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# MICHIGAN STUDENT CAUCUS

Platform and Service Actions

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<http://michiganstudentcaucus.org>

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# Education and the Arts

## **Resolution to Increase the number of minority students that attend college**

Authors: Tracy Barnett and Joshua Stumacher

WHEREAS USA Today has reported that "47.3% of white high school graduates ages 18 to 24 attend college, vs. 41.1% of black and 35.2% of Hispanic high school graduates" ([http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-10-29-minority-enrollment\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-10-29-minority-enrollment_x.htm)); therefore these minority groups are less likely to attend college than the majority of students, and;

WHEREAS USA Today has reported "Students of color often have limited access to the courses they need ... (and) college guidance" ([http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-10-29-minority-enrollment\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-10-29-minority-enrollment_x.htm)). In turn, minority students are hindered in their opportunities to advance into college level education, and;

WHEREAS Minority students also don't continue onto college because they lack sufficient funds to do so ([http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-10-29-minority-enrollment\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-10-29-minority-enrollment_x.htm)), and;

WHEREAS "The Early College High School Initiative is a bold approach based on the principle that academic rigor combined with the opportunity to save time and money, is a powerful motivator for students to work hard and meet serious intellectual challenges" (<http://www.earlycolleges.org/>), and;

WHEREAS A program called the Early College High School Initiative allows "low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree—tuition free (<http://www.earlycolleges.org/>)." This program allows these students who normally would not matriculate onto college to conclude their education with both a high school diploma and college degree, and;

WHEREAS There are only eight programs of this kind in the state of Michigan, all of which are targeted towards gearing students—through various internships offered—to take future occupations in the field of health care, and;

WHEREAS "In 2007, more than 900 students graduated from 17 early college high schools around the country. Their achievements far surpass those of their peers from traditional high schools serving similar populations. Over 65 percent of the graduates were accepted to four-year colleges. Others have chosen to complete an Associate's degree by spending a fifth year at their early college high school. More than 85 percent graduated with substantial college credit. More than 250 early college high school graduates earned merit-based college scholarships. Four earned the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship, awarded to 1,000 high-achieving, low-income students each year (<http://www.earlycolleges.org/overview.html#how10>)," and;

WHEREAS When students enter early college high school, they are reading and performing math below their grade level. By the time they start taking college classes in the 11th grade, they are out performing college students in reading and math, and;

WHEREAS Nationally, the average college graduation rate is 25-30%; 85% of students who complete at least 26 credits in early college high school graduate from college, and;

WHEREAS Students can graduate early college high school with their high school diploma, field experience through clinical internships in the health profession, and up to 60 credits towards their undergraduate degree paid for by the state . This program works; the combination of a new environment, the expectation of college success, and having access to better resources gives these students what they need to succeed.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED That the state of Michigan implement more early college high school programs into its public education system based on the success of the eight programs currently existing in Michigan, and;

BE IT RESOLVED That these programs should exist where they can be accessed by high-need students in low-income areas such as Detroit, Ypsilanti, Pontiac, Saginaw, Grand Rapids and Flint, and;

BE IT RESOLVED Similar, to health care, Computer/Information Sciences is a career field with high demand for personnel; therefore, new early college high school programs should offer internships to students in this high demand field  
(<https://www.ecampustours.com/careerexploration/jobsearchandinterviews/jobsandinternshipsbygeographicareas.htm>), and;

BE IT RESOLVED That the state of Michigan establish connections with Computer/Information Sciences employers to fund the cost of early college high school tuition for students. These employers will be enticed to help since they will ultimately benefit from the experience these students will have gained from their training and internships in this high-demand career field, and;

BE IT RESOLVED That students enrolled in the early college high school program should take the standardized tests mandated by the state of Michigan to ensure that their level of education is on par with that of students enrolled in Michigan's K12 public education system, and;

BE IT RESOLVED That colleges and universities will benefit from implementing an early college high school program because early college high school students who matriculate maintain high GPA's and have high graduation rates; therefore, these students' success in college will only add to the prestige of colleges and universities.

## **Resolution to Increase Spending on Early Childhood Education in Michigan**

Author: Jason Krochak

WHEREAS Spending on programs designed to help make all children ready for school did go up this past fiscal year by about \$7.7 million, but overall spending remains a third lower than it was in 2001; and

WHEREAS The state's need to cut \$440 million out of the existing education budget makes it unlikely more money will be pumped into programs designed to help infants to 4-year-olds this year; and

WHEREAS National statistics indicate about 30 percent of children are not ready for school when they start kindergarten, and of those, 80 percent eventually drop out of school; and

WHEREAS Research studies have demonstrated that necessary investment in the first five years of life pays high dividends both to the public and to the individual; and

WHEREAS For each dollar spent before age five, there is a \$17.00 rate of return that is realized through increased success in high school, higher earning employment opportunities and a decreased likelihood of incarceration; and

WHEREAS In Michigan, funding to provide better quality day care for low-income children has dropped: The state in 2003 was spending \$499.2 million on child care subsidies that helped poor families pay for good child care while the parents worked or went to school, that number dropped to \$462 million for 2007, a 7.5 percent reduction; and

WHEREAS Michigan ranks dead last of all US States in access to preschool programs for 3-year-olds; and

WHEREAS North Carolina now puts \$200 million a year into a program called Smart Start that combines public and private dollars. Since the program got under way in 1993, the state has gone from being one of the worst states when it came to school readiness to one of the best.

