



Restoring Public Trust in State Government

Community Conversation Issue Guide • 2016 - 2017

#MiVoice

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Introduction

Welcome to this Community Conversation!

Welcome! Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to participate in this Community Conversation. We are the Center for Michigan, a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization. This is our seventh statewide public engagement campaign since 2007. Today, you join more than 40,000 people Michigan residents so far who have participated in this form of citizenship!

Today's conversation will focus on your trust in state government, and what it would take for you to feel better represented by our elected state leaders. Public opinion polls, such as the annual State of the State Survey¹, show that the Michigan public's trust in our state government is low, and has been dwindling for years. Crises in some of our largest cities have raised questions about the ability of state government to address the needs of our communities. We'll be electing national, state, and local leaders in November 2016, and some Michigan residents are wondering how much their vote matters when partisanship and special interest groups take up so much room in our political landscape.

Today, your voice DOES matter. It matters a lot. You are one of more than 3,000 Michigan residents taking part in discussions just like this one across the state over the next year. We will be gathering your feedback on the biggest barriers to your trust in Michigan's state government, your ideas and priorities for actions that would help restore your trust, as well as examples of current government programs or initiatives that help improve your trust. Where we find common ground among the problems and potential solutions you share, we will amplify your ideas to state leaders, so they know what it will take for them to improve or restore public trust in government.

Leaders Are Listening

And we know that leaders respond to the results of these conversations. The findings from previous Community Conversations provided public momentum for state leaders to:

- Approve the nation's largest expansion of public preschool for three years running.
- Toughen certification tests for new teachers.
- Approve deeper state investment in the "Pure Michigan" marketing campaign.
- Improve the state's evaluation system for teachers.
- Reform state business taxes.
- Institute reforms to save taxpayers \$250 million in state prison costs.
- Stop the backslide of the traditional 180-day K-12 school year.

The results from each of the Center's previous Conversation campaigns can be found on our website, thecenterformichigan.net/community-conversations/.

Your Voice Matters

The Center for Michigan is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, supporting no specific policy, politician, or party. We pledge to serve as your bullhorn to our state's leaders.

Trust in state government

Let's get started

Our conversation today will focus on three important topics:

- Trust in public services delivered by state government
- Trust in Michigan's elected officials and the political process
- Your ideas for improving both state government services and Michigan politics

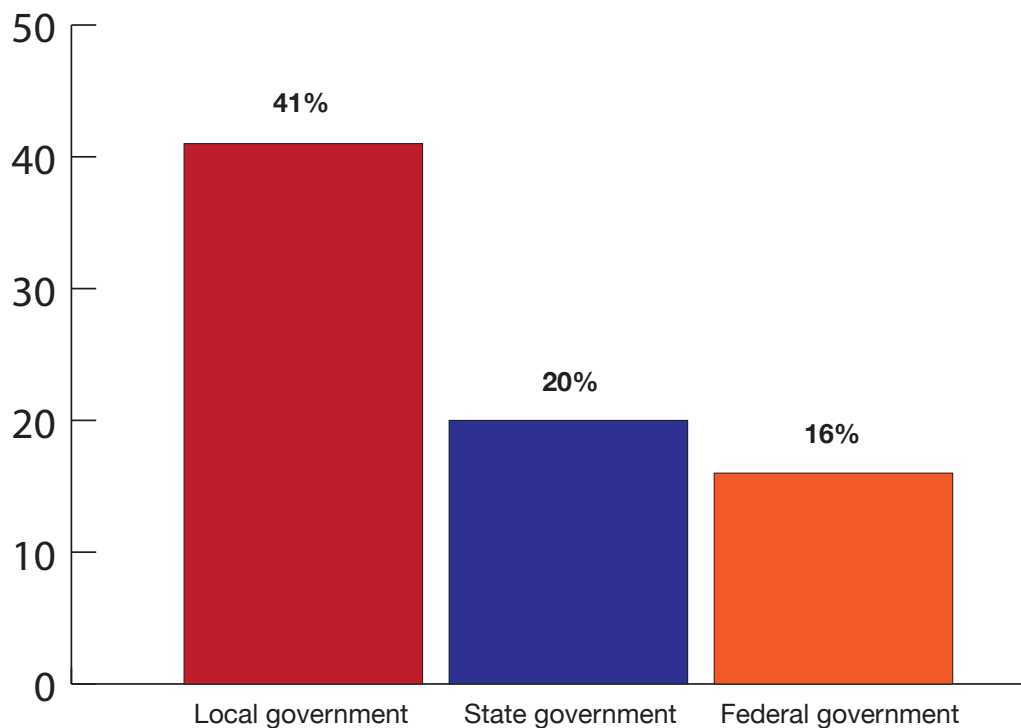
This guide will serve as your road map for today's Community Conversation. It contains:

- Researched, nonpartisan information on state government's functions.
- Outlines of options for improving trust in state government's ability and effectiveness, with pros and cons for each.
- Guiding questions for open discussions throughout this meeting.

Public trust in state government is low, and dropping.

One in five Michigan residents say they trust state government "most of the time." Twice as many as say they trust local government most of the time².

