

# Mackinac Center for Public Policy

## Introducing Our Experts

The Mackinac Center was founded in 1987 as an independent, nonprofit research and educational institute based in Midland, Mich. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for all Michigan citizens by promoting market-based solutions to state and local policy questions. Its research areas include education, fiscal, labor and environmental policy, as well as criminal justice, governmental transparency and regulation reform.

### EDUCATION



#### Ben DeGrow

Director of Education Policy | [degrow@mackinac.org](mailto:degrow@mackinac.org)

Ben DeGrow has been the director of education policy at the Mackinac Center since 2015. **His areas of expertise include parental choice programs, charter schools, education funding, K-12 teacher and personnel policies, student assessment, and school performance and accountability.** He has been featured in the

Washington Times, The Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press, MLive and the Denver Post. He has been published in Forbes, the Washington Examiner, The Hill, The Denver Post, and The Detroit News. He has also done numerous local and statewide radio and TV interviews.

### FISCAL



#### Michael D. LaFaive

Senior Director of the Morey Fiscal Policy Initiative  
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Michael LaFaive is the senior director of the Morey Fiscal Policy Initiative at the Mackinac Center, where he has worked since 1995. During his time at the Center, LaFaive has authored numerous studies on fiscal policy topics, including corporate welfare and state finance. **His**

**areas of expertise include state budgeting, state economic development, privatization, school finance, and cigarette taxation and smuggling.** He has been interviewed by many major news outlets, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Houston Chronicle, The Associated Press and CNN. He's been published in The Wall Street Journal, New York Post, The Hill, the Detroit Free Press, The Detroit News and numerous others. He's also appeared on NPR, Michigan Public Radio, Fox News and ABC News.



#### James M. Hohman

Director of Fiscal Policy | [hohman@mackinac.org](mailto:hohman@mackinac.org)

James M. Hohman is the director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center. Hohman has written studies on government employment benefits, pensions, state spending, economic development policy and school privatization. **His areas of expertise also include tax policy and the state economy.** His work has been cited

nationally in the The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Hill and in the Janus v. AFSCME U.S. Supreme Court decision. He has been published in nearly every newspaper in Michigan with an editorial page and has done countless radio interviews all across the state.

### REGULATION



#### Jarrett Skorup

Director of Marketing and Communications  
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Jarrett Skorup is the director of marketing and communications at the Mackinac Center. Prior to this role, he was a policy analyst and has authored several studies since joining the Center in 2009. **His areas of expertise include occupational licensing, civil asset forfeiture**

**and other labor and regulatory issues.** Skorup's work has been published multiple times in The Wall Street Journal and in every major news source in Michigan, including the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News. Skorup has also testified multiple times before the Michigan Legislature and other states' legislatures on many public policy issues.



#### Michael Van Beek

Director of Research | [vanbeek@mackinac.org](mailto:vanbeek@mackinac.org)

Michael Van Beek joined the Mackinac Center in 2009 and is the director of research at the Center. **Van Beek's areas of expertise and study include ridesharing regulations, auto insurance reform, certificate of need law, dental therapist regulation and education policy.** He has authored several studies and has been published in The

Wall Street Journal, The Hill, The Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press, The Grand Rapids Press, The Oakland Press and elsewhere. Van Beek has also appeared on various radio shows across Michigan.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE



#### Kahryn Riley

Director of Criminal Justice Reform | [riley@mackinac.org](mailto:riley@mackinac.org)

Kahryn Riley is the director of the criminal justice reform initiative at the Mackinac Center, where she's worked since June 2016. **Riley's areas of focus include overcriminalization, the criminal code, civil asset forfeiture, law enforcement, community policing, courts and sentencing, corrections, bail, crime and**

**recidivism rates, and other associated issues.** Her work has appeared in publications including The Detroit News, Lansing State Journal, The Hill and USA Today. She is a sought-after speaker for criminal justice reform events and legislative briefings hosted by advocacy organizations from across the political spectrum.

## GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



### Michael J. Reitz

Executive Vice President | [reitz@mackinac.org](mailto:reitz@mackinac.org)

Michael J. Reitz is executive vice president of the Mackinac Center, where he has worked since 2012. He also currently serves as president of the Michigan Coalition for Open Government, which educates citizens on the importance of government transparency. **Reitz's areas of expertise include constitutional law, First Amendment issues,**

**FOIA and the Open Meetings Act, government unions and collective bargaining.** He has been cited by The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe, The Seattle Times, The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press, among others.



### Jack McHugh

Senior Legislative Analyst | [mchugh@mackinac.org](mailto:mchugh@mackinac.org)

Jack McHugh is the Mackinac Center's senior legislative analyst and editor of MichiganVotes.org, which provides citizens with easy-to-understand information on every bill, amendment and vote in the Michigan Legislature. Previously, he worked as a legislative chief of staff in the Michigan House of Representatives. **McHugh specializes**

**in legislative activity and history and also health policy.** He has appeared in The Hill, The Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press, The Oakland Press, The Grand Rapids Press and many other newspapers across Michigan.



### Patrick J. Wright

Vice President for Legal Affairs | [wright@mackinac.org](mailto:wright@mackinac.org)

Patrick Wright is vice president for legal affairs at the Mackinac Center and director of the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation. **Wright's expertise includes constitutional law, First Amendment issues, FOIA and the Open Meetings Act, and public sector labor law.** He also has experience with corrections law, federal

and state litigation, administrative law, judicial philosophy and state eminent domain. He has been published nationally in The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. He has appeared on the Sean Hannity Show and was interviewed by Shepard Smith on Fox News. Wright has also had multiple radio appearances on WJR and Michigan Radio. He has authored numerous amicus curiae briefs for the U.S. Supreme Court and his work was cited by the U.S. Supreme Court in the Janus V. AFSCME opinion.



### Derk Wilcox

Senior Attorney | [wilcox@mackinac.org](mailto:wilcox@mackinac.org)

Derk Wilcox is senior attorney at the Mackinac Center, where he has worked since 2012. **Wilcox's areas of legal expertise include constitutional law, municipal law, public sector labor law, and administrative and regulatory law.** He has testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. He has also testified before the Michigan Civil Service Commission and the Michigan House Oversight Committee.

## ENVIRONMENT



### Jason Hayes

Director of Environmental Policy | [hayes@mackinac.org](mailto:hayes@mackinac.org)

Jason Hayes joined the Mackinac Center as director of environmental policy in 2016. **His areas of expertise include energy choice and energy regulation; energy development (fossil fuels, nuclear energy and renewables); natural resources and natural areas management, including forestry, wildlife, fisheries**

**and water; conservation policy and environmental movements; and the use and provision of energy and natural resources to promote human development and wellbeing.** Hayes has appeared on multiple radio shows, podcasts and on Fox Business. He has been published in The Wall Street Journal, The Hill, The Detroit News, MLive.com and many other Michigan outlets.

## LABOR



### Morgan Shields

Legal Counsel and Director of Workers for Opportunity | [shields@mackinac.org](mailto:shields@mackinac.org)

Morgan Shields is legal counsel and director of Workers for Opportunity at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Shields received her law degree from the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University. She received her LL.M. in taxation from Georgetown University

Law Center. She served as an assistant general counsel at the National Rifle Association of America for several years before joining the Mackinac Center in November 2018. **Shields' area of expertise include labor, nonprofit tax issues and tax law.**

## HEALTHCARE



### Lindsay B. Killen

Vice President for Strategic Outreach & Communications | [killen@mackinac.org](mailto:killen@mackinac.org)

Lindsay Killen is the vice president for strategic outreach and communications. She joined the Mackinac Center in 2017 after over 10 years in the public policy movement.

**Killen's area of health care expertise includes Medicaid reform, hospital consolidations and transparency,**

**Certificate of Need laws, association health plans and short-term, limited-duration health plans and direct primary care.** She has been published in Forbes, The Washington Times, The Daily Caller and The Hill, among others.

To reach one of the Mackinac Center's policy experts, please contact:

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