



MICHIGAN AFL-CIO
ADVOCATES

MUNICIPAL SOLIDARITY INDEX

2024

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A LETTER FROM RON BIEBER

PRESIDENT OF THE MICHIGAN AFL-CIO

Brothers, Sisters, and Siblings,

Every day, the hard-working folks of Michigan wake up and get ready for work. They show up for their 12-hour shifts where they build the cars we drive, educate our children, care for the sick, keep the lights on, and ensure our trains and buses run on time.

COVID-19 created unprecedented challenges. Michigan workers have lost their jobs, homes, and loved ones. The pandemic has exposed worker mistreatment across the nation - from Amazon warehouses to hospitals, schools, grocery stores, construction sites, coffee shops, and more.

The labor movement worked hard to guarantee that these hard-working Michiganders are treated fairly, both on and off the job. Our successes through the years have produced the 40-hour workweek, health and safety protections, wrongful termination laws—the list goes on. But this tumultuous time has also highlighted the need across the nation to focus more heavily on local politics and government.

Michigan has some of the most anti-worker laws in the nation. When

our state legislature is gridlocked, that necessitates a local focus.

Though they are often under-utilized by statewide organizations, cities, townships, villages, school boards, and counties have the direct ability to improve the lives of the citizens they serve and their own employees — dedicated public servants who provide us with essential services and educate the next generation of Michiganders.

The Michigan AFL-CIO's Central Labor Councils and Area Labor Federations work tirelessly in our communities to address labor disputes, support strikes, coordinate actions, and advocate for workers. The Municipal Solidarity Index will provide the labor movement and pro-labor local elected officials with the resources they need to enact the changes that working people deserve.

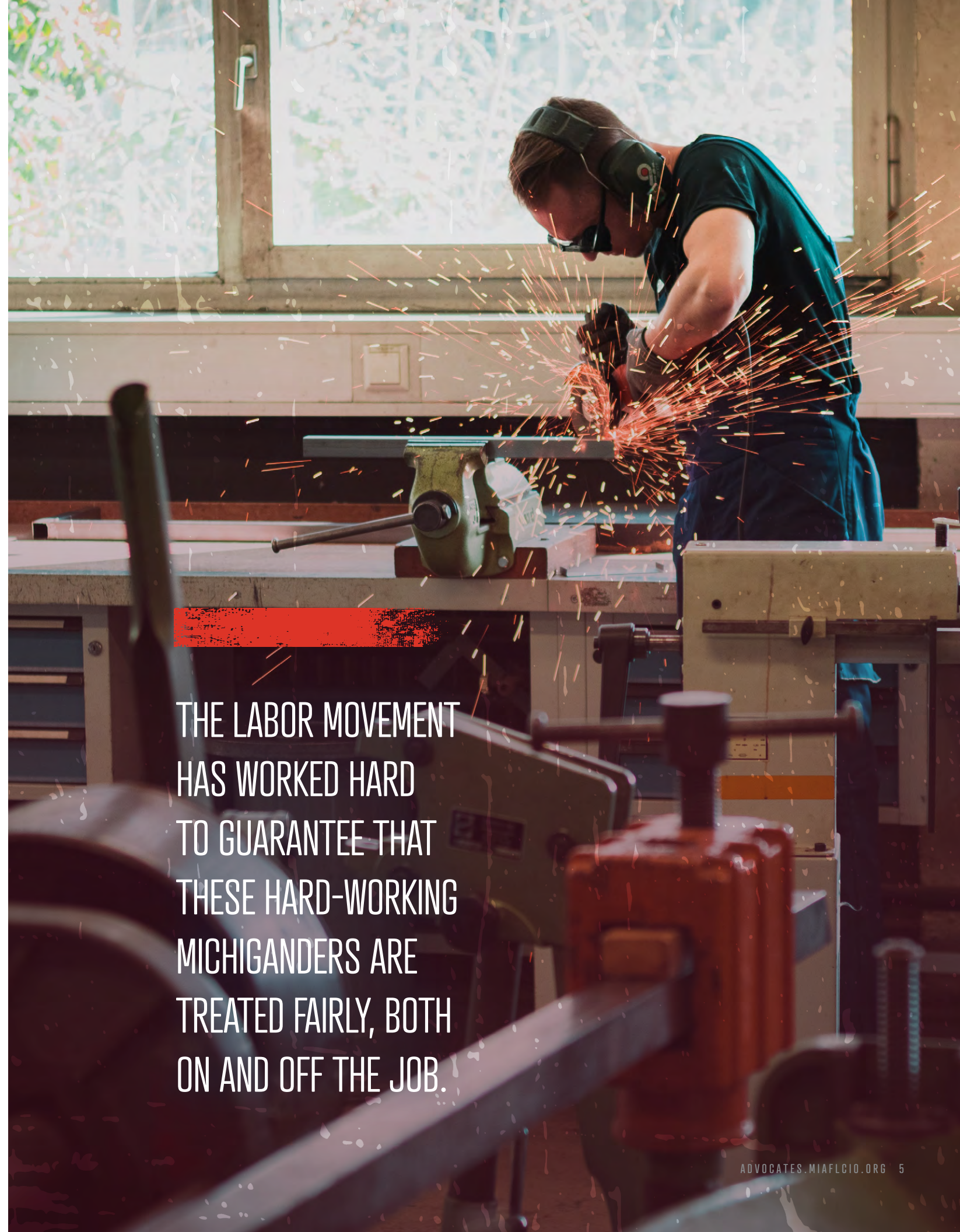
The policies in the index have been curated by the extensive work and research of the Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates, the national AFL-CIO, our affiliated unions, and partner organizations. **Because of the immense political power held by local governments, we will work extensively with local elected officials to ensure they enact these policies and champion their passage at the local, state, and federal levels.**

By holding local elected official accountable, we will work to directly impact Michigan's working families for the better. We're building a better Michigan for working people, and we can't get there without the support of our community allies and local elected officials. To learn about our work and how you can be involved, visit advocates.miaflcio.org.

In solidarity,



Ron Bieber



THE LABOR MOVEMENT
HAS WORKED HARD
TO GUARANTEE THAT
THESE HARD-WORKING
MICHIGANDERS ARE
TREATED FAIRLY, BOTH
ON AND OFF THE JOB.



A LETTER FROM MICHIGAN AFL-CIO ADVOCATES

When it comes to state-level worker protections, Michigan lags behind the rest of the country despite high union density. Disastrous labor preemption laws passed under former Governor Snyder's administration have prevented Michigan municipalities from having meaningful control over local labor issues. As a result, local governments can no longer enact prevailing and minimum-wage ordinances or set labor standards for local businesses. But despite these anti-worker laws, there is still much that can be done.

That is why we created Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates, a public-advocacy organization. While the Michigan AFL-CIO works to change policy in Lansing, **Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates works to change policy in Michigan cities, counties, villages, townships, and school boards.**

Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates will use this Municipal Solidarity Index to grade Michigan's local governments on protections given to workers, despite the constraints imposed by the state. Our index will be the first statewide push to enact stronger labor laws

and protections at the local level that Michigan has seen in decades.

We hope that the policies and practices outlined in the index will become the new vanguard of pro-worker local policy efforts in Michigan. Our policies promote access to fair working conditions, fair pay, fair representation, and prudent stewardship of taxpayer money.

Our inspiration came from the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, a groundbreaking project that grades 506 cities across the nation on their support of LGBTQ+ people in employment, provision of services, law enforcement, and non-discrimination laws. Their flagship effort has seen remarkable success since its launch, and their work has inspired us to undertake the same comprehensive action around workers' rights in Michigan.

Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates relies on local elected leaders to advocate for workers' rights in their communities. You are integral in the fight to make effective change in communities across Michigan. Whether you have had experience within organized labor

or not, we would love to sit down and discuss how working together will improve the lives of working people in your community. Consider joining the fight to support Michigan's working families at advocates.miaflcio.org.

In solidarity,



Jasmine Kaltenbach

Jasmine Kaltenbach
Deputy Director of Government Affairs,
Michigan AFL-CIO

A LETTER TO LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Local elected officials are crucial to the functioning of our society. **You are the face of government for most people — fixing roads, providing utilities, running public schools, administering elections, and so much more.**

But we live in a scary time. People are losing trust in institutions they once believed worked for them - whether it's local, state, or federal government. National and state politics are increasingly polarized and gridlocked. When elected officials become increasingly unable or unwilling to work for change, more and more people check out of the political process. This creates gaps for destructive figures to waltz in and take advantage of a weakened system, with disastrous consequences.

Meanwhile, local elected officials most of whom receive less than part-time salaries, are left with the challenging work of leading their communities with few helpful resources. **In crisis after crisis, not only are they left holding the bag, but they have little support to go beyond the day-to-day work of running local governments.**

Most run for office because they want to help their communities. But after

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they enter office, many realize they're on their own. With little support from political parties, little communication from interest groups, and insufficient time, many struggle to make the trains run on time.

Not being able to properly engage on all these issues only deepens the distrust that growing numbers of people feel for elected officials. And we already know there is a crisis in citizen disengagement in local politics.

That's why Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates has created the Municipal Solidarity Index and Michigan Electeds Labor Caucus (MELC) — to address

these deep-seated issues, provide local elected officials with the resources they need, and give them the credit they deserve.

MUNICIPAL SOLIDARITY INDEX

The Municipal Solidarity Index will provide policy briefs, sample policies, toolkits, and templates to help them work for legislative change within their communities. This index also grades local governments on whether or not they pass the policies we outline and rewards those who have been particularly hardworking.

MICHIGAN ELECTEDS LABOR CAUCUS

The MELC creates networking opportunities for like-minded elected officials across the state, at the local level and in Lansing. It also creates a space where elected officials can learn about pro-labor policies and work with us to develop and workshop cutting-edge and innovative policy solutions while gaining leadership positions within our organization.

Built on the principles of collective action, mutual benefit, and ongoing learning, the MELC creates a collaborative and change-centered environment that elected officials everywhere can use to become

more effective stewards of their constituents' interests.

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Imagine having the resources you need to serve your constituents like you really want to. Imagine having an easy pathway to fulfill your platform and campaign promises.

Not only will your constituents thank you for it, but you'll also receive the respect and admiration of progressive groups across the state. You'll have a track record you can point to during tough elections, or when you seek higher office.

When there are important votes in Lansing, instead of spending hours writing original resolutions, letters, and social media posts, you could borrow from existing sample language and sign on to a more powerful collective letter with dozens or even hundreds of other elected officials across the state.

Join us at advocates.miaflcio.org and we will create that future together.



STATE PREEMPTION OF LOCAL LABOR LAWS

BY: JORDYN HOULE

When federal and state governments fail to protect workers, local governments step up to ensure residents are guaranteed high wages they can sustain their families on, paid leave, fair work schedules, and other benefits that promote a higher quality of life for workers. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of households in Michigan that could not afford basic needs increased by 6%. This means that 13% of Michigan households live in poverty while another 25% struggle to afford basic necessities.² These distressing statistics demonstrate the need for governments to implement strong labor standards that curtail economic inequality. Unfortunately, Michigan’s state government has passed preemption laws that supersede local labor standards and further erode protections for Michiganders at their time of increasing need.

State preemption laws allow state government to block local ordinances from taking effect or invalidate an existing ordinance.³ They impose one broad standard on many diverse communities, harming workers who would have benefited from increased protections in their jurisdiction. **These laws erode democracy by preventing**

local communities from deciding which labor standards work best for their residents. They also deprive local governments of the freedom to experiment with different labor laws to understand which policies improve the lives of working people and protect collective bargaining rights.⁴

The most common type of preemption law gives states the authority to prohibit cities from establishing a minimum wage higher than the states. Including Michigan, 25 states have passed legislation preventing local governments from raising the local minimum wage.⁵ Other common preemption laws prohibit local governments from guaranteeing

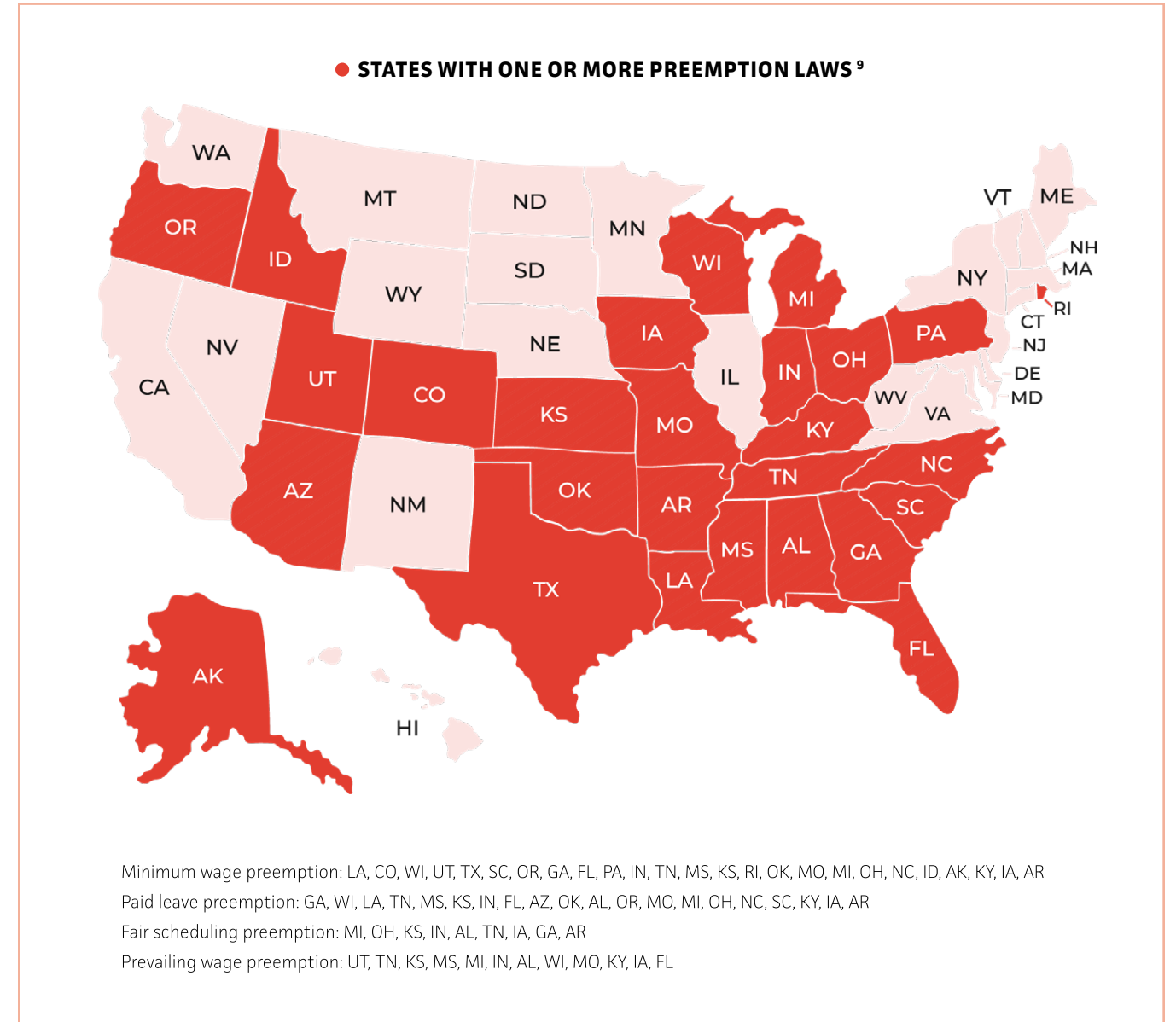
workers paid leave, mandating fair work schedules, and establishing prevailing wage laws that require contractors to pay at least the average wage in their locality during public construction contracts.

Former Governor Rick Snyder signed into law all four types of preemption legislation referenced here throughout his two terms. **In fact, Michigan was the first state in the country to pass a law prohibiting cities from implementing fair scheduling standards that would ban unpredictable scheduling practices and allow workers to arrange childcare, education, or a second job more easily.**⁶

Fortunately, even with preemption laws in place, local governments can still take steps to promote workers’ rights through their own hiring and labor practices. While they may not be able to raise the minimum wage for all employees, local governments can raise the minimum wage for their own employees.⁷ Local governments can establish protocols for contracting work in their jurisdiction by requiring all contractors to pay a certain minimum wage or guarantee equal pay regardless of race or gender.⁸

WHEN THESE PREEMPTIONS WERE ENACTED IN MICHIGAN ¹⁰

- Fair scheduling preemption 2015 (1st state)
- Prevailing wage preemption 2015 (5th state)
- Paid leave preemption 2015 (14th state)
- Minimum wage preemption 2015 (18th state)



In Michigan, preemption laws severely limit local governments’ ability to implement legislation that protects workers. They erode democracy and prevent communities from implementing the labor standards that would best serve their residents. State

preemption laws are designed to weaken local labor laws and inhibit progress on workers’ rights. Michigan workers deserve better.



SOLIDARITY CITIES, TOWNSHIPS, VILLAGES, AND COUNTIES

The local governments we will select for grading span Michigan geographically, ideologically, and culturally. We will choose local governments based on their interest (or lack thereof) in upholding these labor standards for their constituents and workers, in collaboration with the Area Labor Federations (ALFs), Central Labor Councils (CLCs), and Building Trades Councils that know these communities best.

We know that passing laws takes time and that many of the local governments we are working with have the intent to achieve a perfect or near-perfect score on this index. We also know that the political situation in many places is such that, while there may be a minority that

supports these policies, they cannot pass them despite their best efforts. We have a section in the Municipal Solidarity Index where we reward this effort, and we always remember the elected officials who attempted but were unsuccessful at establishing these important standards.

We continue to work in partnership with these local governments to assist them in passing policies that benefit working people. If you'd like to apply for your local government to be evaluated or would like help passing these policies, please email advocates@miaflcio.org.



ENDNOTES

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10 Wilpert, M. (2017, August 26). City governments are raising standards for working people-and state legislators are lowering them back down. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/city-governments-are-raising-standards-for-working-people-and-state-legislators-are-lowering-them-back-down/>.

I.

MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

Municipalities have the unique responsibility of being an employer, contractee, and governing body. Local governments employ 5% of all Michigan workers. The employment and labor practice

standards adopted by municipalities can have a resounding impact on Michigan workers and communities. It is crucial that they operate in the interests of their employees, citizens, and the local economy.

“THE PEOPLE ARE WHAT MATTER TO GOVERNMENT, AND A GOVERNMENT SHOULD AIM TO GIVE ALL THE PEOPLE UNDER ITS JURISDICTION THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE.”

Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, 1933 - 1945



OVERVIEW

RESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR ORDINANCE [P. 20]

Municipalities have a responsibility to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly on only fair, qualified, and responsible firms - especially for important projects like roads and schools. A responsible contracting ordinance ensures that taxpayer funds are spent on ethical, efficient and reputable contracting. Dozens of government bodies across Michigan have already recognized this and adopted responsible contractor ordinances including Jackson, Saline, and Ann Arbor.

LABOR ACCESS STANDARDS [P. 24]

Establishing labor access standards and encouraging open dialogue between workers and their employers is the most efficient and transparent way to preserve workers' rights. Local government employees deserve those rights and protections as much as any worker. Some of the standards discussed in this section are card-check, unit determination, modernized dues collection, access to information about labor access standards, and eliminating unpaid internships and unpaid student teaching positions.

HEALTH AND SAFETY [P. 30]

The Michigan AFL-CIO Workforce Development Institute offers free workplace safety training. Their online bank of 1,200+ safety and workplace trainings is an invaluable resource that can help municipalities educate their employees on best workplace practices, which are left out of safety guidelines required by law. Topics include office health and safety, tree trimming, sexual harassment, and electrical safety. Our team can help create training packages specially tailored to employees' varying training needs.

PREVAILING WAGE ORDINANCE [P. 32]

Prevailing wage ordinances mandate that contractors pay their workers an hourly rate equal to the average local wage while working on publicly-funded projects. By setting a pay standard, local governments can ensure that work is completed with quality, cost-effective labor instead of cheap labor, unskilled labor. Additionally, prevailing wage ensures that wages are commensurate with the standard of living in the area so that workers can afford to live in the communities they build. Though local prevailing wage was repealed during Governor Snyder's administration, local governments

that already established prevailing wage laws were grandfathered in, and other municipalities can implement trigger laws.

ANTI-PRIVATIZATION ORDINANCE [P. 36]

Privatization of public goods and services often decreases the quality and accessibility of these resources and imposes a social cost for workers and residents. Companies have enticed politicians with deliberately low bids that may cut costs in the short term by driving out unions, driving down wages, and eliminating benefits. In the long run, however, the quality of services suffers, costs increase, and jobs disappear. The anti-privatization ordinance requires wages offered by private contractors to, at the very least, be equal to those provided by similar public sector jobs. Additionally, the anti-privatization ordinance requires cities to provide a detailed analysis of the social and economic costs and benefits of privatization.

RESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR ORDINANCE

BY: CALVIN FRIFELDT AND JASMINE KALTENBACH

As a standard practice, many local governments across the state regularly award construction bids to contractors that submit the cheapest proposal. But behind the facade of a low bottom line, many contractors are involved in unscrupulous, unethical, and downright illegal business practices. It is the responsibility of every local government to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars and provide quality services to residents.

This is only possible when local governments consider more than just the bottom line and evaluate the practices and qualifications of firms before awarding contracts.

Responsible contracting ordinances increase government efficiency, support the local economy, and provide government services that our communities can truly be proud of.

IRRESPONSIBLE CONTRACTORS

Sometimes irresponsible contractors employ workers who are not properly licensed, paid well, or live out of state. Their quality of work is poor and wastes taxpayer money. Other times, irresponsible contractors illegally pay workers under the table to avoid paying for healthcare, insurance, and taxes. Others classify their workers as 1099 independent contractors to avoid payroll tax, even though legally,

those workers should be sent W-2s. This is payroll and tax fraud, and opens up local governments to legal liabilities.

