by the entire Detroit public school system and others throughout the state

**WHEREAS** 63% of Detroit public schools have no art program

**WHEREAS** Art helps strengthen children's hand-eye coordination and muscle control

**WHEREAS** Children who are involved in the arts are 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement

**WHEREAS** Children who are involved in the arts are 3 times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools

**WHEREAS** Children who are involved in the arts are 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance

**WHEREAS** Children motivated in the arts develop attention skills and strategies for memory retrieval that also apply to other subject areas

**WHEREAS** Children develop the ability to comprehend abstract content, such as higher mathematic concepts, develop moral philosophies, and move gradually towards a more mature sense of identity and purpose during adolescence

**WHEREAS** The Detroit School of the Arts sends 80-100% of their students to a 4 year college, defying expectations as a direct result of arts

**WHEREAS** The Detroit School of the Arts average daily attendance is 93 percent

**WHEREAS** Governor Snyder's prospective budget seeks to cut \$470 in funding per student while giving tax breaks to business

**WHEREAS** Research shows that you make more money by going to college. U.S. Census Bureau statistics show that someone who graduates from college makes an average income of 40% more than someone who only has a high school degree

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** State government ensure that some form of arts program is maintained until the start of high school

**BE IT RESOLVED** The state revises Governor Snyder's budget to shift the emphasis of spending on arts education over businesses

**BE IT RESOLVED** The emphasis on arts education will accomplish the same goals as what Snyder was looking to gain, as having arts in education will better position students to better the state of Michigan

**BE IT RESOLVED** Schools can use their discretion in implementing art the way that they see fit based on their students needs and limitations as well as their respective budgets

**BE IT RESOLVED** Some form of art would be mandatory for all students K-8 in all Michigan public schools

**BE IT RESOLVED** Schools such as The Detroit School of the Arts can serve as great examples for implementing arts to other public schools throughout the state

**BE IT RESOLVED** Students are required to participate in some form of art in order to move onto high school

**BE IT RESOLVED** The University of Michigan and any other schools could reach out by choosing to provide art supplies, facilities or instructors in order to help improve their prospective students for the future

**BE IT RESOLVED** Using Detroit School of the Arts as an example the state's investment will be rationalized by the future earnings that Michigan students will make by going to college

## **Graffiti Murals**

*By: Neil Rabinowicz*

**WHEREAS** One of the biggest issues in large cities is the contamination of buildings and walls with hateful words, symbols, or images

**WHEREAS** The local community plays a role in deciding which artists are chosen to create graffiti murals, and they have the ability to choose or "vote for" the genre of artwork they see as fit.

**WHEREAS** Graffiti can be an eloquent form of artwork that helps the creator reveal self-expression and culture.

**WHEREAS** Organizations such as the Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI) in Southern Detroit have employed over 7000 14-24 year old residents.

**WHEREAS** Various organizations throughout the United States have been created to help clean up major cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles by removing graffiti from walls and giving talented artists the opportunity to create beautiful murals that members of the community can appreciate.

**WHEREAS** "The murals beautify the neighborhood and allow the area businesses and residents to commission art work."

**WHEREAS** There is a similar program in Philadelphia called the Mural Arts Program (MAP) that unites artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives.

**WHEREAS** MAP's "work would not be possible without the vital support of our donors who breathe life into our brushstrokes and ensure that our work continues into the future."

**WHEREAS** Their artists page is "a resource where artists not currently working with us can find information about how to get involved, and where those currently working with us can find information about meetings, Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) and trainings."

**WHEREAS** MAP includes members of the community in every step of the mural-making process, from selecting a theme to collaborating on a design, to creating the mural and celebrating its completion. Because of this extensive community engagement process, neighborhood murals become a living part of the community long after the project is completed.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** There should be an organization that helps take a stand against those who deface the walls and street signs in cities throughout the country.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Eradicate all of the negative, hateful, or unappealing imagery that was unlawfully created in cities throughout the state of Michigan and replace this with eloquent, creative, and self-expressive imagery that other people can appreciate.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Such an organization would give communities the opportunity to see graffiti murals as a sign of art, life, and culture, which could really help change the way people perceive "graffiti" and give it more importance, instead of just "tags" that random people create in the hopes of marking their territory, you might say.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Give aspiring artists the ability to showcase their creative ability in a constructive fashion.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Bringing about such change in Michigan will truly give people a reason to appreciate their culture's unique form of artwork.

