

From: [Reynolds, Kelly](#)
To: dloep@bcbsm.com
Subject: Letter from Mayor Christopher Taylor
Date: Thursday, July 14, 2022 9:58:00 AM
Attachments: [7.7.2022 Letter to Loepp.pdf](#)

Mr. Loepp,

Please see the attached letter from Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor to your attention. A hardcopy has also been sent by postal mail.

Thank you,
Kelly Reynolds

Kelly Reynolds, Executive Assistant (she/her)

Ann Arbor Mayor's Office | Guy C. Larcom City Hall | 301 E. Huron, 3rd Floor · Ann Arbor · MI · 48104
734.794.6165 (O) | Internal Extension 41602
kreynolds@a2gov.org | www.a2gov.org



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CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Office of Mayor Christopher Taylor

Daniel J. Leopp
Chief Executive Officer
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Re: BCBSM Support of Disenfranchising Legislators

Dear Mr. Leopp:

Michigan's democracy is at a crossroads and we cannot ignore the urgency of the moment.

I was recently approached by the Defend Black Voters Coalition with concerns about BCBSM's political spending to undermine democracy in Michigan. I share their concern and invite you to engage this very serious issue.

As you know, some Michigan legislators are working to make it harder for Black and working-class Michiganders to exercise their right to vote. You signed an April 2021 [joint statement](#) in reaction to these politicians that stated, in part:

Government must avoid actions that reduce participation in elections - particularly among historically disenfranchised communities, persons with disabilities, older adults, racial minorities and low-income voters.

Government has a responsibility to continuously improve and strengthen election administration, because public faith in the security and integrity of our elections is fundamental.

This strong public statement put you squarely on the side of inclusion, equity, and democracy - a position, however, entirely at odds with the financial support BCBSM has quietly given to lawmakers currently working to disenfranchise voters. I understand that BCBSM must have relationships with a range of lawmakers, but the support of Big Lie, disenfranchising legislators ought to be a red line. I ask that BCBSM actions prioritize the defense of democracy above other policy goals.

According to research provided by the Defend Black Voters Coalition, BCBSM (including its affiliated entities) is the largest corporate contributor to the legislators pushing Jim Crow-style voter suppression in Michigan, giving \$329,000 since 2016.¹ In the same period, BCBSM gave \$355,000 to the party committees

¹ All contribution data derived from campaign finance disclosures compiled by OpenSecrets through 11-18-21 and analyzed by Community Change Action.

supporting these legislators. This sum does not include more opaque contributions such as leadership PACs or administrative funds.

The support of Big Lie, disenfranchising legislators is at odds with Ann Arbor (and, frankly, American) values of democracy and harmful of employee and community health, in light of the [empirical connection](#) between a community's access to the vote and a range of health outcomes.

I have a difficult time understanding how you can lead an organization that provides services to government organizations like the City of Ann Arbor, sign a pledge that further supports the foundational democratic principles upon which government rests, and then permit BCBSM to contribute to legislators and candidates who act with intentionality to undermine and violate those principles.

It is time for BCBSM to be true to your statement of April 2021. Renounce Big Lie, disenfranchising legislators and candidates and support those who advance the right and ability of everyone to participate in self-government - the right and ability of everyone to exercise the right to vote.

Thank you in advance for your time. I look forward to discussing these concerns further. Please include my executive assistant Kelly Reynolds (kreynolds@a2gov.org) if you wish to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Christopher Taylor

From: [Hansen, Vicki E.](#) on behalf of [Loepp, Daniel J.](#)
To: [Taylor, Christopher \(Mayor\)](#)
Cc: [greg sudderth](#); [Reynolds, Kelly](#)
Subject: Letter from Daniel J. Loepp, President and CEO, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
Date: Friday, July 15, 2022 1:13:28 PM
Attachments: [071522_Hon. C. Taylor_Voter Access.pdf](#)

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Please see the attached letter from Daniel J. Loepp. A hardcopy has also been sent by postal mail.