Firms without the capacity to handle big projects or the workers with the expertise necessary to complete these projects cause construction delays and headaches for elected officials and residents alike. When irresponsible contractors violate contracts, local governments are stuck chasing them into compliance, creating bureaucratic nightmares and nurturing the expectation many people have that the government is inefficient and wasteful.

HOLISTIC BID EVALUATION

Local policymakers must ensure that responsible contractors win public bids for government projects and set minimum requirements that contractors will meet before a municipality awards them a maintenance contract. Responsible contractor policies help local governments promote ethical labor standards and ensure they purchase high-quality, long-lasting projects that deliver the best value to residents. Under this policy, firms must maintain highly trained

personnel and the resources to successfully perform projects in a safe, cost-effective, and high-quality manner to be deemed responsible contractors. This means that firms are

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not competing for who treats their workers the worst, pays them the least and has the least amount of safety and experience — they compete on innovation, quality, and efficiency.



Firms that demonstrate legal compliance with these standards and state standards can be placed on an expedited responsible contractor list, which actually reduces the administrative burden on local governments to evaluate and approve contractors for these projects.

Dozens of government bodies across Michigan have already recognized this and adopted responsible contractor ordinances.

COST EFFICACY

Researchers found that responsible contractor ordinances do not significantly affect construction bid costs in their analysis of over 300 projects while controlling for various geographic locations.¹¹ Counties, cities, townships, and school boards should commit to awarding construction contracts only to firms deemed qualified to maintain a timely, safe, and high quality of work. The buildings our children go to school in and the roads our elderly parents drive on should be safe and well constructed. Residents on a fixed income paying property taxes don't want their dollars wasted on roads that can only withstand a few Michigan winters.

Local policymakers can ensure that construction will proceed economically, efficiently, and ethically by ensuring that public works are awarded to responsible contractors.

KEY ELEMENTS

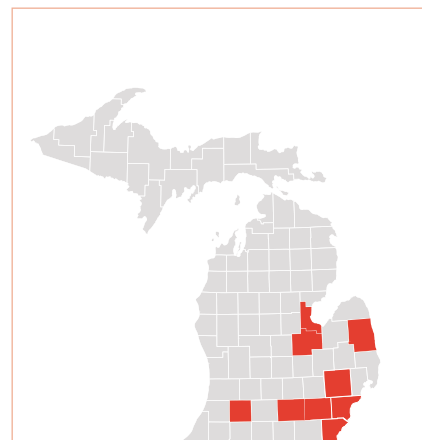
In order to identify responsible contractors, policymakers shall request written responses or documentation of the following standards, in addition to others, as local governments see fit. Responsible contractors should undergo U.S. Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship training programs before submitting a bid. Furthermore, firms should have a record of correct W-2 employee classification. Contractors must have undergone MIOSHA-approved safety training and pass a background check for OSHA violations. Responsible contractors should pass drug and alcohol testing, especially when working on school projects or those requiring the operation of heavy machinery. Finally, while local governments are not legally permitted to require contractors to provide their workers with sufficient pay and benefits, these factors are essential to high-quality public works. Local governments should take worker compensation into account when awarding contracts.

CONCLUSION

Responsible contractor ordinances ensure that taxpayer-funded jobs are given to firms who comply with set standards, such as having undergone official apprenticeships, reporting correct tax classification for workers, being MIOSHA-certified, and passing

drug tests. These standards reduce the legal liability for the local government and ensure that the project is high quality. Without these safeguards, public projects are often awarded to the lowest bidder who underpays their workers and does a shoddy job on crucial public works projects.

More information on responsible contracting can be found by emailing advocates@miaflcio.org.



COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE PASSED EXEMPLARY RCOS:

- Saline
- Jackson
- Saginaw County
- Bay City
- Royal Oak
- Monroe
- Ann Arbor
- Washtenaw County
- Wayne County
- Kalamazoo County

Success Story: Washtenaw County, Michigan

BY: MCKENNA TOWNS AND VIVI IYER

Public bids for public works projects must be given to companies that do the work expertly and while providing safe working conditions, good benefits, and livable wages to their employees. Although sometimes providing benefits and good working conditions can be a bit more expensive, as Washtenaw County Commissioner Katie Scott says, "You have to think about more than just a dollar sign; you have to think about the whole community." Commissioner Scott spearheaded the unanimous passage of a responsible contractor policy by Washtenaw County's Board of Commissioners.

Writing and passing the policy was a long process that took dedication and collaboration. Commissioner Scott recounts her experience with the process: "I started doing work talking to members at the Huron Valley Area Labor Federation, IBEW, and the Laborers (LiUNA)... those groups really helped me formulate what things we needed to see

in that responsible contractor policy." Once the first draft of the policy was written, Commissioner Scott presented it to the county administration for feedback, made revisions, and eventually presented it to the Washtenaw County Ways and Means Committee as well as the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners. As Commissioner Scott recounts: "it took about a year [to get] the policy honed correctly, was my first year on the board too, so it was taking a really huge policy shift to Washtenaw County...[and] I really wanted to make sure I had the trust from my fellow Commissioners and the administration before bringing something like that forward."

Because of her dedication and hard work, the policy was unanimously passed by both the Washtenaw County Ways and Means Committee and the County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Scott reflects, "Labor leaders that I look up to and that I hope to be are people who recognize that all the

work they do, whether at the local level or part of a larger labor movement, is about making our communities stronger. Because when you strengthen families and working people, it strengthens the community."

"YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT MORE THAN JUST A DOLLAR SIGN; YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY."



LABOR ACCESS STANDARDS

BY: CALVIN FRIFELDT

Local government officials are in the unique position of being both employers and public servants. How local governments treat their employees is a reflection of their values — and of their community’s values. Elected officials should uphold a high standard of worker treatment — those they directly supervise and those they represent.

Unions combat workplace racial, gender, and economic inequality for all American workers.¹² A study from the Center for Economic and Policy

Research in 2015 found that union members of all types make more pay than similar non-union workers.¹³ But the benefits of a union job extend beyond the families they support — communities with stronger unions experience increased benefits for all working-class families in the area.¹⁴

In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned years of precedent in *Janus v. AFSCME* by ruling that non-union employees do not have to pay a fee to cover union costs despite benefiting from its collective bargaining

advocacy. Unions are plagued by the free-rider phenomenon, where workers enjoy the benefits that union advocacy generates but do not pay their fair share of the dues that enable these unions to win these benefits through greater collective bargaining leverage. The policies described in this brief promote fairness and workers’ rights, and defend workers from the negative consequences of *Janus v. AFSCME* and Michigan’s deceptively-named “Right-to-Work” laws.

While labor preemption means that cities, townships, villages, and counties cannot mandate that private businesses within their jurisdictions establish strong labor access standards for all community members, local governments can enshrine these crucial protections for their own employees.

INFORMING WORKERS OF THEIR RIGHTS AND UNION NEUTRALITY

New employee orientations should make workers aware of workplace safety standards, their right to organize into a union, and not be punished for disclosing salary information to other employees. Local governments can also pass resolutions declaring union neutrality, meaning they will not actively dissuade employees from forming a union.

PERMITTING CARD CHECK

“Card check” describes a method of unionization in which workers sign authorization cards saying they are interested in joining a union. Some employers force workers to have another union election, even after most workers have signed union cards. Under card check, if over half of the employees of a particular workplace sign authorization cards, then the employer can voluntarily recognize the union.

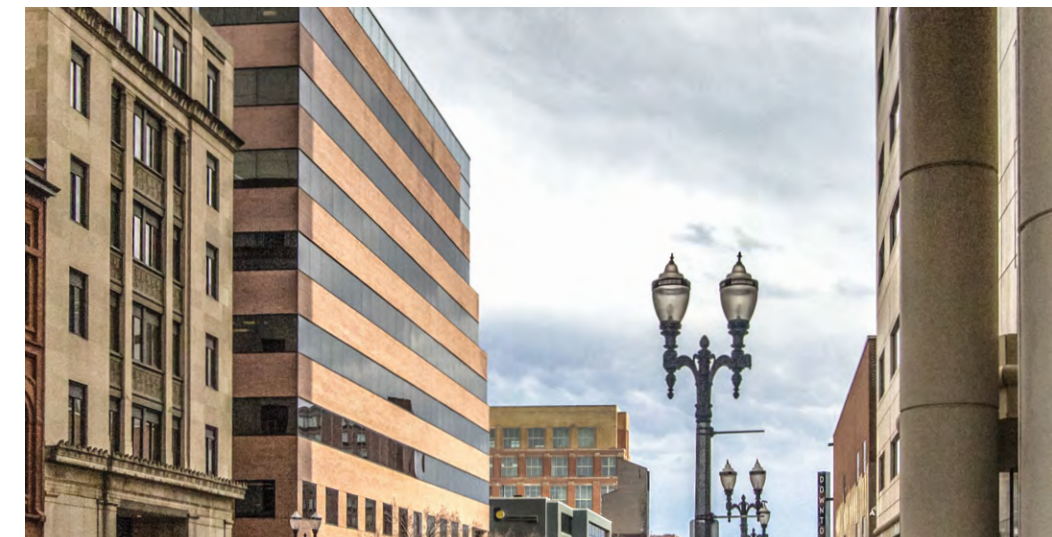
UNIT DETERMINATION

Next, local governments should permit their workers to determine their own bargaining units if they form a union. If the secretaries in a workplace want to form a union but are forced to group with the janitors and transportation staff as well, it will be far more difficult for them to unionize. All workers should be allowed to choose what their own bargaining unit should be, within reason. A policy of unit determination defends workers’ right to unionize as they see fit without unnecessary impediments.

MODERNIZED DUES COLLECTION

Finally, local governments should allow employees the choice to automatically have their union dues deducted from payroll. No workplace is mandated to automate dues, but preventing automation of union dues is an intentional bureaucratic burden. Automated regular payments allow unions to focus on representing the interests of their members

UNIONS ARE
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THE FREE-RIDER
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WHERE WORKERS
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BUT DO NOT PAY
THEIR FAIR SHARE
OF THE DUES...





instead of collecting dues, and allows employees to focus on their work. Even states that enacted other worker suppression laws, such as North Carolina and Virginia, permit modernized dues collection.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

Internships are vital to a student's learning, career development, and future success. However, unpaid internships often hurt lower-income students who cannot afford to be uncompensated for their work. Not only does this further drive the wealth gap, but it unfairly gives wealthier students high-caliber internships. To combat this, unpaid internships should not be offered, and if they are, they should be extremely limited. The same goes for student teaching. Student teachers must have in-classroom teaching hours to graduate from their programs, and most schools do not pay these teachers for their time. Not only are the student teachers unpaid, but they are forced to pay for the class. Recent legislative changes provide stipends for student teachers, and school boards should supplement these stipends to ensure that student teachers are paid livable hourly wages.

UNIONS RAISE WAGES FOR WORKERS OF ALL TYPES

Union wage premium over similar non-union workers



NOTE: Wage premiums control for several characteristics of workers, including their education, industry, occupation, and region. Calculations include those with imputed earnings, which may underestimate the union wage premium. Source: Authors' analysis of Center for Economic and Policy Research Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group extract from 2015. See ceprDATA, "CPS ORG Data," available at <http://ceprdata.org/cps-uniform-data-extracts/cps-outgoing-rotation-group/cps-org-data/> (last accessed March 2016). Model based on Barry T. Hirsch and Edward J. Schumacher, "Match Bias in Wage Gap Estimates Due to Earnings Imputation," *Journal of Labor Economics* 22 (3) (2004): 689-722.

CONCLUSION

Strong labor access standards are vital for Michigan communities, and it is equally vital that cities uphold these standards for their employees. According to the 2021 ALICE report, 58% of jobs throughout Michigan pay less than \$20 an hour.¹⁶ This statistic is especially perilous for working-class families; on average, a family of four needs to make \$30.64 per hour in Michigan just to survive.¹⁷ Consequently, the prevalence of these low wages indicates that Michigan communities need unions

which, in turn, need strong labor access standards to be effective. Local governments should model these standards for their citizens and inform municipal workers of their rights, declare union neutrality, permit card check, allow unit determination, and implement modernized dues collection. Local governments should also solely provide paid internship opportunities for students so that opportunities are equitable and accessible. History shows that union bargaining arguments between corporations and employees gain great amounts of media attention.

Often, this leads to negative views of the corporation and large-scale union demonstrations. If municipalities want to avoid a similar negative image for being anti-union, they should champion these rights and standards for their employees.

Success Story: The University of Michigan Regents

BY: CALVIN FRIFELDT

One of the biggest challenges workers face is the ability to freely join unions. Many workers go on strike just for their employer to recognize the union—sacrificing their pay, health insurance, and sometimes their jobs.

At their June 25th, 2020 meeting, the Regents of the University of Michigan demonstrated their dedication to workers' rights and the labor movement by passing a resolution that upheld three important labor standards for employees that make it easier for workers to freely join unions. The university declared employer neutrality, promising that they would not interfere to dissuade (or encourage) employees to form a union. They also vowed to recognize card check processes, bypassing bureaucratic and burdensome NLRB elections. And, their policy now states that workers can define their own bargaining units provided that their proposal is reasonable.

So far, the Regents' new policy has been honored by the University of Michigan administration. Since the policy was announced, UM employees have been organizing new local unions. So far, librarians, archivists and curators have organized to join LEO, the Lecturers Employee Organization (AFT-MI 6244) and Physicians Assistants in Michigan Medicine have formed a new local union, UPAMM (AFT-MI 5297). More new locals, on both the Michigan Medicine and the academic side of UM's operations, are on the way.

An important test of the scope and strength of the new policy will be how it is applied to UM students. Students now seek to form the first union of its kind on campus to represent students working as residential advisors, dining hall staff, and student researchers. And Big Ten football players are considering unionization on a number of campuses. Local labor leaders expect the administration to apply the same

principles with respect to more conventional employees to these student union organizing efforts.

The University of Michigan administration has not always behaved in a pro-union fashion. Recently, Michigan Medicine negotiators have been pushing back hard against UM Nurses' reasonable demands for fixed (and reasonable) patient-nurse ratios, an end to mandatory overtime, and raises that reflect the tremendous burden they have borne over the last four years of COVID and the inflationary surge of the last several years. It's possible that the UM administration will also resist student organizing efforts, claiming that they fall outside the scope of the Regents' new policy. Ultimately, the Regents will decide that question, and labor will need to work closely with them to ensure that they assert an inclusive interpretation of its scope. These questions about future applications of the policy notwithstanding, there is no

question that the Regents of the University of Michigan took a major step forward when they passed this resolution.

"Some may see this as a dramatic move moving forward, but as Regent Bernstein pointed out this is actually, if not typical, it's absolutely common both in our industry and across our economy," said Regent Paul Brown. "I think all it does is clarify and streamline the process, and if it does happen to result in increased union membership on campus, I see that as a great thing for our institution, students, faculty, and staff for our community and for our state."

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University of Michigan Regent Paul Brown

HEALTH AND SAFETY

BY: ELYSE SHERR

WORKERS DESERVE SAFETY

The Michigan AFL-CIO's mission is to improve the lives of working families by bringing economic justice to the workplace and social justice to the nation. Although the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 has dramatically decreased accidents in the workplace, there are still too many people who work in unsafe conditions. Millions of workers suffer injuries or illnesses because of their jobs. This is especially problematic for those who work with children and in schools and must protect the children's safety alongside their own. The fundamental commitment of the labor movement is to fight for workers to be represented and empowered to champion their own rights and benefits on the job. Safety training courses can equip workers with that knowledge to continually demand that their rights be respected and protected, and the Michigan AFL-CIO's Workforce Development Institute at miwdi.org has been supporting worker safety training, apprenticeships, and other economic development projects for over 40 years.

Employers in hazardous fields like construction require workers to obtain a card certifying that they have completed the OSHA's outreach training program 10-hour outreach training program promoting workplace safety and health, and

helps inform workers on workplace dangers. But, there are many ways in which the basic guidelines for OSHA trainings fall short. Many safety trainings are important for employees to receive but are not explicitly mandated by law. That's why the Workforce Development Institute offers these trainings for free to anyone interested.

TRAINING TOPICS

The over 1,200+ trainings are between 10 and 30 minutes, available in an easy, online or in-person format, and cover a broad range of topics, including:

- Outdoor safety skills trainings applicable to municipal employees such as animal safety, chainsaw safety, park and landscape maintenance safety, and hand and power tool safety.
- General industry trainings, such as PPE standards, back injury prevention, driver safety, and emergency response.
- Trainings centered on working with the public, like human trafficking awareness, active listening, and active shooter response.
- Other HR trainings, like sexual harassment, leadership skills for managers, mental health awareness, and conflict resolution strategies.

- Helpful trainings for all workers, such as office ergonomics, identifying bloodborne pathogens, electrical safety, asbestos hazard awareness, basic first aid, and carcinogen awareness.

COST-SAVINGS FOR WORKPLACE TRAININGS

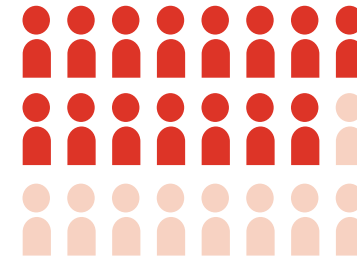
Municipalities who use our bank of workplace trainings may actually save money and not need to hire outside training companies or consultants to administer trainings.

TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION

Employers can choose to implement these trainings in a number of ways, including:

1. Regularly scheduled yearly, bi-yearly, etc. trainings on important safety topics
2. One-time trainings integrated into the onboarding and orientation process
3. À la carte trainings that employees can choose to take at their discretion
4. Trainings implemented as part of the disciplinary process for violations

On average,




15 workers
die on the job per day¹⁸

CONCLUSION

As Michigan workers continue to adjust their occupations after COVID-19, there is no better time to ensure that they receive workplace safety training to prevent the spread of the virus in their workplace that endangers themselves, their families, and other workers. With additional training, we can equip workers with the knowledge to keep themselves safe.





STATES WITH
PREVAILING WAGE
LAWS HAVE HIGHER
CONSTRUCTION
PRODUCTIVITY AND
SPEND LESS ON
OTHER COSTS.

PREVAILING WAGE ORDINANCE

BY: MAXIMILIAN GRAHL

Prevailing wage ordinances mandate that contractors building public projects must pay their workers an hourly rate equal to the average local wage. The average local wage varies across jurisdictions and is determined by comparing union wage rates on other projects in the area.¹⁹ Without prevailing wages, contractors lower their costs and win government bids by paying workers poverty wages.^{20,21} Prevailing wage laws promote local hiring of expertly trained workers who are more likely to make family-sustaining wages and quality healthcare. As such, prevailing wage projects are of higher quality and often save taxpayers money. In fact, states with prevailing wage laws have higher construction site productivity and spend less on other costs.²² It is critical that taxpayer-funded contractors adequately compensate their workers, and prevailing wage laws are a way to ensure workers' labor is valued.

PREVAILING WAGE REPEALED

Michigan's Prevailing Wages on State Projects law was passed in 1965 under Governor Romney.²³ These protections ensured that state contracts employ workers at the highest standard "prevailing wage"

based on locality, typically a union wage. Unfortunately, a statewide petition drive allowed Republicans in the legislature to repeal the state's prevailing wage ordinance protections in 2018. Now, Michigan preempts local governments from enacting their own prevailing wage laws. Governor Whitmer issued an executive order reinstating the law for state-funded projects in 2022, and hundreds of local governments across Michigan also have prevailing wage laws grandfathered-in from before the repeal. But this repeal still leaves thousands of other local governments without prevailing wage.

COST OF LIVING

Prevailing wage ensures that employees are paid a wage that is commensurate with the cost of living and supporting a family in that area. Under prevailing wage laws, non-union workers can obtain fairer returns on work akin to that of union workers. This maintains high wages for union and non-union workers alike.

The absence of prevailing wage depresses wages for the industry. An Economic Policy Institute analysis of states without prevailing wage

ordinances found that **median construction wages in states without prevailing wage policies were 7% lower.**²⁴

Prevailing wages come back to communities, and adequately local workers contribute significant economic activity. Each dollar paid in prevailing wages to workers yields \$1.50 in economic activity.²⁵

Despite arguments that removing prevailing wage ordinances saves money, it ends up costing states. Smart Cities Prevail found that **"States without prevailing wage laws spend an average of \$367 million more each year on food stamps and Earned Income Tax Credits for blue collar construction workers."**²⁶

QUALITY CONSTRUCTION

Without a prevailing wage ordinance, the bidding process becomes a race to the bottom because it incentivizes contractors to pay less to obtain more projects. The government enables this process to persist, at the expense of workers' wages, health, and safety.

