



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE • LEGISLATIVE EVENTS



2019 GUIDE TO ADVOCACY IN ACTION PROGRAMS



MICHIGAN
WEST COAST
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



WELCOME

If you're not yet familiar with the term, "Advocacy in Action" is an umbrella for the various West Coast Chamber advocacy programs that promote a business-friendly environment. You'll find Chamber staff, Board members and Ambassadors out in the community every day, actively listening to your concerns and ideas. This is how we stay on top of what is most important to the businesses in West Michigan.

Next, we act. We invite experts to share insight, we bring in our elected officials to hear directly from our members, we convene meetings and events to facilitate discussions, and we publish educational materials to keep our members informed. As the voice of the business community, the West Coast Chamber is committed to promoting action that will improve our business climate and positively impact our economy. As a Chamber member, you have all of our resources and connections at your fingertips, and we urge you to take advantage of that benefit and stay connected.

Best Regards,



Jane Clark, President
Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce



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Advocacy in ACTION

The West Coast Chamber is uniquely positioned at the crossroads that connect businesses of all sizes, non-profits, and local and state government representatives so we can tackle issues head-on. By providing opportunities for our members to come together at events and committee meetings, we're able to get a pulse of what current issues are most pressing, and a preview of what proposals and projects lie ahead. We curate this information and we share it with the broader business community so that all voices have an opportunity to weigh in and discuss. It's our goal to make sure that our members are informed and that they have a voice in decisions that impact our community. We call this commitment "Advocacy in Action."

The West Coast Chamber serves as the advocate at the local, state, and federal levels for over 1,200 member businesses and 64,000 member employees. Our commitment is to educate our members on issues which impact our members and community, and to serve as an advocate for a business-friendly environment.

Our Public Policy Agenda was created to inform our members, our elected officials, and our community on the position of the West Coast Chamber on issues that impact business.



The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce is your business advocate. We do this by:

- Monitoring legislation at the local, state, and federal level that has a potential effect on the business community
- Actively communicating with local, state, and federal officials on business related issues
- Offering opportunities for our members to connect with elected officials
- Informing our members on public policy issues that impact their business
- Joining forces with the Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and Grand Haven Chambers of Commerce through the West Michigan Chamber Coalition on issues with regional and statewide importance and the Great Lakes Metro Chamber Coalition on federal issues

2019-20 Public Policy PRIORITIES



INFRASTRUCTURE

Modern, up-to-date infrastructure must be maintained for our community and state to effectively compete in the global marketplace.

- Encourage the deployment of internet technologies that are ubiquitous and affordable to support the development, attraction, and growth of technology-based businesses and jobs
- Advocate for the development of energy policies that ensure reliable and economical energy supplies while maintaining environmental responsibility
- Support Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan infrastructure needs including dredging and port projects
- Endorse efforts to ensure a clean and viable water system
- Support the West Michigan Regional Airport and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport
- Maintain and grow the commitment to fix Michigan's roads and bridges
- Support the development and funding of a long-term strategy that includes asset management to modernize and maintain Michigan's critical economic development infrastructure

A TALENTED MICHIGAN

To compete in the 21st Century economy and to continue to grow as a state, Michigan must attract, grow and retain a highly-skilled workforce.

- Continue investment in early childhood development through programs such as Ready for School, which results in improved student outcomes, enhanced academic achievement, and decreased social service costs
- Support rigorous K-12 reform standards that prepare students for success in the 21st Century economy
- Support effective workforce training programs like the Skilled Trades Training Fund
- Enhance career counseling with the focus of helping students and adults explore career options, whether that pathway is early/middle college, apprenticeship, community college or four-year universities, and provide guidance on setting a path to a career
- Support market-based approaches for affordable housing including efforts of Housing Next in our community
- Support efforts of Public Transportation in our community
- Support reasonable criminal justice reform that would reduce barriers of employment

TACKLING UNFUNDED LIABILITIES

Michigan is making headway to address legacy costs. Retiree benefits must be addressed to resolve the problems hamstringing too many local units of government.

- Encourage transparency of the real obligations facing units of government, using realistic assumptions
- Support appropriate funding plans and/or move to a defined contribution for retiree income
- Support appropriate funding plan and/or move to a defined contribution for retiree healthcare

PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE

We must work to institutionalize a culture of good governance in Michigan.

- Promote civility in political discourse
- Encourage responsible, timely, long-term budgeting at the state and local level
- Encourage regular review of programs to determine they are efficient and effective
- Support a consistent and smart regulatory environment that avoids duplicative and costly regulation
- Support efforts that encourage the sharing of services and cooperation between local governments

ENVIRONMENT

The Chamber must work to ensure that environmental regulations encourage and support a growing economy while balancing and protecting our quality of life.

