

Turning College Access Challenges Into Action

Michigan College Access Network Day At The Capitol

State Capitol Building, Lansing
April 25, 2018

Michigan's Children
www.michiganschildren.org



*Public policy
in the best interest
of children.*

Who We Are

- **A statewide, independent policy voice** for children, youth and their families.
- We want Michigan's **public policy and programs to help children, youth and families access the opportunities they need to succeed.**
- To make that happen, we work to ensure that policymakers prioritize the needs of children, youth and families facing the most challenges.
- We believe believe that better public policy is built when those directly impacted by it are **engaged with decision makers.**

How We Work:

Knowing What Changes Public Policy

- **Understanding** Issues and Solutions
- Strategically **Communicating** that Information
- **Mobilizing Strategic Partners** and Engaging Communities Around Problems and Solutions
- **Advocate Directly** With Change Makers and Connect Others To Them



Michigan Situation

- Good News! Everybody loves kids
- Good News! Everybody loves education
- Good News! People are concerned about education success
- Good News! We know what to do
- Bad News! Sometimes they don't love ALL kids
- Bad News! Disinvestment trend
- Bad News! Limited political will to change the situation

Policy In Context

- Growing child, youth and family poverty
- High unemployment, particularly for young adults
- Growing abuse and neglect
- Minimal movement in education outcomes
- Minimal movement in health outcomes
- Some public programs growing to meet needs
- Federal support more tenuous
- Others woefully lacking
- Poor outcomes across the board for kids involved with the foster care and juvenile justice systems

Why the Disconnect?

- Lots of competition for fewer dollars
 - State disinvestment for more than a decade
 - Tax changes=less money to spend
 - Program changes=less state investment, more reliance on federal funding
 - Federal fiscal and operational challenges
- Ideology about the role of government
 - Polarization of the parties
- Policy makers don't hear about issues of concern

Current Policy Frames

- Flint Water Disaster/Distrust of Government
- Nassar Crimes/Distrust of Higher Education
- Struggling School Districts: Detroit, Others
- 3rd Grade Reading Priority
- Michigan as a Top 10 State
- Challenging Post-Secondary Articulation
- Governing Into An Election Year

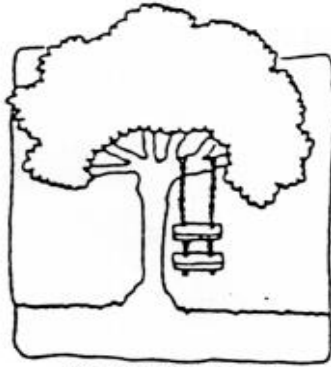
College Access Messages

- College is...
 - Post-secondary Education
 - A Pre-requisite to Success
 - A Necessity for Everyone
 - Has Evidenced Return on Investment
- Credential Attainment NOT College vs. Career
- Investments in College Access Important
- Other Investments Leading to College Access Important

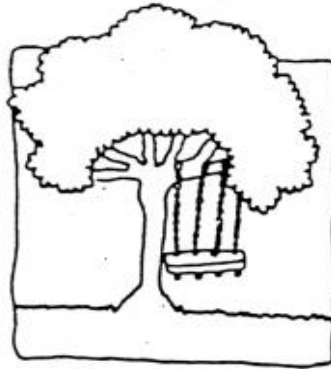
Why Are You Involved Now?

- You Can Do Advocacy!
 - You already have the skills you need
 - It doesn't take that many of us
- You Should Do Advocacy!
 - There are things we want changed
 - Democracy=Responsibility
 - Decision-makers REALLY need our help

