



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN CHERRY

Hello Friends,

Despite the cold weather, I've been hard at work in Lansing and in the district with session, meetings with stakeholders and community members around the district. If you think of any neighborhood meetings, block clubs or other district groups that I should attend, please give me a call! My staff and I can also help with any number of problems you might have, whether it's your unemployment giving you trouble, an overwhelming electric bill, or questions about local policies. You can also visit my website at Cherry.housedems.com to view press releases, past e-newsletters and find other helpful information.



I'm here to help:

Phone:
(517) 373-7515

Email:
JohnCherry@house.mi.gov

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, I hope you will reach out to me. You can email me at any time at JohnCherry@house.mi.gov or call my office at (517) 373-7515.

Best,

John

Legislative Update

PFAS in the Flint Area

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) recently announced that PFAS contamination has been found for the first time during water testing near Bishop International Airport in Flint. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, are a group of man-made

chemicals that are commonly found in polishes, waxes, paints and cleaning products. Firefighting foams have become a major source of groundwater PFAS contamination near airports and military bases throughout Michigan where firefighter training often occurs.

With the expanding spread of PFAS, we need to focus on providing accurate and useful information to the public and forming a plan of action. I want to ensure that our community knows what steps are being taken to protect our health, and where we can go to have our questions and concerns addressed. I have been in direct contact with MDEQ officials as this develops, and I will be sure to keep my constituents and local units of government informed as I receive additional information. I will also push to prioritize resources in the next MDEQ budget for testing of private wells that are potentially impacted by PFAS contamination.

The MDEQ has collected six groundwater samples from monitoring wells around Bishop International Airport, showing the highest level of PFOS and PFOA at 176 ppt and 1,236.3 ppt total PFAS. Information on the testing sites and results indicating the PFAS contamination can be found on the state's PFAS Response website [here](#) and [here](#).

If you would like to have your own well tested, you can contact the MDEQ Environmental Assistance Center at (800) 662-9278. If you are not part of an official investigation area and want to sample your own residential well or pay a technician to sample the well, the MDEQ provides information on laboratories located within the state and guidance on how to take a sample of your drinking water. A private sample and test may run anywhere from a few hundred dollars and up. That information can be found [here as well as lists of potential laboratories to use](#). If any residents test their wells and receive positive results, they are asked to contact the MDEQ Environmental Assistance Center as soon as possible.

There are some filters available to lower PFAS contamination in the water. You can find information [here](#). If residents have been notified that there is PFAS contamination in their water, they may be eligible to receive a free filter system.

If you have more questions about PFAS, you can reach out to the MDEQ's Environmental Assistance Center or visit the State of Michigan PFAS informational page. You can also contact my office or the Genesee county health department.

Committee Assignments

I am excited to announce I have been appointed to the Appropriations committee. My assignments include Democratic vice chair for the Natural Resources and Environmental Quality subcommittee, as well as a seat on both the Joint Capital Outlay and Department of Health and Human Services subcommittees. My involvement within these committees will not only allow me to help the residents of Michigan but our families in Genesee County directly, and I look forward to hitting the ground running in these committees.



In the next few weeks you'll be hearing more about the appropriations process from me, but if you'd like to get a head start you can find out more [here](#). If you'd really like to crunch the numbers, and dive deep into the budget process, visit the House Fiscal Agency website [here](#).

Meet My Staff

If you've had the chance to contact my office, you've probably spoken to one of my dedicated staff members. I'm lucky to have Qiana Towns and Mikaylah Heffernan as my two full time staff members. Qiana works my front desk as constituent services manager. She lives in Flint, and works with many groups around House District 49, so you might see her around. Her hobbies include volunteering, crafting and writing poetry.

Mikaylah is my legislative director. She recently moved to Lansing from the city of Inkster, and her hobbies include volunteering at the animal shelter, writing children's literature and developing recipes. In addition, she serves as an executive board member at Lansing's Salus Center and works with students with special needs.

I'm also very pleased to announce that I was chosen to host a legislative fellow in my office. Nathan Burnand is a recent graduate from the James Madison College at Michigan State University. When he's not reading, you can find him out and about either running or rock-climbing.

If you ever need help, want to share an opinion or just have a question, please reach out. My staff and I are always here to help, and we want to hear from you.

