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MPA sounds alarm on threats to transparency on Tax Day

Press Association calls on lawmakers to preserve important requirements for public notices and disclosure that protect and inform taxpayers.

LANSING — On Tax Day, the **Michigan Press Association** (MPA) is sounding the alarm about threats to roll back key transparency measures that help Michiganders know how their tax dollars are being spent.

Along with the Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act, public notice requirements in Michigan help hold government officials accountable to the people they are elected to serve. That includes providing information about important tax proposals, municipal budgets, and proposed developments that may affect them and their families.

“By requiring public notices be published in independent local newspapers, Michigan promotes transparency, accountability and helps ensure communities have access to government actions, hearings and decisions that impact their daily lives, including their tax dollars,” said **Lisa McGraw, Public Policy Manager** with MPA and the Public Notice Resource Center. “With Michigan already consistently ranking among the worst states in the country for government transparency, state lawmakers should focus on improving transparency, not making it worse.”

The MPA continues to call on Michigan’s elected leaders to halt ongoing efforts that could remove requirements for governments and other public institutions to publish essential information about decision-making impacting their pocket-books in newspapers through public and legal notices.

Public notices often include information about budgets, financial reports and municipal projects that provide insight into the programs and projects that use taxpayer dollars. These notices are important transparency requirements that help keep the public aware of the actions of elected

officials and allow them to weigh in on decisions that can directly affect property taxes, utility costs or business expenses.

Legal notices also affect taxpayers' lives with information about foreclosures, estate settlements and changes in local laws, which can alert residents to potential impacts on their property values and protect residents from scams and fraud that could cause them long-term financial damage. Newspapers are widely accessible and create a record of notices that help ensure legal procedures are followed.

“Michigan's public notices requirements are one of the most important tools we have for maintaining transparency in how our precious tax dollars are spent,” said **Brad Thompson**, President of Detroit Legal News Publishing as well as Co-Chair of the MPA Public Policy Committee. “They help ensure property owners and taxpayers are informed about assessments, rate changes and government spending decisions. These requirements must be protected so all Michigan taxpayers can understand or challenge decisions that could impact their personal finances or their tax bills.”

Learn more about the importance of public and legal notices on the [Michigan Press Association website](#).

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