



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Governor Whitmer Makes Appointments to Boards and Commissions

LANSING, Mich. — Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the following appointments to the Growing Michigan Together Council, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Executive Committee, Michigan Tax Tribunal, Michigan Board of Nursing, Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services, Manufactured Housing Commission, and Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity.

Growing Michigan Together Council

Ambassador John Rakolta, Jr. of Bloomfield Hills, is the chairman of Walbridge, a Detroit-based construction company and one of the largest contractors in the United States. The firm is consistently ranked as the top builder of automotive and manufacturing facilities in the country. He is also the former United States Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, having served from 2019-2021. Rakolta earned a Bachelor of Art in Civil Engineering from Marquette University and completed the Smaller Company Management Program at Harvard Business School. Ambassador Rakolta is named Co-Chair of the Council for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Shirley Stancato, of Detroit, was the longest serving president and chief executive officer of New Detroit Inc., metropolitan Detroit's leadership coalition devoted solely to race relations, serving as an essential forum for discussion and advocacy for racial equity. Stancato earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Wayne State University, where she currently serves on the Board of Governors. Stancato is named Co-Chair of the Council for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Linda Apsey, of Brighton, is President and CEO for ITC Holdings Corp. Apsey also served as the Manager of Transmission Policy and Business Planning for ITC. Ms. Apsey earned a Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in public affairs management from Michigan State University. Ms. Apsey is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Sandy Baruah, of Grosse Pointe Park, is the President and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber. He previously served President George W. Bush as administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration and as a U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce. Mr. Baruah earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Oregon and a Master of Business Administration from Willamette University. Mr. Baruah is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Brian Calley, of Portland, is President of the Small Business Association of Michigan. He has also served as Lieutenant Governor and as a state representative for the State of Michigan. Mr. Calley holds a Bachelor of Arts in business administration from Michigan State University, a Master of Business Administration from Grand Valley State University, and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University. Mr. Calley is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

JoAnn Chávez, of Ann Arbor, is the Founder of the Michigan Hispanic Collaborative, the President of the Michigan Hispanic Fund, and a board member for the Cristo Rey Network, the Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute. Chavez also serves as the Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer for DTE Energy. Previously, Chávez served as an international tax partner for KPMG LLP representing the interests of large multinational clients. Ms. Chávez earned a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Juris Doctor from the University of Notre Dame. Ms. Chavez is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Robert Coppersmith, of Laingsburg, is the Executive Vice President, MITA, Inc. Mr. Coppersmith holds a Bachelor in Human Resources from Spring Arbor University and Masters in Public Administration from Western Michigan University. Mr. Coppersmith is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Jeffrey Donofrio, of Detroit, is the president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan. Previously, Donofrio served as Director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), served as the Executive Director of Workforce Development for the City of Detroit, and as an executive at Ford Motor Company. Mr. Donofrio holds a Master of Business Administration from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy and Secondary Education from Michigan State University. Mr. Donofrio is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Patrick F. "Shorty" Gleason, of Davison, is a retired president and business agent for Michigan Iron Workers Local 25. He is also a Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council member and a Chairman of the Mackinaw Bridge Authority. Gleason is a graduate of Mott Community College. Mr. Gleason is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Anika Goss-Foster, of Detroit, is the CEO of Detroit Future City. She previously worked at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) for 16 years. Ms. Goss-Foster holds a Master of Social Work in community organizing from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's of sociology and African American studies from Purdue University. Ms. Goss-Foster is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Maha Freij, of South Lyon, is the President & Chief Executive Officer of ACCESS. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and economics from Hebrew University. Mrs. Freij is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Ollie Howie, of White Cloud, is the Managing Director of New Community Transformation Fund. Prior to this role, Howie was the Head of Finance at Afriex, an international money transfer platform. Mr. Howie received his Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Harvard University. Mr. Howie is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Santa Ono, of Ann Arbor, is the President of the University of Michigan. Previously, Dr. Ono served in major leadership roles at the Universities of Cincinnati and British Columbia. Mr. Ono is a graduate of the University of Chicago with a Bachelor of Science in Bioscience and earned his PhD in Experimental Medicine from McGill University, before continuing his research at Harvard and Johns Hopkins. Mr. Ono is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Bill Parfet, of Hickory Corners, is currently the Chairman and CEO of Northwood Group. Mr. Parfet has held numerous public company positions including Chairman of the Ujiohn Company (now a part of Pfizer) and Stryker, as well as a director for Monsanto Company, Consumers Energy, Bissel, Inc., and Taubman Company. Mr. Parfet is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Jennifer Root, of Howell, is the Executive Director for SEIU Michigan. She works on behalf of workers in four local unions and approximately 30,000 members. Ms. Root received her Bachelor of Arts in political science and women's studies from Indiana University and her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University School of Law. Ms. Root is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

Nickolai Vitti, of Detroit, is the Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools Community District. Additionally, he was named National Urban School District Superintendent of the Year in 2022. Mr. Vitti received a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Master of Arts in Education from Wake Forest University. He also holds a master's degree and a Doctorate in Education from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Mr. Vitti is appointed to represent the interests of the private sector, labor, workforce development and talent, infrastructure, non-profit or philanthropy, and education, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

The Growing Michigan Together Council will advise the governor on specific policies to grow Michigan's population, including identifying a population goal for 2050. The council will also look at ways to prepare Michigan's workforce for in-demand jobs and emerging industries by proposing initiatives to improve preK-12 educational outcomes and long-term funding solutions for higher education including financial aid. Additionally, to meet the needs of a growing, thriving population, the council will develop long-term, sustainable transportation and water infrastructure funding solutions.

Additional appointments, including four members of the legislative branch and two members with expertise in demography and economics, will be made in the weeks ahead. These appointments are not subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

MEDC Executive Committee

Santa Ono, of Ann Arbor, Ono is the President of the University of Michigan. Previously, Dr. Ono served in major leadership roles at the Universities of Cincinnati and British Columbia. Mr. Ono is a graduate of the University of Chicago with a Bachelor of Science in Bioscience and earned his PhD in Experimental Medicine from McGill University, before continuing his research at Harvard and Johns Hopkins. Dr. Ono is appointed to represent the public sector for a term commencing June 30, 2023 and expiring April 5, 2027.

The MEDC Executive Committee provides policy direction and guidance to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation regarding economic development program and initiatives, approves the MEDC corporate budget, and appoints the chief executive officer who administers all programs, funds, personnel, and all other administrative transactions of the MEDC. The MEDC Executive Committee supports the MEDC through governance, support to enable results-based action, and advocacy for the organization and economic development in Michigan.

This appointment is not subject to advice and consent of the Senate.

Michigan Tax Tribunal

Mark Perry, of Ann Arbor, is currently a member of the Michigan Tax Tribunal. Previously, he served as president of Perry & Co, a management consulting firm assisting with real estate transactions. He received his Bachelor of Science in business administration from Central Michigan University. Mr. Perry is reappointed to represent members-at-large, for a term commencing July 1 2023, and expiring June 30, 2027.

Joshua M. Wease, of Okemos, is currently a member of the Michigan Tax Tribunal. Previously, he served as a licensed attorney for the IRS and as a clinical professor of law at Michigan State University. He received his Bachelor of Science in Psychology, as well as his Juris Doctorate from Michigan State University. Mr. Wease is reappointed to represent attorneys for a term commencing July 1, 2023, and expiring June 30, 2027.

The Michigan Tax Tribunal is an administrative court that hears tax appeals for all Michigan taxes. Most of the Tribunal's appeals involve property tax; however, the Tribunal also hears business and individual tax disputes. The Tribunal is divided into two divisions: the "Entire Tribunal" and the "Residential Property and Small Claims" Division.

These appointments are subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

Michigan Board of Nursing

Elizabeth Horton, of Grand Blanc, is a registered nurse and field clinical liaison at Mary Free Bed Rehab Hospital. She also previously worked as director of business development at Select Medical Hospital. Ms. Horton received her associate degree in nursing from Mott Community College, her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from St. Mary's College, and a Master of Arts in Health Care Administration from Spring Arbor University.

Jessica Lannon, of Haslett, is a registered nurse working for Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, Michigan. While she has been with Sparrow since 2012, she previously worked as a registered nurse at the Okemos Rehabilitation Center. Lannon received her associates of applied science in nursing from Lansing Community College. Ms. Lannon is reappointed to represent registered professional nurses without a baccalaureate engaged in professional nursing practice or nursing administration, for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2027.

LeQuay Brown, of Detroit, is a licensed practical nurse with West Oaks Senior Care and Rehab. She holds a certified nursing assistant certificate from the Barnabas Health Care School and a diploma from the practical nursing program at Dorsey Schools. Ms. Brown is reappointed to represent licensed practical nurses, for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2027.

Carolyn Clemons, of Grand Blanc, is a nurse at Genesys Regional Medical Center, with over twelve years of direct patient care experience and ICU nursing experience. She received her Bachelor of Nursing at Ferris State University. Ms. Clemons is appointed to represent registered professional nurses with a baccalaureate degree engaged in nursing practice or nursing administration, for a term commencing June 30, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2025. She succeeds Kimberly Cox who has passed.

Kathryn MacLaren, of Lansing, is an adjunct professor at Lansing Community College. Prior to this role, she worked as an adjunct professor for Davenport University's nursing program. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Hope-Calvin and her Master of Nursing from Western Governor's University. Ms. MacLaren is appointed to represent registered professional nurse members with a master's degree from an accredited college and engaged in nursing education in less than a baccalaureate program, for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2027. She succeeds Deborah Vendittelli whose term has expired.

Debbie Edkopol, of Lansing, is the Director of Health Equity and Social Justice at Michigan Primary Care Association. Edkopol studied Criminal Justice at Eastern Michigan University before going onto earn her Bachelor of Arts degree in Family Studies from Spring Arbor University. She then earned her Master of Social Work from Michigan State University. Ms. Edkopol is appointed reappointed to represent the general public for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2027.

Melissa Boals, of Traverse City, is a registered nurse and patient care manager at Munson Medical Care. She also has experience in the emergency room as a nurse and is the past director of the Michigan Nurses Association. Ms. Boals received her associate degree in applied science from Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Ms. Boals is appointed to represent registered professional nurses without a baccalaureate engaged in professional nursing practice or nursing administration, for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2027. She succeeds Omar Saleh whose term has expired.

Maria Ditmeyer, of Frankenmuth, is the Dean of the College for Health and Human Services at Saginaw Valley State University in Saginaw, MI. She previously worked as an Associate Dean and a professor at the University of Nevada. Ditmeyer earned her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Wayne State University, her MBA from Central Michigan University, a Master of Science in Community Health and Wellness Promotion from the California College for Health Sciences, and her PhD from the University of Toledo. Ms. Ditmeyer is appointed to represent registered professional nurses with a master's degree from an accredited college and engaged in nursing education in a baccalaureate or higher program, for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and expiring June 30, 2027. She succeeds Donna Carnahan whose term has expired.

The Michigan Board of Nursing was created to establish qualifications for nurse licensure, to establish standards for education and approve nurse education programs, develop, and implement criteria for assurance of continued competency, and take disciplinary action against licensees when the health, safety, and welfare of the public has been adversely affected.

These appointments are subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services

Trina Edmondson, of Six Lakes, is the Workforce Development Manager and Veteran Supports Coordinator at Disability Advocates of Kent County. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies from Davenport University. Mrs. Edmondson is appointed to represent disability advocacy groups, for a term commencing June 29, 2023, and expiring June 28, 2026.

Khodr Farhat, of Dearborn, is the Community Engagement Coordinator for Meridian Health Plan and volunteers as Publicity Chair with the Foundation Fighting Blindness. Farhat was born blind and is a human rights advocate and public speaker on disability rights in Michigan. Farhat holds an associate degree in special Education from Henry Ford College and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Michigan. Mr. Farhat is appointed to represent disability advocacy groups, for a term commencing June 29, 2023, and expiring June 28, 2026.

Karen Wang, of Northville, is a Transition Specialist at the Michigan Alliance for Families. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Classic from Cornell University, and a Master of Arts in Classic from the University of Michigan. Ms. Wang is appointed to represent parent training and information centers established under Section 671 of the individuals with Disabilities Education Act, for a term commencing June 29, 2023, and expiring December 31, 2023.

Shana Lewis, of Lansing, is the executive director of talent acquisition and workforce programs for Trinity Health. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Management from Cornerstone University. Ms. Lewis is appointed to represent the Michigan Workforce Development Board, for a term commencing June 29, 2023, and expiring June 28, 2026.

Jeanne Anderson Tippet, of Holt, is Special Education Consultant at the Michigan Department of Education. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from the University of Akron, and a master's degree in special education from Western Michigan University. Ms. Anderson Tippet appointed to represent a designee of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for a term commencing June 29, 2023, and expiring at the pleasure of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services reviews, analyzes and advises Michigan's rehabilitation programs and services, and advises the department director and Governor. The Council works in partnership with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs' Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (LEO-BSBP).

These appointments are not subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

Manufactured Housing Commission

Thomas Krehel, of Davison, is a regional sales representative for Green State Credit Union. Tom received his associate degree in business management from Lansing Community College. Mr. Krehel is appointed to represent financial institutions, for a term commencing June 29, 2023 and expiring May 9, 2026. He succeeds Jason Hyska whose term has expired.

The Manufactured Housing Commission is responsible for establishing uniform policy relating to all phases of manufactured housing, business, manufactured housing parks, and seasonal manufactured housing parks. The Commission has the legal authority to approve local governmental ordinances which would regulate manufactured housing, grant variances to the Manufactured Housing Commission Rules, approve licenses for manufactured home installer/servicers and retailers, and impose penalties on persons who have violated the Mobile Home Commission Act or Rules.

These appointments are subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity

Tiffany Brown-Mayers, of Flint, is a HiLo driver at General Motors CCA. Previous to this she spent 12 years in the US Army where she served tours in Iraq and South Korea. She currently serves as president of the Atherton East Apartments Tenants Council and is a member of the Flint Housing Commission. Ms. Brown-Mayers is appointed to represent low-income persons, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring June 21, 2026.

Carolyn Bloodworth, of Jackson, is the Executive Director of Corporate Giving at Consumers Energy/CMS Energy. She serves on the board of directors for Habitat for Humanity and is a member of the Michigan Nonprofit Association. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Management of Human Resources from Spring Arbor University. Ms. Bloodworth is appointed to represent the private sector, for a term commencing June 30, 2023, and expiring June 21, 2026.

Miinda Yeasi, of Grand Rapids, is the CEO of Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women. She also serves as City Commissioner for the 2nd Ward of Grand Rapids. She is the co-founder of the Latina Network of West Michigan and serv