



FINAL BRIEF

CAS 832 | SUMMER 2021 | MELISSA FRUGÉ

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As the first woman from Michigan elected to serve in the U.S. Senate, Debbie Stabenow's colleagues know she is a force to be reckoned with and holds a unique and influential role in shaping our nation's health care, manufacturing, infrastructure, environment, and agriculture policies.

This brief outlines how to create a more engaging and dynamic digital space for the Senator's constituents to understand their concerns and issues better while increasing the Senator's visibility in Michigan and on the national stage.

LEADERSHIP

Today Senator Stabenow is Michigan's senior U.S. Senator and a member of Senate leadership. As Chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee, she makes sure there is a Michigan voice at the table and that Congress' priorities stay in line with the priorities of middle class families.

MICHIGAN FIRST

Creating jobs in Michigan is Senator Stabenow's top priority

FOR THE PEOPLE

With six offices around the State, Senator Stabenow is always ready to help Michigan residents who are having issues with federal programs.

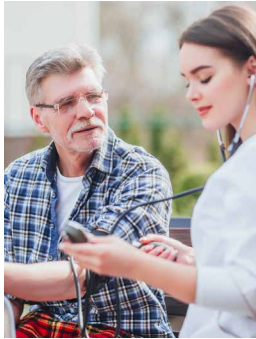
HUNT STATEMENT



The hunt statement unveils multiple opportunities to address constituent desires and issues that motivates someone to engage with the Senator in the digital space.

It's important to understand which needs desires, frustrations and fears drive a person to vote so a platform can be created that resonates with voters in order to build a coalition of supporters willing to vote and participate in the electoral process beyond Election Day.

CONSTITUENT
INSIGHTS



Insight into constituent behaviors reveals three major areas to connect and understand a voter’s values and aspirations.

Content created and targeted to constituents’ interests, geographic regions, age, and other demographics can resonate in a way general information never will.

It’s hard to feel passionate about a process or system designed to exclude specific demographics/populations.

It’s only been 50 years since anyone, regardless of race or gender, 18 years of age and older, has had the right to vote. Additionally, for more than two centuries, barriers have been erected to keep people (think minorities and women) viewed as undesirable from voting.

1

Not everyone learns the basics of democracy in school. Civics or U.S. government-focused curriculum can vary widely from one district to another.

Election results employ a confusing system of winner takes some (electoral college) while others take it all. Additionally, a general lack of understanding is apparent as to government’s actual purpose and who is the elected representative represents when there are local, state, and federally elected officials.

2

Technological advances like the internet, social media, and 24-hour cable news, mean people are bombarded at all hours of the day with information and opinions which may or may not be fact-based.

Spending a day answering phones in the Senator’s office reveals constituents often want to discuss views nearly identical to specific television or media hosts. There is also an uptick in call volume related to the trending topics online or certain television programs.

3

CONSTITUENT JOURNEY

The journey constituents tend to follow as they discover the political process is represented as five linear stages, awareness, engagement, endorsement, action, and validation.

01

01

AWARENESS

Constituent becomes aware of Senator Stabenow. At this stage the constituent needs help with an issue or has become aware of an upcoming election.

02

ENGAGEMENT

Constituent begins to actively seek out information about the Senator. Voter begins form an opinion by attending in-person events, researching voting record, and reading articles/watching interviews.

02

03

03

ENDORSEMENT

Constituent becomes vocal supporter to friends and family, may wear a campaign button, display a bumper sticker and/or yard sign.

04

ACTION

Constituent becomes a Voter and votes for the Senator.

04

05

05

VALIDATION

Constituent actively contributes time/ money to Senator's campaign and campaigns on her behalf.

Showcasing constituent's personal stories strips away perceived political bias and the conversation becomes more intimate. Constituents see how the Senator makes good on her promise of working for the people of Michigan, and suddenly, a system that seems confusing or even pointless begins to have real value and delivers tangible results.

ORGANIZING IDEA

An organizing idea provides the framework to change constituent behavior and create motivated, informed voters.

Michiganders possess a fierce loyalty and display intense pride when it comes to their home state, including the Senator who was born and raised in Clare County.

Michigan First encompasses the Senator's vision for legislation and is reflected through her leadership and core values.

Michigan is home, and the Senator is working to make sure their homes are safe, secure, and prosperous for today and future generations. These shared experiences connect the Senator directly with her constituents by focusing on what they all have in common, Michigan.

MADE IN DETROIT



MICHIGAN FIRST



AUDIT

To discover the brand purpose and establish a relevant connection with constituents an audit was performed. The Senator has several official social media accounts that vary in longevity and would like to increase followings on social media to lead to more visibility and understanding of the Senator’s leadership roles and activities. The office does not create content specifically for different audiences on different platforms. The belief is it all affects Michigan, so it should be shared equally across all channels.



IMMERSE

For more than 40 years, Debbie Stabenow has faithfully represented the people of Michigan as both a State and Federally elected official. Senator Stabenow Chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee and Democratic Policy and Communications Committee. She is a respected leader in areas like agriculture, mental health, and the Great Lakes. From Detroit to Marquette, the Senator maintains six offices in the state to ensure her constituents have nearby and easy access should they need help securing local communities’ resources.



ASSESS

The Senator has several official social media accounts that vary in longevity and don’t have a large following. Michigan has a little more than 10 million residents. Nearly 80 percent of them use the internet. Facebook is the leading social media site in the United States with nearly 50 percent of all social media site visits . By comparison, Twitter’s market share is less than 10% but YouTube is used by 81% of adults.

AUDIT

ORIGINATE

There is a disconnect between meaningful and targeted content and interactions and the big picture. But the office maintains the information shared publicly has an impact on all people of Michigan and even more broadly nationally.

Campaign finance laws, ethics, and a host of other committees limit media options. Essentially elected officials claim only owned and earned media. Paid media comes into play during the campaign season but cannot mix with official business.

ARTICULATE

Once audiences have been established and content created, best practices for social media posting should be followed. This includes four to five posts a week on Facebook, with curated or reshared posts every other day. Tweet up to 15 times a day, half of which should be curated or retweeted content. Post 1-2 times a day and curate or reshare only when applicable to Instagram audiences. YouTube content should be uploaded once a week. As a final recommendation, I suggest researching LinkedIn to share information relevant to "corporate culture" and TikTok for younger voters.