WHEREAS This is essential to Michigan 2018 because educating the youth today will lead to future success of the state.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan invest more money now in early childhood services for low-income families by reallocating the Michigan Department of Education dollars. Additionally, organizations must lobby this cause in hopes of getting funding from corporate foundations. This year the ECIC is looking at a kindergarten readiness assessment with dollars from the Kellogg Foundation.

BE IT RESOLVED The Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) be one of the organizations that the government grants money to and/or works with on issues.

BE IT RESOLVED This increased money will help parents get children more prepared for school, as well as go to before- and after-school programs.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan's increased committed funds will have similar effects to NC's Smart Start, which has improved day care for children up to age 5, makes sure young children get immunizations and health screening tests, helps families pay for high-quality child care and gives parents the tools to read to their children.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan's test scores will increase similarly to how NC's did from 1993 to 2000, when the state had the highest gain in test scores in their public schools of any state in America.

BE IT RESOLVED Funds will allow community leaders to work together, to create the kinds of helpful information, services and resources that parents want and need.

BE IT RESOLVED The government commit money to training and consultation of community leaders about what works to improve the health, development and learning of young children.

# Health

## **Improving Food and Nutrition in Michigan Schools**

Author: Katie Balbirer

WHEREAS The Michigan State Board of Education recognizes and acknowledges that schools cannot achieve effective education if their students, teachers and staff members are not “physically, mentally, and socially healthy”

WHEREAS Establishing healthy eating behaviors during school years can be an important and significant influence to short and long term disease prevention and health promotion

WHEREAS Because of excess calories being stored as body fat, children who eat more calories than their bodies are at an increased risk for becoming overweight and obese in childhood and adulthood

WHEREAS The 1973 Food and Nutrition Statement only provided guidelines for elementary schools students, but because of the current health issues of students of various ages, the updated policy of 2003 encourages all Michigan school buildings to adopt the policy

WHEREAS Folsom Cordova Unified School District in Sacramento, California no longer is operating at a loss after it focused on health eating and increased the annual budget by 105% because of increased food services revenue

WHEREAS Iowa City, Iowa schools partnered with Swiss Valley Farms to introduce milk in its water and sports drink vending machines, resulting in an increase in sales of 42% while pop sales dropped 58% and the district also installed cheese and yogurt vending machines

WHEREAS Jefferson County Schools in Louisville, Kentucky are replacing soft drinks and non-nutritious snacks sold in vending machines with lower fat foods and fruit drinks. They expect that having healthier vending machines on during the day will increase sales and offset any losses of the \$1 million generated annually from vending.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED That all elementary, and junior highs and high schools implement policies such as some of the above schools in other states

BE IT RESOLVED Implementing a healthy food and beverage policy, schools can be provided with the information, resources and tools needed to offer more healthy food and drinks to both students and staff members.

BE IT RESOLVED If a healthy food policy was initiated, food and drinks that competed with the policy would be discouraged in schools and complying food and beverages would be predominate in all school venues

BE IT RESOLVED These venues include but may not be limited to vending machines, concession stands, fundraisers, classroom snacks, school stores, school parties, after school and in school activities, and school meetings

BE IT RESOLVED Schools should offer whole grain and enriched grain products that are high in fiber, and lower in fats and sugars

BE IT RESOLVED Serving sizes should be consistent with the US Department of Agriculture standards

BE IT RESOLVED Fresh fruit and vegetables should be offered as well as non or low fat options for milk, yogurt, and cheeses

BE IT RESOLVED All schools in Michigan should implement policies similar to Bay City Central and Western high schools that offer sandwiches and other healthy options that include fresh fruits and vegetables and low fat meats and dairy products

BE IT RESOLVED All schools in Michigan should implement policies similar to Howell High School that offers vending machines with only water and juice

BE IT RESOLVED All schools in Michigan should implement policies similar to Plymouth-Canton schools that now bake the French fries instead of deep frying. Salads are also offered and food service officials meet with parents on a regular basis to discuss the creation of healthier menu items

BE IT RESOLVED School officials get involved with The School Nutrition Association of Michigan (SNAM) in order to work with experts and develop healthier food options that students will enjoy. SNAM tries to communicate with state legislators in order to develop programs for schools that will be cost efficient and effective

BE IT RESOLVED Schools work with parents and families to teach children how to make healthy choices on their own

### **Resolution to increase taxes and/or prices of cigarettes in the state of Michigan**

Author: Jocelyn Kahn

WHEREAS Whereas Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body; causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general.<sup>1</sup> The adverse health effects from cigarette smoking account for an estimated 438,000 deaths, or nearly 1 of every 5 deaths, each year in the United States.<sup>2,3</sup> More deaths are caused each year by tobacco use than by all deaths from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined.<sup>2,4</sup> ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

WHEREAS Whereas: Smoking causes coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Cigarette smokers are 2–4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers.