Trust the government "most of the time"

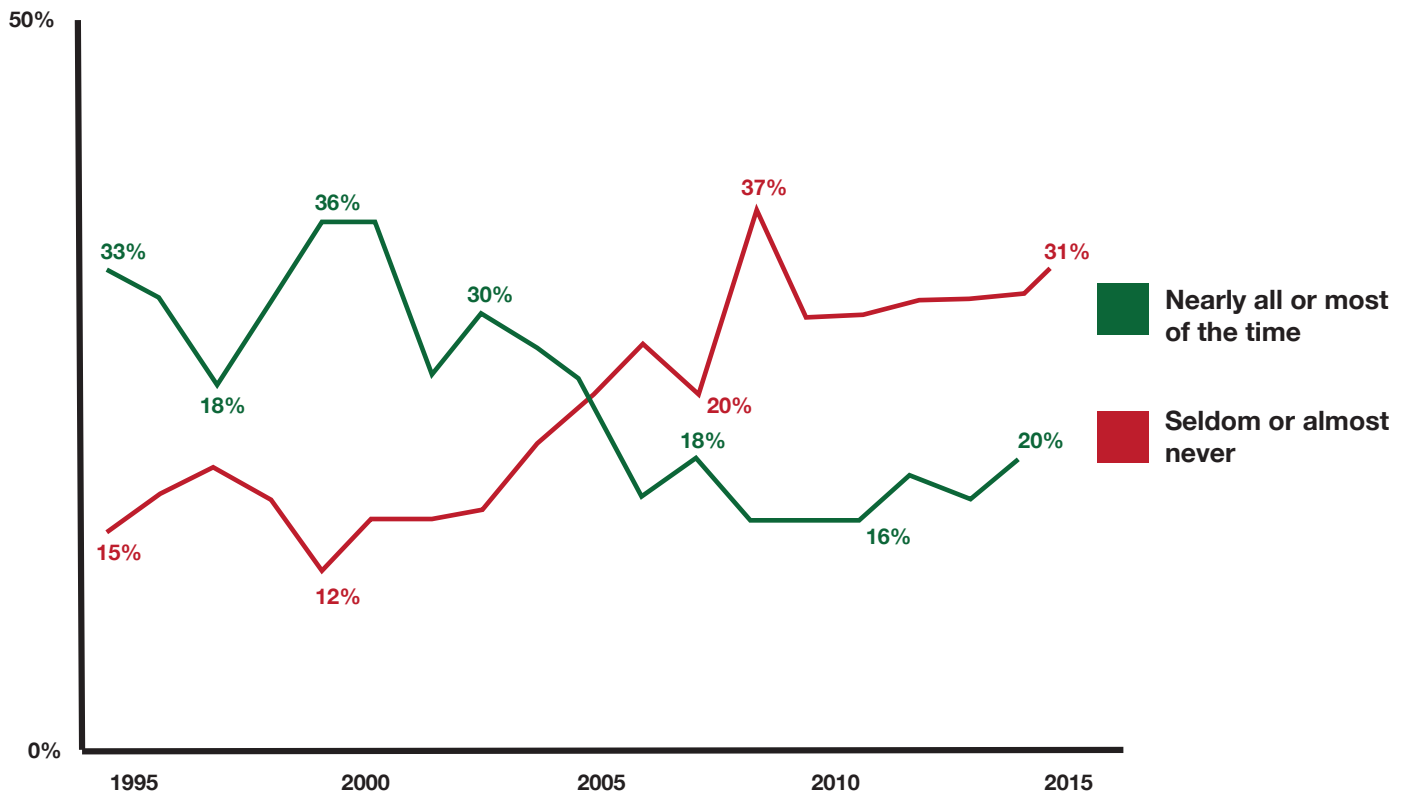


source: State of the State survey, MSU 2015

Trust in state government (continued)

More than 30 percent of Michigan residents polled in 2015 say they trust state government seldom or almost never – double the number who felt that way in 1995³.

How much do Michigan residents trust state government?



Source: State of the State survey, MSU, 2015

Michigan residents are happier with local government services than state services.

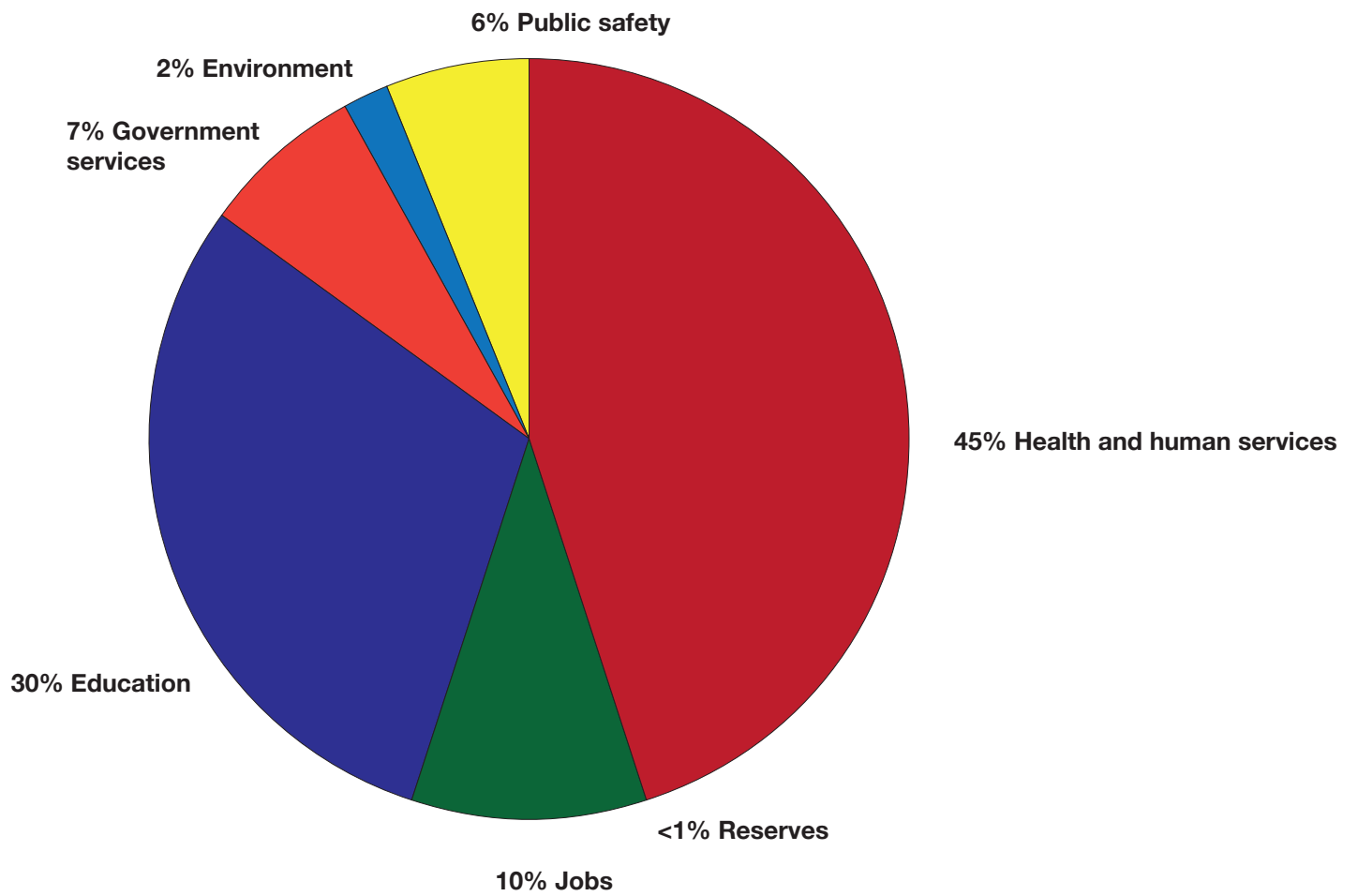
Local services include:

- Community-specific services such as trash pickup and snow removal
- Maintenance of rural roads and municipal streets (92 percent of Michigan roads)⁴
- Local police protection, fire departments and county jails

State services include:

- Public education
- Highways (8 percent of Michigan roads)⁵
- State police and prisons
- Environmental protection and regulations
- Public health protection and licensing

Where Michigan spends its money



Source: Gov. Rick Snyder executive budget, 2016-17

State government services

The quality and quantity of services provided to the public by the state has a big impact on building and maintaining trust between the government and citizens. Here are five major areas in which state services touch the lives of Michigan residents.

Oversight of K-12 and public higher education

The state funds and maintains an education system that offers support to residents from preschool through college. The state funds preschool to low- and moderate-income families, K-12 public schools (funded and regulated by the state but operated at the local level). The state also funds 30 community colleges and 15 public universities, and job training programs. Policies and operations of public universities and community colleges are set by the individual institutions.

Protection of public health

The state provides public health protection through disease monitoring and prevention and health promotion (such as education efforts to decrease infant mortality), preparedness and management of disease outbreaks, licensing and regulating medical and insurance professionals and institutions, drinking water and air quality safety regulation, and oversight of food and restaurant safety (such as restaurant inspections). Some of the activities associated with public health include prevention of environmental health hazards; prevention and control of diseases; development of health care facilities, agencies, and health services delivery systems; and regulation of health care facilities. While the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not provide direct health care services, it works with the legislature to set state policy related to Medicaid services and funds the health care services received by people who are eligible for Medicaid.

Protection of the environment

The state administers programs that ensure Michigan's residents, tourists, and businesses benefit from our natural resources. Many environmental regulations and standards are established at the federal level and delegated to the states to implement. Through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the state is in charge of programs that

monitor and regulate air and water quality, state parks and hunting and fishing regulations.

Providing services for low-income residents

There are a range of services the state provides to our neediest citizens. Many of these programs are funded largely by federal investment and operated with state policy and staff. For example, citizens may receive assistance with health care through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). They also may receive cash assistance through the Family Independence Program or food assistance through efforts like SNAP, WIC, and school lunch programs. There is a child care subsidy, programs promoting access to affordable housing, foster care and Child Protective Services. Michigan also offers tax credits for low-income families such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the home heating credit.

Fostering economic growth

The state works to promote economic development in a number of ways. The state sets tax policy that can encourage or discourage business development. The state Department of Talent and Economic Development is in charge of efforts to attract businesses to Michigan, efforts to grow existing businesses, and efforts to develop the talent of the workforce. The agency provides incentives for businesses to locate in Michigan, helps connect startup firms with the capital needed to grow, and works to help Michigan firms fill open positions with Michigan workers. The agency also promotes the state through efforts like the Pure Michigan advertising campaign.

The state is also in charge of infrastructure such as state roads and bridges, maintaining – 9,700 miles of roads with a designation of “I,” “M” or “US” through the Michigan Department of Transportation⁷; shipping locks, rail lines, the electrical grid, and water and sewer regulation.