PREVAILING WAGE IS A COMMON SENSE POLICY

One study found that Indiana’s repeal of prevailing wage led to lower wages and lower worker productivity, offsetting any small taxpayer savings.²⁷ Construction wages in Indiana fell by almost 8.5%, while in neighboring midwestern states like Michigan (before the repeal), they grew by 2.8% on average. Eliminating prevailing wage does not save the taxpayers money

and leads to lower wages for all workers. Eliminating prevailing wage not only decreases workers’ wages but states without prevailing wage laws spend more on fuels and materials, because they are using poorly-trained, low paid workers compared to states with prevailing wage laws, which have up to 15% higher productivity using higher-skilled local workers.²⁸

There is no positive impact to removing prevailing wage laws; according to Indiana’s Assistant House GOP Leader, “it hasn’t saved a penny.”²⁹ While in contrast, the broad consensus of peer-reviewed research is that construction costs are not affected by prevailing wages.³⁰

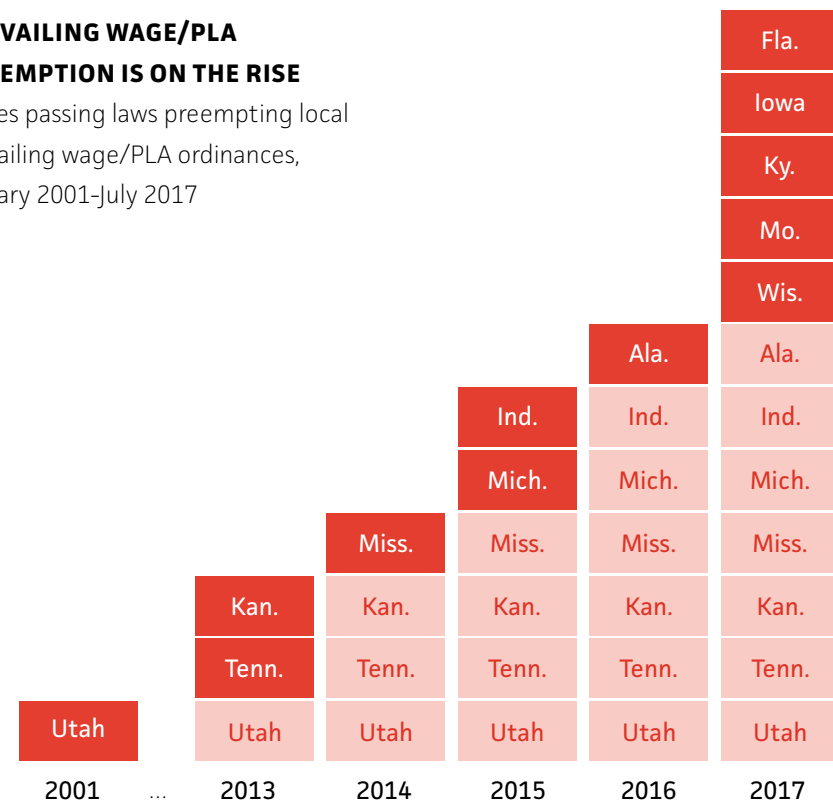
CONCLUSION

Prevailing wage is consistent with one of the labor movement’s core values: people should be paid fairly for their work. Although cities cannot set new prevailing wage standards due to the preemption doctrine, prevailing wage laws already in place are allowed to remain. Research from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and Smart Cities Preval show that repealing state prevailing wage laws would shrink our national economy by at least \$65 billion, eliminating a minimum 400,000 jobs.³¹ Prevailing wage laws have consistently had a positive impact on local economies and the efficiency of taxpayer projects.



PREVAILING WAGE/PLA PREEMPTION IS ON THE RISE

States passing laws preempting local prevailing wage/PLA ordinances, January 2001-July 2017



NOTE: PLA stand for project labor agreement. In each column, red-orange boxes represent prevailing wage/PLA preemption laws passed in the given year. Light red-orange boxes represent prevailing wage/PLA preemption laws in effect (passed in previous years). Source: EPI analysis of preemption laws in all 50 states



ANTI-PRIVATIZATION ORDINANCE

BY: BENJAMIN ELBAUM

Private companies are motivated by profits rather than the general wellbeing of citizens. As a result, privatization of public goods and services often leads to a decrease in the quality and accessibility of these resources and thus imposes a marginal social cost for workers and local residents. Due to municipal privatization, Michigan has the second-lowest percentage of workers on government payrolls nationwide, according to 2016 Census Bureau estimates.³²

Private companies have enticed municipalities by deliberately bidding

low on municipal projects that may cut costs in the short term by driving out unions, driving down wages, and eliminating benefits. In the long run, however, the quality of the services are lesser, costs increase, and jobs disappear. Local governments should implement anti-privatization ordinances in order to slow and stop the further marginalization of workers in the public sector.

PUBLIC GOODS TURN PRIVATE

In order to deliver on government contracts while simultaneously turning a profit, private companies

frequently resort to hiring fewer employees and paying them lower wages. These lower costs correlate with inferior product. Additionally, privatization leads to weakened accountability for companies that are tasked with delivering services to the public. Local residents also no longer have a say in the labor standards that private companies use, and their taxpayer dollars may inadvertently support companies that do not provide living wages, healthcare, or job security for their workers. Oftentimes, privatization laws create public-private partnerships.

Through these partnerships, private companies are required to meet the minimum standards of the contract and no more which hampers local governments' abilities to respond to emergency or short-notice work like snow removal. Additionally, these partnerships often minimize competition for public contracts.

RETURNING THE PUBLIC'S VOICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTI-PRIVATIZATION

Anti-privatization ordinances can address a lack of communication between private contractors, local governments, and public citizens. Local governments must be transparent with their taxpayers and should include a comprehensive analysis of why they are considering accepting bids from private contractors and the impact of privatization. It is crucial that privatization is aptly weighed by the public, and anti-privatization ordinances ensure community representation through this process. These analyses should detail both the social and economic costs and benefits to the community of the privatization of services, including any potential changes in quality as well as whether private contractors will actually reduce costs.³³ Furthermore, anti-privatization legislation puts financial protections in place for employees in the case of privatization. To ensure that privatization does not become

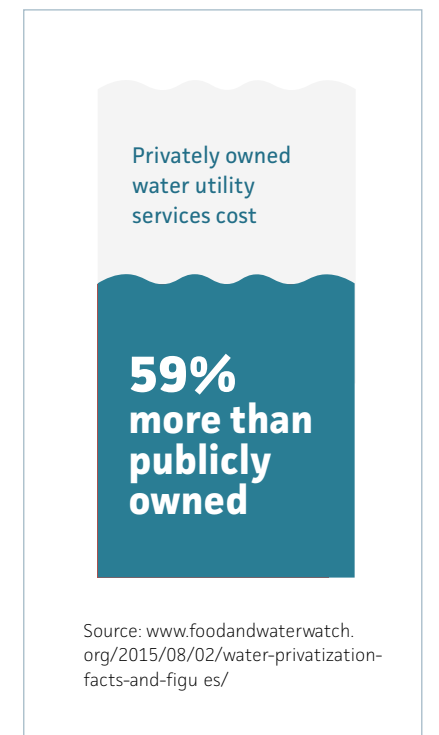
an unnecessary financial burden on taxpayers, the contractor should pay any oversight costs that the municipality incurs upon privatization, as well as costs that exceed the estimate of the analysis. Municipalities should also hold public hearings to discuss proposals for privatization. These outlets allow taxpayers to voice their opposition to any such changes.

PRIVATIZATION IN MICHIGAN AND BEYOND

Today, many municipal governments have taken steps to mitigate these harmful practices.³⁴ In 2017, the City of Detroit implemented an anti-privatization ordinance to preserve municipal employees' jobs and limit the conditions under which privatization may be permitted.³⁵ The cities of Warren and Ann Arbor provide some minimal protection through a living wage ordinance, which protects the wages of workers employed by private contractors who contract with the cities.³⁶ Similar reforms enforcing transparency and oversight in privatization were passed in Chicago in 2015.

CONCLUSION

Effective anti-privatization reforms limit the ability of private contractors to commandeer government contracts, provide security for public employees' wages, and ensure that specific criteria are followed when public services are privatized. In Michigan, these protections can simultaneously protect workers and guarantee that public services meet certain standards of quality.



MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS SCORING CRITERIA

Responsible Contractor

	Points	Points Available
Ordinance made in collaboration with, and approved by, the local Building Trades Council and AFL-CIO CLC or ALF.	0	6
SCORE	0 out of 6	6

Strong Labor Access Standards

	Points	Points Available
Informs workers of the right to join a union and declares union neutrality.	0	1
Permits card check.	0	1
Permits reasonable unit determination.	0	2
Implements modernized dues collection.	0	1
Has no unpaid internships or student teachers below minimum wage.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 6	6

Health and Safety

	Points	Points Available
Provides training courses at least once per evaluation cycle.	0	1
Integrates employee safety and training courses into onboarding process.	0	1
Regularly scheduled (yearly, every other year, every 5 years, etc.) safety courses required for relevant staff	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 3	3

BONUS: Existing Prevailing Wage Ordinance

	Points	Points Available
Has existing prevailing wage ordinance in municipal code.	0	3
SCORE	0 out of 3	3

BONUS: Anti-Privatization Ordinance

	Points	Points Available
Requires a detailed analysis of the social and economic costs and benefits of privatization and require wages offered by private contractors to at least be equal to those offered by similar public sector jobs.	0	1
Municipal employees can submit their own bids to projects under consideration for privatization.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 2	2

FINAL SCORE	0 out of 15	15
FINAL SCORE WITH BONUS	0 out of 20	20

Required documentation includes copies of relevant city code and/or copies of press statements, resolutions, or social media posts. For more information about city selection, criteria, or the MSI scoring system, visit advocates.miaflcio.org. All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email advocates@miaflcio.org.



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II.

FAIRNESS



Every municipality must make a conscious commitment to uphold the human rights and equality of their workers. Workers deserve to work in an environment free of discrimination,

whether it be based on sexuality, gender, race, or disability. Policies that display values of justice and fairness are essential so workers from all backgrounds can thrive and succeed.

**"WE WANT RESPECT
AND FAIRNESS FROM
THE START."**

Sara Nelson, International President,
Association of Flight Attendants-
CWA, AFL-CIO



OVERVIEW

PAID LEAVE [P. 46]

The United States is the only wealthy nation without a national paid leave system. Instead, we have a mishmash of policies from the federal and state levels. It is up to local governments and school boards to close this gap and work in solidarity with their employees to ensure they are covered in times of need.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK [P. 50]

Local governments must ensure all their workers are paid fairly, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or disability. Under the equal pay ordinance, municipalities must ensure contractors are compliant with non-discrimination laws and Michigan's equal pay law. They must also evaluate their own employment data to ensure that they are paying everyone fairly.

BAN THE BOX [P. 54]

Ban the Box policies prohibit checkboxes on job applications that ask about a person's conviction history. Background checks would only be performed for jobs that would require them, such as those that entail handling confidential information or working with children. They would not be required for jobs for which they are unnecessary. Barring those with a criminal background from entering the workforce is a form of discrimination that punishes people beyond their sentence and increases recidivism.

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE HIRING, FIRING, AND EMPLOYEE ADMINISTRATION [P. 58]

Discrimination, high unemployment rates, and discriminatory employee hiring and administration practices prohibit persons with disabilities from receiving equal opportunities. Local governments should ensure they are using inclusive hiring and employee administration practices to decrease the barriers that disabled people face. By creating a strong foundation against disability-based discrimination, they can ensure that employees with disabilities have the support to succeed in a competitive workforce.

NON-DISCRIMINATION [P. 62]

Prior to 2023, there were no legislated protections for LGBTQ+ Michigan workers included in the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act, which compelled dozens of local governments across the state to pass their own ordinances. However, the Michigan Legislature amended the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act in 2023 to include both sexuality and gender identity as protected classes. Municipalities with nondiscrimination ordinances provide an extra layer of protection for LGBTQ+ workers because these workers can seek redress at the local level instead of the state level, likely an easier process.



PAID LEAVE - FAMILY, MEDICAL, & VOTING

BY: CAMILLE MANCUSO, ANDREW SPICER, AND ANNABELLA VIDRIO

Paid family, medical, and voting leave are necessary to create a healthy, safe, and ethical society. But today, only 23% of the workforce in Michigan is eligible for paid family leave through their employer,³⁷ **resulting in working families losing \$20.6 billion in yearly wages when they take leave** for necessary events such as the birth of a child, sickness, or to care for family.³⁸ When employers don't offer paid sick time, workers are faced with a choice: make rent or work while sick. Especially in the age of COVID-19, when coming in to work sick has even more disastrous effects, paid time off is important for the health of society.

Workers also deserve paid time off in order to vote and exercise their rights as a citizen.

According to the National Partnership for Women & Families, women of color have more health issues and caregiving responsibilities than their white counterparts and thus have a greater need for paid leave. Since paid leave is not protected for nearly 40% of workers³⁹, it is more likely that women of color will lose or quit their jobs in order to take leave to care for their children or family members.

While current state law preempts state law from mandating that businesses give their employees significant benefits, and no such mandates exist at the federal and state level, local governments can provide for their own employees and call on the state government to enact these important protections.

RELEVANT LAWS

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 offers eligible employees up to 12 weeks of job-protected medical or family leave.⁴⁰ These 12 weeks are unpaid.

But situations where an employee must take a prolonged absence, such as the birth of a child or illness of a family member, require financial stability.

In 2018, Michigan passed the Paid Medical Leave Act, requiring employers with 50+ employees to provide only 40 hours, one week, of paid medical leave. This includes physical and psychological care, injury or court-related proceedings resulting from domestic violence or sexual assault, and closure of a child's daycare as the result of a public health emergency.⁴¹ Currently, Michigan preempts cities from enacting those standards for businesses inside their jurisdiction.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE

A comprehensive paid family leave policy is essential to the wellbeing of workers and their families. **Paid family leave should be offered to workers in cases where an employee, or an employee's family member(s), is suffering from domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault, physical or mental illness, or requiring preventative medical care.** Unpaid family leave can have extremely detrimental effects, including food and housing insecurity.⁴² Employees struggling with familial matters should not have to choose between making money and caring for their loved ones.

Parental leave is necessary in cases of childbirth, foster care, or adoption.

WOMEN OF COLOR
HAVE MORE
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AND CAREGIVING
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AND THUS HAVE A
GREATER NEED FOR
PAID LEAVE.

Without the option of paid leave, parents may be forced to send their child to school sick or delay seeking necessary medical attention because they are unable to miss work.⁴³

PAID SICK LEAVE

Paid sick leave removes the incentive to report to work when sick which betters the overall health of the workplace. With paid sick leave, workers can stay home to care for themselves while still having the money to pay their bills. COVID-19 highlights the importance of paid sick



leave, as staying home when sick can be the difference between spreading the virus and keeping people healthy. Low-income workers, sole breadwinners, and people in tough financial straits may not have the savings to sustain themselves in the event that they contract COVID-19, care for someone who has COVID-19, or quarantine after exposure.

70% of low-wage workers do not have paid sick days, and those who do rarely have benefits that extend beyond caring for themselves.⁴⁴ **In California, 99% of employers reported that the state's paid leave policy increased company morale, and 87% reported that the program did not increase company costs.**⁴⁵

PAID VOTING LEAVE

A comprehensive paid leave policy must also include paid time off to vote. Michigan does not have statewide paid time off for voting.⁴⁶ In 2016, only 56% of eligible voters participated in the federal election. Many non-voters cited a conflicting schedule as their reason not to vote.⁴⁷ Specifically, low-income workers face the trade-off between taking time off to vote and losing income. With long lines and wait times at the polls, low-income workers are even more disincentivized from voting. This further stresses the importance of non-essential municipal employees being offered the chance to vote via being offered paid leave on election day. Municipalities need to let municipal employees know well in advance whether they have to work on election day, as this allows employees to create a plan to vote if they so choose.

PAID LEAVE AND OTHER BENEFITS FOR PART-TIME WORKERS

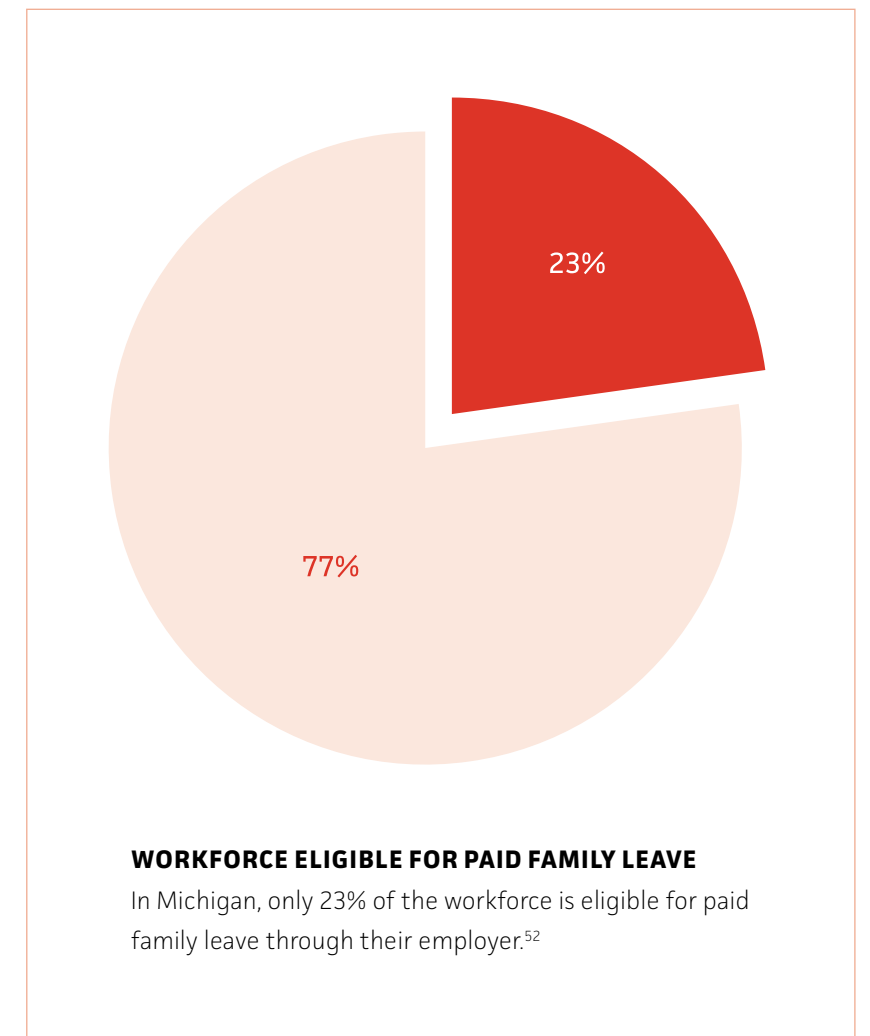
29% of persons with disabilities are employed part-time.⁴⁸ Many cannot work full-time due to transportation or medical issues and rely on part-time income and flexibility to afford rent, utilities, food, and medical bills. Unfortunately, part-time positions typically lack healthcare benefits or paid sick/medical leave. In the private sector, 73% of part-time workers do not even have access to one paid sick day.⁴⁹ For persons with disabilities, taking paid time off to address health concerns is a necessity. Providing paid leave and other health benefits to employees with disabilities is a disability rights and human rights issue, and local governments should provide healthcare to their part-time workers, regardless of disability status. Local governments should offer part-time workers paid leave and other part-time benefits comparable with the hours they work compared to full-time employees.

PAID LEAVE STANDARDS

Local governments have a duty to provide for and protect their constituents — including their own employees.

For full-time and part-time workers, a standard of at least 12 weeks of at minimum partial income replacement due to a newborn child or a family medical emergency.⁵⁰ As of 2019, Michigan's "Paid Medical Leave Act" declared part-time workers ineligible to receive paid medical leave.⁵¹ Municipalities should provide all of their employees, regardless of status, with the opportunity to accrue and use sick and paid leave. Paid and sick leave should begin at the commencement of employment, and a baseline amount of hours should be allowed to be carried over to the next calendar year. The usage of leave may be requested by the employee for myriad reasons including when an employee or family member is suffering from domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault, physical or mental illness, and more. Municipalities should offer their employees either the day off to vote or work with employees to create a plan so that they can vote.

When conducting bid evaluations, local governments should also collect information on contractors' paid leave standards to evaluate whether or not contractors are supporting community members by providing them with this essential benefit.



EQUAL PAY ORDINANCE

BY: MARISSA THOMAS

The following sections use gendered terms, such as man/woman and mother/father. This language is utilized because it is reflective of language used within the research cited.

Women comprise nearly half of the U.S. labor force and represent significant percentages of various industries, including many deemed essential. Women are the backbone of this country: they risk their lives, health, and more to support its wellbeing.

Despite the enactment of the Equal Pay Act and other civil rights laws, women still face a severe wage gap in almost every industry. Currently, a woman working full-time makes 82 cents for every dollar a man makes.⁵³ This pay disparity is even bigger for women of color. Black women are paid 63 cents for every dollar a non-Hispanic white man makes. Latina women are paid only 54 cents for every dollar.⁵⁴ These harmful disparities have severe consequences for women and their families. A woman's economic stability, ability to support herself and her family, and potential to retire later in life is threatened when there is a wage gap.

WHY ARE WOMEN PAID LESS?

Women are paid less than men due to sexism. This results from stark societal expectations for women and mothers compared to men and fathers, a lack

of women-friendly policies and initiatives in the workplace, and implicit or explicit discrimination.⁵⁵ Mothers who go back to work suffer a "motherhood penalty," resulting in a lower likelihood of being hired and a pay cut if hired.⁵⁶ The motherhood penalty is a relative decrease in pay that results from the perception that women do not work as hard after they have children, even though studies show that this is not true. Fathers face no such penalty.⁵⁷ Examples of the "motherhood penalty" include instances where new mothers are not considered for a promotion or raise based on stereotypes that they are suddenly 'unreliable' or 'absent-minded'.

Communities thrive when women are empowered and given the tools and resources to succeed. Local governments have a responsibility to ensure that women and men are paid equal wages - ultimately promoting economic mobility and security for the women that local governments employ.

EQUAL PAY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Within the U.S., approximately 26% of adults are living with a disability.⁵⁸ Disabilities may inhibit a person's ability to perform self-care actions or live independently and thus

impose challenges for seeking employment.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 19.1% of persons with disabilities are employed in comparison to the 63.7% of persons without disabilities.⁵⁹ While laws exist that prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, employer prejudice greatly influences whether or not a person is hired. Common misconceptions describe persons with disabilities as being unable to work or requiring expensive accommodations.⁶⁰

**COMMUNITIES
THRIVE WHEN
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Local governments should ensure that they are not discriminating based on disability status. And they should mandate the same of companies that contract with them.

PAY TRANSPARENCY

Local governments must explicitly make equal pay policies a priority. One way to address and ensure equal pay is through pay transparency. **Hiding pay hides the problem of the wage gap.** Employers can hide gender and racial pay gaps by forbidding employees to discuss pay and benefits.⁶¹ Workers may fear retaliation for disclosing pay in the workplace, which further perpetuates wage gaps.⁶² Local governments must guarantee their workers the right to have conversations about pay. When workers are informed, they will be better able to advocate for themselves and reduce the pay gap.

Multiple states and DC currently have policies banning retaliation against workers disclosing and discussing pay.⁶³ These measures lack support in Michigan at the state level. But local elected officials can ensure that their own employees are paid equally. This requires pay transparency policies.

SALARY HISTORY

When employers use historic salaries to determine current pay, they perpetuate the wage gap.⁶⁴ Because women and people of color are often paid less due to discrimination, when employers take past salary history into account they are perpetuating that cycle instead of evaluating employees based on merit and based on the value they create for the workplace.

YEARLY EQUAL-PAY AUDITS

Cities, townships, counties, villages, and school boards must heed the call to end gender pay disparities by conducting yearly pay audits of their own employees to ensure that everyone is paid equally and fairly. However, pay equality is not limited to two genders but must include non-binary and transgender people. By considering individuals of all genders, local governments can evaluate and end pay disparities for everyone. Submitting yearly pay reports allows contractors and municipalities to ensure equal pay amongst their employees, thus breaking down pay disparities by race and gender.

The U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau provides standards for conducting a self-audit through a series of questions.⁶⁵



Municipalities conducting a self-audit and contractors performing a self-audit should use these questions as guidance.

UNIONS FIGHT THE PAY GAP

Local governments must protect one's ability to join unions in fighting the gender pay gap. Through collective bargaining, unions are able to better fight for equal pay for its workers through requesting higher pay and pay transparency.⁶⁶ Women who are unionized workers face lower pay gaps, but the percentage of women who belong to unions is low.⁶⁷ Local governments, then, should preserve the rights of their workers to collectively bargain and form unions, as outlined in this index in the

fair labor access standards in the municipal operations section.

CONCLUSION

In 2017, the San Diego City Council passed its own equal pay ordinance, making it the largest municipality in the U.S. to pass equal pay policies. The ordinance works in conjunction with California's equal pay act and contractors.⁶⁸ This ordinance includes recording wages and complying with audit requests, and failure to do either results in monetary fines.⁶⁹



FAIR CHANCE ORDINANCE

BY: MAHNOOR IMRAN

Approximately 77 million Americans have a criminal record.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, those with criminal records face barriers to welfare, housing, education, and employment. This marginalization punishes them even after serving their sentence, further contributing to prison recidivism. From an economic standpoint, it is estimated that employment losses among people with criminal records cost as much as \$65 billion per year.⁷¹ As such, municipal governments must take the lead in implementing robust non-discriminatory policies to ensure that Americans with criminal records are treated with dignity and

are given the means to provide for themselves and their families. This can be done through adopting fair chance (“ban the box”) policies which eliminate questions about conviction history from job applications and either forgo background checks if not necessary given the nature of the job or delay background checks in the hiring process.

THE CARCERAL SYSTEM, LABOR MARKET, AND RACISM

To understand the interactions between the criminal justice system and the labor market, policymakers

must also be mindful of how people of color, particularly Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, are disproportionately impacted in these markets. Discriminatory practices in hiring are perpetuated by high rates of policing and incarceration of people living in communities of color, many of which are low-income and poverty-stricken.⁷² According to a U.S. Sentencing Commission report, Black men received 19.1% longer sentences for the same federal crimes that white men were convicted of between 2012 and 2016.⁷³ Furthermore, white defendants are 25% more likely

than Black defendants to have their initial charge dropped or reduced to a lesser crime. They are also more likely to be convicted without incarceration and to not be convicted at all.⁷⁴ Therefore, racial minorities are more likely to suffer the harsh repercussions of having a criminal record due to such profound disparities in the conviction process. Criminal background checks also disadvantage those who have been arrested or charged for demonstrating. Regardless of a prior arrest or conviction, it is also critical to note that implicit bias, hiring discrimination, pay disparities, and other systemic obstacles can play a substantial role in negatively affecting their experiences in the labor market.⁷⁵

WHAT IS “BAN THE BOX”?

In 1998, Hawaii passed landmark legislation restricting employers from accessing someone’s criminal history until after a job offer was made. A national movement was created over a decade later when Minnesota decided to enact similar legislation. “Ban the box” policies prohibit employers from asking criminal history questions on employment applications. Since 1998, 33 states and over 150 municipalities have enacted such policies. The “box” refers to the physical box on job applications that applicants must “check” if they have a criminal history. “Ban the box” policies prohibit this box from being displayed on job applications, allowing job

applicants to forgo discussing their conviction history with employers until it’s necessary.

Although there is a lack of evidence to suggest that individuals with conviction histories perform worse on the job or are more likely to commit workplace crimes than their counterparts, many employers have a negative bias against applicants with criminal records. The intent of fair chance policies is for employers to give applicants an assessment of their qualifications before potentially conducting a background check, thus reducing the likelihood that they will be rejected simply on the basis of their conviction history.

Research indicates that this policy can increase callback rates for people with criminal records.⁷⁶ Case studies demonstrate that hiring rates for individuals with criminal records increased after its implementation.⁷⁷

BAN THE BOX IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

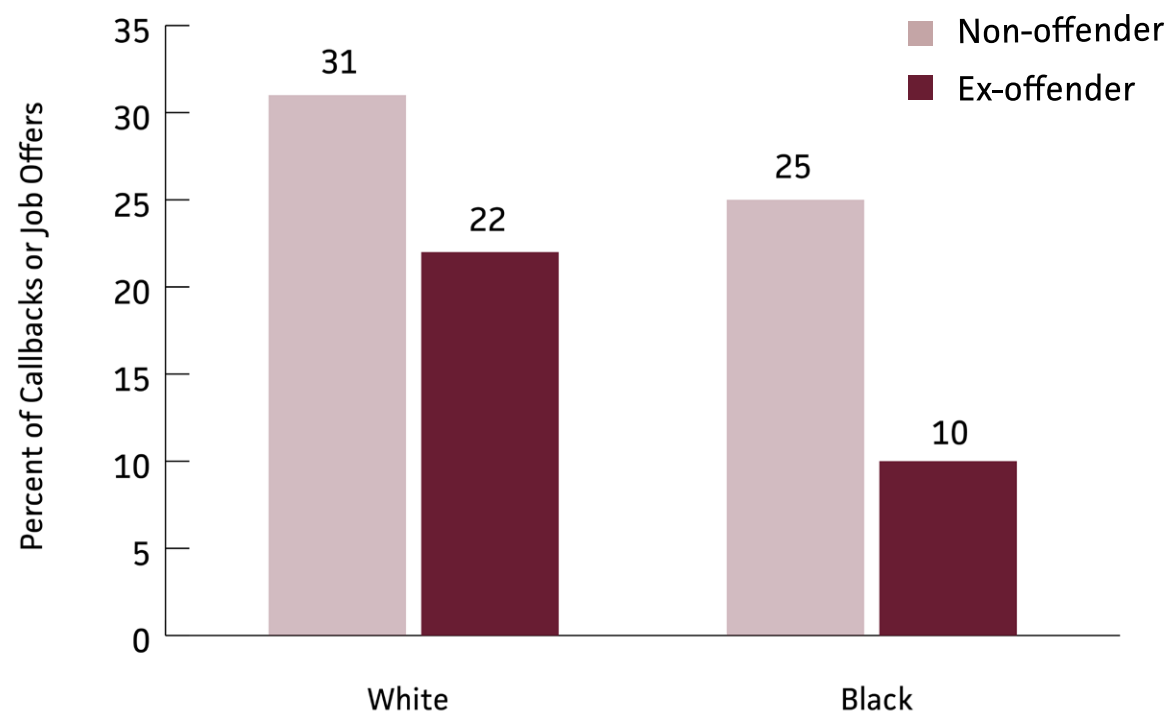
The National Employment Law Project published a [comprehensive toolkit](#) for policymakers looking to enact this measure at the local level. This includes a sample administrative memo, resolution, and ordinance.

This policy has also been enacted at the county and municipal levels in Michigan. The City of Ann Arbor recognized that the box on the application might inadvertently prevent employment opportunities

RACIAL MINORITIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER THE HARSH REPERCUSSIONS OF HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD...

and potentially exacerbate already precarious socioeconomic circumstances. In 2014, they voted unanimously to ban the box for municipal employment and specified that if the municipality denies an applicant based on their conviction history, the municipality must conduct an individualized assessment that considers factors recommended by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. More recently, in 2019, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners also voted to ban the box from government job applications for the purpose of expanding economic opportunities for individuals with conviction histories.

THE EFFECT OF RACE AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



THE EFFECT OF RACE AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES. Pager, D., Western, B., & Sugie, N. (2009). Sequencing Disadvantage: Barriers to Employment Facing Young Black and White Men with Criminal Records. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 623(1), 195–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716208330793>

ADDRESSING COMMON CONCERNS

The National Employment Law Project acknowledges that some convictions are “directly related” to a job’s “duties and responsibilities.”⁷⁸ An applicant with a pedophilia conviction, for instance, should not hold a job requiring close interaction

with children. If they merely have a minor drug possession charge from decades ago, however, that probably ought to be overlooked.

Background checks may be entirely unnecessary when jobs do not require unsupervised access to sensitive populations or information.

But when a job does, employers may make reasonable determinations regarding which charges and convictions signal an applicant’s unsuitability. It is best, however, that employers nonetheless give applicants the benefit of the doubt to avoid inequity.

CONCLUSION

Given the state of the criminal justice system in our country today, fair chance policies play an essential role in improving reentry outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals who deserve to have opportunities for redemption and growth. Local governments can set a positive example for local businesses by establishing a just paradigm in their hiring practices.





81% OF PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES
IN MICHIGAN ARE
UNEMPLOYED.

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE HIRING AND EMPLOYEE ADMINISTRATION

BY: ANNABELLA VIDRIO

81% of people with disabilities in Michigan are unemployed.⁷⁹ However, this percentage is not due to a lack of desire or effort, but rather ableist hiring and employment practices. Ableism is defined as discrimination against disabled people and in favor of non-disabled people. Discrimination in the workplace not only hinders them from doing their job well but also from providing for themselves and for their family. In Michigan alone, 831 discrimination claims were made with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2017.⁸⁰

Local governments and school boards can support these employees by creating disability-inclusive hiring and employee administration processes. These small changes will expand opportunities for disabled people to find and maintain gainful employment.

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE HIRING PROCESS

Here are common barriers in the hiring process and easy solutions local governments can employ.

Rethink job descriptions and responsibilities. To create an inclusive hiring environment, local governments

should re-evaluate job responsibilities to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Jobs that require their employees to lift heavy objects discourage individuals with physical disabilities from applying. The “must be able to lift 50 lbs” requirement should be eliminated from all positions that it is not absolutely necessary for.

Budget for accommodations.

Accommodating disabled employees has some costs associated with it. Although it is illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities, discrimination still happens. Local governments can combat this by creating yearly budgets that account for employee accommodations so, if costs arise, the funds are ready.

Allow education equivalents.

Some disabled people have limited access to traditional educational opportunities and gain experience through working, self-study, or other non-traditional methods. Instead of listing “Bachelor’s degree required,” list “Bachelor’s degree or equivalent experience.”

Provide transportation stipends.

Some disabled people face long travel times, unreliable public transit, or

expensive rideshare programs in order to attend job interviews. As public transit is not always accessible, local governments should offer a transportation stipend and designate a contact for applicants to reach out to with accessibility concerns so that disabled applicants are not prevented from applying. Alternatively, offer virtual interviews.

Provide interview questions ahead

of time. Neurodivergent applicants with anxiety, those who struggle with auditory processing, and those who struggle with organization will benefit from receiving guiding questions or scripts of interview questions before the interview so they can provide adequate responses.

Do not use personality tests or ADS

(Automatic Detection Systems) to screen applicants. ADS personality tests create an automated hierarchy based on how “well” you do on them. Personality tests don’t take into account how different people process information or communicate differently. People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may score poorly on personality tests, especially

those that require deciphering social cues. In turn, personality tests distributed by AI/ADS systems can rule out disabled applicants before an employer even gets to meet the applicant themselves. It is recommended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that employers move away from personality tests and, instead, ask questions that directly relate to the job at hand.⁸¹

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EMPLOYEE ADMINISTRATION

Disability-inclusive hiring processes are just the beginning. Workplaces must maintain this mindset for their active employees. Below are ways for employers to ensure a disability-inclusive workspace:

Have flexible work conditions. One way an employer can meet the needs of their workers with disabilit-

MICHIGAN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE THE POWER TO DECREASE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AMONGST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

ies is by offering flexible in-person and at-home work positions. For people with mobility struggles or who are immunocompromised, navigating small office spaces or frequent in-person attendance is a challenge. Others may work better in low-stimulation environments or have to work irregular hours. Examples of this include providing a flexible work schedule, offering part-time positions, adjusting equipment, or restructuring on-site work responsibilities.⁸²

Provide tools for remote work.

Working from home poses its own obstacles. Computers, reliable Wi-Fi, and other items necessary for remote work come at a high expense. Providing complimentary materials for remote positions can alleviate the financial burden and encourage employees to work from home if needed.

Offer disability-specific resources.

Persons with disabilities face unique challenges that are often not solved through generalized procedures. Discrimination against disabilities in the workplace is a common occurrence and requires its own resources. Establishing a disability-specific employee resource group would support a safe environment where all employees may address issues and receive the help they deserve.

Create a grant program for businesses paying subminimum wage in your jurisdiction. Subminimum wage certificates permit businesses to pay workers with intellectual

disabilities below the minimum wage, sometimes under \$1. This is discussed more in the living wage policy brief. To eliminate the use of subminimum wage in their jurisdiction, local governments can offer a grant program to employers transitioning away from paying subminimum wages. The federally-proposed Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act would offer grants to transition to minimum wage to states or employers who pay subminimum wages.⁸³ Implementing this program will encourage employers to maintain and hire employees with disabilities.

Do not use “bossware” or productivity management systems.

“Bossware” and other productivity management systems are designed to track worker productivity through various algorithms. They often utilize facial and audio recognition software or track the time taken to complete assignments to score employees' abilities. However, bossware and other systems can violate the ADA rights of many who have disabilities. Facial or audio recognition can easily misrepresent a person's productivity. The time taken to complete a task may be longer for some than others, and the standard often does not assume the longer times needed for those with disabilities. These systems judge employees without reasonable accommodation built in.⁸⁴ As with

recommendations toward a more equitable hiring process, the ADA recommends inclusive algorithms in software or, preferably, reducing or eliminating its use altogether.⁸⁵

APPENDIX

Below is a collective of articles, blogs, videos, and other resources that promote disability-inclusive workplaces, available online:

- [6 Disability-Inclusive Best Practices for Your Recruitment Process](#)
Keywords: Accessibility, Diversity, Accommodations
- [Diversity and Inclusion | U.S. Department of Labor](#)
Keywords: Perspective, Resource Networks, Intersecting Identities
- [8 Essential Traits of an Inclusive Workplace](#)
Keywords: Commitment, Uniqueness, Collaborative
- [How to Build and Support Neurodiversity in the Workplace | Great Place to Work®](#)
Keywords: Engagement, Amplify, Diverse Workforce
- [Neurodiversity Is a Competitive Advantage](#)
Keywords: New Opportunities, Uncovered Talent, Pioneers



NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE

BY: MARISSA THOMAS AND JASMINE KALTENBACH

Discrimination in the workplace is a serious issue affecting workers and their families. In 2017, Michigan was 12th in the nation for the number of discrimination claims submitted to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC⁸⁶). When workers are denied employment, promotions, benefits, other workplace opportunities due to attributes such as gender, race, or religion, they are denied socioeconomic mobility and the ability to support themselves and their families. In addition, workplace discrimination fosters an environment of inequity and disproportionately affects marginalized communities, and reinforces institutionalized discrimination.

Prior to 2023, in order to protect LGBTQ+ workers from workplace discrimination, local governments in Michigan had to pass their own

ONLY 22% OF THE STATE HAS LOCAL ORDINANCES IN PLACE THAT CLEARLY PROTECT EMPLOYEES ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY.

gender identity.⁸⁷ We applaud the municipalities that were ahead of state and national Supreme Court cases on this crucial issue, and we applaud the legislators in Michigan's state legislature who made it one of their first priorities to ensure that no form of workplace discrimination can or will be tolerated in Michigan.

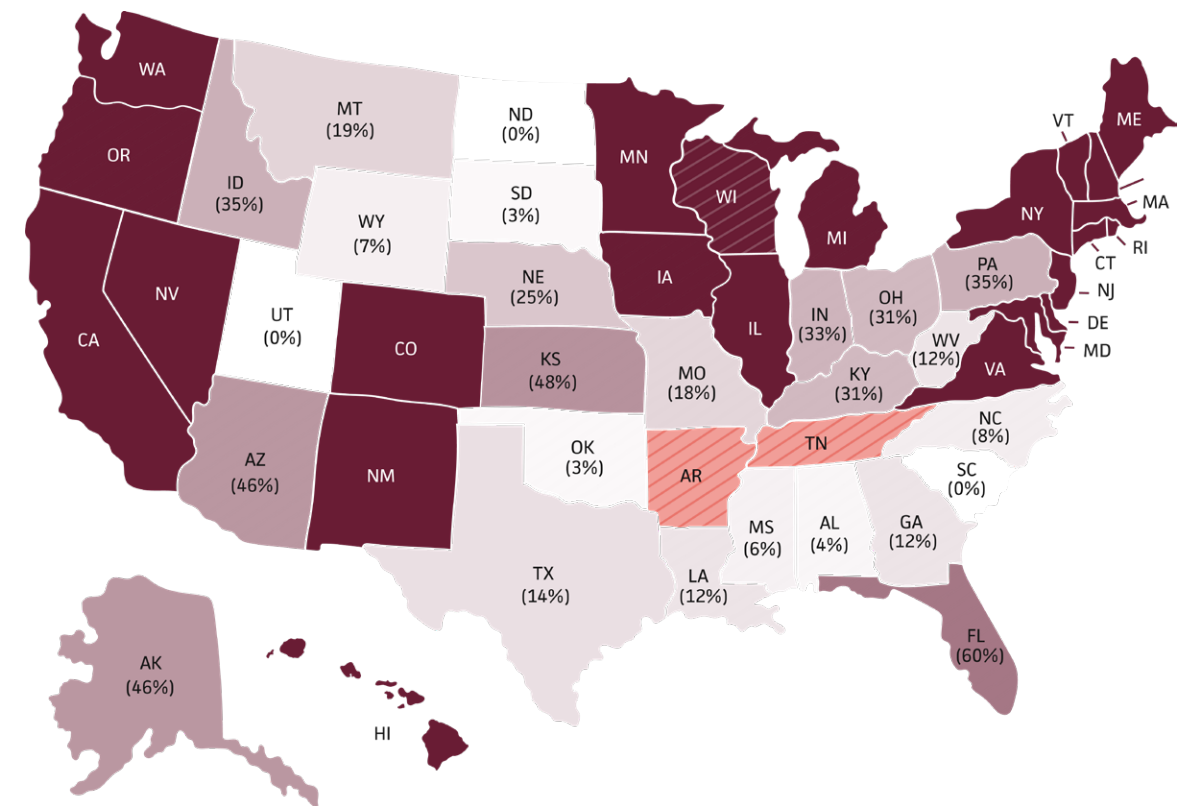
Municipalities with non-discrimination ordinances provide an extra layer of protection for LGBTQ+ workers because these workers can seek redress at the local level instead of the state level, likely an easier process.

non-discrimination ordinances. However, the Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 6 of 2023 to amend the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act to do just that. Now all workers, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are protected in Michigan.

Prior to PA 6 of 2023, only 22% of the state had local ordinances in place that clearly protect employees on the basis of sexual orientation and

1 in 5
LGBTQ+ workers report discrimination on the job⁹⁴

POPULATION PROTECTED BY STATE LAWS FROM DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY



FAIRNESS SCORING CRITERIA

Paid Leave (Family, Medical, Sick)

	Points	Points Available
A minimum 12 weeks paid leave for a serious health condition, childbirth or adoption of a child, or the serious illness of a child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner.	0	2
Part-time employees have access to paid family, medical, sick, and voting leave commensurate with their hours worked comparable to full time employees.	0	2
Paid family and medical leave are not counted as an absence that may lead to or result in discipline, discharge, demotion, suspension or any other adverse action.	0	1
Paid sick days laws explicitly allow for workers to use their accrued time in the event of a public health emergency.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 6	6

Equal Pay Ordinance

	Points	Points Available
Doesn't penalize workers for speaking openly about salary information.	0	2
Takes more than just past salaries for a position into account when determining wages.	0	1
Yearly, review how much employees are paid in all departments and determine if there are inequities between disabled people and non-disabled people, men and women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, and require the same of their contractors.	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Fair Chance Ordinance

	Points	Points Available
Doesn't use the language "ex-convict" or "ex-felon".	0	1
Creates a criminal background check system that does not require background checks until later in the process, pursuant to guidelines in NELP.	0	2

Stipulates that applicants have a right to be informed if their application is rejected on the basis of their criminal history and the applicants have the right to submit evidence of mitigation or rehabilitation in response.

0 1

SCORE 0 out of 4 4

BONUS: Disability-Inclusive Hiring and Employee Administration

	Points	Points Available
Removes barriers in the hiring process such as redesigning jobs, making budget accommodation, allowing education equivalents, and providing transportation stipends.	0	2
Provide healthcare for part-time employees.	0	1
Continue inclusive practices from the hiring stages and through employee administration policies.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 4	4

BONUS: Non-Discrimination Policy

	Points	Points Available
Prohibits discrimination against sex, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and union affiliation.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 1	1

FINAL SCORE 0 out of 15 15

FINAL SCORE WITH BONUS 0 out of 20 20

Required documentation includes copies of relevant city code and/or copies of press statements, resolutions, or social media posts. For more information about city selection, criteria, or the MSI scoring system, visit advocates.miaflcio.org. All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email advocates@miaflcio.org.

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III.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



Local governments have a duty to support workers and promote economic opportunities for their constituents. As many workers face financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our state's

outdated laws make it harder for workers to get back on their feet. Local governments can strengthen their workforce and local economies by implementing policies that support workers in their economic ambitions.

“WHAT DOES LABOR WANT? MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO CULTIVATE OUR BETTER NATURES.”