WHEREAS There are approximately 4000 chemicals in cigarette smoke, many of them toxic. The ingredients in cigarettes affect everything from the internal functioning of organs to the efficiency of the body's immune system. The effects of cigarette smoking are destructive and widespread

WHEREAS The cigarette industry is over a hundred million dollar a year industry

WHEREAS Higher cigarette prices, as well as increased taxes on cigarettes in the sate of michigna, would cause consumption to slide as much as 25% over the next 10 ears.

WHEREAS Effective July 1, 2004, the cigarette tax rate is 10 cents per individual stick or \$2.00 per pack of 20 cigarettes.

WHEREAS Cigarette tax proceeds are distributed as follows: Cigarette proceeds: School Aid Fund 41.620% General Fund 19.7625% Healthy Michigan Fund 3.750% Health and Safety Fund 2.438% Wayne County Indigent Health Care 0.555% Medicaid Benefits Trust Fund 31.875% Cigar, non-cigarette smoking tobacco, and smokeless tobacco proceeds: Medicaid Benefits Trust Fund 75.0% General Fund 25.0%

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Cigarette smoking is harmful to the health and by increasing the tax on cigarettes or increasing the price of cigarettes themselves, it could potentially lead to a decrease in cigarette smoking in the state of michigan.

BE IT RESOLVED An increase in the tax will allow more money to be distributed to the above funds.

**Resolution to make healthcare affordable for Michigan residents**

Author: David Weisfeld

WHEREAS Last year, over half a million Michigan residents spent over 25% of their annual family income on health insurance and prescription drugs.

WHEREAS Also, another one and a half million Michigan residents spent between 10% and 25% of their annual family income on the same things.

WHEREAS Families USA said that it is unaffordable for middle-class and working-class families to support themselves and pay more than 10% of their annual family income to health care.

WHEREAS About ten years ago, a family insurance policy cost about \$5,000 a year. Now it costs almost twice that amount.

WHEREAS Healthcare is described by the state as a “a primary public concern,” but it is not available to all people of the state.

WHEREAS More than a million Michigan residents are not insured and even thousands upon thousands more are losing coverage with the current economic crisis and unemployment situation.

WHEREAS About one fifth of all money spent in the United States last year was related to health problems.

WHEREAS The number of uninsured Americans reached 47 million in 2006, and it continues to rise.

WHEREAS 18,000 adults between the ages of 25 and 64 died in 2000 because they did not have health insurance.

WHEREAS Subsequently, The Urban Institute estimated that at least 22,000 adults in the same age group died in 2006 because they did not have health insurance.

WHEREAS In 2006, there were nearly 5,347,000 people between the ages of 25 and 64 living in Michigan. Of those, 13.4 percent were uninsured.<sup>2</sup> Uninsured Michigan citizens are sicker and die sooner than their insured counterparts.

WHEREAS Families USA estimates that nearly two working-age Michigan citizens die each day due to lack of health insurance (approximately 650 people in 2006).

WHEREAS Between 2000 and 2006, the estimated number of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 years old in Michigan who died because they did not have health insurance was more than 4,200.

WHEREAS Across the United States, in 2006, twice as many people died from lack of health insurance as died from homicide.

WHEREAS Uninsured adults are 25 percent more likely to die prematurely than adults with private health insurance

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Health care should be available to all Michigan residents and should be affordable.

BE IT RESOLVED There should be no difference in the treatment given, whether the person is rich or poor, job or no job.

BE IT RESOLVED Health care should be accessible and not a burden on a person, no one should be afraid to get healthcare because they know they won't be able to afford it.

BE IT RESOLVED Governor Granholm has shown her support for programs such as "Health Care for Michigan" and "MichUHCAN" but will not finance it through the government.

BE IT RESOLVED The money that the U.S. national government is spending on healthcare is going no where. The state governments need to take responsibility for its own people and if the national government has no solution, then the state governments should make sure it does.

BE IT RESOLVED I propose that the government should donate a portion of taxes, not adding new taxes to the people (except on drugs, or cigarettes, like Jocelyn Kahn is proposing), but instead of using the money for highways (which the national government helps to fund) or for other things that may make life easier for the citizens of the state, will not help save them or improve their lives dramatically.

BE IT RESOLVED I believe the majority of all taxes going to the state should go to education, health, and the people to help run the state (government officials, state troopers, teachers, etc.).

# Poverty

## **Resolution to institute free literacy classes for adults in the state of Michigan**

Author: Sara Tumen

WHEREAS According to id21, a development research reporting service, 1.2 billion poverty stricken people cannot read or write, "restricting their ability to carry out every day activities such as reading sign posts, understanding medicine labels and machinery instructions, confirming commercial transactions and avoiding being cheated;"

WHEREAS The United States Department of Education conducted its International Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) in 1995 and found that 20.7% of Americans function at a "level 1" literacy rate while 25.9% function at "level 2;"

WHEREAS Individuals at "level 1" usually cannot "locate an intersection on a street map, identify and enter background information on a social security card application or calculate total costs of purchase from an order form;"

WHEREAS According to the United States Department of Labor at least 50% of the unemployed are functionally illiterate;

WHEREAS Analysis of the 1988 National Adult Literacy Survey estimates that 43% of American adults at the lowest level of literacy live in poverty, compared to only 4% of those at the highest level of literacy;

WHEREAS Adults at the lowest level of literacy earn less and work fewer weeks per year than those at the highest level. In Michigan, according to Michigan Literacy Inc., welfare recipients with low literary skills work 11 weeks/year compared to the 29 weeks per year for those with stronger literacy skills;

WHEREAS According to the State of Oregon Employment Department, adults who have not received a high school diploma are unemployed at nearly 3 times the rate of their peers with high school diplomas;

WHEREAS The National Assessment of Educational Progress' 1999 long-term assessment found a correlation between children's reading scores and the educational level of their parents;

WHEREAS The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study illustrates that less than .5% of kindergarteners passed the sight-word reading proficiency level who had mothers with less than a high school diploma;

WHEREAS 18% of Michigan's adult population is at "level 1" literacy;

WHEREAS In order to stay competitive in the global economy, employers need workers who can read, write, compute, solve problems, and communicate well;

WHEREAS Welfare recipients ages 17-21 read, on average, at the 6th grade level;

WHEREAS When teens drop out of school they are likely to drop into the welfare system;

WHEREAS Almost 50% of adults on welfare do not have a high school diploma or a GED;

WHEREAS Among adults in the state of Michigan with low literary skills, 43% live in poverty and 17% receive food stamps;

WHEREAS 90% of fortune 100 executives expressed concern in a recent survey that low literacy is hurting their productivity and profitability;

WHEREAS Most current literacy programs are offered to Michigan's youth and are sectionalized by county;

WHEREAS Most literacy programs in Michigan do not have the funds to pay for support staff and materials;

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED That free literacy classes be offered for the public in community centers, libraries, churches, and synagogues around Michigan

BE IT RESOLVED That with literacy classes available, illiterate unemployed or people with vocational jobs will gain skills necessary for higher paying careers

BE IT RESOLVED That illiterate people will learn to read, increasing their children's chances at success, ending the poverty cycle.

BE IT RESOLVED The state should offer grants to the 15 public universities in Michigan to create programs where college students can teach literacy classes to adults 21 years and older for credit

BE IT RESOLVED Universities should offer 2 part classes, one semester where students are taught to tutor and one semester where students actually tutor

BE IT RESOLVED Programs will target poverty stricken people who visit unemployment offices and work with social service agents

BE IT RESOLVED That more citizens obtaining higher paying jobs will contribute to the productive domestic economy and keep United States dollars internal

BE IT RESOLVED That more literate citizens will mean less dependent on government funded support

### **Increasing after school programs for children in Michigan who live below the poverty line.**

Authors: Daniel Fetner and Jason Javer

WHEREAS According to US Census Bureau figures released August 30, Detroit is now the poorest city in America, with fully one-third of its residents living below the official federal poverty level, a derisory \$19,157 in household income for a family of four. Nearly one half of the city's children, 47.8 percent, live below the poverty level.

WHEREAS Nine-year-olds growing up in low-income communities are already three grade levels behind their peers in high-income communities.

WHEREAS Detroit public schools are ranked last in graduation rates among the top fifty public school districts in the nation.

WHEREAS The long-term negative effects of children living in poverty run the gamut from poor health to low wages

WHEREAS Individuals aged Under 5 years are witness to the most percent living in poverty in Michigan, having 15.6 percent of the population in this age category living in poverty

WHEREAS Detroit has roughly 48 percent of children in poverty, and the state legislature and Congress might make matters worse by cutting programs for poor and low-income families in next year's budget.

WHEREAS Six school-age Michigan children in every ten are in households where both parents or the only parent are in the workforce. On a regular basis, 27 percent of Michigan children and teens are responsible for taking care of themselves.

WHEREAS The single hour most likely for a teen to commit a violent crime-homicide, rape, robbery, or assault-is between 3 PM and 4 PM.

WHEREAS For every \$1 spent on high-quality child care programs, taxpayers can expect \$4 in benefits, according to a recent benefit-cost analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan Legislature must significantly increase funding for after-school programs.

BE IT RESOLVED Substantially increase federal funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

BE IT RESOLVED Restore Child Day Care Fund eligibility to 200% of federal poverty level.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan Legislature must make a law that for all school districts with 20% or more of their students under the poverty line, the school district must provide some kind of free after school program until 6pm. The funding for the program will come from taxes collected by the Michigan legislature.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan Legislature must allocate more money towards public schools so that schools can put this money towards after school sports, clubs, etc.

