

IMPACT

MACKINAC CENTER RECOGNIZED FOR EXPOSING UNION FRAUD

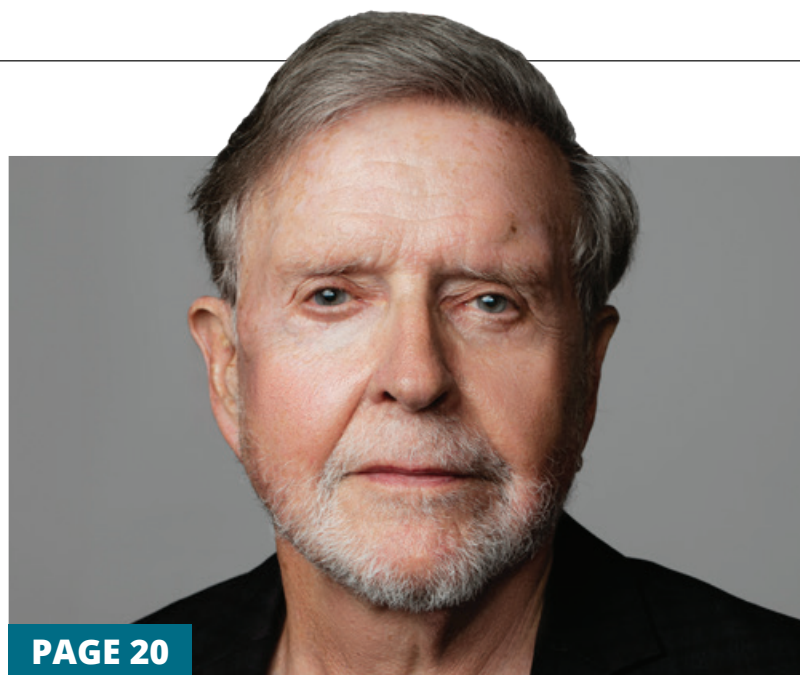


 **STATE POLICY
NETWORK**
State Solutions. National Impact.

**State Policy Network
Honors Mackinac Center
Legal Foundation**

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**MACKINAC
IN THE
MEDIA**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Taking Back a Michigan Tax Cut

“The lawsuit filed Tuesday rebuts that reading by putting the law in context. On behalf of Michigan taxpayers, the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation argues that lawmakers would have spelled out the frame of the cut if they meant it to be temporary.”

The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board

The Detroit News

The Trade-offs of Paid Leave Policies

“Mandating one type of benefit gets in the way of the conversation between employers and employees and takes it from the realm of voluntary, mutually beneficial exchange into one where state lawmakers foist their preferences on others.”

James Hohman, Director of Fiscal Policy

NATIONAL REVIEW

The UAW Might Drive the Big Three off a Cliff

“The UAW’s only hope may be federal taxpayers. The Biden administration recently pledged \$12 billion to help automakers build more electric vehicles, which may be just the start of more bailouts for struggling companies saddled with both unpopular cars and unprecedented union demands.”

Steve Delie, Director of Labor Policy

CNN



Steve Delie discusses the UAW strike with CNN host Laura Coates

CNN Tonight 9/14/2023

Bridge

Renter’s ‘Bill of Rights’ would Spike Michigan Housing Costs

“The increased costs would get passed along to tenants in the form of higher rents. And this would specifically harm low-income residents — the very people lawmakers say they want to help.”

Jarrett Skorup, Vice President for Communications and Marketing

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

I’ll Pass on the Student-Loan Relief

“Yet it’s no solution to swap the rule of law for the raw exercise of power, especially on behalf of favored constituencies. Mr. Biden’s disregard for the Constitution sets a dangerous precedent in treating Congress as a formality.”

Holly Wetzel, Director of Public Relations



How Will We Turn Michigan Around?

And Why Michigan Matters

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Michigan's new Democratic majority have wasted little time reshaping the economy, government and society this year.

Everything will become harder as the governor and her allies impose their agenda on the state. An entrepreneur will have to pay more to start and run his dream business. A college graduate will see fewer opportunities when she reviews the job market. Energy will be less reliable, with costly trade-offs. Public schools will be less accountable, even when they fail to educate kids. Government unions will have broad new powers to push policies that hurt taxpayers.

No wonder our supporters are asking, "How will we turn Michigan around?"

Here's our approach:

1. The foundation of any movement is an idea. Ideas are durable. They outlast electoral swings. Powerful ideas are easily communicated and understood.
2. Even with good ideas we need to reach people and capture their imaginations. Our new capabilities such as Mackinac Center Action and the Frank Beckmann Center for Journalism help move ideas into the Overton Window.

3. Michigan's comeback will be bigger than one person or one organization. A network of people must pursue big ideas together. Who out there is working together, helping allies, growing the movement? Leadership resides here.
4. We need talented people. Former Gov. John Engler showed how to build a talent pipeline for liberty. His team identified good people, entrusted them with opportunities and placed them in positions of influence. Nothing like that exists today in Michigan, but it should.
5. Government overreach is inevitable, so liberty needs litigators. The Mackinac Center Legal Foundation has earned national recognition for its high-impact lawsuits: ending Gov. Whitmer's unconstitutional emergency orders, exposing the Michigan Education Association's pandemic fraud, and rescuing Michigan's income tax cut.
6. Lawmakers pushed Michigan toward forced unionism this year. To counteract these coercive policies, the Mackinac Center is working here and across the country to promote worker freedom. This includes educating hundreds of thousands of union members about their rights.
7. The Mackinac Center encourages policymakers of both parties to act in the public interest. We educate legislative candidates about free-market principles. Our team in Lansing places our policy research into lawmakers' hands. We help train their aides and staffers about policy. And we keep people informed by holding policy briefings in legislative districts across the state.

