

# IMPACT



## Lawmakers Have a Chance to Fix Michigan's Licensing Laws

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**“THE MACKINAC CENTER IS ONE OF THE ONLY ORGANIZATIONS OUT THERE DEDICATED TO PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR RETURNING CITIZENS.”**

— *Gary Wozniak is the president and CEO of RecoveryPark, a Detroit-based nonprofit dedicated to helping those with barriers to employment find jobs. Read his story on page 12.*

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Come Up The Long Way

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The text is overlaid on this background.

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# Races are Won at the Finish Line

Flush from the 1942 British victory at El Alamein, having defeated Rommel in Egypt, Winston Churchill said: "Now, this is not the end. No, it is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

I thought of this statement all summer.

As you know, advocates for freedom of association celebrated the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* this June. With that ruling, the court affirmed that the First Amendment protects 5 million public employees from financially supporting a union against their will.

It is important to take stock of significant victories and to acknowledge those who, like Mark Janus, secured the win. But it would be a grave mistake to assume that a significant victory — in this case, a Supreme Court decision — is the final word.

We learned this lesson after Michigan became a right-to-work state in 2013. The Legislature passed, and Gov. Rick Snyder signed, historic legislation. Unions wasted no time mobilizing a resistance. Steve Cook, then president of the Michigan Education Association, announced the union would use "any legal means" to collect money from school employees, and the union deployed multiple strategies to do just that. Union officials renegotiated school contracts to require dues for another 10 years, they insisted members could only resign in August, and they harassed those who stopped paying dues through shaming and hiring collection agencies. In the first year after right-to-work was enacted, the MEA boasted that only one percent of its members had left the union.

Once we recognized that union obstruction would prevent employees from exercising their rights, the Mackinac Center launched a legal and educational campaign that

secured the free association rights of tens of thousands of employees.

**MICHAEL J. REITZ**

So what are the relevant lessons in a post-Janus world?

Even before the Supreme Court took up that case, the Mackinac Center recognized that a good decision would be an empty victory if it wasn't vigorously enforced at the state level, and we began preparing for this moment. Today, Mackinac Center policy experts are analyzing the reverberations of the ruling, our marketing team is educating workers about their options and our litigators are challenging the illegal barriers unions have raised (most recently in New Jersey).

The effort to expand worker freedom will require persistence. Michigan's right-to-work law has required years of work to ensure the rights of employees since its enactment. The MEA's membership is now down 30 percent, demonstrating that many workers prefer not to financially support a union.

A winning effort increases the number of allies. Mackinac Center supporters can be proud to have enabled us to work with leaders across the country who are responding to the Janus ruling.

Worker freedom is not a one-state solution; accomplishing lasting government neutrality in labor relations requires that the same idea is adopted in other states. Michigan can be a leader in labor reform, but the work will be more enduring if it spreads to states like California, Illinois and New Jersey. In short, it's time to move beyond the end of the beginning. ■

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JOHN LAPLANTE Editor

ILIA ANDERSON Designer

**1** PINCH  
COLOR BERRY

**2** KNEAD  
THE BAG

## The Margarine Debate Spreads Lessons to the Paid Sick Leave Mandate

Supporters of a mandate to require employers to grant paid sick leave gathered enough signatures to put the question on the ballot. Legislators, in turn, voted to enact the mandate themselves. They did so not because they wanted the mandate — though some did — but rather so that they could amend or repeal it later. Passing a voter initiative so it can be amended later is a strategy legislators have used as far back as the margarine debate of 1948.

Yes, there was a margarine debate in 1948. Butter producers had long before convinced Congress to tax margarine — including a larger tax for margarine that was colored yellow. Michigan went further and banned the sale of colored margarine. Margarine manufacturers responded by selling their product with a vial of food coloring for people to mix in themselves. That minor inconvenience made butter, the more expensive product, a little more attractive. (Butter producers, by the way, could use food coloring with impunity.)

Margarine producers eventually convinced federal lawmakers to eliminate the taxes, helped in part by farmers that grew the plants whose oils became margarine. The coalition took the fight to the states that had tighter restrictions, including Michigan.

Michigan's dairy-supporting Republican Legislature was not interested in repealing the colored-margarine ban. So the coalition decided to pursue an "initiated law" to repeal it. Initiated laws allow residents to bypass the Legislature and enact laws themselves by collecting enough signatures to put the question on the ballot for popular approval.

