



community foundation

ANTRIM · BENZIE · GRAND TRAVERSE · KALKASKA · LEELANAU

June 20, 2023

Representative Cynthia Neeley
Chair, Tax Policy Committee
Michigan House of Representatives

Dear Chair Neeley and Members of the Tax Policy Committee:

My name is David Mengebier, and I am the President and CEO of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, chair-elect of the Council of Michigan Foundation's Board of Trustees and co-chair of CMI's Government Relations/Public Policy Committee. I am writing to express my foundation's strong support for legislation reestablishing the charitable tax credit for donations to endowed funds at community foundations and gifts to food banks and homeless shelters.

The Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation has more than 350 funds, 95% of which are endowed. Our funds award scholarships to students pursuing a post-secondary degree or professional certification in a skilled trade, and grants to non-profits supporting educational, youth and family, environmental, arts and culture and health and human service programs in our five-county service area. In 2022, we awarded \$2.7 million in endowed grants.

The beauty of endowment is that we will award nearly \$3 million in grants again this year, next year and every year hereafter, forever. The donors to our endowed funds understand that when they make a gift, they are leaving a lasting legacy for the communities where they live and work. They understand the powerful notion of endowment that long after they are gone, the gifts they made to the foundation will continue to provide financial support for students, non-profit organizations and causes they cared so deeply about.

Our community foundation like many others in the Michigan philanthropic community is committed to treating our non-profit partners and our donors fairly and equitably. In the context of the debate over restoring Michigan's charitable tax credit, we know from research conducted by the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University that the tax credit provides a strong incentive to first-time and moderate income donors to engage in charitable giving. And so from an equity perspective, the charitable tax credit is an important mechanism that empowers all donors - not simply those who are well off - to make a critical difference in the lives of the people in their communities.



On behalf of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation and CMI, I urge you to support this important legislation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Mengebier
President and CEO
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