Samuel Gompers, Founder of the American Federation of Labor



OVERVIEW

BUY LOCAL, BUY ETHICAL, BUY AMERICAN-MADE ORDINANCE [P. 72]

Michigan and other midwestern states have been hit hard, losing hundreds of thousands of local jobs after the passage of NAFTA and other “free trade” agreements which put the interests of capital over workers, incentivizing the outsourcing of jobs overseas. Local governments can support job growth in their communities by implementing “buy local” campaigns and rewriting municipal purchasing policies to evaluate if there are local procurement options instead of overseas. Local governments can also choose to grant contracts to, or favor, local companies and adopt ordinances that use locally-produced goods.

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS [P. 76]

Pre-apprenticeship programs help low-income communities get the skills they need to obtain good-paying jobs. Local governments should utilize municipal finances to support pre-apprenticeship programs to help citizens get back on their feet and transition into valuable careers, and work with these programs and trades representatives to advertise and encourage entry into these programs.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ORDINANCE [P. 78]

When it comes to development, community benefits agreements can ensure community members have a seat at the table. CBAs require developers to negotiate with residents, allowing residents to have an active say in the development process. In cities like Detroit, community input from the CBA led to the building of 60 outdoor basketball courts by the developers of the Pistons' practice facility, among other community improvements.

LIVING WAGE FOR EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS [P. 80]

If the minimum wage had increased at the same rate as productivity from 1968, the inflation-adjusted minimum wage would be \$24 an hour. With skyrocketing wealth inequality and costs of living, workers need a robust minimum wage to survive and thrive in this new economy. While municipalities cannot increase the minimum wage for businesses in their area due to state preemption, they can set wage floors for their own employees commensurate with the cost of living in their area (determined by the MIT living wage calculator) and tie those standards to inflation. Local

governments should also never use subminimum wage certificates, and sign resolutions calling on the state to abolish the subminimum wage for disabled workers.

COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED WAY [P. 84]

The United Way works in communities across Michigan to connect people with government services, promote literacy, and help with housing, food, rental, tax, utility, and transportation assistance. Local governments should collaborate with United Way and other agencies to better combat poverty, fight for economic and social justice, and connect their citizens with the resources they need to grow economic opportunity.

BUY LOCAL, BUY ETHICAL, BUY AMERICAN-MADE ORDINANCE

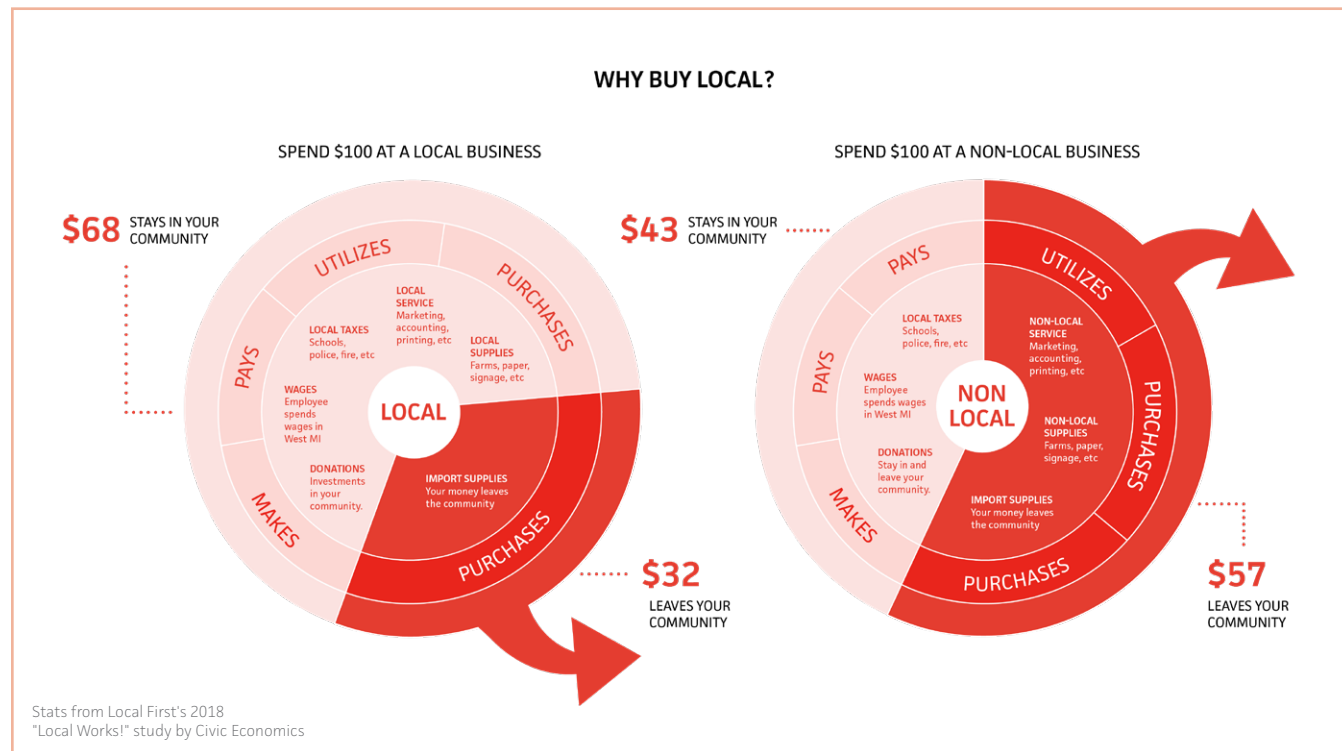
BY: ELIAS KHOURY

Michigan's local governments have a responsibility to support local, ethical, and American businesses. By buying U.S., union, and local, Michigan's local governments promote good jobs and enhance their local economies. By patronizing unionized businesses and purchasing union-made goods, local governments support ethical labor practices and purchase high-quality, long-lasting products made by expert craftspeople.

OFFSHORING OF AMERICAN JOBS
Tens of billions of dollars in federal contracts are given annually to corporations that shutter workplaces in this country and seek cheaper labor abroad.⁸⁸ This effectively means that taxpayers are paying to constrict the job market and put downward pressure on U.S. labor conditions. With offshoring rates soaring to record levels, the need to buy local, union-made, American-made goods

has never been so urgent. Local governments shouldn't put working people's tax dollars towards offshoring their own jobs.

The Midwest has been hit especially hard by offshoring, with Michigan alone losing hundreds of thousands of jobs overseas in the last couple of decades.



Thankfully, there are ways municipal governments can help address this problem and promote American industry.

CREATING RESILIENT ECONOMIES

Investing in the local economy is one of the best ways to keep money in your community and build a sustainable, resilient community where our families can grow and thrive. Supporting local businesses leads to more money, production, and job growth staying in your community rather than being exported to international corporations. Strong local businesses make your community more attractive to potential employers who want to locate in places with a vibrant local economy, interesting local businesses, and unique culture.

SUPPORTING ETHICAL BUSINESSES

Investing in local, unionized businesses improves workers' quality of life and raises labor standards. On average, union workers' wages are 11.2% higher than their non-union counterparts. Additionally, 96% of union workers have employer-provided health insurance, but only 69% of non-union workers do. Unionized workers enjoy better pay and working conditions than their non-unionized counterparts. When city governments support unionized businesses, they support workers.

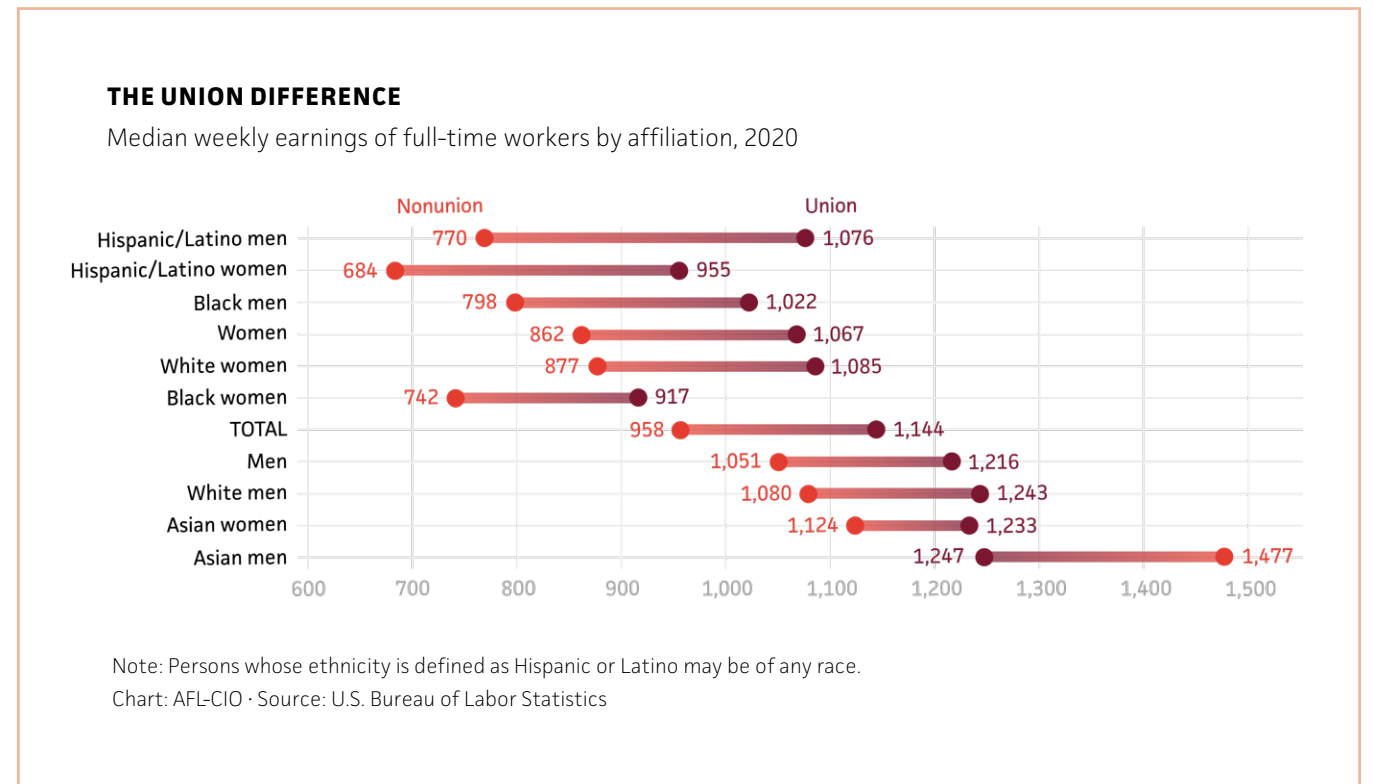
HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN HELP

Local governments should prioritize supporting unionized businesses when possible. They should also ensure that city events are held at unionized hotels in their community.

Finally, local officials should prioritize buying city, county, and school merchandise from union-made, American-made companies. If a business that the city patronizes is involved in a labor dispute, such as a strike, local governments should support workers in their community by not working with the business until the labor dispute is resolved.

At a minimum, local governments should require that manufactured inputs for all infrastructure projects be made in the United States. Such infrastructure projects would include public buildings and transit, roads, bridges, and waterways. Iron and steel are typically the easiest of these inputs to identify, and the federal government already requires American-made iron and steel for all infrastructure and defense projects.⁹⁰ In crafting these policies, one must be careful to avoid being overly exclusionary. Some proposed laws that would curb offshoring exclude non-citizens from employment under government contracts. While this does confront the issue of jobs going overseas, it puts many immigrants in a precarious position. Therefore, it makes more sense to target the performance of contracts abroad rather than the citizenship status of the workers involved.

And local governments can require that people they contract with or purchase from disclose where (Michigan, the Midwest, American, or



international) the items are produced and how (union or non-union labor) the goods are produced. Some communities have local preference when there are two equal bids on a project - for more information on changing bid criteria to advantage local Michigan businesses, head to the responsible contractor section of this index.

BUYING US, UNION, AND LOCAL IN PRACTICE

“Buy local” public awareness campaigns can also be helpful. The Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber launched a campaign promoting local businesses in Berrien County in response to the

pandemic consumption drop, for example. So far, the initiative has successfully kept local businesses afloat and built community solidarity during a tough time. [The Local First](#) website provides good resources to identify local businesses in need of support in the Grand Rapids area, for example.

CONCLUSION

There are countless benefits to buying American, union, and local. It stimulates national and local economies, lowers government deficits, boosts employment, promotes American independence, and puts citizens' tax dollars back into their hands.

Buying union-made products and patronizing union businesses ensure that products are made ethically and by experts. It is only right that Michigan's local governments do what they can to champion this cause.





PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

BY: CAMILLE MANCUSO, ANDREW SPICER, ELIAS KHOURY, AND ANNABELLA VIDRIO

Pre-apprenticeship programs are a valuable tool to help funnel workers into family-sustaining careers. These programs expose prospective trades workers to a number of different career paths. Many programs also help under-resourced people obtain driver's licenses, criminal record expungement, GEDs, and other certifications and training necessary to apply to and be accepted by apprenticeship programs. For local government officials, partnering with pre-apprenticeship programs can be an excellent way to address labor shortages and promote economic

organization. The same goes for programs that weave trade instruction into a traditional education framework. Unfortunately, these programs are often left underdeveloped and underutilized. In many places, they do not exist at all. Local governments can help change this by investing in these programs, and school boards can connect high school students with these programs and other skilled trades curricula. Lastly, all workplaces should ensure that there are adequate opportunities for professional advancement for their staff. Local governments should have a preference to train and hire within.

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN PRACTICE

Pre-apprenticeship programs should be administered through public agencies and nonprofit groups. This is far preferable to private alternatives, as it means better wages, higher workplace safety standards, and more employee protections. Moreover, local trades councils are accountable to the public in ways traditional corporate entities are not. For example, private pre-apprenticeship programs are only subject to minimal oversight by the United States Department of Labor. In the same vein, they are exempt from anti-disri-

mination and equal employment requirements, which is typically not conducive to workplace equity. Michigan's local governments can promote these pre-apprenticeship programs through the development of a Skilled Trades Task Force by sharing information about them on local government pages.

This is a general model for action local governments can take to work toward full employment in their city, village, or township. Pre-apprenticeship programs are necessary as they help those in need of career skills attain good-paying jobs. These programs are unprecedented in their success rate particularly when it comes to underserved and underrepresented populations and should be adopted wherever possible. All localities struggling with unemployment/ underemployment and economic stagnation ought to embrace pre-apprenticeship programs as a means to get people not just working again, but on a path to a thriving wage career.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE WDI 'S ACCESS FOR ALL PROGRAM

Access for All is a free 300 hour construction trades training program that prepares you for a rewarding career in the construction industry. It supports students' basic needs — transportation, child care, and a small stipend for expenses during the training. Graduates earn credentials in:

OSHA 30, First Aid/CPR, asbestos, lead and silica awareness, and a nationally recognized certificate from North America's Building Trades Union (NABTU). For more than 30 years, WDI has helped thousands of workers complete their education and find full-time employment. Their services include:

- Career planning and coaching
- Job placement assistance
- Occupational skills training
- Skills assessments
- Supportive services
- Employability skills workshops
- Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training
- Free safety training online or in person

Their programs help students obtain the soft skills, experience, and hard skills necessary to elevate themselves into skilled trades apprenticeships.

PROMOTION FROM WITHIN

School boards and municipalities ought to subsidize relevant educational opportunities for their staff. This would facilitate an upward career ladder, allowing them to promote from within. That not only helps government employees seeking professional advancement but it also makes financial sense for those school boards and municipalities who no longer have to waste money hunting for new talent.

THEIR PROGRAMS
HELP STUDENTS
OBTAIN THE SOFT
SKILLS, EXPERIENCE
AND HARD SKILLS
NECESSARY
TO ELEVATE
THEMSELVES...

CONCLUSION

Michigan's local governments can invest a lot more in their workforces. They ought to give loyal employees the tools to progress in their careers. Some local governments will find it best to enhance and expand pre-apprenticeship programs. Others will focus on trades instruction in schools. The truly ambitious communities will pursue both. But all of this will lead to happier, healthier, and more successful municipal workforces.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ORDINANCE

BY: J JORDYN HOULE

It's exciting when new businesses or housing developments choose to build and grow in Michigan. Elected officials, thinking first of the jobs and new residents it can bring to their communities, want to encourage projects and developments in any way they can. Elected officials never want the business to actively hurt people in their community, displace residents, or lower the standards of their local economy. But unfortunately, this can happen if the jobs that the new development promises go to people who work out of state or far from the district, or if those jobs are only part-time and have poor benefits. This drives down the standards of the whole community.

Before companies start working on a new development project in a city, it is crucial to guarantee that community members, rather than just developers, benefit from the project. Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) offer one way to ensure that development projects actually support the communities in which they are built. These agreements require developers to enter negotiations with residents prior to beginning a new project and address any possible negative impacts of the development.⁹² In 2016, Detroit voters passed the first community

benefits ordinance (CBO), which mandates CBAs for all large development projects in the city.⁹³ Local governments across Michigan should follow Detroit's lead and implement CBOs to prioritize workers' well-being over corporate profits.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

CBOs emerged in the late 1990s to allow city residents to voice their concerns about a project before developers proceed with construction. In contrast to projects in which developers directly negotiate terms with municipal governments, a CBA is enacted with the help of the residents who will be most impacted by an upcoming development. These agreements allow residents to share how developers can best support their community and to indicate any concerns. Often, CBAs will require developers to pay their workers a living wage, adhere to stricter environmental standards, hire workers local to the area, or invest in other projects such as affordable housing and public parks.⁹⁴

One example of a CBA that strives to balance developers' goals for a project with the needs of the com-

munity is found in Nashville, Tennessee. In 2018, community, labor, and faith-based groups negotiated with a company building a Major League Soccer (MLS) stadium to guarantee a \$15.50 minimum wage for all stadium workers, ensure mandatory safety training, and set aside land



IT IS CRUCIAL
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for affordable housing and childcare facilities.⁹⁵ While CBAs like the one in

Nashville have resulted in significant gains for workers, these agreements remain relatively rare and are not implemented in the vast majority of development projects. As of 2018, only around 30 CBOs had been adopted across the United States since their creation in the 1990s.⁹⁶

DETROIT'S COMMUNITY BENEFITS ORDINANCE

Local governments can increase their use of CBAs by passing a Community Benefits Ordinance that requires developers to meet with community members each time a large project is proposed. In 2016, Detroit became the first municipality in the country to approve this type of ordinance. While other cities have created CBAs sporadically depending on the project they are reviewing, Detroit's CBO ensures that every major development project takes the community's needs into account. Whenever a project either has a value of at least \$75 million or receives at least \$1 million in property tax abatements, a Neighborhood Advisory Council consisting of nine community members is formed to discuss concerns about the development.⁹⁷ The council then negotiates community benefits, such as requiring that \$2.5 million be dedicated to building 60 outdoor basketball courts in municipal parks when the Pistons Practice Facility was constructed.⁹⁸

Recently, labor advocates have proposed changes to Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance, including lowering the development threshold from \$75 million to \$50 million and providing the Neighborhood Advisory Council with more time to approve an agreement.⁹⁹ These reforms would give residents a voice on a broader range of projects in their community and increase transparency in the negotiation process. Nonetheless, Detroit's CBO has had an important impact on similar legislation in the state. In 2018, Ypsilanti adopted an ordinance activating the community benefits process every time a developer requests more than \$50,000 in financial support from the municipality for a project.¹⁰⁰ Other local governments

across Michigan must join these cities in requiring community input for large development projects.

CONCLUSION

CBOs give residents a voice in the construction projects that impact their city. Especially in growing communities and small towns where long-time residents feel uneasy about big developments and changes, CBOs allow citizens to be heard and give local governments the space to negotiate more effectively with developers. They also help ensure that workers involved in new developments receive fair pay and benefits.





**A \$15 MINIMUM
WAGE WILL
DRASTICALLY
IMPROVE WORKERS'
LIVES ACROSS
THE STATE**

LIVING WAGE FOR EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS

BY: CAMILLE MANCUSO

OVERVIEW

In 2017, the AFL-CIO adopted a resolution supporting a \$15 minimum wage for all workers, highlighting the need to sustain bargaining power and improve workers' quality of life.¹⁰¹ A living wage ensures that workers can provide for themselves and their families. Michigan preempted municipal wage increases in 2015, but local action can and must still be taken.¹⁰² Municipalities should establish a living wage for their own employees and contracted workers to improve equity and economic stability in their communities. Elected officials should also pass supportive resolutions for a statewide \$15 minimum wage and advocate to remove local labor law preemption.

An alternative to a \$15 an hour minimum wage is a living wage. Different cities and metro areas have different standards of living - sometimes above, and sometimes below \$15 an hour. [MIT's living wage calculator](#) can provide a living wage for your area.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAISING THE WAGE

The minimum wage sets a floor on how much wages can fall when a worker loses or quits a job — making it an essential policy to preserve bargaining power.¹⁰³ If the minimum wage had increased at the same rate as productivity since 1968, minimum wage would be standardized to \$21.36 in 2024.¹⁰⁴ On average, a single worker will need to earn at least \$31,200 per year to keep up with the cost of living by 2024.¹⁰⁵

A \$15 minimum wage will drastically improve workers' lives across the state, particularly women and workers of color. Michigan ranks 22nd in the country for concentration of workers earning below \$12/hour. 45.8% of Michigan workers earn less than \$15/hour, compared to 42% nationwide.¹⁰⁶ 52.5% of those earning less than \$15/hour are women, 57.3% are Black, and 61.6% are Hispanic.¹⁰⁷ An increased minimum wage can help close both the racial wealth and gender pay gaps. Increasing the minimum wage will help lift families

out of poverty and improve workers' health and educational outcomes.¹⁰⁸ Raising the minimum wage is especially necessary for affirming the value of school employees. Lunch ladies, janitors, and teachers all work tirelessly to develop the next generation and prepare them for what lies ahead. The importance of this cannot be overstated. Those workers are, at the very least, owed a decent wage for their immense contribution to society.

SUBMINIMUM WAGE

Wages below the minimum wage are typically given to persons with disabilities because of the misperception that their physical or mental impairments interfere with productivity or workplace performance.

