

**MACKINAC CENTER**  
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sessa,

Detroit's legacy will be inextricably linked with Michigan and the legacy of today's leaders. The eyes of the nation are on Detroit; our actions today will influence cities across the country tomorrow. All this underscores the importance of adopting policies that will contribute to Detroit's long-term viability and renewal. Fiscal Policy Director Michael LaFaive provides recommendations for making Detroit business-friendly and reviews what can be learned from Pontiac's experience under an emergency manager. Read more at [www.mackinac.org/detroit](http://www.mackinac.org/detroit).

Education Policy Director Audrey Spalding spent a year talking to teachers, students and parents in the Highland Park school district. After years of a dismal track record, the district had been converted to a system of public charter schools. What happened? In the first year, Highland Park schools are undergoing a transformation. Students showed significant academic growth, the schools are cleaner and teachers are more engaged. Said one parent-volunteer whose two children have 4.0 GPAs: "Even after my kids graduate I'll still come back and help this school."

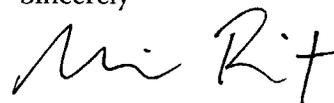
Spalding also published a study analyzing the migration of public school students who take advantage of the Schools of Choice program, which allows students to enroll in a different school within their district or in an adjoining district. Enrollment of Schools of Choice students is up by 144 percent over the last 10 years, and students generally chose districts that have higher graduation rates and higher test scores than the school they left. The study recommends eliminating geographic limitations on Schools of Choice and requiring all Michigan districts to offer a minimum number of seats for Schools of Choice students.

Over-criminalization is a problem recognized by civil libertarians, free-market advocates, Republicans and Democrats alike. One solution is to eliminate crimes on the books that no longer serve a good purpose. The Mackinac Center recently published a study titled "Criminal Minds: Defining Culpability in Criminal Statutes." In keeping with centuries of legal tradition, the study proposes a reform that would clarify the element of intent in criminal statutes.

Talk of a minimum wage hike in Michigan is in the air; gubernatorial candidate Mark Schauer floated a proposal to raise the state's minimum wage to \$9.25. Michael LaFaive published the enclosed Viewpoint reviewing the arguments against minimum wage increases. As he says, the evidence shows that such increases cause great economic harm and minimize employment opportunities. Expect more on that topic this year.

Thank you for using the Mackinac Center as a resource!

Sincerely



Michael J. Reitz

Executive Vice President