



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY  
LT. GOVERNOR

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*A Special Message from Governor Rick Snyder:  
Public Safety*

To Michiganders and the Michigan Legislature:

## I. Introduction

Ensuring the safety of our citizens and security of our communities is critical to Michigan's reinvention. While reported crime rates are down throughout most of Michigan, our state will continue to struggle until we tackle the problems of our most violent cities. Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw are ranked among the top 10 most violent cities in the country according to FBI data. We all suffer the consequences.

Violent crime tears apart the essential fabric of communities. This is painfully evident in the recent shooting death of a 9-month old child in Detroit. This is a terrible loss for the family, the community and underscores the need for focused attention on crime in these cities.

The costs of such crimes, both emotional and financial, are staggering. A single homicide not only devastates the families involved but also costs taxpayers millions of dollars in prosecution and incarceration. A recent study concluded that murders in these 4 cities alone cost Michigan taxpayers more than \$1.6 billion.

In addition, the entire state pays the price when tourists are hesitant to visit our cities, when businesses and talented people are reluctant to consider locating in Michigan and when everyone's insurance rates rise.

Criminals do not recognize the geographic boundaries that define our municipalities. We must enhance cooperation between all levels of the law enforcement and criminal justice communities. To accomplish this we need improved tools to ensure a wise use of our resources to hold chronic offenders accountable and give citizens peace of mind.

Crime prevention is also a critical piece of public safety. Too often we miss the opportunity to break the cycle of crime through prevention or intervention. We need a comprehensive approach to public safety that offers increased economic opportunity for our children and their parents in our distressed communities to break the cycle of crime.

In short, we need a system of "smart justice."

We need a system that recognizes the critical connection between law enforcement, crime prevention and economic opportunity. We need to reinvent public safety for Michigan. Together, we will pursue a strategy of smart justice that is data driven, comprehensive and focused on the areas of the greatest need.

## II. Law Enforcement

When individuals choose to harm their community or engage in violent behavior, citizens need to be assured that law enforcement stands ready to respond.

For too long, criminals have had the upper hand in Detroit, Flint, Pontiac and Saginaw, knowing that law enforcement did not have the resources it needed to respond fully to these challenges.

While crime fighting partnerships are already underway in these cities, we must enhance and accelerate our efforts, leaving no doubt that all levels of law enforcement are working together to keep citizens safe.

### Local Law Enforcement

The contribution and innovative efforts of local law enforcement is not only critical to these four cities but to our entire state. That is why I recommend that the Legislature put a priority on the expenditure of \$10 million of the \$25 million Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP) consolidation and innovation grant fund in the FY 13 budget for investment in local public safety. This investment will create long-term, sustainable solutions for local law enforcement, firefighters, emergency responders, the criminal justice system and their communities.

In the last round of EVIP grants, two Downriver cities, Trenton and Riverview, were awarded nearly \$240,000 to create a central fire, police and rescue dispatch center. This will ultimately save taxpayers half a million dollars over five years and holds the potential for numerous surrounding communities to join. This is a great example of how collaboration can provide better public safety for our citizens while simultaneously saving taxpayer dollars.

Smart investments in law enforcement, coupled with new technology and a commitment to collaboration will help us create a safer Michigan for our children and theirs.

### Secure Cities Partnership

Both local and state law enforcement are critical components of a safer Michigan. The men and women who dedicate their lives to protecting ours should be recognized for their service and applauded for their commitment.

There can be no doubt that we need more law enforcement in Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw to apprehend criminals and protect the public. In some of these cities, officers begin their shifts nearly 50 service calls behind. In others, jail space is so limited that only the most violent and egregious crimes constitute lodging. Combined with high unemployment and structural problems in the criminal justice system, this has created a new norm, where criminals do not expect consequences for breaking the law.

This is simply unacceptable.

A safe Michigan requires safe cities. The challenges facing our distressed cities are significant but not insurmountable.

While we must invest in law enforcement, a simple investment will not solve our long-term, structural challenges. No single agency can address these problems alone. Criminals do not recognize the same artificial boundaries and jurisdictions that limit our municipalities.

We must implement smart justice with our partners in the public safety community to secure these cities and Michigan's future.

Today I am announcing a new Secure Cities Partnership that will focus initially on Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw and the roadways that connect them.

