

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Supports Amending State Constitution to Protect Private Property Rights

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The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today reaffirmed its longstanding position of protecting private property rights by announcing its support for Senate Joint Resolution E (SJR E) -- a proposed amendment to the Michigan Constitution that, if approved by voters in the November 2006 general election, would prohibit local units of government from taking private property for the transfer of ownership to a private entity for the purpose of economic development or enhancement of tax revenue.

"Private property rights are fundamental in a social system based on individual freedom and personal responsibility and are inextricably linked to economic prosperity," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett.

SJR E stipulates that if an individual's principal residence is taken for public use, the landowner must be reimbursed at least 125 percent of fair market value. The amendment further adds that if the taking of property is for the eradication of blight, the local unit of government must demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the taking is for a public use. The amendment also stipulates that all rights as of November 1, 2005 shall be preserved.

"Private property rights are part of the foundation of democracy and our system of free enterprise," said John D. Pirich, Chair of the Michigan Chamber Board of Directors. "Given the recent actions of the United States Supreme Court in *Kelo v. City of New London*, it is critical that Michigan move ahead to protect citizens' rights to private property." Pirich is a partner with the Lansing law firm of Honigman, Miller, Schwartz & Cohn.

The Michigan Chamber Board of Directors voted unanimously to support SJR E at a meeting held yesterday in Lansing.

"The Michigan Chamber applauds State Senator Tony Stamas (R-Midland) and State Representative Leon Drolet (R-St. Clair Shores) for their leadership in guiding this important constitutional change through the legislative process," said Doug Roberts, Jr., Director of Environmental & Energy Policy for the Michigan Chamber. "We look forward to working with these lawmakers and other defenders of private property rights to pass this proposal on the November 2006 ballot."

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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