



MICHIGAN STUDENT CAUCUS

Platform and Service Actions

Presented December 8, 2009

Michigan State Capitol

Lansing, MI

<http://michiganstudentcaucus.org>

About the Michigan Student Caucus

The Michigan Student Caucus represents students throughout Michigan to the Michigan State Legislature. Since 2001, thousands of students across Michigan have participated in online deliberation, negotiation and voting leading to the construction of a political platform that is presented in formal testimony to the House Commission on Civic Engagement.

The Michigan Student Caucus is not affiliated with any political party or organization. The MSC is open to any Michigan resident (permanent or temporary) who is a student. For information about the program, please contact our faculty advisors at The University of Michigan, Professors Gary Weisserman, Jeff Kupperman and Jay McDowell.

Twice each year, MSC participants, including hundreds of high school and college students from around Michigan, present testimony about the MSC platform before the Michigan House of Representatives' Special Commission on Civic Engagement.

There are five content areas in which students create legislative platforms for discussion, debate, and eventual inclusion on the semester's platform. The content areas are:

Education and the Arts

Health

Poverty

Environment and Science

Justice and Security

In addition to the on-line postings and deliberations, students are required to participate in an actual service activity project during the semester. Those service projects are found near the end of this document.

Education and the Arts

Tax-Free Weekend on School Supplies in Michigan

Randi Botwinick, Amanda Fleischman

WHEREAS This year, the average price to fill a backpack and pay for activities for an elementary school-aged child is estimated at \$472. The cost for a middle school-aged student is somewhat higher at \$535, and costs for a high-school aged student's supplies and activities rise to \$998. Huntington National Bank estimates costs have increased 34 percent for elementary students and 11 percent for high school students.

WHEREAS Michigan is the only state to have been in a continuous recession since the downturn of 2000-2001

WHEREAS The latest Kids Count report says the percentage of children under 18 living in poverty statewide rose from 13.6 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2007. In other words, income is no more than about \$21,000 for a family of four.

WHEREAS 72 percent of Detroit's children live in families that are low income, living just below the poverty line

WHEREAS Michigan is the only state in the United States that has suffered job losses for more than seven consecutive years.

WHEREAS The state of Michigan faced job losses totaling 414,000 through 2007.

WHEREAS The research company America's Research Group found that about 34 percent of parents plan to spend less this year on back-to-school supplies compared to last year, with having less money and higher debt as key reasons for the cutbacks.

WHEREAS As record job losses and high unemployment continue put a damper on families' disposable income, the National Retail Federation predicts the worst back-to-school shopping season for stores in more than a decade

WHEREAS According to the National Retail Federation, back-to school shopping is typically merchants' second-biggest selling period after the holiday gift-buying months of November and December.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED The state of Michigan should pass a bill for one tax exemption weekend, per year, on school supplies

BE IT RESOLVED A list be created for the tax-free weekend to indicate what qualifies as school supplies.

BE IT RESOLVED In order to make a purchase, tax free, the customer must provide either a valid student identification card or a report card (in instances where id cards are not available)

BE IT RESOLVED Tax exemption on school supplies will bring needed relief to Michigan residents, especially those on a low income.

BE IT RESOLVED A tax free weekend can save parents a considerable amount of money by planning annual back-to-school shopping and large purchases around the dates.

BE IT RESOLVED The tax-free weekend offers a multitude of items such as calculators, pens and binders.

BE IT RESOLVED Michigan implements a program similar to the state of Texas in regards to a tax-free weekend on school supplies.

BE IT RESOLVED Tax-free weekends in Texas have saved families nearly \$442 million in the past eleven years on expenses for students.

Mandatory Community Service Projects in Elementary School Classrooms

Stephanie Nosan, Fara Yackow, Gillian Gorge

WHEREAS Non-profit agencies and government programs have suffered many budgetary cutbacks, yet client needs have continued to expand.

WHEREAS The community gains resources and services that would otherwise be unavailable.

WHEREAS Teenagers volunteer 2.4 billion hours annually - worth \$34.3 billion to the US economy.

WHEREAS Youth volunteering has increased steadily over the past ten years, with 30% of youth participating in volunteer activities at least once a month in 2000.

WHEREAS 80% of people who participated in community service programs believed they had made a positive contribution to the community

WHEREAS 61% of American adults are convinced that today's youth face a crisis in their values and morals, and view them as undisciplined, disrespectful and unfriendly.

WHEREAS Community service efforts are designed to help individuals and/or groups deal with various issues confronting our society.

WHEREAS 73% of young people think their efforts can have a positive impact on their communities.

WHEREAS Youth who volunteer are three times more likely to volunteer as adults.