I have recommended that the Michigan State Police (MSP) receive an additional \$15 million in FY 13 for two trooper recruit schools that will graduate 180 troopers to provide local agencies with the support they need. Because many of these communities cannot afford to wait, I am advancing a supplemental budget request to the Legislature so MSP can start its first class in June. As a result, the MSP will coordinate teams of local, state and federal law enforcement officers to provide both directed patrols and investigative resources in these four cities. Working with local and federal prosecutors, as well as parole officers from the Michigan Department of Corrections, these teams will target high-crime areas and fast-track the investigation and prosecution of cases. Specifically, they will focus on homicides, drive-by- shootings, sexual assaults, narcotics and other violent crimes. In addition, I have asked the MSP to target crimes that contribute to violent activity including organized crime, arson, and property theft including auto and metal theft.

In addition, I have asked the Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan to partner with the MSP and local law enforcement through their "Safe Streets Initiative" to direct federal agents and resources at the most violent centers of activity within these cities. I am happy to report that he has agreed to do so. I have also sought and received support from U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan for enhanced prosecutorial support in order to bring more criminals to justice.

I have also directed the MSP to offer enhanced tools to our law enforcement community, to support Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) strategies and technology. EBP allows law enforcement to predict where crime is most likely to occur and position resources to prevent it from occurring.

EBP uses data analysis and criminal intelligence to identify "hot spots" and make decisions on resource allocation in an objective, fact-based manner. This data-driven strategy will allow law enforcement to develop a comprehensive approach to reduce crime, disrupt criminal activity and make the best use of limited law enforcement resources.

To implement EBP, the State Police is piloting the Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS), which was developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Department of Justice. DDACTS is currently being piloted in Macomb County and will soon be piloted in Flint as well. With the information gained from the pilots, DDACTS will be enhanced and made available to the law enforcement community statewide.

EBP would not be successful without robust information sharing across all law enforcement agencies. The Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC) is a central resource for law enforcement, providing intelligence to the officer on the street. The MIOC houses law enforcement officials from nearly every agency and level of government and is dedicated to ensuring that law enforcement can ably share information and protect its citizens.

Data sharing will be critical to addressing the crime in Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw. My proposed budget provides funding to MSP for data analysts to collect, analyze and share information with the multijurisdictional teams in each city. This will improve efficiency, reduce duplication of efforts and enable law enforcement to identify the most violent criminals.

To strengthen Michigan's crime information system, I will issue an executive order to recognize the Detroit Southeast Michigan Information and Intelligence Center as a node of the MIOC.

In addition, I encourage our congressional delegation and the Department of Homeland Security to prioritize funding for data sharing capabilities because we can't afford to skimp on this investment. In April, our MSP Director will visit Washington, DC to meet with federal partners to highlight the steps Michigan is taking and to enhance federal partnerships.

Last June, the MSP began partnering with local law enforcement to combat violent crime occurring in Flint. More recently, it has begun piloting data-driven strategies in the city to leverage this partnership. Using EBP, MSP troopers conducted uniform patrols to initiate criminal investigations and arrests, primarily for narcotics and weapons offenses, augmenting the Flint Police and allowing them to focus on calls from citizens. As a result of these efforts, 894 fugitives have been arrested.

While public safety efforts under the Secure Cities Partnership will look different in each of the four cities, what we do know is a collaborative, multijurisdictional approach is critical to success.

### Forensic Science Labs

Forensic science is a critical tool for both law enforcement and prosecutors because it can connect the guilty to a crime and exonerate the innocent. Lab services that are reliable, timely and efficient contribute to quicker adjudication times, reduced court backlogs and earlier resolution for victims.

I am recommending an additional \$5 million to the MSP Forensic Science Division for enhanced forensic services, equipment, training and an additional 20 scientists to achieve a case turnaround time of 30 days. This investment will be a resource multiplier for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges. Increased personnel will benefit the state's entire lab system, including the new Metropolitan Detroit Forensic Science Laboratory slated to open in spring 2013.

The MSP is also currently implementing internal process improvements to help reduce backlogs and turnaround time. However, data suggests the greatest efficiencies will be achieved by improving evidence collection processes at crime scenes, enhancing communication with prosecutors and doing a better job of tracking cases that have evidence awaiting testing.

To accomplish this, the labs will transition to a "Front End Forensics" system of working with prosecutors to set standards on what evidence is accepted and tested based upon what has the highest propensity to yield results. This will enable lab personnel to concentrate on processing critical evidence by reducing the quantity of evidence entering the system.

This transition requires providing training to officers and crime scene technicians on evidence collection procedures. The MSP is currently piloting a Forensic Evidence Training Academy in Flint and Marquette where officers and crime scene technicians are being trained to process crime scenes utilizing the "Front End Forensics" concept.

