LETTER FROM THE CEO

THE SMALL BUSINESS AGENDA, PRESENTED BY THE SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (SBAM), IS INTENDED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, “WHAT DOES SMALL BUSINESS NEED FROM OUR STATE POLICY MAKERS?” ELECTED OFFICIALS OFTEN REFER TO SMALL BUSINESS AS THE ENGINE OF OUR ECONOMY AND WE AGREE. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE DEVELOPED THIS PRO-ACTIVE POLICY AGENDA TO GIVE DIRECTION AND INSIGHT FROM MICHIGAN’S SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS.

THIS AGENDA IS THE CULMINATION OF YEARS OF WORK BY FIVE OF SBAM’S VOLUNTEER-LED TASK FORCES IN THE AREAS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP, RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA, HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT, TALENT AND STATE PROCUREMENT.

THE MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCES WHOSE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE PRESENTED HERE HAVE LISTENED TO EXPERT PRESENTATIONS, CONDUCTED RESEARCH AND ENGAGED IN THOUGHTFUL DISCUSSION AS THEY WORKED TOWARD FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS. I WANT TO THANK OUR SMALL-BUSINESS OWNER MEMBERS FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO THE TASK FORCE WORK.

GOING FORWARD, WE WILL EMPLOY THE ADVOCACY TEAM AT SBAM AND OUR GRASSROOTS EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT THIS AGENDA FOR SMALL BUSINESS IN MICHIGAN. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH PRO-SMALL BUSINESS LAWMAKERS IN BOTH PARTIES AND THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONTINUE TO MAKE MICHIGAN A BETTER PLACE TO START AND GROW A BUSINESS.

[Signature]

ROB FOWLER
PRESIDENT & CEO
SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN SMALL BUSINESSES BRING INNOVATION AND RESOURCES THAT SERVE THE STATE OF MICHIGAN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION. OUR SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY MAKES UP OVER 98% OF BUSINESSES IN MICHIGAN, AND EMPLOYS NEARLY 50% OF ALL WORKERS.

CREATE A PROGRAM THAT ENCOURAGES AND SUPPORTS SMALL BUSINESSES TO PURSUE PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS BY WHICH STATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS CAN CERTIFY AND CONFIRM ELIGIBLE MICHIGAN SMALL BUSINESSES.

DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO TRACK AND MEASURE CONTRACTS AND DOLLARS AWARDED TO MICHIGAN SMALL BUSINESSES.

“SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND PRODUCTS NEEDED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. SBAM’S PROCUREMENT TASK FORCE CONNECTED SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND PROCUREMENT EXPERTS TO ENHANCE CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN MICHIGAN. SBAM’S CREDIBILITY ENSURES OUR SOLUTIONS ARE HEARD.”

- SUE TELLIER - CO-OWNER, JETCO SOLUTIONS MEMBER - SBAM’S PROCUREMENT TASK FORCE
HEALTH CARE

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DIFFERENTIATE HEALTH CARE (THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES) FROM HEALTH INSURANCE (HOW IT IS PAID FOR). AS ADVOCATES FOR TRUE HEALTH CARE REFORM, SBAM BELIEVES THAT THERE MUST BE A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION OF HEALTH CARE DECISIONS AND THE DELIVERY SYSTEM, INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ONLY ON THE PAYMENT.

HEALTH CARE MUST BE TRANSPARENT. SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES MUST HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF COST, QUALITY AND OPTIONS AVAILABLE.

OPPOSE MANDATES THAT REDUCE THE ABILITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES TO OFFER HEALTH CARE TO THEIR EMPLOYEES.

UPDATE STATE STATUTE WITH REGARD TO SCOPE OF PRACTICE TO REFLECT CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGIES AND THE NECESSARY ROLES AND ADAPTATIONS NEEDED IN OUR STATE’S PRIMARY CARE SERVICES.

