

MAC

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

*MAC is the counties' voice
at the State Capitol,
providing legislative
support on key issues
affecting counties.*



www.micounties.org

Basic Legislative Facts

- Michigan's Legislature is bicameral, with a 110-member House of Representatives and a 38-member Senate
- Representatives are elected every two years. Senators are elected every four years
- To become law, bills must receive a majority in each chamber (56 votes in House, 20 in Senate) and be signed by the governor
- Each chamber sets its own calendar, but both tend to concentrate their session days in the spring and fall each year



- In 1992, Michigan voters approved term limits on legislators and executive branch offices:
 - Representatives can serve no more than three (3) two-year terms
 - Senators can serve no more than two (2) four-year terms
 - An individual can now serve only 14 total years in the Legislature



**Term
Limits**

Practical effects of term limits

— Legislators have very little time to master policy areas.

This is where you play a special role.

- It is not unusual now for a first-term legislator to become an important committee chair
- Legislators must rely heavily on veteran staff members for history and context on issues



Partisan Considerations

- Republicans hold a solid 61-45 majority in the House of Representatives; Rep. Kevin Cotter is speaker
- Republicans hold an overwhelming 27-10 majority in the Senate; Sen. Arlan Meekhof is majority leader
- On almost all issues, the legislative debate and action will follow the preferences of Republican leaders; Democrats have few opportunities to influence legislative activity



Why Lobbying Your Legislators Is Vital

- The Legislature controls the number and severity of regulations under which you must operate
- The Legislature reacts to constituent concerns and complaints, as well as comments from other elected officials in your county
- Your legislators will hear from those who are against local control and paying for local services



Why Lobbying Your Legislators Is Vital

— Legislators have become increasingly more wary of government activities and require greater transparency and accountability at the local level

— Legislators hold many of the purse strings for local government agencies

— Legislators are just people and, like all people, tend to act in their own self-interest



Why Lobbying Your Legislators Is Vital

- Legislators cannot know everything about every issue, so they talk to people they trust
- It is your task to become the person he/she trusts on local government issues
- When a local government issue arises, you want to have an existing relationship with a legislator, so he/she turns to you for advice



Making Your Case/Phone Calls

- Make contact (call or email to arrange a meeting)

- State your topic and ask to speak to the appropriate staff member

- Be brief, be polite

- Provide your contact info



- Always ask for a call back from the legislator or a staffer

- Regardless, always leave your position statement with the person on the other end

Making Your Case/Meetings

- Face time matters
- Meetings are great, but discussions in conjunctions with events or tours at your facilities are better
- Schedule well in advance and confirm your meetings



Making Your Case/Meetings

- Be prepared
- Be concise and flexible
(you may only have 10 to 15 minutes to make your case)
- Take photos for use with social media, documents
- Follow up with a letter





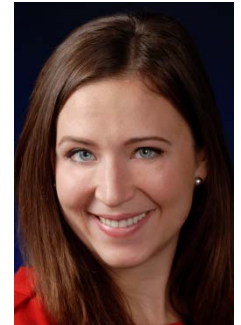
MAC Government Team

Tim McGuire, Executive Director
m McGuire@micounties.org



Steve Currie, Deputy Director
scurrie@micounties.org

Dana Gill, Director of Governmental Affairs
gill@micounties.org



Elizabeth Gorz, Governmental Affairs Associate
gorz@micounties.org

Casey Steffee, Governmental Affairs Analyst
steffee@micounties.org





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