

Slashing taxes for working families and seniors

New legislation would reduce taxes for every working family in Michigan while expanding tax savings for seniors, delivering \$2.5 billion in annual tax relief.

With inflation soaring, local families and seniors on fixed incomes need tax relief now more than ever before. The state is looking at a multi-billion-dollar budget surplus this year. Cutting taxes and returning money to each one of Michigan's hardworking taxpayers is the right thing to do.

The plan would reduce the state's income tax rate to 3.9 percent, offer a new \$500-per-child tax credit, and provide additional individual and retirement income tax exemptions for Michigan seniors.

Currently, seniors are eligible to receive a tax exemption for their first \$20,000 in total income, or \$40,000 for those filing jointly. With the two exemptions under the plan, a person 62 or older with retirement income would be eligible for an exemption for the first \$40,000 of income for single filers or \$80,000 for joint filers.

The plan was approved by both the House and Senate and now awaits the governor's consideration.

Reducing prescription costs for Michigan residents

The governor has signed into law a House plan to help reduce the cost of prescription medicine in Michigan.

The average price of medication to treat diabetes, heart disease, depression and other common conditions has more than doubled over the past six years. House Bill 4348 will help lower those prices by reining in pharmacy benefit managers – the unregulated middlemen who manipulate drug prices to make more money for themselves instead of passing savings on to consumers. By making middlemen more transparent and accountable, drug manufacturer rebates are more likely to be passed along to patients, saving them money.

Everyone deserves access to the medications they need to be healthy. It's time to reign-in bad actors in the pharmacy industry who inflate the cost of medication for hardworking Michigan residents and their families.

Reducing road noise in Saugatuck Township

I have heard from several people I represent about an issue with increased road noise from the I-196 construction. Last year, I began working with local MDOT officials about potential fixes. The Saugatuck Township board put together a plan and is working on these improvements with MDOT and my office now.

Relief available for afflicted businesses

So many Michigan small businesses were set back by the COVID-19 pandemic and the governor's restrictions. Last year, I helped pass a \$409 million plan to provide relief to our most struggling local businesses.

The application for afflicted business relief is open until March 31 at Michigan.gov/ABR. If you are a small-business owner, I encourage you to visit the website to see if your business is eligible for a relief grant. And if you know of a business in our community that might be eligible, please share this information with them.

Funding on the way for more COVID-19 resources

Our bipartisan plan to provide health care resources for testing and treating COVID-19 statewide has been signed into law.

Highlights of the plan include:

- **Early treatment in COVID cases:** A \$175 million investment will help set up eight regional centers across Michigan to speed delivery of early treatments proven to help lessen the severity of COVID and allow patients to recover more quickly. Studies suggest monoclonal antibodies, for example, can reduce the risk of hospitalization or death for COVID patients by up to 85 percent.
- **Easing the health care worker shortage:** A \$300 million investment will help hospitals and other short-staffed health care providers retain, recruit and train more workers. An additional \$114 million will be provided for adult foster care facilities, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.
- **Keeping students in school and protecting residents:** An additional \$150 million will provide more COVID screening and rapid testing in schools, helping classrooms stay open for in-person instruction.
- **Strengthening other community health efforts:** An additional \$367 million will help Michigan communities continue outreach and testing efforts. More support is included for child welfare, homeless shelters, respite care and other services.

Expanding access to more COVID-19 treatments

The House has approved a bill that I introduced that would give COVID-19 patients the opportunity to try medications and treatments that could potentially save their lives by adding COVID-19 to the list of conditions included in the Right to Try Act.

Michigan's Right to Try Act, created in 2014, allows terminally ill patients access to experimental therapies, medical treatments and more that have completed the first phase of testing but have not yet been approved by the FDA.

The number of COVID deaths throughout our state is simply heartbreaking. Michigan residents have the right to access health care measures they need to survive. Clinical trials are a widely

accepted form of treating countless other life-threatening diseases and conditions and I believe COVID-19 should be no different. This isn't political, this is about giving hope to people facing the end of their life.

The plan was approved with bipartisan support and moves to the Senate for further consideration.

Tackling excessive fishing penalties

Some of the penalties for violating Michigan's fishing laws are harsher than necessary, threatening a criminal record and jail time for small errors. I'm a firm believer in the principle that the punishment should fit the crime. A plan I supported was signed into law in February and will tackle these over-the-top penalties and ensure more reasonable enforcement of the law. The plan was supported unanimously by Republicans and Democrats in both the House and Senate.

The law reclassifies two misdemeanors as civil infractions: failure to attach one's name and address to an ice fishing tip-up, and fishing with more lines than authorized. Previously, the maximum punishment for either offense was 90 days imprisonment and a \$500 fine. The new law caps the penalty at a \$150 fine.