

Dear Neighbor,

It is my privilege to serve you and all residents of the 27th House District. I want to assure you that I will continue to support legislation that will help to strengthen Michigan's middle class, protect our seniors, increase funding for our public education system and protect our environment. I will continue to strongly advocate for equal rights for all, work to strengthen voting rights, fight for women's unlimited access to health care, and work on common-sense gun legislation. I am also committed to creating tax equality by establishing a graduated income tax that would cut taxes for 95 percent of Michigan families and ask everyone to contribute an equal share of their income in state and local taxes. **Last year, I introduced 14 bills and one resolution.** To name a few:



- House Bill 4816 would shorten the deadline to register before an election.
- House Bill 4840 would prohibit discrimination by adoption agencies.
- House Bills 4942-3 would create a Gun Violence Restraining Order.
- House Bill 5044 would mandate curriculum on internet safety in grades 1-12.
- House Bill 5175 would grant people who are working irregular shifts to negotiate more predictable schedules.
- House Resolution 181, urging the Congress of the United States to adopt Election Day, the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, as a national holiday.

I believe that if we all work together, put partisan differences aside, and build on our strengths, that Michigan — already great — can be greater still.

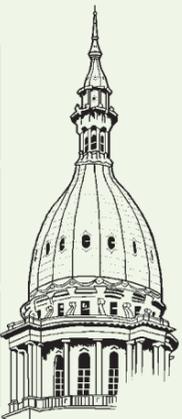
Taxes are also a necessary part of good governance, and as your representative, I want to make your tax season as easy and beneficial as possible. I hope you find the information in this letter helpful.

Sincerely,

State Representative Robert Wittenberg



BLUEPRINT FOR MICHIGAN'S FAMILIES



I am fighting to pass a defining package of bills, called the Blueprint for Michigan's Families, to strengthen Michigan's middle class. These bills are a response to the massive tax shift, which has increased taxes on the middle class, seniors and working families by \$1.6 billion per year. At the same time, corporate taxes were cut by nearly \$2 billion annually.

The Blueprint for Michigan's Families targets the rising costs of raising a family and paying for college by establishing:

- A new \$400 per-child tax credit for each child age 13 and under in households with income less than \$100,000.
- A new dependent care tax credit to help families with working parent(s) offset the cost of child care or caring for an elderly parent.
- An expansion of the Homestead Property Tax Credit to families making up to \$100,000, up from the current limit of \$50,000.
- A senior deduction that exempts the first \$2,300 in income from taxation for residents age 65 and older.
- A College Affordability Tax Credit of up to 50 percent of the amount paid on state and federal higher education loans for any employed Michigan resident.

SIGN UP FOR REP. WITTENBERG'S EMAIL NEWSLETTER

If you would like to get my free email newsletter:

- Call toll free: **(855) REP-WITT**
- Sign up on my website: **wittenberg.housedems.com**
- Email me at **RobertWittenberg@house.mi.gov**.

In the subject line, please write EMAIL NEWSLETTER.



Coffee Hour with STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT WITTENBERG



2016 Coffee Hours Schedule

Thurs.	March 10	Hazel Park District Library	6:30-8 p.m.	123 E. Nine Mile Road Hazel Park
Sat.	March 12	Berkley Public Library	10:30 a.m.-noon	3155 Coolidge Highway Berkley
Mon.	April 4	Pleasant Ridge Community Center	10:30 a.m.-noon	4 Ridge Road Pleasant Ridge
Tues.	April 5	Huntington Woods Parks and Recreation Center	6:30-8 p.m.	26235 Scotia Road Huntington Woods
Tues.	May 3	Royal Oak Township Hall	6:30-8 p.m.	21131 Garden Lane Ferndale
Fri.	May 6	Berkley Public Library	10:30 a.m.-noon	3155 Coolidge Highway Berkley
Mon.	June 20	Oak Park Community Center	10:30 a.m.-noon	14300 Oak Park Blvd. Oak Park
Tues.	June 21	Ferndale Area District Library	6:30-8 p.m.	222 W. Nine Mile Road Ferndale

Why You Might Want to Contact My Office

No "Wrong" Reason: Any comment, question or concern is welcome. If your issue would be more appropriately addressed by a different unit of government, I will help direct you. But remember, I am here to serve YOU and your family.

Comment On Legislation: If you want to express your opinion about legislation or learn more, my office can answer your questions or keep me informed of your comments. Your opinion counts! When you want to show that you support or oppose a bill, writing a letter or email is often the most effective way to communicate.

Suggest Solutions: If you have ideas to improve the laws in our state, please feel free to share your suggestions. After

all, our government is "by the people, for the people." I am here to be YOUR voice in Lansing.

Get Publications: The state offers free publications on topics such as services for seniors and veterans, child safety, consumer protection and more. My office can tell you if there is a publication to meet your needs and explain how to download it for free online or where you can locally obtain the publication.

