

# Where He Stands: *Limited Government*



**O**ur government exists to serve the people, not the other way around. All too often, the government forgets that lesson and burdens our citizens with mountains of unnecessary rules, regulations and restrictions. That trend must stop. Our economy cannot continue to thrive in the 21st century if entrepreneurs and small business owners are smothered by an out-of-control bureaucracy.

**Clearly, we need laws** and reasonable rules in our society. And, yes, I believe in protecting our environment, crime prevention, food safety, public infrastructure, quality education and a strong military. Those are all reasonable things for government to be engaged in. But government is not the solution to every problem, nor should it be. Citizens can often do much better if given a choice of options instead of bowing to the “one-size-fits-all mentality” of big government.

**Just as important but less obvious,** our economy is quietly being smothered by an enormous \$20 trillion national deficit. That amounts to a debt of almost \$160,000 for every taxpayer in the U.S. Imagine if you received a credit card bill at home with a balance due of \$160,000! According to one study from the Heartland Institute: “The \$8 trillion added to the national debt under the Obama administration is the most debt ever accumulated under a single president.” We cannot afford to repeat those mistakes going forward.

**If we continue down this path,** we will very soon face a serious economic crisis. In my view, it is fundamentally immoral to mortgage our future – and our children’s future – via runaway deficit spending. The concept of government providing “free stuff for everyone” (including “free” health care) has never worked and never will work. Controlling government spending at the federal level, and using taxpayer money more efficiently at the state level, are very important to me.



**Of course, taxation is closely related to this issue.**

Our current tax system is far too complicated with far too many loopholes and unnecessary rules. A typical family or small business owner must pay:

- Income taxes (federal, state, local) ■ Property taxes
- Use taxes ■ Sales taxes ■ Excise taxes
- Payroll taxes (e.g., Social Security and Medicare)
- Vehicle taxes ■ Estate taxes ■ Gift taxes
- Pension taxes ■ And many more...

**That’s not to mention** the assorted fees and special assessments that we face throughout the year. It’s far too complicated and complex! Once small business owner told me his annual tax return is more than 145 pages long. We can and must do better.

**Over the last 8 years,** Michigan has made great progress in simplifying the state’s business tax structure, which has helped propel our economy forward. But there’s much yet to be done. I have helped lead the fight to repeal the pension tax in Michigan and I will continue that fight as long as I’m in office. We need to level the playing field for people with pensions and 401K accounts so that the system is fair for everyone.

**Finally, government must be fully accountable** to the people. That means full transparency. I have introduced and co-sponsored bills in the Legislature to make all public records available to the public, without exception. I’ve also been a strong advocate of strengthening Michigan’s Open Meeting laws so that every government official is subject to public scrutiny: No secrets. No back-room deals. No slush funds. No hidden agendas. If it can’t stand the light of day, it shouldn’t be done in the first place!

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