

Michigan Student Caucus Platform

2006-2007

The Michigan Student Caucus, consisting of hundreds of high school and college students across Michigan, resolves the following (unedited version):

Resolution to Distribute HPV Vaccines in Michigan Schools to 6th Grade Girls

Created in the Community Development and Growth area by Joshua Borin and Gregory Heller on Tuesday, February 06, 2007 at 04:01:57 EST

WHEREAS HPV is a virus that causes warts of the hands and feet, as well as lesions of the oral, anal and genital cavities; and

WHEREAS more than 50 types of HPV have been identified, some of which are associated with cancerous and pre-cancerous conditions. The virus is transmitted through sexual contact and is a precursor to multiple types of cancer most notable in women; and

WHEREAS at least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire a genital HPV infection at some point in their lives; and

WHEREAS most HPV infections have no signs or symptoms; therefore, most infected persons are unaware they are infected; and

WHEREAS there are currently 20 million people in the United States who have HPV and 5.5 million more get it every year; and

WHEREAS through the cancers it causes, HPV kills more than 200,000 women around the world each year; and

WHEREAS HPV Types 16 and 18 cause 70% of cervical cancer cases, and HPV Types 6 and 11 cause 90% of genital warts cases; and

WHEREAS Gardasil is approved for girls and women ages 9 to 26. Gardasil works when given before you have any contact with HPV Types 6, 11, 16, and 18. This is why the vaccine should be offered at a young age; and

WHEREAS unlike other vaccines offered in schools, Gardasil requires a total of 3 vaccines spaced over a couple of months; and

WHEREAS one is certainly allowed to forgo the vaccine for health, religious or philosophical reasons; and

WHEREAS by offering the vaccine in schools to those females, there is a better opportunity for the vaccine to be distributed; and

WHEREAS Gardasil has an efficacy rate of 95-99%, very high for a vaccine; and

WHEREAS because of Gardasil's potential, many medical doctors believe it must take a population based approach rather than be distributed to those who can pay; and

WHEREAS the Michigan Senate approved two bills (SB1416, SB1417) that would require girls in the state entering the sixth grade in the 2007-2008 school year and beyond to receive Gardasil but the bill was eventually overturned; THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the State of Michigan work out a funding program and start to distribute HPV vaccine to girls entering sixth grade who wish to receive it;

BE IT RESOLVED, allowing schools to be a vehicle for vaccine distribution for young women would help stop the spread of HPV and promote a more healthy future for Michigan youth; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by creating a subsidy situation, and forgoing a mandatory statute, Michigan could avoid the moral dilemma that arises when a vaccine such as Gardasil is mandated.

Resolution to Help Reduce Waste Caused By All Batteries

Created in the Environment, Energy, Science and Technology area by Shayne Clouthier on Monday, April 02, 2007 at 02:57:18 EST

WHEREAS approximately 11,000,000,000 mm or 36,089,238 feet of space is taken up in the U.S.A by AA battery types each year;

WHEREAS just in the state of Michigan roughly 400,000,000 yds³ of solid waste has been reported by landfills, equating to roughly 1.2 billion ft³ in ten years, some of which may be reduced by limiting amount of non-reusable batteries that we use;

WHEREAS the single largest source of mercury in garbage is household batteries, especially alkaline and button batteries;

WHEREAS most batteries contain metals that are potentially toxic, such as mercury, cadmium and nickel;

WHEREAS when batteries are improperly disposed of in landfills, they risk leaking into the environment;

WHEREAS according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the demand for batteries in the is projected to increase by 5.8% every year;

WHEREAS batteries may produce the following potential problems or hazards:

- Pollute the lakes and streams as the metals vaporize into the air when burned.
- Contribute to heavy metals that potentially may leach from solid waste landfills.
- Expose the environment and water to lead and acid.
- Contain strong corrosive acids.
- May cause burns or danger to eyes and skin.

WHEREAS there are two types of batteries:

- (1) Primary — those that can not be reused, and
- (2) Secondary — those that can be reused;

Primary batteries include alkaline/manganese, carbon-zinc, mercuric-oxide, zinc-air, silver-oxide, and other types of button batteries. Secondary batteries (rechargeable) include lead-acid, nickel-cadmium, and potentially nickel-hydrogen;

WHEREAS rechargeable batteries save more money for the consumer and will not need to be discarded as often;

WHEREAS the cost can range from \$20 for a pack of four and a charger to \$70 for 24 batteries and a charger. A standard pack of four costs around \$4.50 for regular quality. A digital camera can consume one pack when on just one activity for 5 hours;

WHEREAS - this was in 1992, and with amount of batteries being sold per household percentage going up, the number of used batteries being disposed of is also going up;
THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that a deposit of five cents per battery should be implemented in the state of Michigan to increase the demand to buy of rechargeable batteries to help reduce the risk of leaking from Mercury.