**BE IT RESOLVED** "Include members of the community in every step of the mural-making process, from selecting a theme to collaborating on a design, to creating the mural and celebrating its completion. Because of this extensive community engagement process, neighborhood murals become a living part of the community long after the project is completed."

**BE IT RESOLVED** In order to feasibly enact this proposal, Michigan would have to create a not-for-profit organization full of members of communities where bad or hateful graffiti seems to be a large issue.

**BE IT RESOLVED** It is up to the members of this organization to deem which locations in large cities should be altered, and then the members themselves must find a talented artist(s) who can create the desired graffiti mural.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Funding for such an organization would be attained through donation of supplies and time by members of the community who would like to see hateful or meaningless graffiti replaced with graffiti murals that have cultural value and can be appreciated by members of the community.

## **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE:**

### **Healthy Options at School**

*By: Rachel Kunz & Callie Robbins*

**WHEREAS** In 2010, Michigan had the 10th highest adult obesity rate, with almost 30% of adults being considered obese.

**WHEREAS** Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years, with the prevalence of obesity among children aged 6 to 11 years increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 19.8% in 2008. Additionally, the prevalence of obesity among adolescents aged 12 to 19 years increased from 5% to 18%. In Michigan, the childhood obesity rate was 12.4%, and this number is projected to increase significantly in the upcoming years.

**WHEREAS** As of 2010 San Francisco implemented a policy dictating vending machines on city property can no longer dispense Coke, Pepsi and other calorically sweetened beverages. Sports drinks and artificially sweetened water also are included in the ban.

**WHEREAS** A UCLA study regarding nationwide obesity concluded that Michigan is the only state outside the South with one of the nation's highest obesity rates.

**WHEREAS** "There's a direct link between what people eat and drink and the obesity and health care crises in this country," Mayor Newsom spokesman Tony Winnicker said. "It's entirely appropriate and not at all intrusive for city government to take steps to discourage the sale of sugary sodas on city property."

**WHEREAS** 32.7% of elementary schools, 71.3% of middle schools, and 89.4% of high schools had a vending machine or a school store, canteen, or snack bar where students could purchase foods or beverages. Also, 11.9% of elementary schools, 25.4% of middle schools, and 48% of high schools allowed students to purchase foods and beverages high in fat, sodium, or added sugars from a vending machine, school store, or snack bar.

**WHEREAS** According to the U.S. News and World Report caffeine addiction is typically associated with coffee, but caffeinated sodas can be every bit as addictive. Dependency on the stimulant can go unrecognized, especially if the addiction is developed during childhood

**WHEREAS** Food containing low levels of nutrition value will reduce the IQ level of kids while food containing natural vitamins and minerals can help to increase it.

**WHEREAS** 30.6% of Michigan children were overweight or obese, as of 2007. In 2003 this had only been 14.5% according to the National Conference of Legislatures Health Trends.

**WHEREAS** According to First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative, in total, we are now eating 31 percent more calories than we were forty years ago—including 56 percent more fats and oils and 14 percent more sugars and sweeteners. The average American now eats fifteen more pounds of sugar a year than in 1970.

**WHEREAS** Michigan does not have nutritional standards for competitive foods sold in schools on á la carte lines, in vending machines, in school stores, or through school bake sales. Twenty-eight states and D.C. have nutritional standards for competitive foods. Five years ago, only six states had such standards.

**WHEREAS** Michigan has not passed requirements for body mass index (BMI) screenings of children and adolescents or legislation requiring other forms of weight-related assessments in schools. Twenty states have passed such requirements for BMI screenings. Five years ago, only four states had passed screening requirements.

