

CENTER FOR MICHIGAN COMMUNITY CONVERSATION
Hosted by the Benzie Unit LWV-GTA September, 2016

2016 was an unprecedented and divisive year in both state and national politics. In September, 2016 the Benzie Unit of LWV-GTA hosted one of the 125 statewide Community Conversations sponsored by the Center for Michigan. The meeting room at Frankfort City Hall was filled with citizens ready to respond to a series of questions about their trust in state government and made recommendations about what they would like to see state government do in order to create a prosperous future.

Over all participants said that they wanted state government to make decisions in a nonpartisan way. The risks of not doing so have led to the dismal performance of inner city schools, crumbling infrastructure, the handling of financial emergencies and the water crisis in Flint.

Over 5000 Michigan residents shared their thoughts, ideas, and anxieties during these Community Conversations and statewide phone polls. The majority of participants said they had either “low” or “very low trust” of state government’s ability to deliver on all five major areas that were explored: 1) Oversight of K-12 and higher education; 2) Protection of public health; 3) Environmental protection; 4) Services for low-income residents; 5) Fostering economic growth. It was loud and clear that Michiganders felt that state government needed to make changes such as reforming policies of the emergency managers and to provide transparency in the campaign finance systems.

During open dialogue in Community Conversations, participants shared feelings of disappointment and frustration and a desire for more truthfulness and transparency. Sample comments:

People don’t know who to turn to for help or who to blame.

Elected representatives should be representing the people. They are too concerned about the next election.

... the Flint situation has literally destroyed our faith... there is too much sorrow and pain and expense in how we’re operating the state.

This report **Fractured trust: Lost faith in state government, and how to restore it** is available by going to: Center for Michigan Fractured Trust

Excerpt from **Fractured trust: Lost faith in state government, and how to restore it** This report was written by Amber DeLind. 2017