Resolution to lower the speed limit and promote safety for drivers in Michigan

Created in the Justice and Civil Liberties area by Ryan Leavitt and Jennifer Levine on Friday, February 23, 2007 at 12:07:49 EST

WHEREAS the purpose of a speed limit is to provide for the safety of all highway users. To meet this purpose, a speed limit must be acceptable to the public and be enforceable by the police; and

WHEREAS the speed limit on most of Michigan's highways is 70 while many other states maintain speed limits of 65 or lower; and

WHEREAS among all Michigan motor vehicle accident fatalities, about 52% were due to roadway departures, 9% involved large trucks, 26% were intersection related, and 202 fatalities of non-motorists (pedestrians and bicyclists); and

WHEREAS 1,283 people died in Michigan vehicle collisions in 2003. Speed was a factor in 23% of Michigan car crash deaths, costing the state 1,410 million dollars in 2003; and

WHEREAS in 2003, the average number of fatalities per 100,000 people in states where the maximum speed limit is 65 was 12.43 deaths, while it was about 19 deaths in states where the maximum speed limit was 70; and

WHEREAS in Metro Detroit, about \$70 billion is needed over the next 25 years for road and bridge repair, as well as for maintenance and infrastructure upgrades; and

WHEREAS some parts of the state average high temperatures below freezing from December through February, and into early March in the far northern parts; and

WHEREAS during the late fall through the middle of February the state often has heavy lake effect snow. The state receives much precipitation throughout the year, averaging from 30-40 inches annually; and

WHEREAS winter driving can be treacherous. Statistics show that approximately 70% of winter deaths attributed to snow and ice involve motor vehicles; and

WHEREAS the risk of dying in a traffic crash increases significantly in the dark. The fatality rate doubles during the period of time from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.; and

WHEREAS over 50 percent of the energy needed to move a vehicle down the road on highways goes to overcoming aerodynamic drag. Aerodynamic drag increases the faster a person drives; and

WHEREAS as speed increases, fuel economy decreases exponentially. Fast driving increases drag on the engine, thus decreasing fuel efficiency and creating more harm to the environment; and

WHEREAS with a 5 mph lower speed, a driver can save \$5 in gas for each extra hour driven; THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the State of Michigan decrease speeds limits from 70 to 65 to promote driver safety on freeways. Decreasing the speed limit will create safer roads and reduce harmful emissions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Michigan State Police strictly enforce speed limits through increased ticket volume and more severe fines;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, maintain safe roadways by adding lights to the freeways, creating functioning rumble strips, and ensuring the upkeep of poor road conditions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the MDOT partners up with GM or Ford to provide the necessary funding for these programs. MDOT and the car companies could strengthen their goodwill and public images while promoting the safety of drivers;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, additional funding comes from the revenue created by the increased speeding ticket fines.

Resolution to Enact Vehicle Emission Testing in Michigan

Created in the Environment, Energy, Science and Technology area by Sara Ellwood on Thursday, March 15, 2007 at 01:15:26 EST

WHEREAS cars and light trucks are a major source of air pollution in the United States. Vehicle emissions contribute to health and environmental problems such as urban smog, air toxics, global warming and haze. All cars emit some pollution, but poorly maintained cars emit more; and

WHEREAS the health threat from lower levels of CO is most serious for those who suffer from heart disease, like angina, clogged arteries, or congestive heart failure. For a person with heart disease, a single exposure to CO at low levels may cause chest pain and reduce that person's ability to exercise; repeated exposures may contribute to other cardiovascular effects; and

WHEREAS even healthy people can be affected by high levels of CO. People who breathe high levels of CO can develop vision problems, reduced ability to work or learn, reduced manual dexterity, and difficulty performing complex tasks. At extremely high levels, CO is poisonous and can cause death; and

WHEREAS CO contributes to the formation of smog ground-level ozone, which can trigger serious respiratory problems; and

