



What's Happening in Lansing & How to be an Effective Advocate

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Current Michigan Government Landscape

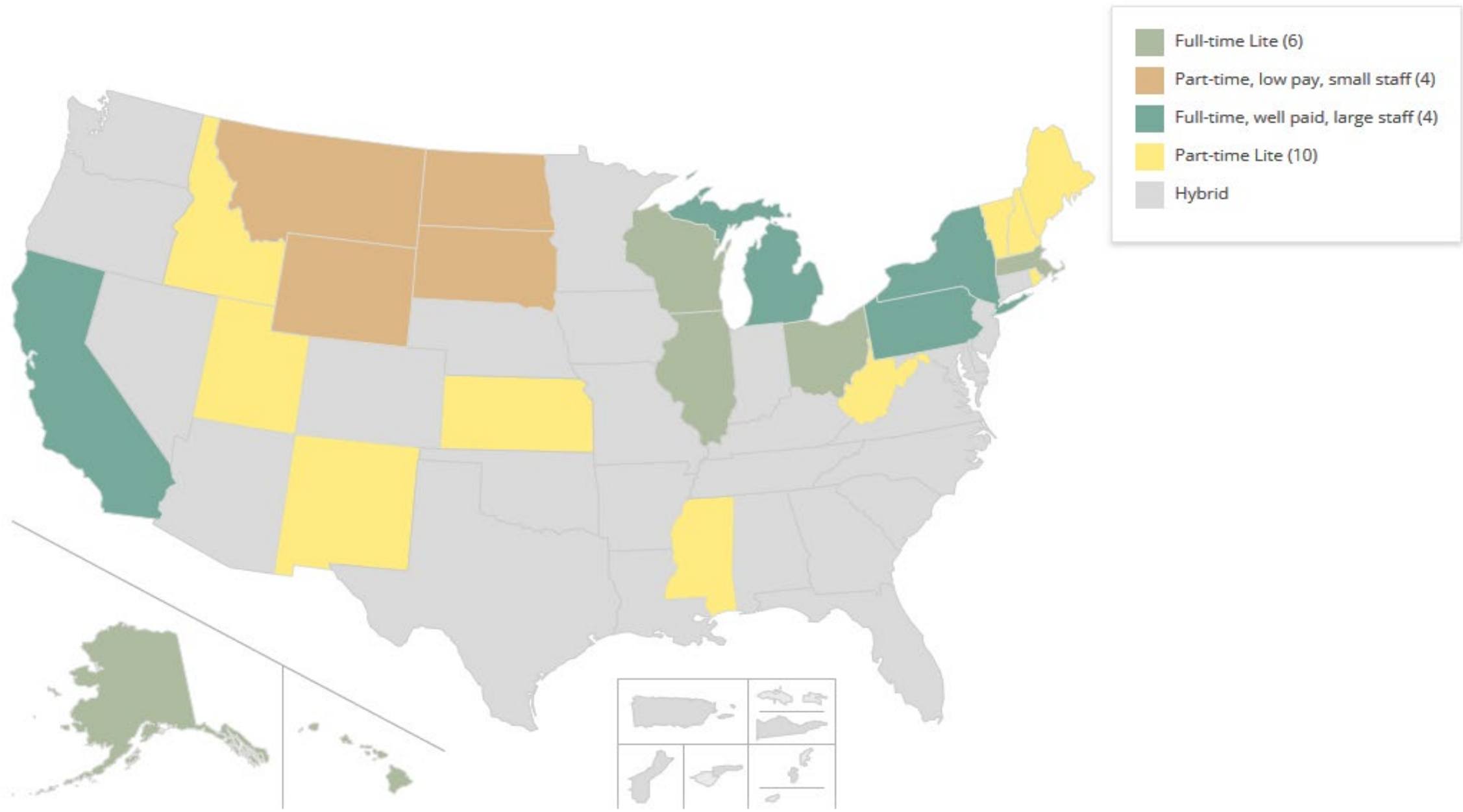
Executive & Legislative Branches



Executive Branch

- Governor (Executive Office) – Governor Gretchen Whitmer (D)
- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
 - Behavioral and Physical Health and Aging Services Administration (BPHASA)
 - Aging, Community Living, and Supports Bureau (ACLS)
 - Medical Services Administration (Medicaid)
 - Behavioral Health & Specialty Services
 - Bureau of Children’s Coordinate Health Policy & Supports (BCCHPS)
- Michigan Department of Education
- Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential





Legislative Branch

- Currently in the 2nd year of the 2-year session (2026 is an election year)
- Split state government has led to new challenges in Lansing
 - 20-18 Democratic majority in Senate
 - Led by Majority Leader Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids)
 - Senate Dems recently picked up the 35th Senate seat during the May Special Election
 - 58-52 Republican majority in House
 - Led by Speaker Matt Hall (R-Richland Township)



Upcoming Election

- Notable Dates
 - August 4 Primary
 - November 3 General Election
- All 148 seats + Executive up for election
- Gubernatorial Race – Who is Leading?
 - R: Congressman John James
 - D: SOS Jocelyn Benson



Arc Advocacy Issues



Key Legislative Issues

- Closely monitor changes to the Mental Health Code
- Supported Decision Making: HB 4676 & 4677
 - Waiting for a House vote
 - Senate recently intro'd SB 1007 & 1008
- PPOs for Vulnerable Adults: SB 111 – 114
 - Passed the Senate, no movement in the House
- Recipient Rights Advisory Committee Membership: SB 142, HB 4218
 - House Bill passed the House
- Informed Consent for Mental Health Treatment: SB 143, HB 4219
 - House Bill Passed the House
- Guardianship/Conservatorship Changes to EPIC: HB 4632 – 4635
 - No movement in the House
- Voter ID Changes: HB 4765
 - Passed the House along party lines
- Medically Necessary Treatment in Schools: HB 5044
 - Substitute adopted in committee to specify ABA therapy



Budget Priorities

- Protecting Medicaid
- Direct Care Worker Wage
- Special Education Funding
- School Aid Categorical Funding



Direct Care Worker Wage

Governor/Senate Proposal:

- Continuation of the \$3.40/hour increase, plus minimum wage adjustments for CY 2025 – 2027.

House Proposal:

- Continues to fund the wage but boilerplate removes the specific \$3.40/hour increase with a requirement to comply to expressly defined network adequacy standards for DCWs and requires reporting on these standards and aggregated rates paid. Only includes minimum wage adjustments for CY 2025 and 2026.

DCW Wage Coalition - Concerns

- Concerned that there is not enough money in the state budget to properly address new minimum wage and earned sick time/leave



Regulatory Issues

- Medicaid Waivers
 - Coverage and reimbursement for services, work requirements
- Mental Health Framework
 - Initial proposal issued by MDHHS would require Medicaid Health Plans to covers mental health services for those mild-moderate. This change that was previously scheduled to go into effect on October 1, 2026, were [temporarily delayed](#).



Regulatory Issues

- PIHP Procurement
 - [February 2025](#): MDHHS issued a survey to seek input from those enrolled in Medicaid or working with the Medicaid population to identify opportunities for improvement within the PIHP system.
 - [May 2025](#): MDHHS releases the results of the survey, indicating an RFP process will begin this summer to allow organizations to apply.
 - [August 2025](#): MDHHS issues competitive procurement for PIHP contracts.



Regulatory Issues

- PIHP Procurement
 - January 2026: Court of Claims Judge Yates ruled that the RFP violated Michigan's Mental Health Code by restricting the CMHSPs from carrying out their mandated duties, but MDHHS could still move forward with reducing the number PIHP regions
 - February 2026: MDHHS withdrew the RFP
 - June 2026: New RFP expected to be released in August



What is *Advocacy* & Why Do We Engage?



What is Advocacy?

- Supporting a cause/issue in an effort to **educate** lawmakers and build support around an issue
- Advocacy involves
 - Nonpartisan research and analysis
 - Sharing personal stories or best practices with elected officials
 - Invitation to testify



Advocacy on Multiple Fronts

- State advocacy is not limited to Michigan's elected officials. Michigan Legislature:
 - House of Representatives – 110 Members
 - Senate – 38 Members
- Regulatory Engagement
 - Department of Health and Human Services
 - Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs



Why Engage with Your Legislator?

