

State Government Needs New Leadership and a Different Direction, says Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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As Michigan continues to suffer one of the highest unemployment rates in the country and our economy remains mired in what is often described as a one-state recession, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce today called for new leadership and a different direction for state government in its endorsement of Dick DeVos for governor.

"This election year there is a clear and compelling difference between the candidates for governor," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett. "One candidate has a proven track record of accomplishment as a business CEO and community leader who transformed a Michigan-based manufacturing company into a successful global competitor. The other candidate was elected with great promise, but her performance has fallen far short of the decisive leadership state government needs during this critical economic period.

"The Michigan Chamber supports Dick DeVos for governor because he knows from personal experience what it takes to create jobs in Michigan," Barrett continued. "The state of Michigan has economic challenges that can best be solved by a decisive business leader.

"The Granholm campaign claims to have an economic plan, but the fact is, Jennifer Granholm has repeatedly failed to support Michigan's job providers, Barrett noted. "Over the past four years, Gov. Granholm has vetoed many pro- business bills covering key issues such as taxes, health care, and regulatory relief."

"Last year, Gov. Granholm proposed a job-killing \$1 billion business tax shift which even her administration acknowledged would have raised taxes on over 22,000 employers across the state," said Rich Studley, Executive Vice President of the Michigan Chamber.

"In 2005, Governor Granholm proposed a bond issue that would have saddled Michigan taxpayers with over \$2 billion in debt with no guarantee that this government spending would diversify the economy or create jobs," Studley added. "And, she has advocated numerous tax and fee increases that fortunately have been rejected or modified by Republican majorities in the Michigan House and Senate.

"Earlier this year, Gov. Granholm vetoed a bill to repeal Michigan's burdensome Single Business Tax; supported an effort by trial lawyers to roll back a key provision of Michigan's products liability law; and was a leading proponent of one of the most extreme proposals in the country to raise the state's minimum wage annually by writing it into the state constitution," said Studley.

"And more recently, she has proposed government competition with private companies to provide 401(k) plans to small business and interjected the state in a plan to endorse certain retailers in the sale of computer hardware and software to the public.

"Another aspect in this year's campaign for governor is that Dick DeVos has demonstrated the capability to win," said Robert LaBrant, Senior Vice President of Political Affairs for the Michigan Chamber. "The DeVos campaign is well run, adequately financed, and off to a strong start as evidenced by several recent statewide public opinion polls that show the incumbent and challenger already locked in a close race."

The Michigan Chamber is a statewide business organization, which represents more than 6,800 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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