State government services discussion questions

- Why do you feel confident in the state's ability to deliver your most trusted services?
- What, specifically, could state government do to improve your trust in their ability to carry out services in your top priority area?
 - What do you want them to do?
 - Who is responsible for making this change?
- What additional ideas do you have for improving public trust in state government services?

Fostering representative government

How our representative government operates – from how we run elections to who is elected to how long they stay in office, can build or tear down trust between our elected officials and the citizens they serve. Here are five major areas in which policies impact how representative government works in Michigan.

Emergency managers

When Michigan cities and school districts are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, Michigan law allows the state to step in to avoid financial calamity. This is done through the appointment of an emergency manager by the governor. Emergency managers have authority over a wide range of decisions, including budgets, hiring and firing and contract negotiations.

Michigan's current emergency manager law was passed in 2012, soon after voters voted to eliminate the former emergency manager law. In 2014, 17 cities and school districts are in some phase of the emergency manager process.⁸

The issue

Because they don't answer to voters, emergency managers can make unpopular decisions such as cutting services or laying off employees that they deem necessary to put

the school district or municipality back on firm financial footing. But it is an undemocratic process, taking control of local government from the people who live there.

Some emergency managers have been criticized for their performance, including emergency managers in charge of Flint when the city water supply to the Flint River, and those in charge of Detroit Public Schools over the course of a decade.

What's it like elsewhere?

About 20 states have some mechanism that allows the state to take control of a local entity. Among those states, Michigan has an emergency manager law that is more far-reaching than most.⁹

Which, if any, of the following ideas for improving the state emergency manager system would most improve your trust?

1. Eliminate the state emergency manager system. Leave fiscally troubled local governments to figure out their own problems or go bankrupt.
2. Reduce or eliminate local fiscal crises by providing more state funding to local governments or giving them more ability to raise taxes.
3. Provide more checks and balances in the law so that decision-making is balanced between state-appointed emergency managers and locally elected officials.
4. None of these. Reforming the state emergency manager system is unnecessary to improve my trust.

Fair representation

REDISTRICTING

Redistricting is the process of changing electoral lines, typically performed by states after a Census to balance the population of districts. In recent decades Michigan has redrawn congressional district lines when the state has lost congressional seats. Michigan has also changed lines of its state legislative districts.

The issue

Redistricting can be contentious because lines can be drawn to favor a political party.

What's it like elsewhere?

Michigan is one of 24 states in which the legislature has primary responsibility for redistricting for both Congressional districts and state legislative districts without at least potential input from a redistricting commission.

The redistricting process varies in other states, with some states relying on independent, nonpartisan commissions to draw district lines.¹⁰

What does research show?

Districts drawn by independent commissions tend to yield closer elections. Closer elections give voters on both ends of the political spectrum a chance to influence elections, and make politicians more responsive to their constituents as a whole, not just their partisan base.¹¹

Pro: Redistricting to favor one political party over another, often called gerrymandering, can lead to representation that doesn't match the overall electorate.

In Michigan, the Republican Party was in control of the Legislature and the governor's office in 2011 when legis-

lative districts were redrawn after the 2010 Census. In the 2014 elections, Republican candidates for the state House of Representatives received 49 percent of votes, and won 57 percent of House seats.¹²

Democrats do it too: After Democrats drew Congressional districts in Illinois, Democrats won 55 percent of the vote in 2012, but won 67 percent of the Congressional seats.¹³

Con: Michigan is far from alone in giving state legislatures the power to draw electoral maps. Gerrymandering often creates some strongly partisan districts for both Republicans and Democrats. If voters elected more of one party than another to the Legislature, why shouldn't that party make decisions about district boundaries?

TOP TWO (OR JUNGLE) PRIMARIES

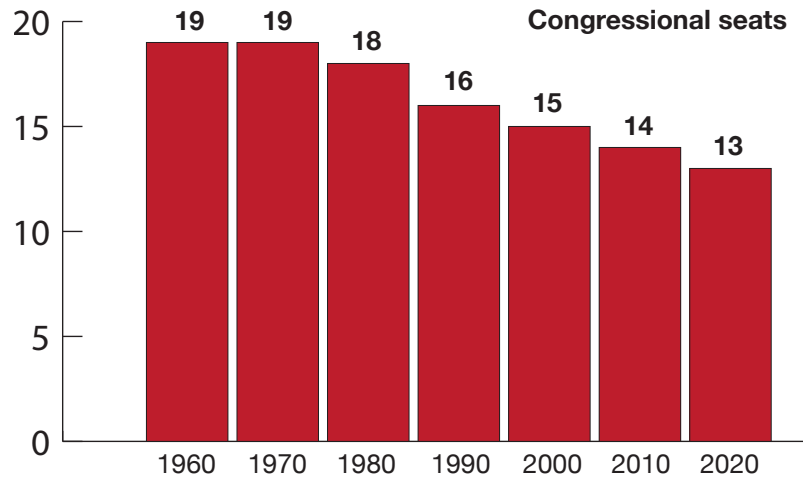
States that have blanket primaries, sometimes called jungle primaries, allow primary election voters to cast ballots for any candidate in any party, with the top-two vote-getters advancing to the general election even if they are both from the same party.

What's it like elsewhere?

