



Dear Friends,

This is my first newsletter of the New Year to you. I hope you had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year. At the Brandenburg home, we sure did! On a personal note, I could not help but notice that this year I constantly heard more and more people saying Merry Christmas rather than the politically correct, Happy Holidays. I even heard other people commenting about this. I cannot help but think that the change in the political climate of this last year had something to do with it. I found it to be refreshing and I hope that good feeling sticks around for a long time.

It has always been a top priority of mine to keep the residents that I serve fully aware of what is happening in the State Senate, and what my opinions are regarding issues that will pop up this year. My opinions are formed, and I make my decisions from a conservative standpoint. I never waiver. This thought process has carried me this far, so I am pretty confident that it will take me the rest of the way. Listed below are some issues that I would like to talk with you about at the present time.

The Elimination of Our State Income Tax: On January 18th, 2017, I introduced Senate Bill 4, which would eliminate our state income tax over the next five years. The thought process and reasoning behind this legislation was pretty simple. Michigan was the only state in the Union that lost population in the 2010 census. We lost 54,000 residents. In fact, our state's population is smaller today than it was in 2006. We are just not growing because our population growth is stagnant. In 1962, we had 19 congressional seats in Congress, and since then, we have lost five seats. When we redistrict in 2020, we will lose another, and that will take us down to 13. You cannot lose votes like this in Congress and expect to have any power in the Federal Government. What Michigan needs is a game-changer. I cannot think of a better one than to leave a meaningful amount of money in the pockets of our taxpayers!

This will be no easy feat to accomplish. This legislation will create a \$9 billion hole in our budget. Taxpayers will love this legislation, but bureaucrats will hate it. They will fight it tooth and nail. However, seven other states do not have income taxes and all are doing quite well. They are: Texas, Florida, Nevada, Wyoming, Washington, South Dakota and Alaska. It does not cost ten cents to take a look at these states to see if they are doing something that we should be doing, or not doing. The citizens of Michigan have not had any meaningful tax relief in 20 years, and it is long overdue! Stay tuned!

The City of Detroit: I am happy for Detroit because the city is finally making some good progress and getting some good publicity. After decades of bad news, the positive things that are happening in the city are good to hear. That being said, there are still concerns that have to be dealt with.

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All of the positive changes are happening within a ten square mile area, which is located in the downtown area of the city. Remember, Detroit is made up of 143 square miles, and you have another 133 square miles that badly need attention. The landmass of Detroit is so large that you could literally fit the cities of San Francisco and Boston inside Detroit's borders and still have five square miles left over. It is a city built for 2,000,000 people, but only 675,000 residents remain, and they are spread out all over the place. You can pump all the economic steroids you want into the city, but the growth will not occur fast enough to make the city viable. My solution is this: Detroit needs to be made smaller. I would sell the perimeter areas of land on the city's borders to the cities that border Detroit on the north, west and south. This would be an economic boom and a windfall to all entities involved. I know this can happen because I have talked with cities who would definitely be interested in this proposal. Once again, this will be no easy feat to make happen.

In closing, I would like you to know that in the near future you will be receiving a newsletter from me about teacher pensions and the unfunded liability they have. I want to try to time the letter when we are taking the issue up in the Legislature. It is a serious problem that has to be solved, one way or another. If you have any comments on today's newsletter, please contact me. As always, it is my pleasure and my honor to serve as your State Senator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jack Brandenburg
State Senator - District 8