Thank you,
Vicki Hansen

Vicki Hansen

Sr. Executive Assistant to the President and CEO
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
313-225-6823 – Office
[REDACTED] - Cell
Mail Code: 2001

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DANIEL J. LOEPP
President & CEO
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

July 15, 2022

Hon. Christopher Taylor
Mayor, City of Ann Arbor
301 E. Huron Street
P.O. Box 8647
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Dear Mayor Taylor:

I'm writing regarding your recent letter expressing support for the Defend Black Voters Coalition and their concerns. I appreciate receiving your views and having the opportunity to reply.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is proud of our longstanding efforts to meaningfully partner with the Black community – and all communities of color. We prioritize retaining the services of Black-owned businesses and have repeatedly been recognized as Supplier of the Year by the Michigan Minority Business Development Association. We are deeply engaged in identifying and resolving barriers existing within communities of color that stand in the way of health care access. We are proactively addressing biases in the health care delivery system by providing unconscious bias education to more than 5,000 physicians in Michigan; and we are also working with Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies across the country to reduce racial disparities in maternal health by 50 percent in five years.

We know that our involvement in issues outside of health care is also critical to support our community stakeholders and move our state forward to a place of greater equity. Last year, as you reference in your letter, I led discussions and joined leaders in Michigan's business community to outline a series of principles that we encouraged legislators to follow when considering whether and how to change Michigan's voting requirements. We believe that the rights of citizens to access the ballot and make their voices heard in electing our leaders are paramount and should not be infringed. We also acknowledge the fact that, historically, communities of color have not received equitable access.

The question is how best to guarantee access to the process of voting for all, in a way that is supportable by all. Clearly, the legislation vetoed by Governor Whitmer earlier this year falls short. So, too, does the approach of the Defend Black Voters Coalition.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's approach to working with policymakers to advance legislation benefiting our members, customers and stakeholders has historically and consistently been one of bipartisanship and respect. We support civil dialogue and open lines of communication – especially with those with whom we disagree. Through our employee political action committee – bluesPAC – and the work of our Governmental Affairs team at the state and federal levels, we inform discussions that have the potential to affect the lives of the people we serve, and the workings of the health care system.

This year, for example, we worked diligently between both parties' leaders in the Michigan House and Senate to improve legislation, signed by the Governor, regulating the operation of Pharmacy Benefit Manager companies. Our work helped consumers, while also enabling the continued operations of our PBM to support the needs of our group customers to manage costs and provide access to leading-edge pharmacy solutions. There are dozens more examples.

Our approach seeks to build bridges. It respects and appreciates the complexity of legislating, and we are often called upon by legislators of both parties for our knowledge. Our goal is always to remain at the table, be invited to lend our expertise, and influence legislation in ways that are positive and that help improve health care for all the people of Michigan.

The operation of bluesPAC respects that it is funded through voluntary contributions by employees at all levels of our organization whose personal political views run from very conservative to very progressive. The function of bluesPAC is to build strong bipartisan relationships with policymakers who support our objective to improve health care – it has never functioned to punish policymakers whose points of view diverge from our own.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan has been a leading corporate voice calling for fair access to the ballot for all Michigan voters. As an inclusive and diverse company, we will continue to advocate for this in our conversations with lawmakers from both political parties. We also will continue working arm-in-arm with our partners in the community representing labor and historically disadvantaged minority populations to make Michigan a more equitable place for all people – in health care, voting and other matters. We are on record, time and again, promoting equity. This is part of our approach to running our business and advocating for a better Michigan, a mission and approach we take very seriously.

We await a more comprehensive plan by this coalition that allows us to engage in responsible ways to support the principles we share, protect the rights of all Michigan citizens while also continuing our effective bipartisan approach to provide high-quality, affordable healthcare for all.

Thank you again for expressing your points of view. As a company, we will continue dialogue on this, and the many other important issues facing our members and our society.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Loepp

cc: Gregory A. Sudderth
Chairman of the Board
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan