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“Compete to Win” – Business Leaders for Michigan charts path to make Michigan a more prosperous, thriving state

Plan outlines how government, community, education and business leaders can advance Michigan’s economic growth

DETROIT, May 23, 2022 – Business Leaders for Michigan today released **“Compete to Win: Michigan’s Path to Top 10,”** a plan that lays out a strategy for Michigan to become a leading state for economic growth.

“Compete to Win,” which is backed by the state’s top CEOs and university presidents who compose Business Leaders’ board, notes that while Michigan has made significant gains since the Great Recession, moving to 29th from 49th, the state still struggles to compete. Important challenges remain to improve our standings in labor force participation, poverty, median household income and educational attainment.

“In the decade following the Great Recession, Michigan made great strides, improving the business climate and economic growth of our state,” said Jeff Donofrio, president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan. “Getting from the bottom of the pack to the middle was an accomplishment – getting from the middle to the top will be harder and will take all of us coming together. We must be clear-eyed about the challenges ahead and be bold in addressing them. We need long-term strategies aimed at making us more competitive and big investments to improve systems and help people, businesses, and communities compete to win.”

The research and data-driven recommendations in “Compete to Win” focus on four priority areas:

- **Do better by our kids**
 - Enact near-term changes to accelerate improvement to the K-12 system
 - Transform our K-12 system so that we leave no student behind and a high school diploma represents a universal high standard

- **Invest in people**
 - Remove barriers to economic success for Michiganders to enter the workforce and progress in their career
 - Improve connections between learning and careers to ensure individuals have quality jobs and employers have access to talent
 - Increase the number of workers with high-demand credentials, skills and degrees to improve income and quality of life of Michiganders
 - Attract and retain workers to Michigan to grow our population and talent base

- **Accelerate our economy**
 - Drive a consistent and competitive state economic development strategy across political terms
 - Become a leading state for business attraction and retention
- **Get the fundamentals right**
 - Ensure a competitive cost of doing business and good governance, which will continue to make us an attractive place to do business
 - Invest in infrastructure
 - Make Michigan a destination for people and employers

“Michigan’s opportunity is clear,” said Howard Ungerleider, Dow president and CFO, and Business Leaders of Michigan chairman. “A consistent, long-standing strategy will enable our state to become a leader in world-class education and economic development that drives business growth, a highly skilled workforce, and strong quality of life for residents. The transformational investments we make today have the ability to accelerate Michigan to a Top 10 state.”

“Compete to Win” uses Business Leaders’ latest [benchmarks](#) released in January 2022, which provide a holistic view of how well all Michiganders are succeeding. The benchmarks informed the recommendations on how Michigan’s people, businesses and communities can better compete against leading states for economic growth. The current Top 10 states include Utah, Washington, Colorado, Texas, Massachusetts, Virginia, California, Oregon, Florida and Arizona.

Closing equity gaps is threaded throughout the plan’s recommendations, a fundamental imperative to creating a state where there is a healthy economy and widely shared prosperity. The plan calls for equity funding in K-12 education, removing barriers to success such as affordable and accessible housing options, childcare, transportation, and broadband access, and creating attractive communities that are welcoming to all.

“We must focus on what’s important to make this state better tomorrow than it is today. There’s no silver bullet to solve systemic issues,” Donofrio said. “If we want widely shared prosperity and a healthy economy, we must act with urgency and focus our attention on what it will take for every Michigander to be successful.”

[Download the full report here.](#)

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About Business Leaders for Michigan:

Business Leaders for Michigan, the state’s business roundtable, is dedicated to making Michigan a Top 10 state for jobs, education, widely shared prosperity and a healthy economy. The organization is composed exclusively of the chairpersons and the executive leaders of Michigan’s largest companies and universities. Our members drive nearly 40% of the state’s economy, generate over \$1 trillion in annual revenue and serve nearly half of all Michigan public university students. Find out more at www.businessleadersformichigan.com.