

# MICHIGAN STRONG:

## *A Stronger Future Starts Today*

The COVID-19 health crisis is one of the greatest challenges we've faced in a generation — one that has upset the lives of Michiganders in unthinkable ways. From this crisis, we've learned more work must be done to make sure our families, students, small and neighborhood businesses and our critical workforce receive the support they need.

As our state prepares to safely reopen, Michigan House Democrats have a comprehensive legislative plan to address the enormous gaps, provide essential support and strengthen our communities and democracy.

### A Strong and Healthy Michigan

Everyone should have access to quality and affordable health care, regardless of their economic status.

- Provide free COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccinations for all Michiganders.
- Expand Healthy Michigan to provide health care for all Michiganders without insurance.
- Increase mental health access for everyone during and after a state emergency and create a dedicated hotline for frontline and essential workers.
- Establish funding for COVID-19 care costs that allow our hospitals to continue operations with the resources, equipment and staff needed.
- Create standards for hospitals, medical and elective surgical facilities to safely reopen.
- Create and fund a statewide contact tracing task force to prepare for future COVID-19 peaks.

### Safeguards to Help with Basic Needs

Having the financial resources for life's basic needs are important every day, especially during an emergency.

- Invest in the staffing and technology to speed up unemployment payments.
- Increase payments for all workers including employees who receive tips.
- Stop foreclosures, utility shutoffs, evictions, defaults, student loan payments.
- Create food program, enable online Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) purchases and expand the Double Up Food Bucks program.
- Establish cleaning standards and social distancing measures for safe workplaces to bring employees on leave back to work first.
- Expand earned paid sick leave through quarantine and treatment for all workers who are exposed or have contracted COVID-19.
- Expand internet access across Michigan and offer affordable internet service options.
- Require auto insurance rate rebates, prohibit credit score use in rate-setting and charge the same garage rates across Michigan.
- Establish a health insurance rebate program for elective and preventative medical services.
- Prevent price gouging, robocall scamming and elder abuse to protect consumers and provide the needed funding.
- Restore the Earned Income Tax Credit to 20 percent for low to moderate income workers.

## Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve Us

Frontline and essential workers protect and serve us while putting the well-being of themselves, their families and communities at risk. It is our responsibility to protect them.

- Establish emergency funding for safety equipment and personal protection equipment.
- Require rapid testing and priority for first responders, medical care professionals and other frontline and essential workers.
- Provide workers' compensation coverage for COVID-19 illness and contraction protections.
- Establish administrative leave due to exposure, quarantine, treatment and recovery, and prohibit disciplinary action.
- Require hazard pay for frontline workers.
- Make childcare available for essential workers.
- Increase direct care workers hourly rates.

## Access to Clean Air and Water

The COVID-19 public health crisis has created a more urgent need to address air quality and access to clean water.

- Prohibit all permit requests that increase air pollution.
- Prohibit water shutoffs during an emergency.
- Create a long-term funding solution to allow access to clean water for everyone.

## Investing in Education and Closing the Divide

Technology and internet access are significant challenges to continue education outside of the classroom, and resources must be equitably distributed across our state.

- Require equitable access to continued learning for all K-12 students through technology and internet access and teacher support.
- Require local school boards and ISDs to adopt the best approach for their students.
- Provide a one-time special education fund for tailored services.
- Use the current early warning process to help school districts in financial stress and provide emergency loan forgiveness and financing options.
- Establish a pathway for a school-based health clinic at every school.
- Establish continual pay and benefits for all teachers, educators, staff and hourly K-12 employees.
- Establish dedicated funding to reimburse educators for incurred distance learning costs.

## Keeping Neighborhood Businesses Strong

All business closures create economic ripples for their communities and employees, but the impact to neighborhood businesses and their communities are often devastating.

- Provide loan and grant assistance and create dedicated funding for neighborhood businesses, including seasonal and majority-minority owned.
- Expand the Small Business Relief Program.
- Establish a pandemic fund to provide a "fresh start" by forgiving back-payments of rent and mortgage for individuals and businesses.
- Require a protocol for the safe reopening and customer interactions to mitigate the continue spread or resurgence of COVID-19.
- Allow workers to return to their jobs and receive reduced unemployment benefits until their wages return or funding is gone.

## Strengthening Our Democracy

In these uncertain times, leadership matters. Participating in our elections, and electing our leaders are everyone's responsibility and will strengthen our democracy.

- Require all voters to receive an absentee voter ballot with a postage paid return envelope and count returned ballots mailed by election day.
- Make Election Day a state holiday and provide funding for healthy polling places.
- Expand early voting options to increase participation in the Michigan elections.
- Keeping the doors of Democracy open during emergencies by authorizing remote participation for local and state governments.