

2024

Voter Guide

VOTE 411

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

The content of this Guide is derived from candidates' profiles and ballot proposals posted online at VOTE411.org.

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters, VOTE411.org contains information about many races across the country, with content published as it was submitted by candidates. VOTE411.org allows voters to compare candidate responses to questions, as well as offering information on voter registration, ID requirements, and election processes such as absentee voting.

Spread the word about VOTE 411.org!

This Service Provided

FREE

By Your Local League of Women Voters

2024 General Election Voter Guide

**Non-partisan Information about
National, State and Local Elections**

November 5, 2024

This Voter Guide was prepared by the League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area as a service to the voters. The League of Women Voters is a national non-partisan organization which encourages active and informed citizen participation in government. The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any candidate or political party. The League does support issues after careful study without regard to the stand of any party. League positions on issues are never indicated in Voter Guides.

JOIN US! Use our Voter Services, study issues, become a member.

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What's in this Guide

President

U.S. Senator – Michigan

U.S. Representative in Congress,
4th & 5th Districts

State Representatives, 40th, 41st, 42nd & 45th
Districts

State Board of Education

University of Michigan Board of Regents

Michigan State University Board of Trustees

Wayne State University Board of Governors

Kalamazoo County Officials

Kalamazoo County Commission

Michigan State Courts

Kalamazoo County Courts

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
Trustees

Kalamazoo & Portage District Libraries

Polling Places

See VOTE411.org for additional local races, including
school boards

See www.kalamazoocounty.com for complete list of
candidates and proposals



www.facebook.com/lwvka

Vote Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Polls Open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Early Voting: Saturday, October 26–Sunday Nov. 3 — 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Who May Vote?

In order to vote in Michigan, you must be registered with the Department of State. To register you must be a U.S. citizen, 18 years old by election day, a resident of the city or township where you register for at least 30 days, and not serving a sentence in jail or prison. Registration is permanent as long as the resident continues to live in the city or township where registered.

A citizen may register to vote, up to and on election day, and is automatically registered to vote when applying for, renewing or updating a driver's license or state-issued personal identification card, unless the person declines. **Check the Michigan Voter Information Center – MVIC – (www.michigan.gov/vote)** or contact your local clerk for details about how and where to register.

How Do You Vote?

1. Complete an application to vote.
2. An election inspector checks your name against the computerized list of registered voters for the precinct.
3. Show photo identification or sign an affidavit stating that you're eligible to vote.
4. Vote by using a pen to darken the oval to the right of the candidate's name or Yes / No in the case of a proposal.
5. Tabulate the ballot by inserting it into the optical scanner.

You have the right to vote independently using an accessible voting machine. If you would like to use such a machine, tell an election official when you arrive to vote. If you are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write, you have the right to assistance from anyone you choose except your employer, an agent of your employer or an officer or agent of your labor union. You have the right to assistance from election officials. You can ask the official for instructions on how to use the voting equipment or assistance at any time, even after you've entered the voting booth.

About Voter Identification

Voters can satisfy the picture identification requirement by showing a Michigan driver's license or Michigan personal identification card. Voters who do not possess either document may show any of the following forms of identification as long as they are current with photo:

- Driver's license or personal identification card issued by another state
- Federal or state government-issued ID
- U.S. passport
- Military ID
- Student ID —high school or accredited institution of higher education
- Tribal ID card
- Local Government ID including Kalamazoo County ID
- Concealed Pistol License (CPL)
- Employee ID Badges issued by a local government

If the voter does not have an acceptable photo ID in his or her possession when offering to vote, that voter may sign an affidavit attesting that he or she is not in possession of a photo ID. A voter who completes an affidavit will be allowed to vote a regular ballot.

Write-in Candidates

To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the name of that person in the blank space provided for that office and darken the oval.

Votes for write-in candidates are counted only for persons who have declared their intent, at the appropriate jurisdiction, to be write-in candidates by 4 p.m. on the second Friday preceding the election—October 25. Names of write-in candidates will be available after that date on the Michigan Voter Information Center website (www.michigan.gov/vote).

Are You Registered & Who's on Your Ballot?

The Voter Information Center on the Michigan Secretary of State website allows voters to confirm their registration status, obtain information on the location of their polling place, view a sample ballot and obtain other election-related information. Go to www.michigan.gov/vote. Enter your name, birth month and year, and zip code.

For Students

The State of Michigan allows students to register to vote at a permanent address (a parent's address, for example) or at a school address. The address on your voter registration must match the address on your driver's license. Registering to vote will change the address found on your driver's license, if you register at a different address. Likewise, if you change the address on your driver's license, the address of your voter registration will be changed to match. **You can vote only in the precinct where you are registered**, so take that into consideration when you complete a voter registration form or renew your license. Students who choose to register at their parents' address may request an absentee ballot to be sent to their campus address—and not have to change the address on their driver's license.

Acknowledgment

Contributors to the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area Education Fund generously provided financial support for LWV voter services, including this Voter Guide.

Absent Voter Ballots

All eligible and registered Michigan voters may request an absent voter ballot without providing a reason.

How do I receive the ballot?

You can:

1. Call your city or township clerk and ask that an application be mailed to you. Complete the application, including your signature, and mail it, scan and email it, or deliver it in person to the clerk.
2. Download an application from the Michigan Voter Information Center – MVIC – (www.michigan.gov/vote), then complete and return it as for option 1.
3. Apply online at MVIC. You will need to submit information from your driver's license, as well as the last four digits of your social security number. Your digital signature kept on file for your driver's license or state ID must match the signature on your ballot when you return it.

Requests to have an absent voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 5 p.m. the Friday before the election. If you are already registered at your current address, you can pick up an absent voter ballot in person at your clerk's office anytime up to 4 p.m. on the day prior to the election. If you are registering to vote or updating your address by appearing at your clerk's office on election day, you can request an absent voter ballot at the same time you register.

Once your request is received by the local clerk, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued. Ballots are available 40 days before the election and requests for absent voter ballots are processed immediately.

When must absent voter ballots be returned to the clerk?

At the time of publishing this Guide, the deadline for returning ballots to the clerk's office is 8 p.m. on election day.

The League of Women Voters recommends that you use a ballot drop box or deliver your ballot to the clerk's office in person. If you use the postal service to deliver your ballot, place it in the mail no later than October 22 to allow adequate time.

Your ballot will not be counted unless your signature is on the return envelope and matches your signature on file.

There are instructions included with the ballot regarding who is eligible to return a ballot on behalf of a voter. For further information, contact your city or township clerk.

Did my ballot arrive?

Registered voters can track their ballots by looking up their information on the MVIC website.

Editors' Note

The League of Women Voters (LWV) contacted candidates for biographical information and answers to questions on issues. Those known to have filed a declaration of intent to be write-in candidates at the time of printing this Voter Guide were included. Responses were limited to a specific number of characters and were truncated after the limit was reached. Responses were printed as submitted; spelling, punctuation and grammar were not changed. If the candidate did not reply by the required date for publication, the words "Did not respond in time for publication" appear under the candidate's name.

The order of parties in the Voter Guide is the same as their order on the ballot, which is determined by Michigan Election Law. Non-partisan candidates are in alphabetical order.

The LWV of the Kalamazoo Area provided information about local candidates. The LWV of Michigan provided information about state candidates, and the LWV of the U.S. about national candidates.

Publication of these candidate statements and opinions is solely in the interest of public service. No one should construe this service as a League endorsement in any way. The League of Women Voters takes no responsibility for any of the views or facts stated by the candidates.

About Candidates' Responses

Responses were limited to a specific number of characters, including letters and spaces. They were truncated after the limit was reached unless redacted because they violate state or federal law or Voter Guide rules provided to candidates.

Responses are printed as submitted by the candidate. Spelling, punctuation and grammar were not changed.

If the candidate did not reply by the required date for publication, the words "Did not respond in time for publication" appear under the candidate's name. Check www.Vote411.org for submissions after the publication deadline.

United States President

Four-year term; limit of two terms – Vote for one

Description: The President is the head of state of the United States of America; the Chief Executive Officer; and, the Commander in Chief of all military forces. The powers of the President are prescribed in the Constitution and federal law. The President appoints the members of the Cabinet, ambassadors to other nations and the United Nations, Supreme Court Justices, and federal judges, subject to Senate approval. The President, along with the Cabinet and its agencies, is responsible for carrying out and enforcing the laws of the United States. The President may also recommend legislation to the United States Congress.

Base Salary: \$400,000 per year

Note: All candidates who will appear on Michigan's ballot are listed below, but only those that meet the following criteria were invited to respond to the League's questions in this Guide.

1. The candidate must have made a public announcement of her/his intention to run for her/his Party's nomination for President.
2. The candidate must meet the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act's minimum contribution threshold requirements for qualifying for matching funds, based on the most recent data publicly available on the Federal Elections Commission website.
3. The candidate must qualify for the ballot in enough states to win a majority of electoral votes.

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Questions

1. What steps should be taken to address the high cost of living and depressed wages in America, including for families, people with disabilities, and people that are economically disadvantaged?
2. What steps will you take to ensure all Americans have access to quality and affordable health care, including reproductive care and prescription drug coverage?
3. What steps will you take to curb gun violence and build safe and healthy communities for communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence in the United States?
4. What are the most important steps you will take to improve U.S. immigration policies, including creating an accessible path to citizenship?
5. What actions will you take to address the threats facing the United States due to climate change?

Kamala Harris

Democrat

Vice President Candidate: Tim Walz

Website: <https://kamalaharris.com/>. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KamalaHarris/>.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/kamalaharris/>. X/Twitter: KamalaHarris.

Did not respond to questions in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Donald Trump

Republican

Vice President Candidate: JD Vance

Website: www.donaldjtrump.com/. Facebook: www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump/.

Instagram: www.instagram.com/realdonaldtrump/. X/Twitter: TrumpWarRoom.

Did not respond to questions in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Robert Francis Kennedy Jr. (Suspended Campaign)

Natural Law

Vice President Candidate: Nicole Shanahan

Website: <https://www.mahanow.org/>. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rfkjr>. Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/robertfkennedyjr/>. X/Twitter: RobertKennedyJr.

Did not respond to questions in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Jill Stein

Green Party

Vice President Candidate: Randolph Ware

Website: www.jillstein2024.com/. Facebook: www.facebook.com/drjillstein. I

nstagram: www.instagram.com/drjillstein/. X/Twitter: DrJillStein.

1. We need an economy that works for working people, not just the wealthy and powerful. To reverse surging inequality and insecurity, we need an Economic Bill of Rights establishing the rights to a living-wage job, guaranteed livable income, housing, healthcare, childcare, lifelong education, secure retirement, utilities, healthy food and clean water, so that all of us are guaranteed the basic security for a good life that can reach our highest potential. A Jill Stein administration will pass a \$25 minimum wage, eliminate the sub-minimum wage loophole, pass universal rent control, cancel student and medical debt, end wage discrimination based on race, gender and other factors, and mandate paid sick and family leave as well as parental leave.
2. Healthcare is a human right. We need a universal healthcare system that is equitable, comprehensive, free at point of service, and accessible to every single person in the US. A Jill Stein administration will immediately implement National Improved Medicare for All as a precursor to establishing a UK-style National Healthcare Service which will replace private hospital, private medical practice, and private medical insurance with a publicly-owned, democratically controlled healthcare service that will guarantee healthcare as a human right to everyone in the United States. We will take the pharmaceutical industry into public ownership to provide medicines as a public good. We will also codify Roe v. Wade and advance reproductive rights.

3. We need to end the epidemic of gun violence with common-sense gun safety laws. A Jill Stein administration will ban the sale of assault rifles and establish a buyback program; establish mandatory waiting periods and background checks for firearm purchases; pass red flag laws for individuals who pose a danger to themselves and others; create standardized digital records of gun registrations and sales; close gun show loopholes; require firearm owners to own a high-quality gun safe to store their firearms; require firearm owners to purchase liability insurance of no less than \$1,000,000; and hold adult firearm owners criminally liable for minor children accessing and using firearms in the commission of any crime, accidental injury or death.
4. Immigrants' rights are human rights. It's time to completely overhaul the broken and abusive immigration system, as well as the unjust policies driving people to leave their homes. We need a comprehensive immigration policy and properly funded institutions to ensure a timely, ethical, transparent, and dignified path to citizenship for immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Border policy should move away from detention and enforcement response toward humane and effective asylum processing. A Jill Stein administration will replace ICE with an Office of Citizenship, Refugees, and Immigration Services under the Department of Labor, grant amnesty to every undocumented person, and implement a path to citizenship with expediency.
5. We all have a human right to a livable planet with a stable climate, healthy food, clean air and water, and living soil. We need a real Green New Deal to transition rapidly from an economic system that is destroying our only home to a sustainable society built around human needs and protecting life on Earth. Our Green New Deal will invest in renewable energy, a publicly-owned nationwide smart energy grid, clean transportation technology, energy efficiency and conservation to generate millions of good-paying jobs, rapidly phase out fossil fuels and achieve 100% clean renewable energy and zero-to-negative carbon emissions by no later than 2035. We need to act now so that our children and future generations can not only survive, but thrive.

The following candidates have qualified for the Michigan state ballot according to the Michigan Secretary of State, but did not meet the LWV Education Fund criteria to receive an invitation to respond to the League's questions in this Guide.

Chase Oliver

Libertarian

Vice President Candidate: Mike ter Maat

Website: <https://votechaseoliver.com>

Randall Terry

US Taxpayers

Vice President Candidate: Stephen E. Broden

Website: <https://www.terry2024.com/about>

Joseph Kishore

Independent

Vice President Candidate: Jerry White

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/joseph.kishore/>

Cornel West

Independent

Vice President Candidate: Melina Abdullah

Website: <https://www.cornelwest2024.com>

About the Candidates' Responses

Responses were limited to a specific number of characters, including letters and spaces. They were truncated after the limit was reached.

Responses are printed as submitted by the candidate. Spelling, punctuation and grammar were not changed.

If the candidate did not reply by the required date for publication, the words "Did

not respond in time for publication" appear under the candidate's name. Check VOTE411.org for submissions after the publication deadline.

Publication of these candidate statements and opinions is solely in the interest of public service. No one should construe this service as a League endorsement in any way. The League of Women Voters takes no responsibility for any of the views or facts stated by the candidates.

U.S. Senator – Michigan

Six-year term – Vote for one

U.S. Senators share the responsibility with U.S. Representatives for enactment of the nation's laws as provided in the U.S. Constitution. Senators ratify international treaties and confirm Presidential appointments of Cabinet members, federal judges, and foreign ambassadors. Qualifications: A Senator must be at least 30 years of age and a U.S. Citizen for at least 9 years. There are 100 Senators, two from each state.

Questions

1. Why are you running for U.S. Senate?
2. How, and to what extent, would you negotiate and compromise with your colleagues to pass critical legislation?

3. What recommendations, if any, would you propose to change U.S. immigration policy?
4. What policies, if any, will you advance regarding reproductive health?

Elissa Slotkin

Democrat. U.S. Representative, MI-07. Cornell University - College of Agriculture and Life Science, Bachelor's Degree; Columbia University - School of International and Public Affairs, Master of International Affairs. White House National Security Council, Director for Iraq, President Bush and President Obama; Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. Website: elissaslotkin.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/elissaslotkin/. X Handle: [elissaslotkin](https://twitter.com/elissaslotkin).

1. My number one priority is to make it easier for Michiganders to get into the middle class. I've long said Michigan is the state that invented the middle class; it did so by maintaining a strong union presence and making investments in small businesses and critical manufacturing areas, which I hope to reinforce. We can keep people in the middle class by reducing healthcare costs, putting Americans on the path to homeownership and making more critical items in America. We also have to defend against attacks on our rights and democracy; I am committed to restoring the national standard set by Roe, and ensuring voting rights for every American.
2. In my career I have proudly worked for two presidents – one Democrat and one Republican. This means that I take a deeply bipartisan approach to all of my work in Congress. I believe in bipartisanship in my bones: Republicans and Democrats working together to solve problems is exactly how our legislative process should work. My guiding principle in office has been to work with people based on how committed they are to serving their constituents, not by party affiliation. Serious leaders are willing to work with anyone to get things done; that has been my approach since I was first elected to the House in 2018.
3. Our immigration system has been broken for years, and it's imperative that as a nation of immigrants we figure out a way to fix it. That's why since I arrived in Congress, I've fought for common-sense, bipartisan solutions to secure the border, stop the flow of deadly substances like fentanyl, and fix our legal immigration system. I support a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients and comprehensive immigration reform. I've also championed bipartisan reforms to improve legal visa programs to better key them to our economic needs. Finally, I've introduced bills to provide resources to secure our borders in a comprehensive and humane way.
4. First, we need to codify the Roe standard into federal law. The biggest mistake we can make is thinking that overturning Roe was the end. It was only the beginning. Republicans across the country – in courtrooms, State Legislatures, and Congress – are targeting contraceptives, travel, abortion medication and even IVF. In Congress, I have defended a woman's right to have a family when and how she chooses, including working to protect access to contraception and IVF and blocking Republican attempts to limit access to reproductive care among our servicemembers. It's why I am proud to have earned the endorsement of groups like Planned Parenthood.

