Dear Neighbor,

Your state Capitol has been extremely active this year, and the Michigan House continues to make strides toward improving government efficiency and accountability.

The Michigan House approved another fiscally responsible budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16, months ahead of the constitutional deadline for the fifth year in a row. In fact, we received national recognition this year for our efficient budgeting practices.

Transparency also is hugely important to us, and that’s why we unveiled a comprehensive Action Plan in January to let Michigan residents know our key policy plans. In addition to the many issues we consider in the House each session, we’ve highlighted 78 action items that we firmly believe will bring sensible government reforms for Michiganders across the state.

As of mid-November in the first year of a two-year session, the Michigan House is happy to report that:

- 68 percent of all our action items have been introduced
- 49 percent of our action items have already been approved
- 37 percent of the action items have been signed into law

These are significant achievements, but it’s important to acknowledge that there is a long road ahead of us. We will continue to fight to make Michigan the best it can possibly be and deliver on every promise we have made.

Inside you will find a summary of our 2015-2016 legislative term efforts and accomplishments so far. As always, if I can provide assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL WEBBER
State Representative, 45th District

(866) 969-0450 • MichaelWebber@house.mi.gov
www.RepMichaelWebber.com
Gov. Snyder recently signed into law a bipartisan House bill package reforming Michigan's civil asset forfeiture laws.

In the worst cases of civil asset forfeiture abuse, private property has been seized and kept by government officials even when the owner is never even charged with a crime, much less prosecuted or convicted.

- Although civil asset forfeiture can be an effective way of hitting criminals in their pocketbooks, the old free-for-all practice is not acceptable.
- Innocent, private citizens asking for the return of their belongings should no longer be met with large fees, red tape and endless bureaucracy, and these new laws put a stop to these practices.
- The reforms bring transparency to the system by closing loopholes and raising standards at the law enforcement and prosecutorial level, making sure everyone is on the same page to ensure the sanctity of individual rights and the lawful seizure of property by authorities.

The Michigan House has approved legislation to make much-needed reforms to the state's parole and probation practices while reducing the burden of corrections costs in the state budget.

- Since the 1970s, Michigan's prison population has tripled and the state's corrections costs have swollen from 3 percent of the general fund budget to 20 percent today.
- The state devotes a larger share of its general fund budget to prisons than any other state in the nation.
- Data shows that processing low-risk individuals out of prison and onto parole has no impact on public safety or recidivism, and frees up taxpayer dollars that could be put toward detaining individuals who pose a true threat to society.

House Bills 4138 and 4137 are part of an ongoing effort to reduce offender recidivism and incarceration costs while providing the highest standards of public safety.

The House also approved HB 4137, which expands the state's “Swift and Sure” probation program. The program has been shown to reduce the occurrence of repeat violations through a system of swift, graduated punishments.

In November, the Michigan Legislature approved a long-term roads plan that will generate $1.2 billion annually to fix the state's crumbling roads and bridges at the lowest possible cost to Michigan taxpayers.

It's also important to realize that tangible work has already been done to improve roads in Michigan. In addition to the new legislative roads plan, a total of $1.27 billion from the General Fund has been allocated to fix our roads and bridges without raising taxes over the last five years.

The governor signed the bills into law on November 10.

THE PLAN:

- Allocates $600 million in existing funds to fix roads and bridges
- Generates $600 million in new revenue for roads and bridges
- Provides $200 million in tax relief by expanding the Homestead Property Tax Credit for middle-class families, low-income residents and seniors
- Funds our roads with responsible, targeted dollars