“Michigan matters. It’s a state worth fighting for.”

Michigan matters — and not only to those of us who call it home.

Michigan’s entrepreneurial legacy produced famous companies: Ford, Kellogg, Stryker, Carhartt, Whirlpool, Gibson Guitars, Amway, Dow, Lear.

Motown shaped the world’s musical tastes. We steward abundant natural resources, with a unique position amid the Great Lakes.

Michigan enjoys many historical distinctions.

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 by a group of abolitionists in Jackson. Detroit was an important stop on the Underground Railroad. Our manufacturing might was celebrated as “The Arsenal of Democracy” during World War II.

Even our failures (Detroit bankruptcy, Flint water crisis, repealing right-to-work) produce international headlines!

Michigan has disproportionate political significance. As a battleground state and one of America’s ten most populous states, it is a prize for electoral votes and policymaking.

Michigan matters. It’s a state worth fighting for. ■



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Reitz".

By Michael J. Reitz

Executive Vice President



Opening Doors in Our Community

The Mackinac Center’s mission is to use research, legal expertise and other skills to shape the policy environment, thereby helping the people of Michigan achieve their fullest potential. But sometimes, it’s valuable to depart from the day-to-day routine and provide direct aid.

That’s why the Mackinac Center is partnering with organizations across the state to serve people in new ways. You’ll find one example at Midland’s Open Door, a soup kitchen and shelter located less than a mile from our Midland office.



This June, Mackinac Center interns and staffers volunteered their time to help finish a new shelter for women and children. Our volunteers scraped walls in the building’s basement to prep them for a mural. The space will become a recreation room for children and teens.

One door in the shelter will remain as a piece of art that features signatures of all the volunteers who have worked on the building, which the organization calls its shelterhouse. The Mackinac Center’s 12 volunteers ended the work day by adding their names to the door.

The Mackinac Center also funded the purchase of a new riding lawn mower, which residents will use to maintain the grounds. Open Door believes in the dignity of work, placing shelter residents in charge of many day-to-day household tasks and allowing them to develop tangible skills during their stay.



Our partnership with Open Door continued into the fall. Three Mackinac Center staffers volunteered in September at Open Door’s soup kitchen. Preparing and serving meals to shelter residents and visitors, which we will keep doing on a monthly basis, helps us learn more about our neighbors and give back to our community.

Volunteering to serve those in need is its own reward, but connecting with other nonprofits in our local community has additional benefits. We meet the Michiganders we support, getting a unique opportunity to learn about the hardships they face every day, especially the barriers put in place by the government.

We hope to continue partnering with Open Door and other nonprofits around the state to help Michiganders reach their full potential without being hindered by government barriers and restrictions. ■



By Taylor Anderson

Outreach Manager



**MACKINAC
STAFF
PROFILE**

A JARRETT OF ALL TRADES

Meet Jarrett Skorup, Vice President for Marketing and Communications



“I’m lucky enough to get paid to try and make the world better for people.”

As a Grove City College student, Jarrett Skorup heard about the Mackinac Center from long-time Mackinac president Larry Reed, who was visiting his alma mater. He later attended one of the Mackinac Center’s student colloquiums. Having already interned with a Washington, D.C., advocacy organization, Jarrett wanted to try something in the states, so he applied to work at the Mackinac Center. Fourteen years and seven job titles later, he works as the Mackinac Center’s vice president for marketing and communications.

“It’s been fun to try a lot of different things, from news writing to policy analysis to online engagement,” he says. “It’s not just about finding good ideas to recommend, but about getting strong messages into more people’s heads.”

His work on the 2012 ballot proposals fueled Jarrett’s interest in trying new things. The proposals would have elevated union contracts above state law, mandated more industrial wind turbines, and allowed a union to keep skimming dues from Medicaid payments to home health care workers.

Jarrett gave more than 30 speeches around the state warning about the effects of these proposals. He also led the effort to use online tools to reach people. Voters rejected all three of the proposals.

“My boss at the time, Ken Braun, made sure I was getting my core work done, but he also encouraged me to do more when I saw some opportunities,” Jarrett says. “We needed to broadcast our message on these proposals to help people inform their votes, and I stepped up to help.”



Jarrett continues to do many different things to advance the Mackinac Center’s mission. On any given week, he could write about the barriers to employment created by the state’s occupational licensing rules, the foolishness of the latest film subsidy proposal, and the unfairness of the state’s civil asset forfeiture rules. Or he could be talking with elected officials, journalists and policy advocates on the WJR radio show he co-hosts. He could also be managing a multimillion-dollar marketing campaign to help union members understand their right to opt out of unions.

“I’m lucky enough to get paid to try and make the world better for people,” Jarrett says.

