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2017 Peter Pettalia Memorial Sunshine Award Winners Announced by Michigan Press

The Michigan Press Association announced a name change for the annual award honoring Michigan legislators for supporting transparency in Government. From now on, the award will be called the “Peter Pettalia Memorial Sunshine Award.” The name change is a nod of respect to former legislator Representative Peter Pettalia who was killed in a motorcycle accident last fall. Rep. Pettalia was a vocal advocate for newspapers and open government and one of the first recipients of the award.

The following legislators have been chosen as this year’s recipients:

-Representative Jim Tedder (R-Clarkston) a second term Representative has been a strong supporter of open government and transparency as well as journalism during his career in Lansing. He is a co-sponsor of a package of bills moving through the House which would remove FOIA exemptions from the Governor’s office and the legislature.

-Representative Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) who is also serving his second term has been a proponent of open records, government accountability and available citizen information throughout his years in the House.

-Senator Rick Jones (R-Grand Ledge), a second term Senator who supports the First Amendment and sponsored the “student free press and civics readiness act” last year which would provide protections for student journalists. He will be reintroducing the bill this session.

These individuals continuously demonstrate their belief that government transparency is important to a strong democracy.

The Michigan Press Association chose these legislators for this award based on their continuing efforts to improve citizens’ information regarding their government in Michigan, and their leadership in promoting the importance of available and accessible public notices in keeping Michigan’s citizens informed about government activity. These actions directly support MPA’s mission of defending free speech, promoting a strong press and fostering an informed citizenry.

“The media needs legislators like these who will battle for a more open government, better FOIA legislation and who believe that open government is good government,” said MPA Public Policy Committee Chairman Dirk Milliman. “We applaud them and their efforts in Lansing and are proud to present them with a Sunshine Award for their continued work to include the people of Michigan in the governmental process. “

The 2017 Peter Pettalia Sunshine Awards will be presented to these legislators by Chairman Milliman this spring.