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Michigan Municipal League Proposes Cost-Control, Investment Legislation.

With the goal of fixing what they see as Michigan's broken municipal finance system, the Michigan Municipal League announced this week that they would now be offering proposals aimed at changing the situation.

The league, a coalition dedicated to educating officials, assisting administration and innovating in Michigan communities, is pushing the value of placemaking—a concept promoted by Gov. Rick Snyder during his State of State address—and trying to tear down impediments to it. Placemaking is the concept of revitalizing and modernizing downtown and neighborhood areas.

"Michigan's current system for funding municipalities is clearly broken," Dan Gilmartin, executive director and CEO of the Michigan Municipal League, said. "From 2002-2012, we were the only state in the nation where municipal revenue actually fell, and there has been little improvement since then. That means cities have laid off first responders and been unable to maintain roads and infrastructure, let alone provide the services that attract college graduates, the lifeblood of today's middle class."

Part of the problem facing municipalities, according to the league, are that its finance system fails to track the economy, which has actually seen revenue sharing cut by \$7.5 billion since 2002 while state policy limits local governments' ability to control many of their own costs.

"Gov. Snyder has called for our state to grow its population back to the 10 million mark, and we agree that 'true' growth is the answer," Gilmartin said. "We must recognize that won't happen if our cities continue to be burdened by archaic state policies."

The league has advocated for state-authorized efforts to help cities contain costs so they can continue providing benefits to retirees, enhancements to existing infrastructure and a recommitment to revenue sharing.

Published on January 27, 2017 by Peninsula Reports

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