The Legislature does have a role in this process. The Michigan Constitution gives it the power to pass an initiated law when election officials certify that supporters have collected enough signatures. But in 1948, if the law had gone on the ballot and been approved by voters, the Legislature could not have amended it. (This was later changed. Initiated laws can now be changed with the support of three-fourths of both legislative chambers.)

The rule about not amending initiated laws gives legislators a strong incentive to pass them, even when they don't like the content. And Republicans in 1948 thought so, too, and lawmakers allowed the sale of colored margarine by a vote of 86-7 in the House and 21-7 in the Senate.

Some lawmakers then wanted to exercise their power to reverse their recently passed law. But it was tough because then-Gov. Kim Sigler, also a Republican, wanted people to be free to buy colored margarine, so he opposed repealing the new law. So the dairy industry launched its own ballot question and collected enough signatures to put the issue on the ballot. It lost and Michigan residents were free to buy yellow margarine instead of having to mix it up at home.

So we've been here before. Since the margarine debate, reluctant legislators have approved several other initiated laws so they could preserve their ability to change the eventual outcome. When supporters gathered signatures to eliminate the state's burdensome and complicated Single Business Tax, the Legislature enacted the law and then passed an equally burdensome

and complicated Michigan Business Tax. Lawmakers then voted to increase it.

Lawmakers have the authority to amend the paid sick leave mandate. And they should consider using it. The mandate is expensive — it will cost employers at least \$2.3 billion. It will have unintended consequences, like putting downward pressure on wages. It will disrupt the natural conversation that employers should have with employees about what benefits they want. And it may be an unfunded mandate upon local governments that could cost taxpayers as well.

There are problems with the way the current law is written. It can allow employees to "no-call, no-show" with impunity. Workers can interpret even a reminder from their employer as "retaliation," and file a complaint. Any further action taken by an employer can result in the employee being granted "a rebuttable presumption of a violation" by the courts. This means that, depending on the employee's interpretation of what happened, an employer could be subject to court costs, double damages, and a fine of up to \$1,000.

Most employees already receive paid sick leave benefits. Lawmakers should consider repealing the new mandate or at least amending away some of its obvious problems. As the old margarine debate shows, they have the authority to amend or even repeal laws brought forth by voter initiatives. They should use it. ■

James Hohman is the director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center.





MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
CORRECTIONS

JOB  
APPLICATION



# Two for Two on Hiring Former Offenders

## Michigan avoids a bad policy and embraces a good one

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder made headlines in October when he announced that people with a criminal history would no longer be required to disclose it on an application for a job with the state government.

While applicants will eventually need to discuss past offenses with their potential employer, the governor hopes that delaying the question will help more people get a foot in the hiring manager's door.

While the move is characterized as part of the “ban the box” movement that has been adopted by many states, it differs from it in one crucially important way. Snyder removed the “Have you been convicted of a felony?” checkbox on state government job applications only; he didn't require all Michigan employers to follow suit. It's a distinction worth keeping in mind when we talk about employment. Voluntarily delaying the discussion of criminal history until later in the hiring process is also known as “fair chance hiring.” Mandating that policy is “banning the box.”

Both the fair chance hiring and ban-the-box concepts have been gaining steam, but the latter is more controversial — for good reason. The rationale behind ban-the-box is that prisoners re-entering society are less likely to reoffend if they have stable work, so it's good for public safety to ensure that they get hired, even if it means telling employers they can't use initial applications to ask about past criminal behavior.

Although many offenders commit only minor offenses, employers' reluctance

is understandable. Former offenders are more likely to have engaged in violent, dishonest or antisocial behavior in the past than non-offenders and are more likely to engage in it again (although this likelihood decreases over time). After unsuccessfully encouraging employers to give former offenders a fair chance, advocates of ban-the-box got their proposal passed into law in about half the states.

They may have been well-intentioned, but, as is often the case, asking the government to interfere in the employer-employee relationship backfired.

States that have banned the box have increasingly observed that the policy is having the opposite of its intended effect. Rather than helping former offenders get jobs, this policy was minimally helpful for them, and it actually harmed the employment prospects for black and Hispanic men with clean records.