Mike Rogers

Republican. Businessman and candidate for U.S. Senate. Adrian College. Army Veteran, FBI Special Agent, Michigan State Senator, Representative in the U.S. House, Businessman. Website: rogersforsenate.com. Facebook: facebook.com/mikerothersformi. X Handle: [mikerothersformi](https://twitter.com/mikerothersformi).

1. I was born & raised in Michigan. My mother ran a local advocacy group for small businesses, & my father was a school administrator and football coach. After graduating from Adrian College, I joined the U.S. Army as an Officer. After the Army, I signed on as a Special Agent with the FBI helping take down public corruption & organized crime. I successfully ran for the Michigan Senate and represented my hometown before running for Congress and representing Mid-Michigan, including as House Intelligence Chairman. After Congress I helped start cyber security companies to help small businesses protect their data from foreign nations.

2. Michigan families are struggling mightily under the current administration & are desperately in need of real solutions to lower the costs of gas & groceries, end the mandates, & secure the border. As a Congressman, I earned a reputation as someone who got results for Michiganders by working across the aisle. Including as House Intelligence Chairman where I worked with my Democrat colleagues to cut over \$7 billion in wasteful spending, saving taxpayers money. In the Senate, I'll work with anyone to help Michigan families. "Rogers has been a noteworthy exception to the culture of dysfunction on Capitol Hill." – David Ignatius, Washington Post
3. The failure of the Biden administration to secure our southern border has put Michigan families at severe risk, as we've seen with needless tragedy after needless tragedy. In the Senate, I'll work to help reinstate the Remain in Mexico policy, build physical and technological barriers, and reform our asylum laws to require individuals to begin their applications in their home country, or else they'll be rejected immediately at the border. This is a humanitarian and national security disaster and must be a top priority to protect American families who are already suffering under unbearable costs for gas and groceries.
4. Michiganders spoke in a loud and clear voice in 2022 and made abortion legal in the Michigan Constitution. As Michigan's U.S. Senator, I will take NO action that would take away rights guaranteed by the Michigan Constitution or support any legislation that would limit access to birth control, or IVF, which has helped so many Americans start their families. I will work to expand access to prenatal care, provide additional resources for pregnant woman, and promote adoption.

Joseph Solis-Mullen

Libertarian

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Dave Stein

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Douglas P. Marsh

Green Party. Journalist. B.A. Philosophy, University of Michigan. Website: www.electmarsh.us.

1. We live in a world gone mad where the absolutely worst kind of people assume leadership positions through enormous sums of money and then make decisions entirely in line with the sources of that money. We need an independent political movement against the two parties of war and Wall Street.
2. Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.
3. End imperialist actions that destabilize other countries and cause masses of people to flee their homes.
4. Single-payer healthcare and a woman's right to choose.

Doug Dern

Natural Law

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Absent Voter Ballot Reminders

- 🗳️ If you decide to use a secure **drop box**, find the location of one near you at:

www.michigan.gov/vote

1. Click on "Who is My Clerk"
2. Enter information to search by your name, license or address.

- 🗳️ If you mail your ballot, do that no later than **October 22** to allow adequate time for delivery.

- 🗳️ You can track your ballot on the MVIC website (www.michigan.gov/vote).

- 🗳️ See page 2 of this guide for more information.

U.S. Congress – Michigan

Two-year term Vote for one

Description: Representatives share the responsibility with Senators for enactment of the nation's laws as provided in the U.S. Constitution. Laws that require payment of taxes are initiated in the House of Representatives. A Representative must be at least 25 years of age and a U.S. Citizen for at least 7 years. There are 435 Representatives based on Congressional districts reapportioned after each census. Michigan has 13 districts as of 2022.

Questions

1. Why are you running for U.S. Congress?
2. How, and to what extent, would you negotiate and compromise with your colleagues to pass critical legislation?
3. What recommendations, if any, would you propose to change U.S. immigration policy?
4. What policies, if any, will you advance regarding reproductive health?

District 4

Jessica Swartz

Democrat. Senior Legal Counsel. Michigan State University (Bachelor of Arts) and American University Washington College of Law (Juris Doctor). Education lawyer; VA counsel; environmental activist; voter protection activist; Black, Latino, and LGBTQ+ ally; teacher; athlete; coach; mom; person of faith. Website: www.jessicaswartz.vote/. Facebook: www.facebook.com/jessicaformi. X Handle: @JessicaForMI.

1. I want to help people. I believe there is more that unites us than divides us. By being willing to listen to all reasonable positions, we can achieve common sense solutions to many problems including: growing our economy; protecting the Great Lakes; maintaining Medicare and Social Security; increasing access to broadband internet; making healthcare affordable; defending democracy and voting access; protecting abortion and IVF rights; passing common sense gun control; and making sure billionaires and corporations pay their fair share. I love America and will do everything I can to maintain our democratic institutions and ideals.
2. Effective compromise requires listening as people advocate for their positions. When we truly listen, we almost always find common ground. From its founding, the US was built upon individuals compromising to promote the greater good. My experience living and working in politically, economically, geographically, racially, and ethnically diverse areas has given me the tools to understand that people who think differently than me are also good people who almost always have solid foundations for their belief systems. I will listen to all reasonable positions and vote in the way that will best serve our country and district regardless of party.
3. Immigration is a bipartisan problem that requires a bipartisan solution. It starts with a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients who have lived here their whole lives. I would work to see that ICE has the resources it needs to enforce existing immigration laws; USCIS has resources to provide swift, just decisions on whether immigrants can stay; and aid agencies have resources to provide food and shelter for asylum seekers. We must also have a line for how many people are allowed into this country every day. I will work with experts and those who have day-to-day experience to help decide where and how to humanely draw that line.
4. Safe, affordable reproductive health must be available to everyone who chooses to use it. In Congress, I will oppose any attempt to pass a national abortion ban and support efforts to protect access to birth control and IVF. Reproductive health decisions should be made between a pregnant person and their doctor. Stopping legal access to abortion services will not stop abortions; instead, it will lead to more women and babies dying due to a lack of this basic health care. I will work to put better social supports in place—whether that is pregnancy prevention or housing support—so fewer women have to make that impossible choice.

Bill Huizenga

Republican. U.S. Representative for Michigan's 4th Congressional District. Bachelor's degree from Calvin College. Small business operator and co-owner of Huizenga Gravel Co. in Georgetown Township. Previously, a realtor, District Director, and Rep. for 90th District in Michigan State Legislature. Website: www.huizengaforcongress.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/BillHuizenga. X Handle: billhuizenga.

1. As your voice in Congress and a lifelong resident of Ottawa County, I've relied on my experience as a small businessman, a father, a person of faith, and my deep ties to the community to enact policies that make Southwest Michigan a better place to call home. If reelected, I'll continue to apply these principles, as well as build upon my record of reining in reckless spending, preventing tax increases on our families and small businesses, cutting bureaucracy, holding the federal government accountable to the people of Southwest Michigan, making daily life more affordable, and protecting the Great Lakes.
2. In divided government, you need to be able to work across the aisle to achieve meaningful results. For example, as Co-Chair of the bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force, I have secured funding to strengthen the ecological and economic health of the Great Lakes now and for future generations. I have also introduced several bipartisan bills, like the Fiscal Commission Act to address our debt crisis. By focusing on our shared principles without compromising our values, I've advanced policies on behalf of investment and opportunity in our Kalamazoo community, as well as Battle Creek's airport and VA hospital.
3. We must fix our broken immigration system and have it support American jobs and businesses. However, it starts with law and order, legal immigration, and ending the border crisis.

I supported passage of H.R. 2—Secure the Border Act to restore border integrity and provide the resources to stop record illegal crossings, fentanyl, and human trafficking. I've also introduced H.R. 8209—The Migrant Flight Accountability Act of 2024. Additionally, I'm working to increase national food security and lower costs by reforming agricultural labor visas utilized by farmers in Southwest Michigan.

4. I will always stand for the health and wellbeing of women and families, which is why I've voted for bills like the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act of 2023. This legislation would help lower maternal mortality and close the gap in health outcomes in pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care through implementation of best practices. Furthermore, I support IVF and the bundles of joy it brings to families. Whether it's protecting the life and wellbeing of mothers or supporting growing families, the federal government must do more to support the health of women and families.

Curtis Clark

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

District 5

Libbi Urban

Democrat. Retired. Bachelors of Science in Electronics Technology from Indiana State University. 30+ years as a maintenance electrician and United Steelworker officer at Cleveland Cliffs Kote, a steel mill in New Carlisle, IN. 13 years on the union negotiating committee, negotiated 4 contracts. Website: electlibbiurban.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/ElectLibbiUrban/. X Handle: electlibbiurban.

1. We're on the precipice of losing our freedoms. My opponent and other radicals no longer respect our democracy. Among other abuses, they threaten: Our families' right to make reproductive and health care choices. Seniors' access to the Social Security and Medicare benefits they spent their lifetimes earning. Americans' sacred voting rights and the promise of free and fair elections. A host of other rights, including an equitable tax system, a fair immigration system, and essential protections for our food, air, and water. These are the main reasons why I am running for office.
2. Here are some ways I would negotiate and compromise with my colleagues to pass critical legislation: Identify the Issue. Research and Gather Information. Engage in Dialogue. Build Coalitions. Lobby and Advocate. Consider Consequences. Seek Compromise. It is essential to stay informed, engage respectfully with others, and work towards a more just and equitable society.
3. Enhance the number of judges to expedite asylum processes and tackle case backlogs. Offer more avenues for legal immigration to help streamline procedures and meet demands for skilled labor. Reverse restrictive immigration measures from previous administrations to foster a more inclusive system. Address underlying factors that propel immigration, such as economic and social conditions, to help develop comprehensive policies. These proposals aim to establish a more equitable, streamlined, and compassionate immigration framework that considers the interests of immigrants and the nation as a whole.
4. Policies that could be put forth include ensuring access to contraceptives, implementing comprehensive sexual education in schools, offering affordable family planning services, providing safe abortion options and codifying Roe v. Wade into law, enhancing maternal healthcare quality, promoting preventive screenings for STIs and cervical cancer, and supporting marginalized groups in accessing reproductive health services. These policies aim to boost reproductive health, empower informed decision-making, and lower maternal mortality rates and related issues.

Tim Walberg

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

James Bronke

Green Party

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.



Michigan State House of Representatives

Two-year term — Vote for one

Description: The Michigan House of Representatives shares responsibility with the Michigan Senate to enact new laws and amend or repeal existing laws. State Representatives may serve a maximum of three full terms. They must be at least 21 years of age and a registered voter in their district. There are 110 State House districts which are re-apportioned after each census.

Questions

1. Why are you running for the Michigan State Legislature?
2. What should Michigan do to provide an equitable, quality public education for all while addressing the current teacher shortage?
3. What do you see as the state's role, if any, in mitigating the impact of climate change?
4. What actions/proposals, if any, do you support to retain residents in our state?

District 40

City of Portage. Part of the City of Kalamazoo. Texas Township

Matt Longjohn

Democrat. I own a health systems consulting business and serve on the faculty at WMed. Kalamazoo College, bachelor's degree. Tulane University, MD and MPH. Northwestern University, Internal Medicine Residency. I'm a nationally recognized public health expert, with roots in the district. I teach medical school students, consult for health-focused non-profits, and serve on the Portage Planning Commission. Website: mattlongjohn.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/mattlongjohnformichigan. X Handle: [MattLongjohn](https://twitter.com/MattLongjohn).

1. I am running for MI House District 40 for the same reason I went to medical school in the 1990s, the same reason I led a non-traditional career in health care, and the same reason I ran for Congress in 2018—because I have the opportunity to improve the health and quality of life of others. In 2016 I was identified as one of the nation's top 100 innovators in health care, and if elected I'll be the only physician in the MI Legislature. The opportunity to improve the health of all Michiganders is inspiring, and my focus will be to provide immediate leadership on policies to make our healthcare system more accessible, equitable, and affordable.
2. To ensure equitable, quality public education in MI and address the teacher shortage, we must increase education funding to offer competitive salaries and benefits, attracting and retaining educators, especially in underserved areas. It's essential to recognize and support all school employees, fostering a community-focused environment through collaboration with organizations like MEA, AFT. Expanding early childhood education through Universal Pre-K and reducing turnover in these settings is critical. Additionally, we must focus on strengthening public schools and oppose the diversion of public funds to private, for-profit charter schools.
3. The state plays a critical role in addressing climate change and fostering a sustainable future. I will advocate for climate justice policies, aiding workers and consumers in transitioning to a greener economy and ensuring disadvantaged communities are not left behind. I will hold polluters accountable for contamination to prevent cleanup costs from falling on taxpayers. Additionally, I will secure funding to upgrade water systems, address PFAS contamination, and support legislation for a modern, equitable transportation system with clean vehicle standards and investments in electric vehicle infrastructure and public transit.
4. To retain residents in Michigan, I will focus on improving quality of life through better healthcare access, affordable housing, and economic opportunities. As the only physician in the legislature, I will address physician shortages and reduce barriers, particularly for reproductive and mental health care. To promote stability, I will advocate for investing in affordable housing to help Michiganders live where they work. Additionally, ensuring livable wages, good benefits, and supporting strong labor unions will keep residents employed within the state. These initiatives improve the health and quality of life of all Michiganders.

Kelly Sackett

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

District 41

Most of the City of Kalamazoo. Most of Kalamazoo Township

Julie M. Rogers

Democrat. State Representative and Physical Therapist. Master's in Physical Therapy. 2nd term State Rep; Chair, House Health Policy Committee; Military, Veterans & Homeland Security Com; Insurance/Financial Services Com; Local Government Com; Biosciences Caucus Co-chair. Website: juliemrogers.com. Facebook: facebook.com/vote4rogers. X Handle: [vote4rogers](https://twitter.com/vote4rogers).

1. As Chair of Health Policy Com, I believe I'm the best candidate to continue to represent the needs of our community. Residents deserve a leader who will work to unify our state rather than divide it. I've spent my life fighting for a better Michigan for everyone. I began public policy work because I wanted to be an advocate for patients. During my 20-year career as a Physical Therapist, I've rehabilitated thousands of people and have countless examples of why I believe healthcare is a basic human right. My background drives me to be a champion of public health. That's why I'm prioritizing healthcare, environmental protection, & infrastructure.
2. I was proud to vote for each state budget while in office, which had the largest per pupil funding increases for preK-12 schools in decades. In 2024, we included funding for "At-Risk" students with formulas weighted more heavily toward our most vulnerable school districts. Areas with higher proportions of children in poverty face more hardships and are not starting from the same level as students from wealthier areas. Providing free breakfast and lunch for all public school children has also been impactful. We must support teachers by equipping them with the tools and resources they need and stop vilifying them. Add educator scholarships.
3. Climate change's impact on our communities has been devastating. Increase state funding to assist locals with the aftermath from floods and tornadoes. In 2023, I voted for Clean Energy & Jobs Act to establish a 100% clean energy standard for Michigan by 2040. Investing in renewables helps decrease climate change impact. Environmental protection is key. In Kalamazoo, a company operating Morrow Dam lowered water levels to make repairs and discharged 400,000 cubic yards of sludge downstream, damaging our ecosystem. My bill, HB4832 would amend MI Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to give EGLE emergency powers in these situations.

4. Investing in great schools that provide quality education draws many families to an area. Building strong infrastructure, including roads, broadband, and lead-free pipes for safe, clean drinking water are also essential. Supporting strong, safe communities free from violence and providing plenty of green space to relax and play can also help attract talent. As a co-chair for the Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus, I also support funding for the arts and historic preservation. People are often interested in living in areas with cultural and educational opportunities. We aim to grow and build creative places to attract top talent.

Terry Haines

Republican. Retired. BS, Central Michigan University. 35 years political activities, Work office work, security, and education. Three times I made my company at least another million dollars. I can do the same for Michigan. Website: www.cteterryhaines.com/.

