



***Testimony before the New Economy and Quality of Life Committee***

***May 5th, 2010***

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Again we would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to have this dialogue. We understand that each of you have a very busy schedule.

Serving on this committee I'm sure you constantly receive the latest and greatest study on how to fix Michigan's economy.

Organizations, think tanks, universities, associations all have the solutions --- we need more and better incentives, we need to cut business taxes; or we need to focus on entrepreneurship, tech transfer, medical devises, a resurgent high tech auto industry, homeland

security, manufacturing, green energy technology, worker training, higher education, and on and on.

I believe that through our discussions you will have a better understanding that all of these have merit and need to be used to move the state forward. But we cannot pursue one at the cost of another.

We can't pursue the lowering of the business tax while ignoring the reality that incentives are needed. Likewise, we can't simply continue providing incentives while ignoring the fact that our business tax structure and business climate is "at best" extremely confusing.

We can't pursue a resurgent high tech auto industry while ignoring entrepreneurship.

My point is that it's not an "either - or" proposition. We need to pursue all avenues that make sense for the entire state while understanding that each region may have its own unique opportunities. This needs to be understood so that we can make the entire business retention/attraction effort as seamless and flexible as possible.

Last week you heard from Northern Michigan economic developers and today you will hear from economic developers representing Southwest Michigan who will share their experiences with the Committee.

They are:

Ron Kitchens, Chief Executive Officer, Southwest Michigan First

Birgit Klohs, President and CEO, The Right Place, Inc.

Randy Thelen, President, Lakeshore Advantage Corporation

And

Wendy Chesser, Executive Vice President, Cornerstone Alliance who  
will be speaking first