**WHEREAS** Thirty-three states impose a sales tax on soda; Michigan is not one of these states.

**WHEREAS** The intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)-which include soda sweetened with sugar, corn syrup, or other caloric sweeteners, as well as other carbonated and noncarbonated drinks like energy drinks-is associated with higher body weight, poor nutrition, displacement of more healthful beverages, obesity, and diabetes. It is estimated that daily SSB intake increases an individual's risk of diabetes by 32%. 75,000 new cases of diabetes, 14,000 new cases of coronary heart disease, and \$1.4 billion in health care costs can be attributed to the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Additionally, SSBs account for 10-15% of daily caloric intake among children and adolescents, and has been steadily increasing over the past few decades.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan should follow San Francisco's lead and ban sodas and other sugar-sweetened drinks from public-property vending machines, replacing them with diet drinks and soy milk.

**BE IT RESOLVED** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these policies should be implemented in schools specifically because it is schools that have the greatest influence on children and adolescents. More than one-half of youths in the United States eat one of their three major meals in school, and 1 in 10 children and adolescents eats two of three main meals in school.

**BE IT RESOLVED** To measure the effectiveness of this law, schools in Michigan will continuously measure the obesity levels of students in each class and track to see if there is a decreasing trend over the years after several years of being in place. We strive to lower Michigan's rank in the most obese states list within a couple years.

**BE IT RESOLVED** A ban on the sale of soft drinks in elementary or middle schools, with high schools allowing limited access to diet soda in vending machines.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Vending machines in elementary and middle schools will contain only water and 100% fruit or vegetable juice products. In high school, vending machines will be stocked with water, milk, sports drinks, vitamin water, 100% juices and juice smoothies (i.e: Naked Juice), 100% vegetable juices (i.e: V8 100% Vegetable Juice), and diet soda. Diet soda can be no more than 33% of the items offered in a high schools total vending machines. Vending machines that currently dispense candy, chips, or other unhealthy snack options should be replaced with an assortment of: Kind Bars, Luna Bars, trail mix, packaged nuts, pretzels, Sun Chips, Special K Bars, rice cakes, and other products of similar nutritional value.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The public schools in the state of Michigan that do not adhere to these new standards and alter the vending machines to match our regulations are subject to reduction in government funding. Before the start of every new school year, there will be government officials (usually from Michigan's Department of Education) that will go into the schools to ensure that they are meeting and supporting these regulations. If found that products in the vending machines, or the advertisements on the machines itself (i.e: coke instead of coke zero or diet coke), violate the imposed legislation, then this situation would justify a loss of government funding.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Encourage public high schools to not only offer better options in vending machines, but monitor and regulate the hours that they can be accessed during the school day. Vending machines that dispense soda (and chips/candy) should only be accessible during lunch hours or after school. Vending machines that dispense water, milk, 100% juices, and vitamin water should be available for purchase throughout the day.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The state of Michigan will impose a SSB tax. This will act as an excise tax rather than a sales tax. Even though sales taxes are the most common form of food tax, they often do not serve as a deterrent because they encourage consumers to seek out less expensive brands or larger containers and are not seen until a consumer gets to the register. An excise tax will be more effective as a deterrent because they work as a fixed cost per ounce, and most manufacturers adjust the price so the consumers see the price difference when they are making their selection as opposed to at the register. It is believed that a penny-per-ounce excise tax could reduce SSB consumption by more than 10%. Additionally, taxing SSBs can have an immediate impact on the obesity problem in the state of Michigan, and implementing a tax program involves minimal costs to the state.

# **Opt-out System in Michigan to Increase Organ Donation**

*By: Justine Nowosatko*

**WHEREAS** Approximately 82,000 Americans are waiting to receive lifesaving organ transplants.

**WHEREAS** Organs such as the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and small intestines, and tissues such as skin, bones, and eyes are needed for donation.

**WHEREAS** A new name is added to the national waiting list every 16 minutes.

**WHEREAS** Unfortunately, 13 people die each day waiting for an organ.

**WHEREAS** One organ donor can save the lives of eight people and enhance the lives of 50 to 100 more through tissue donation. Last year in Michigan alone, 289 organ donors provided 786 organs to waiting recipients in Michigan. Organ donor, Tim Parker, of Troy, saved the lives of SEVEN people in 2008 when he died in a tragic car accident. Not only did it impact the lives of those he saved, but also his family and friends. Now that Tim is gone, it helps Tim's mother, Lynn Parker, to know that her son's heart beats in someone else, that his kidneys and liver filter toxins in the bodies of three individuals, that his pancreas works again in another patient, that his lungs allow two others who once struggled to breathe enjoy life again. Even Lynn was a recipient of Tim's generous donation. When a degenerative condition caused pain in Lynn's neck, Richard Easton, M.D., implanted some of Tim's bone into her spine. "It formed in me and now is a part of me again," she says of the bone that was once her son's.

