



Center for Michigan Progress, Results and Long-Term Plan

The Center for Michigan

- Non-profit, non-partisan “think-and-do-tank”
- Why “think-and-do”? Because thinking without doing is pointless and doing without thinking is folly!

WHO'S INVOLVED

- 10,500 statewide citizens
- 585 Community Conversations
- 100 Founding Champions (statewide leaders who launched the campaign)
- Three dozen philanthropic, corporate and individual investors
- ONE bipartisan, common ground agenda for Michigan
- Run by nonprofit, non-partisan Center for Michigan.
- Staffed by diverse regional conveners.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- 10,000+ "Community Conversation" participants statewide (20 people at a time. Representative of all of Michigan).
- 9,500+ "Fresh Thoughts" newsletter subscribers receive weekly news about economic development, education, reforms, and success stories that come from tipsters in Community Conversations.
- 100 candidate meetings for 2008 state House elections.
- 200 candidate meetings with 2010 state House and Senate candidates – 200 candidate videos posted to www.MiVote.org
- 65,000 viewers for televised state House debates in 2008.
- 11,000 Michigan quality of life scorecards & citizen toolkits distributed statewide.
- 18,000+ copies of the 2010 Citizen Agenda distributed statewide.
- 14,000 citizen photos collected in EnvisionMichigan contest.
- Regular breakfasts and town hall policy forums for citizens and leaders alike in Lansing. Topics: budget & tax reform, education & talent, corrections reform, local government cooperation, young professionals.



PURPOSES OF MDM

Michigan's Defining Moment: one of the largest attempts ever to gather a shared citizen vision for Michigan's best future and develop a bottom up, common ground action plan to bring that vision to reality

- **Citizen Engagement:** Thousands of diverse, statewide residents learning about and discussing Michigan's challenges & opportunities.
- **"Common Ground" Agenda Setting:** Electronic voting and deliberation results in a far-reaching, "common ground" public agenda for a more prosperous Michigan.
- **Action:** Citizens and emerging leaders take action. We amplify the "common ground" agenda thru conferences, legislative breakfasts, candidate forums and TV debates, online petitions.



Why 2010? Why 10,000?

- 2010 is a watershed election – the entire executive branch and 70% of the legislature will turn over.
- The 2010 Citizens' Agenda represents nothing less than a playbook for voters and candidates alike in this election year, not taken from the partisan platforms of either political party or special interest groups but from a process of deliberative democracy undertaken by citizens who care about the state as a whole.
- The citizens who built this agenda did so because they share a belief that even in this time of deep political skepticism and economic upheaval, they can be effective in helping to transform our state.



Citizen Engagement/Audience Participation

What is your vision for Michigan?

How do we get there – what are the action steps?



Community Conversation Results: Three Principles for Michigan's Future Prosperity

1. Economic Growth & Quality of Life
2. A Talented, Globally Competitive Workforce
3. Efficient, Effective & Accountable Government



Community Conversation Results: Ten-Point Action Plan to Get There

1. Create a More Business Friendly, Entrepreneurial Environment.
2. Overhaul the Michigan Tax System for the 21st Century.
3. Build on Michigan's Distinctive & Competitive Assets.
4. Change How & What Schools Teach.
5. Transform Education Operations and Funding.



Community Conversation Results: Ten-Point Action Plan to Get There

6. Hold Educators, Parents & Students to Higher Standards.
7. Hold Politicians – and Our Citizen Selves – More Accountable.
8. Extend or Repeal Term Limits.
9. Execute Transparent & Strategic State Budgets.
10. Intensify Consolidation & Service Sharing in Local Government.



Top Action Steps – Accountable Government

- Lengthen or repeal term limits – *single most mentioned action step across 585 Community Conversations*
- Educate citizens & encourage civic engagement
- Make legislators accountable & government more transparent
- Reform political campaigns and lobbying
- Reduce partisanship through legislative reforms (unicameral/nonpartisan legislature, legislator training, best practices)
- Pass annual balanced budgets with transparent, strategic priorities and clear intended outcomes
- Cut pay/benefits for legislators/public employees
- Intensify consolidation & service sharing in local government



Top Action Steps - Education

- Improve the K-12 curriculum
- Recognize the importance of and invest in pre-K development and education
- Expand classroom time by extending school days and school years
- Improve K-12 and pre-school funding
- Make college more affordable & invest in higher education (including community colleges)
- Consolidate/encourage collaboration among districts
- Intensify involvement of parents in kids' education
- Help all students succeed (drop out rates, social promotion)
- Improve teacher training (includes professional development & raising qualification)



Top Action Steps - Economy

- Link education to the jobs of the new economy
- Improve the entrepreneurial environment & culture
- Make it easier to do business by streamlining regulation
- Foster alternative energy and green economy & jobs
- Create a focus/strategic thinking for our economy
- Encourage growth of health care industry
- Invest in and grow mass transit & transportation industry
- Simplify the tax code & reform Michigan's tax incentive system
- Cut business taxes
- Promote tourism & invest in innovative state branding
- Improve infrastructure, reuse land, urban revitalization
- Transform/retool manufacturing and the auto industry



The Success Stories

It isn't all bad news, when asked what was working well in their communities, participants responded overwhelmingly –

- Quality of Place
- Pre-K – 16 Education
- Entrepreneurialism
- Lifelong Learning