1. I will push to bring our country closer to a Constitutional Balanced Amendment. This can only happen at a state level through the Convention of States. I will bring our gas prices permanently down and shield Michigan from OPEC and bad federal energy policies. I will fight to make the Republican Party have bottom-up leadership development as well as respecting their top-down leadership. For five years I extensively studied the subject of creative problem solving. I will encourage churches to become good neighbors and good citizens politically.
2. Education should be decided by the local community, not the state or the federal government. Critical Race Theory is itself racist against white people. Bring back shop class to high school. Many good jobs require trade school and not a college education. We must support the 1776 Project. I will champion the rights of home schoolers. Our universities must be made safe for Jews.
3. Pollution must be punished. We can lower gas prices and shelter Michigan from OPEC and bad federal energy policies by following the advice of Robert Zubrin in his book Energy Victory. I believe we have the technology for safe nuclear energy now. Climate Change is junk science. You can buy a scientist as easily as you can buy a politician.
4. Lower taxes. Medical freedom. Do not require that people adhere to governmental mandated sexual philosophies. Voter integrity.

Rafael Wolf

Libertarian. IT Consulting. BRE and BS Information Technology. US Citizen, thorough knowledge of government operations. Website: vote3p.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/cterafaelwolf.

1. When voting, what you get is a committee member, not a representative. Their power is stripped to the committee chair. The chair's power is then stripped to the House Speaker. This leaves all voters regardless of party unrepresented. This is a systemic problem and why "government is broken". The only thing that can attempt to fix it is by electing a person like me who can collude with a minority of other freshmen to change these parliamentary processes that consolidate power. Your current rep can NOT bring a single thing to the floor for a vote that you care about. I will be changing the rules. My goal is to de-power the establishment.
2. Quality of education has declined since the centralization of education systems beginning in the 1950's and 1960's. Power centralization in the state and federal government is what trashed education. About 20% of the US is functionally illiterate and the rest have an average reading level of 7th or 8th grade. We need small class sizes and focused instruction as noted on my website vote3p.com. The teacher shortage, in large part, is due to a combination of market forces and administrative overhead given teachers that add rigorous paper pushing work outside of instruction. Recruit, support and compensate w/minimal paper pushing is key.
3. I have also written about this extensively at vote3p.com. In short, the state and federal government have been hijacked by the "Green Industrial Capitalist" to sell you a commodity, energy, at premium prices through inefficient technologies like wind and solar. The Biden administration, as well as every administration prior continues increasing hydrocarbon production not cutting it. The ONLY solution to climate change, if human caused, is less humans. This is not rocket science. During COVID lock-downs the planet saw the effects of less human activity. Anyone telling you anything other than this is in error. Subsidize population decline.
4. This question is based on a false premise. Less residents in the state is counterintuitively preferred. The question posed is one from the perspective of a Ponzi capitalist needing new amounts of people to grow the Ponzi system. Once you can't grow a Ponzi, it fails. Michigan, and the US in fact, need managed decline, not growth. Ponzi capitalism's "growth model" equating to "prosperity" is because of the fiat dollar system, which is also a Ponzi. The entire framework is upside down. The fiat system is designed to inflate the Ponzi dollar and pump consumption based on debt. Look at any government budget, it's all on loan at interest.

District 42

City of Galesburg. Townships of Alamo, Cooper, Richland, Ross, Comstock, Pavilion, Brady, Schoolcraft, and part of Oshtemo

Austin Marsman

Democrat. Development Associate. Former Board of Education Trustee, Chair of Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup. Website: austinmarsman.com. Facebook: Facebook.com/austinmarsmanmi. X Handle: [austinmarsman](https://twitter.com/austinmarsman).

1. I am running for State Representative because the people of Michigan's 42nd House District deserve a leader who stands up for us instead of tearing our communities apart. I'm seeking to represent the people of this district because I know our communities, understand the seri-

Michigan State House of Representatives, continued

ous challenges we face and recognize that the political games from the current representative are only making things worse. We deserve someone to bring our voices to Lansing and stand up for our families.

- Our public schools are points of pride for our communities. We must support our educators to ensure their professions are truly respected. As State Representative, I'll continue the work I started as a local Board of Education Trustee by supporting our educators, pushing for funding and solving real problems facing our schools.
- Last year, I worked with the Michigan League of Conservation Voters to hold utility companies like Consumers Energy accountable for their lack of reliable service. Through our advocacy we passed the Clean Energy Future package, which among other things requires the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to prioritize environmental quality, affordability, and reliability when reviewing the long term plans of utility companies. We all have a role to play in mitigating the impact of climate change in order to protect our people and our planet.
- As a young person, I want to build a better future for Michigan to support welcoming, safe communities for generations to come. I believe investments in affordable housing, transportation, accessible healthcare, and community safety are vital to this goal. In order to retain our residents, Michigan must prove to Michiganders (and those thinking about moving here) that we are doing the work to make our state the best place to be. If I am elected State Representative, I will be responsible with tax dollars while prioritizing funding for these categories.

Matt Hall

Republican. State Representative. Bachelor of Business Administration, Business Management & Public Administration, Western Michigan University and a Juris Doctor, Advanced Constitutional Advocacy from WMU Cooley Law School. State Representative, Constitutional Attorney, Worked for the Michigan Attorney General Office. Website: electmatthall.com.

- Our Southwest Michigan communities want leaders who will commit to building a better Michigan for all generations. That's why I am working hard every day to control out-of-control government spending, improve our schools, strengthen public safety, and deliver much better value for our tax dollars. Our community deserves results, and I have a comprehensive plan to make all our lives a little better.
- We must give children the best chance to succeed by focusing on core academic subjects, like reading and math. And we need to empower parents with more options and more information about what's happening in their local schools. Bringing everyone together with more choices and new tools is key. That is how we can make sure every child leaves high school with the necessary skills to succeed in life's next steps, whether that is a career in a skilled-trade field or higher education in college.
- Michigan urgently needs to address skyrocketing energy prices. We must lower costs for families, ensure electric grid reliability, and unleash American natural gas production. The new law implemented by Michigan Democrats to ban fossil fuels by 2040 and remove the cap on power company rate hikes is unsustainable and irresponsible. This policy will double your electric bill and create an unreliable grid, something we will pay for every time the wind blows or rain falls. I will continue to fight for policies that lower our electric bills and increase our grid's reliability.

- In order to create a stronger and more vibrant state, we need to pursue policies that make Michigan a better place to live, work, and raise a family. That means fixing our broken local roads and bridges, strengthening public safety, improving our schools, and reversing the 2024 income tax hike. Those are the things I hear about the most when I talk to people in our community. I am committed to making life better in Southwest Michigan so that our community is the kind of place where everyone wants to stay and put down roots.

District 45

Kalamazoo County Townships of Charleston, Climax, Wakeshma
Calhoun County: City of Marshall; Townships of Albion, Athens, Burlington, Clarendon, Eckford, Emmett, Fredonia, Homer, Leroy, Marengo, Marshall, Newton, Tekonsha

Jackson County: Concord, Hanover, Henrietta, Liberty, Marengo, Parma, Pulaski, Rives, Sandstone, Spring Arbor, Springport, Tompkins

Doug Murch

Democrat. Retired. BA, Michigan State University. Small business owner and retired employee Jackson County Youth Center. Served on many community boards. Website: www.dougmurch.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/DougMurchfor45.

- I believe that the voters of the 45th District are looking for leadership to solve serious problems that affect their daily lives. We must have leaders who are honest, straightforward, and willing to take difficult positions. Politicians who will stand up for what they believe even if it is not politically expedient. It is time for our political leaders to set an example that we can disagree without being disagreeable. Everywhere I have served I have been asked to be in leadership because I was known to get things done. I am running because the 45th District needs someone who can get things done.
- Public education and the professional educators in our state need to be respected. We keep teachers and recruit new teachers by providing a competitive wage and good benefits.
- The state needs to put in place policies that make it easier and financially attractive for individuals, cities, counties and townships to make decisions that reduce our impact on the environment.
- Individuals who are looking where to live and raise their families are searching for a quality of life where they can have a good paying job with quality healthcare, childcare, and education. They are looking for a clean environment and safe communities. We have some of the top institutions of higher learning in the country, we need to keep that talent in Michigan by providing the opportunities they are seeking. In addition, we have a severe shortage of skilled trades people in our state. We need to support trade schools and apprenticeship programs. Those entering the workforce should not need to look elsewhere to find what they want.

Sarah Lightner

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

State Board of Education

Eight-year term – Vote for two

Description: The State Board of Education has eight members and has leadership and general supervision responsibility over all public education, including adult education and instructional programs in state institutions, except institutions of higher education granting baccalaureate degrees. It shall serve as the general planning and coordinating body for all public education, including higher education, and shall advise the legislature as to the financial requirements in connection therewith. It shall appoint a Superintendent of Public Instruction who shall be responsible for the execution of its policies.

Questions

- Describe your qualifications and the skills and experience you bring to the position. Why do you want to serve on the State Board of Education?
- What actions and policies would you recommend to improve our education system?
- What are the most pressing issues facing the State Board of Education and what actions would you take regarding them?

Theodore Jones

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Adam Frederick Zemke

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Tom McMillin

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Nikki Snyder

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Scotty Boman

Libertarian. Science and Mathematics Professor at Macomb Community College & Wayne County Community College Dist. Wayne State University, Teaching Certificate (1998) and MAT (1999). Western Michigan U, MA in Physics (1987), and BS (1985), majors—Physics and Philosophy, minor—Mathematics. I've been a professional College+K12 educator for over 25 years. I was elected to the Detroit District 4 Community Advisory Council in 2020 and 2022. I was elected to the WSU Student Council in 1999. Website: scottymboman.org. Facebook: [facebook.com/scottymboman](https://www.facebook.com/scottymboman). X Handle: [boman2012](https://twitter.com/boman2012).

- As a professional educator with over 25 years of experience, I've seen firsthand the flaws in our education system. Elected twice to the Detroit District 4 Community Advisory Council, I've advocated for local voices. I believe Lansing's top-down approach to education is failing. While I can't change it overnight, I will fight for reform. I support letting parents keep the money they'd spend on public schools to choose private schools or homeschooling for their children. It's time to end state control and put education decisions back in the hands of parents.
- Over-specialization leads to extinction—and our education system is no different. We need to break free from the top-down, one-size-fits-all approach that's driving it downhill. Central control has failed. I believe parents should keep the money they'd otherwise spend on public schools to choose private schools or homeschooling for their kids. It's a step toward real freedom. In an ideal world, politicians wouldn't meddle in education at all, and families wouldn't have their money taken by the government for that purpose. Let's empower parents, not the state.
- (A) Over-standardization is holding us back. Let's make schools laboratories of innovation, encouraging distance learning for all students—traditional and homeschoolers alike. Schools and families should control curriculum, not politicians. (B) Coercive funding must end. I'll work with legislators to restore local and parental control. No one should pay for education they don't use. (C) Safety matters. "Gun-Free Zones" attract threats. Let's allow law-abiding citizens who can carry elsewhere to protect our schools, too. It's time for real solutions, not empty rules.

State Board of Education, continued

Ted Gerrard

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Christine C. Schwartz

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Mary Anne Hering

Working Class. Retired community college teacher; coordinator Student Activities; organizer in the working class. Bachelors from University of Illinois, Chicago; Graduate degree, Michigan State; life experience education in working class organizing. Long time teacher and advocate for quality public education for all. Website: www.workingclassfight.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/WCPMichigan.

1. I was a long-time community college teacher, from Lansing, to Detroit to Dearborn, and have an inside perspective about how and if students come prepared academically from our K-12 system. I have also been politically active, organizing in the working class. I can give voice to the problems students, families and workers face when it comes to the lack of access to a

quality public school education in many school districts. Since 2016 as a Working Class Party Candidate I have talked to thousands of teachers, and other school employees, parents, grandparents and students about the problems they have faced in the public schools and this system.

2. Simple. If children truly are our society's most valuable resource, then ALL the economic resources needed to provide an excellent quality public education, including the social and cultural experiences, should be put into public education in all public school districts throughout the state. Funding for public education should be at THE TOP of all federal and state expenditures. The best that money can buy. The money is there. Public money should be put towards our public school system, including for decent working conditions and good pay for all school employees.

3. Although funding per pupil has increased, there continues to be huge disparities in school districts. We know it is the wealthy school districts that have the best academic results. Public money that people pay in taxes should go to public education and not to private schools, or corporations or real estate speculators. Neither property taxes, nor fund-raisers nor the lottery should be how schools are funded. I would use the resources the SBE office has to give school employees and families whatever is needed to help organize to fight that public money goes for excellent public education for all. I repeat: the money is there.

University of Michigan Board of Regents

Eight-year term – Vote for two

Description: The University of Michigan Board of Regents has eight members and has general supervision of the university and the control and direction of all expenditures from the institution's funds. The board shall elect a university president who shall be the principal executive officer.

Questions

1. Describe your qualifications and the skills and experience you bring to the position. Why do you want to serve on this university board?

2. What are the two most pressing issues facing this university today, and what is your position on those issues?

3. What would you recommend to make university education more accessible to all Michigan's residents?

Denise Ilitch

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Shauna Ryder Diggs

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Carl Meyers

Republican. Investment Advisor and Wealth Manager, WMS. University of Michigan—Dearborn School of Business, 1979. Senior Vice President, Investments at Raymond James Financial. Chairman of the City of Dearborn Retirement System, 2008-2022. Board Member of Member Focus Credit Union, 2012-2018. Website: Meyers4Michigan.com.

1. I'm running for U of M Regent to fight for affordable tuition and lower dependence on student debt. America and Michigan are addicted to student debt, with an estimated \$18 trillion outstanding and growing. This tragedy has impacted generations of Michigan families. Our sons and daughters are forced to go deeper into debt just to attend college. My 42 years of experience in finance, investments and board governance are an asset in addressing budgetary and tuition challenges at U of M. My investment knowledge will prove valuable in oversight of the University's 17 billion-dollar endowment.

2. Freezing tuition will address the greatest challenge facing the University of Michigan, affordability. U of M has one of the highest costs for a public university. Freezing tuition while controlling the budget growth and cutting wasteful spending will begin to address the issue and reduce the need for punitive student debt. U of M must maintain institutional excellence, while providing a safe environment for free speech and exchange of ideas. The antisemitism and hate speech that we witnessed earlier this year has no place at U of M. I will insist on zero tolerance of hate speech at U of M.

3. To make U of M more accessible to residents, bring costs down and accept more Michigan students. U of M is too expensive for most Michigan families. Freezing tuition and cutting wasteful spending will put U of M on a path of affordability and lessen the need for student debt. A tactic used by U of M to close their budget gaps was to accept more out-of-state students for the higher tuition. Now over 50% of freshmen at the main campus come from out of state. This is wrong. Capping out-of-state freshmen admissions at 40% will give more Michigan students an opportunity for a U of M education.

Sevag Vartanian

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Andrew Chadderdon

Libertarian

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Donna M. Oetman

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

CAMPAIGNING AT THE POLLS

Michigan election law stipulates that "a person shall not post, display, or distribute in a polling place, in any hallway used by voters to enter or exit a polling place, or within 100 feet of an entrance to a building in which a polling place is located any material that directly or indirectly makes reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question."

The following activities are included under this restriction:

- Displaying "pro and con" information on the proposals appearing on the ballot.
- Approaching voters to encourage them to vote for or against a candidate or ballot question.
- Distributing any type of campaign literature or write-in stickers.
- Displaying signs, posters, or bumper stickers.
- Attempting to collect petition signatures.
- Requesting donations, selling tickets or engaging in similar activities.

Election inspectors will request that voters entering the polls remove campaign buttons or cover up clothing which bears any reference to a political party or interest group, campaign slogan or a candidate(s) name if associated with a ballot question or candidate whose name is appearing on the ballot for that specific election. In addition, voters will be told to conceal campaign literature or other campaign materials brought into the polls. While there is nothing to prohibit a voter from referring to campaign literature, "slate cards" or election information such as the LWV Voter Guide when voting, the materials may not be left behind in the voting station. Election inspectors periodically check each voting station for campaign literature left by voters and discard any that is found.

A voter may park a car or other vehicle bearing campaign signs or bumper stickers within 100 feet of the polling place during the time he or she is voting. Under any other circumstances, vehicles bearing campaign signs or bumper stickers must be parked at least 100 feet from any entrance to the building in which the polling place is located.

Based on Election Officials' Manual, Michigan Bureau of Elections, Chapter 11, pp 26-27, Updated July 2019.

Michigan State University Board of Trustees

Eight-year term Vote for two

Description: The Michigan State Board of Trustees has eight members and has general supervision of the university and the control and direction of all expenditures from the institution's funds. The board shall elect a university president who shall be the principal executive officer.

Questions

1. Describe your qualifications and the skills and experience you bring to the position. Why do you want to serve on this university board?
2. What are the two most pressing issues facing this university today, and what is your position on those issues?
3. What would you recommend to make university education more accessible to all Michigan's residents?

Rebecca Bahar-Cook

Democrat. CEO/Capitol Fundraising Associates. B.A., Michigan State University, 1992. I and my children are MSU graduates. I've served on many public and nonprofit boards and know how to work with fellow board members and the administration in a respectful and civil manner. Website: www.rebeccabaharcook.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555554285342.