WHEREAS Community service programs provide psychological benefits such as students feeling less stressed, less depressed and more satisfied with life.

WHEREAS Students who engaged in community service were more likely to treat each other kindly, help each other and care about doing their best. It also increased their self-esteem and self-efficacy.

WHEREAS Community service programs enable students to acquire interpersonal skills and develop social networks.

WHEREAS Students who engaged in service learning ranked responsibility as a more important value, and reported a higher sense of responsibility to their school than comparison groups.

WHEREAS Elementary school students who engaged in community service programs had better problem-solving skills

WHEREAS Youth who volunteer are more likely to do well in school, graduate and vote.

WHEREAS Volunteering is related to longer life spans and improved mental health.

WHEREAS 81% of Americans who have volunteer experiences when they are young give to charitable organizations as adults.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Elementary school students are required to take part in a community service project with their class at least 4 times a year.

BE IT RESOLVED These community service projects will be age appropriate.

BE IT RESOLVED Mandatory community service projects would be a tremendous win-win situation for the young volunteers, the organizations and communities they serve.

BE IT RESOLVED Students will benefit from doing such community service projects both now and in the future.

BE IT RESOLVED Students who participate in community service projects at a young age will realize the importance of community service and be more likely to participate in middle and high school.

BE IT RESOLVED With the present economic condition, there will be more volunteers to help the growing number of people in need.

Graduate School Admissions Testing preparation incorporated into the curriculum of Michigan public universities

Sam Palazzolo

WHEREAS Average Kaplan and Princeton Review Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) classroom preparatory courses cost \$1,699 and \$1,749, respectively.

WHEREAS Average Kaplan and Princeton Review Law School Admission Test (LSAT) classroom preparatory courses cost \$1,299 and \$1,349, respectively.

WHEREAS Average Kaplan and Princeton Review Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) classroom preparatory courses cost \$1,549 and \$1,199, respectively.

WHEREAS Average Kaplan and Princeton Review Graduate Record Examination (GRE) classroom preparatory courses cost \$999 and \$1,149, respectively.

WHEREAS The curriculum of Michigan public universities consists of rigorous education of ALL topics covered on each the Medical College Admission Test, Law School Admission Test, Graduate Management Admission Test, and Graduate Record Examination.

WHEREAS The average ("standard") amount of time devoted towards studying for the MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, or GRE is 3 hours per day for a duration of 4 months out of the year.

WHEREAS Many MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, and GRE's are administered during the months of January, February, March, April, and May - months in which students are still currently enrolled at the University of Michigan.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED State of Michigan public universities make preparatory classes available or incorporate Graduate School Admissions preparatory instruction in certain classes.

BE IT RESOLVED Students will benefit from professors directly relating material covered in their class to similar (if not the same) material covered on the corresponding standardized admissions exam of which that class material is tested.

BE IT RESOLVED Appropriate classes should be categorized as to which of the 4 above Graduate School Admission Tests covers their material to allow students to properly receive preparatory testing.

BE IT RESOLVED The fees listed above for the MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, and GRE would never be incurred by students, therefore keeping money in the shrinking pockets during these hard economic times.

BE IT RESOLVED Students can learn progressively and can take Graduate School Admission Tests with a fresh mindset of material as opposed to cramming before their enduring admission exam and paying to simply "revisit" material covered in the past.

Health

Mandate chain restaurants to list calorie information next to menu items

Gillian Gorge, Fara Yackow, Stephanie Nosan

WHEREAS According to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, heart disease is the leading cause of death in the state, and obesity is a key contributor to heart disease.

WHEREAS Michigan has the 9th highest obesity rate, with 28.8% for adults.

WHEREAS 30.6% of youths, ages 10-17, in Michigan are obese.

WHEREAS About 50% of adults in the United States believe that having nutritional information available influences their food choices.

WHEREAS Studies show that Americans consume 1/3 of their calories eating out at restaurants, especially at food chains, which have a tendency to super-size meals.

WHEREAS When restaurant menus provide caloric information, consumers are 2/3 more likely to choose lower calorie items.

WHEREAS According to a study conducted by the New York City Department of Health, 9 out of 10 people underestimate the number of calories they intake in their meals by about 600 calories.

WHEREAS Of the restaurants in New York City, roughly 2,000 of them, or 10%, were chains, thus affected by the regulation to display caloric content next to food items.

WHEREAS In New York City, the 10% of restaurants with calorie information displayed, serve 35% of all restaurant meals.

WHEREAS Technomic, a fast food industry consultant, found that after New York City implemented a law requiring fast food chains to post calories, 82% of New York City residents said the visible nutritional information affected the way they order. Of the 82%, 71% of them now seek out lower-calorie options and 51% no longer ordered certain items.