A Sampling of Success Stories

- **Cutting the red tape in Brownstown** - planning, economic development and billing services are a one-stop shop which helped to recruit an \$8.5 million plant with 300 new jobs to the area as well as opening GM's new Brownstown Battery Pack Assembly Plant - the country's first lithium ion battery pack manufacturing plant operated by a major automaker.
- **Huron Valley Schools** are the 24th lowest funded out of 28 in Oakland County, however: The district's three high schools have significantly increased online learning, which provides more opportunities without a lot of additional expense. The technology has allowed dual-enrollment of college courses for some kids, and remedial work for others. Two years ago, the district launched its Grad 100 program, a K-12 initiative aimed at ensuring that every graduate has the skills to be successful, whether they go on to a career, military, college, vocational school, or other type of training.
- **Filling cavities in Battle Creek** - Calhoun County Community Dental Access Initiative's Dentists' Partnership was formed three years ago to provide a comprehensive dental safety net in Calhoun County. The 35 dentists in the program donate dental services such as cleanings, fillings, extractions, x-rays, dental supplies, and in some cases, other specialized services. In return, the patients must first volunteer in the community four hours for every \$100 of treatment. Patients have donated over 12,300 hours of community service.



INSPIRING CHANGE – concrete state-level outcomes from our work

- 1) The Freshman Bipartisan Caucus: Our outreach to legislative candidates during the 2008 election led to a **first-ever bipartisan caucus** in the Michigan House. The caucus is sinking its teeth into big-picture policy issues such as state budgeting practices and term limits reform.
- 2) Beginnings of Corrections Reform: In 2008, we helped form a coalition of business, education and nonprofit groups concerned that unchecked growth of spending on prisons would displace other important budget priorities. Our work led directly to a **\$30 million saving in the 2010 budget**. More generally, it has placed corrections reforms front and center on Lansing's agenda.
- 3) Lengthening the school year: In March, 2009 we issued a report, "School Daze: Michigan's Shrinking School Year", which documented how more than 90 percent of local school districts have fallen well below the informal national standard of 180 days of annual instruction. Lansing's reaction was swift. **Legislators passed new budget language requiring districts to quit cutting additional days from the school calendar.**
- 4) Improved Links Between Citizens and Elected Leaders: More than 1,500 people have attended "Action Group" conferences, sessions devoted to following up in detail some important topics raised in community conversations. And in March 2010, MDM participants sent more than 200 emails in six hours urging the legislature to approve funding for the Pure Michigan tourism advertising campaign. Funding was approved that same afternoon, with Lansing insiders reporting the email campaign was crucial.



Happening Now

Truth Squad

Most of us are sick and tired of partisan, below and belt and simply inaccurate political ads. We're doing something about it through the Michigan Truth Squad. We've hired two respected journalists to investigate the claims (sometime dubious, sometimes correct) in this year's political advertising. And we'll call foul on bad actors ... and point out when candidates play it straight. The fouls are plentiful – check them out or help tip us off to the fouls you've found at www.michigantruthsquad.com.



Happening Now

Online Citizen Petitions

A lot of community conversation participants expressed a wish to take a direct stand on some of the big issues facing our state. Our online citizen petitions offer a way to make citizen concern into Lansing priorities. At MichiganPetitions.org you can sign your name to three citizen pleas for action on term limits and tax and budget reform. The goal is to gather thousands of signatures and take them to Lansing to greet incoming legislators and the new governor in 2011.



Happening Now

Great Debates 2010

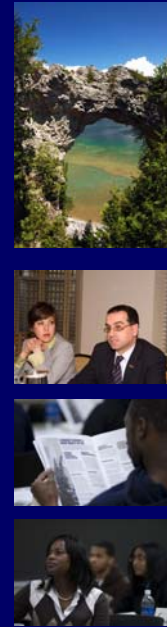
Sponsored by 20 interest groups ranging from the AFL-CIO and MEA to the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and Business Leaders for Michigan, the Great Debates offer gubernatorial and legislative candidates a chance to set out their views in a civil, policy-focused setting moderated by nonpartisan, experienced journalists. 2 gubernatorial debates have been held and 50 legislative debates will be taped after the primary.

In partnership with www.MiVote.org 200 legislative candidates were interviewed on the Citizens' Agenda – watch the interviews online!



What You Can Do To Transform Michigan

- 1) Spread the Citizens' Agenda – take copies home with you to share with the engaged and non-engaged in your community. If you can distribute at least 50 copies, we'll deliver them to you!
- 2) Sign an online reform petition
- 3) Join the Truth Squad
- 4) Hold a "Great Debates" viewing party (gather your friends and neighbors to watch the candidates on your ballot.
- 5) Stay informed with the Center for Michigan eNewsletter (sign up today!)



CENTER FOR MICHIGAN BEYOND 2010

Three long-term missions for an enduring, differentiated, civic-driven, non-profit institution:

- **Engage.** Continue to recruit and inspire statewide residents to the tough tasks of citizenship.
- **Report.** Launch and grow publications to fill the void left by the ever-declining coverage of state and local government by traditional media. Continue to probe and promote citizen values of economic diversification, quality of life, education, and government accountability.
- **Lead.** Provide common ground space and discussion for citizens, interest groups, and elected leaders of both parties to brainstorm long-term policy solutions and move Michigan aggressively toward a prosperous future.



Audience Participation

Questions?



THANK YOU!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

–Margaret Mead

