

Time to Rewrite Michigan's Constitution

The current Michigan Constitution of 1963, which is the fourth edition of Michigan's Constitution, states that every sixteen years Michigan citizens must be asked on a state wide ballot whether they want the Michigan Constitution rewritten. The framers of the 1963 Michigan Constitution did not intend to make the document permanent. Provisions were also included in the Constitution to amend it one section at a time. In 2010 voters will have the opportunity to decide if they want the Michigan Constitution rewritten. Historically speaking Michigan's Constitution has never been permanent. It has been an evolutionary document in order to meet the needs of the time. Thomas Jefferson felt that each generation should have the opportunity to write their constitution.

The United States takes great pride in the fact that its constitution is the original edition, and has had very few changes. It is a remarkable well written document that has met the needs of the country. The country has been able to interpret and adapt the document to contemporary times. The U.S. Constitution contains more generalities than state constitutions. The United States Constitution delegates complex responsibilities to the states. The U.S. Constitution is a lot shorter than state constitutions such as Michigan's, because state constitutions contain many more specifics. State constitutions such as Michigan's have been influenced by special interest groups with self serving political agendas.

In 1963 Michigan was an economic and political leader. Unfortunately, times have changed, and Michigan is in a severe economic decline, and has a repressive Constitution that does not serve the needs of many of its citizens. Michigan cannot afford the type of government mandated by the 1963 Constitution. A new constitution can down size and streamline Michigan government. This can be done by making Michigan a unicameral state with a single legislative house of 55 members. The Michigan Supreme Court can be downsized from seven to five justices.

The needs of the citizens can be better served by eliminating special interest control of vital functions in the state of Michigan. The *Golden Legal Oversight Amendment* which advocates an independently elected board to police the legal system, write court rules, and administer the courts instead of the Michigan Supreme Court will enable Michigan to become a political leader. Eliminating the requirement that the majority of all professional regulatory boards be composed of members of the profession the board regulates will make the various professions more responsive to the people they serve. Michigan's current constitution does not permit a graduated income tax. The vast majority of the states have a graduated income tax, and it is time for Michigan to change its constitution to fall in line with the majority. Michigan should change its constitution and have retention elections of incumbent judges like Illinois does in order to hold them accountable when they run for re-election. Incumbent judges should run against themselves with the question, "Should this incumbent judge be retained?"

All of these important beneficial changes to the Michigan Constitution will only happen if in 2010 Michigan votes to rewrite its Constitution. www.tagolden.com