**WHEREAS** More than 19,000 organ transplants are performed in the United States every year. Transplants have become a successful form of treatment for end-stage organ disease. Three-year patient success rates are estimated at 95 percent for kidney transplants, 92 percent for pancreas, 91 percent for heart transplants, 90 percent for liver transplants, 81 percent for heart-lung transplants, and 76 percent for lung transplants.

**WHEREAS** Everyone can donate! There are certain stipulations involved in organ donation and the greater the pool of organ donors the greater likelihood these stipulations can be met. For example: People need to get organs from a donor with a compatible blood type (e.g., A to A or AB). People with O negative blood (often considered universal blood donors) can donate an organ to anyone, regardless of the recipient's blood type. Matching organs between members of the same ethnic or racial group often enhances the success of kidney transplantation. Approximately one-third of the individuals waiting for kidney transplants are African-American. Why? African Americans are 17 times more likely than Caucasians to develop hypertension, which can lead to eventual kidney failure. Also, a higher incidence of hypertension and diabetes among Native Americans increases the risk of kidney failure for this segment of the population, too. Even people with HIV and hepatitis can donate to others with the same illnesses.

**WHEREAS** Currently America uses an "opt-in" system for organ donation, whereas a person must have declared earlier that they wished for their organs to be donated.

**WHEREAS** Donation in the United States is currently extremely overlooked.

**WHEREAS** The state of Colorado recently proposed Senate Bill 11-042, or "A Bill for an Act Concerning Presumed Consent for Organ and Tissue Donation," to take effect January 1, 2012 that would change the current organ donation process for all Coloradans. This bill changes the organ donation program so that a person is presumed to have consented to organ and tissue donation at the time the person applies for or renews a driver's license or identification card. The text of the bill amends driver's license and photo ID renewal forms to read: "You are automatically deemed to have consented to being an organ and tissue donor and this designation will appear on your driver's license or identification card. If you do not want to be considered and organ and tissue donor, you must elect not to be included on the organ donor registry by inserting your initials on the line below." If Colorado passes Senate Bill 11-042 then it will be the first state in the Union to agree to "presumed consent."

**WHEREAS** Spain and Austria have implemented "opt-out" systems and hence have the highest donor rates. Spain has the highest donation rate in Europe, with 34 donors per million people, and also 3 times the rate of 13 million in the UK, which relies on greater public awareness campaigns. Austria has 21 million donors per inhabitants.

**WHEREAS** Both the US and Spain use celebrities to raise public awareness about organ donation, but Spain has higher rates of organ donation.

**WHEREAS** An "opt-out" system would automatically assume they wanted to donate their organs, unless they earlier declared that they did not.

**WHEREAS** According to Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein in their book entitled "Nudge," they argue the lack of donors in the United States is not due to a lack of individual willingness, but the ineffectiveness of the current system. "The organ shortage in the U.S. is primarily due to default rules that require organ donors to formally register their wish to be a donor, known as explicit consent. In surveys, most Americans express a strong willingness to donate their organs upon death, but very few take the costly step of formally registering to become a donor."

**WHEREAS** On March 18, 2010 Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law Public Act 16 of 2010 that makes organ and tissue donation education a required part of driver's education programs.

**WHEREAS** Public opinion surveys find that a majority of people say they want to have their organs used for transplantation after death - more than 70% of the public states that they are somewhat or very likely to donate. However, while Michigan has one of the oldest state donor registries (1994) it is also houses one of the lowest participation rates. Only 27% of adults are on the registry, well below the 70% that say they are likely to donate. This puts

Michigan as 45th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of organ donor participation rates.