BE IT RESOLVED After school jobs be stressed to young teens because it will keep them out of trouble, and money can be earned and put away for savings.

### **Resolution to Increase Michigan's Minimum Wage**

Author: David Rothstein

WHEREAS A report by the Michigan League for Human Services says that 13.3 percent of Michigan residents - or 1.3 million - were in poverty in 2006, up from 9.4 percent five years earlier.

WHEREAS Families are earning less. The median household income of \$47,182 is down 7.5 percent since 2001, when adjusted for inflation. It is also below the national average of \$48,451.

WHEREAS Nearly 30,000 homes were in some stage of foreclosure in the third quarter of 2007, representing one of every 102 households. That's nearly double the national rate.

WHEREAS About 52 percent of Michigan renters are paying at least 30 percent of their household income on rent, including utilities. That's up 12 percent from 40 percent in 2001.

WHEREAS There were 450,000 fewer Michigan residents covered by private health insurance plans in 2005-06 than in 2000-01.

WHEREAS Michigan's minimum wage laws cover employers who employ two or more persons, 16 years-of-age or older and certain employees in federally-covered businesses because the state minimum wage rate for those employees will be higher than the federally required rate.

WHEREAS The current Michigan minimum wage is \$7.15 per hour, with plans to increase to \$7.40 per hour on July 1, 2008.

WHEREAS Under the current Michigan statute, tipped workers may be paid as little as \$2.65 per hour. Workers under the age of 18 may be paid \$6.08 per hour. These will also slightly increase on July 1, 2008.

WHEREAS The federal minimum wage will increase on July 24, 2008, from \$5.85 to \$6.55 per hour. The federal minimum wage covers the employees of businesses engaged in interstate commerce or companies with annual earnings over \$500,000. Most employers in the U.S. are covered under the federal law.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Due to the increasing amount of poverty in Michigan, the minimum wage be increased an additional 25 cents to \$7.65 an hour on July 1, 2008. This may not seem like much, but over the course of a year it is over \$500 dollars.

BE IT RESOLVED "Tipped" employees base wage will increase from \$2.65 to \$2.95 per hour provided they report in writing tips which when added to \$2.95 will equal or exceed the state's minimum hourly rate.

BE IT RESOLVED The Michigan legislature shall revisit this issue every two years and properly evaluate the level of poverty in the state. Based on this information the legislature will be able to vote on whether or not to increase the state's minimum wage.

# Environment and Science

## **Proposal to Improve Recycling in Michigan**

Author: Katie Balbirer

WHEREAS Michigan is nationally recognized as a leader in conservation and environmental protection, but the state is far behind its neighboring states and the rest of the nation in its solid waste recycling efforts.

WHEREAS Michigan's recycling rate of 20% is lower than the other Great Lakes states (30%) and the U.S. (27 %) averages.

WHEREAS Michigan's recycling rate decreased by 20 % from 1994 to 2004, while every other state in the region had at least a marginal increase in recycling.

WHEREAS The per capita recycling rate (0.38 tons/year/person) has remained almost stagnant and continues to be below the regional and national averages (0.44 and 0.46, respectively).

WHEREAS Unlike many states, Michigan does not collect or require reporting of municipal solid waste recycling data; therefore, Michigan does not have the ability to measure the state's recycling performance or its handling, collection, transport, and marketing of recyclable materials.

WHEREAS Michigan's recycling program is funded at a fraction of the level of other Great Lakes state programs and ranks 41st out of 48 states that reported their allocations for recycling.

WHEREAS Only 37 percent of Michigan residents have access to curbside recycling, the lowest percentage of all the states in the region

WHEREAS Michigan has not invested in developing or sustaining markets for recycled materials, and some businesses have to import recycled materials from other states because of the inconsistency in local supplies.

WHEREAS Polling shows that Michigan residents overwhelmingly support the idea of comprehensive recycling—90 % of survey respondents indicate that they are "very" or "somewhat" likely to support such a program. Residents also say that they are willing to pay for a comprehensive recycling program.

WHEREAS Recycling is not mandated in the state of Michigan and it is up to the discretion of individual communities to initiate recycling programs.

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** There is much that Michigan can do to increase recycling, and the substantial economic benefits the state receives from the recycling and reuse sector—including jobs, support to the manufacturing sector, and tax revenues collected by state and local governments— should be an incentive to do so.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan has an estimated 2,242 establishments in the recycling and reuse industry with receipts of \$11.6 billion, a payroll of about \$2.06 billion, and employment of 61,700.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Increasing the recycling rate in Michigan from the current level of 20 % (2002 estimate) to the average of the other Great Lakes states (30 percent), would produce a total of 6,810 to 12,986 jobs, approximately \$155 to \$300 million in income, and approximately \$1.8 to \$3.9 billion in receipts (accounting for multiplier effects). This additional income would generate about \$12-\$22 million in state taxes.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Michigan could also implement a market development program for recycling, provide grants to communities for collection programs, or provide tax incentives to businesses to use recycled feedstock in manufacturing products.