WHEREAS Michigan is an industry-oriented state and pollution is an issue; and

WHEREAS in cities, 95% of all CO (Carbon Monoxide) emissions come from car exhaust. (Michigan DEQ 2005 Annual Air Quality Report); and

WHEREAS the EPA estimates that motor vehicle exhaust contributes about 60% of all CO emissions nationwide. (Michigan DEQ 2005 Annual Air Quality Report); and

WHEREAS in Arizona where the fee is already enacted, only 51% of CO emissions is from on-road Vehicles; and

WHEREAS vehicles emit a dangerous variety of chemical gases including NO (Nitrogen Dioxide), in which 46% of total emissions in Michigan are from on-road vehicles. (Michigan DEQ 2005 Annual Air Quality Report); and

WHEREAS in 1995, when the first versions of the program were first issued, Pennsylvania's concentration of CO average statewide was 3.5 parts per million. By 2004, it was 1.5, showing a 51% decrease statewide; THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, Michigan starts a program designed to reduce air pollution and better the air quality in Michigan by testing citizen's cars for levels of chemical emissions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, residents' cars would be put through a test that would detect the levels of chemicals in the car's emission at least once a year. If the levels are above the standard, then the owner is required to get it repaired within 60 days. Once the test is passed, the owner is to register their vehicle. The total payment required from the owner is the fee from the test, and if necessary, the costs of the repairs.

Resolution to Improve the Public Education System in Detroit

Created in the Education and Employment area by Linda Huang on Saturday, February 17, 2007 at 08:34:01 EST

WHEREAS nearly a third of students (51,000) in Detroit opt out of the public schooling system; and

WHEREAS Each missing student would cost the district \$7,450 dollars in state funds; and

WHEREAS Detroit Public Schools has a reading proficiency of approximately 50% and a math proficiency of 20-40%; and

WHEREAS ACT and SAT Participation rate and scores are significantly below schools such as Northville Public Schools; and

WHEREAS in Detroit, only 2.5% of students attend the 3 magnet schools in Detroit; and

WHEREAS in 2006, 50 school closings occurred in Detroit and are trying to close 75 this year; and

WHEREAS Detroit has the lowest graduation rate (21.7%) in America; and

WHEREAS Detroit teachers were already among the lowest paid public teachers in the state of Michigan; and

WHEREAS In Detroit, most of the students are impoverished (three-times higher poverty rate than the rest of the state); and

WHEREAS Detroit schools suffer from shortages of books, toilet paper, heat, running water, and other necessary supplies; and

WHEREAS teachers often have to make up for the public schools' shortfalls themselves and spend on average \$1,200 a year on school supplies for students; and

WHEREAS the teachers had also loaned the district five days of pay in 2005 and have yet to be paid back; and

WHEREAS forty-seven percent of Detroit's adults are functionally illiterate; and

WHEREAS three out of four children are born to single mothers. Unemployment is as high as fifty percent in some parts of Detroit - affecting and socializing the children; and

WHEREAS by the time children understand the consequences of their decisions, say to skip school, they have developed a mentality of low standards; and

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan needs to increase funding/balance the funding put into the Detroit Public Education System, focusing in on the schools that need the most help. Additional funds should be generated by a slight income tax increase of those in the top 5% of annual income; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that higher standards need to be set for students and teachers. Teachers should put together portfolios including their curriculum guides, a reflective essay, student projects and essays, and attestation of teaching accomplishment from other teachers, students, and parents and be subject to on-site observation by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (<http://www.nbpts.org/>); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED new teachers, quality educators, are needed in the system. DPS should motivate, encourage, and provide inspirational benefits to attract new educators; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED mentor-ship programs for young students need to be implemented - this would provide inspiration to young and impressionable students who may not have had a chance to see there is more to the world than their immediate society and increase their expectations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED obtaining and retaining Teach for America teachers and placing them in the right school systems.