He lives in Midland with his wife and four children. You can catch him playing soccer or softball, refereeing high school wrestling, volunteering on construction projects for the needy, and rooting for his beloved Chicago Cubs. ■



By James Hohman
Director of Fiscal Policy

MACKINAC CENTER RESEARCH JOINS JSTOR



Photo by Adobestock

The Mackinac Center prides itself on publishing university-level policy research. JSTOR, a large digital library of published scholarship, recently recognized that research by asking if it could add some of our work to its collection. Mackinac Center studies can now be found among some of the most prestigious and influential academic publications.

JSTOR is one of the largest research databases in the United States. It was launched at the University of Michigan in 1995 and now includes more than

12 million journal articles, reports and books. Most colleges and universities provide access to JSTOR, and it is one of the most popular digital libraries for academic research. The Mackinac Center is pleased to add its contribution to this collection of scholarly literature.

Mackinac Center research that emphasizes limited government and free markets is a change of pace from much of what gets published in academic journals, and our state-based policy focus adds



Scan the QR code to check out our work on JStor.

geographical diversity to the database. JSTOR is to be commended for its commitment to ideological diversity at a time when much of academia seems to be moving in the opposite direction. The Center’s high rating in a report that ranks think tanks by their influence initially drew JSTOR’s attention to our work.

Only a handful of other free-market think tanks have their content hosted by JSTOR. Most of these are national, more broadly focused and larger than Mackinac. The Center stands out as one of only a few state-based think tanks with research that JSTOR rates highly enough to include.

This honor attests to the quality of our research and has real-world implications. When college students, professors or other researchers look in JSTOR for studies on business subsidy programs, right-to-work laws or occupational licensing, they’ll discover a broader discussion of these issues, including the free-market perspective that Mackinac provides. ■



By Michael Van Beek
Director of Research

The Mackinac Center’s work, including this magazine, is made possible by the Mackinac Center Board of Directors:

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State Policy Network Honors Mackinac Center Legal Foundation

The Mackinac Center was honored to win the inaugural Bob Williams Award for Best State-Based Litigation at this year's State Policy Network Annual Meeting in Chicago. Each year, SPN celebrates the successes of select think tanks. These awards recognize achievement in the categories of Biggest Win for Freedom, Best Issue Campaign, Most Influential Research and Biggest Home State Win. This year, the State Policy Network added an award for Best State-Based Litigation.

SPN recognized the Mackinac Center for holding the Michigan Education Association and its health insurance affiliate, MESSA, accountable after they fraudulently took more than \$12.5 million in Paycheck Protection Program funds. These funds were meant to help businesses stay afloat and pay their employees during government-mandated shutdowns in 2020.

The MEA and MESSA were clearly ineligible to receive these funds due to their tax status as 501(c)(5) and 501(C)(9) entities, respectively. But they applied anyway. The MEA received \$6.4 million and MESSA received \$6.1 million. The funds from this program ran out within weeks, leaving many Michigan businesses without any financial support.

We used a novel legal strategy by filing our lawsuit under the federal False Claims Act, which ensured not only that the union was held accountable, but that the taxpayer dollars wrongfully taken would be repaid. The MEA and MESSA had already

returned the PPP loans when we filed. But the Department of Justice ordered them to pay an additional \$200,000 in reimbursements and fines to the federal government. The Mackinac Center received \$77,000 in attorneys fees for uncovering the wrongdoing.

This wasn't the first time we've gone toe-to-toe with unions. When we created the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation nearly 15 years ago, its inaugural lawsuit uncovered a unionization scheme that forced tens of thousands of home-based day care providers to pay union dues. Since then, the Mackinac Center has been proud to work through the courts to stand up for what's right. This has meant establishing teachers' right to resign from their union at any time, challenging state entities that refuse transparency requests, defending parents who want the best education for their kids, and protecting ten million Michigan residents against executive overreach.

It was a privilege to be recognized for our legal work alongside two other nominees with remarkable success stories, our fellow Midwestern friends at the Buckeye Institute and the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty. We are proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our fellow litigation centers in the continued fight for justice and accountability. ■



By Holly Wetzel
Director of Public Relations



Bob Williams Award Acceptance Speech Patrick J. Wright

Given August 30, 2023, in Chicago, Illinois

Thank you! On behalf of the Mackinac Center, it's an honor to accept the inaugural Bob Williams award for litigation.

Our movement stands at a seminal moment. We face threats greater than ever before. To overcome these threats, we must be more creative.

This insight drove our case. We discovered that Michigan's largest teachers union went to unprecedented lengths to defraud taxpayers. All told, the union stole more than \$12.5 million from Americans.

The union thought no one would notice, much less hold them accountable. But we did. We found a creative solution to a newfound problem – and our lawsuit compelled the union to make taxpayers whole.

This is a model for our movement. We fundamentally believe that markets give rise to the best ideas. But we also need to push ourselves to find new, better and unbeatable solutions.

In this new era, we need to be artists, not just activists. And the Mackinac Center is more committed than ever to create a masterpiece of freedom and opportunity, together with you.

Thank you again.



Learn more about the Mackinac Center's fight against the MEA in the March/April 2023 edition of *IMPACT* or at www.mackinac.org/30848.