BE IT RESOLVED Setting clear and sometimes ambitious local and statewide goals is important when starting a program, but providing funding and tools for communities to meet those targets will translate to the most success

BE IT RESOLVED The percentage of residents with curbside recycling is increased by local programs and initiatives.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan residents are educated about the benefits of recycling through local programs in order to increase the incentive participate in recycling initiatives.

BE IT RESOLVED Communities in Michigan look towards Ann Arbor's recycling program as an example. Recycle Ann Arbor has curbside pickup and also offers a place for residents to bring hazardous waste.

BE IT RESOLVED Recycle Ann Arbor also offers free recycling pickup for offices and encourages residents to come together to clean up the city of Ann Arbor. Similar types of programs should be implemented in other cities to encourage business to recycle and community members to come together to benefit their local environment.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan communities are encouraged to initiate and make the long term investment in recycling programs. This encouragement should come from neighborhood communities that have implemented programs and seen the substantial benefits, such as Ann Arbor.

### **Increasing awareness and decreasing pollution in the Great Lakes**

Author: Daniel Fetner

WHEREAS Scientists say that pollutants and other dangerous sediments that entered Lake Erie in the 1970's are still in the water and can be toxic.

WHEREAS The Great Lakes connect to other small bodies of water in Michigan, the pollution in the Great Lakes further cause pollution for over 11,000 inland rivers and streams that they connect to.

WHEREAS The pollution in the Great Lakes causes the deaths and diseases of all animals in its ecosystem.

WHEREAS Studies have found that animals are suffering from deformities such as cross billed syndrome at an extremely high rate of 42 percent times the natural occurrence. Other deformities include large fish tumors and three legged frogs.

WHEREAS Most states in the U.S. and areas in Canada rely on the Great Lakes as their main fresh water source.

WHEREAS The Great Lakes bring in \$4 Billion annually to the Michigan economy through the varieties of fish being caught and sold on the market.

WHEREAS The Great Lakes consist of 6 quadrillion gallons of fresh water, which is twenty percent of the world's fresh water source.

WHEREAS Human health and natural ecosystems are impacted by persistent toxins such as lead, mercury, and PCBs as well as bacteria levels throughout the Great Lakes.

WHEREAS Rainwater is not chlorinated and therefore a great choice for plants. Rain barrels have become more popular in recent years, come in a variety of sizes with lids to prevent mosquitoes, and are easy to use.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED To finally enact the pact signed but never passed by the Great Lake Governors and premiers to grant protection to the Great Lakes.

BE IT RESOLVED Inspect large freighters that travel the lakes.

BE IT RESOLVED Scheme up a purifying system to ensure that all water and fish coming out of the Great Lakes are non-poisonous and healthy enough to be consumed by people.

BE IT RESOLVED Encourage more tourism and attractions by the lakes in order to boost the economy.

BE IT RESOLVED Clean up beaches by picking up garbage, waste, litter, etc. Everything on the beach ends up in the lakes as a result of the tides.

BE IT RESOLVED People living on the lakes should stop using chemical fertilizers and pesticides in their yards.

BE IT RESOLVED Direct home downspouts toward the lawn or a rain barrel, not the pavement.

BE IT RESOLVED Buy organic and locally-grown produce.

### **Resolution for Grocery Stores to have Recycling Bins for Plastic Bags**

Authors: Allison Aronne and Joshua Kent

WHEREAS First introduced in the 1970s, plastic bags now account for four out of every five bags handed out at the grocery store;

WHEREAS Plastic bags are so cheap to produce, sturdy, plentiful, easy to carry and store that they have captured at least 80 percent of the grocery and convenience store market since they were introduced a quarter century ago;

WHEREAS Plastic bags are difficult to recycle and end up in much needed landfill space. In Ann Arbor, plastic bags (unlike paper bags) can not be recycled at the curb, and many people do not know easy ways to go about recycling them;

WHEREAS In 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency estimated that only 5.2% of plastic bags were recycled that year;

WHEREAS Somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. Of those, millions end up in the litter stream outside of landfills—estimates range from less than one to three percent of the bags;

WHEREAS Once in the environment, it takes months to hundreds of years for plastic bags to breakdown. As they decompose, tiny toxic bits seep into soils, lakes, rivers, and the oceans;

WHEREAS Since the Irish Government passed a tax on plastic bags in 2002, Ireland has cut the use of plastic bags by 90%;

WHEREAS Several countries, including Bangladesh and Bhutan, have completely banned the use of plastic bags;

WHEREAS By giving a small refund or charging extra for plastic or paper, some supermarkets in the U.S. are encouraging shoppers to bring their own bags. Some major retailers have also committed to help reduce the use of paper and plastic bags. For example, in 2007, Ikea began to charge their customers 5 cents per plastic bag

WHEREAS The mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, signed a law requiring New York City stores and retail chains to create in-store recovery programs for the single-use polyethylene bags that they distribute. The program requires stores of 5,000 sq. ft. or larger, or stores with more than 5 branch locations

in the city, to provide an easily accessible, visible container for customers to return all types of plastic film. Each store is required to create a reporting and accounting system to track collections. Additionally, "Please return this bag to a participating store for recycling," is printed on each bag (Resource Recycling Magazine).

**THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED** Grocery stores and major retailers in Michigan are required to have recycle bins for consumers to deposit their plastic bags in order for the bags to be reused;

**BE IT RESOLVED** Stores should collect the bags from the recycle bin, and reuse them for future customer purchases;

**BE IT RESOLVED** To promote to use of reusable bags, stores should give discounts to customers for bringing in their own cloth or canvas bag

**BE IT RESOLVED** All new polyethylene bags created by bag manufacturers for these major retailers and grocery stores should all be labeled "Please return this bag to a participating store for recycling;"

# Justice and Security

## **Resolution to Strengthen DUI Laws in Michigan**

Author: Christopher Miller

WHEREAS All 50 states and the District of Columbia have per se laws defining it as a crime to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above a proscribed level, 0.08 percent.

WHEREAS The 0.08 per se BAC law in Michigan contains a sunset clause which states that the legal BAC will revert to 0.10 on October 1, 2013.

WHEREAS The percentage of drunk driving fatalities for Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota are all above the national average of 38.4%.

WHEREAS A woman of average health that weighs 140 pounds is legally intoxicated after three drinks in one hour—though her impairment begins with the start of her second drink. For an average healthy man weighing 170 pounds with a full meal in his system, four drinks in one hour will put him at the legally intoxicated level.

WHEREAS In Michigan, although we become adults at age 18, the liquor control laws define an adult as someone 21 years of age or older. So, Michigan enacted the "Zero Tolerance" law for people under the age of 21. Minors may not operate a motor vehicle with any bodily alcohol content.

WHEREAS A conviction or plea of guilty of OUIL (Operating Under Influence of Liquor) or driving with an excessive BAC, means a maximum sentence of up to \$500.00 in fines plus the costs of prosecution, up to 93 days in jail and up to 45 days of community service. A second DUI, OUIL or UBAC (Operating with an Unlawful Bodily Alcohol Content) in Michigan increases the fines plus costs up to \$1,000.00, and imprisonment up to 1 year in jail. A conviction or guilty plea to OWI will result in a maximum sentence up to \$300.00 in fines plus costs, up to 93 days in jail and up to 45 days of community service. A third time conviction for drunk driving will result in a felony punishable by 1 to 5 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$5,000.00.

WHEREAS Compared to other states, such as New York, a second DUI charge results in a "class E" felony. The motorist is also more likely subject to a period of probation for 5 years or may even be incarcerated for a period of up to 16-48 months.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED The state legislature should not revert the BAC level to .10. As indicated above, Michigan is one a few states where the percentage of drunk driving fatalities is above the national average of 38.4%.

BE IT RESOLVED A second time conviction for drunk driving should result in a felony charge where the motorist is subject to both probation and prison. The extent to which should be determined by the person's criminal record.

BE IT RESOLVED A second time conviction for drunk driving permits the state to impound the motorist's vehicle.

BE IT RESOLVED The state should increase the amount in fines for each offense.

BE IT RESOLVED The state should keep bars open an extra hour, while keeping "last call" the same, to allow people who drove to sober up.

## **Give Youth a Second Chance at Life: A Resolution to Abolish the Sentence of Life Without Parole for Michigan Youth**

Author: Andrew Bronstein

WHEREAS more than 300 Michigan prisoners have been sentenced as youth to life without parole. Of those prisoners, 146 are serving life without parole for crimes they committed at age 16 or younger, 43 were 15 years old at the time of the sentence, and 2 were 14 years old; (1)

WHEREAS legislation to abolish this sentence for youth has been introduced in Michigan, Nebraska, Florida, California, and Illinois; (2)

WHEREAS the United States Supreme Court declared unconstitutional imposition of the death penalty for youth under the age of 18; (3)

WHEREAS “nine states plus the District of Columbia have banned the sentence for youth.” (4)

WHEREAS in December of 2006, 184 nations voted for United Nations Resolution 61-146: The Rights of a Child. The resolution urges member nations “to abolish by law, as soon as possible... life imprisonment without possibility of release for those under the age of 18 years at the time of the commission of the offence.” (5) The United States was the lone dissenter on this resolution; (6)

WHEREAS the United States is the only country in the world to sentence youth to life without parole; (14)

WHEREAS sentencing youth as adults violates the core principle of the juvenile justice system, recognizing that juveniles are less mature socially and biologically than adults, and therefore should not be held to the same standards or be given the same sentences as adults; (7)

WHEREAS science confirms youth’s immaturity as a justification for the establishment of juvenile courts; the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that regulates aggression and impulse inhibition, is not developed in people under the age of 20. Further, this lack of brain development would indicate not only a lesser degree of culpability, but also a greater potential for change; (8)

WHEREAS there is compelling evidence in the field of child development that teenagers “lack adult decision-making and reasoning skills.” (9)

