

Dear Rules and Bylaws Committee Members,

We write today to encourage you to select the great state of Michigan as the newest early state on the Presidential Primary calendar. As business community leaders with strong relationships in the Republican and Democratic Parties, we believe it is in Michigan's, and your, best interest for Michigan to occupy this prestigious position. We write to you to make our opinion known, and we have shared this perspective with our legislative colleagues who we have encouraged to vote to move our primary date.

As business community leaders, we understand you must prioritize the components of the primary election operation that will maximize success. As we understand it, you are looking to optimize for reasonably priced media markets, seamless transportation, a primary election investment that sets the Party up well for a competitive general election, and diversity — both economic and demographic. Michigan's got it all.

Michigan is an affordable state in which to run a political campaign, even for lesser known candidates on a tight budget. Michigan's cost per point for television ad space is significantly less than other states like Illinois, Minnesota, and Colorado where one expensive media market reaches the majority of voters but is untouchable for smaller spending candidates. In Michigan there are a variety of affordable media markets reaching a variety of communities and voters.

Michigan's transportation systems make our state accessible. Four major media markets serving population rich metropolitan areas — Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Flint — are accessible within roughly two hours or less of each other. We are also served by a number of large scale and regional airports, with nearly 70 flights per day between Michigan and Washington, D.C.

In Michigan, both parties compete hard every election cycle. We are a true presidential battleground state, unlike many other states competing for this position. Our political environment will sharpen campaigns' and candidates' ability to reach every type of American voter in the general election — progressives, moderates, independents, and conservatives. Michigan voters believe in working together to get things done.

Michigan is the perfect representation of America's economic diversity, the foundation of our country's economy, and our nation's bright future. From farms to factories to the new electric F-150, we have it all. In December, Governor Whitmer worked across the aisle to put Michigan in the lead on economic development, ensuring the state can compete for big projects. That hard work paid off when General Motors announced a \$7 billion investment across Michigan with 4,000 jobs. We have followed up with additional \$2 billion investment with 3,200 jobs by Ford and deals with other manufacturers to create electric vehicles, parts, and charging equipment. Michigan is at the cutting edge of future mobility and industry, made up of incredibly talented people who make, grow, build, and innovate, the core values of America's future growth and prosperity.

Michigan isn't just auto manufacturers and the 600,000 manufacturing jobs: it is part of America's Main Street. Michigan small businesses employ 1.9 million employees — nearly half of all Michigan workers. It is home to a dynamic travel and hospitality industry, with the renowned "Pure Michigan" campaign directing a record number of visitors to our freshwater beaches and diverse culinary offerings. Michigan businesses are diverse, with 33,000 Black-owned businesses located in Detroit alone. Metro Detroit is ranked at the top of the nation for growth of women-owned firms, ranking as the top metropolitan area with an 88% increase from 2014 to 2019. We are also the second most agriculturally diverse state in the country. Our 46,000 farms contribute over \$100 billion to Michigan's economy. From cherries to chestnuts, if you can find it at your local farmers market, Michigan's got it.

With two peninsulas, and 10 million people from all walks of life, Michigan is a dynamic state that is well representative of communities throughout the country. It is made up of big, medium and small cities and vast stretches of rural areas. We are home to suburbs with both college educated voters and manufacturing-based union voters. And we have dozens of big and small university and college towns to engage young voters. Michigan is home to over 1.4 million Black Americans, over half a million Hispanic and Latinx residents, over 377,000 Asian American and Pacific Islanders, over 240,000 American Indian or Alaskan Natives, and twelve federally recognized tribes. We're also home to the second largest Arab American population in the nation, including the largest concentration of Chaldeans/Assyrians/Syriacs in the country. Over 373,000 Michiganders identify as LGBTQ+. Michigan is also a young state, with nearly 22% of the population under eighteen years old. Michigan is becoming more diverse every year, shaping our communities, strengthening our economy, and building on a rich heritage and culture that is emblematic of America.

We understand that above all else, Michigan needs to be able to move our primary date, which requires partnership with the Republican legislature. Michigan is a rare state that still gets things done on a bipartisan level. In fact, Governor Whitmer just signed her 849th bipartisan bill into law. A number of Republicans have expressed their desire for a date change, indicating a credible and strong opening to move our date with the legislature's partnership.

Take it from us – unlike Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, or other states, Michigan uniquely captures every intersection in American politics. We are a swing state which is more representative of the nation than states like Iowa or New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER
ALLIANCE
ALPENA • BENZIE • CADILLAC • CHARLEVOIX • GAYLORD
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