WHEREAS A study of customers who saw calorie information at Subway were found to have consumed about 50 calories less than those who did not.

WHEREAS According to the Los Angeles county department of public health, if 10% of restaurant patrons cut their intake by 100 calories per meal, we would see a 39% decline in weight gain.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED The state of Michigan should pass a law mandating restaurants with 15 or more chains to list the caloric information next to food items.

BE IT RESOLVED People would be more inclined to make healthy choices in their food consumption if calories were posted at restaurant chains.

BE IT RESOLVED People that regularly consume fast food are often obese, thus, by putting the caloric content next to food items, they will learn better nutrition.

BE IT RESOLVED It is not costly for restaurant chains to put calorie information next to food items.

BE IT RESOLVED Many restaurant chains already have their caloric information listed elsewhere, therefore it would not be difficult to carry out.

BE IT RESOLVED Restaurants will not lose business from posting calorie contents if they offer healthy alternatives, many of which already do.

M.I.P. Reform for Hospitalization Incidents

Jenna Friedman, Alex Weiss, Alex Bonda

WHEREAS The majority of kids under the legal age of 21 will consume alcohol because alcohol is part of our culture and society.

WHEREAS "Under state law, the body is considered a container of alcohol, so a minor is considered to be in possession of alcohol if he or she is drunk or has a blood alcohol content of .02 percent or higher"

WHEREAS A Michigan student with previous MIP avoids calling ambulance even though her friend is throwing up and seriously sick because she will receive an MIP.

WHEREAS No clemency is granted to minors seeking medical aid for themselves or others when treatment is needed for alcohol related problems.

WHEREAS 1,700 college students will die each year from alcohol-related injuries. Many could have been avoided if the student had been taken to the hospital.

WHEREAS Prosecutors are not very sympathetic to college students charged with alcohol-related crimes, and often do prosecute alcohol-related offenses aggressively.

WHEREAS The state of Michigan is so serious about underage offenses that the Ann Arbor police division actually has its own underage-offense department called the Ann Arbor Party Patrol.

WHEREAS Being convicted of an MIP charge is extremely serious and can mean having a misdemeanor on your record.

WHEREAS Fines upwards of \$400, in addition to potentially costly legal fees are standard for a first offense, resulting in a financial burden that encourages students to avoid calling police thus further endangering those with alcohol poisoning.

WHEREAS "Michigan's MIP law has been declared unconstitutional, so you need a knowledgeable lawyer who understands the law, stays abreast of current law and court cases and can keep the charge off your record."

WHEREAS "The chance that I might really be OK would encourage me to hold out rather than get an MIP and a record," LSA freshman Elliott Darvish said at University of Michigan.

WHEREAS The primary mission of the state government should be to serve the safety, health, and welfare of its citizens.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED This law would have a significant influence on students to make safer and more responsible decisions in bad situations regarding alcohol.

BE IT RESOLVED A reduction in MIP's issued to students who call for help will result in more cautious, responsible action taken to ensure the health and safety of underage drinkers.

BE IT RESOLVED The citizens of the state of Michigan will save hundreds of dollars on costly M.I.P. fines and legal fees that grow on top of college tuition for the struggling families in difficult economic times.

BE IT RESOLVED Instead of having the police officer write everyone up who helped the sick, have them encourage the students and be supportive of the decision they made.

BE IT RESOLVED By getting rid of the fear of MIP's, this would effectively help to reduce the amount of alcohol-related deaths among college students by a significant amount.

BE IT RESOLVED Make it a law that a police officer can't write you an MIP if you're either helping a seriously sick friend or are in the one in the hospital.

BE IT RESOLVED A reform of the current minor in possession laws should be enacted that absolves minors who seek medical attention for themselves or others in alcohol related incidents, therefore encouraging rather than discouraging cautious and responsible reactions to alcohol poisoning.

Install Hand Sanitizers in Public Classrooms

Stacey Shuman

WHEREAS The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers on hands that are not visibly soiled are helpful in curbing the spread of stomach and intestinal bugs

WHEREAS According to a Harvard Medical School Study, families that used alcohol-based hand sanitizer had a 59% reduction in the spread of gastrointestinal illnesses compared with families that didn't use sanitizer.

WHEREAS Research has shown that antibacterial products do not cause bacteria to become resistant.

WHEREAS Studies show that hand sanitizers with 60% alcohol content effectively reduce the number of viral and bacterial germs on hands.

WHEREAS Using hand sanitizer is a quick and convenient alternative to washing hands with soap and water.

WHEREAS Germs can spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface (like a desk) and then touches his/her own eyes/mouth/nose before washing his/her hands.

WHEREAS Hand sanitizers have been found to be effective in curbing absentee rates in elementary schools.