ENCOURAGE CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

- Support efforts to continue to achieve our region's air quality attainment status
- Support Project Clarity and efforts to improve Lake Macatawa Water Quality

HEALTHCARE

The rising cost of health care directly impacts business. The Chamber will provide information and tools to help member businesses control health care costs.

- Endorse efforts to control the rising cost of health care through expanding flexibility, transparency, competition, and choice in the health insurance marketplace
- Support Medicaid reform as long as it does not adversely affect health care costs.

Upcoming Advocacy in Action EVENTS

Public Policy Committee events feature presentation on and discussion of key community/business issues, as well as updates from our local elected officials. The committee then makes recommendations to the Chamber Board on matters of policy. These monthly events are held in the West Coast Chamber Learning Lab and are open to all members.

Governmental Affairs Breakfasts are an excellent opportunity to network with representatives across all public and private sectors of our business community, including those in education, health care, non-profits, and government. Our elected officials report out and answer questions. These monthly events include a full buffet breakfast and are open to all members.

JANUARY

Friday, January 11, 8:00 am
Public Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, January 21, 7:30 am
Governmental Affairs Breakfast

FEBRUARY

Friday, February 8, 8:00 am
Public Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, February 18, 7:30 am
Governmental Affairs Breakfast

MARCH

Friday, March 8, 8:00 am
Public Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, March 18, 7:30 am
Governmental Affairs Breakfast

APRIL

Friday, April 12, 8:00 am
Public Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, April 15, 7:30 am
Governmental Affairs Breakfast



MAY

Friday, May 10, 8:00 am
Public Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, May 20, 7:30 am
Governmental Affairs Breakfast

JUNE

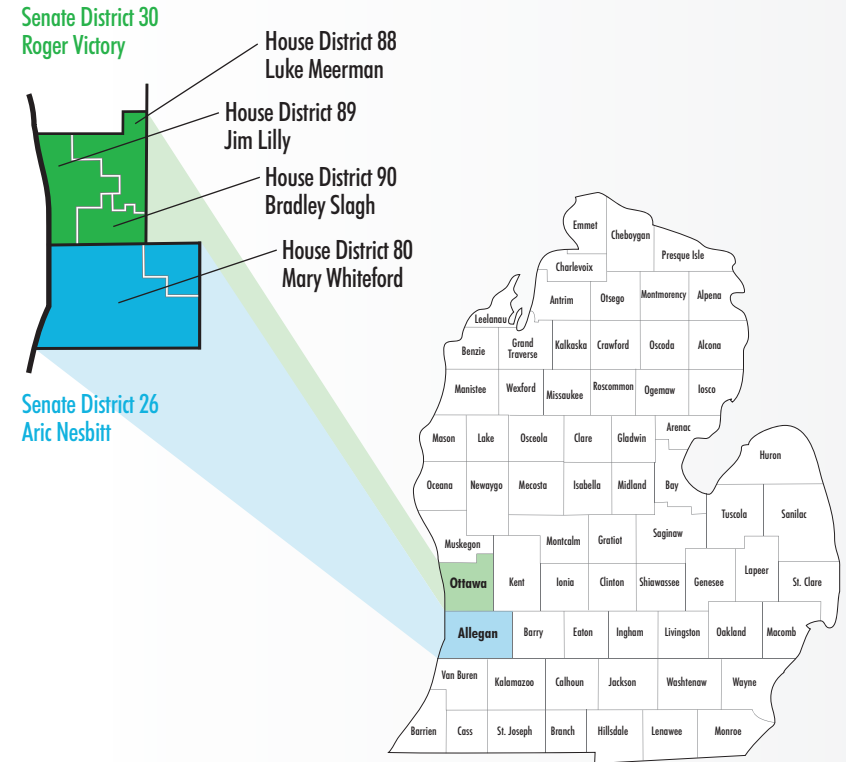
June, TBD
Lunch with U.S. Congressman Fred Upton

Friday, June 14, 8:00 am
Public Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, June 17, 7:30 am
Governmental Affairs Breakfast

Elected OFFICIALS

Local Districts



Thank you to Huntington Bank for their continuous support as the West Coast Chamber's Legislative Sponsor.