**WHEREAS** Dialysis is a costly lifeline for almost 400,000 Americans who are awaiting kidney transplants. Because of a change in the Social Security Act in 1972, comprehensive coverage under Medicare is granted to virtually anyone diagnosed with kidney failure, regardless of age or income. As a result, taxpayers spend more than \$20 billion a year to care for those on dialysis - about \$77,000 per patient, more than many other nations. However, research by the University of Maryland School of Medicine has found that the cost of a kidney transplant has dropped so significantly that it is now cheaper to have a transplant than to stay on dialysis for more than two and a half years, even among the sickest patients. Furthermore, kidney transplants account for the greater majority of transplants performed throughout the United States. Therefore, studies have shown that a kidney transplant not only improves the quality of life of the individual, but saves society money in the long-run.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** The State of Michigan enacts the “opt-out” system during license and state identification renewal at the Secretary of State when an individual turns 21. At this age, registered Michigan drivers are required to renew their driver's license by mail or in person at the Secretary of State. Also, by the age 21, individuals are not required to receive consent from their parent or guardian to become an organ donor - they have the freedom to make their own decision. There are currently three different ways for individuals to become organ donors in the state of Michigan: sign a Donor Card, check a box on their Driver's License, or sign up with a State Donor Registry. This proposal only affects organ donor registration when renewing a Driver's License upon turning 21 years of age.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Until one has sought license renewal from the Secretary of State at 21 years of age, they will not be placed under presumed consent. Individuals under 21 will retain the opportunity to voluntarily register to become an organ donor through one of the three venues listed above.

**BE IT RESOLVED** If one does not want to donate for a personal, religious, political, etc. reason one does not have to do so.

**BE IT RESOLVED** When renewing a driver's license at 21 years of age they will have the choice to declare removal from the list.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The State of Michigan does not have to rely solely on hospitals to recruit employees, family members, neighbors, friends and colleagues or the voluntary enrollment of individuals to the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The State of Michigan can sufficiently increase the number of organ donors.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The Organ Procurement Agency of Michigan, commonly known as "Gift of Life Michigan", will maintain the registry.

**BE IT RESOLVED** If one later decides they wish to change their organ donor status, they can contact the Gift of Life Michigan and do so.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Because of Public Act 16 of 2010, all individuals who apply for renewal of their driver's license have been previously educated about organ and tissue donation and can therefore make an informed and educated decision about their organ donor status.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The Michigan State Legislature should alter Michigan driver's license and state identification renewal forms when an individual turns 21 to reflect presumed consent (similar to Colorado's Senate Bill 11-042).

**BE IT RESOLVED** The Michigan Secretary of State is the most effective location to gain possible organ donors. In states with high-functioning donor registries, about 97% of registrations come through SOS or DMV offices.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The Michigan Secretary of State could increase the fee paid by individuals renewing their license to cover some of the cost associated with altering renewal forms to reflect presumed consent.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH:**

### **Allow for Off-Shore Wind Farming**

*By: Christopher Mull*

**WHEREAS** Building wind turbines and farms off the shore of Lake Michigan can lead to incredible and permanent job creation to aid Michigan's unemployment issues.

**WHEREAS** Local communities have already started to adopt and create local policies in anticipation of the widespread efforts.

**WHEREAS** According to the state energy potential packet below, Michigan ranks 14th nationally in wind energy generation potential, while it ranks 29th nationally in actual wind energy capacity. This leaves ample room for development.

**WHEREAS** Major utilities companies across the state would be willing to contribute to the construction of offshore wind farms, as the government recently passed the Michigan Renewable Energy Portfolio, mandating that 10% of utility companies' electricity be generated by renewable sources by 2015.

**WHEREAS** "There are currently no offshore wind farms in the United States, but the topic has picked up steam in discussions."

**WHEREAS** Wind energy construction also means the construction of wind turbines. This can create jobs in the state of Michigan because the construction of wind turbines is similar to the assembly of a motor vehicle--one of the paramounts of Michigan is the auto industry.

**WHEREAS** Michigan's onshore wind energy production is 16,500 megawatts, compared to a stunning 40,000 megawatt offshore potential.

**WHEREAS** Some of the biggest concerns of offshore wind turbines include their low-frequency noise, danger for birds, danger for motorists, ice shifting, and getting the energy to the shore.

**WHEREAS** Previous offshore wind legislation has been proposed to the Michigan state legislature, but the most recent stalled last December, creating a need for a new and improved proposal.

**WHEREAS** Although Michigan has been hit hard by the economic recession, the clean energy industry has actually provided increases in job opportunities for Michigan residents, while all other industries have dropped.

