

Substitute for House Resolution No. 275

A resolution to declare March 11-17 2018, as Sunshine Week in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Sunshine Week is a national initiative spearheaded by the American Society of News Editors to educate the public about the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy. The first nationwide Sunshine Week took place March 13–19, 2005; and

Whereas, Sunshine Week was established to spark a discussion about the importance of open government and public access to government documents and meetings; and

Whereas, Sunshine Week was also a way to draw attention to the media’s role in advocating for government transparency; and

Whereas, The American public has relied on a free press for more than two centuries to stay informed about the many activities in which our government engages; and

Whereas, Thomas Jefferson penned in his letter to Elbridge Gerry on January 26, 1799 that “I am ... for freedom of the press, and against all violations of the Constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.” and

Whereas, 6 U.S. Supreme Court justices ruled in favor of the Freedom of the Press in *New York Times Co. v. United States*, with Justice Black concurring, “Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government;” and

Whereas, Without the diligent work of a free press, many Americans would not have known about the tragedies suffered by those in Flint, Michigan or at Michigan State University; and

Whereas, Many institutions promoting a free press have recently been under attack because of the stories they are publishing; and

Whereas, An open and accessible government is vital to establishing and maintaining the people’s trust and confidence in their government and in the government’s ability to effectively serve its citizens and free press is an essential part of that mission; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, that the members of this legislative body declare March 11-17, 2018, as Sunshine Week in the state of Michigan. The House of Representatives realizes every citizen in our participatory democracy has an inherent right to access to government meetings and public records and is committed to openness and transparency in all aspects of its operations and seeks to set a standard in this regard.