GRETCHEN WHITMER GOVERNOR



Gretchen Whitmer, Democrat, is the Governor-Elect for Michigan. Her goal is to build a better Michigan so that people can build their lives here. She will focus on making real differences in people's lives, including fixing the roads, making healthcare more affordable, improving education and skills training, cleaning up drinking water, and repealing the retirement tax. A graduate of Michigan State University, Whitmer formerly served as a Michigan State Representative (2001-2006), Senator (2006-2010), and Senate Democratic

GARY PETERS U.S. SENATE



Democratic Senator Gary Peters represents the State of Michigan and has done so since his election in 2014. In the 115th Congress, Gary serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Joint Economic Committee. In the U.S. Senate, Gary's top priority is to continue supporting job creation and economic growth to strengthen Michigan small businesses and our middle class. He previously served on the Rochester Hills City Council, Michigan State Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, and the Michigan State Lottery. Peters earned his B.A. in Political Science from Alma College, an M.B.A. in Finance from the University of Detroit Mercy, a law degree from Wayne State University Law School and an M.A.

in Philosophy from Michigan State University, with a focus on the ethics of development. For more than 20 years, Gary worked as an investment advisor yet always felt the need to serve and give back to his community; he also volunteered for the U.S. Navy Reserve where he earned a Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist designation and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He and his wife, Colleen, live in Oakland County and have three children.

DEBBIE STABENOW U.S. SENATE



After 12 years in the Michigan House of Representatives and 4 years in the State Senate, Democrat Debbie Stabenow was elected to the U.S. Congress. In 2000, she became the first woman from the State of Michigan elected to the United States Senate, where she also currently serves as the Chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Center. She is a member of the Senate Energy, Finance, and Budget Committees as well as Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Born in Gladwin and raised in Clare, Debbie received Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Michigan State University and worked with youth in the public schools before running for public

office. Her top priorities are creating jobs in Michigan as well as giving Michigan a voice that aligns Congress's priorities with those of middle class families. Her home is in Lansing, where she is a lifelong Methodist and a member of Grace United Methodist Church. She has two grown children, Todd and Michelle; a daughter-in-law, Sara; a son-in-law, Scott; and four grandchildren.

BILL HUIZENGA U.S. HOUSE, DISTRICT 2



Republican Congressman Bill Huizenga represents Michigan's 2nd Congressional District, which stretches from Kentwood to the lakeshore and up the coast of Lake Michigan from Holland to Ludington. Huizenga was first elected to Congress in 2010 and is currently serving in his fourth term. He serves as Co-Chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, the bipartisan group that fosters cooperation and support for policies and programs that enhance the environmental health of the Great Lakes while also ensuring the full economic potential of the Great Lakes region is realized. Huizenga is a member of the House Financial Services Committee, and chairs the Capital Markets, Securities, and Investment Subcommittee for the 115th Congress. He also leads oversight efforts pertaining to the Securities and Exchange Commission, and is a member of

the Monetary Policy and Trade Subcommittee. Huizenga studied Political Science at Calvin College and worked as a realtor and entrepreneur before pursuing public policy. The Congressman is a lifelong resident of Ottawa County, where he currently resides with his wife and children. Today, Bill also co-owns Huizenga Gravel Inc. located in Jenison, MI.

FRED UPTON U.S. HOUSE, DISTRICT 6



Republican Congressman Fred Upton is the U.S. Representative for Southwest Michigan's Sixth Congressional District and has served in this position since being elected in 1986. Upton previously worked under President Ronald Reagan in the Office of Management and Budget and formerly served as Chairman of the Committee of Energy and Commerce. Currently, he serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy. He is also an active member of the Great Lakes Task Force and has demonstrated leadership in this aspect. Fred's top priorities remain job creation, economic growth, and working to help all residents of Southwest Michigan live longer, better lives. Fred, and his staff, are committed to helping residents of Southwest Michigan who run into snags dealing directly with the federal government. He maintains two constituent district offices,

located in Benton Harbor/St. Joseph (269-982-1986) and Kalamazoo (269-385-0039) as well as Washington, D.C. (202-225-3761), where dedicated caseworkers serve as intermediaries to help them navigate the system. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and has two children with his wife, Amey.

ARIC NESBITT STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 26



Aric Nesbitt, Republican, ran for State Senate to “continue achieving conservative

results, strongly defend our values, and build a brighter future for the hardworking taxpayers, small businesses, farmers, and families

of West Michigan.” After growing up on a six-generation family farm in West Michigan, he earned an Economics degree from Hillsdale College and later added a Master’s degree in International Business. For his work as a conservative reformer, Hillsdale recently awarded Nesbitt as a Distinguished Alumnus. He represented the

people of Van Buren County in the Michigan House of Representatives and was a member of Governor Snyder’s cabinet. He focuses on turning principles and solutions into a reality. Aric and his wife Trisha live in Lawton. His family still operates their grape and dairy farm.