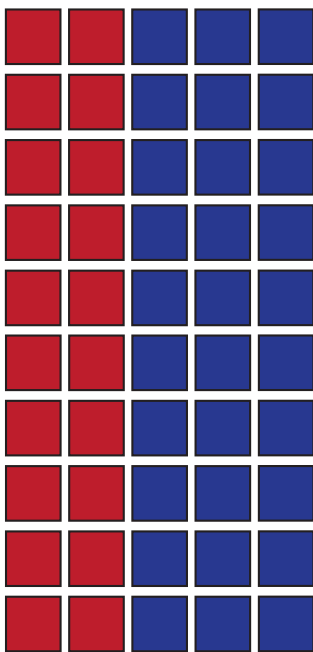
Instead of using redistricting reform to address one-party-dominated districts, Louisiana, Washington and California and Nebraska have top-two primaries. Such primaries allow voters of a minority party to cast ballots in the general election for the remaining candidate who most closely reflects their views, which can mean the election of more moderate candidates. For example, in California in 2012, seven congressional districts had two Democrats face each other in the general election, and two congressional districts where two Republicans faced each other.¹⁴

Michigan clout diminishes

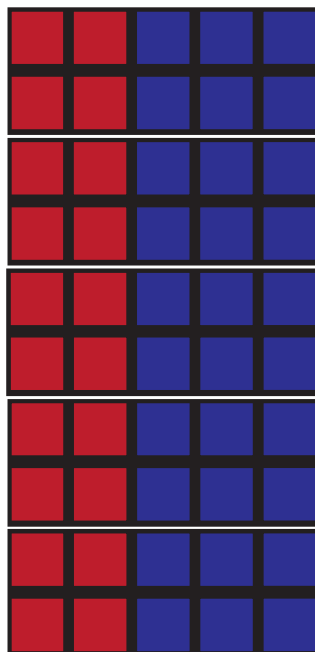
As Michigan's population has not kept pace with the growing South and Southwest areas of the country, the state has continued to lose Congressional seats each decade. The tepid growth experienced so far in the 2010s indicates the state will lose another seat in 2020.



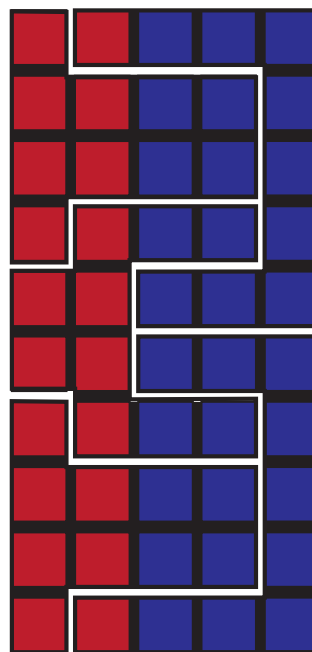
Redistricting



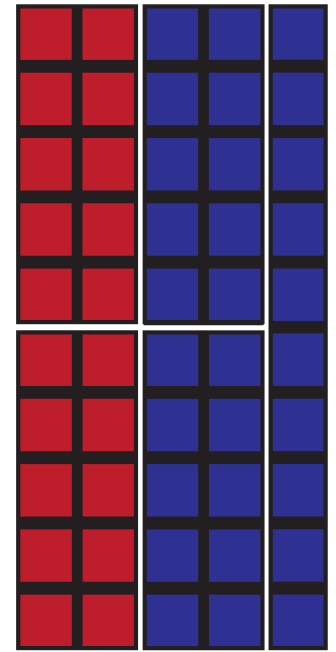
50 PRECINTS
60% BLUE
40% RED



5 DISTRICTS
5 BLUE
0 RED
BLUE WINS



5 DISTRICTS
3 RED
2 BLUE
RED WINS



5 DISTRICTS
2 RED
3 BLUE
BLUE WINS

Which, if any, of the following ideas would most improve the fair representation of Michigan residents in the state legislature?

1. Reform how legislative districts are drawn.
2. Create top two primaries.
3. None of these. Reforming Michigan's election processes is unnecessary to improve my trust.

Fair representation (continued)

VOTER ACCESS

In 2014, the most recent general election, 41.6 percent of registered voters cast ballots in Michigan. In 2012, the most recent presidential election, 63 percent of voters cast ballots.¹⁴

The issue

Should Michigan enact policies to encourage increased voting, such as additional voting days, no-reason absentee voting or mail-in voting or election-day voter registration?

What's it like elsewhere?

Voter turnout in 2014 ranged from 28.7 percent in Indiana to 58.7 percent in Maine.¹⁵ Michigan's voter rate is in the middle of the pack.

Michigan is one of 13 states without early voting and requiring an excuse to vote absentee; 27 states allow both early voting and no-excuse absentee voting.

Three states, Oregon, Washington and Colorado, have gone to 100 percent mail voting, and all have above-average voter participation.¹⁶

Fifteen states allow election-day registration, allowing citizens to register to vote the same day they cast ballots. Four of the five states with the highest voter turnout in 2012 allow election-day registration.¹⁷

GUARD AGAINST ELECTION FRAUD

Making sure votes are counted accurately and that only those who are registered to vote cast ballots, are issues of election security.