It's easy to explain this disparate impact on racial minorities. When employers are determined to weed out applicants with a criminal history but aren't allowed to screen for it, they screen for things they think are a proxy for it, like race or income. So they reject applicants with less education, certain kinds of names, or addresses in certain low-income areas, inadvertently disqualifying many law-abiding candidates.

Michigan avoided this outcome in 2015 by banning ban-the-box: It forbade local

governments from telling employers what they could or couldn't ask on job applications, leaving an exception for jobs where a statute specifically forbids people with a criminal history from working. Employers who wanted to screen out former offenders could do so, and other employers who wanted to practice fair chance hiring could do that. Now, three years later, the governor has modeled fair chance hiring by opting to remove the box for his potential employees in the state government, a move that was preceded by years of Mackinac Center commentary on the link between smart criminal justice reform and workforce development. This was the right move and just one of the reasons why Michigan is quickly becoming a national leader in safe, effective corrections and criminal justice administration. ■

Kahryn Riley is the director of criminal justice reform at the Mackinac Center.

**KAHRYN  
RILEY**

# Welcome New Staff Members to Our Team



## LINDSAY KILLEN

In November 2017, Lindsay Boyd Killen made the journey from Tennessee to Michigan to join us as our **vice president for strategic outreach and communications**. Killen brings over 10 years of experience in marketing, policy and communications and is a great addition to lead the department.



## DON ORRICO

Based in Florida, Don Orrico serves as a **regional director of strategic partnerships** and joined the Mackinac Center in August 2018. Orrico brings several years of fundraising experience from his time at the James Madison Institute as its director of major gifts.



## HOLLY WETZEL

Holly Wetzel joined the communications team as **communications coordinator** in December 2017. You may remember her from our intern group in 2017, when she also worked with the same team. We are thrilled to have her back and running our social media and other media relations activities.



## ASHLEY KEIMACH

Our regular IMPACT readers will recognize Ashley Keimach, now in her new role as **external affairs coordinator**. She is responsible for building relationships with our coalition partners, strengthening current partnerships and identifying new ones, and finding opportunities for collaboration. Keimach will be working closely with David Guenther, senior strategist for state affairs, working to provide stories that will lead to good policy.



## JOE MILLIGAN

Joe Milligan is a **regional director of strategic partnerships** at the Mackinac Center and joined the advancement team in summer 2018. Before taking on this role, he helped found and directed a research and educational policy institute in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and was a key leader in raising money for the organization.



## MORGAN SHIELDS

The newest member of the Mackinac Center team is Morgan Shields, our **legal counsel and director of Workers for Opportunity**. Shields received her law degree from Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, where she also served as an adjunct professor for several years.





# An Old School Conservative Who Got Started in Mackinac's Early Days

Sue Campbell is a mother of four, widow of Calvin Campbell, (Dow Chemical's first legal counsel), professional real estate agent, and supporter of the Mackinac Center since its founding. Campbell was raised in a politically divided household where matters of policy were rarely discussed, but she became active and outspoken on such matters anyway. She maintains an eclectic collection of social circles and an interest in big ideas, both of which started when she was a young adult. Today, she regularly participates in a book club and writes letters to the editor in her hometown. The Mackinac Center is proud to have her as one of the newest members of its Legacy Society.

Campbell's passion for liberty began in the early 1950s at the University of Michigan, where she found herself learning very little as an economics student and being instructed by a communist professor. The views of this prominent professor, combined with those of a radical leftist who taught labor law, prompted her to independently study free-market ideas and theories. Classes in the business school opened her eyes to the free market, the importance of competition and principles that lead to true progress.

Upon graduation, she moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with her then-husband, Dale Biggs and eventually to Midland, Michigan. The couple soon became closely networked with Northwood University during the school's early years, and they

belonged to an economics study group there. It was through that group that she met Orval Watts, John Pafford, David Fry and Larry Reed, all affiliated with the university. (Reed went on to become the Mackinac Center's first president; Pafford is on its Board of Scholars.) The ideas of the



free market and an independent laboratory of ideas aligned naturally with her, and she has been supportive of the Mackinac Center ever since its inception more than 30 years ago.

Campbell now enjoys spending as many summer days as she can at her cottage on Lake Charlevoix and in her garden in Midland. With her city council tenure and most of her board service days behind her, she remains civically active in her beloved Midland. Her family, including

her four children, are widespread, residing in Florida, Tennessee, and Washington state. She is pleased to have one son and daughter-in-law in Midland, which affords her the opportunity to see two of her grandchildren regularly.