### Holding Offenders Accountable

Currently, 46% of all statewide parolees report to parole offices located in Detroit, Pontiac, Flint and Saginaw. We must give law enforcement the best possible resources to ensure that parolees are not reoffending and posing a danger to our communities.

I am announcing a new initiative to embed a Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) parole officer into each of the local law enforcement agencies that covers these four target cities. The MDOC has reached out to the Flint Police Department, the Detroit Police Department, the Oakland County Sheriff Department and the Saginaw Police Department to offer the services of a parole officer specifically dedicated to reducing crime in these areas.

The enhanced parole supervision program will reduce recidivism and increase fugitive apprehensions.

This initiative will assign a single point of contact to build a stronger partnership between the MDOC and local law enforcement in these distressed communities. The parole agents embedded into these local law enforcement agencies will be able to share information on parolees, accompany police officers on home checks, assist with criminal investigations and partner with police to track down and arrest wanted fugitives.

In addition to a high population of parolees, Flint faces the unique challenge of limited access to jail space. Because the ability to get offenders off the streets is crucial to law enforcement, last year I worked with the Legislature to appropriate \$1 million to open up jail space in this high crime region. This is helping, but we still need to do more. My FY 13 budget calls for expansion of this project by increasing funding by an additional \$4.5 million. This will provide critical assistance to Flint and help law enforcement remove dangerous criminals from the street.

In addition to limited jail space, Flint also suffers from limited prosecutorial support. I have recommended \$900,000 for prosecutorial support in our distressed cities, with a particular focus on Flint.

### CLEAR

Last year, I formed the Council on Law Enforcement and Reinvention (CLEAR) to act as an advisory team for Michigan's public safety reinvention. CLEAR is comprised of respected professionals from our statewide criminal justice system – local and state police, the tribes, the prosecutors, the judiciary and corrections. This group advises me and recommends ways to deliver law enforcement more efficiently, effectively and at an optimal cost while protecting the public safety interest for our citizens.

CLEAR provided recommendations that led to Executive Order 2011-7 to significantly increase law enforcement collaboration to improve the state's criminal justice information systems. Recently, it provided invaluable guidance resulting in my recommendation for enhanced funding and technology for MSP's forensic labs.

CLEAR is developing long-term, sustainable solutions for a broad array of public safety issues. By the end of this year, it will recommend major improvements to public safety technology and establishing training standards for police agencies.

I also am tapping CLEAR's expertise to combat crime at the neighborhood level. The safety of a neighborhood is an important indicator of its overall economic and social health. With that in mind, I am requesting CLEAR develop a plan to partner with key neighborhood organizations in our largest cities to formulate a Neighborhood Crime Prevention Initiative that can be implemented statewide.

### Fire and Emergency Response

We cannot talk about public safety without talking about the importance of fire safety and emergency response. Arson is a growing problem in Detroit, Flint, Pontiac and Saginaw and threatens not only lives but livelihoods when property is destroyed. These 4 cities also accounted for roughly 43 percent of all arsons in Michigan from 2008 to 2010.

Firefighters and emergency responders are a critical part of the public safety community and we are thankful for the commitment they have made to protect Michigan citizens. As we reinvent law enforcement for a new Michigan, we must also reinvent our fire and emergency services.

That is why I will be forming an advisory council on fire and emergency response. Similar to CLEAR, I will be building a team of the best and brightest in their field – individuals who can identify methods for better service statewide with a long-term, sustainable cost model.

I look forward to working closely with this team over the next year and have asked the state's new Fire Marshal to lead this effort to reinvent emergency service delivery for our state.

### Public Safety Technology

In an emergency, time is of the essence. Today's public safety technology can enhance the connection between citizens and first responders. It will allow citizens to provide instantaneous information to public safety officials and to participate in public safety response.

The current system for landline voice-based calls was built more than 40 years ago. As our modes of communication become increasingly mobile and multi-media driven, our public response system has not kept up. Today, it does not support the wide array of technologies available on the average smart phone.

The future framework, referred to as Next Generation 911, will enable users to send texts, pictures and video to dispatchers who can quickly relay it to emergency responders in the field. For example, a 911 caller will be able to take a picture of a suspect's vehicle leaving a crime scene and share it instantly with law enforcement officials via text message.

I am directing CLEAR to develop recommendations within the next 6 months addressing the requirements, timelines, costs and governance structure for implementing Next Generation 911.