**WHEREAS** While offshore wind farming is more plausible a few years down the road once technological difficulties are overcome, it will be crucial as the state looks to require a higher percentage of energy used to be generated from renewable sources.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** Using Michigan Wind Energy Resource Maps, the state will determine which communities across the state that are viable for offshore wind energy production, and also those areas where wind energy construction would be completely off limits.

**BE IT RESOLVED** In order to ensure safety to the lakeshore regions, no construction of wind turbines would be allowed within 3 miles of the shore.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The implementation of these regulations and directives would be handled by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Create Wind Farm Committees across the state in counties with the highest wind energy generating potential, providing the opportunity for important stakeholders to voice their opinions on offshore construction projects. This will make the proposal more politically viable.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Solve some of the biggest concerns by mandating that businesses comply with existing legislation on tall structures. According to the Michigan Tall Structures Act, companies must apply for a permit for the construction of turbines.

**BE IT RESOLVED** In order to ensure that offshore sites are optimal for construction and to avoid building an obstruction in the lakes that may damage the surrounding environment, companies must first use test structures (similar to the buoy structures of Grand Valley State University).

**BE IT RESOLVED** Turbines cannot be built in areas with sensitive animal habitats or fly-over zones for birds that may put them in danger.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Along with the Tall Structures Act, this act will permit that "A structure that is over 500 feet above ground elevation at the structure's site and that is within 2 miles of a well-defined natural landmark such as a shoreline or river" will require a permit from the Michigan Aeronautics Commission.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Offshore turbines are larger than onshore turbines, in order to take advantage of the steadier offshore winds, and range from 200ft to 400ft tall. Application fees for offshore turbines will have separate costs than other, generic, tall structures (in order to offset ancillary costs associated with the act): 50-100'=\$100; 100-150'=\$150; 150-200'=\$200; 200-250'=\$250; 250-300'=\$300; 300-350'=\$350; 350-400'=\$400; 400'+=\$450

# **Placing Nutritional Information on Publicly Displayed Menus**

*By: Zachary Schwartz & Raymond Reaves*

**WHEREAS** Obesity is a disease that currently affects 34% of adults age 20 and over in the United States, or approximately 72 million people.

**WHEREAS** Obesity related deaths have climbed to over 300,000 a year, and is considered to be the 2nd leading cause of death amongst American adults.

**WHEREAS** Obesity increases the chance of developing high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and other diseases.

**WHEREAS** Obesity in adults has increased 60% in the past 20 years and has tripled amongst children in the past 30 years.

**WHEREAS** 70.2% of Michigan males, and 56.1% of Michigan females are considered overweight or obese, which are both above the national average.

**WHEREAS** Many popular restaurant chains, such as Applebee's, Outback Steakhouse, Chili's and Pizza Hut have very popular items on their menus with more calories, grams of fat, saturated fat and sodium than an average sized adult should consume in a full day. Many consumers are completely in the dark on this and would most likely make different decisions if they knew this.

**WHEREAS** In 2008, the New York City Board of Health mandated that all city chain restaurants post calorie count information on their menu boards, with the expectation the posted information would help combat obesity in New York City, where 54% of adults are either overweight or obese.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** That the Michigan Legislature mandate that all chain restaurants located in the state of Michigan be required to place certain nutritional information directly on their publicly displayed menus.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Information to be displayed will include, but is not limited to, calorie count and grams of fat for each menu item.

**BE IT RESOLVED** That a chain restaurant should be defined as any restaurant chain that has more than fifteen location outlets located throughout the entire state.

**BE IT RESOLVED** The posting of this information will make consumers more aware of the health factors associated with the foods they are eating, which will promote a healthier lifestyle and smarter menu selections.

**BE IT RESOLVED** This legislation will be the first step by the government in taking in active role to help reduce the growing obesity problem in the state of Michigan.

## **JUSTICE AND EQUITY:**

### **Harsher Punishment for "Drugged Driving"**

*By: Ben Logan Winnett*

**WHEREAS** Despite the knowledge about a drug's potentially lethal effects on driving performance and other concerns that have been acknowledged by some public health officials, policy officials, and constituent groups, drugged driving laws have lagged behind alcohol-related driving legislation in all areas of the country.