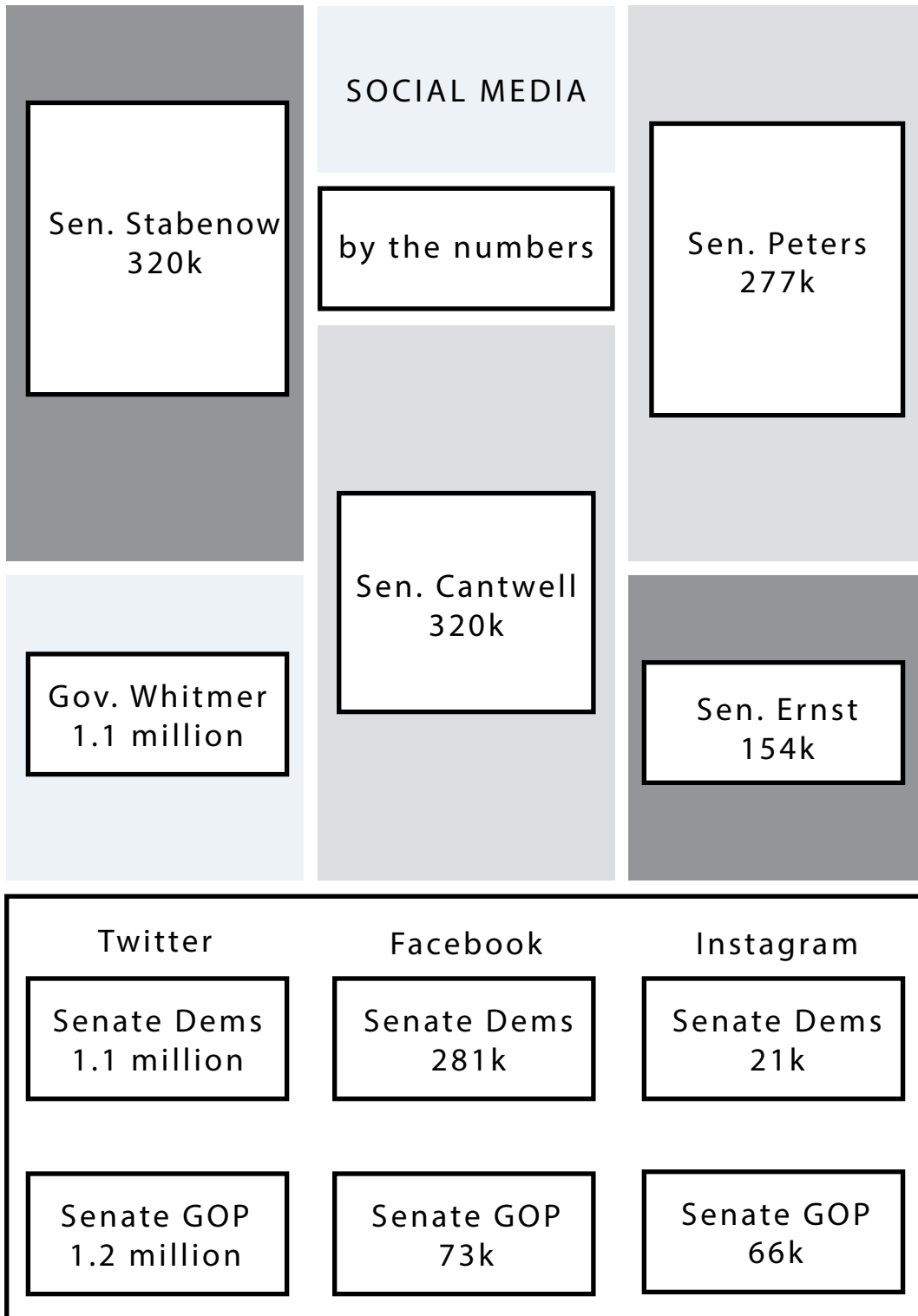
AUDIT

Senator Stabenow has a well-established digital media presence and focuses on several key issues critical to Michigan; job creation, quality healthcare access, a diverse and robust industry (including agriculture and manufacturing) and protecting the Great Lakes. As part of her leadership role within the caucus, Senator Stabenow also chairs the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee.

A comprehensive review of the Senator's social media channels reveals a total reach of just under 320,000 people. For comparison, Michigan's junior Senator, Gary Peters, has a reach of almost 277,000 people, and Michigan's Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, has the most significant reach with approximately 1.1 million people.

Facebook is not the dominant force it once was amongst younger users, and Twitter's market share is less than 10%, but apart from YouTube – used by 81% of adults – no other major online platform comes close to Facebook in terms of usage. Nearly 80% of Michigan's 10 million residents use the internet, and more than five million use Facebook.

There is a disconnect between meaningful and targeted content and interactions and the big picture, gaining followers and earning a larger share of voice.



EMAIL



NEWS FROM SENATOR STABENOW



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SENATORS STABENOW, PETERS INTRODUCE BILL TO SUPPORT WORKERS IMPACTED BY TRADE

The Trade Adjustment Assistance For Workers Reauthorization Act of 2021 improves the existing Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers program so that more trade-impacted workers can access job training benefits, extended unemployment, and other support services needed to find new jobs.

“I’m focused on making sure workers have good paying jobs, which includes providing them the opportunities and training they need for the jobs of the future. The Trade Adjustment Assistance program has helped workers in Michigan and across the country get back on their feet after their jobs disappeared because of trade-related reasons. My bill will make sure this program continues and is there for workers when they need it,” said Senator Stabenow. [Read More Here](#)



SENATORS STABENOW, BLUNT ANNOUNCE NEW BILL TO EXPAND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES NATIONWIDE

Legislation Builds on Historic 2014 Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Act, Which is Transforming the Way We Fund Community Behavioral Health Services



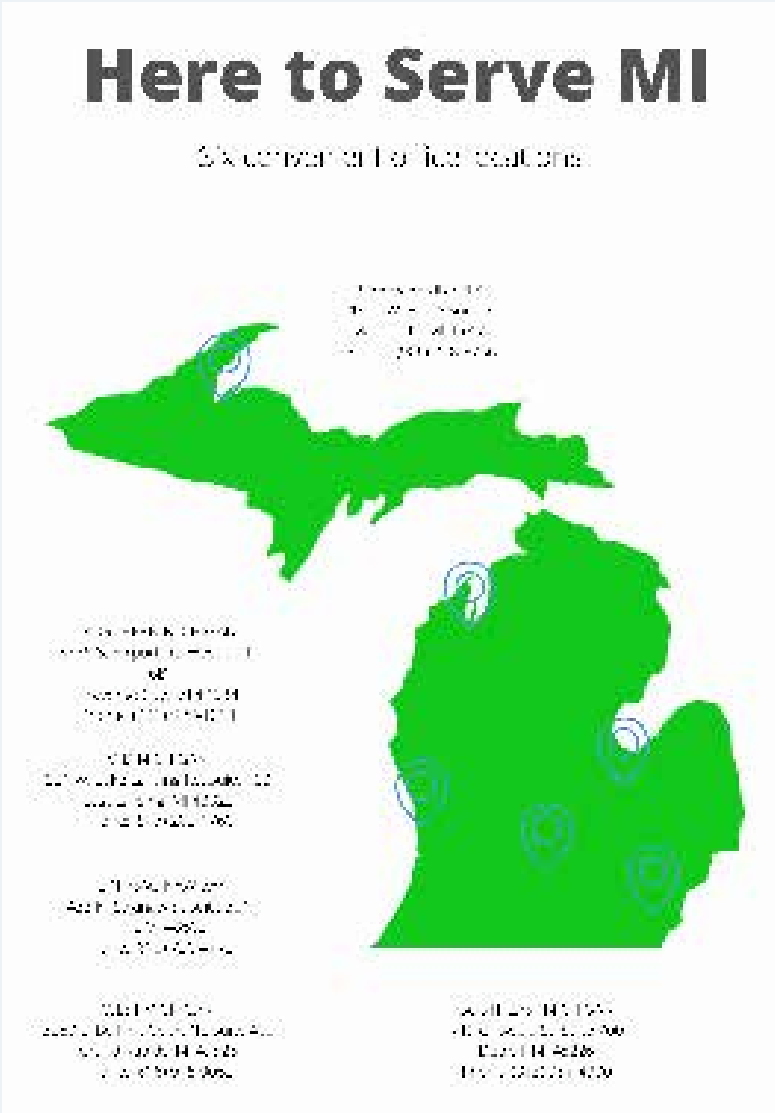
“Mental illness and substance use disorders do not discriminate – they affect our parents, children, CEOs, students, teachers, veterans and other community leaders. For too long, our country has funded health care above the neck differently than health care below the neck. We are finally transforming the way we deliver high-quality services in our communities and the results are clear. It’s time to expand these highly successful clinics to people in every corner of our country,” said Senator Stabenow. [Continue Reading](#)

INFOGRAPHIC

Here to serve Michigan

The Senator maintains six state offices stretching from Detroit to Marquette to ensure her constituents have nearby and easy access to her staff.

An interactive map of Michigan shows the six locations of the Senator’s state offices, allowing anyone to quickly identify the closest home office and visually reinforce the Senator’s accessibility to the people.