She is an active supporter of local, state, and national efforts to defend and advance freedom. The Mackinac Center has earned a special place on her priority list and in her heart. "You, the Mackinac Center, approach ideas logically, not emotionally and the current information, publications, and engaging events are invaluable. I appreciate how you have reached out way beyond our community and into the state and national scene."

If you would like to learn more about how you can defend recent victories and advance timeless free-market principles today, or if you would like to make a lasting impact by joining or learning more about the Legacy Society, please call 989-631-0900. Caleb Hortop or a fellow member of the advancement team would be happy to share more and welcome you to our growing network. ■



**Blanca  
Chabi**



**Mike  
Grennan**

# Lawmakers Have a Chance to Fix Michigan's Licensing Laws

JARRETT  
SKORUP

One of the biggest issues the Mackinac Center has focused on over the past few years is occupational licensing laws. Here's why we care so much about these rules and what lawmakers are doing about them.

Licensing requirements are meant to enforce occupational rules that someone must abide by to get a job.

That's a key thing to understand. For the vast majority of jobs out there — about 80 percent in Michigan — people work for themselves or someone else with no specific mandates from the government. This does not mean they aren't subject to regulation. Most engineers, for example, aren't licensed — but their work is still regulated. Restaurateurs and cooks don't need an occupational license, but they are still subject to health inspections. Tree trimmers aren't mandated to take college classes, but they might still need a bond.

There are lots of ways to regulate. We believe that rules should be fair, specific and lead — not merely promise to lead — to better health and safety outcomes.

In occupational licensing, the government regulates the process rather than the results. For example, the state of Michigan requires someone who builds a deck for pay to take 60 hours of classes and pass a test. There is no guarantee that it

will actually lead to better deck building. As someone who builds decks, I can say from experience that I learned by working with experienced builders (much like an apprenticeship) rather than book work. And what makes sure decks hold up? The reputation of the builder — who has an incentive to do a good job — and the inspections that towns subject them to. (I have dug a lot of 48-inch holes for deck footings over the years).

Right now, a little more than 20 percent of the workforce is subject to licensing rules. And many licenses on the books don't make sense. For many occupations, Michigan requires a license where most states do not. For others, our regulations are out of whack with common sense. (Why do makeup artists in cosmetology shops need more training than those who work on film projects?)

In addition, most licenses block people who have committed a crime from working — even misdemeanors are taken into account — without enough thought to whether they have been rehabilitated. And how better to rehabilitate someone back into society than through a job?

These rules are standing in the way of Michigan citizens trying to find work. People like:

- **Blanca Chabi**, a hair braider trying to earn an honest living running Blanca's Braids in Garden City. Chabi had a shampoo bowl in her shop, not knowing that doing so in Michigan

requires a cosmetology license, which requires tests, years of training and hundreds of dollars in fees. She was fined by the state.

- **Austin Loose**, who owes thousands of dollars for schooling to earn a certificate he will never use. He sailed through massage therapy school, but a learning disability caused him to struggle with the final test required for a state license. While other states allow massage therapists to work without heavy state regulations, Michigan requires 500 hours and an exam. Austin and his twin brother Login went to school and graduated together; Login got his license and is working in the field while Austin cannot.
- **Dr. Jan Pol**, a veterinarian in rural Michigan and former reality TV show star on the National Geographic channel. Pol saved the life of a dog that had been hit by a car, to the delight of its owners. But after the feature on Pol was broadcast, an out-of-state vet reported him for not wearing the proper surgical attire and failing to provide a warming pad to the dog. The state licensing board tried to take away his license after fining him and putting him on probation, but it was overruled by a court.
- **Mike Grennan**, a carpenter whose past criminal activity restricts him from getting a license to do contracting work. Grennan can work



for other people or on jobs billed for less than a certain amount of money, but can't work for himself.

Thankfully, state lawmakers are working on the issue. House bills 6110-6113 have passed the state House and are in the state Senate. This bipartisan package would make it easier for ex-offenders to get licensed. While nobody should be forced to hire someone with a criminal record, it shouldn't be illegal to give them a chance.

House bills 5955-5965 would preempt local governments from adding regulations above and beyond state rules. That's a commonsense step that would make it easier for people to take their license from city to city.

Other bills which are just as important have been introduced, but they have not moved yet. House Bill 6114 would require the state to review the occupational licenses on the books to determine if they make sense. And Senate Bill 340 would raise, from \$600 to \$3,000, the

amount of work handyman contractors could do before being subject to licensure requirements. That amount hasn't budged for decades. Adjusting it for inflation would give more individuals the chance to bid for lower-value projects.

To learn more about our work on this important issue and watch a video featuring the individuals negatively affected by current laws, visit [mackinac.org/licensure](http://mackinac.org/licensure). ■

Jarrett Skorup is the director of marketing and communications at the Mackinac Center.

# Spotlight: Gary Wozniak

In the late 1980s, Gary Wozniak was serving three years in federal prison. The former stockbroker was convicted for using the money of his clients to support his drug addiction.



As part of his sentencing, Wozniak forfeited his licenses to work in finance. After getting out of prison, the forfeiture and his criminal background prevented him from getting licensed in many other areas. And no private employer would give him a shot.

"When I got out of prison, I couldn't even be hired to sweep a broom in a nursing home because of state regulations," Wozniak said. That remains the case today, 30 years later.

For too many people, this story would follow a typical path. No job. No financial resources. Part-time or off-the-books employment. Perhaps a regression back to drugs and other illegal activity. Then back to prison.

But not for Wozniak. After being turned down for work again and again, he decided to go into business for himself. He worked briefly as an intake counselor for a Detroit-based drug treatment program before becoming one of the first franchisees for Jet's Pizza. He eventually started seven different businesses and volunteered to help others in Detroit clean up their lives.

His business and community work eventually combined, and today he runs RecoveryPark. This latest business includes a 50-acre plot in the city of Detroit that grows crops for local restaurants. It's part of his nonprofit that focuses on hiring people with challenging backgrounds — often those with special needs or a criminal background.

"Tomatoes don't care if you can't read or write," he told Model D media. "They don't

care if you're coming out of prison. They're basic skillsets you can teach anybody, and you get immediate feedback from growing."

The business doesn't just provide jobs; it's revitalizing the neighborhood. Wozniak has worked to clean up blight in the area and put the land to more productive use. And there's clearly a market for his services, as demand has continued to grow.

While he's doing what he can in the private sector to help people get back on their feet, Wozniak believes lawmakers need to do more to help. In September 2018, he testified in support of a package of bills that would make it easier for those with criminal backgrounds to find work. **(Page 10)**

While businesses have been slowly embracing the idea of second chances, state government needs to do it as well. Wozniak knows the obstacles that a criminal background can put in front of citizens. That's why he joined the Mackinac Center and other organizations in testifying in support of legislation to make it easier for people to find work and rehabilitate themselves. ■



Sarah Hodson is one of our most recent partners. Read her story in the 2018 September/October issue of IMPACT at [mackinac.org/s2018-05](http://mackinac.org/s2018-05)

## Get Engaged

As part of our outreach efforts, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy is building a program focused on bridging the gap between concerned citizens across the state and those who make policy decisions in Lansing. Its purpose is to create an opportunity for community leaders, activists and everyday heroes to come together to engage more deeply with our mission to make Michigan freer and more prosperous. Partners in the program have the opportunity to help us host an event, testify in front of the Legislature, co-author an op-ed, find other people of influence to join the program, and much more.

Our two most recent partners in this effort are Gary Wozniak, founder and

CEO of Recovery Park; and Sarah Hodson, who was featured in our last IMPACT magazine.

Wozniak first partnered with the Center as a donor and has since helped us by collaborating with Kahryn Riley (director of criminal justice reform) and testifying before the Legislature. Hodson engaged with the Mackinac Center on these issues after we interviewed her and her children about their unconventional education at a cyber school. She is a fierce advocate for choice and decided to join us in our efforts to create a brighter future for Michigan's children.

The Mackinac Center believes that people who people come together to share

their perspectives on how government regulations are affecting their lives can be the key to bringing about much-needed change. In the new year, we will officially launch this volunteer-based partnership program, which will equip individuals around the state to be a part of a growing support network for freedom-based policies in our communities and the Capitol. If you are interested in being a part of launching this exciting program or would like more information, please contact Ashley Keimach at [keimach@mackinac.org](mailto:keimach@mackinac.org). ■





ILIA KATE  
2013



# Time for Michigan to Bring Democracy to Government Unions

Public employees deserve to have a choice and a voice in who represents them in the workplace.

