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MDCR/MCRC E-news for August 31, 2011

Editorial: Deportation policies get focused more humanely

From the Detroit Free Press, 8/26/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20110826/OPINION01/108260347/Editorial-Deportation-policies-get-focused-more-humanely?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|p>

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security announced new guidelines for all immigration agencies to ensure that enforcement priorities are focused on people who threaten the nation's security or public safety.

Mid-Michigan diversity survey troubles advocates

From the Lansing State Journal, 8/25/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20110826/BUSINESS/108260315/Mid-Michigan-diversity-survey-troubles-advocates?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

Regional business leaders vowed Thursday to improve workplace diversity, but a recent survey shows they may have a long way to go.

Saginaw County teens bring home five medals from national NAACP academic competition in Los Angeles

From the Saginaw News/MLive, 8/25/11

http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/saginaw/index.ssf/2011/08/saginaw_teens_bring_home_five.html

SAGINAW — Every year, as Canika Owen-Robinson begins recruiting students for the Great Lakes Bay Region's branch of NAACP ACT-SO, she wonders if she'll find young men and women able to keep pace with past members.

Government sues Ypsilanti Township apartment complex owners, alleging fair housing act violations

From Ann Arbor.com/MLive, 8/24/11

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/government-sues-ypsilanti-township-apartment-complex-owners-alleging-fair-housing-act-violations/>

The federal government has filed a lawsuit against the owners of an Ypsilanti Township apartment complex, alleging they discriminated against prospective tenants who had children.

Same-sex households increase in Michigan census

From the Michigan Messenger, 8/23/11

<http://michiganmessenger.com/51936/same-sex-households-increase-in-michigan-census>

Figures released by the Williams Institute in California show that the 2010 census was a banner year for self-reported same-sex couples in Michigan.

Editorial: Anti-Muslim legislation fueled by prejudice, not patriotism

From the Detroit Free Press, 8/22/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20110823/OPINION01/108230309/Editorial-Anti-Muslim-legislation-fueled-by-prejudice-not-patriotism?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

At a time when hundreds of thousands of Michigan families are hurting, State Rep. Dave Agema, R-Grandville, is waging a silly anti-immigrant crusade that will do nothing but sow fear and distrust among the state's diverse residents.

Citizens Bank announces \$1.6M in grants for Detroit homes

From the Detroit News, 8/22/11

[http://detnews.com/article/20110822/METRO/108220381/1361/Citizens-Bank-announces-\\$1.6M-in-grants-for-Detroit-homes](http://detnews.com/article/20110822/METRO/108220381/1361/Citizens-Bank-announces-$1.6M-in-grants-for-Detroit-homes)

Detroit —Citizens Bank and Mayor Dave Bing on Monday announced a new program that will provide grants of up to \$10,000 apiece for exterior home improvements in select neighborhoods.

Rock the Vote urges Michigan to allow online registration

From the Detroit News, 8/22/11

<http://detnews.com/article/20110822/POLITICS02/108220331/1408/local>

Michigan is failing to engage young voters because it lacks online registration and some of its laws are too restrictive, according to a group whose aim is to get more youths to vote.

Disability funds nearly depleted

From the Detroit News/AP, 8/22/11

<http://detnews.com/article/20110822/POLITICS03/108220346/1022/local/Disability-funds-nearly-depleted>

Washington— Laid-off workers and aging baby boomers are flooding Social Security's disability program with benefit claims, pushing the financially strapped system toward the brink of insolvency.

Settlement reached in girls' harassment, bullying suit against Tawas Area Schools

From the Bay City Times/MLive, 8/21/11

http://www.mlive.com/news/bay-city/index.ssf/2011/08/settlement_reached_in_girls_ha.html

BAY CITY — Tawas Area Schools officials have agreed to an undisclosed settlement in a civil suit filed on behalf of two former students who claimed they were sexually harassed, threatened and bullied by peers and teachers.

Unintended consequences: Does identification requirement keep needy away from food bank?

