



## • PROTECTING MICHIGAN'S DEMOCRACY

- Everyone deserves to have their vote secured and counted, and in a well-functioning democracy the people should be able to hold their government officials accountable.
- Unfortunately, each year we see new threats to the health of Michigan's democratic process. As a political organization with a mission of helping to pass strong laws to protect our environment and public health, Michigan LCV is committed to enabling good governance best practices, and promoting free, fair, safe, and transparent elections where everyone has easy access to the ballot.

### Michigan Ranks Low on Good Government

In a 2018 study conducted by the Coalition for Integrity, Michigan ranked last among all American states in transparency and good governance. Although reform acts like Proposal 3 have been passed since this study, Michigan has yet to address many of the problems that led to this abysmal rating. Action on updating our election infrastructure, increasing transparency in government, and reforming our campaign finance system is still needed to ensure the integrity of the democratic process we all value.

### Michigan received the following grades from the Center for Public Integrity: <sup>1</sup>

- Public Access to Information: **F**
- Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Accountability: **F**
- Political Financing: **F**
- State Budget Process: **B+**
- Electoral Oversight: **B-**

### Recent Attacks on Michigan's Democratic Process

**Absentee Voting.** In 2018, Michigan voters overwhelmingly passed Proposal 3, which expanded absentee voting to include no-reason absent voting and strengthened voting rights. However, absentee ballot application initiatives and widespread absentee voting by mail have recently come under fire from the federal level and the Michigan legislature. Moving forward, the legislature must aid the Secretary of State in ensuring our elections are fair, accessible, and safe. This includes funding the USPS in order to ensure that mail-in ballots are received and processed safely and on time.

## Recent Attacks on Michigan's Democratic Process (Cont.)

- **Term Limits.** In 1992, almost 59 percent of Michigan voters backed Proposal B, the Michigan Term Limits Amendment, which amended the State Constitution to enact term limits on state officials. While enacting term limits was intended to increase legislative responsiveness and decrease corruption, this policy had unintended consequences. Term limits have created a volatile environment, where a lack of institutional knowledge and few long-term, trusting relationships among legislators has resulted in an inexperienced and hyper-partisan legislative body where expertise and power has shifted to lobbyists, special interest groups, and other Lansing insiders.
- **Failure to enhance government transparency.** There have been several attempts to expand Freedom of Information Act requirements to the Governor's Office and the Legislature, all of which have failed due to a lack of support from leadership. As representatives of the people, the citizens of Michigan have a right to know what their elected officials are doing.
- **Voter ID Law.** During the 2015-2016 legislative session, the Michigan House of Representatives passed a bill that requires all citizens to have photo identification prior to voting or sign an affidavit confirming their identity. Voting is a fundamental right that should not be inhibited by the ability to get state-issued identification, and its process should not include intimidation tactics. Courts in other states throughout the country have concluded that Voter ID laws, such as these, are discriminatory.

## Actions Needed to Protect Michigan's Democracy

- **Retain institutional knowledge and relationships.** Modify Michigan's current legislative term limit process to extend terms or remove limits entirely.
- **Support the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.** Ensure the Secretary of State has adequate resources to administer the new independent redistricting commission so we can ensure fair legislative maps over the next decade.
- **Enhance Transparency.** Expand the Freedom of Information Act to include the Governor's Office and the State Legislature.
- **Reduce the voices and money from special interests.** Restrict the amount of money that Super PACs are allowed to spend in a given election and expand public disclosure of Super PAC donors.
- **Guarantee fair, open and secure elections.**
  - Oppose efforts requiring a government-issued photo ID to cast a regular ballot.
  - Increase funding for election infrastructure improvements statewide to ensure our elections are accurate and have integrity by auditing election results.
  - Prevent efforts to eliminate straight ticket voting.

<sup>1</sup> <https://publicintegrity.org/accountability/how-does-your-state-rank-for-integrity/>