WHEREAS the law respects that youth are not as capable as adults at making mature judgments on important matters. The law does not allow youth under the age of 17 to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, enlist in the army, or enter into enforceable contracts, but it allows the state to sentence youth under the age of 17 to life in prison without the possibility of parole; (10)

WHEREAS a small number of high profile shootings have made the public fearful of our nation’s youth, and these high profile cases have skewed the public’s opinion towards harsh sentencing; (10)

WHEREAS the incomplete biological and social development of youth makes them especially subject to improvement through exposure to positive role models; (11)

WHEREAS sentencing youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole condemns the youth to a high-risk situation. Adolescent prisoners are particularly vulnerable to abuse and manipulation amongst adult prison populations; (12)

WHEREAS sentencing youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole is neither safe for the youth, nor is it safe for incarcerated adults. Most youth sentenced to life without parole are in great need of mental health care, which they do not receive in prison. Many incarcerated youth, therefore, pose a threat to themselves and to others when they are mixed with the general population in a prison setting; (13)

WHEREAS sentencing youth to life without parole puts a tremendous burden on taxpayers. Michigan taxpayers pay \$4.7 million per day to operate the dozens of prisons and camps throughout Michigan. It costs,

on average, \$32,000 per year to house each prisoner in the state of Michigan. The state of Michigan spends as much on corrections as it does on all of its public colleges and universities combined; (15)

WHEREAS their enhanced capability to change makes youth who have transgressed a potentially valuable resource in future efforts aimed at preventing high-risk behaviors by other youth; (11)

WHEREAS the lifetime imprisonment of an individual who has undergone substantial change, such that he or she can live peacefully in society, does nothing to help victims, society at large, or public safety; (21)

WHEREAS the opportunity for youth to institute positive change in themselves or contribute to society is severely, if not completely eliminated when they are sentenced to life without parole; (11)

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Michigan Legislature shall amend the "Code of Criminal Procedures" to abolish the sentence of life without parole for youth under the age of 17;

BE IT RESOLVED that prisoners who were sentenced to life without parole in the state of Michigan shall have an opportunity to appear before the parole board no more than seven years after the beginning of their sentence.

### **The elderly and driver's licenses**

Author: Michael Mallon

WHEREAS In the next 20 years the number of elderly drivers (persons 70 & over) is predicted to triple in the United States.

WHEREAS Statistics show that older drivers are more likely than younger ones to be involved in multi-vehicle crashes, particularly at intersections.

WHEREAS Research on age-related driving concerns has shown that at around the age of 65 drivers face an increased risk of being involved in a vehicle crash. After the age of 75, the risk of driver fatality increases sharply, because older drivers are more vulnerable to both crash-related injury and death.

WHEREAS Three behavioral factors in particular may contribute to these statistics: poor judgement in making left-hand turns; drifting within the traffic lane; and decreased ability to change behavior in response to an unexpected or rapidly changing situation.

WHEREAS A NHTSA study of Fatal Accident Reporting System data reports that senior citizens accounted for: 5% of all people injured in traffic crashes 13% of all traffic fatalities 13% of all vehicle occupant fatalities 18% of all pedestrian fatalities

WHEREAS In a NHTSA study, older people made up 9 percent of the population but accounted for 14 percent of all traffic fatalities and 17 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

WHEREAS In 1997, more than 24 million people in the United States were over 70 years of age.

WHEREAS Representing 9 percent of the population in 1997, the 70-and-older age group grew 2.1 times faster from 1987 to 1997 than the total population.

WHEREAS In 1986 older drivers were 7 percent of licensed drivers; in 1996 they were 19 percent of licensed drivers.

WHEREAS Of traffic fatalities involving older drivers, 82 percent happened in the daytime, 71 percent occurred on weekdays, and 75 percent involved a second vehicle.

WHEREAS Drivers over 65, along with new teen-age drivers, have the highest accident rates per miles driven.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Deficit screening - Screening could be given to all drivers for whom age-related decline is suspected and whose performance is viewed as a safety concern for themselves and other motorists.

BE IT RESOLVED In addition, health professionals and others who work with older populations could administer the tests. Screening could become a part of the regular process of license renewal. By reducing testing time, drivers could be quickly screened and identified either as capable, or as in need of further testing.

BE IT RESOLVED DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) and insurance company records can help identify high-risk older drivers.

BE IT RESOLVED Given that many older drivers involved in crashes have never had a crash before and may not have another one during the following year, crash records will identify only a few high-risk older drivers. However, crash statistics may be an important part of a comprehensive program to identify high-risk older drivers.

BE IT RESOLVED Require drivers over 70 to retest if they are involved in two or more crashes in one year.

# Service Actions

FreeRice.com Proposal, originally proposed by Adam Carlin

Two Weeks Without Plastic Bags, originally proposed by Cody Weber

Playing Nintendo Wii with Seniors, originally proposed by Jason Saline

BeBrightPink.org, originally proposed by Casey Dowell

Field Day for Kids, originally proposed by Joshua Kent