From Dutch Roots to Michigan's Economic Growth

The Kieft Family Legacy



Larry Kieft's family arrived in Grand Haven in 1856, and they have been building the Michigan economy ever since. Bringing generations of farming experience from the northern Dutch provinces, the Kieft family made a thriving business of celery, garden vegetables, leafy greens, greenhouse tomatoes, flowers and perennials.

Larry's work on the farm and in industry took him to the heights of innovation and to some of the depths of poor policy and government interference. Clumsy regulations, subsidies to favored businesses, and the heavy hand of organized labor are growing challenges to Michigan entrepreneurs. His service as chairman of the Grand Haven Board of Light and Power also showed Larry how misguided federal and state energy policies are literally turning off the lights in our state.

When an old friend of Larry's from Hope College told him about the Mackinac Center, this lifelong farmer saw a chance to plant a seed. Now Larry and his wife Christine are Legacy Society members, supporting our work to improve Michigan governance and create a freer, more prosperous state.

With degrees in economics and business, Larry made a career with companies including the energy equipment manufacturer Dresser Industries and American Seating Corp., the nation's premier provider of seating for mass transportation.

If you work in any office, you have probably seen Larry's work. He initiated and led the development of a plastic, corrugated-board celery container in the 1970s. These containers were used for a decade

“I like that the Mackinac Center and other think tanks can create change.”

by South Bay Growers in Florida and are still in use by the U.S. Postal Service. They're the plastic tote boxes that carriers use for large batches of mail.

Larry is retired but keeps serving the community. He has held leadership positions with an assisted living retirement home, the Grand Haven Community Center, and the First Reformed Church, among many others. He has established several endowed scholarships. As a Legacy Society member, he thinks a lot about preserving freedom for the future.

“Be as educated as you can be, regardless of what the subject matter is,” Larry says when we ask his advice for future generations. “Have a moral base

to your character.” He sees value in both trade schools and colleges, with the important thing being the formation of independent thinkers. And he considers the Mackinac Center essential to Michigan's future.

“I've been frustrated by the lack of change created by elected bureaucrats,” he says. “I like that the Mackinac Center and other think tanks can create change.” ■

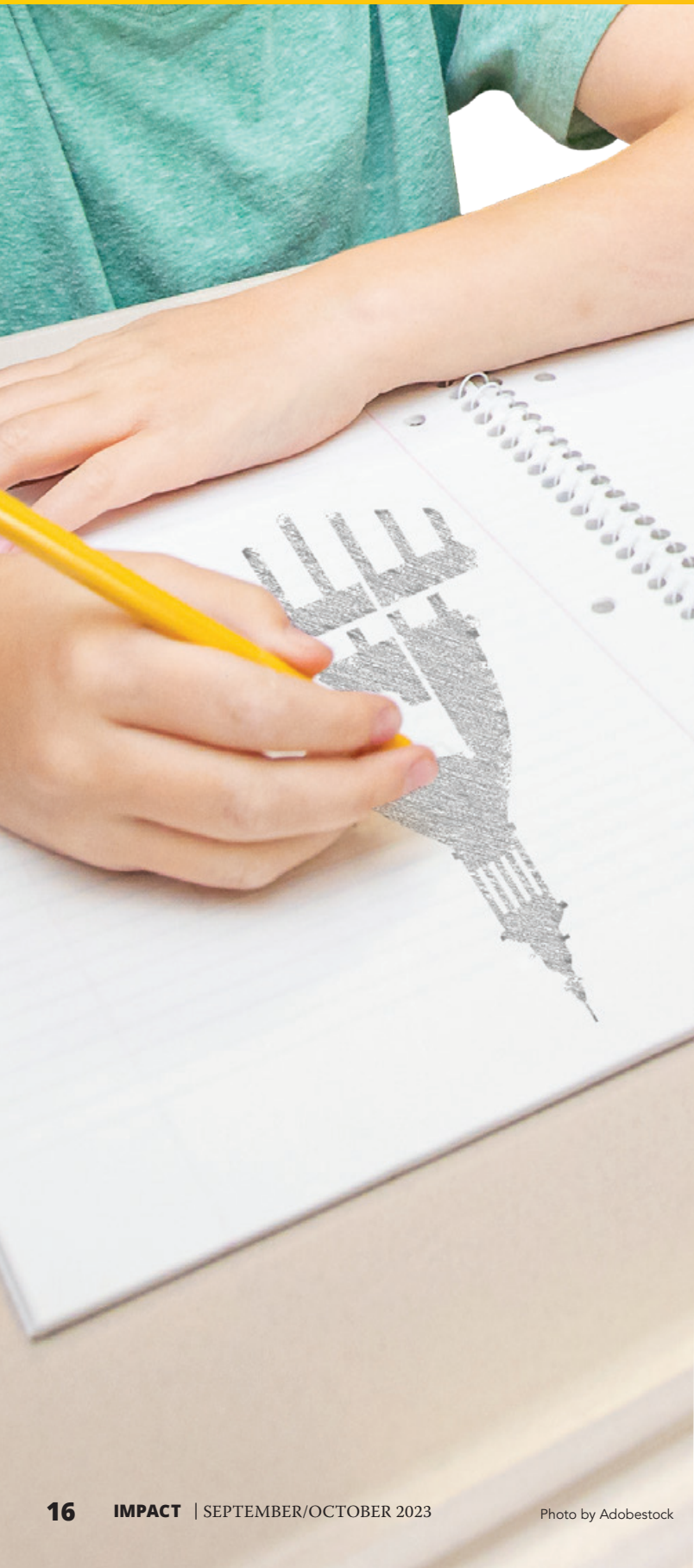


By Ryan Rickel

Director of Strategic Partnerships



CAPCON DELIVERS



Lisa Aponoves needed help during the COVID-19 panic. The public school where her special needs daughter was a tenth grade student instituted a strict mask policy, and the Riverview Community School District refused to make accommodations.