WHEREAS Maintaining good hand hygiene, which includes using alcohol-based hand cleansers, has been recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as an effective way to protect against the spread of swine flu.

WHEREAS 20-25 million cases of the flu are reported each year.

WHEREAS "According to the International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene (IFH), the hands are one of the most frequent transmission routes for many types of infections as they come into direct contact with known portals of entry for pathogens (mouth, nose, conjunctiva of the eyes). Therefore, practicing proper hand hygiene is the easiest way to help reduce infections."

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED The state of Michigan should pass a law mandating that all public school classrooms have hand sanitizer.

BE IT RESOLVED Children will be more likely to use hand sanitizer regularly if it is consistently available to them.

BE IT RESOLVED Children are constantly spreading germs between each other, but that would be reduced if they used hand sanitizer more often.

BE IT RESOLVED Since only a drop of sanitizer is needed per usage, it might be costly to implement but not to maintain since the sanitizer would not have to be replaced frequently.

BE IT RESOLVED Because no one can monitor whether or not people use hand sanitizer in the bathroom, it should be installed in classrooms as opposed to bathrooms. This is especially important for young children who do not necessarily always remember to wash their hands; teachers should mandate that children use the sanitizer a few times a day.

Poverty

Growing poverty and starvation rate in Michigan; Help homeless youth

Adam Shiffman

WHEREAS Michigan has one of the fastest rising poverty rates in the country, according to new U.S. Census data released today.

WHEREAS There were 13.3 percent, or 1.3 million Michigan residents, living in poverty in 2006. That compares with 12.3 percent nationally

WHEREAS The state's poverty rate rose 3 percentage points when a two-year average in 2000-01 average is compared with the 2005-06 average. Only five states experienced a greater increase from 2000- 01.

WHEREAS Michigan ranks 20th among the states for the percent of its population living in poverty. There were 17.8 percent of children living in poverty, up from 14.2 percent in 2001.

WHEREAS Poverty produces many adverse effects, including malnutrition or starvation, infectious diseases, mental illness, drug dependence, depression, and crimes like domestic violence that are evident throughout our communities

WHEREAS Hunger is affecting how people perform at work, how children perform in school, and how people view their communities and lives.

WHEREAS In 2007, 11.1 percent of households (13 million households) were food insecure, a statistically insignificant increase from 10.9 percent (12.6 million households) in 2006.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED More soup kitchens should be set up around the state of Michigan. An increase in the number of soup kitchens would generate a decrease in the number of hungry individuals, especially Michigan's youth.

BE IT RESOLVED Due to the increasing poverty rate in Michigan, additional soup kitchens are necessary and imperative to have. Multiple soup kitchens will assist lowering the amount of children going hungry every day. An increase in the number of soup kitchens would trigger a decrease in the number of hungry individuals.

BE IT RESOLVED Local corporations will be encouraged to participate and donate and will receive a tax credit for donations. Also money can be raised in the University of Michigan Diag throughout the year. Students and volunteers can make signs, handout flyers, and spread awareness of the amount of poverty and starvation occurring on a daily basis.

BE IT RESOLVED Furthermore, funding could come from local bakeries or supermarkets. Perhaps an agreement could be made, saying that in return for any donations, MSC members can and will promote those businesses around campus. Food can be collected at the end of each week and distributed to different soup kitchen around the state of Michigan.

BE IT RESOLVED Soup kitchens will ultimately decrease the hunger rate in Michigan and stop innocent children from becoming mild under-nutrition.

BE IT RESOLVED Creating more soup kitchens will bring hope and faith to those experiencing poverty and show them they are not alone, and will motivate them to find other resources to assist their family and children.

Peer Mentoring Program for Inner City Elementary School Students

Sam Hartman, Brian Helfman

WHEREAS According to Professor Perry at the University of Michigan Flint, the High School graduation rate of Detroit public schools is around 25% compared to around 52% for the country's top 50 urban centers.

WHEREAS Over 50% of Michigan prison inmates are high school drop outs, and it costs the state \$29,000 to house them per year.

WHEREAS According to a 2005 study at Princeton University, a Detroit high school drop out costs the county \$260,000.

WHEREAS In these harsh economic times, parents and teachers are preoccupied with many different things like securing jobs and putting food on the table so young students have no one around to support their education.

WHEREAS Over 40% of parents on public assistance are high school dropouts, which adds to the continuous cycle of poverty.

WHEREAS In a study of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring program, it was found that students in the program were 46% less likely to initiate drug use, one-third less likely to get in a fight, and skipped school half as many days as the control group.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED A program will be designed for University of Michigan students who have interest in mentoring and tutoring inner city Detroit elementary school students.

BE IT RESOLVED The program will work with Detroit public school officials to choose students whom they feel could use mentoring. The program would also be open to any student who wants to sign up.

BE IT RESOLVED It will be an after school program, once a week, that is an hour long, designed for the mentor to provide the support to make these students do their work while encouraging them to stay in school for their future.

BE IT RESOLVED In addition to helping students with their school work, mentors will serve as role models. Many of the children in the program will live in single parent homes, or under similar circumstances, and the mentors can give them the extra emotional support that they need.

BE IT RESOLVED The ending goal is to teach these students that school is vital to their future and graduating high school can change the outcome of their lives. If this is successful, hopefully the abysmal high school graduation rate will increase.

BE IT RESOLVED Since the mentors will be made up of entirely volunteers, the costs of this program will be insignificant compared to the expected results amongst students and in turn the positive effects on the overall economy.

Environment and Science

Energy Efficient Lightbulbs

Meredith Meye, Ilana Michele Shapiro, Jaclyn Rubel

WHEREAS An ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) will save about \$30 over its lifetime and pay for itself in about 6 months.

WHEREAS It uses 75 percent less energy and lasts about 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb.

WHEREAS CFLs also last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, use two-thirds less energy, and give off 70 percent less heat.

WHEREAS If everyone in the U.S. used energy-efficient lighting, we could retire 90 average size power plants. Saving electricity reduces CO2 emissions, sulfur oxide and high-level nuclear waste.

WHEREAS If every U.S. family replaced one regular light bulb with a CFL, it would eliminate 90 billion pounds of greenhouse gases, the same as taking 7.5 million cars off the road

WHEREAS The electricity used over the lifetime of a single incandescent bulb costs 5 to 10 times the original purchase price of the bulb itself.

WHEREAS Energy saving bulbs are one way that you can significantly reduce the energy your home uses. These bulbs are friendly to the environment, they cost less than traditional bulbs when all the factors are considered, they reduce pollution by reducing the need for energy, and they last a lot longer, so you do not have to replace them as often.

WHEREAS According to Shelly Vineyard, environmental associate for Environment Michigan, energy efficient lights pay for themselves in about one to two years and last for at least eight. She also states that it is one of the easiest ways to save on energy bills and reduce your carbon footprint.

WHEREAS Because fluorescent bulbs use less energy and last longer, there is less waste. You use less energy and go through bulbs far less often (average 8000 hours life vs. 500-2,000). The only environmental consideration to keep in mind is that fluorescent bulbs use trace amounts of mercury. It is important, then, to recycle them at either your local recycling center or return them to the store you bought them from so that they can recycle them for you.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED That the university implements energy efficient light bulbs throughout every university-owned building on campus, as well as throughout the dorms and apartments. This will conserve large amounts of energy and cause less waste.

BE IT RESOLVED That MSC students will help advertise the purchase of these bulbs by placing flyers and banners around campus that promote the benefits of energy efficient bulbs. Raising awareness of this issue will help gather more supporters.

BE IT RESOLVED MSC will assure that the CFL light bulbs are properly recycled and disposed of so mercury emission will not cause any problems.

BE IT RESOLVED that the government provide a grant to the university for the purchase of these light bulbs.

BE IT RESOLVED that if this program finds success at the University of Michigan, all other schools in the state of Michigan will be required to use energy efficient light bulbs as well.

BE IT RESOLVED MSC will be around campus to collect donations for the start of this project. All donations will directly be put to the purchase and installation of the energy efficient light bulbs.

BE IT RESOLVED MSC students will help to advertise to the general public in cost-effective ways, such as email, where these light bulbs can be purchased and how much they cost. Included in these flyers could also be facts on the importance of using these light-bulbs and how effective they are.

BE IT RESOLVED Light bulbs will be bought in bulk to reduce the overall cost.

Recycling Goods at the End of the School Year

Alex Feld

WHEREAS In 2008, NYU School of Law collected 1,836 pounds of clothing, 789 pounds of linen, and 318 pounds of shoes from students around campus.

WHEREAS On average, 25,000 pounds of reusable items are wasted every year at NYU upon students moving out.

WHEREAS Every year during move out, students waste and throw out items that many people cannot afford to begin with.

WHEREAS Students in dorms and student housing accumulate numerous items that are no longer of use to them at the end of the school year.

WHEREAS According to NYUGreen, community engagement is one of the best ways to raise awareness for environmental issues and thus has effects throughout other aspects of the communities' daily lives.

WHEREAS The University of Michigan's dorms house thousands of students every year.

WHEREAS NYUGreen, referenced by Alex Feld, has a "Sustainability Task Force," which is responsible for assessing current practices, recommending a prioritized Green Action Plan to maintain and revive the environment, engaging faculty, students, and administrators in efforts to encourage their involvement in sustainability efforts, as well as developing a method to award funds for green projects.