Decreasing Crime in Detroit

Created in the Poverty, Opportunity, and Social Development area by Jared Annapolen on Wednesday, January 17, 2007 at 07:37:01 EST

WHEREAS Detroit as a city ranks as one of the largest crime stricken cities in the US; and

WHEREAS Detroit's 2005 Crime data (the most recent available as of now) states that throughout the city there were over 50,000 property crimes. In the entire US there were over 10,000,000 property crimes. That figure is equal to .5% of the entire country's property crimes; and

WHEREAS Detroit's 2005 Crime data shows that throughout the city there were over 20,000 violent crimes, including murder, rape and robberies. Throughout the entire US there were just over 1.4 million violent crimes. That figure is equal to almost 1.5% of the entire country's violent crimes; and

WHEREAS According to a 2005 poll, Detroit ranked as the second most dangerous city in the country; and

WHEREAS These figures are astonishing and call for immediate action by the government of Detroit and Michigan. These two governments need to work together in order to limit the overwhelming crime throughout the city; and

WHEREAS Detroit needs to look into adopting a similar plan to the one enacted by Mayor Rudy Giuliani of New York. This policing strategy adopted by the mayor decreased the NYC's crime by almost half in the 1990s and approximately 100% of all the continuing crime in NYC by the 2000's; and

WHEREAS Giuliani teamed up with the police commissioner Bill Bratton to adopt an aggressive enforcement strategy that was based on James Wilson's Broken Window research. This policy started by cracking down on small offenses including graffiti and turnstile jumping, in order to send the message that the city would be changing its policing strategies; and

WHEREAS Giuliani implemented a program known as CompStat which used Geographic Information Systems to map out geographic areas known for high crime rates as well as mapping out officers performances. This allowed the city to focus its resources in the areas that needed them the most. Weekly meetings were held, in which the heads of departments met with local precinct commanders and went over problems in the areas. Once problems were established, these individuals worked together to establish creative and innovative ways to handle the issues; and

WHEREAS In 2005, once Giuliani had been out of office and his programs were fully enacted, NYC was voted the safest major city in the country; and

WHEREAS Giuliani was so successful in limiting crime in the cities that his programs and variations of his programs were implemented throughout suburb police departments; THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that Detroit's mayor Kwame Kilpatrick team up with the chief of police Ella M. Bully-Cummings and look to implement a similar program to that of Giuliani and NYC; and

BE IT RESOLVED that Detroit use its \$414 million budget more effectively and put money to programs like CompStat. Giuliani saved businesses over 600 million dollars by breaking up organized crime rings and companies that are controlled by these organizations. With such huge savings by these businesses, hopefully businesses in Detroit would be willing to contribute to the program seeing that it would provide them with more money and more success; and

BE IT RESOLVED that Detroit is one of the leading cities when it comes to crime, which also leads to poverty and other problems throughout the city. The current programs in place are ineffective and change needs to occur. Giuliani proved his program could work in NYC by limiting the crime tremendously. Detroit needs to be cleaned up and this is the program that needs to be mimicked.

Resolution to Implement Programs in Saginaw Schools in an Effort to Decrease Crime Rates

Created in the Community Development and Growth area by Melissa Cooper and Lauren Weitz on Wednesday, March 14, 2007 at 07:00:31 EST

WHEREAS the city population of Saginaw, Michigan is 40,127; and

WHEREAS compared to Michigan state averages, Saginaw 's median house value is below this average, the unemployed percentage is above state average, the median age is below state average, and the percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher is significantly below state average; and

WHEREAS in 2004 there were 22 rapes, 8 robberies, 108 assaults, 214 burglaries, 663 thefts, and 72 auto thefts in Saginaw; and

WHEREAS as of 2006, Saginaw has been facing a significant increase in criminal shootings; and

WHEREAS this increase in Saginaw 's violent crime rates reveals the following: Murder, 3.47 times the national average. Rape, 3.38 times the national average. Robbery, 1.31 times the national average. Aggravated assault, 6.30 times the national average. Arson, 4.92 times the national average. Overall violent crime, 4.55 times the national average; and

WHEREAS 20% of the population of Saginaw are not high school graduates, and 75% do not have their bachelor's degree or higher; and

WHEREAS high school dropouts commit about 75 percent of crimes in the area;
THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT implementation of a program in the local middle and high schools involving the Saginaw County police officers. This program will educate the children on these serious crime rates and offer instruction on how to prevent involvement with crime;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Saginaw public high schools make after school activities and community involvement a mandatory activity (only excused by work obligations). Therefore, the students will be more involved with the school and community and they will be spending less time getting involved in dangerous activities.