Aponoves' daughter had undergone nasal surgery, experienced breathing trouble, and was under a physician's order not to wear anything on her face. She also had acute anxiety that was triggered by being singled out. Aponoves provided the district with notes from the family doctor and a neuropsychologist in the Henry Ford Health System.

District officials refused to compromise. They said the girl's options were to wear a mask, attend remote schooling, or sit at her desk in class, six feet from the other students and surrounded by plexiglass. None of these options worked. Aponoves' daughter has an individual learning plan that requires in-person instruction, while isolation behind a plexiglass barrier would have aggravated the teenager's anxiety.

“We consider it an honor when individuals trust us with their stories.”

Aponoves came to Michigan Capitol Confidential with her story in late 2021. CapCon wrote two stories on this issue. The first explored the detrimental impact of inflexible COVID policies and the school's violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The second showcased a

AFTER GOVERNMENT FAILS

photo gallery the diligent mother had compiled, showing students, teachers and even then-Superintendent Russell E. Pickell happily attending public events without masks. Aponoves and her daughter were thankful that CapCon shed light on the school's unfair treatment of a vulnerable student.

One of the most rewarding things about being assistant managing editor of CapCon is connecting with readers who appreciate our reporting. Sometimes the government works. When it does not, residents suffer. CapCon helps people like Lisa Aponoves and her daughter by drawing attention to issues government overlooks, ignores, or refuses to resolve.

We consider it an honor when individuals trust us with their stories. Sometimes they ask for help resolving an issue. Sometimes they just want their story heard.

Our unfair advantage in reporting is that we have access to public policy experts and a winning legal team. This combination gives us information and perspectives often omitted by mainstream news organizations that do not have the time, money or inclination to consider other points of view. By highlighting issues media ignore and officials prefer to keep hidden, we hold government accountable to the people. ■



By Jamie A. Hope

*Assistant Managing Editor of
Michigan Capitol Confidential*

BY THE NUMBERS

123,000

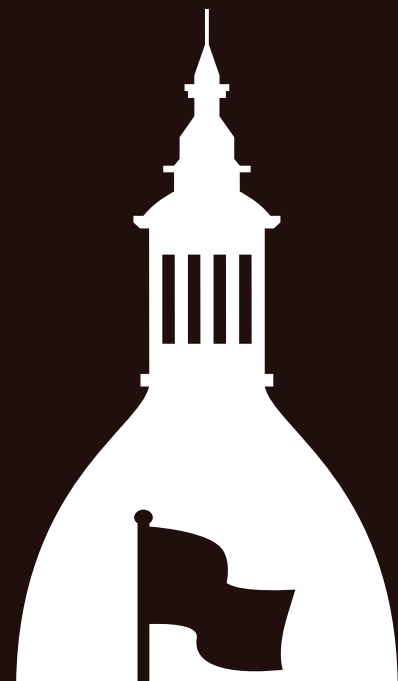
Number of readers
subscribed to CapCon's
weekly email newsletter

8,300

Number of stories published
by CapCon since it began its daily
news reporting in 2010

1,000,000

Pageviews on CapCon's website
from January 1st through
mid-October



WE'VE MET OUR MATCH

In early 2022, a generous donor offered a \$3 million challenge grant for the Mackinac Center to launch the Frank Beckmann Center for Journalism.

We are thrilled to announce that we hit this match in 19 short months. Thank you for helping us put government transparency into action and wield a megaphone for free markets.

Reaching the target fuels our work in journalism, transparency and outreach. With the funds we are ...

Reaching young people: Six journalism fellows have gone through the Mackinac Center, receiving training from our experienced staff of journalists and then entering the field themselves. These fellows wrote dozens of articles on government licensing laws, union contracts that punish younger teachers, legislation that would punish landlords, and proposals to subsidize Hollywood.

Investigating government: In the past year, we have filed more than a thousand public records requests, which give our researchers and reporters data for their work. These requests also reveal government activity that might otherwise go unnoticed. We had the story when the city of Ann Arbor fired a firefighter with an exemplary service record because he refused to get the COVID vaccine and the mayor publicly violated COVID protocols. FOIA requests are expensive, and Beckmann Center funding pays for them — as well as for the three current transparency lawsuits we have filed against a public university and several school districts.

Turbocharging outreach: The Beckmann Center sponsors our radio show on WJR-AM, a 50,000-watt, class A clear-channel station heard through much of eastern North America. Increased funding has also allowed us to produce more content on our own platforms and reach more people. The number of news articles published is up more than one-third, and we've



FRANK BECKMANN
CENTER FOR JOURNALISM

Challenge Grant Will Ramp Up Our Media Presence

seen double-digit percentage increases in social media engagement. We've also exponentially increased the number of videos produced.