WHEREAS Oftentimes, a system of rewards results in added incentive which motivates people to take action when they otherwise would have been less inclined to.

WHEREAS 53.4 percent of all paper manufactured in the United States is recovered for recycling, according to recent statistics released by the American Forest and Paper Association (AFPA), and all of that paper is utilized.

WHEREAS If all our newspaper was recycled, we could save about 250,000,000 trees each year!

WHEREAS The average household throws away 13,000 separate pieces of paper each year. Most is packaging and junk mail

WHEREAS By 2012, the paper industry's goal is to recover 60 percent of all the paper Americans consume for recycling, which is approximately 60 million tons of paper.

WHEREAS It is estimated that 40 percent of post-consumer fiber in the United States is food contact, tissue, or sanitary products that cannot be recycled or is in rural, low-density population areas that makes recovery too costly or energy demanding

WHEREAS The ultimate goal of paper recycling should be to increase fiber recovery to the maximum possible in the United States, and then to re-use all fiber that is recovered.

WHEREAS 60% of our landfill problems are due directly to the paper industry here in the USA

WHEREAS The paper industry generally says paper can be recycled eight times.

WHEREAS Paper recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions that can contribute to climate change by avoiding methane emissions and reducing energy required for a number of paper products.

WHEREAS Paper recycling extends the fiber supply and contributes to carbon sequestration

WHEREAS Paper recycling saves considerable landfill space.

WHEREAS Paper recycling reduces energy and water consumption

WHEREAS The paper recycling rate has never been above 40% at the University of Michigan.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED At the end of the year, all public universities in the state of Michigan will participate in our recycling/donation program

BE IT RESOLVED In all dormitories there will be stations set up where students will be encouraged to bring their reusable goods to, for example, refrigerators, microwaves, futons, desk lights, bathroom supplies, etc.

BE IT RESOLVED in addition to the reusable goods, there will be bins at these stations for students to drop off their used paper, binders, notebooks, etc. to be recycled

BE IT RESOLVED at the beginning of the following school year, there will be a sale for all students to purchase the reusable goods that were donated the previous year at a cheaper price than available in established stores.

BE IT RESOLVED there will be a committee similar to the "NYU Green Sustainability Task Force," that will be responsible for designating marked down prices to each individual donated good depending on their perceived value. This sale in which these goods are sold at the beginning of each year will be widely publicized to the student body in order to raise awareness of an alternative option.

BE IT RESOLVED The universities will set up recycling bins in all academic buildings and libraries, as well as in high foot traffic areas.

BE IT RESOLVED collecting the reusable goods and paper will reduce space taken up in landfills, benefit the environment, as well as provide those students who aren't financially stable to purchase goods at more affordable prices.

Five-cent deposits on plastic grocery bags

Peter G Christmas

WHEREAS An estimated 500 billion to a trillion plastic grocery bags are consumed each year around the world.

WHEREAS It is estimated that less than one percent of these bags end up in litter streams outside of landfills while the others directly hurt the environment.

WHEREAS Several countries (Ireland, South Africa, Australia, among others) have either taxed or banned plastic grocery bags already.

WHEREAS Several cities in the U.S. have considered banning the use of plastic bags in convenience, grocery, and drug stores. San Francisco banned their use in 2007.

WHEREAS Legislation has already been proposed for a nation-wide 5 cent tax, not deposit, on plastic bags.

WHEREAS A deposit law instead of a tax law for plastic bags will encourage people to think more consciously of the environment because it will benefit them to recycle.

WHEREAS People should be more resolved to reuse bags, plastic OR paper, if this deposit law is passed. If passed, people will more consciously think of the environment on a more regular basis (at least when shopping).

WHEREAS A increase in reusing bags will lead to a decrease in production. Not only will this reduce production costs, but it will help the environment as well.

WHEREAS Hundreds of thousands of whales, turtles, dolphins, and other marine life and mammals die every year for ingestion or suffocation as a result of plastic bags.

WHEREAS Plastic bags are non-biodegradable while they require petroleum and other non-renewable resources to create.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED All stores using plastic bags must immediately implement a policy where the bagger must ask whether the consumer wants paper or plastic.

BE IT RESOLVED A five cent deposit law on all plastic bags be implemented in the state of Michigan. Consumers can either re-use bags or return them in exchange for their deposit.

BE IT RESOLVED All stores at the end of their fiscal year will give 75% of unclaimed deposit to aid in relief of state debt. It will keep 10% of the unclaimed deposit as means of covering expenses. Another 10% will be given back to the manufacturers. The final 5% will be kept on hand for refunds. The percentage will carry over to the following fiscal year in case more than 20% of deposits are redeemed after this dispersal.

BE IT RESOLVED Marine life will be allowed to thrive once again with reduced pollution into the oceans.

BE IT RESOLVED Price of groceries will decline. As prices of transporting and creating bags decreases, these price will no longer be placed upon the customers.

Justice and Security

Banning Texting While Driving in Michigan

Samantha Litvack, Justin Grischkan

WHEREAS There are no laws in Michigan preventing texting while driving.

WHEREAS According to the wireless industry trade association, CTIA, the number of monthly texting messages reached 110 billion at the end of 2008, a more than 11-fold increase in three years.

WHEREAS 46% of teens text while driving.

WHEREAS Using a cell phone while driving has been found to quadruple your risk of crashing.

WHEREAS A study released in July 2007 and conducted with more than 900 teens from 26 high schools nationwide, revealed that text-messaging while driving is becoming as dangerous as drinking and driving, in terms of inhibiting a teen's driving abilities

WHEREAS It only takes three seconds for a driver to take their eyes off the road and become involved in an automobile accident, said the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

WHEREAS The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute concluded that people who send text messages while driving are 23 times more likely to be in a crash (or what they call a near-crash event) than nondistracted drivers.

WHEREAS Research released by the Auto Club of Southern California shows that the texting while driving ban implemented in California in January 2009 appears to be reducing texting by drivers.

WHEREAS The usage of cell phones is growing among all ages and will continue to be a severe threat to all drivers on the road.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED A law in Michigan should be passed to ban texting while driving.

BE IT RESOLVED Drivers pulled over for another offense will face greater fines if found guilty of texting.

BE IT RESOLVED Although it is difficult to enforce, implementing a law will hopefully deter people from texting while driving.

BE IT RESOLVED Drivers who offend the law more than twice can face more severe penalties, such as suspension of license

BE IT RESOLVED Awareness campaigns, such as Heads Up Driving Week organized by AAA, and public service announcements should be funded by the state government as this is an extremely serious issue.

BE IT RESOLVED Unlike recent bills proposed in the House Committee, texting while driving would become a primary reason for police to pull drivers over.

License Renewal for the Elderly

Samantha Bubes, Zoe Rogovin, Samantha Leon

WHEREAS The National Motorists Association does not believe that the main cause of serious accidents involve poor vision, motor skills, or stiff joints. Instead, slips in judgement, understanding and memory are the tell-tale signs for a decline in driving ability.

WHEREAS Statistics show that the elderly are more likely than other drivers to receive traffic citations for failing to yield, turning improperly, and running red lights and stop signs. And, a person 65 or older who is involved in a car accident is more likely to be seriously hurt, more likely to require hospitalization, and more likely to die than younger people involved in the same crash. Lastly, fatal crash rates rise sharply after a driver has reached the age of 70.

WHEREAS Statistics show that in two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older and a younger driver, it is 3.1 times as likely that the vehicle driven by the older person will be struck.

WHEREAS Experts have found that two main groups have shown a higher incidence of car accidents. These groups are those aged from 16 to 20 who are inexperienced drivers and those who are 70 years or older. The elderly develop physiological manifestations that affect their driving ability.

WHEREAS There are many aging factors that affect elder drivers. These include loss of vision, slower reaction time, decrease in strength and motor skills, and lower tolerance to alcohol.

WHEREAS A NHTSA study of 1995 Fatal Accident Reporting System data reports that senior citizens accounted for 5% of all people injured in traffic crashes, 13% of all traffic fatalities, 13% of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 18% of all pedestrian fatalities.

WHEREAS On the basis of estimated annual travel, the fatality rate for drivers 85 and over is nine times as high as the rate for drivers 25 through 69 years old.

WHEREAS Road safety analysts predict that by 2030, when all baby boomers are at least 65, they will be responsible for 25% of all fatal crashes. In 2005, 11% of fatal crashes involved drivers that old.

WHEREAS "National statistics show that fatalities rose by 7 percent for drivers 75 and older from 1981 to 2000, remained steady for drivers from 65-74, but dropped for younger drivers."

WHEREAS Florida's requirement that drivers 80 and older pass a vision test resulted in the loss of a license for about 7% of elderly drivers seeking renewal, according to a study by the IIHS. And, nearly 20% of those 80 and older who needed to renew their license told researchers they decided to give up driving because they did not think they could pass the vision test.

