

Greetings friends and fellow Patriots,

We want to first thank God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for our salvation and His abounding and generous gifts, blessings and His grace, and mercy on our state and nation. It is important to acknowledge that it is only by His power and might that our state and nation remain. It is not the bills or the laws or the regulations that make our state and nation great, rather, it is recognizing who God is and submitting to His authority and dominion in our lives and as a state and nation; without this acknowledgement and also valuing God's gift of life, then all other steps to set our state on the right course will be amiss.

This evening we would like to congratulate the Governor on his State of the State Address; tonight he has given us his clear vision on what he believes will move our state forward. Our Governor has taken some significant steps that have brought some improvements, but there is still much work to be done. We look forward to partnering with him around our shared values, however, as newly elected legislators who are committed to conservative values, we believe the vision he is casting tonight is one of ever growing government which is unsustainable and detrimental to Michigan families. It is not the proper role of government to be the family, the church, or society; we make a mistake when we replace God with government.

As Michigan families sit down at their kitchen tables to plan for the year ahead, they struggle to work out a plan to live within their means while paying for their mortgages, utility bills, insurance plans, health care bills, car payments, groceries, fuel, college, and retirements. Michigan families work hard for every dollar and deserve a government which is committed to doing more with less and living within its budget just as our families must do. Nonstop spending and tax increases places the burden of an over reaching and over bloated government on the backs of our families.

Michigan has become this Governor's business and growing his business has become his goal; his vision stands in stark contrast to the Republican Party platform of lower taxes and less spending; it neither foster an environment which encourages a private economy, nor a society where families can thrive and pursue prosperity. The Governor has stated that his primary objective is to push through a sales tax increase on every Michigan resident. This will result in additional permanent

perpetual taxation for generations of Michigan citizens, removing wealth from the private economy with precious little of the new resources actually getting to the potholes that line our drives to work and school each day. The Governor's plan also pledges to increase government spending when we are now faced with a very large budget deficit. We currently have one of the highest gas taxes in the country and have failed to properly prioritize transportation infrastructure in our current and past budgets. Michigan families pay the price for this abdication of leadership.

It is time for government to live within its means. It is time for our elected officials to expect and demand tighter and more accountable purse strings. We call on our Governor, Senate, and House to demonstrate fiscal accountability and responsibility to our Michigan citizens by reversing the progressive pattern of continuous growth in government. We cannot continue to take billions and billions from the people of our state and expect them to be able to provide for themselves. The political establishment is perpetuating a never-ending need for cradle to grave government programs. This insatiable lust for public spending will be a suffocating boot on the neck of our future and our children's future. Most importantly, it will impede our individual liberty, freedom, and our economic prosperity; leaving little left in the pockets of the good families of Michigan to pay for their food, heat, and the rest of their lives.

Over the last four years, the state budget has increased by billions and we have seen a dramatic increase in the expansion of both crony capitalism and individual entitlements; the state can only fund these programs by extracting from our wallets. This never-ending grinding massive steamroller of more government programs is in direct conflict with the pockets of the people of our state. Michigan needs her elected officials to roll up their sleeves and work hard to cut back on the Goliath of government by providing real cuts in spending, taxing, and legacy costs.

Currently, we face a budget deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars. The Governor has stated this shortfall is due almost entirely to corporate entitlements provided by the MEDC. Now is the time to finally put an end to corporate welfare in our state. We must stop greedy corporate interests from devouring the hard earned resources of Michigan families. The MEDC is the bar at which corporations feed their never ending desire for more entitlements; it is used to pick winners and losers and the losers, the

winners are always the corporate interests with political connections and the losers are the families of our great state. Now is the time to stop government intrusions and distortions of the free markets.

Where we can partner together with the Governor to protect our priceless gift of liberty, we are excited to do so. However, we were not elected to represent a government, or the Governor, but rather, we are compelled to first and foremost adhere to Biblical principles, the Constitution, our families, and the best interests of our districts, and the state. It is incumbent upon us to protect these interests with an intentional and thoughtful concern for our future generations. As elected officials, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of the dollars that have been entrusted to our care and to be ever-mindful of the taxpayers whose money we are spending.

As elected officials our first priority should be to respect the right of the people to be free from intrusive and overpowering government, to that end we have put forward the Contract for Liberty Project advancing our core liberties:

- The Freedom to Be Born
- The Freedom to Defend Ourselves
- Health Care Freedom
- Freedom to Worship
- Freedom from Regulatory Tyranny
- Freedom to Own Property
- Freedom from Economic Intrusion
- Freedom from Unjust Taxation
- Free from Government Intrusions
- Free and Independent States

America is a Christian nation founded on Judeo-Christian values and God has given us incredible freedom and opportunity. Let us enjoy all that we have been blessed with as we carry forth with the responsibility to bestow these same freedoms and opportunities to future generations. We are told America is plagued with limited resources and limited opportunities, however the truth is we are awash in boundless unlimited potential that has been restricted from the people by government untethered from our founding documents.

It is critical that we fight this ever growing and increasing government while protecting liberty and the sound fiscal practices which lead to stronger families, stronger

communities, and a stronger state; moving in the direction where more Michigan families are independent from government assistance, not dependent on an ever hungrier government. It is time for servant leaders to stand again for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, believing again in the American spirit of valuing life, personal opportunity, personal responsibility, generosity, American Exceptionalism, ingenuity and hard work. It is time to free the people from servitude to state government and we call all our citizens to pray for those in leadership asking that God would grant them wisdom, judgment, discernment, and the fortitude to do the right things, in the right moments, for the right reasons.

In His Grip...

With Firm Reliance on Divine Providence,

Todd Courser

Cindy Gamrat

State Representative, District 82 State Representative, District 80