If You Need Help: If you have problems related to a state government issue, such as accessing unemployment benefits, I can try to resolve them. While I usually cannot assist with local or federal issues, I will always do my best to help direct you to the appropriate person.

State Representative

Robert Wittenberg

Working for You!



State Representative
Robert Wittenberg

House District 27

Email: RobertWittenberg@house.mi.gov

Website: wittenberg.housedems.com

The filing deadline to submit 2015 state and federal tax returns is **Monday, April 18, 2016**, rather than the traditional April 15 date. Washington, D.C., will celebrate Emancipation Day on that Friday, which pushes the deadline to the following Monday for most of the nation.

18
April

Join me to learn more about
INCOME & TAX INEQUALITY IN MICHIGAN
at a Town Hall

Thursday, April 14 • 7-8:30 p.m.
Ferndale High School Auditorium

881 Pinecrest Drive, Ferndale

For more information please call my office: (855) REP-WITT

*You're
Invited!*

Graduated Income Tax

Do you ever wonder what percent of your income you pay in state and local taxes? Our system for raising revenue at the state and local level is complicated — we have property taxes, sales taxes, excise taxes (e.g., fuel tax) and the income tax.

Well, it depends how much you earn each year. In Michigan, the more you make, the smaller share of your income you contribute in state and local taxes. Does that sound unfair? That's because it is. When you add it all up, the bottom 80 percent of families, those making \$88,000 a year or less, contribute 9.2 percent to 9.5 percent of their income, while the wealthiest 1 percent contributes only 5.9 percent. Why is our tax burden so unequal?

The wealthiest 1 percent contributes a far smaller share than everyone else because Michigan relies heavily on regressive property, sales and excise taxes that disproportionately impact the bottom 95 percent of families.

I haven't met a single person who believes this is a fair way to distribute our tax burden. So what can we do?

We can equalize our tax burden by establishing a graduated income tax that cuts taxes for 95 percent of Michigan families and asks the wealthiest to contribute the same share of their income as everyone else.

This plan would make a real difference in the lives of Michigan families who have been getting hit from every angle — declining income, reduced benefits, rising costs and disproportionately higher taxes.

More than 4.4 million filers would receive an \$830 million tax cut to stimulate economic growth and create jobs.

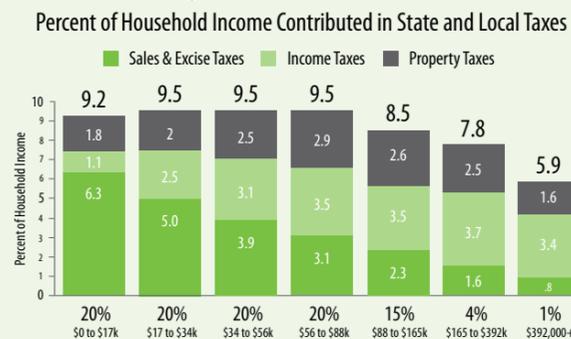
Additionally, 89 percent of small business owners would receive a tax cut. It's time to help hardworking small-business owners who don't benefit from special-interest deals like the MEGA business tax credits.

The top 5 percent would contribute their equal share, generating up to \$760 million in new revenue that can be used to:

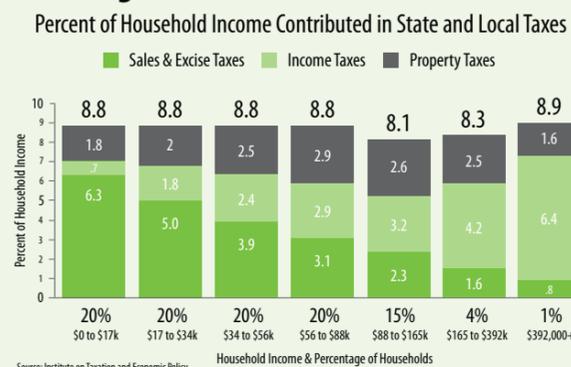
1. Replace our outdated infrastructure
2. Restore funding for public schools
3. Invest in our regional transit

There is no reason a police officer or a small-business owner making \$50,000 a year should contribute nearly twice the share of their income as a billionaire, but that is how our tax system works, for now...

Michigan Under Current Law



Michigan with a Graduated Income Tax



Checking your State Tax Refund Status Online

As you may know, your 2015 state tax refund status can be checked online. If you do not have access to a computer or you are having trouble with the site, feel free to contact my office and someone will be glad to assist you.

- 1) Go to www.michigan.gov/taxes
- 2) Click on the box on the left that says "Individual Income Tax"
- 3) Click on the box that says "Check My Income Tax Information"
- 4) In Order to Check Your Refund Status, this information is **required**:
 - a. Social Security Number (SSN)
 - b. Tax Year
 - c. Filing Status
 - d. Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) or Total Household Resources (THR) / Household Income (HHI)

Note: Adjusted Gross Income is found on line 10 of your MI-1040.