- Most legislators are not experts, well-versed in the mental health and I/DD space, or someone with lived experience
 - You likely know more than they do
- You are already an advocate every day
- You have a unique and critical perspective
- Ability to develop a relationship



Being Active in Advocacy with Your State Lawmakers



Step 1:

Know the landscape

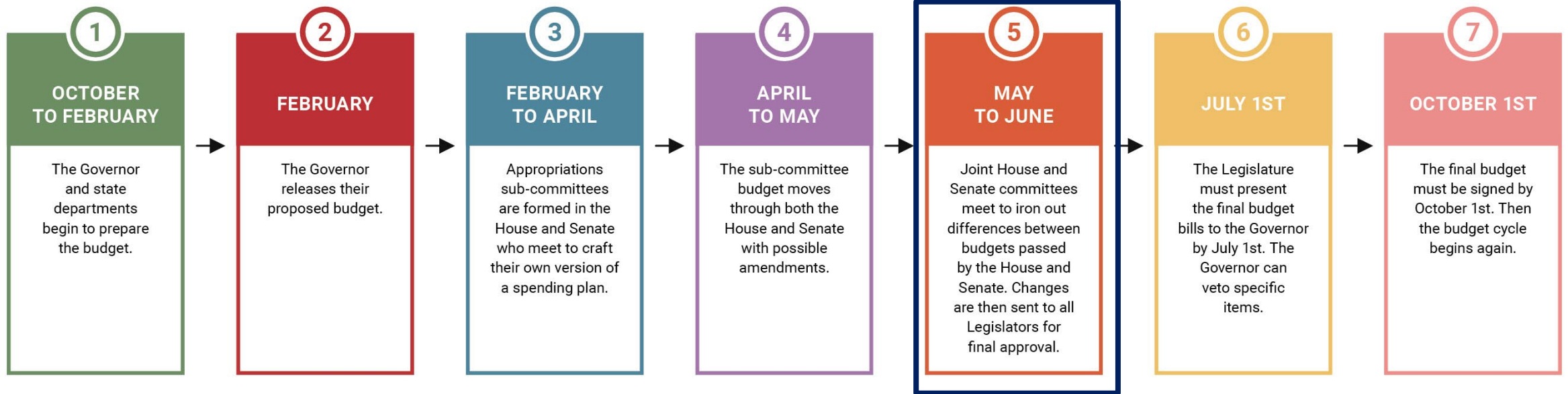


Legislative Branch

- Split state government
- 20-18 Democratic majority in Senate
 - Senate Majority Leader Winne Brinks
 - Senate Minority Leader Aric Nesbitt
- 58-52 Republican majority in House
 - House Speaker Matt Hall
 - House Minority Leader Ranjeev Puri
- New Term Limits
 - New term limits for state representatives and state senators: 12-year total limit in any combination between house and senate, except a person elected to senate in 2022 may be elected the number of times allowed when that person became a candidate.