"WE CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR TRUE HEALTH CARE REFORM (INVOLVING BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH) ON BOTH THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL. INSTEAD OF THE RECURRING FOCUS ON THE PAYMENT PROCESS, WE MUST ENGAGE IN A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION OF HEALTH CARE DECISIONS AND THE DELIVERY SYSTEM. THE PUBLIC POLICY DISCUSSION NEEDS TO RESHAPE THE DEBATE TO HOW WE CAN MAKE THINGS COST LESS BY DELIVERING HIGHER QUALITY CARE, INCREASING ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY, REDUCING WASTE AND ENGAGING THE INDIVIDUAL TO TAKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE DECISIONS."

- GREG BROGAN, MANAGING PARTNER - BROGAN, REED, VAN GORDER AND ASSOCIATES
CHAIR - SBAM’S HEALTHCARE TASKFORCE
“Perhaps my biggest “aha” moment from the work we did on the Talent Task Force was understanding the vast differences in talent acquisition issues across the state. While it is true that most small businesses are struggling to find talent right now, the reasons why they struggle vary greatly from region to region, company to company.

It became clear to us that a “one size fits all” approach to solving this issue for small businesses just won’t work. We came to believe that regionally based, public-private partnerships could offer some real potential in solving the talent crisis that currently plagues Michigan’s small businesses.”

- Sheri Welsh, President - Welsh & Associates
Chair - SBAM’s Talent Task Force
RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

SBAM DESIRES TO MITIGATE RISKS THAT RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA POSES TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS, TO UNDERSTAND THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS TO BUSINESSES WHERE STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS DIFFER, ALL WHILE LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL BUSINESS IN THIS NEW MARKET.

☑️ ENSURE BUSINESSES RETAIN THE ABILITY TO BE A DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE.

🔍 REMOVE FEDERAL LIMITATIONS ON RESEARCH AND ENCOURAGE THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE EFFECT OF MARIJUANA AND MEASURE IMPAIRMENT.

💰 SEEK CHANGES WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW FOR LEGALIZED BANKING OF THE INDUSTRY.

📈 ALLOW FOR A COMPETITIVE MARKET THAT PROVIDES MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

“WE DO NOT HAVE A POSITION ON THE LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA FOR MEDICAL OR RECREATIONAL USAGE, BUT WE RECOGNIZE THAT WITH THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY, THERE ARE BOTH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MICHIGAN’S SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE THE ABILITY TO THRIVE IN THIS NEW INDUSTRY AS WELL AS HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE POTENTIAL RISKS THAT MAY ARISE IN THEIR BUSINESSES AFTER FULL LEGALIZATION.”

- BILL GRUBB, OWNER - STAR EMS CHAIR - SBAM’S MARIJUANA TASK FORCE
Entrepreneurship

In order to accelerate small business growth, support is needed to help encourage and facilitate these strategies.

- Develop a one-stop-shop to assist small business owners in navigating state programs.
- Set up a cabinet-level position in the governor’s office to help drive innovation and support small business policy.
- Support acceleration services for second-stage businesses and provide ongoing growth oriented services and training.
- Facilitate alumni services to meet the needs of second-stage growth companies that have met certain eligibility standards.
- Implement matchmaking initiatives for mentors, consultants and other resources.
- Design official performance metrics focused on small businesses for the MEDC that track outcomes of state investments.
- Create a comprehensive strategy for public and private funding for small business resources and service providers.

“Using real data from Michigan small business owners was instrumental in creating our set of recommendations. Our task force collaborated with the Michigan small business development center, the Edward Lowe Foundation, the MEDC and several universities to create an annual statewide business survey giving thousands of business owners the opportunity to provide specific input on Michigan’s business climate. The work culminated in this comprehensive policy paper can be used to shape the policy agenda for Michigan’s gubernatorial and legislative candidates — sharing what our small business employers and taxpayers need to grow.”

- Neil Sheridan, Owner - SVPI LLC Chair - SBAM’s Entrepreneurship Task Force