

Nov. 30, 2022

The Honorable Winnie Brinks
Majority Leader-Elect
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Aric Nesbitt
Republican Leader-Elect
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Joe Tate
Speaker-Elect
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Matt Hall
Republican Leader-Elect
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Majority Leader-Elect Brinks, Speaker-Elect Tate, Minority Leader-Elect Nesbitt, and Minority Leader-Elect Hall:

As the largest bipartisan voice for Michigan's business community, the Detroit Regional Chamber congratulates you on your upcoming leadership of the Legislature. No doubt, the entire state will benefit from your combined wisdom, collaborative spirit, and commitment to an even more prosperous Michigan.

Employers and elected officials interact with the same people daily. Your constituents are our fellow employees and our customers – and they are all our neighbors. As you prepare to lead the state – to capitalize on our opportunities and address our challenges – I share the following perspective from the Chamber in the hope that the new Legislature will take the opportunity to govern from the broad center, rack up some early bipartisan wins, and advance Michigan's competitive position in the global economy.

Promote Economic Growth

- Too many people are engaged in a debate that artificially pits building Michigan's talent base against capitalizing on our manufacturing and engineering heritage. The stark reality is that Michigan *must* capitalize on our manufacturing competitive advantage today *and* make major improvements in our educational attainment and skill levels. This is not an “*or*” conversation.
- Create a constant, reliable and **sufficient source of funding for SOAR** (or similar program) that allows Michigan to compete for manufacturing, engineering, technology, and other jobs on par with our national and international competition.

- Support the **deployment of electric vehicle infrastructure**. As Michigan competes for leadership in the global shift to electrification, our infrastructure must support what our Michigan-based companies are doing globally. This includes support for the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Michigan EV Friendliness Program.
- Invest in **the successful Going PRO Talent Fund**, initially launched by the Snyder Administration, that prepares employers for 21st Century jobs. The Chamber supports increasing funding by \$45 million for this purpose.
- Support **bipartisan and balanced reforms to our K-12 education system**, focused on high student achievement, measurable results, and funding equity-based models – including the reforms contemplated by the ongoing Launch Michigan effort.
- **Reinvest in Michigan's higher education assets**, including community college access and skilled certificates in addition to traditional four-year institutions.

Foster Equitable Opportunity

Like the rest of America, the gap between the wealthy and working class continues to grow. In Michigan, 38% of our neighbors fall below the ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) level – unable to provide for basic household necessities such as transportation, education, childcare and other essentials.

Additionally, in the competition for skilled talent our employers face, we cannot leave any talented person on the sidelines. Michigan and employers need state policies to support a welcoming environment for all.

- Enhance the **Earned Income Tax Credit**, a tax cut targeted at Michiganders that need it the most and have the highest propensity to spend those dollars locally in our communities.
- Expand the **Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include the LGBTQ+ community**. In the war for talent, Michigan employers want and need the state to send a welcoming message that *all* hard working and talented individuals are welcome.

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Promote Civility

Washington continues to set a poor example for civility, productivity, and efficiency. In Michigan, we can do better – and you can lead the way in the new legislature.

- Create a **Bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus** – mirrored after the Congressional Problem Solvers Caucus championed by Reps. Debbie Dingell and Fred Upton – to help drive reasonable and practical solutions across parties and across chambers.

Again, congratulations on your new leadership posts, and thank you for your ongoing commitment to public service. The Chamber stands ready to support your work and bring the voice of Michigan’s employers to your important deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy K. Baruah', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sandy K. Baruah
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer