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SEPTEMBER 16, 2013 AT 1:00 AM

COLUMNS

A welcome to Michigan's immigrants

STATE REP. RASHIDA TLAIB AND STEVE TOBOCMAN 1 COMMENTS



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Welcoming Week offers Michigan a chance to show immigrants America's best face, Tlaib writes. (Max Ortiz / The Detroit News)

From September 15-22, Michigan will join communities across the country to celebrate the second annual National Welcoming Week...

For Michigan, the celebration has significance beyond creating welcoming communities that exude our Midwestern traits of friendliness and hospitality.

Michigan is particularly poised to benefit from creating a more welcoming atmosphere for immigrants. As the only state to lose population in the 2010 Census...

In fact, from 1995-2005 Michigan's immigrants, representing only five percent of the state's population, launched 32.8 percent of the state's high-

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tech start-ups and contributed to nearly half of the international patents filed from the state. For the 2011-2012 academic year, Michigan's 25,551 foreign students contributed \$758.7 million to the state's economy. Michigan is also a destination for the many farm workers who contribute to local communities and our agricultural economy.

These insights have inspired Michigan's leaders to build the infrastructure to make Michigan the most welcoming state in the country. Exciting efforts like Global Detroit – an initiative launched by the New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan and the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce with dozens of collaborative partners – have placed the state at the forefront of innovative strategies to create economic growth and jobs for all Michiganders.

Gov. Rick Snyder also has put Michigan on the map as a leader in welcoming international talent, investment, and trade that contribute to our state's economic growth. In his first State of the State address, Snyder discussed how highly-educated immigrants have propelled economic regions like Silicon Valley. He asked the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Department of Civil Rights to lead a Global Michigan effort to ensure Michigan communities are prepared to take full advantage of welcoming strategies that will secure the global investment, talent, and trade critical to 21st Century economic growth.

Recently, Detroit hosted the first Global Great Lakes Convening, and Macomb County joined Welcoming America's Welcoming Cities & Counties Initiative, one of only two counties in the nation to do so.

There is growing recognition that welcoming new Michiganians is both smart economic development policy and the hospitable, Michigan thing to do.

During National Welcoming Week Michiganians recognize that our communities are strongest when everyone who lives in them feels welcome.

Snyder has issued a proclamation to mark the occasion and Welcoming Michigan will host a variety of activities.

Learn more at [WelcomingMichigan.org](http://WelcomingMichigan.org).

*State Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Detroit, represents Michigan's 6th District. Steve Tobocman is director of Global Detroit.*

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**Jake Johnson** · ★ Top Commenter

All of the good things that have been accomplished have been based on the fact that they are here legally. They respect American Dream. The illegals do not possess that foundation of respect for our laws, how can they build anything positive

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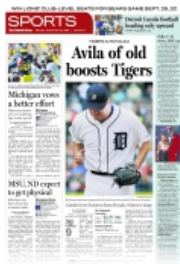
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