STATE OF MICHIGAN BUDGET CYCLE



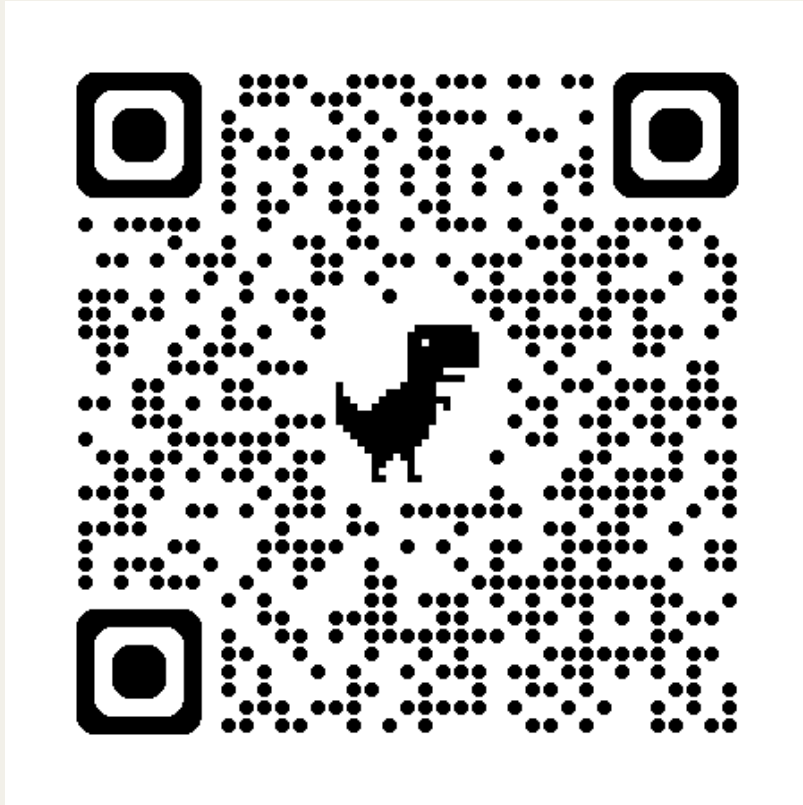
Step 2:

Connect with your lawmakers



Identifying Your Legislator

To find you Michigan State Representative and
Senator:



Making Contact

- You can meet your legislator in-district or in Lansing
- Events
 - Coffee Hours (could be virtual!)
 - Office Visits
 - Advocacy Days
 - Letters/Emails
 - Site Visits/Facility Tours
 - Sign up for their newsletters
 - Follow your legislators on social media (Facebook, X)



Making Contact

Setting Up a Meeting

- Whether you are setting up a meeting via email or phone, the following information will be helpful for staff:
 1. Introduction – name, mention where you work or who you represent
 2. Reason for contacting – concise, but detailed enough to get the ball rolling
 3. Contact information – always provide a phone number, email address, or personal address (if comfortable doing so)
 4. Share your schedule – giving the staff an idea of your flexibility will make scheduling a meeting much easier.
 1. Some meetings take a while to get scheduled, be prepared to wait or be scheduled weeks out



Meeting Preparation

Doing some ‘self-education’ on your legislator and their priorities will prepare you for your encounter. You should be researching the following:

- The legislator
 - Their website, social media
- The district
 - What cities are in the district? What has been reported locally?
- Current state of politics
 - Advocacy updates, local news ‘politics’ section
- The issue at hand
 - Are they talking about it in Lansing? Is it a local issue? Is it a personal issue?



Preparation

- Meet at the right time
- Be confident in your personal experience/expertise
 - Know **your** story
- Bring any written materials or handouts for the legislator
- Don't be afraid to have talking points/written notes
- Bring something to take notes
- Practice!



Step 3:

Prepare for committee hearings & make
your voice heard



Committee Testimony

- You must fill out a card if you want to speak or submit written comments before committee begins. The card must have:
 - Name, position, wanting to speak (if you select ‘no’ your position will be on the record and you can provide written comments), contact information
 - Recommended time: 5 minutes or less (depending on the agenda that day)
- MI Legislature: [How Committees Work](#)

Committee: _____ Date: _____
Bill#(s): _____

Wish To Speak: Yes No

Support Bill Oppose Bill Neutral

Time Needed: _____

Please leave a copy of any prepared statement with the committee clerk.

Name: _____
Representing: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
City: _____ State: _____

CARD FOR LEGISLATIVE USE ONLY



Providing Testimony (Verbal & Written)