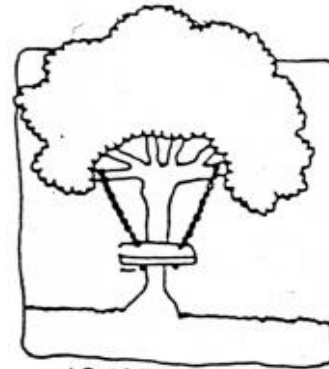
How a Bill Becomes Law



AS INTRODUCED



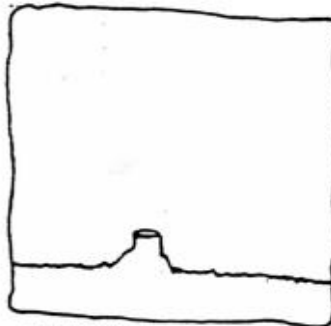
AS AMENDED IN
COMMITTEE



AS AMENDED ON
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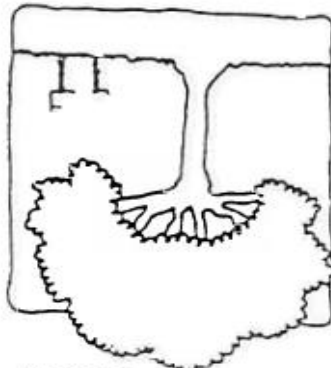
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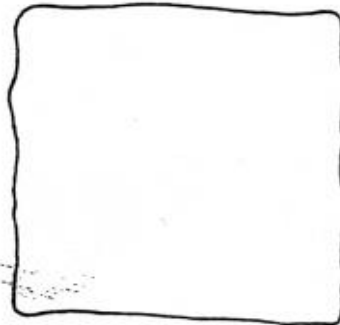
AS FUNDED BY JOINT
BUDGET COMMITTEE



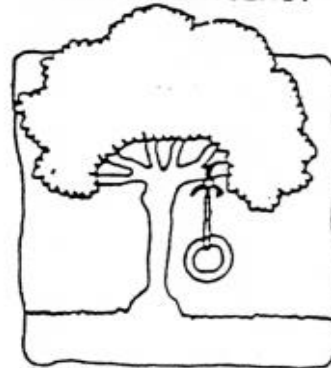
AS IMPLEMENTED BY
THE STATE AGENCY



AS REPORTED BY THE
MEDIA



AS UNDERSTOOD BY
THE PUBLIC



WHAT WAS ACTUALLY
NEEDED

How do we use our time today to make change?

- **Talk to Decision-Makers**
 - About what we need them to know about us
 - About what we need to know about them
- **Talk to Other People**
 - About our experiences at home
 - Finding common ground
 - Strengthening our messages through partnerships
 - About policymaker's views or positions
 - Strengthening MCAN and Michigan's Children
 - Building collective next steps

Policymakers Need to Know

What WE Know

- What do policymakers need to know?
 - What do policymakers need to know about youth, families, our communities?
 - What do policymakers need to know about how programs work or don't work?
 - How can we share that information today?
 - How can we get more information to follow up?

How Do We Best Get Them That Information?

- Helps to Know Something About Them
 - What issues do they prioritize?
 - Who do they tend to listen to?
 - What do they think about our issues?
 - How does our work help to solve their problems?
- Helps to Know Something About Their Job
 - They are busy, have lots of issues to weigh in on
 - Helps to connect the dots between our issues and issues they are already talking about

You Did Some Homework on Their Priorities

- Who represents you? Who else do they represent?
- What have they said when they are in the district? Through media and otherwise?
- What have they worked on in Lansing?
 - They sponsor and co-sponsor bills
 - They all have committee assignments

Who Do They Listen To? What Influences Them?

What Influences Decision Makers

- Friends
- Title or position
- Information
- Numbers
- Constituents
- Money

“When you need a friend, it’s too late to make one.”