Michigan has a voter photo identification requirement at polls. Voters must show a government-issued photo ID (such as a driver's license or passport); those without a photo ID can sign an affidavit saying they are not in possession of a photo ID to vote.¹⁸

Michigan also has outdated voting machines that election officials say are a "catastrophe waiting to happen."¹⁹ In Michigan's presidential primary in March, some Detroit precincts registered zero votes because memory cards failed.²⁰

The issue

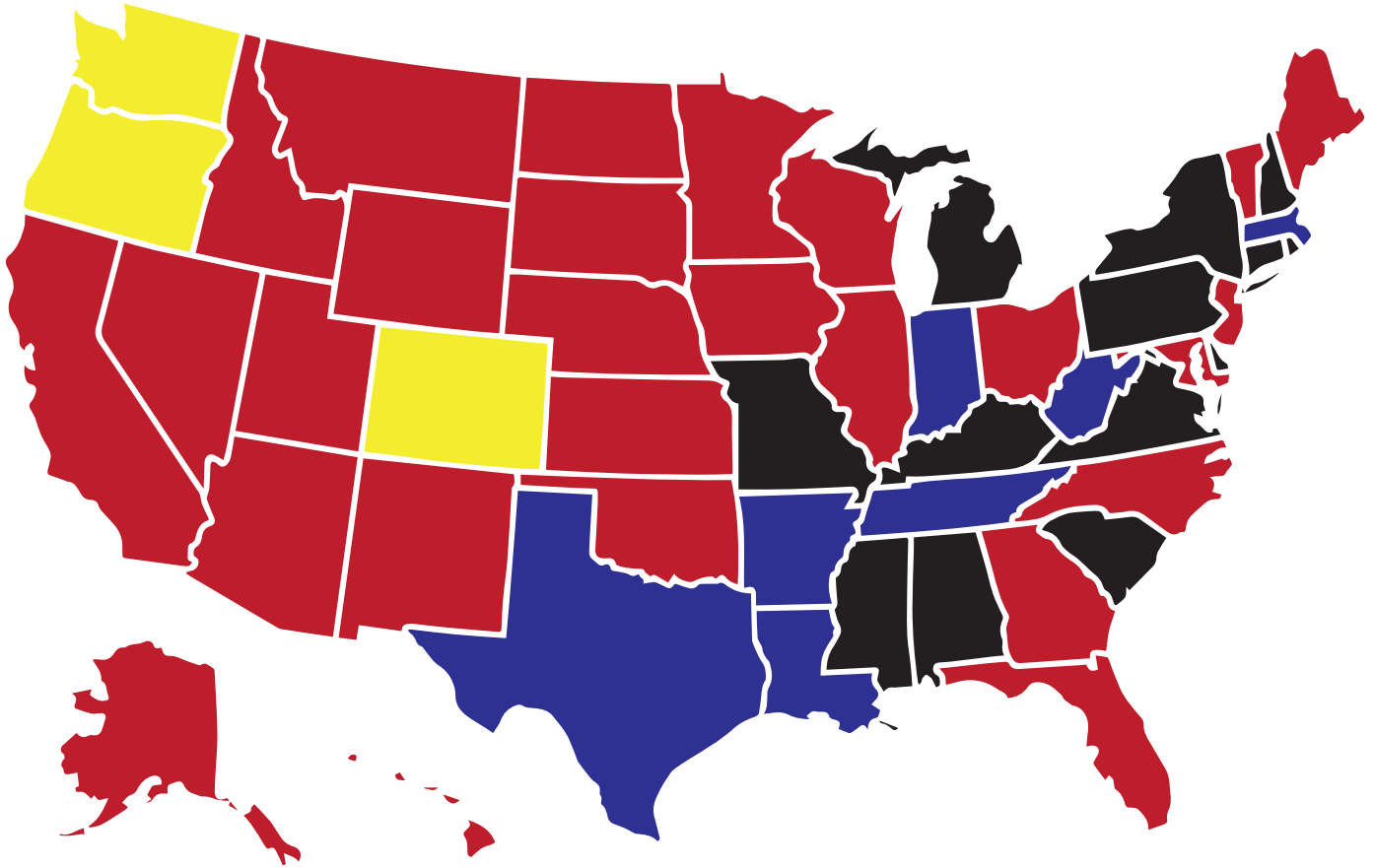
It's vital in a democracy to have secure, accurate elections, and it's reasonable to take steps to assure that happens. Some security measures, such as tightened requirements for showing government ID at polling places, may cut down on voter fraud, at the cost of making it more difficult for some people who do not carry government IDs with photos to cast ballots.

What's it like elsewhere?

Michigan is one of 19 states that require voters to show some type of photo ID; 33 states require various types of identification, and 17 do not have an identification requirement at the polls.²¹

Michigan is among many states using electronic voting machines that are reaching the end of their lifespans, creating increased risk of problems trouble counting votes, or increased wait times for voters.

Absentee and early voting



YELLOW: Mail-only voting

BLUE: Early voting

RED: Early voting AND no-excuse absentee voting

BLACK: No early voting, excuse required for absentee

Which, if any, of the following ideas would most improve the fairness of Michigan elections?

1. Ease voting access: Make it easier to vote early, by absentee or by mail.
2. Guard against election fraud: More voter ID requirements, improved election machine security, better monitoring of voter rolls (removing voters who have moved or died)
3. Keep things the way they are.

Term limits

In 1992, Michigan voters approved by a 59-41 margin a state constitutional amendment setting term limits for state elected offices. Those term limits are:

- Governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general: two four-year terms
- Senate: two four-year terms
- House of Representatives: three two-year terms

Legislators can (and sometimes do) complete term limits in both the House of Representatives and Senate, serving a total of 14 years in Lansing.²²

The issue

Term limits assured that fresh faces, possibly with fresh ideas, would fill Lansing – more than 90 percent of incumbents were routinely elected.²³ But term limits also curbed institutional knowledge about issues, and made it harder to develop relationships with members of the other party to develop and pass legislation.