There is more to come. In the next few months, we will be able to build a new media studio at the Mackinac Center headquarters. It will help us make more and higher-quality videos, a key means for reaching young adults. We won't stop writing studies, filing lawsuits or publishing news articles. But many of those will be turned into shorter, punchier, graphic-intensive videos so we can reach more people than ever with a free-market message.

We've met our match. It's time for government officials to meet theirs. ■



By Jarrett Skorup
*Vice President for Marketing
and Communications*

ONLINE RESOURCES



MichCapCon.com

Michigan Capitol Confidential reports with a free-market news perspective.



WorkersForOpportunity.org

Advancing the liberty of employees across the country and protecting First Amendment rights.



Mackinac.org/MCLF

Our public interest law firm advances individual freedom and the rule of law in Michigan.



OpportunityMichigan.org

Want to get more engaged with public policy in Michigan? Opportunity Michigan is right for you.



FrankBeckmannCenterForJournalism.com

Keeping citizens informed with news and analysis that expose government overreach and abuse.



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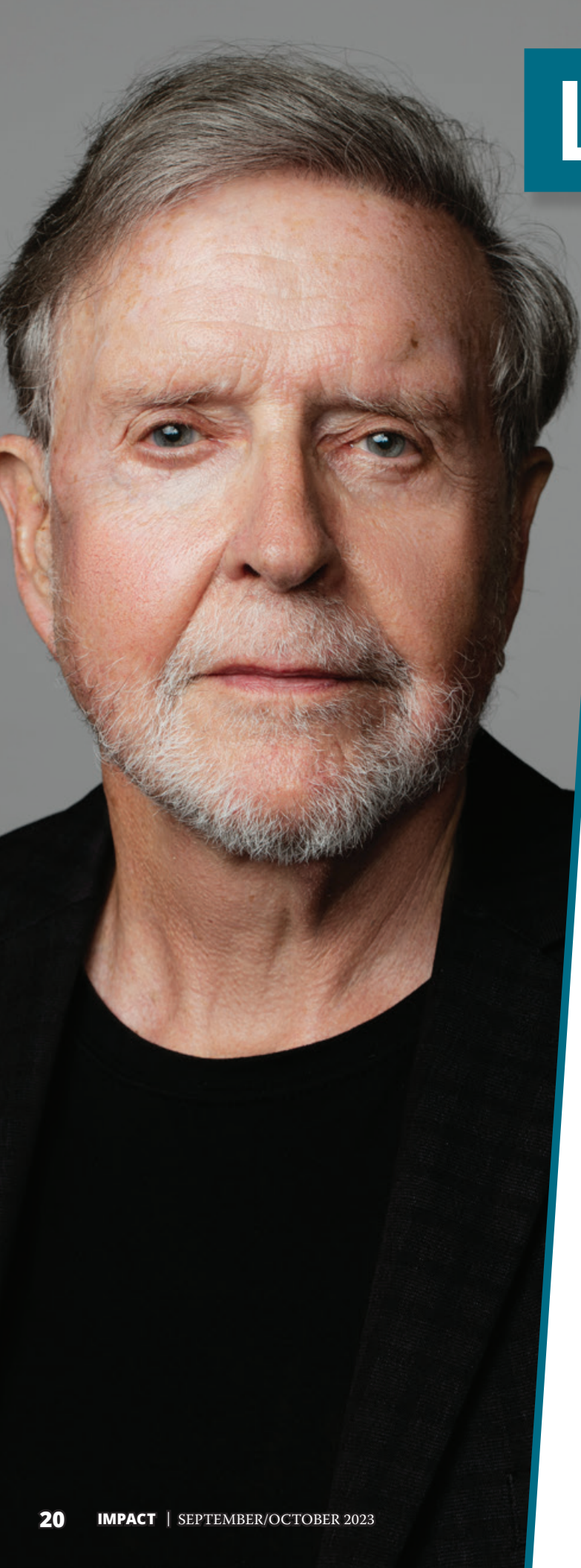
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LOCKWOOD

NAMED NEW CHAIRMAN OF MACKINAC CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Board also welcomes new
director Jennifer Panning*

The Mackinac Center Board of Directors has chosen Rodney M. Lockwood Jr. as its new chairman. He replaces former Michigan Supreme Court Justice Clifford W. Taylor, who has served as chairman since 2013 and will remain on the board.

“The Mackinac Center has long benefited from Cliff’s wisdom and wit,” said Mackinac Center President Joe Lehman. “His commitment to freedom and the rule of law left an indelible mark on Michigan. We are grateful for his service as chairman these last ten years.”

Lockwood joined the Mackinac Center board in 1996. He is chairman of Lockwood Companies of Southfield, Michigan, which develops and manages multifamily housing and senior living communities. He previously served as chairman of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and provided leadership on policy issues, including the chamber’s support of Michigan’s right-to-work law. He is the author of “Belle Isle: Detroit’s Game Changer,” published in 2013.

“Rod Lockwood is a champion of free markets, a student of transformational ideas and a respected business leader,” Lehman said. “His leadership is essential to our mission of advancing liberty and opportunity.”

Lockwood thanked his fellow board members. “I am committed to promote the values and strategies that will increase Michigan’s growth, in terms of both population and economics,” he said. “From my real estate background, I know the market speaks clearly on where to work, where to live and where to play.”

