

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 207

Reps. Hope, Byrnes, Coffia, Brixie, Morgan, Haadsma, Hood, Wegela, Paiz, Steckloff, MacDonell, Wilson and Aiyash offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare March 10-16, 2024, 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

1 draw attention to the media's role in advocating for government
2 transparency; and

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

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

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

25 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
26 this legislative body declare March 10-16, 2024, as Sunshine Week
27 in the state of Michigan. We recognize every citizen in our
28 participatory democracy has an inherent right to access to
29 government meetings and public records and is committed to openness

1 and transparency in all aspects of its operations and seeks to set
2 a standard in this regard.