Outline

1. Introduction

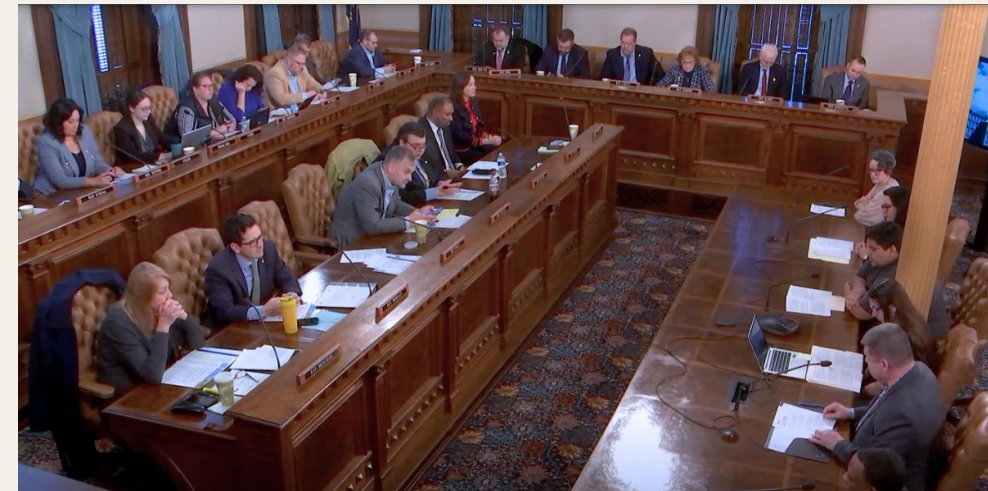
- Begin with thanks to Chair and members of the committee
- Name, location of where you reside/work
- State support or opposition to the specific bill number(s)

2. Overview of Issue

- Offer a perspective that will differ from other potential speakers (i.e. how would this specifically impact you, your organization, your family/friends)
- Offer real world stories

3. Conclude

- Wrap up thoughts – restate position
- Offer collaboration going forward
- Final thanks



Tips

- Dress for the occasion
- If verbally testifying or providing comments, always come with written copies of your testimony/letter
- Be prepared to answer questions - “I don’t know” and “I can follow up with you” are always suitable answers



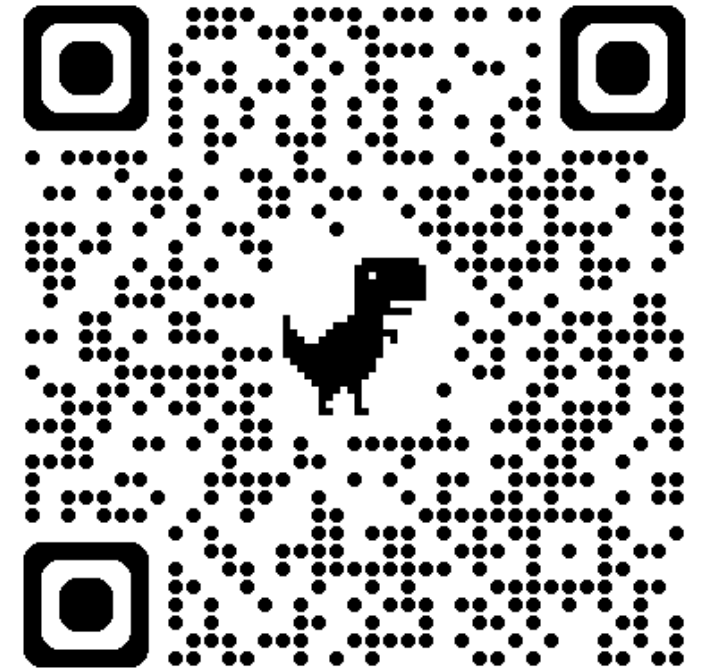
Step 4:

Continuing the relationship



Coffee Hours & Town Halls

- Identify your Michigan State Lawmakers
- Meeting in-district or in Lansing
 - Town Halls (in-district)
 - Coffee Hours (virtual or in-person)
- Key Resources
 - Facebook
 - State webpages
 - Sign up for newsletters



Questions?



Resources

- 102nd Legislature – Citizen’s Guide to State Government:

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Publications/CitizensGuide.pdf>

- National Conference of State Legislatures:

<https://www.ncsl.org/>

- Michigan Constitution:

<http://legislature.mi.gov/Publications/MIconstitution.pdf>

- State Budget Office

<https://www.michigan.gov/budget/>

- House Fiscal Agency Publications:

<https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/home.asp>

- Senate Fiscal Agency Publications:

<https://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa/>