I am also directing the fire and emergency response council to partner with CLEAR and DTMB's Michigan Public Safety Communications System to implement best practices for the recent Congressional reallocation of D-Block to public safety. A recommendation of the 911 Commission, D-Block reallocation creates a nationwide public safety broadband network where police, fire, and EMS first responders from all departments will be able to communicate with one another. For example, firefighters will be able to see floor plans while they are en route to a fire, EMTs will be able to access victims' medical records, and emergency managers will be able to coordinate federal, state and local responses to floods, tornados, and other disasters. Michigan has the largest public safety statewide communications network in the nation and is recognized as a leader in public safety communications.

### **III. Criminal Justice**

Smart justice means more than just improving our law enforcement capacity. While we need to protect the public from violent criminals, we also need to invest resources to ensure that non-violent offenders do not become violent, endangering lives and costing taxpayers money. It is simply a better, smarter solution for Michigan to address offenders early on by providing alternative treatment programs to those who commit crimes as a result of underlying addiction or mental health issues.

At the same time, violent criminals must be held accountable. When our citizens are injured, we must bring peace of mind to victims and their families. As new crime trends emerge throughout the state, endangering our children and our communities, we must give prosecutors new tools and technology to deliver smart justice.

### Mental Health Courts

I am committed to looking at how untreated mental health issues impact public safety. This is an area where we need to be smarter. When individuals suffering from mental health issues come into contact with the criminal justice system, we must step in and address their mental health needs to prevent an escalation of criminal behavior.

In my health and wellness message, I tasked the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) with facilitating meetings of community stakeholders - the Department of Corrections, jails, courts, community mental health boards - to create a long-term plan to:

- 1) Improve mental health services in the community, in the jails, and in the court system,
- 2) Institute diversion programs,
- 3) Improve the management of individuals in jail, and
- 4) Share information appropriately across the criminal justice system.

MDCH has started this process and will deliver an action plan by July 1, 2012. The plan will outline a strategy for reducing the number of individuals with behavioral health conditions who are incarcerated. Specifically, it will focus on strengthening Michigan's prison and jail diversion programs and expanding mental health courts.

In the meantime, I am committed to investing in Michigan's already successful mental health courts. Mental health courts are the best resource available to provide treatment to mentally ill individuals who break the law. Traditional courts are unable to address mental health needs because resources are not available for treatment and the law does not permit them to require individuals to comply with treatment. Mental health courts have the unique ability to work with offenders to address the underlying cause of their criminal behavior and to provide treatment, which may include psychotropic medicines.

I am recommending that we invest \$2.1 million to continue the existing 8 pilot mental health courts and to create a new mental health court in Saginaw. Information collected by State Court Administrative Office on the initial 8 pilot courts shows that participants in mental health courts saw improvement in employment and education opportunities, high rates for medication compliance and reduced recidivism rates.

### High-Risk, High-Need Drug Courts

Intensive drug court programs address addiction problems that are often the root of criminal behavior. Drug treatment courts break the revolving-door cycle in which drug and alcohol offenders move in and out of the justice system. They provide comprehensive therapeutic treatment and other services to increase a participant's period of abstinence and reduce the rate of relapse, re-arrest and incarceration.

The role that Michigan's \$2 billion corrections budget plays in the state's budgetary challenges is well documented. Most prisoners are behind bars directly or indirectly because of substance abuse. Experts estimate 70% to 80% of the children in foster care are there because their parents are substance abusers, many of whom are incarcerated.

A study by the State Court Administrative Office concluded that drug courts dramatically reduce recidivism, sharply reduce substance abuse and save substantial tax dollars.

I am proposing the creation of a high-risk, high-need drug court initiative that would expand drug court programming in Genesee, Wayne, Oakland and Saginaw counties.

This initiative will target high-risk, high-need offenders and ultimately lessen the burden on our corrections system.

Unlike the current funding model for drug courts, this model will fund a fixed dollar figure for each offender in the program so the court is receiving money for each participant in the program. Currently, drug courts are grant funded with a fixed amount of money, regardless of how many offenders go through the program.

I am recommending that the Legislature appropriate \$1.25 million for the creation of this new drug court initiative. This funding would be allocated at \$4,500 per person and include the following services: intensive drug testing, intensive outpatient treatment, alcohol testing and monitoring and specific staff for high intensity supervision of participants in the drug court. This will result in a decrease in the number of individuals who reoffend and have continual interaction with the criminal justice and corrections systems.

### Designer Drugs

New “designer drugs” are emerging in our communities with little warning and causing severe harm to our kids. These drugs are “designed” to circumvent the controlled substance law.

A drug known as “K-2” was recently added to Schedule I of the Controlled Substance Act, but another version is already being sold and used throughout the state. Communities are having little success in controlling this drug because there are no laws to help them.