Workplaces can legally pay their employees subminimum wage by applying for a 14(c) waiver through the Fair Labor Standards Act.¹⁰⁹ This permits employers to, in some cases, pay employees less than \$1 per

CONCENTRATION OF LOW-WAGE WORKERS, MICHIGAN VS. NATIONWIDE

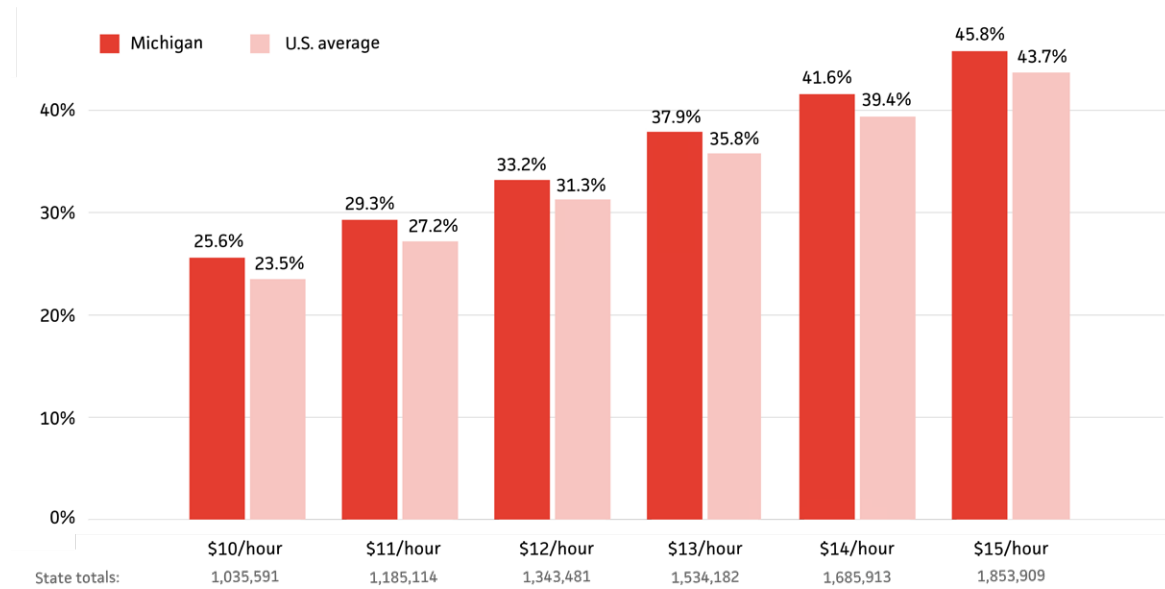


Image courtesy of: "Michigan Scorecard." Policy & Practice. Oxfam America, Economic Policy Institute. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://policy-practice.oxfamamerica.org/work/poverty-in-the-us/low-wage-map/scorecard/?state=MI>

hour.¹¹⁰ In Michigan, 63% of subminimum wage workers earn \$2.75/hour, with 23% employees earning less than \$1/hour. Local governments should, first and foremost, absolutely not use 14(c) waivers, and should instead pay everyone at least the minimum wage. Secondly, local governments should use their power and public platform to call on employers in their jurisdiction, as well as the state government, to eliminate the use of waivers.

RELEVANT MICHIGAN LAWS

Michigan's minimum wage is set to increase from \$9.45 to \$12.05 by 2030, and the minimum tipped wage is set to increase from \$3.59 to \$4.58

by 2030.¹¹¹ This may change following recent rulings in the Michigan Appellate Court in July of 2022 regarding a ballot initiative to raise the minimum wage that was passed in 2020 and never implemented. While this increase is a start, it is insufficient to sustain a family in our modern economy. One study found that a family of four living in cities across Michigan would need closer to a \$30/hour minimum wage to live comfortably.¹¹²

Five states (CA, NY, NJ, IL, MA) and over two dozen local governments have \$15 minimum wages.¹¹³ Opponents of increasing minimum wage laws claim that an increase to \$15/hour will

adversely affect employment and productivity. However, recent studies have shown that significantly raising the minimum wage boosts the economy by expanding the consumption power of working people.¹¹⁴ While local governments in Michigan are preempted from directly enacting policies that would set a minimum wage higher than the prevailing state wage, there is an exemption for work done under a contract with a local unit of government.¹¹⁵ Detroit City Council enacted a resolution in 2018 supporting a \$15 minimum wage, despite many of their city employees still being paid less than that.¹¹⁶ Ann Arbor passed a living wage ordinance in 2015, stating that all city-contracted employers must pay their

employees a "living wage," designated at \$12.70/hour if they provide health benefits, and \$14.18/hour if not.¹¹⁷

IMPLEMENTATION

Local governments, thanks to state preemption, are not able to set living wage standards for their employees and their contractors through an ordinance. But, they can ensure that all of their employees make at least \$15 an hour, or the living wage for one adult, no children, under the MIT Living Wage calculator. Partial credit will be awarded to cities whose lowest paid employees make more than state minimum wage but less than the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#). Local governments must also not use subminimum wage certificates 14(c) and refuse to purchase from or contract with local businesses who also have 14(c) certificates.

CONCLUSION

Raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour, or a living wage, and indexing it to inflation will improve workers' lives across Michigan. Despite state law preempting local governments from directly increasing their local minimum wage to \$15/hour, they can still implement \$15 minimum wages (indexed to inflation) for municipal employees and municipally contracted employees, and actively lobby for changing state laws to allow municipalities the freedom to increase the minimum wage in their communities.





COLLABORATION WITH UNITED WAY

BY: LINDSEY HAUGHTON

United Way is a nonprofit which aims to improve the lives of working families by mobilizing community power to improve education, worker income, and health outcomes.¹¹⁸ Across the state, United Way works to combat income inequality, joblessness, unaffordability, and underemployment for Michigan workers.

The AFL-CIO and United Way work together to improve Michigan communities through volunteer work, community organizing, and providing direct assistance to working families in crisis. In Michigan, United Way has approximately 60 local chapters

who raise and distribute over \$160 million to support local health and human service organizations.¹¹⁹ United Way Labor Liaisons connect local unions and United Way chapters across the state.

UNITED WAY'S PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Every year, United Way releases their [Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed \(ALICE\) report](#), which goes beyond official poverty line measurements to accurately portray financial hardship in Michigan. According to United Way's ALICE report, 38% of Michigan households

struggle to afford the basic necessities of housing, childcare, food, technology, healthcare, and transportation. United Way's priorities are childcare, early literacy, postsecondary attainment, and Michigan 2-1-1.

United Way supports ALICE children by offering literacy resources, book drives, legislative advocacy, grants, and online and in person programs. Michigan 2-1-1 connects people in need with community, government, and faith-based services in their area, referring them to housing, food, rental, tax, utility, and transportation assistance. Local governments and United Way

can work together to enhance the quality of life in their communities. Together, the AFL-CIO, United Way, and local governments should partner to support workers in their communities.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Elected officials should reach out and contact their local United Way to see how the city government can be of service. Elected officials can share local United Way events, book drives, and community resources on their social media pages and on their official social media pages. Elected officials can also assist their local United Way chapter when it hosts fundraisers and drives for books, food, and more.

School boards can collaborate with United Way, too. Board members, for example, could distribute flyers and other informational materials in hopes of connecting United Way with struggling families. School boards could also partner with United Way to hold drives to ensure low-income students have the supplies they need.

Understanding how local governments, United Way, and the Michigan AFL-CIO can work together will help local elected officials improve the health and living standards of their communities.



THE AFL-CIO AND UNITED WAY WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR UNITED WAY

The Michigan Association of United Ways is comprised of 34 chapters across the state, all of which are listed at unitedway.org/local/united-states/michigan. This link includes the web addresses of each local chapter, through which you can contact them.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY SCORING CRITERIA

Buy U.S. / Union

	Points	Points Available
Having a purchasing policy that gives preference to locally produced goods made in the jurisdiction, then county, state, Midwest, and in America.	0	2
Having a purchasing policy that gives preference to ethically produced or union-made goods.	0	1
Tracking and publishing a yearly report of the source of the goods they and their contractors purchase.	0	1
Collaborating with local businesses, chambers of commerce, or the DDA on a "buy/shop local" campaign.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Pre-Apprenticeship Program

	Points	Points Available
Implementing a pre-apprenticeship program in their district in collaboration with the local Building Trades Council or the Workforce Development Institute within the jurisdiction and supporting part of that program financially. School districts receive points for having a robust skilled-trades education program at their school, including a job fair.	0	3
Internal policy reflects a preference for hiring within and advancing employees from within, and includes opportunities for employees to obtain degrees and certificates.	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Community Benefits Ordinance

	Points	Points Available
CBA applies to projects which receive \$50,000 or more in property tax abatements or projects that receive 10% in value of municipal land sale or transfer; or other amounts negotiated with local labor leaders.	0	1
CBA notifies residents living in the area impacted by the project of the community benefits process.	0	1
CBA holds an initial public meeting where the developer is not present explaining the CBA process to community members.	0	1

CBA provides at least one week for the board of community members to approve the agreement with the developer.	0	1
CBA gives residents at least 2 meetings to voice their concerns on the development.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

BONUS: Living Wage for Municipal Employees

	Points	Points Available
Municipal employees make the area living wage according to the MIT living wage index.	0	1
Sets local minimum wage for all workers in a municipality based on the MIT living wage index.	0	1
Indexes all wage rates to grow with inflation or CPI.	0	1
Releases a resolution condemning subminimum wage and calls on the state government to abolish subminimum wage while retaining protections for disabled workers so they retain their jobs; must also not have any active 14-C certificates.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 4	4

BONUS: Collaborate with United Way

	Points	Points Available
Running a United Way giving campaign to workers within the municipality, and working on a joint community impact project through your Community Service Labor Liaison.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 1	1

FINAL SCORE

0 out of 15 15

FINAL SCORE WITH BONUS

0 out of 20 20

Required documentation includes copies of relevant city code and/or copies of press statements, resolutions, or social media posts. For more information about city selection, criteria, or the MSI scoring system, visit advocates.miaflcio.org. All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email advocates@miaflcio.org.

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IV.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Local governments should be concerned about quality economic development for the sake of their citizens' well-being. Municipalities

ought to only subsidize and incentivize the creation of full-time jobs that pay livable wages and provide healthcare benefits.

“THE BASIC GOAL OF
LABOR WILL NOT
CHANGE. IT IS...
BETTER STANDARDS
OF LIFE FOR ALL WHO
WORK FOR WAGES.”

George Meany, President of the
AFL-CIO, 1955 - 1979



OVERVIEW

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCLOSURE [P. 94]

Local governments should only consider providing corporate tax breaks on the condition that businesses who benefit create quality jobs within the community. The details of these deals, including job-growth estimates and the sizes of tax incentives, should be public knowledge.

JOB CREATION QUALITY STANDARDS [P. 96]

Since living costs differ across communities, each municipality should have its own job creation quality standards for organizations that receive tax breaks. Businesses that provide little economic value to the community should not qualify for tax handouts.

CLAWBACKS [P. 100]

Economic development disclosures and job creation quality standards are essential for making fair deals between businesses and local governments. But those deals can be difficult to enforce once they are made. Clawbacks ensure that companies have to return tax-payer dollars used to incentivize the business if they fail to comply with the standards and terms agreed upon in the contract.

INCLUSIVE HOUSING [P. 102]

Many workers do not earn enough to live where they work. And property values in many cities are increasing while wages remain stagnant, leaving more and more people unable to afford homes. This can be combated with inclusive zoning ordinances in expensive communities. Affordable housing should be available to whoever is eligible according to their city's guidelines.

PRO-WORKER CANNABIS RETAIL [P. 106]

As more municipalities legalize recreational cannabis shops, they should ensure that the scoring criteria they use for who gets licenses includes worker wage standards.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCLOSURE ORDINANCE

BY: CONNOR CAIN

To attract or retain business developments, local governments often offer tax breaks and other incentives to businesses. In fact, the frequency of state and local tax incentives for businesses has tripled since 1990.¹²⁰ Tax incentives are one of the principal economic tools for states and localities, with some studies estimating that cities, counties, and states spend roughly \$80 billion a year on them.¹²¹ Local officials often justify these agreements, sometimes worth millions of dollars in lost tax rev-

enue, on the grounds that the development wouldn't occur. However, these agreements aren't always as good for the community and at times amount to nothing more than corporate welfare. The benefits to a firm are often front-loaded, and there are typically few mechanisms for holding businesses accountable after they receive them. To combat this problem, local governments should adopt comprehensive economic development disclosure policies. These policies require

businesses to report various data relevant to the subsidy they received, such as total investment, jobs created, and/or wages paid to workers. Beyond increasing overall government transparency, comprehensive disclosure policies allow lawmakers to evaluate the success of their policies, ensure taxpayers know how their money is being spent, and hold businesses accountable.

TAX INCENTIVES

As these tax incentive deals become increasingly common, taxpayers deserve to know whether their money is being put to good use. Despite their pervasiveness, evidence for the efficacy of tax incentive deals is shaky at best. For one, it's not clear that development incentives affect business decisions all that much. It's estimated that, on average for all states, state and local taxes only make up about 1.8% of total business costs.¹²² Available infrastructure and workforce education levels play an arguably larger role. The competition between cities for the location of Amazon's HQ2 is an excellent example. A total of 238 cities placed bids, but in the end the final contender was Washington, DC which only offered \$2 billion in incentives compared to \$9.7 billion from Pittsburgh or \$22.7 billion from the Dallas-Fort Worth area.¹²³ If the effects of these deals are marginal at best, public scrutiny through disclosure laws can help ensure that a city's resources aren't being wasted.

Further, economic development deals impose a real and significant cost on local governments, leaving fewer resources to fund important social services. Reduced property taxes are a common component of these deals, which poses a problem for property tax-financed K-12 school districts. A 2018 study conducted by the organization Good Jobs First studied the effects of incentive deals on school districts. In the 348 Michigan

school districts surveyed, over \$106 million was lost due to tax abatements. These funds could have been used to hire over 1,700 new teachers. As stated earlier, workforce education levels influence business location decisions, so that development deals may undermine future development opportunities. Because companies aren't required to disclose information about these deals, it's hard to know whether the benefits are truly worth the high cost.

The point is not to discourage local governments from engaging in tax incentive deals with corporations but rather to encourage elected officials to enter into them with complete transparency. Cost-benefit analyses concerning the deals are often impossible to conduct because the data they require is simply unavailable. Fortunately, with comprehensive economic development disclosure laws in place, elected officials and taxpayers alike can scrutinize the costs and benefits of subsidies and decide democratically whether they are a good use of resources.

DEVELOPER TRANSPARENCY

Good economic development disclosure laws have a few common characteristics. First, any company that receives an economic development deal must be required to provide a report at least annually. The report should include data about the total amount of the subsidy, the number of jobs created compared

with the jobs promised, and the wages and benefits paid to employees. Additionally, it should include more in-depth information such as the number of full-time jobs created, whether health coverage is provided, and whether the company receiving the subsidy reduced employment at any other site. Finally, the data should be published online for full community transparency.

Comprehensive disclosure laws help ensure that incentive deals actually bring development rather than just positive news cycles for politicians and businesses. They can arm officials and taxpayers with the information needed to implement sound development strategies if implemented correctly.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that comprehensive disclosure laws are fundamentally good for workers. This is because those who work on the front lines to deliver economic development are the people who are supposed to benefit from the higher wages and better benefits promised in incentive deals. When businesses are allowed to essentially take the money and run, these deals amount to nothing more than corporate welfare. While not a panacea, with comprehensive disclosure laws in place workers are better equipped to hold their officials accountable, and businesses will feel more pressure to deliver.

JOB CREATION QUALITY STANDARDS

BY: BENJAMIN ELBAUM

When cities, townships, villages, and counties agree to give tax breaks, the jobs these companies create should meet a certain standard of quality, including healthcare benefits, living wages, and more. These standards must be enforced to make sure that every job created is a good one.

Before COVID-19, 43% of households in Michigan could not afford housing, childcare, taxes, and a cell phone despite a decline in unemployment. Low-quality jobs are still far too prevalent in Michigan, with 58% of them paying less than \$20 per hour.¹²⁴ Even with high employment, quality jobs with living wages and guaranteed benefits are scarce. Policymakers should ensure that jobs created through tax breaks and subsidy programs are indeed quality jobs that offer satisfactory benefits.

All too often, subsidized companies offer part-time, low-paying jobs with poor benefits. A study done in Kentucky found that the state had granted tax breaks to more than 31 companies that paid average wages below the federal poverty line for a family of four.

Furthermore, a 2018 bill, also in Kentucky, grants \$60 million to banks and insurance companies that invest in businesses in the state's rural areas. However, the bill does not require the creation of jobs, let alone benefits or fair wages.¹²⁶

WAGE STANDARDS

Wage standards are the most common type of job-creation quality standard. Market-based wage standards are commonly found in state-level incentive programs, whereas cities and counties commonly use poverty measures, such as the federal poverty line or minimum wage.¹²⁷

Several cities in Michigan have implemented poverty measure wage standards, including Detroit. An ordinance in the city defines living wages as 100% of the federal poverty level income guideline for a family of four if health benefits are provided and 125% of the federal poverty level income guideline if health benefits are not provided. These pay rates, subject to change based on federal guidelines, came out to \$11.03 and \$13.78 per hour in 2009.

These requirements must be met by city service contractors or any other recipients of city financial assistance greater than \$50,000.

LOW QUALITY JOBS ARE STILL FAR TOO PREVALENT IN MICHIGAN, WITH 58% OF THEM PAYING LESS THAN \$20 PER HOUR.

HEALTHCARE STANDARDS

Another one of the most critical standards that labor quality legislation must protect is the guarantee of employer-provided health benefits. Workers paid minimum livable

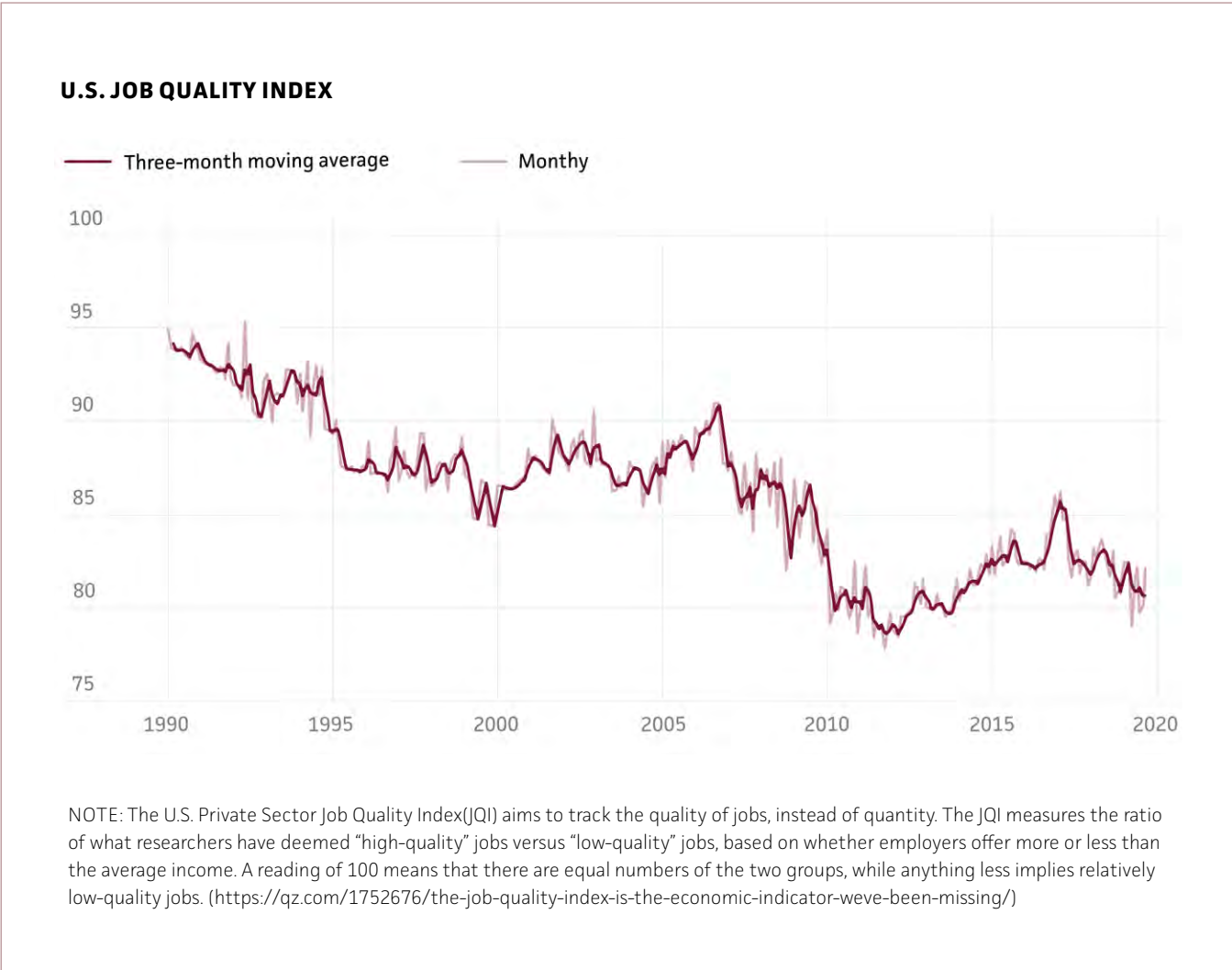




wages should not have to shoulder the burden of healthcare alone. In Michigan, several cities have encouraged health benefit legislation parallel to wage standards by allowing health benefits to count toward wage requirements.¹²⁹ In Ann Arbor, the wage floor for companies receiving city financial assistance is set at \$1.61 lower (to \$14.05 down from \$15.66) if the company also offers health benefits (as of 2021; the living wage is set to be adjusted each year on April 30).¹³⁰

JOB QUALITY STANDARDS

In addition to wage and health benefit standards, some cities and local governments add other standards to ensure subsidies create quality jobs. Another common standard is the requirement that new jobs are permanent, full-time positions. Some states and cities, such as Wisconsin, also include the requirement of paid sick leave to be eligible for certain tax credits.¹³¹ Other programs, such as the Tax Increment Financing program in Lewiston, Maine, require employers to fund employee retirement plans to receive certain financial assistance from the municipal government.¹³² These additional standards are more commonly offered at the local level rather than the state level. Municipal legislation enforcing these standards would further increase the quality of good jobs in communities.



CONCLUSION

Strong job creation quality standards are necessary to ensure subsidy programs create good jobs. Companies receiving subsidies must be held accountable for the wages and benefits they provide. In Michigan, cities such as Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti protect the wages and health benefits of subsidized employees through standards for wages with and without included health benefits. This, however, should be expanded

to include other standards such as contributions to retirement plans and paid sick leave.

Local governments must ensure that tax breaks and other business incentives go only to companies that create quality jobs offering livable wages and good benefits. It is the responsibility of both state and local governments to implement and enforce these standards with legislation that protects the wages and benefits of workers, because no

government should subsidize unethical business practices which perpetuate underemployment and poverty wages.

CLAWBACKS

BY: CONNOR CAIN

Economic growth in metropolitan areas outpaces that of non-metropolitan areas. Looking to revitalize their struggling economies, many municipal policymakers are increasingly turning to economic development incentive deals, which offer a mix of grants, loans, tax abatements, and public investment in exchange for new business developments. These deals, however, are frequently criticized for being secretive, wasteful, and little more than corporate welfare. While ordinances requiring the comprehensive disclosure of incentive deals are solid tools for increasing government transparency, they leave local governments with no recourse in the event that a business fails to live up to its promises. As a result, local and state governments should add clawback provisions in any incentive deal they choose to enter. Clawback provisions are money-back guarantees if businesses that receive tax breaks are unscrupulous or break promises.

CLAWBACKS EXPLAINED

When firms are offered economic development incentive deals, they typically promise to deliver benefits to the community, such as new jobs, higher wages, and better healthcare benefits. Despite these promises, the issue is that the benefits to a

business are usually received up-front with few ways to determine whether the promises were fulfilled. Municipal governments and taxpayers can effectively solve this problem by adding clawback provisions to economic development agreements. Clawback provisions are simply a contract clause stipulating that a business must repay part or all of the benefits it received if certain predetermined metrics aren't achieved. These typically include the number of jobs created, average wage levels, amount of capital invested, and a specified length of time the business must remain in the community.¹³³ Additionally, strong clawback provisions are often prorated, meaning a company is liable to repay subsidies based on the extent to which the metrics were missed, with harsher penalties applying to more severe underachievement.

Clawback provisions help ensure a community's resources aren't being squandered. But, all too often, local governments don't realize how important clawbacks are until it's too late. In 1993, the city of Ypsilanti attempted to recover \$13.5 million in tax abatements from General Motors after the company announced its intention to close down its factory there and consolidate production in Texas.¹³⁴ Although a trial court initially ruled in the city's favor, an appellate

CLAWBACK PROVISIONS HELP ENSURE A COMMUNITY'S RESOURCES AREN'T BEING SQUANDERED.

court ruled that public statements GM made about investment and employment were only expressions of hope that production would continue.¹³⁵ Had there been a clawback provision in place, the community wouldn't have lost those valuable resources.

Despite the appeal of this taxpayer money-back guarantee, some policymakers fear that clawbacks will give off the impression of a hostile business climate. However, this doesn't need to be the case. For one, clawbacks are added during contractual negotiations, and respect for contracts is a fundam-

ental aspect of a healthy business climate. Businesses and local governments can avoid unnecessary misunderstandings down the road by clearly laying out expectations and penalties for not meeting them. Further, with clawbacks in place, taxpayers may be more apt to approve even more significant subsidies as they have a guarantee of repayment.

ENSURING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

In an ideal world, clawback mechanisms in economic development incentive agreements would never activate. The issue, however, is that this isn't an ideal world, and no municipality wants to find itself needing clawbacks when they aren't in place. By adopting clawback provisions in all development deals, communities are equipped with the legal tools necessary to hold businesses to their promises. Because of this, clawbacks should be an integral component of any worker-friendly economic development plan. On the one hand, when clawbacks are in place, businesses have a real economic incentive to do what they promised. If a business can't deliver, it will be held fiscally liable. On the other hand, clawbacks ensure that workers and their families aren't punished because of the actions of businesses. The underperforming business, not the taxpayer, should foot the bill when promises aren't kept.





INCLUSIVE HOUSING ORDINANCE

BY: KEITH JOHNSTONE

“Labor has to make progress with the community, and not at the expense of the community... We are not fighting for more dollars... but we are fighting for more purchasing power. We get a wage on one hand, and it is taken away by a higher price increase on the other, we have made no progress. We have merely accelerated the speed of the economic merry-go-round. Our basic fight is for basic purchasing power; dollars that will buy things.”

— Walter Reuther debates Senator Robert A. Taft, CBS Broadcast, April 11, 1948

Doing what’s right for workers means improving conditions for the entire working class and giving workers the tools (on and off the job) to make a better life for themselves and their families. Inclusive zoning ordinances are one of those tools. But all too often, the teachers, firefighters, and construction workers who work in our communities cannot afford to live there. **With affordable housing ordinances, we can protect the things our families need and build a better Michigan: at work, at home, and beyond.** Wealth gaps in many metropolitan areas across this

country manifest through the housing market. Since cities have a finite amount of space, some private real estate owners and developers price gouge to increase their profits.¹³⁶ This forces working people out of their housing as wealthier people flood into a city. Today, many cities are attempting to curb this trend.¹³⁷ One of the most effective and least controversial of these tools is inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning is a public-private partnership where, in exchange for a government’s land use permits and sometimes subsidies, private developers will reserve a portion of

their new developments for low- and middle-income families.

BACKGROUND

After explicitly racist housing laws were made illegal, cities adopted exclusionary zoning laws to exclude racial and ethnic minorities from cities. Examples include building height requirements, bans on multifamily units, and minimum lot requirements. These measures effectively raised construction prices and decreased affordability. They continued unabated until the late 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement’s efforts resulted in many new policies to ameliorate the harms made by explicitly and implicitly racist housing policies. The most popular policy solution was inclusionary zoning because it was viewed as still being business-friendly.¹³⁸

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

For at least the last five decades, housing has become increasingly unaffordable. Pre-pandemic, over 18 million American families were spending more than half of their income on it.¹³⁹ These days, it is virtually impossible for a low-wage worker to afford a decent place with multiple bedrooms.¹⁴⁰ This is especially troubling as the average minimum-wage worker is 35 years old — many of whom have children.¹⁴¹

The housing crisis is a national problem, and it thus requires federal solutions. As we work toward this,

MICHIGAN LAW PROHIBITS REQUIRED INCLUSIVE ZONING ... THOUGH APPROXIMATELY 80% OF ALL INCLUSIVE ZONING ORDINANCES IN THE UNITED STATES ARE MANDATORY.

however, there are things localities can do to help promote affordability in the housing market.

HOW INCLUSIVE ZONING WORKS

Inclusive zoning, more so than a specific policy, is a category of policies. The basic tenet is that they require or incentivize developers to designate a percentage of units in a given project as below-market-rate (BMR).¹⁴² Michigan law prohibits

required inclusive zoning, per a ruling by the Michigan Supreme Court,¹⁴³ though approximately 80% of all inclusive zoning ordinances in the United States are mandatory.

Voluntary inclusive zoning has many economic benefits for both the government and developers. Inclusive zoning laws achieve a social good and protecting the interests of low- and middle-class people at a low cost.¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, developers will receive an incentive tied to building these units. These incentives are usually either density bonuses, which increase their allotment of space in the city, or direct subsidies for the projects. These benefits increase proportionally to the amount of affordable housing they build. **Developers still often profit off affordable housing in growing cities because building and upkeep costs are relatively low.**

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH INCLUSIVE ZONING

Affordability is measured by a unit being priced as BMR (below market rate), which is defined by the area median income (AMI). Medium-income units are defined as between 80% and 120% of AMI, and low-income units are below 50% of AMI. Therefore, these policies are intended to provide housing assistance to those who do not qualify for Section 8 assistance, which only applies to those below 30% of AMI.

The AMI is a concept developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to determine fair rent prices. However, the non-locals who calculate the AMI sometimes overestimate. Detroit's city median income (CMI), for instance, is \$27,838, while the AMI for the Detroit metropolitan area is \$56,399.¹⁴⁵

Therefore, in many poorer cities, residents are forced to pay out of their price range for ostensibly affordable housing. Inclusive zoning is meant to curb some of the economic and racial barriers caused by the wealth gap and exclusionary zoning. Since most affordable units are built in the same buildings as other units, the policy results in prosocial race and class integration. However, some developers are against this because they want to isolate wealthy families from the poorer ones. These developers will typically implement "poor doors,"

which are essentially separate doors for the affordable units that separate them from the other units. Further, some developers will build affordable units off-site if permitted by the local ordinance.

INCLUSIVE ZONING IN MICHIGAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

There are two major cities with inclusionary zoning ordinances: Detroit¹⁴⁶ and Ann Arbor.¹⁴⁷ During the 2020 elections, Ann Arbor voters resoundingly approved new taxes for affordable housing. The ballot measure, known as "Prop C," is expected to raise \$160 million over the next two decades. This sum will be used to create 1,000-2,000 affordable units in a city suffering from an acute housing crisis.¹⁴⁸ In Detroit, fears of gentrification and price hikes pushing residents from their homes have dominated

the discourse for a long time. Every development in the city receiving over \$500,000 in federal or city subsidies would have to include at least 20% affordable housing at 80% of AMI.

This policy was supposed to keep prices affordable, but it failed to account for the discrepancies between AMI and CMI. As a result, many "affordable" units still cost more than half their renters' income even though the federal standard is 30%. Therefore, while the policy increased community support for many projects, it still left behind some of those most in need.

Conversely, the Ann Arbor policy created a fund, the AAAHF, devoted to establishing housing for those making less than 60% of CMI and improving conditions for those making less than 30% of CMI.¹⁴⁹ In exchange for these conditions, developers must operate with less stringent building height and parking requirements.¹⁵⁰ The program was only passed in 2019, so it is too early to tell its results. Still, its targeted approach looks to be a more promising model than Detroit. Policymakers should take note.

POLICIES OUTSIDE OF INCLUSIVE ZONING

Municipalities experiencing housing shortages should increase the areas zoned for multifamily units and allow accessory dwelling units to make it easier to increase density.

Additionally, in areas where labor unions make specific requests of city councils, county commissions, and school boards regarding affordable housing solutions, local governments should listen to them and work with them to implement policies that benefit working class and low-income renters. For example, in Ann Arbor, the GEO (Graduate Employees Organization, AFT Michigan 3550, AFL-CIO) has repeatedly advocated to the Ann Arbor City Council for various housing reforms, including the Early Leasing Ordinance.

CONCLUSION

To increase housing affordability in Michigan, local governments can enact inclusive zoning ordinances. These should be targeted, like Ann Arbor's, and focused on CMI rather than AMI. Lastly, ordinances should establish criteria like sufficiently low-income targets and design standards that avoid stigmatizing affordable housing.¹⁵¹

Inclusive zoning addresses the supply side of the housing crisis by making it easier to build more housing.



PRO-WORKER CANNABIS RETAIL

BY: ELIAS KHOURY

Michigan overwhelmingly legalized recreational cannabis in 2019 with 55.89% popular support in the election.¹⁵² Cities, townships, and villages across the state have since legalized recreational marijuana retail in their jurisdictions to create new jobs and to partake in revenue sharing.

Marijuana legalization can have myriad benefits to a community if done correctly. Marijuana legalization can provide communities with much-needed tax revenue, revitalize local businesses, provide jobs to formerly incarcerated people, and create good-paying jobs on which people can raise their families. Legal cannabis retailers, especially unionized ones, can be powerful vehicles for economically empowering people with former marijuana convictions.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

In the 2018 midterm elections, Michigan voters approved Proposal 1 by a margin of 55.9% to 44.1%. Michigan became the tenth state, and first in the Midwest, to legalize recreational cannabis. But Proposal 1 did more than just allow Michigan adults to use marijuana. It also contained a provision empowering cities to restrict cannabis retail as they see fit. This includes complete prohibition. However, municipalities will receive the generated tax

revenue if they opt for legalization, as will the county.

Cities that permit retail cannabis establishments can expect to make a considerable amount of money in state revenue sharing each year. For every legalized marijuana establishment, the municipality receives the revenue from the excise tax collected at each sale. The tax revenue is distributed based on the number of stores a municipality has. In 2022, Michigan's municipalities received \$56,000 per store.¹⁵³

The excise tax distribution is as follows:¹⁵⁴

- 15% to municipalities in which a marijuana retail store or a marijuana microbusiness is located, allocated in proportion to the number of marijuana retail stores and marijuana microbusinesses within the municipality;
- 15% to counties in which a marijuana retail store or a marijuana microbusiness is located, allocated in proportion to the number of marijuana retail stores and marijuana microbusinesses within the county;
- 35% to the school aid fund to be used for K-12 education; and
- 35% to the Michigan transportation fund to be used for the repair and maintenance of roads and bridges.

CANNABIS WORKERS AND THEIR CHALLENGES

Thanks to widespread legalization efforts, the cannabis industry is burgeoning. Like most other industries, however, it has become increasingly corporatized. Big pharmaceutical companies are investing heavily in the cannabis market and infecting it with their usual slate of shady business practices. These include the systematic underpayment and otherwise mistreatment of workers. There have also been reports of rampant sexual harassment, mistreatment, and wage theft. Cannabis workers deserve to be paid well for the time, effort, and stigma they undertake at their jobs.

CANNABIS AS A SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE

Marijuana is one of the drivers of mass incarceration. Countless Americans, primarily people of color, are impacted by cannabis-related arrests and convictions each year.¹⁵⁵ The enforcement of marijuana prohibitions, and the broader War on Drugs, was always a racialized endeavor. All available data confirms this. While Black and white people use marijuana at similar rates, Black people are four times as likely to be arrested for possession.¹⁵⁶ In this crucial respect, legalizing cannabis and



providing restitution to the victims of its prohibition are civil rights issues. Regardless of their identity, no one should face serious legal sanction for a victimless crime. And those who have are owed restitution, in some form or another, for their suffering. Legalizing retail cannabis can provide jobs for formerly incarcerated people with cannabis convictions who may be otherwise discriminated against and stigmatized.

BID EVALUATION CRITERIA

Now that recreational cannabis is legal in Michigan, municipalities can decide whether to allow its sale. This raises another important question: To whom should the municipality grant licenses? Some local officials may be tempted to adopt a permissive approach. They might see granting licenses to whoever wants them as good policy. But this would be a mistake.

Granting licenses unconditionally stacks the deck against workers. The more shops flood the market, the

more that shops will compete by driving down worker wages and conditions. Cannabis retailers who treat their employees fairly, and thus have higher relative labor costs, will struggle to compete in the market.

Meanwhile, retailers mistreating their employees will thrive, creating yet another hostile economic environment for workers. Shops that treat their workers well but cannot compete in an oversaturated market will just sell their licenses to other chains with even worse labor standards.

To avoid this fate, municipalities should award licenses based on how well retailers treat their employees. Communities can do this by creating retail license applications and evaluation criteria that award licenses based on several factors, including:

- % of workers who will be local hires
- Number of full-time vs part-time positions
- Whether part-time workers are offered PTO, health insurance

- Employee healthcare
- Employee wages standards
- Social equity plan
- Security standards: guards, cameras, security systems, armed banking, etc.
- Capitol and aesthetic improvements to the property

This way, marijuana companies will compete for licenses based on how much benefit they will bring to the community. These standards will also likely make it easier for elected officials to assure constituents that the shops will be good, upright businesses that provide people with an honest living and improve the local economy.

Reach out to advocates@miaflcio.org for more information and to view the criteria.

Success Story: Recreational Cannabis in Jackson, MI

BY: ELIAS KHOURY

In November of 2018, the Jackson City Council approved an ordinance opening their municipality to the marijuana business.¹⁵⁷ Notably, it limited the number of retail licenses, awarding them on the basis of pro-worker scoring criteria. To qualify for a license, businesses must pay their workers more than double the state minimum wage. They also must provide healthcare with minimal out-of-pocket costs as well as generous deferred compensation for retirement.¹⁵⁸

Mayor Derek Dobies lauded his city's efforts as "giving workers power" and sparking "a Renaissance" in Jackson. This is especially important given that more than a third of the city's residents live below the federal poverty line. Jackson's marijuana ordinance, Dobies remarked, promotes "stable, sustainable, equitable growth."

Achieving this wasn't easy. Dobies faced gridlock in the Jackson City Council that, for some time, halted policy change.¹⁵⁹ Through rigorous advocacy, however, Dobies was able to overcome legislative obstacles and deliver for his community. This has not only created a fairer environment for workers, but also revamped local infrastructure. Taxes on Jackson County's booming cannabis industry are being used to finance road repairs and other important services.¹⁶⁰

With the passage of Proposal 1 during the 2018 midterms, cities throughout Michigan have the opportunity to follow Jackson's lead. By adopting sound policies, they too can create a fair cannabis market that protects the interests of workers. In an era of increasing wealth inequality and escalating assaults on workers' rights, the need for this is evident.



TAXES ON JACKSON COUNTY'S BOOMING CANNABIS INDUSTRY ARE BEING USED TO FINANCE ROAD REPAIRS AND OTHER IMPORTANT SERVICES.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCORING CRITERIA

Comprehensive Economic Development Disclosure	Points	Points Available
Information includes the number of jobs required in the subsidy deal and the number of jobs actually created (or lost).	0	1
Information includes the amount of capital investment in the subsidy deal and actual capital investment.	0	1
Information includes the health insurance that employees receive.	0	1
Information includes a percentage breakdown of employees by full-time and part-time.	0	1
Information includes the percentage of employees that are local.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Job Creation Quality Standards	Points	Points Available
Requires employers who receive public subsidies to provide health benefits for full-time employees.	0	2
Wages paid to employees meet or exceed wage standards calculated by the MIT living wage calculator.	0	1
The recipient corporation shall create at least one new full-time job in the state for each \$35,000 of assistance it receives for a project.	0	2
<i>Note: This category is in place to reward local governments that enforce quality standards outside of wage and health benefit standards. These quality standards may include retirement benefits, paid sick leave, full-time employment, or other miscellaneous quality standards.</i>		
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Clawbacks	Points	Points Available
Clawback ordinance permits officials to negotiate with businesses to whom they provide subsidies and tax abatements to, in order to ensure that those companies invest capital, remain in the community, and provide full-time jobs to local workers in the amounts promised.	0	3
Prorates clawbacks, meaning the company must repay subsidies based on the extent to which the metrics were missed.	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

BONUS: Inclusive Housing	Points	Points Available
Demonstrates a willingness to build more affordable housing, including through public private partnerships that reserve 20% of new housing for low to moderate-income individuals. Municipality uses CMI (City Median Income) instead of AMI (Area Median Income) to calculate affordability.	0	1
Bans affordable housing "poor doors," or separate entrances for those who are living in reduced-priced housing.		
Bans affordable housing units built offsite from the other units.		
Bans selecting applicants on a first come, first serve basis.		
Bans screening affordable housing residents based on credit history and/or criminal background.		
SCORE	0 out of 1	1

BONUS: Pro-Worker Cannabis Policy	Points	Points Available
Evaluates cannabis operators based upon whether or not they have labor peace agreements.	0	1
Evaluates cannabis operators based upon whether or not they will pay workers a living wage.	0	1
Evaluates cannabis operators based upon whether or not they have healthcare and 401k options for employees.	0	1
Evaluates cannabis operators based upon whether or not they have a local hire preference.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 4	4

FINAL SCORE 0 out of 15 15
FINAL SCORE WITH BONUS 0 out of 20 20

Required documentation includes copies of relevant city code and/or copies of press statements, resolutions, or social media posts. For more information about city selection, criteria, or the MSI scoring system, visit advocates.miaflcio.org. All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email advocates@miaflcio.org.

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V.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Elected officials should express public appreciation for organized labor and work as advocates for the rights of workers to collectively bargain. They should stand with workers and serve as a constant reminder within the legislative system that workers' rights matter.

This includes solidarity vocally and through actions such as proposing pro-labor policies. In addition, they can educate the community about pre-apprenticeship programs and other opportunities within skilled trades.

“THERE’S A DIRECT
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE
BALLOT BOX AND
THE BREAD BOX.”

Walter Reuther, UAW President
1946–1970



OVERVIEW

POSITION ON ORGANIZED LABOR [P. 118]

Elected leaders must heed workers’ calls for basic rights, such as fair wages, paid leave, retirement security, and protection from discrimination.

PRO-LABOR POLICY EFFORTS [P. 120]

Local officials have the power to pass pro-labor policies, such as those in the Municipal Solidarity Index. Even if politically or procedurally difficult, officials that propose these measures and advocate for their passage should earn credit for standing on the side of working families.

UNION MEMBER ELECTED OFFICIALS [P. 124]

Elected officials have the opportunity to serve as advocates and spokespeople for workers’ rights and values within their communities. Union members are, for obvious reasons, exceptionally well-equipped to take on this role.

Approval ratings for union members-turned-elected officials are high, as they know and understand everyday workers’ struggles and lived experiences. Fundamentally, union leaders understand the importance of fighting for communities as a whole – not just a select few at the top.

SKILLED TRADES TASK FORCE [P. 127]

Many trades deemed essential to society are experiencing surges in demand, even despite the adverse economic effects of the pandemic. Many Michiganders have certification in the skilled trades and are searching for employment in high-paying fields. Others, including our youth, are interested in the skilled trades but lack access to apprenticeships.

Meeting this growing demand can require creating a skilled trades task force. The task force should include a union representative versed in a variety of the skilled trades and representatives from nonprofits

who can provide further advice. The main goal of a skilled trades task force is to promote the skilled trades, facilitate job fairs, and help funnel people into successful careers.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS [P. 128]

Short-term rentals worsen the housing crisis by decreasing housing availability and increasing prices. Municipalities should take steps to regulate these harmful effects. Potential policy solutions include instituting a hard cap on short-term rentals and outright banning them in select zoning districts.

LEADERSHIP'S POSITION ON ORGANIZED LABOR

BY: JORDYN HOULE

When elected leaders acknowledge the importance of organized labor in advancing workers' rights, **they send a message to working families that they are fighting for them and their ability to live dignified lives.**

One way elected leaders can show support for organized labor is by signing an ordinance or declaration expressing their continued support for working families. They can also post their labor-related issue positions on their website, Facebook, or Twitter. By publicly declaring their solidarity with the labor movement, local leaders demonstrate that workers are valued in their communities and that their concerns will be considered when making policy decisions. This can take various forms depending on the level of government. School boards, for example, could express appreciation for workers by integrating labor history into local curricula.

Moreover, local elected leaders can support unions by recognizing workers who choose to go on strike.

Instead of trying to stop strikes that occur within their cities, municipal officials should listen to striking workers' concerns and implement policies to address them. When the United Auto Workers (UAW) went on strike against General Motors in September 2019, local officials across



**BY BACKING UP
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the state supported the workers' demands for job security, higher pay, and better healthcare benefits. Elected officials, many of whom were

union members, met with striking GM workers to listen to their concerns and express solidarity with their cause.¹⁶¹ Local leaders should acknowledge and support their constituents when they fight for the pay, benefits, and working conditions they deserve.

Finally, one of the most important ways local officials can publicly support unions is by **passing legislation that strengthens workers' rights in their cities.** For instance, municipal leaders can advocate for and adopt policies guaranteeing workers a fair wage, paid leave, retirement security, and protection from discrimination.¹⁶² These policies, alongside countless others, are integral to ensuring that working people across Michigan are able to provide for themselves and their families. By backing up their public support for the labor movement with concrete action, local governments can show workers that they are prioritized.





PRO-LABOR POLICY EFFORTS

BY: KEITH JOHNSTONE AND ELIAS KHOURY

Working-class people make up a majority of the state, but often more financed and organized interests conspire in our statewide offices to prevent truly pro-worker legislation from being passed. Allies and champions fighting for the rights of working people are one of the labor movement's best assets. Michigan AFL-CIO Advocates recognizes that these leaders are vital to our movement.

Politicians can show their support for working families in a plethora of ways. They can, for example, vote for or propose legislation that directly helps workers and their families. These pieces of legislation could be taken

from the Municipal Solidarity Index or developed in tandem with local unions. Even if such pro-labor policies do not pass, politicians communicate their values by proposing and voting for them. They also force their colleagues to take a stand. This helps the labor movement identify friends and foes so that they can re-elect the former and unseat the latter. Aside from advancing positive measures, politicians can also stop bad ones. Municipal officials, for example, can speak out against legislation that hurts working people by passing resolutions calling out the state legislature. Under the Snyder administration, dozens of laws were

passed that hurt working families. These laws included HB 4052, also known as "The Death Star Bill," which preempts local governments from enacting local minimum wage ordinances and other pro-worker policies.

Lastly, local governments, in particular, can take steps to honor organized labor. United in struggle, unionized workers have won critical demands for economic justice. These include, but are not limited to, overtime pay, the weekend, an end to child labor, and the minimum wage. In exchange for their sacrifices, workers deserve recognition.

PARKS

Municipalities can dedicate public greenspaces to the memory of employees who died on the job. Workers Memorial Park in Jackson, Michigan is an example of this. It also honors frontline workers who put their lives on the line during the COVID pandemic.¹⁶³

HOLIDAYS

Tributes can also come in the form of holidays. Governments at the state and local levels could, for example, pass resolutions declaring a Workers Memorial Day. The labor movement has long honored this holiday in memory of their fallen heroes. Workers Memorial Day is typically celebrated on April 28th – the day OSHA went into effect. Starting in 2021, the state of Michigan began following the labor movement's lead. Since then, Governor Gretchen Whitmer has issued official statements acknowledging April 28th as Workers Memorial Day, honoring "the workers who have died, suffered injury, or are disabled due to workplace accidents."

SCHOOL CURRICULA

School boards can use their authority to require the teaching of labor history. This is especially important in states like Michigan, which have rich labor histories. For example, the famous 1936-7 Flint sit-down strike saw the UAW go from a collection of isolated locals to a major industrial force. This

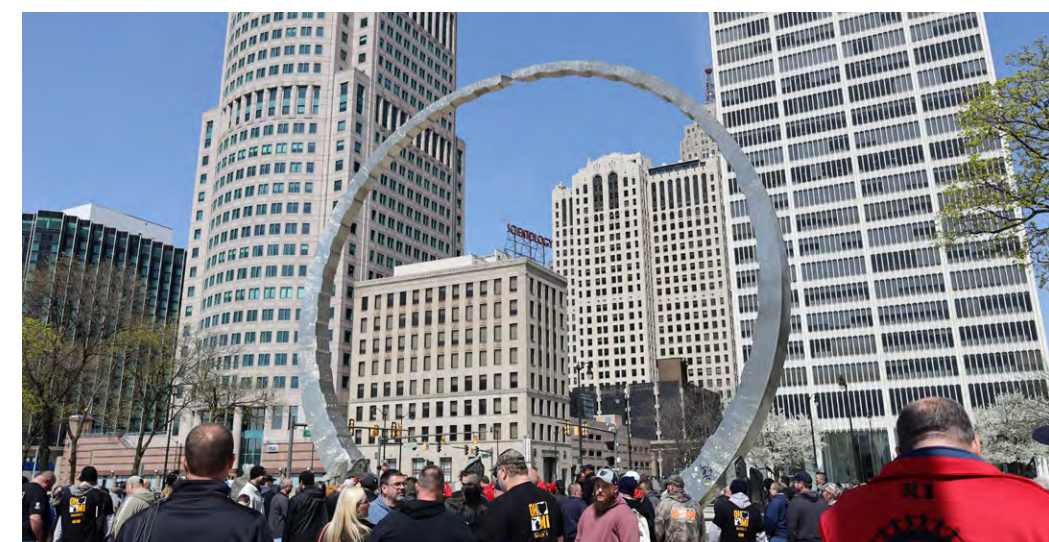
ALLIES AND CHAMPIONS FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF WORKING PEOPLE ARE ONE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT'S BEST ASSETS.

led to widespread unionization of the American auto industry.¹⁶⁴ Students ought to learn about these successes so that, one day, they too can further the cause of workers' rights.

In addition to covering notable strikes and unionization drives, lessons in labor history might also cover the basics of collective bargaining. Whatever topics teachers choose, this would be a huge step in the right direction. Ensuring kids understand organized labor and its history will help them affect positive change when they eventually enter the workforce.

MONUMENTS

Further, states and municipalities can erect monuments honoring organized labor. A landmark known as Transcending in Detroit, Michigan's Hart Plaza is an example. The Michigan Labor History Society began the project in 2000 and completed it just three years later. Today, Transcending



stands 63 feet tall and serves as a tribute to the sacrifices and hard-fought gains of Michigan’s labor movement. The monument was built thanks in no small part to generous financial contributions from groups like the AFL-CIO and UAW.¹⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

Local elected officials have the distinct opportunity to pass pro-worker policies in their local governments, especially in instances when the state is unwilling or unable to make important changes to help workers. If they can’t pass them, they have the opportunity and responsibility to propose them and push the envelope for the sake of working people and their families. Even if a pro-worker bill is rejected during a council or board meeting, elected officials who support the measure deserve to be recognized by the AFL-CIO and affiliated labor organizations for their efforts. Organized labor deserves to be recognized too. To that end, government officials can erect parks and monuments to honor the sacrifices made by unions and their workers. Officials can also designate holidays to honor those sacrifices and ensure kids learn about them in school.

Success Story: Workers Memorial Park, Jackson MI

BY: ELIAS KHOURY

In his last act as mayor of Jackson, Derek Dobies knew he had to do something big. So he did what any union man would -- honored the workers who make his city run. In November 2021, Dobies dedicated a newly opened community park to the “frontline heroes who put in the extra hours.”¹⁶⁶

Workers Memorial Park is fittingly located on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Of course, the late reverend believed strongly in organized labor’s power to liberate people from injustice. Workers Memorial is, therefore, a tribute to the brave workers fighting to finish what King started. One day before his assassination, Dr. King delivered this quote at an address to striking AFSCME union workers in Memphis:

“You are demanding that this city will respect the dignity of labor. So often we overlook the work and the significance of those who are not in professional jobs, of those who are

not in the so-called big jobs. But let me say to you tonight that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity and it has worth.”

Dobies hopes others will follow his lead and dedicate public spaces to working people. “Now is the time to honor those who keep our economies running,” he said. **“Workers have made so many sacrifices — especially**

during the pandemic. The least we can do is honor them. The next step is treating them with dignity and respect, paying them what they are owed, and improving conditions for all working people, no matter who they are or where they come from.”



Former Mayor of Jackson Derek Dobies stands next to the Workers Memorial Park sign, November 30th, 2021.

UNION-MEMBER ELECTED OFFICIALS

BY: LINDSEY HAUGHTON

Many of our most courageous elected leaders have come from within the labor movement. Working-class people know how the rules of the game are rigged — and union members understand that better than anyone. Union members know what it takes to stand up to power and how to enact policies that promote fairness on and off the job. Because of their experience, government officials who are also union members often enjoy immense popular support.

The Michigan AFL-CIO is committed to supporting and electing union members at all levels of government across the country. At least 964 union members were elected in the 2018 midterm elections nationwide.¹⁶⁷

UNION MEMBERS ARE POPULAR

Approval ratings of labor unions among the general public have improved over the last 10 years to 68% in 2021.¹⁶⁸ This is partly because union members tend to look like their communities. Just under half of all union members are women, and 65.4% are people of color.¹⁶⁹ Government is rather unrepresentative by comparison. White men are just 37% of Michigan's population but comprise 65% of Michigan's elected officials.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, though 13% of Michiganders are women of color, only

3% of Michigan's elected officials are.¹⁷¹

Many working people and union members lack the financial resources, flexibility, and time to run for office. This makes it even more critical for local governments to ensure union members are represented in local politics. No one understands everyday life better than workers. It is not enough to hope union leaders will decide to run for office. Local governments must set, and follow through on, well-defined goals to elect and appoint union leaders.

ALL ISSUES ARE WORKERS' ISSUES

Union members are particularly qualified to assist with many problems facing a community, including unfair labor practices, low wages, workplace safety problems, discrimination, and more.

Union elected or appointed officials would also bring union values to cities. Unions promote democracy and respect within the workplace. They practice solidarity and fight for what they believe is right. Union members are willing to fight for someone they don't know, whether standing in a picket line for hours in the hot sun or advocating for legislation and policies that support working people and amp-

NO ONE CAN REPRESENT WORKING PEOPLE BETTER THAN THEMSELVES.

lify their voices.

School boards would greatly benefit from the insights and perspective of working parents, who may have less time to participate in school board meetings or PTA but care deeply about their children's education. School board members with a union background, especially former teachers, can understand the needs of working parents, students, and teachers alike.

CONCLUSION

Our political and economic systems must address the complex issues impacting workers. Working people living under rules written exclusively by wealthier people is unacceptable. No one can represent working people better than themselves.

Local governments will receive points for this category based on whether or not they have any active or former union members as elected officials and whether they have gender and racial representation among their elected officials that are, at minimum, representative of their constituents.





SKILLED TRADES TASK FORCE

BY: MAHNOOR IMRAN

THE VALUE OF SKILLED TRADES

Many people believe the misconception that a 4-year college degree is the only way to attain a stable career and steady income. However, skilled trades careers in many fields provide workers with stable jobs they can raise their families on.

Given the demand for skilled trades workers nationwide and in Michigan, local governments would greatly benefit by connecting workers to sustainable, life-long careers. With emerging automation technologies and retiring baby boomers, there has been a steady decline in the number of people with the skills to fill these careers. In Michigan, employers will need to fill an estimated 545,000 skilled trade jobs by 2026.¹⁷² Unfortunately, the path to job training can be fraught with obstacles and difficult to navigate. In 2019, Governor Whitmer established the Going Pro campaign designed to elevate the perception of skilled trade jobs and help people invigorate their talents in that realm.¹⁷³ Governor Whitmer also signed an executive order creating the Michigan Workforce Development Board, whose goal is to ensure that Michiganders can acquire the necessary skills and credentials to secure jobs as the state recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷⁴

DETROIT SKILLED TRADES TASK FORCE

One effective way local governments can open the doors for more people to enter the skilled trades is to build a robust task force comprised of union representatives. These representatives will provide critical information about the different types of trades, apprenticeship readiness programs, apprenticeship application process, and career opportunities that exist for people at all points in their occupational journeys. Detroit launched a skilled trades task force that meets every month. In these meetings, union representatives coalesce to discuss vocational opportunities and facilitate a dialogue with the community about career progression. This meeting is led by the City Council President and features union representatives who specialize in a variety of trades, including, but not limited to, bricklaying, plumbing, pipefitting, electrical work, craftwork, ironwork, carpentry, and construction work. During these meetings, many community members often take the time to promote organizations that help with employment opportunities and share educational resources. The skilled

trades task force community provides networking opportunities, helps people seek guidance in their field of interest, and assists people with navigating application processes and employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Elected officials have an obligation to ensure the economic welfare of their constituents. Municipal governments are uniquely positioned to communicate with their communities about available training opportunities and job opportunities within the skilled trades. In doing so, local governments can help provide avenues to in-demand careers so that workers can support themselves and their loved ones.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

BY: ELIAS KHOURY

BACKGROUND

Airbnb and Vrbo may seem innocent enough, but they can seriously damage local economies. These short-term rentals decrease the availability of long-term units and often elevate housing prices to unsustainable levels. In most communities, the rate at which Airbnbs are created outpaces the rate at which new housing is constructed. Often Airbnbs take up older, affordable single-family homes. Simultaneously, newly constructed housing units are often just luxury apartments.

Suddenly, it's a challenge for families to afford housing. This forces working-class people to live far from where they work, costing them precious time and money spent on transportation. Firefighters, teachers, and the like should be able to live in the cities they serve. The impact of Airbnbs on hotel workers is particularly severe. Short-term rentals compete with hotels for visitors and often win. This can push the latter into financial insolvency, potentially leading to job loss among hotel workers. Luckily, their deleterious effects can be kept at

bay via sound, practical policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

State legislators, however, are working overtime to stop this from happening. Years ago, the Michigan House of Representatives passed legislation to preempt the regulation of Airbnbs by local governments. The bill would ban municipalities from adopting or enforcing any zoning code that would "have the effect of prohibiting short-term rentals."¹⁷⁵ State Representative Sarah Lightner defended this on the grounds that it supposedly protects "the private

property rights of Michigan citizens."¹⁷⁶ That, however, could not be further from the truth. Airbnbs have been shown to exacerbate the ongoing crisis of affordable housing. They make it harder for the average person to own property. Immunizing short-term rental units from regulation does not protect property rights. Instead, it leads to the concentration of property rights in fewer and fewer wealthier hands. This is anathema to the democratic and egalitarian principles that the labor movement holds so dear. Guided by the informed choices of their citizens, municipalities should have the right to regulate Airbnbs as they see fit. And communities across Michigan have done so with great success.

SAMPLE POLICIES

Mackinaw City, for example, places considerable limitations on short-term rentals and bans Airbnbs from select zoning districts. City officials were responding to "detrimental effects" such as "a reduction in affordable housing stock" and "loss of... parking spaces."¹⁷⁷

Similarly, in 2020, New Buffalo enacted a temporary moratorium on Airbnbs. At the time, the Lake Michigan town - whose population is under 2,000 - had already licensed 150 short-term rentals. New Buffalo imposed the moratorium in hopes of increasing housing affordability to keep people safe during the pandemic.¹⁷⁸

SHORT-TERM RENTALS, WHILE PERHAPS CONVENIENT FOR VISITORS, CAN SERIOUSLY HARM LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

CONCLUSION

Short-term rentals, while perhaps convenient for visitors, can seriously harm local communities. By reducing the availability of long-term units and putting upward pressure on rent, they exacerbate the affordable housing crisis. But good policies, such as those constraining short-term rentals to certain areas, can help combat these effects.



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP SCORING CRITERIA

Position on Organized Labor	Points	Points Available
Majority of elected officials regularly put forth press releases, social media posts, or other statements supporting workers, organizing efforts in their jurisdiction, and other pro-labor stances.	0	1
Majority of elected officials are willing to take meetings and work with unions and workers.	0	2
Majority of the elected officials regularly attend strikes, pickets, or other worker actions in their jurisdiction when invited.	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Pro-Labor Policy Efforts	Points	Points Available
Passes pro-labor legislation at a public meeting beyond those included in the Municipal Solidarity Index.	0	1
Publishes statements which condemn policies at other levels of government that hurt workers.	0	1
Passes policy that directly challenge unjust state law.	0	1
Litigates in defense of good labor policy, or against unjust state laws or actions in court — including as amicus curiae.	0	1
Creates a workers memorial park or celebrates Workers Memorial Day.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

Union Member Elected Officials	Points	Points Available
Has elected member that is a current or former union member.	0	3
Women and people of color are represented in proportion with population of district.	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 5	5

BONUS: Skilled Trades Task Force	Points	Points Available
Holds meetings at regular intervals with the participation of the local Building Trades Councils. Contain some union representatives who deal in a variety of the skilled trades and representatives from nonprofits such as the United Way. Provides informational material about relevant opportunities (e.g. flyers, pamphlets, opportunities, resources, etc.). Meetings allow time for other community organizations to showcase their services and provide informational material regarding their educational and employment-related programs (e.g. those assisting with mathematics to help people qualify for apprenticeship opportunities, those who can help people locate their GEDs if obtained in the past, etc.)	0	2
Helps coordinate programs such as job fairs, orientations, and experiences that provide the community members with exposure to careers. Appoints at least one youth representative who can provide information about relevant opportunities for students to engage with vocational training and gain early exposure to the skilled trades.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 3	3

BONUS: Short-Term Rentals	Points	Points Available
Bans short-term rentals in multiple zoning districts.	0	1
Places a hard cap on the number of short-term rentals allowed in jurisdiction.	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 2	2

FINAL SCORE	0 out of 15	15
FINAL SCORE WITH BONUS	0 out of 20	20

Required documentation includes copies of relevant city code and/or copies of press statements, resolutions, or social media posts. For more information about city selection, criteria, or the MSI scoring system, visit advocates.miaflcio.org. All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email advocates@miaflcio.org.



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SCORING CRITERIA

We recognize that not all local governments are created equal. Whether due to population size, budget constraints, untenable political situations, jurisdiction, or state laws, not every local government will be able to achieve every point in this index. That's why we've provided bonus points for ordinances that we consider more difficult to be able to pass or that are no longer able to pass.

Scoring will also be different for cities vs townships vs villages vs school boards. This will be reflected in the final scorecards. All scoring will be done in collaboration with Area Labor Federations (ALFs), Central Labor Councils (CLCs), and regional Building Trades Councils. We will take into account the size of the local government in the grading process.

MASTER SCORING CRITERIA

I. Municipal Operations

Municipalities have the unique responsibility of being an employer, contractee, and governing body. Local governments employ 5% of all Michigan workers. The employment and labor practice standards adopted by municipalities can have a resounding impact on Michigan workers and communities. It is crucial that they operate in the interests of their employees, citizens, and the local economy.

	Points	Points Available
Responsible Contractor	0	6
Strong Labor Access Standards	0	6
Health and Safety	0	3
BONUS: Existing Prevailing Wage Ordinance	0	3
BONUS: Anti-Privatization Ordinance	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 20	20

II. Fairness

Every municipality must make a conscious commitment to uphold the human rights and equality of their workers. Workers deserve to work in an environment free of discrimination, whether it be based on sexuality, gender, race, or disability. Policies that display values of justice and fairness are essential so workers from all backgrounds can thrive and succeed.

	Points	Points Available
Paid Leave (Family, Medical, Sick)	0	6
Equal Pay Ordinance	0	5
Fair Chance Ordinance	0	4
BONUS: Disability-Inclusive Hiring	0	4
BONUS: Non-Discrimination Policy	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 20	20

III. Economic Opportunity

Local governments have a duty to support workers and promote economic opportunities for their constituents. As many workers face financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our state's outdated laws make it harder for workers to get back on their feet. Local governments can strengthen their workforce and local economies by implementing policies that support workers in their economic ambitions.

	Points	Points Available
Buy U.S. / Union	0	5
Pre-Apprenticeship Program	0	5
Community Benefits Ordinance	0	5
BONUS: Living Wage for Municipal Employees	0	4
BONUS: Collaborate with United Way	0	1
SCORE	0 out of 20	20

IV. Economic Development

Local governments should be concerned about quality economic development for the sake of their citizens' well-being. Municipalities ought to subsidize and incentivize the creation of full-time jobs that pay livable wages and provide healthcare benefits if they're going to be giving tax breaks to corporations and businesses.

	Points	Points Available
Economic Development Disclosure	0	5
Job Creation Quality Standards	0	5
Clawbacks	0	5
BONUS: Inclusive Housing	0	1
BONUS: Pro-Worker Cannabis Policy	0	4
SCORE	0 out of 20	20

V. Political Leadership

Elected officials should express public appreciation for organized labor and work as advocates for the rights of workers to collectively bargain. They should stand with workers and serve as a constant reminder within the legislative system that workers' rights matter. This includes solidarity vocally and through actions such as proposing pro-labor policies. In addition, they can educate the community about pre-apprenticeship programs and other opportunities within skilled trades.

	Points	Points Available
Position on Organized Labor	0	5
Pro-Labor Policy Efforts	0	5
Union Member Elected Official	0	5
BONUS: Skilled Trades Task Force	0	3
BONUS: Short-Term Rentals	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 20	20

FINAL SCORE

0 out of 75 75

FINAL SCORE WITH BONUS

0 out of 100 100

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