

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 56

Reps. Byrnes, Miller, Breen, Hope, Brixie, Coffia, Hoskins, Skaggs and Conlin 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  
10 government documents and meetings. Sunshine Week was also a way to  
11 draw attention to the media's role in advocating for government  
12 transparency; and

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

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

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

23           Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of  
24 this legislative body declare March 13-18, 2023, as Sunshine Week  
25 in the state of Michigan. The House of Representatives realizes  
26 every citizen in our participatory democracy has an inherent right  
27 to access to government meetings and public records and is  
28 committed to openness and transparency in all aspects of its  
29 operations and seeks to set a standard in this regard.