ROGER VICTORY STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 88



Representative Roger Victory, Republican, was first elected to serve the 88th District in

Michigan House of Representatives in 2012 and was re-elected to a third term in 2016. Victory earned a degree in Business Management from Davenport University and graduated from Michigan State

University’s Great Lakes Leadership Academy. Roger owns Victory Farms, LLC, a year-round specialty crop producer, as well as Victory Sales, LLC, a national produce distributor. He also co-owned a trucking company from 1996-2004.

Currently, he is an executive board member of the Michigan Vegetable Council, Vice President of the Vriesland Growers

Cooperative, and serves on the National Council of Agricultural Employees. He is also active with the Ottawa County Republican Party and on the advisory board of the Ottawa County Careerline Tech Center. Roger is a lifelong member of First Hudsonville Christian Reformed Church where he has served as an elder and a deacon.

JIM LILLY STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 89



Republican Jim Lilly was first elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in November

2016 and represents the 89th District. Lilly, a graduate of West Ottawa High School, received his bachelor’s degree in Economics and Finance from John Carroll University. He is also a graduate of the Stonier Graduate School of Banking and the Wharton Executive Leadership Program, and is currently pursuing his master’s in Business Administration at Grand Valley State University. He

and his wife, Sarah, are active in the community with their roles in local nonprofits and civic organizations. Lilly is a past member of the Board of Directors at Lakeshore 504 and has previously been president at Holland Area Arts Council, Fund Development Director at Holland Young Professionals, and president at Holland Professional Club.

Working with new enterprises and growing businesses taught Jim about the importance of investment in our community and the role that government can play in economic development. He has worked as a legislator to make a

more efficient and responsive state government. Jim stresses the importance of the business community being constantly engaged to ensure that their voice will have a real impact at the Capitol. He emphasizes his open-door policy and encourages direct engagement from the business community to inform and make an impact in Lansing. Personally, Lilly is grateful to live in one of the most beautiful areas and enjoys taking a boat ride on Lake Macatawa or watching a sunset over Lake Michigan.

LUKE MEERMAN STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 88



Luke Meerman, Republican, is State Representative of Michigan’s 88th District.

He stands by the concepts of faith, family, and freedom. He believes that strong families ensure a bright future for our state; they hold our

communities together. Meerman backs the freedom and success of small businesses and believes in local solutions: “The entrepreneurial spirit is essential to the future of our country.” He currently serves as a Polkton County Trustee, Executive committee member of the Ottawa County GOP, Communication

co-chair for the Ottawa County Farm Bureau, and board member of the Critter Barn in Zeeland. He and his wife Vicky have five children; they live on their family farm and he owns a few small businesses.

BRADLEY SLAGH STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 90



Republican Bradley Slagh is Michigan’s 90th District State Representative. A Zeeland native,

Brad has cultivated growth for the last 10 years as Ottawa County Treasurer, and before that, he invested in Zeeland Township for 5

years as Supervisor. These experiences have enhanced his understanding that leadership means using authority to meet needs. He graduated from Hope College with a degree in Business Administration and Teaching, maintains a real estate sales license, and was in the banking industry before running for public

office. Slagh has gained valuable experience throughout his career, putting to use both business and teaching skills. Brad and his wife Carol have 3 children. Both have also invested in the community throughout the years by playing active roles in multiple organizations.

MARY WHITEFORD STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 80



Republican Mary Whiteford serves the 80th District in the Michigan House of Representatives

and has done so since being elected in 2016. She serves as chair of the House Appropriations Environmental Quality Subcommittee and vice chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Subcommittee. She also serves as a member of the Subcommittees on Licensing and Regulatory Affairs/Insurance and Financial Services and Health and Human Services.

pediatric neurosurgery and emergency units. She started an accounting business with her husband, Kevin, and they now run their own financial planning firm. Whiteford was an active volunteer in her children’s schools, ran homeowner associations, was appointed to city committees and was appointed to the Michigan Women’s Commission where she worked on raising human trafficking awareness.

Mary’s work in an emergency department has taught her how to prioritize, work as a team, and be an advocate. She also emphasizes

Whiteford earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Northern Illinois University and worked in

the importance of what business owners sacrifice as well as contribute to provide for their families, employees, and the community. These real stories are important to her, and she encourages people to reach out to her so she can listen, learn, and implement real changes: “I am your partner.” Additionally, Saugatuck Dunes State Park is one of her favorite “Pure Michigan” locations.



MICHIGAN
WEST COAST
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MICHIGAN OUTSTANDING CHAMBER OF THE YEAR

When you join the West Coast Chamber, you're putting your trust in a 5-Star Accredited organization, a distinction that less than 1% of Chambers in the country have achieved. This means you can count on innovative programming to help you network and learn, powerful connections to help your business grow, and a dedicated partner to help you find resources and solutions that enable your business to succeed.

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