



2023 Michigan Press Association Sunshine Award Winners

Michigan Press Association Announces 2023 Rep. Peter Pettalia Memorial Sunshine Award Winners to Kick Off Sunshine Week in Michigan
For immediate release 3/13/2023.

For more information contact: Lisa McGraw lisa@michiganpress.org

The Michigan Press Association annually gives the Rep. Peter Pettalia Memorial Sunshine Award to public servants that strive to promote and protect transparency in government. The award is named after former State Representative Peter Pettalia of Presque Isle who embodied all good things in governing especially support of the citizens in his community and an understanding of the importance of keeping them informed through a transparent government.

This year's recipients are State Senator Sylvia Santana (D-Warrendale) and recently retired Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack.

Senator Santana has demonstrated her support of open government in various ways throughout her legislative career in the House and the Senate. In 2022 she sponsored legislation that would create better public notice by requiring newspapers to post this information on their websites and a statewide website. This legislation retained the important element of notice by still requiring print notices in local newspapers. She is also on record supporting subjecting the Governor and the legislature to FOIA in Michigan.

Former Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack championed openness throughout her career on the court. She notably led the creation of a task force to improve accessibility to court activity through Zoom during and after the Covid-19 crisis. She also supported release of records and open meetings in a 2021 redistricting commission case involving a closed meeting.

"It is our hope that all public officials strive to maintain a transparent government for Michigianians," says Dirk Milliman, Public Policy Committee Chair for the MPA. "The taxpayers are best served when sunlight shines on government activity and promotes a strong understanding of our democracy and how it works."

Sunshine Week is the annual nationwide celebration of access to public information and what it means for you and your community. It will be celebrated this year from March 12-18 Keep an eye on your local newspapers to see what you can do to shine light on Michigan.