**F. VINCENT  
VERNUCCIO**

Unfortunately, once workers vote to unionize, the union becomes like an heirloom passed down from one generation of employees to the next.

Unlike grandpa's old typewriter that is stored in the closet — long past its prime but unobtrusive — these entrenched unions are still an force, with their monopoly on representing all employees both new and old. Worse, chances are slim to none that new employees will have a say or a vote on this representation.

In fact, fewer than 1 percent of public employees ever had the chance to vote on the union that represents them. Even more stark, in the 10 largest school districts in Michigan, it's likely that 75 percent of the teachers were not even born when the union organized their school. This is because most government unions organized shortly after Michigan approved public sector collective bargaining in 1965.

The vast majority of public employees have never had a say on which union represents

them, and they still must accept representation, whether they are union members or not. This

remains true even in a right-to-work state and after the recent ruling in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which prohibits public employees from being fired for not paying union fees.

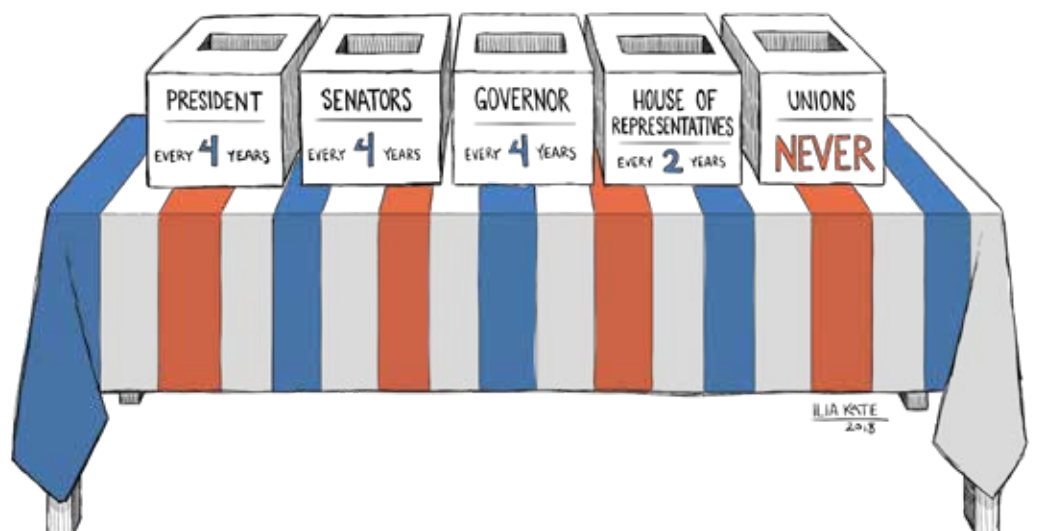
The time is now to give more power to public employees and give them the right to vote on whether to keep the union at their workplace or vote it out.

Worker Voting Rights, otherwise known as union recertification, has already been passed in Missouri, Florida, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

The idea is popular: 83 percent of voters and 78 percent of union households support the idea of requiring a union to stand for reelection and seek the support of workers.

Michigan should be the next state to embrace union democracy and ensure that all workers under a public union contract have a say in which organization represents them. ■

F. Vincent Vernuccio is a senior fellow with the Mackinac Center.



# Mackinac Center Events



Sept.  
7

## Michigan Safety & Justice Roundtable

Success is more likely when different sides work together. That's one takeaway from September's Michigan Safety and Justice Roundtable, which was held in Detroit. The two-day event was hosted by the Mackinac Center, as well as the Michigan League for Public Policy, the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice and the Hudson-Webber Foundation.

The roundtable's participants came from across the political spectrum to discuss solutions to some key issues in criminal justice. Participants included lawmakers, educators, attorneys, law enforcement officials, advocates and policy experts. Kahryn Riley, director of criminal justice reform at the Mackinac Center, spoke at the event, which addressed many issues she has tackled, including occupational licensing and cash bail. ■



Sept.  
13

## "Little Pink House" Screening

To what lengths would you go to save your home from being taken by the government? For some people, it means going all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

Nearly 40 supporters and students attended a private screening of the film "Little Pink House," held by the Mackinac Center at Hillsdale College. The compelling film, based on the life of Susette Kelo, tells the story of how far a nurse from Connecticut was willing to go to save her home from eminent domain.