1. I aim to leverage my extensive board experience to make MSU a force for positive change in Michigan. As Chair of the Capitol Area Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board, President of the Rotary Club of Lansing, and a member of the Capital Regional Community Foundation Board, U-M Health Sparrow Specialty Hospital Board, and the Ingham County Jury Board, I bring solid diplomatic skills to the university. I also served on the Ingham County Board of Canvassers (2018-2024), protecting our democracy and ensuring that all voters can fairly participate in elections.
2. The rising cost of tuition is making MSU increasingly unaffordable for working-class families, often leaving students with crippling debt. MSU must find budget solutions that don't burden students with higher fees. Secondly, campus safety is critical, requiring both common-sense gun control and accessible mental health services for students, faculty, and staff. These issues are essential for ensuring a secure and equitable environment at MSU.
3. To make university education more affordable, I propose expanding scholarships, grants, and work-study opportunities, while controlling tuition costs. Regular audits should identify inefficiencies to redirect savings toward student support. Strengthening partnerships with businesses and local communities can offer more paid internships to help reduce tuition debt. Finally, advocating for increased state support to help minimize the need for tuition hikes.

Thomas Stallworth III

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Mike Balow

Republican. Real Estate Broker & Consultant. Bachelor of Science, U.S. Naval Academy 1994. Masters of Business Administration, University of Michigan, 2008. Over 23 years of business leadership experience, 7 years as a U.S. Naval Officer. Website: www.MikeBalowForMSU.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/MikeBalowForMSU. X Handle: MikeBalowForMSU.

1. I believe MSU is a great institution that has suffered greatly from some poor leadership over the last several years. I believe that my experience as a proven leader in various organizations can bring stability and transparency to the MSU board, which will lead to much better outcomes for the hard working families that pay tuition and taxes that support MSU, and especially the young men and women who attend college there. As a former president of several volunteer organizations, and a parent of 3 college age girls, I feel I am uniquely situated to serve at this point and time.
2. MSU is facing a crisis of confidence in its administration and board. It seems that scandal after scandal affect the school, and there is little accountability. We need to address issues head on, and not try to cover them up. In particular, the school has never done an investigation into "who knew what and when" that allowed the sexual predator Larry Nassar to abuse so many young women on campus for so long. As a father of 3 girls, I find this abandonment of justice and the truth abhorrent. I also will stand for women's rights in sports, as MSU has cut them in recent years.
3. Continued outreach to the communities and high schools that send students to MSU. Helping communities with resources to ensure that high schools are providing the proper base to enable students to succeed in college. Increase partnership with 2-year colleges and trade schools to ensure education credits are extremely transferrable, as well as giving college credit for real-world experience. Always look to find alternate sources of funding to help lower the cost of education, which has become too expensive for many, and driving many into unsustainable levels of debt.

Julie Maday

Republican. BA, University of Michigan—Dearborn. Common sense, experienced leader and a Spartan Mom. Former Novi City Councilwoman, former Novi Planning Commission member, and is currently a member of the Novi Economic Development Committee. Website: www.JulieMadayforMSU.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/juliemadayformsu.

1. I previously served the City of Novi in multiple capacities, most notably as a City Councilwoman. My experience on Council directly correlates to the MSU Board of Trustees, as you are required to work civilly with the same group of leaders over multiple years. The Board has

struggled navigating these relationships and, as a Spartan Mom of one graduate and one current student, I've experienced this turmoil and lack of administrative control firsthand. I want to serve on the Board to stop the infighting and political rhetoric, and instead focus solely on advancing the university's interests.

2. Board members have plagued MSU with lack of professionalism, infighting, and political battles. It's time to restore normalcy and a common sense approach to the Board—focusing on students rather than politics. We must re-introduce a culture of accountability and transparency. The role of the Board is to hold university administration accountable for decisions and provide transparency to all Michigan residents. Today's Board wastes hundreds of millions of dollars shielding MSU Administration from scrutiny, instead of holding people accountable for (and working to correct) past mistakes.
3. Admission requirements and tuition costs both greatly impact the accessibility of college education for MI residents. As a taxpayer-funded state university, MSU must prioritize in-state student admission over out-of-state and foreign students. Many universities nationwide require a minimum percentage of each incoming class to be in-state students, and this is something MSU should consider implementing. MSU must also be fiscally conscious and eliminate wasteful spending, which will help eliminate the need for future tuition increases, in turn enhancing MSU's affordability for MI families.

Grant T. Baker

Libertarian

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

John Paul Sanger

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Janet M. Sanger

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

John Anthony La Pietra

Green. Attorney (solo practice). BA, planning/public administration, Macalester College, 1978. JD, Cooley Law School, 2008. Also took Teaching of English as a Second Language classes at MSU in 1989-1990. Website: jalp4thepeople.wordpress.com/2024/08/19/introduction-2024/. Facebook: www.facebook.com/jalp4thePeople.

1. 30+ years ago I took classes at MSU, preparing to teach English in Japan. 20+ years ago I joined the march from MSU to the Capitol to protest getting lied into Gulf War II. I've worked 10 years each in government, non-profits, and private business—and 15 as a lawyer. I've overseen many budgets and inventories, so I can protect the people's money. I want to make MSU, called the nation's worst-governed major public university last fall, a place I'd be proud to send my daughters—a place they'd feel safe attending. I'm not a fat cat or an insider—I'll be a Trustee the people can trust.
2. A public university must be a beacon of transparency and free speech. I've pushed for Freedom of Information and Open Meetings as a citizen and a lawyer. I'll lead in making MSU meetings, reports, and discussions more public and open. I oppose MSU's punishment of protests against genocide in Gaza, as I deplore historical oppression of others. I'll serve students first, with MSU workers and MSU families close behind. These policies will draw students, faculty, and staff of conscience here. Embodying democracy, free speech, and human rights can be good for MSU's reputation and its economy.
3. The Green Party platform calls for lifelong free public education, from pre-K through college and graduate school (and including trade schools). If this ambitious plan needs a starting place, MSU—our state's original land-grant college and the model for the first national legislation creating more of them, the 1862 Morrill Act—is in great position to serve as a model again. MSU can build a statewide network of university-level educational opportunities, in person and remote, working through the Extension service and possibly with public libraries as well as (other) public schools.

Wayne State University Board of Governors

Eight-year term – Vote for two

Description: The Wayne State University Board of Governors has eight members and has general supervision of the university and the control and direction of all expenditures from the institution's funds. The board shall elect a university president who shall be the principal executive officer.

Questions

1. Describe your qualifications and the skills and experience you bring to the position. Why do you want to serve on this university board?
2. What are the two most pressing issues facing this university today, and what is your position on those issues?
3. What would you recommend to make university education more accessible to all Michigan's residents?

Rasha Demashkieh

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Mark T. Gaffney

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Michael Busuito

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Sunny Reddy

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Farid Ishac

Libertarian

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

William Mohr II

US Taxpayers

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Suzanne Roehrig

Working Class. Retired High School Teacher and Media Specialist/Librarian. Wayne State University with a BA, English literature, MAT, English Education, MLIS, Library and Information Science. I have also been a lifelong advocate and activist in the working class. I've worked in education for 25+ years and I have been a union rep and activist in organizing the working class in various work places. Website: www.workingclassfight.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/WCPMichigan.

1. I have worked in education for 25+ years and have seen working class families struggle to afford a college education. Education should be a right, free to all who desire to learn. I want to be the representing voice for working class families who are disenfranchised and struggling to afford a college education.
2. Two most pressing issues: The cost of tuition and student debt. There is more than enough wealth in this society to make a university education free.
3. It will take a working class fight to ensure education is a right, that public money will be used for public interest not for private gain, and to make certain there is no limits to funding education.

Sami Makhoul

Green

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Kathleen Oakford

Natural Law

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Kalamazoo County Officials

Questions

1. What are your top three priorities for the office you seek? What do you hope to accomplish?
2. Describe an example of how someone in the office you seek should work effectively with other governmental departments and officials. What skills and talents qualify you to be the best person to play such a role?
3. A number of efforts have been initiated in recent years to reduce gun violence in our County. Has there been satisfactory progress in those endeavors? What more, if anything, needs to be done?

Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney

Four-year term Vote for one

Description: The office is created by the Michigan Constitution and is the Chief Law Enforcement Official of the county. The Prosecutor and staff are responsible for the prosecution of all adult and juvenile violations of state criminal law within Kalamazoo County. They represent the community in the local District, Circuit, Family, Probate and State appellate courts.

Jeffrey S. Getting

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information visit VOTE411.org.

Kalamazoo County Sheriff

Four-year term Vote for one

Description: The Sheriff is responsible for the operation of the County Jail, accepting and processing reports of crime occurring in the County, providing court security, marine law enforcement, service of court orders and process, and numerous other statutorily mandated functions.

Richard C. Fuller III

Democrat. Sheriff. Marshall High School Diploma. Kellogg Community College, Associates Law Enforcement. Spring Arbor University, BS Organizational Management. FBI LEEDA and BJA Jail Administrator. 37 years in Emergency Service. 35 years with Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office, with over 15 years as Sheriff. With prior experience as Police Officer, Fire Fighter, EMT, Dispatcher. Website: www.richardfuller.com.

1. (A) Continue to increase our inmate educational opportunities and add a Social Worker to the team. Today we have the IGNITE and Change of Status programs to help raise reading levels, help critical thinking skills, and challenge inmates to set goals for their future. (B) Expand the Medical and Mental Health Services provided in the jail by exploring the best programs to help with our Medically Assisted Treatment and Substance Use Disorder partnerships. (C) Broaden our community involvement through outreach. I have set a goal to increase our BIPOC and female MCOLES and MSCTC certified personnel levels to better match our community demographics.
2. Partnerships and collaboration built on trust and respect lead to effective and efficient management of not only the every day business but also when a crisis arises. I have a career of leading these partnerships within the county; with other municipalities; and with other law enforcement and elected officials. Examples of collaboration include response to the 2010 Enbridge Oil Spill into the Kalamazoo River; the Uber Shooting case; to the recent tornado. As an experienced collaborator, I have the skills to listen to all parties at the table, assess, negotiate, prioritize and delegate during the calm or the crisis.

3. Law Enforcement across Kalamazoo County educates the community on ways we can work together toward ending gun violence. As a group we explore successful programs in other communities. We partnered with state legislators to develop effective laws, including penalties for not locking firearms; extreme risk protection orders; and new guidelines for registering the purchase of firearms. We reached out as a team to partner with the US Attorney Mark Totten to utilize federal laws when appropriate and work with our local Prosecutor Jeff Getting when a state law is a better fit. Gun Violence Intervention programs have helped our community.

James J. Charon

Republican. Captain at Van Buren County Sheriff's Office. Bachelor of Science from Ferris State University in Criminal Justice. Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command, Graduate March 2020. 18 years of Law Enforcement experience. Currently supervising the Jail, Road Patrol, Dispatch, Narcotics and Criminal Investigation Divisions. Supervised the execution of search warrants on homicides to violation of public trust and the execution of search warrants on a police agency. Van Buren County SWAT Commander. FBI-LEEDA Executive Leadership Institute. Child Forensic Interviewer. Website: www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=SVQT32UJUEX52. Facebook: www.facebook.com/charon4positiveleadership/.

1. My top three priorities as your Sheriff will be Positive Leadership, Positive Policing, and Positive Community. Within these three tenants of law enforcement, we will begin to make a difference within our community. Positive Leadership is knowing that your Sheriff will lead with integrity and support our law enforcement partners and hold a high degree of professionalism for his office. Positive Policing is making sure all police contacts in the community have been made with respect and courtesy. The byproduct of this will result in Positive Community which reflects a mutual respect between our community and its law enforcement.
2. The Sheriff should have a positive relationship with every law enforcement partner in Kalamazoo County. The Sheriff should work with Federal, State, and local partners together to accomplish a better, safer more positive community. I have shown a track record of working collaboratively with all agencies to accomplish a common goal, regardless of personal, political or social views. I have shown the tenacity to hold law enforcement accountable within my agency and others as I supervised the execution of a search warrant on a police agency for the distribution of drugs by its police chief.
3. Kalamazoo has begun a collaborative approach in reducing gun violence, I feel it is a step in the right direction but there is still an unacceptable amount of gun violence within our community. As Sheriff I will steer our community away from gun violence in several ways. I will encourage our partners to focus on getting illegal guns off the streets and will positively support our hardworking police officers. I will support programs that encourage safe storage, educating our youth and keeping children involved so we stop losing so many to the fringes of society. I will work tirelessly to end generational incarceration and violence.

Kalamazoo County Officials, continued

Kalamazoo County Clerk & Register of Deeds

Questions

1. What are your top three priorities for the office you seek? What do you hope to accomplish?
2. If elected, what would you do to foster an accessible, responsive process for citizen involvement and to improve citizen understanding of the role and structure of county government?
3. How would you advise voters to educate themselves about candidates and proposals to ensure that they have accurate information when they exercise their right and responsibility to vote?

Four-year term Vote for one

Description: The duties of the County Clerk include Clerk of the Circuit Court, Board of Commissioners, County Board of Canvassers, Jury Board and Gun Board; Registrar of all Vital Records; and Chief Election Officer for the County. The duties of the Register of Deeds include official recording of all legal documents affecting real property.

Meredith Place

Democrat. Kalamazoo County Clerk/Register of Deeds. BA, University of Iowa, majors: Political Science and Communications Studies. Certificate: Sustainability. As a former County Commissioner and County Clerk/Register of Deeds since 2021, I have experience in local government and being accountable to the voters. I have intimate knowledge of the Clerk/Register office and budget. I am a proven leader committed to building trust and partnerships; I bring valuable insight to this position with solutions to problems by staying active in my community. Website: www.meredithplace.com. Twitter/X: Vote4Meredith. Facebook: www.facebook.com/vote4meredith.

1. (A) Continue to provide safe, accurate, and secure elections by administering a successful rollout of Kalamazoo County's Early Voting collaboration with 18 of our City and Township Clerks. (B) Provide exceptional customer service to all residents of Kalamazoo County through offering convenient access to records and services online, expanding projects grow our digital database of vital records, continue to offer bilingual services, and County ID mobile units. (C) Raise awareness of services including free "Property Fraud Alert", Vital Records Scholarship Program, Honor Rewards for veterans, and enhance engagement strategies around voter education.
2. I will continue to prioritize improving outreach and engagement. Our office has significantly improved information sharing on our social media and overhauled our website to provide readers access to important information about the role of the Clerk/Register of Deeds, services we provide, and simple searches to "find your commissioner, polling location, or drop box." We have and will continue to work with local non-profit organizations including the League, the local Democratic and Republican parties, ACLU, YWCA, NAACP, neighborhood associations, and local clerks to coordinate voter education efforts resulting in more citizen involvement.
3. With several resources at their disposal, voters can be overwhelmed with where to start. I would encourage a voter to visit the Michigan Voter Information Network (www.mi.gov/vote) to first learn what's on their ballot and find out who their local clerk is in case they have questions about obtaining a ballot. Then I would direct a voter to the League's vote411.org to learn more about their local candidates. If they want to learn more they can visit the candidate's own website.

Kathleen Olmsted

Republican. Self Employed. Bachelor of Science - WMU. Non-profit Board Leadership, Business Owner, 35+ years of Customer Experience, 25+ years in Mortgage Servicing and Management. My responsibility was maintaining & correcting mortgage records and working with County Clerks throughout the United States. I'm an Election Inspector since 2016, currently an Election Chair in Kalamazoo City & have worked in several Election recounts. Website: ClerkForKalamazoo.com.

1. (A) Improve Election Integrity and Transparency: State law mandates that an equal number of Democrats and Republicans be assigned to each polling location. Currently there is a disproportionate number of Democrat Election inspectors. My goal is to recruit more Republican Inspectors or create a swap between counties, so that we better comply with state law. I would also have each party vet these Inspectors before being approved by the Board of Election Commissioners. (B) Lower or eliminate unnecessary fees where possible: Personal Property records should be free. (C) Clean up the QVF & Audit all Election Results and make available to the public.
2. Provide a citizens guide to County Government online and have all members of the Clerk's office put on workshops, visit schools, present to neighborhood associations and local organizations. Office hours could also be open prior to regular government hours or after regular government hours at least once a week and every other weekend or offer appointments. Positive Communication, Communication, Communication.
3. The Clerk's role is not to present the candidate's information or opinions, but rather provide the public with contact information for those running for office. The Clerk's Office should positively partner with public candidate forums, direct voters to individual campaign websites or encourage them to utilize services, such as Vote411.org. The Clerk's Office should also assist with voter registration and answer questions about the County Clerk's office and duties.

Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner

Four-year term Vote for one

Description: The Drain Commissioner is responsible for enforcing the Michigan Drain Code which includes the construction and maintenance of drains, determining drainage districts and assessing necessary costs, authority over drainage in most new construction sites, and member of lake boards established for the purpose of maintaining lake levels, and inspecting dams.

Jason Wiersma

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Kalamazoo County Treasurer

Questions

1. What are your top three priorities for the office you seek? What do you hope to accomplish?
1. Describe an example of how someone in the office you seek should work effectively with other governmental departments and officials. What skills and talents qualify you to be the best person to play such a role?
3. If elected, what would you do to foster an accessible, responsive process for citizen involvement and to improve citizen understanding of the role and structure of county government?

Four-year term Vote for one

Description: The Treasurer is the custodian of County monies, collector of all county revenue and the agent for the delinquent tax revolving funds.

Thomas Whitener

Democrat. Kalamazoo County Treasurer. BFA Interactive Design and Game Development. 4 years as Kalamazoo County Treasurer, 2 years as a Licensed Real Estate Professional, Certified Public Funds Investment Manager. Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/Thomas4KzooTreasurer.

1. As the current County Treasurer, I'm proud of the work I've done in the past 3 and a half years. I want to continue this work, driving forward the successful policies and priorities that have carried Kalamazoo County this far. My top 3 priorities are: To continue the trend of vastly reduced Tax Foreclosures; To continue to safeguard and grow the tax dollars that Kalamazoo County collects; To continue to provide opportunities for Affordable Housing through efforts in both Treasury and at the Land Bank.
2. During the Foreclosure process, my office works very closely with local officials, county commissioners, and community organizations in order to get in touch with, inform, and prevent homeowners from losing their homes. One of the talents I bring is the ability to work with anyone, no matter their political ideology or party affiliation, toward the end of keeping homeowners in their homes. These are relationships I have developed throughout my term, and my proven track record of doing what is best for taxpayers helps bring these disparate people together toward a common goal.
3. There are many ways to get in touch with the County Treasurer, and I generally have an open-door policy for citizens who wish to speak with me on any topic. In my time in office, I've hosted investment groups looking to buy homes in Kalamazoo, concerned citizens who wanted to know about how our investments work and what we were invested in, and taxpayers who wanted to better understand what their tax dollars are used for and how they get distributed.

Dale Shugars

Republican. Retired. BBA from Western Michigan University, majoring in Accountancy and Political Science. Former CPA and CAE, Michigan State Senator, Michigan State Representative, Kalamazoo County Commissioner, Portage City Council Member, Executive Vice President of two Home Builders Associations, owned and operated a CPA practice. Website: votesugars.com. Twitter/X Handle: In Process. Video: In Process.

1. (A) Safeguard taxpayer's money. (B) Invest money in safe, high yield, liquid investments. (C) Account for every dollar, balance every ledger account, reconcile investment reports and bank accounts, process transmittals from various departments and electronic payments, bond payments, etc. on a timely basis. Partner with the local treasurers to serve all taxpayers efficiently and effectively. Work together to ensure accurate bills are sent and a smooth settlement with all parties. NOT to have any Auditor's negative Comments regarding material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting as now occurs in annual audits.
2. My approach will be to lead rather than be a boss as the County Treasurer. I would strive to provide the staff with support, tools and training to carry out the duties & responsibilities of the Office of the County Treasurer. Our goal would be to meet all timely datelines while implementing the General Property Tax Act, including being the agent of the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund, issue dog licenses (Dog Law 1919), administering the County's hotel/motel accommodations tax, among many other functions required by law. My experience in public accounting along with over 25 years serving in government uniquely qualifies me for this position.
3. Having served in local, state, federal government for over 25 years, I have an improved understanding & respect for the role and responsibilities of the local treasurers. Collaborating & working with them as a team to serve the taxpayers in fulfilling the requirements of the general property tax laws and for the collection & distribution of delinquent real tax levies would be a major goal. Also, having worked for the Home Builders Association and being part of the Market Place neighborhood successful development with the previous County Treasurer, City of Kalamazoo, the County Land Bank will help prepare me to serve on the Land Bank Board.

Kalamazoo County Surveyor

Four-year term Vote for one

Description: The County Surveyor is the County Representative for the State Survey and Remonumentation Program, whose primary objective is to locate, monument, and maintain the County's roughly 3,300 section corners. The Surveyor must be licensed as a Professional Surveyor by the Michigan State Board of Professional Surveyors.

Gary Hahn

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Kalamazoo County Commission

Two-year term Vote for one

Description: The Board of Commissioners is the legislative policy-making branch of Kalamazoo County Government. The Board is responsible to the citizens for development and administration of policies and the annual budget. The Board has 9 members who are elected from districts according to population.

Questions

1. What specifically will you do as a Commissioner to improve the quality of life for residents of your District? How will your talents and skills enable you to succeed in these efforts?
2. What are your top three priorities for the office you seek? What do you hope to accomplish?
3. What are the two most significant environmental concerns in the County? What activities or initiatives would you support to address them?
4. A number of efforts have been initiated in recent years to reduce gun violence in our County. Has there been satisfactory progress in those endeavors? What more, if anything, needs to be done?

District 1

Kalamazoo City precincts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 27

Kalamazoo Township precincts 2, 8, 9, 10

Tami Rey

Democrat. Community Health Manager CRADLE Kalamazoo. Associates Degree. Currently serve as the Chair of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners. Website: electtamirey.com. Facebook: [facebook.com/CommissionerTamiRey](https://www.facebook.com/CommissionerTamiRey).

1. I'm proud of my work on the county commission during my last two terms, including serving as Chair and Vice Chair. Advocating for an improved quality of life for district residents has been my priority. I initiated the Kalamazoo City and County collaboration to reduce gun violence, promoted affordable housing, and secured funding to prevent tax foreclosure. My experience equips me to build strong coalitions by listening, drafting policy, and seeking feedback. My ability to anticipate challenges and my commitment to transparent communication are unmatched.
2. I am committed to addressing the housing needs through the Housing Millage, developing affordable options and collaborating with organizations to ensure safe housing for all. I will continue to work with my colleagues to streamline processes for new projects to increase availability. Safe communities are essential, and I support the current gun violence prevention efforts and hope to continue allocating resources to tackle root causes. Economic development, I plan to support local businesses in an effort to enhance prosperity. My approach is rooted in collaboration to create more opportunities for small business development in my district.
3. The county's top environmental concerns are pollution from the paper mill and climate change. The mill's pollution, causing odors in neighborhoods, is a priority. Climate change impacts require supporting green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects. In addressing these concerns, I am committed ensuring that our community has access to the necessary information and resources to understand these issues and be part of the solution. By working collaboratively with residents, businesses, and governmental agencies, we can develop strategies to protect our environment and ensure a healthy, sustainable future for our county.
4. There has been significant progress in reducing gun violence in our county. The county and the City of Kalamazoo have declared gun violence a public health crisis and allocated \$2 million for prevention and intervention, leading to a decrease in community violence. Increased collaboration with local organizations has been effective. However, continued support and funding are crucial for sustained impact. We must enhance community outreach, invest in youth programs, and ensure consistent evaluation of these efforts to further reduce violence and maintain safety in our neighborhoods.

Douglas Olivares

Republican. Meijer Courtesy service clerk. High school.

Did not respond to questions in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

District 2

Kalamazoo City precincts 2, 4, 5, 6

Kalamazoo Township precincts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Jen Strebs

Democrat. Clinical Quality Specialist, Qualified Intellectual Disability and Mental Health Professional. Western Michigan University, Bachelor of Science—double major in American Public Policy and Psychology (summa cum laude). 2nd term County Commissioner and 1 term as Township Trustee. Jen chairs the Kalamazoo County Opioid Settlement Fund Taskforce, Board Appointments Committee, and the County ID Advisory Board. She services on the Kalamazoo County Environmental Health Advisory Council and a variety of additional boards and committees on behalf of the community. Website: www.jenstrebs.com. Facebook: [facebook.com/jenstrebs](https://www.facebook.com/jenstrebs). Twitter/X Handle: @jenstrebs.

1. I am a passionate advocate for the people of this community. With my experience in elected office, I am a strong and effective advocate for the progressive policies needed to address the issues our community is facing. I am focused, diligent, and deeply engaged as a commissioner. Serving this community is an honor that I take very seriously. The relationships and legislative experience I have built will continue to benefit everyone in Kalamazoo County should I be supported by our community to continue to serve.
2. I continue to expand our efforts to create more stable and truly affordable housing, to ensure the voter's investment in housing creates opportunities even for those with low incomes. Increasing government transparency with access to public facing data on our policies, programs, and criminal justice system which will help to drive advocacy, accountability, and innovation in county programs and services. I will continue to combat the climate crisis with our first county sustainability coordinator that I brought forward. We will create a countywide climate action plan with local governments so we can take climate action now.
3. Air quality and PFAS continue to be the number one concerns due to the immediate impacts on physical health. In my service on the Environmental Health Advisory Council, we will continue to monitor and take action on air and water quality in our area. The county-wide climate action plan will be created as an opportunity for intergovernmental collaboration needed to address the climate crisis in both urban and rural areas. We must also address infrastructure approaches including the way we design and fund our roads and drain systems to deal with the expected increases in both water and population that are likely com-

ing due to climate change.

4. I have worked closely on gun violence initiatives at the county and finalized more allocations going to community-based organizations that are on the ground to address gun violence. This is critical work that must receive the support from our local governments. The County must continue its commitment to the Blueprint for Peace Kalamazoo and endeavor to advance the public health solutions to this crisis. We must recognize that social determinates of health like housing, jobs, and mental healthcare are all part of the solutions needed to reduce gun violence. I am an advocate at the intersection of all these issues. We have a lot more to do.

Gary Mitchell

Republican. Chemical Physicist / retired. Currently Realtor. PhD / Physical Chemistry.

1. I will treat constituents with respect. I will be a servant representative. I do not have any plan to make politics a career or county commissioner a stepping stone to a larger job. I will represent you The People, keep taxes low and services as good as possible.
2. Lower taxes, more responsive service, respect for the citizens.
3. We need to conserve our water supply and our beautiful natural areas. There are places in the county that have been turned into de-facto dumps. This needs to stop and we need to prevent the contamination of our ground water and even the rivers.
4. More citizens need to have guns and fewer criminals should have guns.

District 3

Kalamazoo City precincts 1, 3, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

Kalamazoo Township precinct 1

Monteze O. Morales

Democrat. Director, Kalamazoo Promise Services at Kalamazoo Valley. M.A., Teaching, Learning, and Educational Studies with an emphasis on Socio-Cultural Foundations. Over 20 years in education. Serving on County Board since July 2021. Facebook: www.facebook.com/montezemoralesd3/. Twitter/X Handle: @montezemorales.

1. As Commissioner, I actively work to improve the quality of life for constituents by advocating for accessible healthcare, affordable housing, and community development initiatives. I engage with local organizations to address social issues and promote inclusive policies that benefit diverse populations. My strong communication and collaboration skills enable me to build effective partnerships and mobilize resources, while my commitment to community engagement ensures that the needs and voices of residents are prioritized in decision-making processes allowing me to drive meaningful change, and enhance the overall well-being of Kalamazoo County.
2. I aim to create a more equitable and thriving Kalamazoo County by prioritizing affordable housing to ensure all residents have access to safe living conditions. Protecting reproductive healthcare is my commitment to safeguarding individual rights and health choices. By focusing on reducing community violence, I seek to foster safer neighborhoods and enhance community well-being. Lastly, my emphasis on environmental sustainability aims to promote ecological health, ensuring our county's natural resources are preserved for future generations. Together, these priorities reflect a holistic approach to community development and social justice.
3. My two most significant environmental concerns include the quality of water and air pollution. I will continue to support initiatives to address these issues by advocating for the assessment and monitoring of contaminated sites, particularly around leaking underground storage tanks and industrial operations. Additionally, I will support stricter regulations and promote community education on protecting water resources. I will continue being an avid supporter for cleaner energy and sustainable transportation options that can further improve the environmental health of our county.
4. Yes, there has been satisfactory progress including an uptick in removing guns off the street. Continuous community collaborations, and gun violence education is a priority in resolving this issue.

Ron Austin

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.



Kalamazoo County Commission, continued

District 4

Portage City precincts 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19

Abby Wheeler

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Jason Mikkelborg

Republican. Retired. College. Former Kalamazoo County employee, Combat Vet.

1. I will support police, fire, and ems and encourage safe neighborhoods and communities. I will help preserve natural resources. I will also encourage Veteran friendly employment to help get our nations heroes back in the work force. I will help control wasteful government spending. Our local government is full of wasteful spending and no return on investment to the tax payer. Being a former employee of Kalamazoo County Roads, I will help make our roads better and safer. Our vehicles need to be road worthy, so our roads should be car worthy. Lastly but not least, I will fight to protect Constitutional Rights.
2. Safe neighborhoods. Strong roads. Clean natural resource.
3. The first concern I have is the PFAS issue that has plagued our local communities. As a former U.S. Army Crash Rescue Firefighter, I will do everything within my power to help keep our environment clean and free from PFAS problems. As per our recent natural disaster, I have recognized short comings from our local government to help communities. I will address the short comings in hopes this protects our communities in the best way possible.
4. No, citizens want the sanctuary county status revoked immediately. We will not harbor criminals and terrorists in our community.

District 5

Kalamazoo City precincts 17, 18, 19

Portage City precincts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 17, 20

John Patrick Taylor

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

District 6

Brady Township precincts 1, 2

Comstock Township precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Pavilion Township precincts 1, 2, 3

Townships of Climax, Wakeshma

Village of Climax

John Gisler

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

District 7

Cooper Township precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Richland Township precincts 1, 2, 3

Ross Township precincts 1, 2

Township of Charleston

City of Galesburg

Villages of Augusta, Richland

Andy Davis

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Jeff Heppler

Republican. Chief of Police Augusta. Village Manager for Augusta. Business owner for 48 years. Graduated from Lakeview High School. Business degree at Kellogg Community College. Criminal Justice degree, KVCC. I have been a county commissioner for 18 Years in Kalamazoo. I was also on the Village of Richland board. Volunteer Fireman for Richland Township for over 40 years. Facebook: commissioner Jeff Heppler.

1. I want to work to keep taxes low for Kalamazoo County residents and businesses. Have less regulations and Make sure Tax dollars are spent on county projects. I have been a county commissioner for 18 years and have worked with many different commissioners and can work with both sides of the aisle. I also want to improve the communication across the county with our citizens and businesses.
2. Try to improve communications across the county. I want to make sure the entire county is served and has representation. TO make sure all money is spent wisely.
3. Recycling and water quality. We need to keep working to improve the safety and quality of our water. We need to have more recycling collection sites in the outlying areas. Like the one that is in Augusta Village. That would encourage people to recycle if it was more accessible for them.
4. I have been in law enforcement for 49 years. So, I really understand the issue of the gun violence. I currently set on the Gun violence committee. We need to work on the enforcement of the laws that we have on the books. We need to educate people about Gun safety and the consequences of Gun misuse. There is always room for improvement in reducing the gun violence.

District 8

Schoolcraft Township precincts 1, 4

Texas Township precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Township of Prairie Ronde

Villages of Schoolcraft, Vicksburg

Matthew Miller

Democrat

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Wendy Mazer

Republican

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

District 9

Alamo Township precincts 1, 2

Oshtemo Township precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Dale DeLeeuw

Democrat. Police Officer. Masters of Science in Accounting. Police Officer for 40 years, current county commissioner elected in 2022.

1. I will continue to work with the Oshtemo Township Leadership committee working on the master plan for the township. I will also continue to attend the Alamo Township board meetings and assist the board in any way I can to help them serve the public. My experience as the current commissioner has led to numerous valuable contacts which help in bringing leaders together for improved public service.
2. Continue to advocate for funds for the Sheriff's department and the prosecutors office as both are understaffed. Proper funding of public safety is essential to protect the citizens of the community. Prudent spending of our housing dollars is also a priority. Kalamazoo County is blessed to have the housing millage and sound decisions on how to spend the funding is crucial. I am anticipating requests for some housing millage next year from Oshtemo township projects and I am looking forward to that. My third priority is to accomplish as much in the next couple of years as much as the current board has produced in this current term.
3. Protecting ground water is and has always been a an important part of Kalamazoo County as this is where our drinking water comes from. I totally support our working relationship with MSU Extension to educate the public on this matter. I am also a supporter of maintaining green space while allowing growth in the community. Being a part of the Oshtemo master plan process facilitates my desire and ability to do so.
4. I have been in law enforcement in our community for forty years. I have seen ebbs and flows when it comes to gun violence in Kalamazoo County. Fortunately we are currently experiencing a slowdown in gun violence due to very active police enforcement in certain areas. I am pleased that Kalamazoo Public Safety is once again involved with the community through the police athletic league which reaches out to the youth of the city. Giving the youth a positive outlet as well as experiencing positive interactions with officers is essential in combating gun violence.

