



## **When Michigan Invests in its Families and Children, Our Economy and Workforce Prospers.**

At [a variety of youth-and parent-led forums](#) this election season, candidates from both political parties have argued that when we invest in families through critical initiatives like affordable child care, mental health services, or juvenile justice reform, we give every Michigander a chance to be part of a strong workforce that will attract great employers, or to apply their talents toward starting their own game-changing companies.

This week, however, we learned that most lawmakers still follow the old school of “economic development.” That is – award tons of money to attract large businesses to move to our state – rather than investing in the very real needs that are affecting today’s workforce.

The federal funds that we spent a year ago to sustain the child care industry will run out in the coming years, and we have no new plan yet to invest state dollars in making child care affordable for any parent who wants to work or get a degree.

The funding invested in our mental health system this summer is still not enough to ensure that every family can access services for themselves or their kids, whether it’s a mild to moderate need or something more severe.

Yet the centerpiece of the latest supplemental budget is nearly \$850 million in new incentives (aka corporate welfare) for companies to flock to Michigan.

Sure, Michigan invested a lot in its people through the Fiscal Year budgets earlier this summer, but those initiatives do not reach the same magnitude as the \$2 billion we have given in corporate handouts going back to December 2021.

Not every item in this budget is bad – \$15 million for housing for youth aging out of foster care is a commendable investment – but the only reason this deal was made is because it was part of a larger plan by eager lawmakers bent on handing out more money to big business..

The most notable beneficiary is the construction of a [battery plant](#) near Big Rapids, Michigan, right next door to, I kid you not, “Roben-Hood” airport.

You can’t make these things up.

To build a strong and sustainable economy in Michigan, let’s refocus our attention and public dollars on where those investments can do the most good for retooling our current and future workforce. Focus those dollars on Michigan parents and children, and not on out-of-state corporation hand-outs.