

Vanderberg, Alan

From: Jonathan Perman <jperman@thepermangroup.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 28, 2025 9:00 AM
To: Vanderberg, Alan
Subject: Referral/Invite from MI Rep. Carol Glanville, re: MI Legislative Exchange working dinner
Attachments: IPPSR MILE one pager04202025.pdf

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Institute for Public Policy and Social Research MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear Mr. Vanderberg:

The Michigan Legislative Exchange (MILE) at the MSU Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) and MI Rep. Carol Glanville would like to invite you to a working dinner with Grand Rapids business & civic leaders **on Thur., June 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at The Chop House, 190 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids** **Joining Rep. Glanville will be her guest MI Rep. John Roth from Interlochen.** Also invited are Stacy Behler, Grand Valley State Univ.; Guillermo Cisneros, West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Grand Rapids City Manager Mark Washington; Randy Thelen, The Right Place; and Kara Wood, Grand Action 2.0. The conversation will introduce Rep. Roth to the city/regional economic growth strategies that Grand Rapids has employed, and the role of state policy for urban areas.

This visit by Rep. Roth is the second MILE trip where starting this month, Republican and Democratic members of the Michigan state legislature are regularly traveling across the state to spend a day with a colleague from the opposite party in their district. The MILE enables members from opposite parties to visit each other's districts and build the cross-party relationships that are essential for problem solving in the legislature and Michigan. The program helps dignify differences, define common problems across blue and red districts, and identify shared interests between lawmakers. It allows regional and local civic, business, education, and faith leaders to connect with two members of the legislature. Most importantly, when the lawmakers return to Lansing, their new relationship and shared understanding leads to working more closely together, collaborating on legislation that would not have happened otherwise. Given the current challenges facing the MI state legislature, we and many others believe this program couldn't be more timely.

While in House District 84, Reps. Roth and Glanville will also visit with: regional business, labor, and civic leadership, health innovators, the Grandville Clean Water Plant, West Michigan Center for Arts & Technology, Grand Rapids Public Museum Archives, and other stops in the Grand Rapids area.

The concept is based on a very successful program called the [American Congressional Exchange \(ACE\)](#) sponsored by the [Bipartisan Policy Center \(BPC\)](#) in Washington, D.C. Since 2018. ACE has completed over 55 exchange trips with members of Congress and is recognized on Capitol Hill (and elsewhere) for its effectiveness in bridging differences and for the results that see participating members working together after they finish their visits. BTW, members of the MI delegation who have participated include: U.S. Reps. Jack Bergman and former Rep. Peter Meijer.

We would look forward to your attending on Thur., June 5. Attached is more information about the MILE initiative.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonathan Perman
Founder, Michigan Legislative Exchange
773-405-6312

Arnold Weinfeld
Associate Director, IPPSR
517-730-1548

Our acronym MILE comes from the celebrated phrase, "Walk a mile in his moccasins (shoes)", which is from a poem called "Judge Softly", by Michigan author, preacher, and suffragist Mary Lathrap (1838-1895), who led the Michigan State Woman Suffrage Association.



Advisory Board

Dave Dulio, Director, Center for Civic Engagement, Oakland Univ.

Brian Calley, President & CEO, Small Business Association of Michigan; Lt. Governor (2011-18), MI House (2007-2011)

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Rachel Richards, Fiscal Policy & Govt. Relations Director, MI League for Public Policy

Ken Sikkema, former legislator, served in both House & Senate (1987-2006)



MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE

The Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) at Michigan State University is **launching the Michigan Legislative Exchange (MILE)**: a first-in-the-nation, state-level, systematic approach to building trust across the political aisle. MILE is modeled after the successful American Congressional Exchange, launched in 2018 to advance bipartisanship among members of the U.S. Congress. Building on lessons learned from Congressional exchanges, this program will facilitate district-to-district relationships and understanding among Michigan state lawmakers.

Guiding principles:

- Trust must intentionally be built across the aisle as a precursor to solving problems.
- Legislators must listen to one another and understand what issues motivate and concern their colleagues.
- A shared experience based on close personal interactions helps bring state legislators together, identify shared values and goals, and find ways to work together on behalf of the people of Michigan.

Why?

Emerging from a divisive and polarized election season, the state of Michigan is currently characterized by a divided government and political parties increasingly at odds. Left unchecked, bitter gridlock and political acrimony will continue and the legislature will struggle to be productive.

How?

MILE will pair two legislators from opposite political parties to visit each other's districts, with special emphasis on bringing together districts that differ in areas such as geography, culture, politics, or community demographics.

MILE will aspire to dignify these differences, define common problems across communities, and identify shared interests and goals.

MILE trips will typically last 12-36 hours. Itineraries will be designed by IPPSR, in collaboration with the host legislator to showcase unique experiences, industries, businesses, and community leadership in their district.

Itineraries may include, but are not limited to, tours, roundtable conversations, meetings with local civic and community leaders and shared meals. Experiences such as these help legislators better understand the economic, social, political, and cultural make-up of a district. MILE will nurture authentic connections, relationships, and trust across differences.



MILE goals

1. **Identifying policy issues** of local, regional and state importance that legislators may be able to work on together and find bipartisan solutions.
2. **Encouraging and fostering deeper connections, relationships and trust** between legislators and key civic and community leaders across the state of Michigan.
3. **Learning and hearing about local challenges and opportunities** that may not be as well-known or understood in different parts of the state

Why IPPSR?

IPPSR is dedicated to applying research to pressing public policy issues and building problem-solving relationships between the academic and policymaker communities. IPPSR is uniquely suited to host the MILE program alongside its other highly successful education programs, including the Michigan Political Leadership Program and the Legislative Leadership Program.

IPPSR brings together a wide network of policymakers, policy experts, government professionals, and scholars to discuss and confront the most pressing issues for society today. A leading institution in the areas of social science research and public policy education, IPPSR is prepared to facilitate lasting relationships among Michigan legislators as they travel together and learn from one another.

Next Steps

IPPSR has vetted MILE with civic and community leaders, organizations, educational institutions, philanthropy, and businesses as well as received enthusiastic support from current and former state legislators. With start-up funding from two family foundations, we are identifying project partners, and **actively seeking financial support** from individuals, non-lobbying organizations/foundations in Michigan to sustain the MILE. Funding will provide support staff, travel costs and food, collateral materials, and communications needs.

On April 23, we announced our first legislative pairings; those exchanges will take place in the first half of 2025. IPPSR aspires to conduct a total of eight exchanges in 2025 and more in 2026.

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Ken Sikkema, *MI House (1987-1989), MI Senate (1999-2006), Majority Senate Leader (2003-06)*