What's it like elsewhere?

Twenty-one states passed term limits, almost all between 1990 and 1996. Two of those states later repealed term limits, and four had term limits ruled unconstitutional by

their state supreme courts, leaving 15 states with term limits in place today.

No state allows legislators to serve for fewer years than Michigan. Term limits range for representatives from six years (only Michigan) to 16 years; for senators, from eight years (Michigan and 9 other states) to 16 years.²⁴

In nine of the 15 term-limit states, legislators can return to the legislature after a set period of time and start the term-limit clock over. In Michigan, legislators are banned for life from the legislature once their term limits end.

Argument for extending or removing term limits: Adds institutional knowledge to legislature. Ends cycle of legislators leaving Lansing just as they learn how to do their jobs. Those who stay long enough increase their influence and can better serve their constituents.

Argument for keeping term limits as they are: A return to “career politicians” more connected to Lansing than their home districts.

What does research show?

Legislator effectiveness increases over several terms, and doesn't decline as terms continue.²⁵

Which, if any, of the following ideas regarding term limits would most improve your trust in the effectiveness of state elected leaders?

1. Eliminate term limits
2. Lengthen term limits (allow elected officials to stay in office longer)
3. Tighten term limits (force elected officials out of office sooner)
4. None of these. Reforming term limits is unnecessary to improve my trust.

Campaign finance

Campaign spending is rising rapidly in Michigan. In 2014, there was \$118 million spent on elections for governor and seats in the Senate, House of Representatives and the Supreme Court – a 95 percent increase from 2002, after adjusting for inflation.²⁶

Michigan has doubled the limits individuals, corporations and groups can contribute to a political campaign since 2013. Individuals can contribute up to \$6,800 to statewide offices, \$1,000 to candidates running for House seats and \$2,000 to candidates running for the Senate. Independent political action committees, which often run “issue ads” that attack candidates without mentioning the name of a candidate to vote for, can donate 10 times as much.²⁷

In addition to doubling the contribution limits in 2013, lawmakers voted in 2015 to allow candidates to exceed limits

from past election cycles in paying back campaign debt, in effect doubling again the amount that can be given to campaigns.²⁸

Who’s funding campaigns? Groups that run “issue ads” do not have to disclose who donated money.²⁹

The issue

Does an increase in money give undue influence to a few anonymous sources? Or is this free speech?

What’s it like elsewhere?

The Center for Public Integrity gave Michigan a grade of “F” for political financing transparency.³⁰

Which, if any, of the following ideas would improve your trust in Michigan’s campaign finance system?

1. Tighten donor limits to limit special interest influence.
2. Loosen donor limits to protect the free speech right to support candidates.
3. Require greater transparency and reporting requirements to provide better public information about how candidates finance their campaigns.
4. None of these. Reforming Michigan’s campaign finance system is unnecessary to improve my trust

Fostering Representative Government Discussion Questions

- **Why did you choose your top priority?**
- **How, specifically, would you like to see it carried out?**
- **Who is responsible for making this change?**
- **Is there another potential solution for improving your trust in state government that you didn’t see on the screen today?**

Thank you and next steps

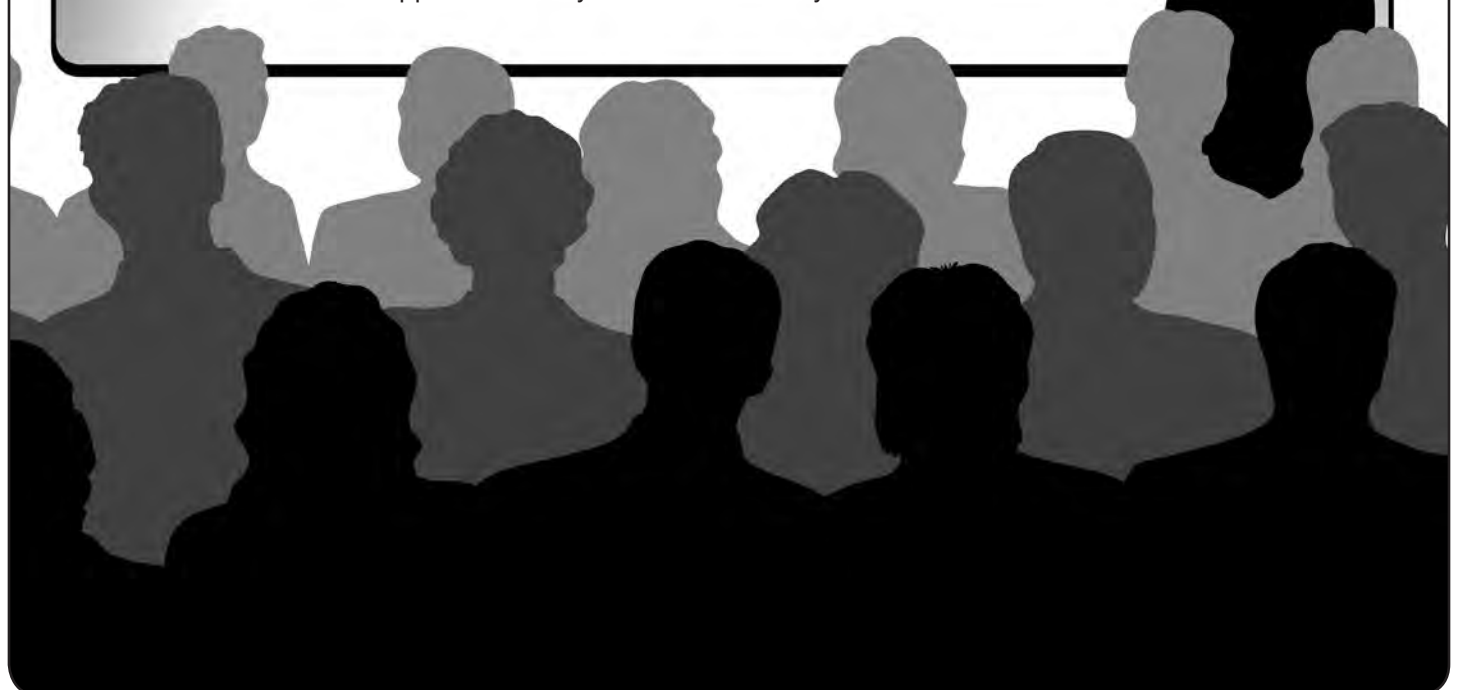
Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and priorities about trust in state government! Keep the momentum you built today going in the following ways:

Spread the word. Contact us at engage@thecenterformichigan.net or 734-926-4285 to tell us about other groups of people who would like to participate in a Community Conversation. We're seeking additional participants, as well as groups to host discussions, all over the state.

Stay informed. Subscribe for free to Bridge Magazine, the Center for Michigan's online news magazine at bridgemi.com. Bridge's in-depth, data-driven reporting will help you better understand the complex issues facing our state.

Follow the Conversation's progress. Throughout this round of Community Conversation, we'll be posting updates, as well as our findings from these discussions. "Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan and follow us on Twitter and Instagram using @CenterforMI. Continue to share your ideas for improving trust in Michigan's government using the hashtag #MiVoice. Our final report from these Conversations will be released in early 2017.

Make Michigan better through service. Visit thecenterformichigan.net for a link to Volunteer Michigan's online volunteer match tool. You can search for volunteer opportunities in your own community.



About The Center for Michigan

The Center for Michigan is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and nonpartisan think-and-do tank. The Center was founded in 2006, and our work is defined by three verbs: Engage, Inform, and Achieve.

Engage: We are the state’s leading practitioner of nonpartisan public engagement. We make citizenship interesting, convenient, and meaningful through interactive, small-group Community Conversations, large town hall conferences, phone polling, and online engagement tools. This public engagement can, and does, lead to actual policy change.

Inform: Bridge, our online news magazine, focuses on the “how” and “why” of Michigan current events. Our differentiated, in-depth, data-driven reporting accentuates—and partners with—traditional publishers increasingly focused on the “who,” “what,” “where,” and “when” of the 24-hour news cycle. Positive policy change growing out of Bridge’s journalism, while rare, is among the highest forms of social return to the Center’s investors.

Achieve: We take the findings of our public engagement campaigns and Bridge journalism and see to get things done for Michigan. Some examples of positive change: 1) The nation’s largest expansion of public preschool; 2) Some \$250 million in savings from prison system reforms; 3) Stopping the erosion of the traditional 180-day K-12 school year; 4) Approval of tougher certification tests for new teachers; 5) Deeper investment in the Pure Michigan marketing campaign; 6) Approval of a more rigorous teacher evaluation system; and 7) Reform of state business taxes.

Steering Committee members

The Center has been fortunate to attract a group of distinguished Michigan citizens to serve on its Steering Committee. They include:

- Richard T. Cole, Chairman Emeritus, Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing, Michigan State University and former Chief of Staff to former Michigan Governor James Blanchard
- Paul Courant, former Provost, University of Michigan Librarian Emeritus
- Paul Dimond, Of Counsel, Miller Canfield
- Elisabeth Gerber, Professor, Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan
- Larry Good, Chairman, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
- Steve Hamp, Chairman, Michigan Education Excellence Foundation and the New Economy Initiative
- James Hilboldt, Senior Partner, The Connable Office, Inc.
- Paul Hillemonds, retired Senior Vice President, DTE Energy, former President, Detroit Renaissance, and former Speaker, Michigan House of Representatives
- Mike Jandernoa, Managing Partner, Bridge Street Capitol
- Jack Lessenberry, Professor of Journalism, Wayne State University and Senior Political Analyst, radio station WUOM
- Tom Lewand, Partner, Bodman LLP. and Economic Development Advisor to Detroit Mayor Michael Duggan
- Anne Mervenne, President, Mervenne & Co. and Co-Chair, Michigan Political Leadership Program
- William G. Milliken, former Governor of Michigan
- William Parfet, Chairman and CEO of MPI Research
- Glenda Price, President Emeritus, Marygrove College
- Milt Rohwer, President Emeritus, The Frey Foundation
- Doug Ross, former State Senator and former Director, Michigan Department of Commerce
- Douglas Rothwell, President and CEO, Business Leaders for Michigan
- Craig Ruff, retired Senior Policy Fellow, Public Sector Consultants, Inc. and former Education Advisor to Michigan Governor Rick Snyder
- Dr. Marilyn Schlack, President, Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Dr. John A. (“Joe”) Schwarz, former member of Congress and former Michigan State Senator
- Jan Urban-Lurain, President, Spectra Data and Research, Inc. and Senior Advisor, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
- Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President of Government Relations, University of Michigan

Thanks to our investors

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Foundation Investors

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More than 1,000 people who have contributed \$10-\$999

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