From MLive, 8/19/11

http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2011/08/unintended_consequences_does_i.html

LANSING -- The City of Lansing's Human and Community Relations Department is bringing the Mid-Michigan Food Bank's mobile food pantry to town Saturday, but some worry the city's policy of requiring identification to receive food could scare away needy families.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s fight against housing discrimination recalled as national memorial is dedicated

From the Grand Rapids Press/MLive, 8/18/11

http://www.mlive.com/business/index.ssf/2011/08/martin_luther_king_jr_brought.html

As a Realtor, Pat Vredevoogd Combs credits Martin Luther King Jr. with sparking the changes that led to laws against housing discrimination.

Nuclear family no more: New data shows more grandparents raising kids, more unmarried couples

From the Detroit Free Press, 8/18/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20110818/NEWS06/108180529/Picture-family-changing-Michigan-census-data-show>

The nuclear family that once was the norm -- think Ozzie and Harriet for readers old enough to remember -- continues to shrink in Michigan and across the nation, census data released today shows.

Foreign Students in Work Visa Program Stage Walkout at Plant

From the New York Times, 8/17/11

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/us/18immig.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha23

PALMYRA, Pa. — Hundreds of foreign students, waving their fists and shouting defiantly in many languages, walked off their jobs on Wednesday at a plant here that packs Hershey's chocolates, saying a summer program that was supposed to be a cultural exchange had instead turned them into underpaid labor.

Editorial: Lansing needn't listen to hate message

From the Lansing State Journal, 8/16/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20110817/OPINION01/108170310/Lansing-needn-t-listen-hate-message?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

Terry Jones, the Florida pastor who gets attention for his repugnant rants against Islam, needs a history lesson. The same constitutional amendment that lets Jones hold protest rallies to spew vitriol against the Islamic faith also makes clear this nation's constitutional protection for religious freedom that covers all faiths, including Islam.

Critic says anti-Sharia bill 'polarizes people based on fear'

From the Detroit News, 8/16/11

<http://detnews.com/article/20110816/METRO/108160409/Muslims-decry-anti-Sharia-bill-as-racist>

Detroit— Prominent Muslim leaders and others on Tuesday announced their opposition to a bill to ban "foreign laws" in Michigan, calling the measure a racist attack on Islam.

Heather Burgbacher, Teacher Fired For Pumping Breast Milk At Work To File Law Suit

From the Huffington Post, 8/16/11

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/16/heather-burgbacher-teache_n_928178.html

After five years of teaching technology at the Rocky Mountain Academy of Evergreen in Colorado, teacher Heather Burgbacher will not be returning to the classroom. Instead, with the help of the ACLU, she is filing a discrimination lawsuit against the school, 9news.com reports.

MSU study: Low-income earners 30 percent less likely to have cases heard by U.S. Supreme Court

From MLive, 8/10/11

http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2011/08/msu_study_low-income_earners_3.html

EAST LANSING - New Michigan State University undergraduate research on the U.S. Supreme Court agenda setting suggests bad news for prisoners hoping to appeal their cases.

Once Bullied Relentlessly, Ron Bachman Now a Motivational Rock Star

From Fox 2 Detroit, 8/9/11

<http://www.myfoxdetroit.com/dpp/news/local/once-bullied-relentlessly-ron-bachman-now-a-motivational-rock-star-20110809-wpms>

DETROIT (WJBK) - It's hard not to be in awe of Ron Bachman. Born with deformed legs, his parents had them amputated when he was four.

Federal immigration-check requirement draws ire

From USA Today/the Detroit Free Press, 8/8/11

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cId=freep&sParam=49870488.story>

Civil rights groups are considering a lawsuit to try to block the federal government from requiring all police agencies to screen people booked into local jails for immigration violations.

ACLU gets \$390K grant to help shape school reform

From MLive/The AP, 8/7/11

http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2011/08/aclu_gets_390k_grant_to_help_s.html

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan a \$390,000 grant to help reduce the numbers of students suspended or expelled from schools and referred to criminal courts.