Reversal of Decision to Prohibit Providing Health Benefits to Same-Sex Partners

Created in the Justice and Civil Liberties area by Lindsey Faivus on Thursday, February 08, 2007 at 03:10:41 EST

WHEREAS on February 2nd, 2007 the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that public universities and state and local governments would violate the state constitution by using public tax dollars to provide health benefits to same-sex partners; and

WHEREAS the unanimous appeals court ruling reverses a 2005 decision by an Ingham County Judge who allowed public employers to provide these benefits; and

WHEREAS the constitutional amendment passed by Michigan voters in November 2004 made the union between a man and a woman the only agreement recognized as a marriage “or similar union for any purpose.” It was that clause that led to court to fight over the benefits; and

WHEREAS state and local governmental agencies, represented by the Michigan Corrections Organization, Michigan State Employees Association, Service Employees International Union, AFSCME and UAW, had successfully bargained for a jobs benefits package that was scheduled for ratification by the State Civil Service Commission on December 15, 2004; and

WHEREAS the package included medical benefits and family medical leave for their families, including domestic partners and their children; and

WHEREAS Governor Granholm, announced in December that a “legal cloud” exists in terms of interpretation of the language of the state constitutional amendment which limits marriage to a man and woman, and that domestic partnership benefits for employees and their families would be withheld pending a judicial decision; and

WHEREAS Attorney General Michael Cox issued an opinion that the marriage amendment bars the City of Kalamazoo from offering domestic partnership benefits in future contracts; and

WHEREAS although this opinion is not binding in court, the couples who will lose benefits fear that without a court decision, they are in danger of losing or being denied the same health insurance and benefits that their co-workers’ families receive; and

WHEREAS attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan and 21 couples are appealing to the state Supreme Court and if unsuccessful will sue in Federal Court; and

WHEREAS all of the 21 couples name in the lawsuit currently rely on domestic partnership benefits for health care coverage. Six of the couples have dependent children;

three have re-located to Michigan because the employer offered such benefits and several specifically chose their place of employment on the basis of the benefits; and

WHEREAS the plaintiffs include, “Darby, who works for Clinton/Ingham County Department of Mental Health, and his partner Ken Syberski; Judith Block, a clinical psychologist, and, Kathleen Poelker; Jerome Post, a labor relations specialist, and Paul Renwick; Gregg Pizzi, a forensic psychologist, and Adnan Ayoub; Tom and Dennis Patrick, parents of two children and foster parents to a child with developmental disabilities; Kathleen Moltz, a physician at Wayne State University, and Dahlia Schwartz; Dorothea Anagnostopoulos and Jill Fuller; Wade Carlson, a city treasurer, and Kevin McMann; Jolinda Jach, a systems analyst, and Barbara Ramber; Debra Harrah, a protective services worker, and Michelle Corwin; Lori Curry, an Family Independence Agency foster care/protective services worker and Gwen Stokes; Courtney Chapin, a Field Career Consultant at Michigan State University, and Mary M. Brisbois; Scott Dennis, a University of Michigan Graduate Library librarian, and Jim Etzkorn; Ty Hiither, a computer systems specialist, and Meghan Belanger; Peter Hammer, a law professor at Wayne State University; Alexandra Stern, an assistant professor at University of Michigan, and Terri Koreck; A.T. Miller, an employee of University of Michigan, and Craig Kukuk; Gary Lindsay, a secretary at Michigan State University, and Michael Chapman; Michael Falk, a University of Michigan engineering professor, and Matt Scott; Joanne Beemon, a state worker at the Forensic Center, and Carol Borgeson; and Kitty O’Neil and Becky Allen who both work at Michigan State University (<http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/relationships/12192prs20050321.html>)”; and

WHEREAS Without legal protection, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) families are not offered equal rights, thus putting them at risk, since:

Medical providers can prevent parents from authorizing emergency medical treatment for their children. LGBT partners are not automatically considered next of kin for the purpose of hospital visits or medical decisions;

Employers can refuse to grant family medical or bereavement leave for an employee’s partner or children. Employers may refuse to insure an employee’s partner and children. Children of LGBT parents are not entitled to both parents’ disability;

Pension or social security benefits. If a family is lucky enough to receive domestic partner benefits, federal and state taxes must be paid on their value. LGBT families have difficulty getting life insurance because a partner has “no insurable interest” in the other;

Because they cannot marry, lesbian and gay couples cannot live together in government-subsidized senior housing;

WHEREAS this could have a significant impact on public universities who will now be unable to compete for staff who will no longer be offered benefits, “It’s hugely disappointing, said Gary Lindsay, and office assistant at Michigan State University whose partner of seventeen years gets health coverage along with family medical and

bereavement leave. “That’s one of the primary reasons for working at this university- the fact that they are open to people’s diversity and they strive to treat people fairly” (<http://www.post-trib.com/lifestyles/241402,SameSex.article>); and