Total Household Resources are found on line 33 of your MI-1040CR or line 34 of your MI-1040CR-7
For 2011 and prior years, Household Income is found on line 28 of your MI-1040CR or line 31 of your 2011 MI-1040CR-7

- 5) Follow the prompts on the screen and enter in the required information in order to check your tax refund status

TAX HELP CONTACT INFORMATION

- IRS**
- Telephone Assistance for Individuals: Toll-Free: (800) 829-1040
 - Telephone Assistance for Businesses: Toll-Free: (800) 829-4933

Michigan Dept. of Treasury

- Treasury Information: (517) 373-3200
- Individual Income Tax Information: TreasIndTax@michigan.gov

Free Income Tax Help

The deadline to file taxes is drawing near and residents have until April 18 to file their taxes.

You can receive free help filing your income taxes from these locations within our district. Remember to always bring your Social Security card, photo ID, last year's tax return, all tax statements, property tax bills, and any other tax documents.

Oakland County Financial Hub

(for low-income individuals/families)

1956 Hilton • Ferndale

Tuesdays from noon-7 p.m.

Wednesdays-Saturdays

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Through April 18

Appointment necessary:

(248) 548-2937

Ferndale Community Center

(for senior citizens only)

1201 Livernois St. • Ferndale

Tuesdays — Doors open at 9:30 a.m.

on a first-come, first-served basis

Through April 13

Walk-In:

(248) 544-6767

Berkley Community Center

(for senior citizens only)

2400 Robina Ave. • Berkley

Thursdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Through April 14

Walk-In:

(248) 658-3470



Finding Your Unclaimed Property on the Michigan Treasury Website

The state of Michigan's Treasury allows an easy process for residents to check for unclaimed property they may have forgotten about or didn't know existed. Here are some easy steps to help you see if you have any unclaimed property. If you lack access to a computer or are having trouble navigating the Department of Treasury website, feel free to contact my office and someone will be glad to assist you.

- 1) Visit www.michigan.gov/treasury
- 2) Click on the orange box that says "Unclaimed Property"
- 3) Click on the blue box on the left that says "Claiming Unclaimed Property"
- 4) Enter your first and last name in the two search boxes
- 5) If your search returns property under your name that you think may be yours, click the tab to print out the **Initial Inquiry Form**
- 6) Print and fill out the Initial Inquiry Form and mail it to the address listed on the form

New Developments in Tax Year 2015

2015 brought many changes to Michigan's tax structure. New developments this year include special exemptions for those with certain disabilities, a Home Heating Credit, and many other changes that can be found online. Here are some easy steps to help you view the changes for 2015. If you lack access to a computer or are having trouble navigating the Department of Treasury website, feel free to contact my office and someone will be glad to assist you.

- 1) Visit www.michigan.gov/taxes
- 2) Click on the box on the left that says "Individual Income Tax"
- 3) Click on "New Developments for Tax Year 2015" under "Tax Time Resources"



March Board of Review

What is the Board of Review? The Board of Review is a tax review board that is made up of three, six, or nine appointees from your city or township. Every citizen who appears before the Board of Review is challenging a decision of the tax assessor and it is the Board of Review's responsibility to make an independent judgment based on the facts and according to the law.

Why does the Board of Review meet? The Board of Review meets to hear challenges by residents who feel their tax assessments are unfair.

When does the Board of Review meet? The Board of Review is required to meet in March of each year. If there is still business to conduct, the Board of Review may also meet in July or December, or both.

Who can schedule/attend a Board of Review Appointment? Any individual may file an appeal regarding the assessment of any property within the board's jurisdiction. By law, non-resident property owners can appeal by letter. Some municipalities will allow written appeals by residents as well. Most commonly the property owners appeal in person. You will need to schedule an appointment if you or your agent is to appeal in person. The Board of Review meetings are open to the public in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

How to Schedule a Board of Review Appointment? First, you should check your city's or township's website and see if the March Board of Review meeting times are posted there. If not, you can call your local assessor's office to inquire about when the Board of Review meetings are.

Berkley, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Pleasant Ridge or Royal Oak Township residents, please call the Oakland County Assessor service line at (248) 858-0776.

How Can I Petition the Board of Review? The form to petition the Board of Review can be found at 1.usa.gov/1QnqP8v or you can also visit my website and click on "Constituent Downloads" to download the form. You can either fill out the form online and print it or fill it out by hand and bring it to your Board of Review meeting.

How does the Board of Review notify taxpayers of their decisions? Every person who requests a hearing and protests a decision to the March Board of Review must be notified in writing of the Board of Review's action and information regarding the right of further appeal, not later than the first Monday in June.