Sound policy will secure Michigan’s future, Lockwood said.

“Rod Lockwood is a champion of free markets, a student of transformational ideas and a respected business leader.”

- Joe Lehman

“To achieve growth and particularly to retain and attract our young people, Michigan needs affordable and reliable energy, quality K-12 education, and better tax policies,” he said. “All are solvable. I am sure the Mackinac Center’s staff will continue its leadership in these areas and others of importance to our state.”

The Mackinac Center Board of Directors also welcomed new member Jennifer Panning. She is president of Artisan Tile Inc. in Brighton, Michigan. She also serves as chair of the Northwood University Board of Trustees.

Panning co-founded Artisan Tile with her father in 1995. Her profile on the company website tells a story of servant leadership: “Although she started the business and worked from day 1, Jennifer is employee #023. It took some time before she was able to pay herself.”



Photo by Adobestock



Artisan Tile has since earned a strong reputation for its award-winning work, specializing in tile and terrazzo installations. The company’s notable projects include Little Caesars Arena, the Henry Ford Cancer Center and the Detroit Metropolitan Airport’s McNamara Terminal. The interior tilework in the McNamara Terminal is the largest tile project in the state of Michigan.

“We are delighted that Jennifer Panning has joined our top leadership board,” Lehman said. “She exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit and dedication that make the American dream a reality.” ■



Michael J. Reitz

By Michael J. Reitz

Executive Vice President



Latest Student Loan Forgiveness Plan **Leaves Taxpayers on the Hook**

The Mackinac Center will not give up its fight against the Biden administration's unconstitutional efforts to put taxpayers on the hook for student loan debt. President Biden has tried in many ways to skirt congressional authority for this costly and unpopular giveaway to a favored constituency, and we will keep opposing those attempts.

In April we joined the New Civil Liberties Alliance in a lawsuit challenging the administration's authority to pause student loan payments and interest. By that time, the debt pause had cost taxpayers more than \$150 billion. Soon after, the United States Supreme Court struck down the Department of Education's attempt to forgive \$430 billion in student loan debt on the grounds that such an act required congressional authority.

Now the department is attempting yet another workaround that would circumvent the separation of powers established in the Constitution. This new plan relies on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Income-Driven Payment programs, which allow debt to be discharged after borrowers make a certain number of qualifying payments.

The department implemented what it called a "One-Time Account Adjustment" for borrowers under these plans by treating borrowers who had entered forbearance as if they had made qualifying payments during the forbearance period. This step would discharge \$39 billion in debt and bail out 3.6 million borrowers.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, however, since the fix is prospective as well. When applied to future borrowers, this new scheme would cost taxpayers as much as \$175 billion.

That's why the Mackinac Center, alongside the Cato Institute, once again joined forces with the New Civil Liberties Alliance to challenge the unlawful bailout by filing a lawsuit in August.

This plan is as bad as prior attempts at student loan forgiveness. In all three instances, the executive branch, without authority from Congress, has attempted to appropriate billions of dollars. The Constitution expressly delegates the power of the purse to Congress alone. By usurping that authority, Biden is violating the separation of powers principle that provides essential checks and balances against government overreach.

Equally troubling is the method by which these changes were enacted. Typically, when an administrative agency acts, it must do so through a rulemaking process that requires public input on the proposed rule. Here, the new forgiveness plan was simply announced via press release. By sidestepping the legal process, the Education Department violated the law.

Although the trial court in this case ruled that neither the Mackinac Center nor the New Civil Liberties Alliance has standing to sue, we have filed an appeal to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. We are proud to keep fighting to preserve the separation of powers, and we will always hold government accountable to its constitutional limits. ■



By Stephen Delie

Director of Labor Policy



Mackinac Center
EXPERTS
Offer
INSIGHTS
into
KEY ISSUES
Facing Michigan
Residents

Each year the Mackinac Center hosts public forums around the state to educate citizens about critical policy matters, engage with supporters, and promote the ideals of free markets with minimal government intervention. These open discussions ensure that attendees have the information they need to participate in shaping the future of Michigan.

Mackinac Center staffers and policy experts provided key insights at our summer events, covering issues ranging from corporate welfare and government spending to the state's changing policy landscape. ■



By Jordan Barker

*Advancement and
Events Intern*



Michael LaFaive, senior director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center, teamed up with John Mozena, president of the Center for Economic Accountability, for a discussion of the almost \$3 billion worth of state corporate welfare spending in the first quarter of 2023. The two speakers, with extensive experience in economic development policy, discussed the value taxpayers receive for this spending. They also evaluated the historical performance of corporate subsidy programs and examined the implications for Michigan's long-term economic performance and population growth.





Another event featured James Hohman, director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center, and Vance Ginn, founder and president of Ginn Economic Consulting. They analyzed how the Michigan Legislature spends your tax dollars and assessed the long-term sustainability of this spending. Hohman and Ginn also looked at the achievements and shortcomings of efforts to control the growth of state government spending, in Michigan and around the nation.



Our final policy event focused on the implications of repealing Michigan's decade-old right-to-work law. Mackinac Center Director of Labor Policy Steve Delie and Shane Hernandez, president of the Associated Builders and Contractors of Michigan, delved into the wide-ranging effects of the repeal and other policies that have been enacted or are pending in the Legislature. Delie and Hernandez shed light on how these changes will affect the daily lives of Michiganders, our families, and our way of life.





