Washtenaw Community College

Office of the President

Michigan House of Representatives
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

February 17, 2026

Support for Michigan HB 5031

Dear Members of the Michigan House of Representatives,

On behalf of Washtenaw Community College, I am writing to express our strong support for **House Bill 5031**, which would authorize the renewal and continuation of **Technology Improvement Financing (TIF) through Michigan's SmartZone program**. This legislation is vital to sustaining innovation-driven economic development and workforce preparation throughout our the region.

As a public college deeply rooted in both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, WCC plays a central role in educating the region's current and future business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. The SmartZone program directly complements this mission by strengthening the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting business creation and growth, and expanding opportunities for experiential learning, internships, and talent retention for our students.

Renewal of SmartZone TIF authority through HB 5031 would allow WCC to continue investing in programs and partnerships that connect emerging companies with university talent, research expertise, and business support services. These investments help ensure that graduates of WCC can pursue meaningful career opportunities locally while contributing to the region's long-term economic vitality.

We have seen how SmartZone-supported initiatives encourage collaboration among higher education, local government, and the private sector—an alignment that is essential for inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Continued SmartZone funding will help our region remain competitive in attracting innovative companies, supporting small businesses, and preparing a skilled workforce ready to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving economy.

Washtenaw Community College supports HB 5031 and advocates for its passage. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Ann Arbor SPARK and our regional stakeholders to advance innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunity for our students and community.

Sincerely,

Rose B. Bellanca Ed.D.

Rose B. Bellanca, Ed.D.
President
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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