It took 8 months to enact legislation to schedule a designer drug known as “bath salts” in 2011. When the drug appeared in Michigan, health officers, law enforcement and prosecutors in many local jurisdictions had no authority to act. Meanwhile, our kids and young adults were showing up in emergency rooms with severe symptoms, including suicidal and homicidal tendencies. Some episodes resulted in death.

We need to work harder to get these substances scheduled in a manner that gets us ahead of the curve of the drug designers and distributors who are so easily getting around our current laws. We need to equip those on the front line with the authority to act in a uniform way when a new drug emerges in a community.

We need a law that will allow us to temporarily schedule dangerous designer drugs that appear in our communities while we work legislatively to get these drugs placed permanently on the controlled substance schedules. Expansion of the MDCH director’s existing imminent danger authority and the Board of Pharmacy’s authority to schedule a controlled substance are important steps we can take.

House Bill 5338 and Senate Bill 789 amend the Public Health Code to allow the MDCH director to declare a substance as an “imminent danger to the public,” immediately providing public safety officials the tools they need to keep our communities safe. I ask the Legislature to pass this legislation and move it to my desk for signature.

### Prescription Drug Trafficking

Michigan’s public safety is also threatened by the diversion of controlled substances from their legal safe use to illegal use and distribution.

Prescription monitoring programs are among the most effective tools available to identify and prevent diversion of controlled substances at the prescriber, pharmacy and patient levels.

The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) maintains an electronic system for monitoring controlled substances dispensed by all prescribers. LARA is permitted by statute to provide access to that data to prescribers and pharmacists, licensing boards of authorized prescribers and limited access to law enforcement officials.

I recently signed House Bill 4369 which allows LARA to provide that same limited level of access to health insurance carriers as currently provided to law enforcement. The objective of H.B. 4369 – now Public Act 44 of 2012 – is to promote greater access to the electronic monitoring system in order to further advance the goals of the prescription drug monitoring system including education, early detection, enhanced investigations and law enforcement. In particular, it will enhance health providers' ability to identify individuals who are chronically misusing controlled substances.

In addition, I am pleased to announce a partnership between the Michigan State Medical Society and the Michigan Pharmacists Association to increase awareness and participation by their members in the Michigan Automated Prescription System.

### Video Technology

Video conferencing technology allows defendants, police officers, experts, witnesses and others to attend arraignments, pretrial conferences and court hearings by video instead of in person.

Defendants held in jail or prison can attend hearings from the secure facility without the risks and costs of transporting them with armed officers. This saves the Department of Corrections and local law enforcement time and money. In the 20-month period from January 2010 to August 2011, the number of correctional inmates who appeared by video increased six-fold. Each hearing by video keeps two officers at the facility.

In addition, allowing lab technicians from the State Police Forensic Lab to testify by video conferencing permits them to focus on forensic work, saving time and money traveling to court. I have tasked CLEAR to work with State Court Administrative Office to implement this initiative.

The Michigan Supreme Court is dedicated to expanding video conferencing technology in all trial court locations to achieve greater efficiencies. I fully support those efforts.

### Preliminary Exams

Preliminary exam reform is necessary to improve the treatment of victims of crimes, minimize officer time in the courtroom and improve efficiency in the courts. More than 90% of felony cases result in a guilty plea and a criminal defendant in Michigan waives the right to a preliminary exam in 75-80% of all cases. Despite these overwhelming numbers, police officers are too often stuck sitting in courtrooms waiting to see if an exam is going to go forward. CLEAR has already identified the need to reform Michigan's preliminary exam process to keep police officers on the street where they are most needed.

I urge the Legislature to pass reforms that require preliminary exam conferences and allow for limited hearsay testimony at a preliminary exam. Preliminary exam conferences allow the prosecutor, defendant and defense attorney the opportunity to discuss the charges and possible plea negotiations. Allowing limited hearsay testimony at preliminary exams will reduce the number of witnesses required to establish probable cause. This will lighten the burden on law enforcement because fewer officers will be required to testify.

### Indigent Defense Commission

In October, I created the Indigent Defense Advisory Commission to investigate the problems in Michigan's legal defense system and recommend solutions for the Legislature and my administration to review and enact. The Commission has been meeting regularly and talking with experts from around Michigan and the country. It will release recommendations in July. I look forward to working with the Legislature to reform our indigent defense system in order to protect our communities, our tax dollars and the constitutional rights of all Michiganders.

### Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

A misconception about who commits sexual assault undermines our ability to effectively respond to these crimes. For years the common belief has been that sexual assaults are most often perpetrated by a stranger. For some victims this is true, but the reality is that well over 75% of sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance, family member or current or former partner.