Nicole C. Wagner

Republican. Leasing Specialist. High School. Having owned my own business I've learned to balance budgets, the importance of time management, the gratification of customer satisfaction and most importantly is actually hearing what another person is saying.

1. Reduce crime! You have every right to feel safe in OUR county. I'm going to look at every option I'll have to make that happen. Working with our Sheriff, prosecutors, my constituents we will change this shameful crime rate. Violent or property crime rate is 1 in 16 here and theft is at 32.88! We need change because what's being used obviously ISN'T working. We have a housing crisis that has to be addressed immediately. We need affordable housing, be it tiny house communities to restoring what we have. I work in leasing and see how desperately Kalamazoo needs homes for families. Being a sanctuary county is also ridiculous.
2. Reduced crime rates. Substance abuse programs. Mental health programs with in house care options. Those 3 go hand in hand. If we don't work hard on those problems our county is going to keep getting worse. I don't "hope" to accomplish this, WE will. Housing which I touched on above. Kalamazoo needs people who want to live here, build their future, investing in themselves and us investing in them. We can do that by using our resources, end pet projects and wasteful spending. When you have a safe productive county to call home the county flourishes. Veterans and Seniors get left behind, forgotten. That's unacceptable. Use resources to help them.
3. Our water. Michigan is known world wide for our beautiful lakes and rivers. But we've been heavily contaminated here which has been devastating to people, wildlife and our community. A lot of money has been spent to fix the water issues and its important we keep at it. See what is working and eliminate what isn't. Air pollution. Again, what is or isn't working.
4. A gun is a tool for violence. We need to address the individual who uses this tool. Put the blame where it belongs, on the individual. There are millions more law abiding gun owners not shooting others than there are who either are mentally unstable or are just a criminal using the gun as their tool to inflict violence.

5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day

1. Go To The Right Place Poll locations can change. Be sure to locate your polling place before you go to vote. Check www.VOTE411.org or contact the clerk for your county, city or township.
2. Bring I.D. You will be asked to show I.D. at the polling place. Bring your driver's license or another photo I.D.
3. Get a Ballot Don't panic if you registered to vote but your name is not on the list. Get help from a poll worker to make sure your vote is counted. You should be given a provisional ballot or given directions to another polling place.
4. Get Help Poll workers are there to help you. They'll show you how to use the voting machine or give you a provisional ballot if you need one. Ask, or read the signs at your polling place, which have instructions, list your voting rights and say how to file a complaint.
5. Stay and Vote You probably won't have to wait too long. But even if the line is long, don't leave without voting. The outcome of this election will be important!

Michigan Courts

Questions

1. Why are you running for the Michigan Supreme/Appeals Court and how do your educational, occupational, civic and community experiences qualify you to serve on this court?
2. Describe, in lay terms, what the Michigan Supreme/Appeals Court does and the challenges it faces. How would you address these challenges?
3. What, in your opinion, are the two greatest areas of need in the Michigan justice system, and how should the Supreme/Appeals Court respond to them?

Michigan Supreme Court Justice

Description: The Michigan Supreme Court is the state's highest court and makes the final determination and interpretation of Michigan's laws. It supervises all other state courts. Although the election is nonpartisan, candidates (other than incumbents) are nominated by political parties.

Eight-year term **Vote for one**

Andrew Fink

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Kimberly Ann Thomas

Nonpartisan. University of Michigan clinical law professor and lawyer. Harvard Law School, magna cum laude. University of Maryland, College Park, magna cum laude. Website: www.electkimberlythomas.com. Twitter/X Handle: [ktforjustice](https://twitter.com/ktforjustice).

1. I am running to be a Michigan Supreme Court justice because I care deeply about the quality of justice that the people of Michigan receive. I have the experience and knowledge to represent Michiganders on our state's highest court. I am a law professor at the University of Michigan Law School, and the director of the law school's Juvenile Justice Clinic, where I teach the next generation of lawyers the ethical practice of law. As an attorney of nearly 25 years, I have represented hundreds of individuals in state trial and appellate courts. I know how our courts work and have the expertise needed to be a Michigan Supreme Court justice.
2. The Michigan Supreme Court is our highest court, which applies our state laws and constitution, and also serves as the administrative leader for our state court system. I would decide cases before the Court with diligence, integrity, and fidelity to the law. I am also committed to working collaboratively with the Justices and stakeholders across the state to make our courts better and more fair for all Michiganders. One example of my prior problem-solving work is my appointment by Gov. Whitmer to the bipartisan Michigan Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform, which took a data and research-driven approach to improving courts across the state.

3. First, Michiganders need a Court they can have confidence in and can rely on to deliver understandable decisions based on the law. I have the experience, perspective and knowledge to decide difficult questions with integrity and apply the law fairly. My previous work as an expert for the ABA Rule of Law Initiative is an example of my commitment to promote respect for the role of courts in a constitutional democracy. Second, Michiganders need a transparent and accessible court system where they are treated with dignity. The Michigan Judicial Council has begun this work and I will work to better serve the people of our state through our courts.

Partial term expires 01/01/2029 **Vote for one**

Kyra Harris Bolden

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Patrick William O'Grady

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Michigan Court of Appeals Justice, District 1

Six-year term **Vote for two**

The Michigan Appeals Court is the primary appeals court of the state. There are 4 Appeals Court districts.

Kirsten Frank Kelly

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Michael J. Riordan

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Kalamazoo County Courts

Questions

1. How have your education, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?
2. What have been the most effective methods for improving court procedures? What other methods would you suggest to improve efficiency or make the courts less intimidating to the public?
3. Name a judge, living or deceased, for whom you have great esteem, and explain why.

Circuit Court Judge, 9th Circuit

Description: The Ninth Circuit Court is the court of highest jurisdiction in Kalamazoo County. The Circuit Court consists of a Family Division and a Trial Division, supported by Technology Services, Finance Services, Drug Treatment Courts and Planning, Friend of the Court and Juvenile Home.

Six-year term **Vote for two**

Paul J. Bridenstine

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Pamela L. Lightvoet

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Circuit Court Judge, 9th Circuit— New Judgeship

Eight-year term **Vote for one**

Christine Morse

Nonpartisan. Legislator/State Representative for Michigan's 40th District. Juris Doctor from Wayne State University Law School awarded May 1998. Bachelor of Arts in Political Science/Pre-law from Michigan State University awarded May 1995. I have been licensed since 1999. I interned for the St. Clair County and Berrien County Prosecutor's Offices in the District and Probate Courts. I interned for the Honorable Gerald R. Rosen of the Eastern District of MI. I practiced insurance defense litigation in both Michigan and California. I also practiced in worker's compensation administrative law in California. Website: www.vote4morse.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/vote4morse. Twitter/X: [@vote4morse](https://twitter.com/vote4morse).

1. My well-rounded background has prepared me to be a judge who serves the community with fairness, impartiality and compassion. My current position as State Representative provides insight into the creation of legislation that I will be applying as a judge. My judgment skills are valued at the highest level of state government as evidenced by my role as Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Health and Human Services, which requires decision making and discernment of critical health and social services issues. I have experience in both criminal and civil litigation. My interest in social justice drives me to want to improve the system.
2. The use of technology has clearly brought efficiencies to the courtroom and increased access for those involved with judicial system. Ensuring we have enough judicial capacity to support the current populations of our counties which have suffered from years of backlogs. Bringing together the people who know the system with the people who have the power to change it is critical for ensuring we can effectuate the needed improvements. Treating everyone who enters the courtroom with dignity and clear communication are steps toward making the process less intimidating. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty and should be treated as such.
3. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg is an inspiration to me as a fellow mother and cancer survivor. She blazed the path for women to succeed, persevering through gender bias and discrimination to reach the Supreme Court, always fighting for gender equality and women's rights. Her critical work in gender discrimination resulted in the end of discrimi-



Kalamazoo County Courts, continued

nation in many areas of the law. She was a brilliant member of the Supreme Court whose absence is deeply felt today. As a mother and cancer survivor, I admire her fortitude in building the career she did while balancing life's challenges with an indomitable spirit.

Mariko Willis

Nonpartisan. Owner/Attorney (Fidelis Counselor at Law); Of Counsel Attorney (Willis Law); COO (Willis Foundation). Juris Doctorate, Cum Laude—Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Rising Star in Super Lawyers for 5 consecutive years (reserved for less than 2.5% of attorneys in the state). Marine Corps Veteran (SSgt) with last billet being Company Gunnery Sergeant & Deputy Family Readiness Officer for ESC, 6th ESB, Area Chairman of Ducks Unlimited Greater Kalamazoo and public servant. Website: www.WillisForJudge.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/MarikoWillis-Kalamazoo/. Video: www.facebook.com/MarikoWillisKalamazoo/videos/1532958080584049.

1. My legal experience, military ops, public service, management, conflict resolution, leadership training and work with Gold Star families has trained me to multi-task, use sound judgement, objectively resolve conflict, remain impartial/informed and use systemic methodology to make effective decisions. I can handle a full plate and perform under pressure. My experience has given me insight and understanding for every tough situation imaginable and from every point of view possible. This allows me to have an open mind, consider all points of view, empathize, counsel, encourage, but still make tough decisions based on the facts and law.
2. Electronic filing/info saves time/labor/money. Remote proceedings give those not otherwise able the chance to participate/comply. Multiple platforms have emerged that streamline transactional work/cut down on time and costs. I believe courtrooms should be a place where every party feels safe/seen/heard. Respect/professional courtesy should be given/shown by all involved. But, I think a courtroom should hold some level of intimidation – to signify the magnitude of the reason for being there. An intimidating venue may be just what the occasion calls for, whether that be to invoke feelings of awe or, if appropriate, slight feelings of fear.
3. My father, who served 39 yrs. When he lost a son, he did not crumble but took what strength/love he had left to hold up his wife and four other kids. He woke before sunrise to read his Bible/pray. I can't imagine a time someone needed help and my father said no. His court policies/systems were modeled. He found cost saving measures. Under his tenure juvenile crime decreased. He was awarded/an integral member of the court system. He was the epitome of humil-

ity/selflessness on the bench & loved what he did. In his words, "Where else can you be in such a position to help, and give hope to people at some of the lowest moments of their lives?"

Probate Court

Six-year term Vote for one

Description: Probate Court handles guardianships, conservatorships, deceased estates, trusts and mental health proceedings. Circuit Court/Family Division matters currently handled by Probate Court include name changes, adoptions and emancipations.

Curtis J. Bell

Nonpartisan. Judge. 1990 Bachelor of Arts, Michigan State University. 1993 Juris Doctorate from the University of Iowa College of Law.

As a judicial candidate without opposition, I am prohibited from campaigning. Thank you in advance for your understanding. Thank you for the opportunity to serve Kalamazoo County for another term.

8th District Court

Six-year term Vote for two

Description: The Kalamazoo County Eighth District Court has Countywide jurisdiction over traffic matters, criminal misdemeanors, original jurisdictions over felony cases, civil cases up to \$25,000, small claims cases, landlord/tenant and land contract cases that arise in Kalamazoo County.

Christopher T. Haenicke

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Alisa Parker-LaGrone

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Board of Trustees

Six-year term Vote for two

Description: The role of the seven-member board is to create, sustain, and fulfill the vision of the College, while setting broad parameters for the chief executive officer under which to operate.

Questions

1. Why are you running for a board seat? What strengths or talents especially qualify you for that role?
2. If elected, what are your top two priorities for the coming year? How will you strive to address them?
3. Are you satisfied with how well KVCC is supporting local economic vitality and stability through development of a skilled workforce? Explain why or what more should be done.
4. Are you satisfied with the College's graduation rate and ethnicity distribution? Explain your rationale.

Full six-year term Vote for three

Elizabeth Burns (write-in)

Nonpartisan

Did not respond in time for publication. For the latest information, visit VOTE411.org.

Dawn DeLuca

Nonpartisan. Business Owner. Bachelor of Music Education, Florida State University. Master of Music Education, Western Michigan University. Choir Director, Battle Creek Public Schools 2004-2016; Health Career Pathways Program Coordinator, Western Michigan University Homer Stryker School of Medicine 2016-2020; Administrator of Youth Services, KRESA 2020-2022.

1. I'm running for another term because I am passionate about our community and education, and dedicated to creating opportunities for all to succeed. My six years on the board have given me deep insights into our challenges and strengths. My commitment to education and community development, combined with my experience in fostering collaboration and advocating for inclusive programs, uniquely qualify me to continue serving. I am eager to build on our progress and ensure KVCC remains a vital resource for all members of our community.
2. If elected, my top two priorities will be creating alternative paths to obtaining teacher credentials and improving the diversity of our student body. To address these, I will advocate for flexible programs that allow aspiring educators to earn credentials while balancing other commitments. Additionally, I will work to strengthen outreach and support initiatives aimed at underrepresented communities, ensuring that our student body better reflects the diversity of our community and that all students have the opportunity to succeed.
3. I am pleased with how Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) supports local economic vitality through workforce development. KVCC's alignment of programs with industry needs ensures students are well-prepared for in-demand careers, particularly in fields like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable food systems. The college's strong partnerships with local businesses further reinforce its positive impact. To enhance its contribution, KVCC could expand into emerging fields and increase outreach to underrepresented communities, ensuring broader economic growth for Kalamazoo.
4. While I recognize the progress KVCC has made, I believe there is still work to be done regarding graduation rates and ethnicity distribution. Graduation rates are a key measure of our effectiveness, and we must ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed. Additionally, our student body should reflect the diversity of our community. We need

to focus on both recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups to improve these outcomes. I am committed to advocating for policies that enhance success and equity for all students.

Sherry Thomas-Cloud

Nonpartisan. Retired. Western Michigan University, MSW – policy, planning and administration tract. Program manager for Head Start and School Readiness in Kalamazoo County. Executive Director of state-wide advocacy agency. Executive Director of Department of Human Services—Kalamazoo County. Executive Director of Douglass Community Association. CEO of Family & Children Services.

1. I have been a lifelong community volunteer and believe in the opportunities that continuing education beyond K-12 can provide individuals no matter your age. I have taught as part time faculty at WMU's School of Health and Human Services and mentored many college students in achieving their educational goals. My strength is my ability to work collaboratively with service providers in creating or expanding successful programs and services for individuals.
2. I will continue to work with the President and leadership staff at KVCC to ensue a school culture where everyone feels that they belong. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and belonging is a key priority for me. Another key priority is to encourage student engagement and attainment of educational goals. I plan to address these goals through feedback from students, community partners and staff to determine additional resources that may be needed
3. KVCC offers many options for students in preparing them for their work lives after completion. This is done by course offerings, community partnerships, internships, and being on top of new and emerging employment opportunities. As an example, this summer the ribbon was cut on a new Cosmetology and Barbering school on the Texas Township campus. I believe the direction the leadership at KVCC has taken has benefited not only the students but the community at large.
4. There are all racial groups represented at KVCC, including Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian, Hispanic, Black, White and International students. KVCC has dual enrolled students that choose to take courses for college credit while still in high school and students that transfer to 4 year universities to finish their course of study. These are planned exits and is expected. A number of students persist in coming back to KVCC the next year. One way KVCC helps with students being able to continue in their studies is our intentional efforts to keep costs low and providing needed resources.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Board of Trustees, continued

Partial Term ending Dec. 31, 2028 **Vote for one**

Paul Foust

Nonpartisan. Township Trustee. B.S. and M.A. degrees from Western Michigan University. A.A. degrees from Lansing Community College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Member of the Richland Township Board of Trustees (2012-Present). Member of the Richland Village Planning Commission (2011-Present). Facebook: facebook.com/paul.foust.

1. As a two-time KVCC graduate, I genuinely care about what happens to the school. I have 13 years of previously political experience that will allow me to “hit the ground running.” I am knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the services that KVCC offers.
2. (A) I would launch a systematic review of all the programs offered by KVCC, in order to assess their viability. Most, yet not all, KVCC programs have good employability prospects. Recent innovative-yet-inopportune offerings, like the Wind Energy Academy and the Sustainable Brewing Program, should probably be axed from KVCC’s offerings, on account of having never been viable in the first place. (B) I vow to redefine the relationship between WMU and KVCC. I feel that WMU uses predatory tactics to siphon away KVCC students before they are able to complete their program at KVCC. Students are being fed half-truths, in order to mislead them.
3. No. Too many local college graduates are leaving Michigan after completing their programs of study. I believe that Michigan is experiencing what is known as the “brain-drain” phenomenon. Transfer-outs to four-year institutions should be discouraged.
4. Members of the Mainstream Media use race-baiting questions like this one to drive Americans further apart. I am, categorically, refusing to answer this question.