WHEREAS The only measure scientifically proven to lower the rate of fatal crashes involving elderly drivers is forcing the seniors to appear at motor vehicle departments in person to renew their licenses, says the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), citing a 1995 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

WHEREAS A study was conducted in Maryland and found that drivers who performed poorly on cognitive tests, including basic commands and repeating simple movements, were 25% more likely than others to cause a crash.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED Drivers between the ages of 65 and 70 should take the following measures to renew their licenses in addition to a second road test: elderly drivers must get their eyes and ears checked annually, they must have an occupational therapist or rehabilitation specialist prescribe equipment to make it easier for elderly drivers to maintain control of the steering wheel and operate foot pedals, and levels of fatigue must be assessed.

BE IT RESOLVED California, which requires retesting for anyone involved in a fatal crash or three or more crashes in one year, requires drivers over 70 to retest if they are involved in two or more crashes in one year. The state of Michigan should enact a similar program in which drivers over the age of 65 are required to take a driving test annually to ensure that they meet state requirements.

BE IT RESOLVED The elderly can rely on many other forms of transportation, aside from driving themselves. They can use public transportation or have their family and friends drive them.

BE IT RESOLVED an elderly-drivers road test must take into consideration abrupt lane changes, braking or accelerating unnecessarily. Also, forgetting to use signals when changing lanes or driving in the shoulder. In addition, assessing reflexes, navigation issues and range-of-motion of the neck and body are important issues to determine whether the elderly driver is still a safe driver. Determining reaction time to other cars or involvement on the road and testing for increased anger or rage in the car are specific qualities that can lead to a decrease in safety of the elderly driver, passengers and other cars.

BE IT RESOLVED Most states do not require older drivers to renew licenses in person, and only two — Illinois and New Hampshire — require them to pass road tests, which can be crucial in identifying drivers whose physical ability or mental awareness has diminished.

BE IT RESOLVED Research shows that having the elderly renew their license can reduce death rates among people over 85 by nearly a fifth.

BE IT RESOLVED drivers over age 65 must get their license renewed every three years.

Mandatory bike helmets

Michael Wieder, Justin Winiarz

WHEREAS According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's 2004 estimates, bicyclists received about 151,000 head injuries that were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. Nearly 11,000 or 7 percent of those emergency room visits resulted in hospitalization.

WHEREAS Non-helmeted riders are 14 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than helmeted riders.

WHEREAS Helmets can prevent an estimated 75% of bicycle fatalities among children.

WHEREAS 85-88% of critical head and brain injuries can be prevented through the use of a bicycle helmet.

WHEREAS By wearing a helmet, an injury can be prevented every 4 minutes.

WHEREAS A bicyclist died every six hours in the year 2002.

WHEREAS Universal bicycle helmet use by children ages 4-15 can prevent 39,000-45,000 head injuries, and 18,000-55,000 scalp and face injuries annually.

WHEREAS In the year 2000, 90% of bicycle fatalities occurred to riders not wearing helmets.

WHEREAS 61% of bicycle fatalities occur in urban areas.

WHEREAS Between \$109 million and \$142 million could be saved if 85% of all child bicyclists wore helmets for one year.

WHEREAS Each year, the direct cost of bicycle injuries is about \$81 million, while the indirect cost is approximately \$2.3 billion.

WHEREAS Each year, over 600,000 people are treated in emergency departments for bicycle-related injuries and 824 die from this type of injury.

WHEREAS Every three days a child is killed from a fall off a bicycle.

WHEREAS Every day 100 children are treated in an emergency room for a severe head injury caused by a bicycle accident.

WHEREAS Despite the risks of injury or death, 25 percent of children ages 4 to 17 never wear a helmet.

WHEREAS According to the study, in 2006, 95 percent of all bicyclists killed were not wearing helmets.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED The policy will be enacted all over the State of Michigan and any law enforcement agent will be able to issue the fine.

BE IT RESOLVED Fines will be able to be paid online similar to the online parking ticket system that the City of Ann Arbor has.

BE IT RESOLVED Police will escort anybody not wearing a helmet home, so they do not ride their bicycle without a helmet.

BE IT RESOLVED The mandatory bicycle helmet law applies to all ages, not just children.

BE IT RESOLVED Every offense will be a fine of \$30.

BE IT RESOLVED The legal guardian of any minor is legally responsible for the child and the fines will be assessed to the guardian not the child.

Service Actions

Howell High School Students meet U of M MSC members --Jessica Scheiner

Donating Clothing to the homeless -- Brian Smith, Sean Sabin, Ryan Dolan

Mural Arts program for Michigan inner cities -- Connor Harlow, Steven Schlaack

Donating School Supplies -- Shelby Marie Donovan

BandAid Drive for Children's Hospital -- Amanda Fleischman, Kasey Rothkopf

Penny Wars to Buy Needy Children Holiday Presents -- John Kavchak

Students should get involved with cognitively impaired students -- Kristina Salenik

Volunteering at Gleaners Food Bank -- Veronica Shiemke