

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 56

Reps. Byrnes, Miller, Breen, Hope, Brixie, Coffia, Hoskins, Skaggs, Conlin, Alexander, Bezotte, Bierlein, Fitzgerald, Glanville, Haadsma, Harris, Kunse, Liberati, Morse, Price, Rheingans, Rogers, Schuette, Snyder, Stone, Wegela and Young offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare March 13-18 2023, as Sunshine Week in
2 the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, Sunshine Week is a national initiative spearheaded by
4 the American Society of News Editors to educate the public about
5 the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and
6 unnecessary secrecy. The first nationwide Sunshine Week took place
7 March 13-19, 2005; and

8 Whereas, Sunshine Week was established to spark a discussion
9 about the importance of open government and public access to

1 government documents and meetings. Sunshine Week was also a way to
2 draw attention to the media's role in advocating for government
3 transparency; and

4 Whereas, The American public has relied on a free press for
5 more than two centuries to stay informed about the many activities
6 in which our government engages. Thomas Jefferson penned in his
7 letter to Elbridge Gerry on January 26, 1799, that "I am ... for
8 freedom of the press, and against all violations of the
9 Constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints
10 or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct
11 of their agents." Six U.S. Supreme Court justices ruled in favor of
12 the freedom of the press in *New York Times Co. v. United States*,
13 with Justice Black concurring, "Only a free and unrestrained press
14 can effectively expose deception in government;" and

15 Whereas, Without the diligent work of a free press, many
16 Americans would not have access to accurate information that
17 directly impacts their daily lives. Many institutions promoting a
18 free press have been targeted by high profile and unwarranted
19 attacks discrediting their viability through a new era of
20 misinformation; and

21 Whereas, An open and accessible government is vital to
22 establishing and maintaining the people's trust and confidence in
23 their government and in the government's ability to effectively
24 serve its citizens and free press is an essential part of that
25 mission; now, therefore, be it

26 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
27 this legislative body declare March 13-18, 2023, as Sunshine Week
28 in the state of Michigan. The House of Representatives realizes
29 every citizen in our participatory democracy has an inherent right

1 to access to government meetings and public records and is
2 committed to openness and transparency in all aspects of its
3 operations and seeks to set a standard in this regard.