Kathy Purnell

Nonpartisan. Attorney and part-time professor. Ph.D., Cornell University; J.D., DePaul University College of Law; A.B., Harvard University. Current member of the KVCC Board of Trustees. Over two decades of experience as a university administrator and professor in formal classrooms and public, open-access settings. Legal advocate for the rights of the marginalized and under-represented. Kalamazoo city resident and small business owner who supports community partnerships for educational and career opportunity. First generation college. Website: www.purnell4kvcctrustee.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61565486450149. Video: @KathyPurnell4KVCCTrustee.

1. I currently serve on the KVCC Board of Trustees. I am a first-generation college graduate, who remembers the challenges I faced, and the support I received, while navigating higher education. I have 25+ years of experience as a college administrator, professor, and attorney which fuel my commitment to ensuring KVCC remains well-resourced, affordable, accessible, and

equitable. I will always advocate for KVCC to ensure its faculty, staff, and leadership have the policies, community partnerships, and resources necessary to reduce barriers to educational access, support degree and certificate completion, and promote post-graduation success.

2. (A) Advancing and deepening KVCC’s community partnerships. This is an exciting time at KVCC because partnerships have helped make possible a new Michigan Community College guarantee for all high school graduates and expand access to Michigan Reconnect for adult learners. KVCC constantly innovates to position students for post-graduation success and respond to community workforce needs through partnerships. (B) Expand engagement with all internal and external KVCC stakeholders. I look forward to continued dialogue with all stakeholders to explore how we can jointly transform our communities through expanded educational attainment and access.
3. Objectively, KVCC performs well on these measures, but I feel very strongly about this question because I faced periods of re-invention during several career and personal transitions post-college. It is important to welcome and invest in adult learners to empower their career transitions and flexibly develop new skills. I was nearly 40 years old when I completed my law degree. I launched a new social enterprise after turning 50. KVCC’s investments in workforce development are essential because we will all face personal transitions and new workforce challenges; training and education can help us move with confidence and purpose through them.
4. Ms. Carter’s 2024 Commencement address was inspiring. She described the support she received at KVCC to complete her degree, part-time, while addressing health challenges and raising a family. KVCC has a unique responsibility to all potential students: to be open access, to meet every student where they are, and to mobilize resources for their lifelong success. I will work tirelessly to encourage our institution to close all equity gaps, minimize all barriers to entry, and monitor evidence on graduation rates and ethnicity to ensure that we are steadfast in our commitment to open access, and are well-resourced for holistic student support.

10 Reasons to Vote

1. Your vote does count.
2. Democracy only works if we vote.
3. If you don’t vote, others decide your future.
4. You cannot change a situation by ignoring it.
5. Voting is power.
6. Elections determine leaders and politics.
7. Without your vote, your voice will not be heard.
8. When you don’t vote, special interests take control.
9. If you don’t vote, don’t complain.
10. People have died for the freedom to vote.

Public Library District Trustee

Description: The role of a public library board is to set policy and to delegate responsibility for implementing those policies to the library's director and staff. The seven-member board provides for, establishes and reviews library services necessary or desirable to serve library constituents. This includes appointing and reviewing the director, overseeing finances, providing suitable facilities, and guiding the future of the library through strategic planning.

Questions

1. Why are you running for a board seat? What strengths or talents especially qualify you for that role?
2. If elected, what are your top two priorities for the next four years? How will you strive to address them?
3. Are you satisfied with how well the library is serving the community? Explain why or what more should be done to make the library accessible, inclusive, and equitable.

Kalamazoo Public Library Trustee

Full four-year term Vote for four

Lisa A. Godfrey

Nonpartisan. Attorney retired. BA, Kalamazoo College. MLS & MA, WMU. JD, DePaul College of Law. Lisa Godfrey is a retired attorney and practiced law in Kalamazoo for over 35 years. She has served on the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees for eight terms and has served on a number of other public governing boards, public and private advisory boards and non-profit boards in leadership roles at the national, state, regional and local levels.

1. I am running for the Library Board because of my belief that public libraries are the keystone of a strong, vibrant, and literate community. The Library is where free and open access to information in all of its forms is to be found and enables all residents the chance to participate in their community. The Library must be sustained and access must be protected. While on the Library Board, we have built a strong library infrastructure, developed a skilled and committed staff and received deserved professional recognition for the Library's services and programs. I am proud of my contribution as a steward of Library resources.
2. The Library is currently engaged in addressing the library building and service needs of the northside of our district. This will remain a priority until completion of the project. Another priority for the Library is to identify and hire a permanent Director for the Library. It is imperative to have library leadership in place and to develop the strategic initiatives as the Library continues its forward progress and builds the case for community support.
3. I am proud of the Library's service to the community but one should never be complacent about what is being done or can be done. The fundamental value of a public library is its commitment to providing a place accessible to all and where everyone belongs. This value applies not only to patrons but to how buildings are designed/located, how staff is recruited/hired/treated, and how services/programs/collections policies/procedures are planned/developed/implemented. The Library has a history of responding to the ever changing needs of the community but vigilance in shaping future opportunities is critical.

Brenda J. Hughes

Nonpartisan. Retired. Public Administration, WMU (no degree). Over 40 years of public library experience, all in public service in every neighborhood, downtown and three Bookmobiles.

1. I am running for Trustee, at this time, because the Board is in the midst of two very important issues, as well as a few on-going issues and/or areas of concern. Strengths & talents: 40+ years direct public library service to every neighborhood, downtown & remote bookmobile stops. Over 40 years union membership, leadership, and bargaining (training as well). Kal County Public Housing Commissioner, 15 yrs (13 as Vice-Chair). Formed five 501C3's for housing projects for homeless, as part of that service. Founding member with all planning & implementation training of KPL's Anti-Racism Transformation Team. Now on Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Board.
2. (A) Permanent relocation of the Powell Branch Library and selection of a permanent Director. (B) I will combine the data already collected from the community, along with my experience working in the Powell Branch and my connections to the patrons of the neighborhood and District to insure Powell is where, and what the community needs, wants & deserves. I have experienced 4 different Director's administrations & have observed the strengths & weaknesses that level of leadership brings the very community that literally insures, through their tax dollars, that KPL exists & is given what it needs to serve every person equally & more than sufficiently.
3. (A) Yes, for programs & materials. (B) I was a founding member of KPL's ARTT. After thorough training & given the mission of disrupting racism, the Board wrote a resolution committing to that same mission. We need to have a Board that always supports and in fact, insures that the institution & all employees are living into that mission, every day for every person. I will join those voices & be a staunch defender of equity, inclusion, & assuring we are all accountable to the community, the entire community. Transparency in all levels from within & without is absolutely necessary always.

Kori Jock

Nonpartisan. Principal, Kori Jock Digital. Bachelor of Science, Western Michigan University. I've served as a KPL Trustee (2022 to 2024) and bring over 15 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, including fundraising and development for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Michigan and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. My background includes coordinating various youth development programs, and I have more than a decade of experience owning small businesses.

1. I ran 2 years ago because of my deep love for the library, which has been constant since childhood. As a Trustee, I've spent the last 2 years learning how the library operates, understanding its needs, and supporting it and our community as an elected official. The learning curve has been steep, particularly with the search for a permanent Executive Director and the temporary closure of the Alma Powell branch. The institution and taxpayers have invested in my development, and I want to continue serving by applying my nonprofit and small business experience to enhance the library's impact and ensure it serves everyone equitably.
2. If elected, my priorities will be to hire the library's next Executive Director, and to support and ensure the new Alma Powell branch's visioning, process, eventual ground-breaking, and temporary location are appropriately resourced and supported. As part of the hiring process and onboarding the library's next Director, I will support the library's strategic vision and the development of its next strategic plan. The library's role as a community hub continues to increase in importance, as does the need to ensure its collections and programs reflect and include Kalamazoo's diversity and vibrancy.
3. The community's needs are significant; I applaud the library staff for their efforts. This year's

biggest challenge was the temporary closure of the Alma Powell branch under Interim leadership. As a Trustee, I've listened and know that the library isn't serving the community equitably. The immediate priority is reopening the temporary Alma Powell branch and securing the permanent branch's future. The evolving needs of individuals and families require KPL to continually adapt its programming and access to information. Beyond this, I support returning to the DEI Strategic Plan to ensure everyone benefits from the library.

Takisha Johnson

Nonpartisan. Entrepreneur, CFO. Doctoral level course completion, Master's Degree in Psychology, B.A. in Psychology/Sociology and an associate's degree in Accounting. Nonprofit founder, business owner, former Adult Learning Navigation Specialist with Kalamazoo Literacy Council, youth advocate, business coach and empowerment coach.

1. The library has always been an important part of my life as it is where I played as a child while my grandmother was taking classes to get her GED that came after her passing. It is also where I was able to edit and update my resume when I didn't have internet at home and where I could find entertainment for my son when I couldn't afford to take him out. It is a tool for success that I am especially passionate about and willing to support the sustainability of. As a business owner for the last 21 years, nonprofit founder and advocate I believe I can support the forward momentum and stability of the library with my knowledge, skill and ability
2. My top priorities are supporting the sustainability of the library so that it remains a stable resource in the community and supporting the work being done to ensure that Kalamazoo's Northside neighborhood is not without access to a community library that meets their needs. I will strive to address these priorities by supporting the work needed to make progress in these areas and making decisions with community as the focus.
3. Kalamazoo Public Library is an amazing community resource, they provide a multitude of tools for community to use for their development and entertainment, yet there is always room for improvement. As a community supporter, business owner and patron, there are some processes that can be executed more efficiently that would make resources more accessible and a great need for inclusivity in decision making that will lead to more equitable outcomes for every patron.

Chelsey Pinto

Nonpartisan. Hospitalist. Undergrad: University of Michigan Ann Arbor. Graduate School: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Lifelong reader, learner, library lover

1. I started attending KPL board meetings regularly because I'm passionate about my community library and I noticed a particular lack of representation from the younger generations of library users and lovers. I want to add some age diversity representation to the board. The talents that qualify me for the board are communication and clarity in leadership. As a health care professional I am called to synthesize large amounts of information quickly and make a decision that I can clearly communicate with my patient, their family, and my team. Medicine is a team sport, these skills translate well to serving on the board.
2. My top priority is helping with every effort to get both the temporary and permanent Alma Powell branch locations up and running. The intended temporary location is great and the board has done a lot of work to get it in place this fall, but the Northside Community deserves a permanent library location to utilize and love. My second top priority is to encourage and develop more library programming for young people in the Kalamazoo community. Children, teenagers, young adults, and young families with children would benefit significantly from more library engagement and recognition.
3. I think the Kalamazoo Public Library does a fantastic job, and it's an amazing organization. That said, there is always room for improvement. We have one of the highest millage rates in the state, meaning our budget is able to support reinvestment in library infrastructure, technology, and employees to allow for amazing programming and events for library patrons.

Jannie M. Williams

Nonpartisan. Self employed—Landlord. BBA, Masters of Arts Management. Former 21 year employee General Motors. Positions held were Quality of Worklife Coordinator, Accounting Specialist, and Data Processing; Cofounder of non profit organization Restoration and Redemption (R&R); Event Planner; and Professional Fundraiser.

1. My candidacy for the board seat is underpinned by eight years of experience as the incumbent candidate. Currently, I am serving as the secretary of the Board. I am actively involved in the community as a volunteer. I am a member of the Board of Community Advocates for Parents and Students (CAPS), a partnership with Kalamazoo College. I am a Board member of the Northside Association for Educational Advancement (NAEA), a scholarship program for underrepresented students. I am a tutor for Specialized Learning Disability (SLD Read). My service is propelled by a commitment to our community and a genuine belief in equal access to education.
2. If elected, my vision for the next four years is to see the Powell Branch on the Northside of Kalamazoo fully operational. I also aim to implement a robust organizational metrics and data system to guide our five-year strategic plan, ensuring it aligns with our community's needs and aspirations. This vision is not just a plan but a promise of a brighter future for our library and community. I firmly believe that values and character are paramount. We are on a journey towards an organizational culture that genuinely values equity and inclusion. My commitment to equity and inclusion is unwavering.
3. My work continues until I see evidence of an anti-racist board and institution. When I know that we have crossed over the racist bridge to an anti-racist board and organization, then I will be satisfied with how well the library is serving our community. By actively collecting data from our community and staff will measure our library's commitment to equitable service. Also by continuing to partner with community organizations like the Literacy Council and KPS. Lastly, we need a director who seeks to remove implicit bias, promotes innovation, practices equity and social justice and is committed to inclusion and access for all on a daily basis.

Public Library District Trustee, continued

Partial Term ending 12/31/2026 Vote for one

Dorla Coleman-Bonner

Nonpartisan. Retired—City of Kalamazoo. B.A.—Western Michigan University. MA—Cornerstone Theological Seminary. Certificate, Diversity and Inclusion—Cornell University. Pursuing Doctorate of Ministry—Calvin Theological Seminary. I served on the following boards—United Way, Rockford IL (executive committee). Girls on the Run and KNHS. (executive committee), Kalamazoo, MI. I also have over 30 years of exp. in Community Development.

1. I joined the board in June following an application process to fill a vacant seat. The application requested someone who understood and had experience with issues surround diversity and had board experience. I bring to the board those qualifications. I have sat on three boards ranging in size from 30 to 7. During my tenure at the city I helped create a board and staffed two boards. I was the first Director of Diversity for the City of Kalamazoo. I am a person who is able to see problems and solutions. I try to be mindful that every decision made affects layers of people from staff to those who use the library.
2. My first priority will be to assist the leadership in finding a permanent executive director. There has to be an honest thorough review of past attempts and plan made with that review in mind that will set the new director in place for success. Another priority is the make sure the community is aware of the amazing services offered. In the three months that I have served as a trustee I am continually learning about services that should be shared more broadly. I hope to share ideals about the non traditional ways to communicate with the community.
3. I am impressed with what I've seen and heard about the library since I've become a trustee. However I am concerned with the challenge we are facing and working diligently to address with the closing of the Alma Powell branch. I am also concerned with the challenges of equitable treatment of our houseless residents that come to the library. Because of my experience in equity I am not quick to say what should be done. There is no exact recipe on how to become equitable, accessible and inclusive. However I will commit to bringing my experience to the conversation to make sure voices are heard and truth is told and action is taken.

Jeff Messer

Nonpartisan. Gig Worker. Western Michigan University alumnus (accountancy, economics, gender & women's studies, Lee Honors College). Boy Scouts of America (Eagle Scout with bronze palms, National Jamboree, Brownsea training). Former KPL Central branch circulation desk employee. Regular attendee & participant in Kalamazoo City Commission meetings since October 2012. Regular attendee & participant in City Commission advisory board meetings: Planning Commission (since June 2013), Zoning B.A. (2014), Downtown Development Auth. (2017), Parks & Rec. (2020). Participant in KPL Board meetings since 2020. Rank MI Vote volunteer. Website: messenger.substack.com/. Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/swmindys. Twitter/X Handle: [jeffmessenger](https://twitter.com/jeffmessenger).

1. I'm a former KPL circulation desk employee who's been a very frequent user of in-library services for the past 12 years. I talk to patrons and staff frequently. I'm familiar with their needs. I'm aware of chronic facilities & service shortcomings that need addressing. The library's primary use now is as a community center. This is why staff has added many non-traditional services like Peer Navigators, U.S. Passport office, Idea Lab, adult gaming computers, emergency foods bags, winter hats, and social work intern. I want to encourage greater patron participation in Board meetings & restore video recordings of past ones (removed in Aug. 2023).
2. Facilities & patron experience. The current board has neglected these areas, resulting in their failure to hire a permanent director since Dec. 2022 & allowing the Powell branch to close. The roof leaks, facilities are worn and dirty, security guards are inattentive, front entry needs regular power washing, & patrons regularly complain about the lack of chairs for reading. I would like to see a designated indoor eating area w/ hot water dispenser, recycling for plastic bottles and aluminum cans, plant seed library, better security for the Library of Things collection, facilities for laptop computer use, more quiet study space, & longer hours.
3. The current board lacks diversity. Since Jan. 2021, it's been all female, a fact they've celebrated. During this time, there's been infighting that's led to dysfunction, such as the meeting where 2 of the candidates for reelection argued for 20 minutes over the selection of board Vice President. The board also lacks an actual patron user of the library. In Jan. 2023, I asked board members to spend time in the library & form independent opinions of how it's operating. The board distances itself from patrons so much that they enter via the employee entrance, bypassing all patron areas. Of the 8 board candidates, I'm the only male & patron user.



The stakes are too high for government to be a spectator sport.

—Barbara Jordan

Portage Public Library Trustee

Four-year term Vote for four

Kenneth A. Baker

Nonpartisan. Substitute Teacher. MBA & ME. 4 years on the board.