Jonathan Pommerville



Luke Dinnan

“RENTER’S BILL OF RIGHTS” DOESN’T HELP RENTERS *and isn’t right*

Jonathan Pommerville has sunk tens of thousands of dollars into his Detroit neighborhood, fixing dilapidated houses to make them livable and rentable. He’s making the neighborhood better and creating more housing supply.

Luke Dinnan and his wife have several rental homes in mid-Michigan aimed at middle-class households. They put countless hours into their rentals, with the goal of eventually using them to fund the college education of their young children.

But a bill package introduced in Lansing, inappropriately known as the “Renter’s Bill of Rights,” could upend their plans. These bills would:

- Essentially prevent landlords from using criminal background checks or credit ratings
- Require housing providers to rent to the first “qualified” applicant
- Make it very difficult to evict bad tenants
- Have taxpayers fund lawsuits against landlords and subject housing providers to expensive legal risk

The state and federal government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic cut the housing supply, increased costs for landlords and made inflation surge. All this has driven up rental and housing

costs. Michigan lawmakers could respond by reigning in state spending and passing laws, such as statewide zoning reform, that would increase the housing supply. They are instead doing the opposite.

The Mackinac Center is working hard to draw attention to these bad policies and inform people about better legislative options. Our video reports on Pommerville and Dinnan have reached hundreds of thousands of Michigan residents. (You can find them on the Mackinac Center’s YouTube, X or Facebook channels.) Thousands more have read our opinion and news articles. And we recently hosted a bipartisan event on housing reform that featured real solutions.

Housing prices have skyrocketed, making it hard for middle and lower-income families to afford a place to live. Much of that increase is due to heavy regulation. The government is breaking the legs of the housing market and then having taxpayers pay for the crutches. Policymakers need to pursue free-market housing reforms so Michigan can compete with more affordable states that are gaining population. ■



By Jarrett Skorup

Vice President for Marketing and Communications



You don't have to be famous or wealthy to 'turn on a small light in a dark room'

Miep Gies coined that phrase. She was an otherwise ordinary person who did an extraordinary thing by hiding Anne Frank's family in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam.

Friends of liberty know this truth: A single light can be seen for miles in the darkness. Mackinac Center Legacy Society members turn on lights all over the nation by creating a legacy of freedom for future generations.

When you include the Mackinac Center in your will or estate plan, you automatically become a member of our Legacy Society. Your donation will help us push back against government overreach and advance the values you cherish.

Mackinac Center Legacy Society members shine a light in the darkness of the world today, giving a strong, clear voice to the voiceless and ensuring future generations will hear the vital message of liberty. As a member, you will stand secure in the knowledge that your bequest is advancing freedom and opportunity for all people, regardless of the challenges that arise.

The Mackinac Center also wants to thank you by turning a light on in your own life, through the select benefits offered to Legacy Society members. Benefits include:

- Special mailings
- A VIP celebration event each year with other Legacy Society members
- Invitations and recognition at Mackinac Center events
- Featured space in our Legacy Society newsletter (with your permission)

The greatest benefit to being a member of our Legacy Society, however, will be the knowledge that you are helping to preserve the freedom we enjoy today for generations to come.

Thank you again. For more information about planned giving, please feel free to contact an advancement representative at 989-631-0900 or LegacySociety@mackinac.org. ■



By Garrett Wedemire
Donor Communications Intern

MACKINAC CENTER
LEGACY SOCIETY

Your Involvement is Not Just a Contribution; It's an Opportunity to Create Meaningful Change

At the heart of every powerful movement are individuals who choose to be more than just spectators. Those who share the Mackinac Center's passion for fostering individual freedom and economic prosperity have many avenues for getting more involved.

Host a Mackinac Center Speaker.

Our policy experts travel across the Great Lakes region, sharing insights on critical issues such as labor policy, energy, education and fiscal matters. By inviting a Mackinac Center expert to speak at your event, you bring valuable knowledge to your community. Contact Holly Wetzel, Director of Public Relations, at wetzel@mackinac.org.

Engage with Michigan Capitol Confidential.

Sharing your tips about government activities in Michigan contributes to our investigative journalism. By writing to Managing Editor James D. Dickson at dickson@mackinac.org, you can amplify your voice and connect with fellow readers.

Invite Friends to Mackinac Center Events.

Join us at one of our public events — more than 25 each year — across Michigan. Use our website to discover events near you. Questions? Ask at events@mackinac.org.

Write a Letter to the Editor.

Tell others in your community about an issue you care about, fortified by Mackinac Center research. We're here to guide you through the process. Call us at (989) 631-0900.

Request Research Studies.

Our dedication to informed discourse is evident in our extensive library of research studies, legislative testimony and publications. View digital versions of our studies online, or order printed copies to share with family and friends by visiting our publications page.

Generate a Buzz on Social Media.

Connect with us on various social media platforms. Like, follow, and share our posts to amplify the reach of good policy ideas.

By joining in our efforts, you propel our vision of a future grounded in freedom, choice and prosperity. Thank you for your unwavering support. ■



By Victoria Hoffman

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