Coffee with Cherry

Join me for coffee and conversation. I'll give a brief legislative update, then I'll have time for any questions, comments, or concerns you'd like to share. These events are family friendly, and there will be coffee provided.

Coffee and Conversation with Rep. Cherry
Where: 5473 Bicentennial Dr. #G in Mt Morris
When: Feb. 8, 11:00 a.m. to noon.

Helpful Resources for the Folks in the Forty-Ninth

Worried About Your Utility Bills?

It can be hard to make sure your bills are always caught up. But for those tough times, you do have options. The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) is a non-profit organization that helps through partnerships with agencies across the state of Michigan to distribute utility assistance. THAW programs are open to income-eligible Michigan residents. Prior to seeking THAW assistance, you can also contact your utility provider to see what options may be available to you.

DTE Energy – (800) 477-4747
SEMCO Energy – (800) 624-2019
Detroit Water & Sewerage Department – (313) 267-8000
Consumers Energy – (800) 477-5050
Michigan Gas Utilities – (800) 401-6402

Want to lower your bills and help save the environment? Check out THAW's list of 30 no-cost tips to help you use less energy and reduce your energy costs.

Saving Energy is Easy!

This year marks THAW's 30th year of assisting Michigan families in need of utility assistance. In honor of our anniversary, here are 30 easy, low-cost or no-cost energy tips to help you save on your energy costs this winter.

BATHROOM

- Use low-flow shower heads and faucets.
- Turn bathroom fans off before you leave the room to keep warm air from leaving the home.
- Take short showers over baths to reduce water heating costs.
- Don't let water run. Turn it off when not needed for brushing teeth, shaving, or washing hands.
- Repair leaky or dripping faucets to avoid wasting water.

KITCHEN

- Use the microwave or the stove top to cook food over using your oven.
- Know what you want before opening the refrigerator door. Keeping the door closed saves energy.
- Run cold water for the garbage disposal instead of hot water.
- Operate the dishwasher only when the loads are full and air-dry dishes on the energy saver setting.

LAUNDRY

- Only wash and dry full loads of laundry.
- Use the washing machine's cold water setting.
- Clean the lint trap in the dryer after drying each load to improve air circulation.
- Use a drying rack to air-dry your laundry.

LIGHTING

- Change incandescent light bulbs to CFLs.
- Use dimmer switches or timers on your lights.
- If you use lights for your holiday decorating, use LED lights that use less energy.
- Look for ENERGY STAR qualified fixtures when purchasing new lighting devices.

HEATING/COOLING

- Place draft-stoppers under your doors to keep the cold air outside.
- Replace your furnace filter once a month or as needed.
- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120 degrees F).
- Save on heating costs by installing a programmable thermostat.
- Keep the thermostat heat temperature at 68 degrees F to maximum savings.

LIVING AREAS

- Shut off lights, fans, appliances, TV, and stereo when you leave the room.
- Cover drafty windows with plastic sheeting.
- Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors or windows.
- Lower the thermostat when home and wear warm clothing (sweater or blanket).
- Close vents or registers in rooms you are not using and close the door. If you have storm windows, make sure they are closed and in place.
- Insulate the attic, walls, and crawl spaces.
- Encourage everyone in the household to gather around one television. It will save energy and encourages family time.
- Open window blinds and curtains during the daytime to naturally warm your rooms from direct sunlight.



Seeking Mental Health Services

Coping with stress or anxiety caused by your daily life? Genesee Health System offers a Mobile Mental Health Unit that travels around Genesee County to provide mental health services. So far, the mobile unit has connected 35,000 residents to mental health services. This service is free for adults and children.

Protect Yourself from Tax Scams

As the state of Michigan begins a new year and the state income tax filing season approaches, the Michigan Department of Treasury is asking taxpayers to be alert and watch out for tax scams.

Cybercriminals typically increase their activity in the first part of the year through phone scams and email phishing schemes. These scammers try to obtain personal information using different tricks and tactics so they can file income tax returns and claim refunds on behalf of unsuspecting taxpayers. Some scammers may also allege a taxpayer owes taxes and aggressively demand payment for a quick payout.