When a pharmaceutical company decided to build a plant, the city gave the New London Development Corporation the power of eminent domain. This allowed the NLDC to take privately owned land from homeowners to give it to be used for private development.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Kelo v. City of New London* was one of its most controversial rulings. The court ruled against Kelo and her neighbors, ultimately forcing them to give up their property.

Patrick Wright, vice president for legal affairs at the Mackinac Center, spoke after the movie screening and answered questions from the audience.

"The court ruled under the Fifth Amendment that economic development can be considered a 'public use' in the eyes of the law," said Wright. "It's important to note that while Susette Kelo may have lost the case, she won in the court of public opinion. As evident by the film, her story to fight for her property continues to impact the public to this day." ■

Sept.  
20

## Q&A with FCC Chairman Ajit Pai

Mackinac welcomed Ajit Pai to Lansing in September. Pai, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, talked with Jarrett Skorup, director of marketing and communications at the Center, for a breakfast Q&A.

While most regulators advocate for a stronger government presence, Pai has taken a different approach. His belief in a “free and open internet” helps guide his decisions. His talk emphasized how he favors free-market competition and has worked to limit the bureaucracy and heavy regulation that has been a legacy of the FCC.

The most high-profile issue Pai has tackled to date is the Open Internet Order, commonly referred to as net neutrality. When asked why the FCC got rid of it, Pai said that the prior regulations were holding back investment and innovation in networks.

Pai also talked about robocalls (the No. 1 source of consumer complaints to the FCC), the telecommunications standard 5G and the expansion of the internet to rural communities. ■



Ajit Pai speaks at a Q&A session in Lansing.

Sept.  
25

## Issues & Ideas: Bail Reform

The Mackinac Center was pleased to once again partner with the ACLU of Michigan at September’s Issues and Ideas forum. Kahryn Riley was joined by Heather Garretson from the ACLU of Michigan to discuss how improving Michigan’s current practice of bail will benefit defendants and taxpayers.

Both Garretson and Riley presented their latest research to an audience of legislators, staffers and others interested in criminal justice reform. The research emphasized the importance of preserving a safe and civil society by making bail affordable for defendants. Reforms may not be too far away. A few weeks after the event, a package of bills was introduced in the Michigan House to implement some of the recommended reforms. ■



Kahryn Riley, director of criminal justice reform at the Mackinac Center.



For more information on upcoming events or to watch video replays of past ones visit [mackinac.org/events](https://mackinac.org/events)



# Mackinac Center Experts at State Policy Network's Annual Meeting

The Mackinac team was well represented at this year's State Policy Network Annual Meeting, which took place Oct. 9-12. Set in beautiful Salt Lake City, Utah, this annual meeting was a great opportunity to connect with friends and colleagues from around the world who share a vision of a freer nation.

Lindsay Killen, vice president for strategic outreach and communications, was a presenter on a panel discussing Medicaid expansion. She also moderated a panel on how and when to take your issue campaigns to the national level.

Michael Reitz, executive vice president, was part of a roundtable discussion on "building a coalition to shine a spotlight on government." Reitz is on the board of the Michigan Coalition for Open Government and explained how, through the use of the Freedom of Information Act, the public can play a part in holding government accountable.

Several members of Mackinac Center staff have gone through SPN's Generation Liberty Fellowship Program, which seeks to inform and prepare those newer to the network as they begin their careers in liberty. Ashley Keimach, an alumna of GLE, was asked to speak on a panel on how new participants in the program could get the best experience out of SPN's annual meeting.

Policy guides, a recent Mackinac Center project, were on display at our booth in the networking lounge. These publications seek to explain different areas of policy in Michigan, from occupational licensing reform to fiscal responsibility to energy policy, complete with illustrations and artwork for easy comprehension. ■



Lindsay Killen



Michael Reitz, center



Visit [mackinac.org/policyguides](http://mackinac.org/policyguides) to view and download digital versions.



Lindsay Killen is the vice president for strategic outreach and communications at the Mackinac Center.

# How We Respond to Our Environment in the New Year

What trends, opportunities and threats will advocates of liberty face in the coming year and decade? That's a question I worked through recently at a meeting with leaders in the think tank world of State Policy Network. Equally important, we considered, how do we prepare for those developments?

