

Commentary: How state lawmakers can keep moving Michigan forward

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Credit: Dale G. Young, Crain's Detroit Business

By Blake W. Krueger and Mike Jandernoa

Business Leaders For Michigan's 2024 [Top 10 Benchmarking Report](#) places Michigan at 27th nationally — a reminder that we have progress to make. Lawmakers have a critical opportunity to improve the lives of our residents and elevate our ranking by focusing on bipartisan solutions to improve the quality of our infrastructure, education outcomes, talent availability and economic growth. However, they must avoid enacting legislation that adds complexity and costs to doing business in Michigan.

To become a Top 10 state for jobs, talent and a thriving economy, we must accelerate efforts to:

- Create a competitive business climate
- Improve K-12 education
- Attract and retain top talent
- Foster an innovation-driven economy



Mike Jandernoa

Unfortunately, a number of current proposals in Lansing risk undermining this progress. If enacted, these bills would increase costs for businesses and consumers, jeopardizing Michigan's standing and reversing the hard-won gains of the last decade. Let's not forget where we were in 2009, when Michigan ranked near the bottom — 49th or 50th — on most measures. Protecting our progress requires prioritizing stability, competitiveness and accountability.

The message from the last election was clear: voters are frustrated by rising costs of everyday essentials. To address these concerns and



sustain economic momentum, policymakers must focus on reducing costs and complexity for businesses of all sizes—and the consumers they serve.



Blake Krueger

A pressing priority before the legislative session ends is fixing the Earned Sick Time and Tipped Wage laws, set to take effect in February 2025. As it stands, the laws are unworkable for small businesses and would likely reduce employee benefits, as well as decrease jobs, especially in restaurants. More than 70 business organizations across Michigan agree that critical changes are needed to make the law fair and functional for all stakeholders.

With global disruptions and uncertainty, Michigan’s progress remains fragile. By doubling down on bipartisan policies that expand prosperity and opportunity for Michiganders and enhance our economic fundamentals, we can ensure our state remains an attractive place to live, work and grow. Together, let’s propel Michigan closer to the Top 10—and keep it there.

*Blake W. Krueger is the retired executive chairman of Wolverine World Wide Inc. Mike Jandernoa is the founder and chairman of 42 North Partners. Both Krueger and Jandernoa are executive committee members on the **Business Leaders For Michigan** Board of Directors.*

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