Sexual assault offenders are often also guilty of committing domestic violence. Research shows that sexual assault and domestic violence are undeniably connected, with 60-70% of rapists committing an average of 6 sexual assaults and 8 additional victimizations including child abuse and domestic battery.

Domestic violence and sexual assault threaten the lives and livelihoods of our citizens, contribute to homelessness, result in billions of dollars in national health care costs annually and – critically - perpetuate the cycle of crime. We must take a comprehensive approach to domestic violence and sexual assault to protect victims today and prevent victimizations tomorrow.

To begin this process, I will be issuing an executive order designating the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board (MDVPTB) as the Michigan Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention and Treatment Board. I appreciate the hard work the board has already done and ask it to take a more comprehensive approach to domestic violence and sexual assault crimes moving forward.

We must work collaboratively to ensure that the best tools are available to hold offenders accountable. Sexual assault crimes are particularly difficult to investigate and successfully prosecute. Nationally, only an estimated 25% of sexual assault reports result in arrests. However, estimates from Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw are far below the national average.

The MDVPTB is working with partners to enhance tools to hold more offenders accountable, specifically through prompt and accurate collection of forensic evidence. Working with law enforcement and health professionals, the MDVPTB is in the process of overhauling Michigan's sexual assault evidence kit for the first time in over 20 years. This new kit will reflect the most recent advances in forensic science and evidence collection to increase the arrest rate of offenders – holding those accountable who not only are perpetrating sexual assault but so often other forms of domestic violence.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the MDVPTB recently secured federal funding through a competitive grant to work collaboratively with the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan on an innovative training project. I have asked them to pilot their training efforts in Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw and the board has agreed. They will offer training, consultation and technical assistance to law enforcement for the purpose of critically examining and improving the criminal justice system's sexual assault policies and domestic violence practices. Additionally, they will reach out to these prosecutors' offices to provide support for their efforts.

This targeted technical assistance will be tailored to meet each jurisdiction's specific needs and will allow Michigan to develop and showcase best practices.

### Victim Protection

It is critical that we protect our seniors from abuse, one of the fastest growing crimes in Michigan. I want to thank the Senate for passing a comprehensive package of bills to protect seniors, Senate Bills 454-468. These bills increase coordination between state and local authorities to expedite investigations, create stricter penalties and implement necessary guardianship reforms to further protect elderly adults from financial and physical harm. I am asking the House of Representatives to pass this legislation.

I will also support legislation that protects victims of human trafficking, particularly children. Human trafficking crimes are growing, lucrative and dangerous. While state-specific data is not currently available, the U.S. Department of Justice reports that human trafficking has become the second-fastest-growing criminal industry – just behind drug trafficking – with children accounting for roughly half of all victims. Current Michigan law does not adequately address the problem of human trafficking and should be revised to ensure that we are properly protecting victims and putting the onus on individuals who are profiting from those victims.

Finally, we must also protect victims of cybercrimes, particularly children preyed upon by sexual predators. Predators today typically use the internet to befriend, seduce and ultimately harm children. We must proactively combat the problem by educating children and their caregivers. Last fall Michigan hosted the nation's first state-level summit on cyber security, which addressed these issues. I am committed to working with our parents, schools, the Michigan State Police and the Attorney General's Office to ensure the safety of Michigan's children

### Organized Retail Crime

Public safety also requires that we crack down on organized retail crime. Unlike shoplifting, which is done by individuals, organized retail crime consists of sophisticated theft and fraud activity conducted by professionals. In many instances, professionals, known as "boosters," steal large amounts of the same product from multiple stores and throughout several jurisdictions.

"Boosters" usually act in well-organized groups or gangs, methodically stealing merchandise from retail stores or trailers and then fence the products in order to convert them to cash or drugs. The cash and drugs finance other major criminal activities such as health care fraud and money laundering. Thus, organized retail crime has become a gateway to finance more serious offenses.

Many of the stolen items surface again in the marketplace, posing a risk to Michigan communities. Over-the-counter medication, infant formula and pharmaceutical items are all targeted and provide a clear danger to a buyer if resold in an uncontrolled environment.

We must ensure law enforcement is given every tool to combat organized retail crime. I will be working with the Legislature on statutory changes to address this head on, by providing more effective and comprehensive laws specifically targeting organized retail crime. These sophisticated criminals are not common shoplifters. They are gangs of dangerous criminals who are costing our businesses and our communities too much.

#### IV. Crime Prevention

Public safety must begin with crime prevention. Crime prevention starts with strong communities. In addition to law enforcement, our crime fighters range from parents, to teachers, to responsible landlords to engaged employers.