WHEREAS Citizens for Protection of Marriage, the organization driving the constitutional amendment, consistently advised voters, that the intent and purpose of the proposed amendment was to limit marriage to a man and a woman and would not affect domestic partnership of same-sex partnership benefits. Their widely distributed brochure explains the limits of the amendment as follows, “Proposal 2 is only about marriage. Marriage is a union between husband and wife. Proposal 2 will keep it that way. This is not about rights or benefits or how people choose to live their lives. This has to do with family, children and the way people are. It merely settles the question once and for all what marriage is for families today and future generations”; and

WHEREAS Tens of thousands of Michigan public-sector employees are eligible for such same-sex benefits under collective bargaining agreements; and

WHEREAS At the University of Michigan, about 200 same-sex partners are collecting such benefits. At Eastern Michigan University, 19 domestic partners are affected; and

WHEREAS Private companies such as major automakers, banks and others are able to provide these benefits and are not affected; and

WHEREAS The ruling could also affect unmarried heterosexual couples; and

WHEREAS Twenty-seven states have passed constitutional amendments that define marriage as the union between a man and a woman. Michigan, will be the first state to remove health-care benefits from the same-sex spouses as the result of such an amendment; and

WHEREAS Matt Coles, director of the ACLU’s Lesbian and Gay Rights Project in New York City said, “the ruling could hurt Michigan’s competitiveness. Particularly in the high-tech and academia where there is real competition to attract the best people, this one of the things that people check out, and not just gay people (<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070203/POLITICS/702030381>); THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that the state court declare that “Proposal 2” does not prohibit domestic partnership benefits offered by public employers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that benefits and health-insurance be offered equally to all employees despite their sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS On February 2nd, 2007 the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that public universities and state and local governments would violate the state constitution by providing health benefits to same-sex partners; and

WHEREAS The constitutional amendment passed by Michigan voters in November 2004, made the union between a man and a woman the only agreement recognized as a marriage “or similar union for any purpose.” It was that clause that led to court to fight over the benefits

WHEREAS This unanimous appeals court ruling reverses a 2005 decision by an Ingham County Judge who allowed public employers to provide the benefits; and

WHEREAS Kary Moss, executive director of ACLU of Michigan said, “It was never the intention of Michigan voters who approved the marriage amendment to take health care benefits away from Michigan families” (<http://www.easternecho.com/cgi-bin/story.cgi?11622>); and

WHEREAS The court ruled, "Michigan's public universities are bound by the public policy mandate of the people as reflected in Article 1, section 25"; and

WHEREAS The Court also rejected the arguments of the city of Ann Arbor that it has statutory authority to provide same-sex domestic partnership benefits; and

WHEREAS Attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan said twenty-one gay couples will appeal to the state Supreme Court and if unsuccessful will sue in federal court; and

WHEREAS This could have a significant impact on public universities who will now be unable to compete for staff who will no longer be offered benefits, “It’s hugely disappointing, said Gary Lindsay, and office assistant at Michigan State University whose partner of seventeen years gets health coverage along with family medical and bereavement leave. “That’s one of the primary reasons for working at this university- the fact that they are open to people’s diversity and they strive to treat people fairly” (<http://www.post-trib.com/lifestyles/241402,SameSex.article>); and

WHEREAS employers offer benefits to employees and their dependents in order to recruit and retain the very best faculty and staff; and

WHEREAS Providing benefits also demonstrates a commitment to an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of the community; and

WHEREAS Tens of thousands of Michigan public-sector employees are eligible for such same-sex benefits under collective bargaining agreements; and

WHEREAS At the University of Michigan, about 200 same-sex partners are collecting such benefits. At Eastern Michigan University, 19 domestic partners are affected; and

WHEREAS Private companies such as major automakers, banks and others are able to provide these benefits and are not affected; and

WHEREAS The ruling also affects unmarried heterosexual couples; and

WHEREAS Twenty-seven states have passed constitutional amendments that define marriage as the union between a man and a woman. Michigan, as of Friday however, will be the first state to remove health-care benefits from the same-sex spouses as the result of such an amendment; and

WHEREAS Matt Coles, director of the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project in New York City said, "the ruling could hurt Michigan's competitiveness. Particularly in the high-tech and academia where there is real competition to attract the best people, this one of the things that people check out, and not just gay people (<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070203/POLITICS/702030381>); and

WHEREAS Institutions affected by the ruling include the University of Michigan, and Michigan State, Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Northern Michigan, and Wayne State Universities; THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, this ruling is appealed and a petition is drafted and signed by 10% of those who voted in the 2004 election; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, advocates lobby legislature to revoke this ruling and allow public institutions to provide the benefits they have been able to provide in the past.

