



For more information contact: Lisa McGraw lisa@michiganpress.org, 313-247-9859
For immediate release 3/17/2025.

Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks is the 2025 Michigan Press Association *Peter Pettalia Memorial Sunshine Award Winner.*

The Michigan Press Association annually gives the Peter Petallia 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, Michigan Press Association has decided to give the award to Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks D-Grand Rapids. Because of her leadership the removal of exemptions from FOIA for the governor and legislature became the number one priority of the Senate this year and passed the chamber in quick order.

“MPA has been trying to move this legislation for a decade. Leader Brinks has supported the legislation every time it has come before her for a vote during her legislative career” said MPA Public policy Co-Chair Brad Thompson of Detroit News Legal Publishing. “Her understanding that transparency better serves her constituents than secrecy is appreciated” added MPA Public Policy Co-Chair Jim Schaefer of the Detroit Free Press.

“The citizens of Michigan deserve greater transparency to know how their tax dollars are spent and avoid the scandals by elected officials seen in recent years. We appreciate SML Brinks making this a priority in the State Senate and hope Speaker Hall follows suit quickly in the House” stated MPA Executive Director James Tarrant. “We appreciate all her hard work to move the State of Michigan out of last place in transparency.”

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 16-22. Keep an eye on your local newspapers to see what you can do to encourage sunshine in your community.