1. To protect everyone's right to read
2. Promote reading and the library. Author interactions.
3. They are doing a great job for our community. The plan that are in place will increase this strength.

Michele D. Behr

Nonpartisan. Academic Librarian / Scholarly Communications Librarian, Western Michigan University. Master of Information and Library Studies, University of Michigan; Bachelor of Arts, University of Michigan. Experience running for reelection, having served as a Trustee since 2011.

1. I am running for reelection, having served as a Trustee since 2011. My years as a Trustee have given me a thorough understanding of not only the role the Library plays in our community, but also the major issues involved in the successful administration of the organization. I believe my years of experience will be a benefit to the Board of Trustees, and provide continuity to the Library.
2. (A) Continue to ensure that we are making the best use of our limited funding, and remain good financial stewards of taxpayer money, and (B) Continue to explore and strengthen partnerships with other organizations in the Portage area in order to maximize limited resources, and improve services to citizens. I feel confident in the budgeting process and the transparency of the decision making when it comes to financial operations and overall direction of the Library. As a Trustee I believe one of the most important roles I play is to ask questions, provide oversight of finances, and advise administrators on strategic directions.
3. I am very satisfied with how well the library serves the community. I am constantly impressed by the dedication of the staff, and how committed they are to providing the best possible service to patrons and the community. However, we know our community is continually changing, and therefore the Library needs to evolve and adapt to best serve the needs of our patrons. If reelected, I look forward to playing a role in that process.

Tom Vance

Nonpartisan. Retired. BS and MA in History, Western Michigan University; Defense Information School two-month resident course; and Army Staff College three-year correspondence course. Commissioned from WMU Army ROTC, ten years active duty (New York City; Germany; Fort Knox, KY) followed by 12 years in the Army Reserve teaching ROTC with two-week summer assignments in Washington, D.C. (retiring as lieutenant colonel). Worked in public relations at The Upjohn Company (later Pharmacia & Upjohn), Biggs-Gilmore Communications, Portage Schools, and Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

1. I'm running for a second term because of my love for our library and my desire for its continuous improvement. I believe my public relations career, in both the public and private sectors—and my experience during these four years—have prepared me for this second term. In addition to chairing this board, I was board chair of Portage Parks Board, Portage Community Center, the former Portage AM Rotary and the Portage Division of the former Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce. Board member service includes WMU Alumni Association, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Housing Resources, and Friends of the Portage Senior Center.
2. My first priority is to always work with fellow trustees. Secondly, to continue our 2023-2026 strategic plan featuring three key goals: (A) Strengthening the community by providing outlets for expressing creativity, increasing community partnerships and offering feedback opportunities. (B) Providing extraordinary experiences by increasing outreach to underserved populations, provide staff training to best work with all patrons, and foster interactions that help make the library a welcoming space. (C) Investing in the future by focusing on maintaining an excellent staff and providing technology access and learning opportunities for patrons.
3. While we don't want to rest on our laurels, I believe the library is providing outstanding service to the community—but we are always working to improve. The quarterly updates to our strategic plan are filled with examples of our progress, including improvements suggested by patrons. At each of our monthly board meetings, I'm always impressed by the amount of community outreach our director and her staff achieve throughout the community (youth and adults, along with a variety of local organizations). As outlined in our plan, we continue to make our collections, programs, displays, messaging and facilities welcoming and inclusive.

Linda Whitlock

Nonpartisan. Retired Educator, MSU Extension. MA from University of Michigan. Currently serving as Portage District Library Trustee. Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081460441510.

1. I am running to provide support for Portage District Library, an invaluable resource that enhances our community.
2. I will keep well-informed about the operations, services and challenges of the Portage District Library and will do my best to be an ambassador in the community.
3. Yes, I believe the Portage District Library provides impressive services well-suited to the community's needs. Staff is continually striving to improve their services.

Check VOTE411.org for responses submitted after this Guide was published.

How to Judge a Candidate

Source: League of Women Voters Education Fund

Elections present voters with important choices. Whether it is a local race that will affect your community or a national race that could change the direction of the country it is a time to consider the issues which you care about and decide which candidate you support.

How do voters go about comparing and then judging candidates?

The seven steps outlined below are designed to help you judge a candidate.

Step 1: Decide what you are looking for in a candidate.

Candidates can be judged in two ways: the positions they take on issues and the leadership qualities and experience they would bring to office. Both are important. Your first step in picking a candidate is to decide the issues you care about and the qualities you want in a leader.

When you consider issues, think about community or national problems that you want people in government to address. For example, you may be interested in the threat of nuclear war, government funding for student loans or teenage unemployment. Those are issues.

When you consider leadership qualities, think about the characteristics you want in an effective leader. Do you look for intelligence, honesty, and ability to communicate?

Step 2: Find out about the candidates.

First, find out which candidates are running in the race you are following by using the League's online election resource VOTE411.org (www.VOTE411.org). You can find the number for your local elections office and data on the candidates. A Voters Guide, published by your local League of Women Voters, is another source of information. Use the Secretary of State website – www.michigan.gov/vote – to find out all the eligible candidates that will appear on your ballot. Be sure to notice minor party and/or independent candidates.

Step 3: Gather materials about the candidates.

Put together a “library” of information about the candidates. Call campaign headquarters and watch the press. Sources of information from which you may choose include:

- www.Vote411.org or League Voter Guide
- Campaign literature, including campaign websites
- Nonpartisan online voter information websites
- Direct mail letters
- Press reports (newspapers, television, and radio)
- Radio and television ads
- Candidates' speeches
- Candidate debates (information on League hosted debates is available on VOTE411.org)

In a local race, interviews with the candidates can be helpful. For incumbents, a look at their voting records on issues that you have listed as important can tell you the candidates' positions on those issues.

Step 4: Evaluate candidates' stands on issues.

As you read the materials you collect, keep a record. Do the materials give you an overall impression of the candidates? What specific conclusions can you draw about the candidates' stand on issues?

Step 5: Learn about the candidates' leadership abilities.

Deciding if a candidate will be a good leader is difficult. How can you know if someone will be honest, open or able to act under pressure if elected to office? Here are some ways to read between the lines as you evaluate the candidates' leadership qualities.

- Look at the candidates' background and their experience. How well prepared are they for the job?
- Observe the candidates' campaigns. Do they accept speaking engagements before different groups - even those groups that might not be sympathetic? Do they accept invitations to debate? Do the campaigns emphasize media events where the candidates can be seen but not heard?
- Review the campaign materials. As you read the materials and watch the campaign develop, add to your journal information that provides insights into candidates' personalities and leadership qualities. For example, do campaign materials emphasize issues or just images? Are they accurate?

Step 6: Learn how other people view the candidate.

Now that you have accumulated information from campaigns and other sources, you will want to learn what other people think about the candidates. Their opinions can help to clarify your own views, but do not discount your own informed judgments. You may be the most careful observer of all!

- Seek the opinions of others in your community who keep track of political campaigns. Interview three people (not family members) such as shopkeeper, neighbor, or politically active volunteer, to find out which candidate they support and why. Learn what has shaped their political opinions. Was it an event? An idea or program proposed by a candidate? A particular issue about which they feel strongly? A long-standing party loyalty?
- Learn about endorsements. This is a way for interest groups and organizations to give a “stamp of approval” to a candidate. Endorsements provide clues to the issues a candidate supports. Get a list of endorsements from each candidates' headquarters. Find out what these groups stand for and find out why they are endorsing this candidate.
- Look into campaign contributions. Where do the candidates get the funds to finance their campaigns? Do they use their own money or raise funds from a few wealthy donors, from many small contributors, or from Political Action Committees? Many types of information about campaign contributions must be reported to the government and are watched by the press. Check the newspaper for stories on campaign finance. How might these campaign contributions affect the candidates' conduct in office? You might also want to analyze an incumbent's voting record on issues important to PACs and other campaign contributors.
- Throughout the campaign, opinion polls will be taken by a variety of groups to evaluate public support for the different candidates. Polls reveal who is leading at a certain point in the race. As you read the polls, ask these questions: Who sponsored the poll? Were all the figures released? What kinds of questions were asked? Were they slanted or unbiased? How were respondents selected - randomly or such a way to include all segments of the population? How many people were included in the poll sample?

Step 7: Sorting it all out.

Review the information in your notes and compare all the candidates. Ask yourself these final questions:

- Which candidate's view on the issues do you agree with the most?
- Who ran the fairest campaign?
- Which candidate demonstrated the most knowledge on the issues?
- Which candidate has the leadership qualities you are looking for?

Is the choice clear? If so, pick a candidate.

Seeing through distortion techniques.

All candidates are trying to sell themselves to voters. Sometimes their language is so skillfully crafted that they distort the truth in a way that is difficult for even the most careful observer to detect. Here are some examples of distortion techniques that you should watch for as you review candidates' campaign materials.

Common Distortion Techniques

Name calling/Appeals to prejudice:

- These are attacks on an opponent based on characteristics that will not affect performance in office. References to race, ethnicity or marital status can be subtly used to instill prejudice.

Rumor mongering:

- These include statements such as, “Everyone says my opponent is a crook, but I have no personal knowledge of any wrongdoing,” which imply (but do not state) that the opponent is guilty.

Guilt by association:

- These are statements such as, “We all know Candidate B is backed by big money interest,” that attack candidates because of their support rather than because of their stands on the issues.

Catchwords:

- These are phrases such as “Law and Order” or “un-American” that are designed to trigger a knee-jerk emotional reaction rather than to inform.

Passing the blame:

- These are instances in which a candidate denies responsibility for an action or blames an opponent for things over which he or she had no control.

Promising the sky:

- These are unrealistic promises that no one elected official could fulfill.

Evading real issues:

- These include instances in which candidates may avoid answering direct questions, offer only vague solutions, or talk about the benefits of proposed programs but never get specific about possible problems or costs.

Prepare a Candidate Report Card

- List your priority issues.
- List your positions and rank the candidates on how they stand on the issues and your positions.
- List the leadership qualities you want and rank the candidates on those qualities.

Now that you have thought through your choices, DO SOMETHING!

- Back the candidates you believe in.
- Talk to your friends and family about “your” candidate.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions at candidate meetings, debates, or rallies or when a campaign worker rings your doorbell.
- Call television and radio stations to praise or criticize campaign spots.
- Be a letter writer. Tell candidates, newspapers and party leaders how you feel about the issues.
- Volunteer to work on a campaign or make a donation.
- **If you're 18, register to vote. Then, go to the poll on Election Day or mail your ballot — Vote!**

KALAMAZOO COUNTY PRECINCT LOCATIONS

Polls Open Tuesday, November 5, 2024 – 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Alamo Township

#1 Township Hall7901 North 6th St.
#2 Alamo Community Church 7925 North 6th St.

Brady Township

#1 Township Hall 13123 South 24th St.
#2 Chapman Memorial Church 7520 East U Ave.

Charleston Township

#1 Township Hall 1499 South 38th St.

Climax Township

#1 Township Hall 110 North Main St.

Comstock Charter Township

#1 Galesburg Baptist Church.....10100 Shadowlane Dr.
#2 Comstock Township Hall5858 King Highway
#3 Comstock Christian Reformed Church 5300 Comstock Ave.
#4 Northeastern Baptist Church.....6536 East G Ave.
#5 Church of God Family Worship Center.....5841 East H. Ave.
#6 Kalamazoo Community Church 2435 North 26th St.
#7 Northeastern Baptist Church6536 East G Ave.

Cooper Charter Township

#1 Township Hall 1590 West D Ave.
#2 Fire Station #2 3160 McKinley St.
#3 Bethel Baptist Church 5701 Mt. Olivet Rd.
#4 North Bridge Church 8824 Douglas Ave.

Kalamazoo Charter Township

#1 Lakewood Fire Station 3100 Lake St.
#2 Northwood Fire Station2617 N. Burdick St.
#3 Community Presbyterian Church 811 Gorham La.
#4 Westwood United Methodist Church 538 Nichols Rd.
#5 Westwood Fire Station 1310 Nichols Rd.
#6 Agape Christian Church 609 Cherokee St.
#7 New Day Community Church 3600 Nichols Rd.
#8 Eastwood Library1112 Gayle Ave
#9 Eastwood Fire Station 2703 East Main St.
#10 Sunnyside United Methodist Church..... 2800 Gull Rd.

Oshtemo Charter Township

#1 Grange Hall 3234 N. 3rd St.
#2 Fire Station #2 3500 South 6th St.
#3 Oshtemo Branch Library 7265 W. Main St.
#4 Voyage Church – Fellowship Hall6339 Atlantic Ave.
#5 Skyridge Church 394 S Drake Rd.
#6 Centerpoint Church 2345 N. 10th St.
#7 Voyage Church - Gymnasium6339 Atlantic Ave.
#8 Oshtemo Community Center6407 Parkview Ave.
#9 Township Hall 7275 W. Main St.
#10 Oshtemo United Methodist Church 6574 Stadium Drive

Pavilion Township

#1 Lakeland Reformed Church10442 South Sprinkle Rd.
#2 Christian Evangelical Church9286 South 36th S.
#3 Township Hall 7510 East Q Ave.

Prairie Ronde Township

#1 Township Hall 8140 West W Ave.

Richland Township

#1, #2 & #3 Gracespring Bible Church..... 8643 Gull Rd.

Ross Township

#1 Augusta Village Hall 109 W. Clinton St.
#2 Yorkville Community Church 11523 East D Ave.

Schoolcraft Township

#1 Vicksburg United Methodist Church 217 South Main St.
#2 & 4 Township Hall 50 East VW Ave.
#3 Vicksburg United Methodist Church 217 South Main St.

Texas Charter Township

#1 Calvary Reformed Church..... 7829 South 5th St.
#2 Township Hall 7110 West Q Ave.
#3 KVCC Groves Campus7107 Elm Valley Dr.
#4 & 5 Southridge Reformed Church6726 Texas Drive
#6 Calvary Reformed Church 7829 South 5th St.

Wakeshma Township

#1 Township Hall 13988 South 42nd St.

Galesburg City

#1 City Hall 200 E. Michigan Ave.

Kalamazoo City

#1 & 3 Faith Temple Church of God 402 S. Westnedge Ave.
#2 & 4 Fetzer Center 2251 Business Ct.
#5 Wesley Foundation2350 Ring Rd N
#6 Kalamazoo RESA West Campus 4606 Croyden Ave.
#7 & 9 Douglass Community Association 1000 W. Paterson St.
#8 & 27 Mt. Zion Baptist Church120 Roberson St.
#10 Temple Baptist Church 3706 Mt. Olivet Rd.
#11 Eastside Community Center 1301 East Main St.
#12 Oakwood Bible Church 4100 Oakland Dr.
#13 & 14 St. Joseph’s Catholic School – Bennett Building 930 Lake St.
#15 Urban Alliance 1009 E. Stockbridge Ave.
#16 & 18 Converge Community Church3306 Lovers Lane
#17 Greenwood Reformed Church.....1815 Winton Ave.
#19 & 25 Southern Heights Christian Reformed Church 4141 E. Hillandale Dr.
#20 Centerpoint City Church 326 W. Cork St.
#21 & 24 Girl Scouts Building 601 W. Maple St.
#22 Third Christian Reformed Church 2400 Winchell Ave.
#23 Bethany Reformed Church 1833 S. Burdick St.
#26 Parkview Hills Clubhouse 3707 Greenleaf Circle

Parchment City

#1 Parchment City Hall 650 S. Riverview Dr.

Portage City

#1 Westminster Presbyterian Church 1515 Helen Ave.
#2 Goldentree Apartments Community Room 4795 E. Milham Rd.
#3 Portage Parks & Recreation Center 320 Library Lane
#4 & 6 Lord of Life Lutheran Church..... 9420 Portage Road
#5 & 12 Zhang Portage Community Senior Center..... 203 E. Centre Ave.
#7 K-RESA Service Center1819 E. Milham Rd.
#8 & 14 Chapel Hill United Methodist Church 7028 Oakland Drive
#9 & 15 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church 1747 W. Milham Ave.
#10 & 13 Prairie Edge Christian Reformed Church9316 Oakland Dr.
#11 & 19 Kalamazoo First Assembly of God 5550 Oakland Drive
#16 & 18 The Bridge Church 7200 Angling Road
#17 Pathfinder Church8740 S. Westnedge Ave

Source: Kalamazoo County Clerk / Register Office

Early Voting Locations—Oct. 26 -Nov. 3, 2024 • 9am to 5pm

Pavilion Township Voters

Township Hall 7510 East Q Ave.

All Other Kalamazoo County Voters

Kalamazoo County Expo Center 2900 Lake St, Kalamazoo
Portage Parks & Recreation Department 320 Library Ln, Portage
Fetzer Center at WMU2251 Business Ct, Kalamazoo
Douglass Community Association 1000 W Paterson St. Kalamazoo