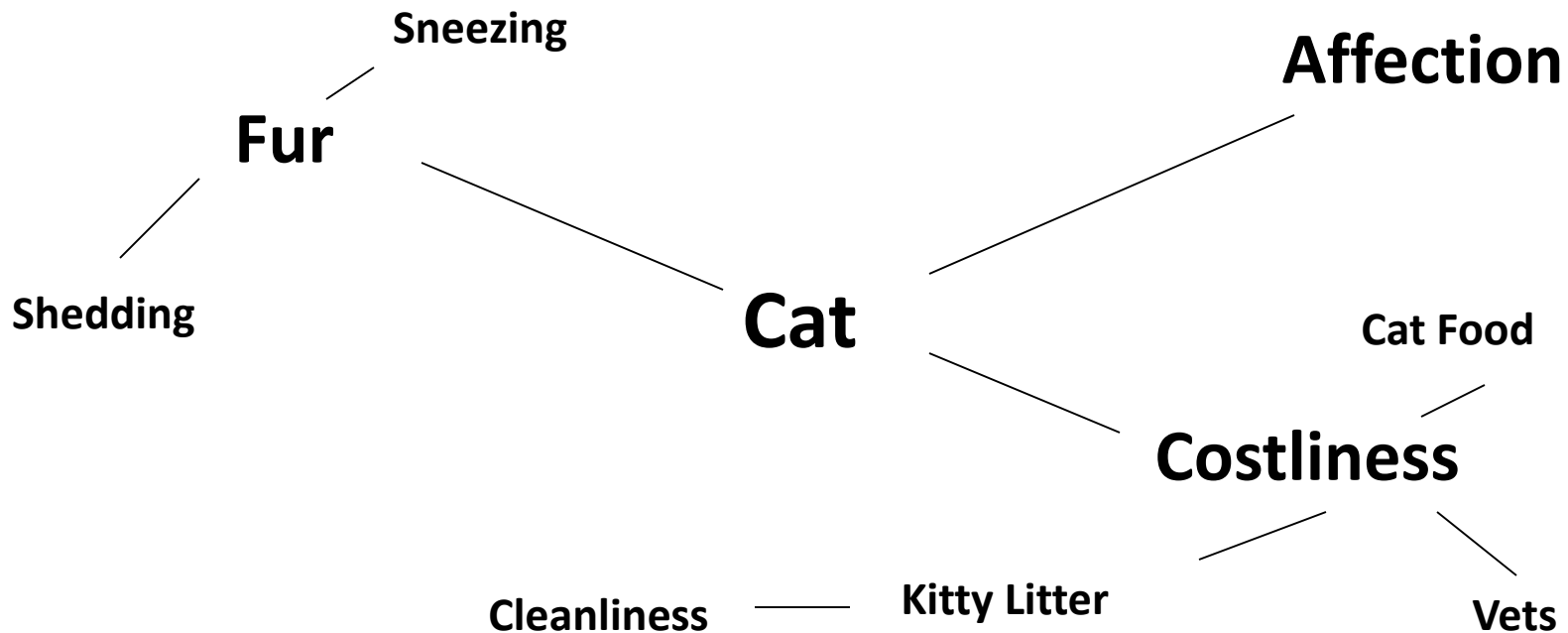
Mark Twain

How Do We Get Them to Listen?

- We use mental shortcuts to make sense of the world
- Based on our life experiences, including the media
- We use “frames” to filter new information



Cat Frame



Why Do Frames Matter?

- When the facts don't fit the frame, it is the **FACTS** that are rejected, not the frame.
- Find out what they hear when you say:
 - College access
 - Scholarship opportunities
 - Supportive services
 - Other issues you will be raising with them

TODAY: Understand Their Friends and Their Frame

- **Become Their Friend and Resource**
 - Share What You Know
- **Find Out Who Else They Listen To**
 - Think About Who You Might Want to Get To Help With Follow Up
- **Find Out Their Priorities**
 - Think About How Your Information and Resources Connect To Those Priorities

Always Keep the Door Open

- If they don't do what you want...
 - Can you blame them? Did they know what you know?
 - Express disappointment, but look for other possibilities
- If all else fails...
 - Don't get angry
 - Get a better person elected/appointed/hired

Capitalizing on the Election Year

- More Attention on Issues
- More Attention to Constituents
- More Opportunities to Connect
- Building Early Relationships for Next Year

Continue Working Together

Utilize The MCAN Network

Keep in Touch With Other Partners

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