**WHEREAS** Some States (Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, MICHIGAN, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin) have passed "per se" laws, in which it is illegal to operate a motor vehicle if there is any detectable level of a prohibited drug, or its metabolites, in the driver's blood.

**WHEREAS** In addition, 44 States and the District of Columbia have implemented Drug Evaluation and Classification Programs, designed to train police officers as Drug Recognition Experts.

**WHEREAS** According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) 2007 National Roadside Survey, more than 16 percent of weekend, nighttime drivers tested positive for illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter medications.

**WHEREAS** More than 11 percent tested positive for illicit drugs.<sup>1</sup> Another NHTSA study found that in 2009, among fatally injured drivers, 18 percent tested positive for at least one drug (e.g., illicit, prescription, or over-the-counter), an increase from 13 percent in 2005.

**WHEREAS** A person who operates a vehicle upon a public highway or other place open to the general public or generally accessible to motor vehicles, including an area designated for the parking of vehicles, within this state is considered to have given consent to chemical tests of his or her blood, breath, or urine for the purpose of determining the amount of alcohol or presence of a controlled substance or both in his or her blood or urine.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** Drivers should be drug tested when there is suspicion of impairment, even in those cases where the presence of alcohol has been detected. Drivers identified as impaired who do not have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) over the legal limit should be tested for drug use.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Drivers involved with fatal car crashes, and crashes resulting in serious injuries, should be required to submit to drug testing and BAC testing either at the scene or at the hospital.

**BE IT RESOLVED** All 50 states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation specifically targeting drugged drivers; however few motorists know that drugged driving is a crime, and there are not enough law enforcement officers or public education activities that are actively engaged in raising the profile of this epidemic problem. To reduce drugged driving, police and communities will have to make it known that drugged driving will not be tolerated.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Law enforcement needs to be engaged in educating the public and especially younger drivers about the risks of driving drugged. Police departments can train and employ more Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) to patrol the streets and apprehend drugged drivers before they do harm to themselves and others. There are currently 44 states participating in the DRE program with over 7,500 DRE's and instructors.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Another aim is to ensure that all drivers understand the grave risks they would face when driving under the influence of any drug. Student drivers must be made aware that drugged driving is as dangerous as drunk driving through driver education programs. Drivers should also feel that if they drive drugged they are liable and likely to be caught, and that anyone caught driving with drugs in his system will face serious legal consequences. Michigan and of course National driver training programs need to enhance the testing on drugged driving and raise its awareness in their training programs.

## **Increasing LGBT Rights**

*By: Samantha Wormser*

**WHEREAS** LGBT families are denied of many privileges and acknowledgements such as protection under federal law because of their inability to get married.

**WHEREAS** "More than 90 percent of those surveyed agreed that all people deserve equal opportunities in life." (umich news services) If people feel this way, then there is significant support in Michigan residents to give LGBT people equal rights and legalize their marriage.

**WHEREAS** All LGBT residents of Michigan are at a significant disadvantage based solely on their sexual orientation. They are deprived of basic rights of equality.

**WHEREAS** In 1996, Michigan passed a law banning the recognition of same-sex marriages even when performed in another state.

**WHEREAS** As of 2004, current Michigan law follows the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) which prohibits gay and lesbian couples from marrying. At this time, 59% of the voters were in favor of this law, but in a recent poll there is a 63.7% support for the recognition of civil unions and a 46.5% support of same sex marriage. There has been a shift in public opinion that needs to be acknowledged.

**WHEREAS** Michigan representatives claim " the union between a man and woman is the only agreement recognized as a marriage 'or similar union for any purpose.'" (nysun.com) In 2008 the law was officially passed that banned all domestic partnerships and gay marriages using this reason as defense.

**WHEREAS** In 2009, LGBT person's protested on the steps of the Lansing Capitol in opposition to the California Supreme Court ruling which upheld a ban on same-sex marriage. Their goal was to put a new marriage equality amendment on the 2012 ballot. Activists said that in order to remove the state constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in Michigan they would need to collect over 500,000 valid signatures on a proposal.

**WHEREAS** In June of 2009, at an LGBT rally in Lansing, House Speaker Pro Tempore Pam Byrnes (a Democrat) announced plans to introduce legislation that would jumpstart the process of allowing same-sex marriage in the state constitution.