Crime occurs in communities that lack educational and career opportunity – where children and parents alike – are unable to see a bright future for themselves. And it occurs in neighborhoods with blighted buildings that too often become drug houses or fire hazards.

We must ensure that our children see a more promising future in education than in gangs. We must ensure that our cities are strong and filled with economic opportunity – not blight and crime. To not only stop the cycle of crime, but to prevent it from occurring, we must invest our resources in our young people and their futures.

##### Community Ventures

More and better jobs are not only good for economy, they are a key crime prevention tool. When opportunities are scarce and criminal activity is lucrative, crime may seem like the only option.

A comprehensive approach to public safety must recognize the importance of increasing economic opportunities. Providing career pathways to the structurally unemployed is an especially effective way to improve public safety in our most challenged urban centers. While a great deal of important work addresses the barriers to employment of those in the most difficult circumstances, we need to do better.

Employers value work experience, in-demand job skills and literacy. Michigan has failed to successfully address the employment needs of the structurally unemployed – people with the willingness to work but who face barriers to employment. Cities like Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw are hardest hit with citizens remaining unemployed far longer than the average Michigan citizen.

Today, I am charging the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to launch the Community Ventures initiative -- a public-private partnership that will identify employers willing to create new jobs, and organizations that can provide training and other job readiness services for the structurally unemployed. I am recommending \$15 million in my FY 13 budget for this initiative. For the first time, state agencies like MEDC, Workforce Development Agency and Department of Human Services are bringing together employers, job readiness partners and private funders in a comprehensive and measurable program to assist young people aged 15-29 and ex-offenders. The outcome will create at least 1,000 new, long-term jobs in our hardest hit urban centers.

Those with employment challenges have unique needs like basic workplace training, access to day care, reliable transportation, necessary education and literacy skills. Community Ventures will line up key job readiness partners and employers who have experience in these types of comprehensive programs. Detroit region businesses like Cooper Standard and VITEC LLC have stepped forward to provide jobs and the Kellogg Foundation is ready to partner in these efforts.

I am also charging the MEDC in partnership with Michigan Corps and Accelerate Michigan to develop a new social entrepreneurship business competition. This initiative will bring together the best innovative minds to design sustainable solutions that address structural unemployment.

Government efforts and resources alone cannot solve the problems of structural unemployment in our cities. Working together in an innovative way, we can overcome this employment challenge, strengthen our urban cores, stabilize neighborhoods and reduce crime.

### Creating New Paths for Young People

One of our best crime prevention tools is a bright future for young people. If we can help our youth see that future, then we have taken an important step toward a safer Michigan.

Teenagers in Detroit, Pontiac, Flint and Saginaw are arrested at alarming rates. Young people involved in violence and crime usually can't see a positive future for themselves. They likely have not seen the opportunities that exist beyond the boundaries of their own neighborhoods.

In communities where much of the green space has given way to blight – many children have never gotten to enjoy the beauty of Pure Michigan – let alone had their eyes opened to the potential careers that may be available. We know that too few of our struggling students are being immersed in nature and other science activities. We must invest in programs that encourage exploration of the sciences and provide a path to high demand careers.

Many employees at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), including some conservation officers, got their start as summer interns for the department, and discovered not just a passion for the outdoors, but a career in it. We want to make sure teens from urban areas know these opportunities exist, and can imagine that life for themselves. That's why I recommended \$5 million in the FY 13 budget to support programs for teens from Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw. Today, I call upon the business and non-profit communities to join the state in this commitment by investing in our youth, their future and ours.

I have directed the DNR to build new partnerships with recreation centers and organizations in those cities that help teens who too often see nothing but concrete to understand that opportunities exist far beyond their experience.

These young people will discover what it's like to work at Milliken State Park in Detroit or Bald Mountain Recreation Area near Pontiac – what it's like to do a fish survey or help green their city. They will benefit from mentorship and the pride of gaining new science and math skills.

Not only will this program create a safer Michigan, but it will begin young people on the path to a bright future.

### Strong, Safe Cities

In addition to exposing young people to Michigan's natural environment, we need to ensure that our urban environments are safe, strong and thriving.

We can reduce crime by removing and rehabilitating abandoned buildings. These buildings often become drug houses and offer shelter for illegal activity. They pose dangerous situations for our first responders. And they prevent economic growth in communities where it is most needed – creating economic distress that challenges job growth, perpetuates poverty and breeds crime.

Wayne County regularly lists upward of 10,000 tax foreclosed properties for auction, primarily in Detroit. These dilapidated properties are often occupied by drug or other criminal operations or simply held by speculators willing to perpetuate community blight in the hope of personal financial gain.