MSU law college named in age discrimination suit

From the Lansing State Journal, 8/6/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20110806/NEWS06/308060012/MSU-law-college-named-age-discrimination-suit?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|News|s>

EAST LANSING - Nicholas Spaeth, a 61-year-old former North Dakota attorney general, has filed an age discrimination lawsuit against the Michigan State University College of Law after the school declined to interview him for a teaching position.

Rochelle Riley: Law can end education achievement gap

From the Detroit Free Press, 8/5/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20110805/COL10/108050376/Rochelle-Riley-Law-can-end-education-achievement-gap>

PHILADELPHIA -- In a hotel suite with columnists from across the country, Russlynn Ali was at a crossroads.

Should she reveal that the Obama administration has launched 72 investigations into allegations of discrimination in school districts across the country?

New immigration rule changes make it easier for immigrant entrepreneurs to get visas

From MLive, 8/3/11

http://www.mlive.com/jobs/index.ssf/2011/08/new_immigration_rule_changes_make_it_eas.html

The federal government made it easier this week for entrepreneurial immigrants to get green cards.

Anti-Gay Hate Crimes Increasing

From Gongwer 8/3/11 (no link available)

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs released statistics recently that show anti-gay and anti-transgender hate crimes have increased by 13 percent nationally from 2009 to 2010.

The FBI has statistics that place anti-gay hate crimes as the third most frequent kind of hate crimes, behind race and religion.

Advocates with Equality Michigan are urging legislators to include gay and transgender people in the current hate crime law, which makes it a felony to assault someone, damage property or threaten to do so when the crime is motivated by race, national origin, color, religion or gender.

Equality Michigan, in a release, described three brutal attacks on Michigan gay men as reason to change the law. The most recent happened last week against David Battjes in downtown Grand Rapids, where he was called a slur for gay people told "you don't deserve to live" and was then punched in the stomach. No suspects have been found.

"The reports of violence that we've received this year are horrifying," said Denise Brogan-Kator, Equality Michigan's executive director. "Gay and transgender Michiganders should be able to walk the streets of their own communities without fear of violence. We're seeing disturbing evidence that too few have the freedom to do so. We need public leaders, law enforcement officials and legislators to stand up and say

that violence against gay and transgender people is not OK. Instead, we've had some radical legislators in Lansing openly promote hate and intolerance of their gay and transgender constituents. It's time for Michigan to get serious about passing and enforcing a hate crimes law that includes gay and transgender victims."

Latinos, advocates blast immigration agency for dismissing profiling allegations

From the Detroit Free Press, 8/2/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20110802/NEWS05/108020357/Latinos-advocates-blast-immigration-agency-dismissing-profiling-allegations?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

Calling it a "whitewash," local Latinos and advocates slammed Monday an internal investigation by a federal immigration agency that dismissed allegations of abuse and profiling. And they called for the community to start videotaping federal agents whenever they target minorities.

Jesse Jackson launches coalition against pending welfare restrictions

From the Lansing State Journal, 8/2/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20110802/NEWS04/108020341/Jesse-Jackson-launches-coalition-against-pending-welfare-restrictions?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

LANSING - Rev. Jesse Jackson stopped by Lansing this morning to launch a new statewide coalition aimed at repealing the state's new emergency manager law and proposed welfare restrictions that would cast 12,000 families off welfare Oct. 1.

Civil rights group asks US Department of Justice to monitor Islamic schools rezoning request

From Ann Arbor.com, 8/2/11

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/civil-rights-group-asks-us-department-of-justice-to-monitor-islamic-schools-rezoning-request/>

The Pittsfield Township Planning Commission has rejected a Michigan Islamic Academy request to rezone property where it wants to build a new school on property it owns at Golfside and Ellsworth roads.

Twenty state with the most workplace discrimination (Michigan is 13th)

From BusinessWeek.com

<http://images.businessweek.com/slideshows/20110728/twenty-states-with-the-most-workplace-discrimination/slides/9>