In other words, how is the sociopolitical world changing, and what must our organizations do to maintain our successes — or better yet, build on them? This question is always apt, but especially after an election that ushers in new leaders, some of whom may alter the expectations for policy reforms for years to come. If the trend in politics moves toward bigger government and less individual freedom, the easy response would be to say “no.” But our principles are more important than the political fortunes of any individual or party. They're also inclusive; they do not rely on any one demographic group maintaining or achieving power; and they deserve our best efforts to see sociopolitical challenges as opportunities to work smarter and harder.

So as we look toward the start of the last year of this decade and welcome new leadership in Michigan government, what trends should we prepare for?

The Pew Research Center recently explored several areas of sociopolitical change. Three of them, in particular, give Mackinac opportunities to shape the future:

## 1. Millennials are more liberal but less likely to affiliate with a party.

The Mackinac Center has always advanced principles over politics and encouraged a vibrant intellectual

debate over the issues. If partisan identity is less important to millennials, that is good. We can work with them to build a community of people who seek innovative answers to complex problems, regardless of party.

## 2. Americans are increasingly disengaged from religious institutions.

As a Christian who firmly believes that individual liberty is birthed from our God-given rights, it would be easy for me to see this development with alarm. Yet the Mackinac Center's policy solutions are built on principles that are grounded in both secular and religious terms. The principles of free enterprise can unite diverse coalitions of people.

## 3. Nearly 50 percent of children now live in a single-parent household.

I talk frequently about the “success sequence,” a concept I borrow from the Georgia Center for Opportunity. Simply put, access to a good education and gainful employment leads to stronger families, which can reverse multi-generational poverty and give people what they need to thrive. During our 30 years, the Mackinac Center has worked for increased access to educational opportunities and employment, particularly for the vulnerable and neglected. We will continue to share this compelling narrative with Michiganders.

In short, the next year and decade will require us to examine our assumptions, change the ways we communicate, and pursue our mission with nimble steps and a heart full of optimism. ■

## BY THE NUMBERS OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

125,000

Estimated number of jobs excessive licensing rules cost Michigan every year

\$10,400,000,000

Amount Michigan citizens pay in higher prices from a loss of competition because of licensing rules

1,500

Amount of flight hours federal licensing rules require for commercial airline pilots

1,500

Amount of hours Michigan licensing rules require to legally shampoo hair

# Come Up The Long Way

Do you remember the first asset you purchased that grew in value? How about the first time you realized your wealth had increased because you had made a good investment decision?

The satisfaction that comes from good decisions can be as strong as the satisfaction that comes from a job well done.

Do you also remember the first time you had to pay capital gains tax? For any friend of the Mackinac Center, that was probably a very different feeling!

Fortunately, the tax code makes it possible for you to experience the gratification of making good investment decisions while avoiding the exasperation of sending more tax dollars to Uncle Sam.

By making a gift of an appreciated asset before it is sold, you can take a full tax deduction on the increased value while also forgoing the capital gains tax.

The Mackinac Center regularly receives direct transfers of securities and periodically has accepted gifts of real estate, jewelry and other real property.

Most recently, Robert Forgette, a supporter from the Upper Peninsula, made a significant gift of stock. He said that he chose the Mackinac Center for his extraordinary gift because he “came up the long way” and doesn’t want other citizens in



**JIM WALKER**

Michigan to be under unwarranted government pressure.

There was a sense of pride in Robert’s voice when he said, “came up the long way.” In other words, he worked his way up the ladder, starting near the bottom. One great attribute of the United States, he suggested, is that

coming up the long way is considered a badge of honor.

In this issue of IMPACT, my colleagues have laid out many ideas they have developed to help people make and keep more of their own money. In other words, the policy changes we recommend make it possible for more people to have the opportunity to come up the long way. They can have the satisfaction and dignity of a job well done, and of seeing their own assets appreciate in value.

Your gift of an appreciated asset before the end of 2018 would make a symbolic statement that you also grasp what it means for someone to have the chance to come up the long way. ■

Jim Walker is the vice president for advancement at the Mackinac Center.

If you have any questions about making a gift of securities or other assets, please contact us today. It’s easy to make a gift of stock electronically. Call **989-631-0900** and ask to speak to an Advancement representative or send an email to Lorie Shane at [shane@mackinac.org](mailto:shane@mackinac.org).