We must remove barriers to demolishing or rehabilitating blighted properties so we can have strong, safe cities.

I am proposing a change in the state law to forbid individuals with unpaid taxes or who own blighted properties from buying any more property at auction. This will encourage current property owners to clean up and prevent blight on their property, and also prevent bad actors from degrading good neighborhoods.

In addition, I have identified \$3 million in the state's Land Reutilization Fund for use in clearing title on tax-reverted properties in Detroit.

Right now, it is very hard to get title insurance on a tax-reverted property. It can be an expensive and time-consuming process and it hampers redevelopment. By clearing title, we can eliminate dangerous properties and get back to the business of doing business and creating jobs.

I will work with the State of Michigan Land Bank and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation to target parcels that will most benefit the city's redevelopment and the safety of its citizens.

### Truancy

Our education system plays an important public safety role. Children who do not regularly attend school are more likely to confront the challenges of substance abuse, teen pregnancy and juvenile delinquency. For the 2010-2011 school year, Michigan public schools documented 83,491 cases of truancy. This is a tragedy for our students and our state.

To break the cycle of crime, we must tackle truancy.

Truancy often results from other underlying problems, such as poverty and parental neglect. We can work to reduce truancy, and crime, by addressing the root causes. Accordingly, I call on the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) to implement a program to place more social workers within the 135 public elementary schools located in Flint, Detroit, Pontiac and Saginaw.

Under the existing Family Resource Center (FRC) program, DHS has created special service units located within 45 schools statewide. The FRC program works by moving DHS family independence specialists out of county offices and stationing them within local schools. These workers assist eligible families in obtaining supportive services to help them become self-sufficient. The idea behind the FRC concept is to reduce barriers to academic success by helping families access resources immediately, before the barriers—such as insufficient transportation, child care, housing instability, food insecurity and access to healthcare—cripple the learning process. Placing DHS workers where clients are located permits situational observation for prevention of child neglect and abuse by referral to child protective services, counseling for improved parenting and nutrition, health monitoring and educational advancement including regular school attendance.

I also call on DHS to require regular school attendance as a condition for eligibility for temporary cash assistance. Current policy only requires school attendance for children ages 16-18, missing our youngest and most vulnerable children. I am asking DHS to extend this policy to cover all school-age children to encourage parents who are receiving cash assistance to make sure that their children are attending school. Twenty-nine other states already do this and Michigan ought to join them.

One exemplary local program for reducing truancy is already underway in Midland County. The Midland County Probate Court has deputized a single person at each school who has the authority to monitor truancy and carry out the process. This proactive and innovative effort is commendable. I encourage other communities to consider similar efforts to combat truancy.

### Successful Prisoner Re-Entry

We know that the majority of those incarcerated will be rejoining society and their successful re-entry is as critical to public safety as a sentence served. We need to ensure that those re-entering society are well-equipped with education and marketable skills so that they have alternatives to crime when they are released.

Effective prisoner re-entry is an important component of smart justice. Michigan's prisoner re-entry program has been a major contributor to lower recidivism rates for the state. Recidivism rates have gradually improved over the past nine years, from a high of 45.7% to the current low of 33.2% being returned to prison within three years following release.

Michigan's overall parole revocation rate for 2011 was the lowest since 1987, when record-keeping began. While we have achieved much, I know we can continue to improve in this area. The existing prisoner re-entry model was built with an emphasis on programming and treatment as prisoners neared the completion of their prison term and transitioned into the community.

This process must begin earlier. We need to start these programs on day one, at the very beginning of an offender's prison sentence. This will focus on treatment and programming specifically designed to lower each offender's risk of re-offending. I have tasked the Director of the Department of Corrections with improving the re-entry model with an ultimate goal of beginning the process sooner, continuing the progress Michigan has already made, and further reducing recidivism rates.

## **V. Conclusion**

For far too long, Michigan has turned a blind eye to the conditions of many of our cities and those who live there.

The simple truth is that for Michigan to succeed, our cities must succeed. And to succeed, they must be safe.

Today, I ask the citizens of Michigan to join me in understanding that we are all in this together; that what happens in Flint or Detroit or Pontiac or Saginaw affects each of us; and, that Michigan cannot be strong and prosperous until we all are strong and prosperous.

And, today I ask the Legislature to join me in taking the steps necessary to build a smarter, better justice system.

If we are truly to reinvent the state we love, we must face our most intractable problems head-on and we must fix them together. Michigan's future, and the future of Michigan's next generations, depends on it.