CAST

The Senator's existing social media channels, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, have the potential to reach a very large audience. But the opportunity for more targeted and more valuable user experiences lie with the Senator's email lists and, to an extent, even direct mail. Email allows for a seamless call to action but recognizing not everyone has access to a computer or the internet, traditional media cannot be excluded, including direct mail and news outlets (print, radio, and television).

The ability to reach younger voters should also focus on newer or emerging platforms like TikTok and Snapchat. Reddit may also be a consideration because of its projected growth and LinkedIn for its ability to connect with business leaders.

STORY SYSTEM

Signpost channels like YouTube and Instagram, and email offer the potential for engagement, but the goal is to lead users to the website to learn more about what their Senator is working on for them. In addition, the roundabout media helps reinforce the Senator's name recognition amongst the people of Michigan to be familiar with her and inspired to learn more about her work and priorities. Finally, Facebook and Twitter serve the most crucial role of town centers. Here, the Senator can reach and interact with millions of people memorably and beneficially.

OPTIMIZE

Any story or content clip taken on its own should be delivered through the lens of Michigan First and reinforce the Senator's mission to improve the lives of all Michiganders and those of future generations.

The Senator's website is a resource for the people, and the desired action is to increase website visits and increase social media presence. To drive the action content needs to be specific to its audience and deliver meaningful messages. Organizing information and resources should also be built or designed intuitively to make the user experience enjoyable and informative to share information and content on their own efficiently.

EXPERIENCE SPACE

SCORE

The score has not been assigned using any type of metrics due to availability or lack thereof. Instead, the prioritization criteria were created using an educated opinion.

INSPIRE

Bringing to life the constituent stories is of critical importance. By connecting with real people directly impacted by the Senator's work adds a level of trust and authenticity to the Senator's story.

Connecting with other extensions of the Senator, for example her staff, brings to life the Senator's vision through the Organizing Idea and gives constituents a sneak peek behind the scenes.

TikTok and Reels can be used to connect younger voters with interns and show first-hand how government impacts their young lives.

**EXPERIENCE
SPACE**

To create an experience space and open communication between the Senator’s office and the public, we can use several existing and potential channels.

PROBABLE TOUCHPOINTS	REACH	ENGAGEMENT	INFLUENCE	STORY SYSTEM
Website	6	5	8	Destination
Facebook	7	9	9	Town Center
Instagram	5	5	6	Signpost
Twitter	8	9	7	Town Center
YouTube	5	5	6	Signpost
eMail	8	9	9	Signpost
Direct Mail	10	3	6	Roundabout
News Media	6	3	6	Roundabout
TikTok/Reels	2	2	2	Roundabout

CONCLUSION

With the idea of a deeply engaging website being the ultimate destination, it should be designed with the user experience in mind in a simple, straightforward manner. Facebook and Twitter serve a crucial role allowing the Senator to reach and interact with millions of people memorably and beneficially.

The immediate goal is to increase social media followers across all platforms by 7% next year. As the 2024 election cycle approaches, the goal is to increase qualified volunteer support and small-donor campaign contributions (amounts under \$200) by 10% from 2018. An increase of 25% in website traffic, specifically to pages with email sign-up (and creating a space for validator stories), is critical to the success of these goals.

To begin making meaningful growth to the various social media platforms, several key actions must happen:

01

Define your audience (s) and messages to each audience

02

Add value for your audience with relevant stories, personal messages, and valuable content

03

Optimize your presence on social media

04

Keep an editorial calendar filled with fresh content

The brand or voice of the Senator always returns to simply who she is and her mission to create meaningful legislation for the people of Michigan to improve their lives and those of future generations. This can be achieved through interviews with actual people from Michigan who have been impacted by her service and how she was able to help them improve their lives.

Senator Stabenow has devoted her life to improving all Michiganders' lives while securing a bright future and rich legacy for generations to come. This is an opportunity to authentically connect the people with the Senator through stories told by the people.



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