The Michigan Department of Treasury will never;

- Initiate a phone call or email to ask for personal information.
- Call or email to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method, such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, Treasury will first send a bill through

the U.S. mail to any taxpayer who owes taxes.

- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.
- Demand that taxes be paid without giving the taxpayer the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

Contacted by a scammer? Immediately hang up the phone or delete the email. If you have received a call or email from a scammer, you should report the case to the IRS [through the web](#) or by calling (800) 366-4484. To learn more about tax-related identity theft, go to www.michigan.gov/identitytheft.

Need Answers?

United Way for Genesee County can offer help 24 hours a day by calling 2-1-1 or by visiting their website at <http://www.unitedwaygenesee.org>. They have information and resources on a variety of topics such as utility and rent payment assistance, job search and placement, food, health and child care, housing and temporary shelters, prescription expense assistance, school-related programs, free tax preparation, and more. This is a great resource available to the residents of Genesee County.

Community Events

Join the Flint Children's Museum for a Snow Princess & Snowman Party

Dress up as your favorite princess, prince or other fun character and join the Flint Children's Museum for a good time. Party includes meeting and playing with the museum's Snow Princess and Snowman, digging for jewels in the snow, creating your own crown, chipping away at an ice rescue, playing with sparkling snow dough and snacking on winter cookies with drinks.

Date: Jan. 25-Jan. 26, from 9 to 11 a.m. both days.

Where: Flint Children's Museum, 1602 W. University Ave. in Flint.

Seating is limited. For reservations and more information visit flintchildrensmuseum.org.

University of Michigan-Flint Theatre and Dance Presents "My Children! My Africa!"

The search for a means to an end to apartheid inspires Mr. "M", a black South African school teacher, to invite a white South African student named Isabel to join his student Thami in an inter-school

debate competition. He hopes this will demonstrate that even in Apartheid-era South Africa, people of different races can work together toward a common goal. Pressure on Thami erupts into a tumultuous conflict between the black township students and the “old-fashioned” black teacher. This astonishingly provocative drama explores the struggle between choosing actions of constructive dialogue or destructive violence in order to accomplish immediate justice and social change.

Date: Jan. 27, from 2-4 p.m.

Where: University Theatre, Room 238, 303 E. Kearsley St. in Flint.

Swartz Creek Area Firefighters' Association 2nd annual 5-Alarm Chili Cookoff Fundraiser

Come support your local firefighters while sampling some of the finest chili in the area! Spend the first three hours sampling chili and casting a vote for your favorites! Following the Competition there will be a raffle as well as awards and prizes.

Date: Jan. 26, 2019, 1–4:00 p.m.

Where: 3440 Morrish Road in Swartz Creek

Slow Flow Yoga

Long week? Primary Prevention Physical Therapy has your answer! Come in next Thursday for a restorative yoga session in beautiful downtown Flushing. This is a nice easy session that will have you refreshed and ready to go for the coming week.

Date: Jan. 27 2019, 9:30 a.m.

Location: 209 S. Cherry St. in Flushing

Ground Hog Day Fun at the For-Mar Nature Preserve!

Come on down to the For-Mar nature preserve this Ground Hog's Day to see if Punxsutawney the groundhog sees his shadow. There will be crafts, games, groundhog tunnel forts and fun for the whole family.

This is a great community event that is free to attend!

Date: Feb. 2, 1-4:00 p.m.

Location: For-Mar Nature Preserve 2142 N. Genesee Road in Burton

Flint's Second Friday Art walk

Partake in delicious food, tasty beverages, live music and the works of various artists on display throughout a variety of downtown Flint galleries and businesses. Stop by the Greater Flint Arts Council (816 S. Saginaw Street) for a copy of this month's walking tour, while supplies last. For more information visit geneseefun.com.

Date: Feb. 8 6-9pm

Location: Flint's Downtown Entertainment District, Saginaw St. in Flint



I hope that this information has been helpful to you. As always, please feel free to reach out to me at JohnCherry@house.mi.gov or at (517) 373-7515.

[Unsubscribe from this newsletter](#)

** The Michigan House of Representatives is responsible only for content submitted with House resources and in accordance with the law and House policy. Unauthorized use is strictly prohibited.*

©2019 Michigan House Democrats. All rights reserved