**WHEREAS** It is assumed that children of same-sex couples are at a disadvantage, however it has been proven that married LGBT couples produce children with the same emotional, cognitive, social and sexual functioning as children with heterosexual parents.

**WHEREAS** Michigan laws would never require any religious affiliation to perform civil unions or marriages between two-consenting adults. Michigan recognizes the separation of church and state which means that any argument against gay marriage biblically based or otherwise connected towards church or religious affiliation would thus be null-in-void.

**WHEREAS** In Section 25 of the state's constitution, it says "To secure and preserve the benefits of marriage for our society and for future generations of children, the union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose." However, in Section 2 it reads "No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws; nor shall any person be denied the enjoyment of his civil or political rights or be discriminated against in the exercise thereof because of religion, race, color or national origin. The legislature shall implement this section by appropriate legislation." Sexual orientation should be included in the characteristics in which discrimination is prevalent in Section 2, as it is each individual's preference, similar to religion.

**WHEREAS** Gay marriage is legalized in many states including Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Washington D.C, and Iowa and recognized in many other states as well.

**WHEREAS** In 2005 Connecticut passed a law providing same-sex couples with equal rights and responsibilities as those who are married, and by October 2008 legalized same-sex marriage. In 2007 Washington D.C. passed a law that permitted domestic partnership, then eventually legalized same-sex marriage in 2010. In three years both states went from no acknowledgment of LGBT relations to legalizing their marriage and granting all residents equal rights.

**WHEREAS** The state of New Hampshire legalized civil unions in January of 2007. Only two years after (in 2009), the state legalized gay marriage.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan should be a state of equality and acceptance of all of its residents. This reputation would attract people from around the world to come to Michigan, an incentive the state could use with its floundering economy.

**BE IT RESOLVED** By proposing a law to at least acknowledge same-sex marriages made outside of the state of Michigan, the MSC will provoke change. In this situation, the marriages would be granted equal rights and privileges as opposite sex marriages in Michigan. There are countless organizations that would be in enormous support of this idea such as Equality Michigan and the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan would become a role model to other states and hopefully encourage change throughout the country.

**BE IT RESOLVED** By 2014, a law should be passed that provides for the legalization of same sex marriage under state law and specifically accords them substantially the same rights and burdens (such as child support in a separation) as are available to, and required of, opposite sex married couples. That is three years from now which is the same timeframe that other states in the country were able to radically improve their state's LGBT rights and legalize gay marriage.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Clearly LGBT people are negatively affected by the bans against their sexual orientation, and as they made clear in their protest they want to provoke change. MSC could create this petition that they suggested to prove to legislation how many residents want to change and improve the laws of equality in our state.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Connecticut and Washington D.C. went from no LGBT rights to complete same-sex marriage legalization in just three years. By April 2012 (one year), I suggest that the state of Michigan should recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states and grant these couples equal rights and responsibilities to opposite-sex married couples.

**BE IT RESOLVED** By April of 2013, the state should permit domestic partnership and civil unions. Also, the state should commission a study of the rights and obligations under state law that are currently available to, and required of, married opposite sex couples but not same sex couples with a report due in 2013.

**BE IT RESOLVED** "Roughly half of gay couples in Massachusetts have gotten married and we know from Census data that given the kind of incomes couples have that they are paying more in income taxes..we know that there has been some interest from out of state couples to come in and get married and helped the tourism industry" (cpbn article attached). Adopting LGBT right does have economic benefits as Massachusetts has proven. The state of Michigan should recognize and take into consideration our financial position when reviewing this proposal. The tourism in Detroit, an issue the MSC has relentlessly dealt with, would increase and hopefully stimulate the economy.

## **SERVICE ACTIONS:**

Don't Take Out! Eat In, Originally Proposed by Kayley McInerney

Power Hour, Originally Proposed by Alexandria Casperson

National Walk to Work Day, Originally Proposed by Lindsay S Specter

Reduce Plug Time, Originally Proposed by Romina Reversi

School Supplies Drive, Originally Proposed by Jennifer Wolf

Only Use Reusable Water Bottles, Originally Proposed by Morgan Solomon