Resolution to Implement Anti-Crime and Anti-Drug Educational Program in Detroit Public Schools

Created in the Education and Employment area by Julie Ross and Jon Levy on Tuesday, January 23, 2007 at 09:20:25 EST

WHEREAS Detroit is currently listed as the most dangerous city with a population over 500,000 by the Morgan Quitno's Statistics; and

WHEREAS the homicide count in Detroit was 487 for the year 2006; and

WHEREAS Detroit is the second most murderous city in the United States; and

WHEREAS over 56,000 people were arrested in Detroit in 2005; and

WHEREAS about 1,500 more inmates are being housed in state prisons this year than officials anticipated, for a record-high total of more than 51,000; and

WHEREAS Michigan's per capita incarceration rate is the nation's 11th highest; and

WHEREAS Michigan's annual prison budget is \$1.9 billion; and

WHEREAS Michigan's incarceration rate is 40% higher than those of its neighboring states; and

WHEREAS Michigan spends more on prisons than public universities; and

WHEREAS over 10% of incarcerations in MI were related to drug offenses in 2001; and

WHEREAS there is currently a program called Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities; THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that the state of Michigan work to improve this Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities program. It should include speakers such as ex-convicts, police officers and other people who will have an impact on these kids and educate them about the consequences of committing crimes and doing drugs. The program should also include field trips to jails, prisons, rehab facilities, etc. so the kids get a first-hand experience of what will happen to them as a result of bad choices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the program include mentors from surrounding colleges and universities that meet with these kids one-on-one on a monthly basis. This will provide kids with mentors to help them find constructive things to do and just to have a role model in general.

Resolution to Create a Tax Credit for Alternative Energy Users

Created in the Environment, Energy, Science and Technology area by Shayne Clouthier on Monday, February 26, 2007 at 02:40:16 EST

WHEREAS fossil fuels are becoming limited; and

WHEREAS the fact that 66% of all damage done to the ozone that is man made can be reduced; and

WHEREAS documentation illustrates that man made green house gasses have increased the hole in the ozone layer; and

WHEREAS Hydrogen can be manufactured by using water, wind and sun and is a very secure, inexhaustible, emission-free fuel for consumer electronics, heat and electricity production, and the next generation of highway vehicles; and

WHEREAS in Orange County, the amount of alternate fuel usage in transportation is only 5%; and

WHEREAS using alternative energy will reduce this damage because cleaner energy sources will not have a negative effect on the ozone layer; and

WHEREAS developing, manufacturing and maintaining alternative fuel technologies will lead to new jobs and greater economic opportunity in Michigan; and

WHEREAS certain alternative fuels, such as ethanol which costs 7-10% less, depending on which is used, can save money for current gas consumers; and

WHEREAS consumers may choose alternative fuel more often if the state of Michigan rewarded a tax credit to those citizens/consumers in Michigan who replace/d gas with any alternative fuel option; and

WHEREAS in Montana the state has established a tax return of 25% or up to \$500.00 to property owners for all alternative energy bills paid to alternative energy companies by home/property/company owners; and

WHEREAS in Oregon, a tax credit policy was made that qualified users of alternate energy for: clothes washers, wastewater heat recovery, combo space and water heater systems, solar water heating, wind systems, alternative fuels, hybrid vehicles; and

WHEREAS qualifying alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) purchased or placed into service between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2010 may be eligible for a federal income tax credit of up to \$4,000; and

WHEREAS it can cost \$1 or less per gallon to use used frying oil as an alternative fuel;
THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that a tax credit be enacted for all alternative energy users, whether automotive or house. A summary based on the dollar sum of their annual usage will qualify one for a tax credit of 15% of total from the state of Michigan. The credit will increase to 25% for two automobiles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any increase of cash going into the pockets of people will increase more spendable money, increasing the economy, and after more people take advantage of this, and more money gets spent in the state, an increase in the economy is likely to happen, a possible small amount of green house pollution that is man made, and if more states were to adopt this, than all the above will also be likely to increase.