



Candidate Questionnaire Responses

The West Coast Chamber serves as an advocate for business at the local, state, and federal level for our 1,200+ member organizations and nearly 80,000 member employees. Our commitment is to educate our members on important policy issues, provide access to our elected officials, and serve as an advocate for a business-friendly environment.

In an effort to educate our community and prepare residents to cast their ballot in the upcoming election, we created and shared a brief questionnaire with all candidates running for office to better understand their stance on business related issues. All candidates were contacted and given two weeks to respond to the questionnaire. Responses from those who completed the questionnaire are reflected below.





85TH DISTRICT HOUSE CANDIDATES

Bradley Slagh

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

20 years in the banking industry and about 23 years serving the people of Ottawa County in various elected positions.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

Finding employees - support employee training programs,
Ensuring adequate and reasonably priced energy
Dealing with governmental bureaucracy

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

Working to reduce government to reduce costs to the taxpayers.

Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

slaghformichigan.com





Marcia Mansaray

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

It is my time at the Ottawa County Department of Public Health that prepared and motivated me to run for office in 2024 as a Michigan State Representative. Interestingly, my nearly two decades of public health leadership are bookended by two major campaigns. Both taught me how effective policy can produce much good in a community. From 2006-2008 I led a county-wide campaign for smoke-free indoor air in workplaces and public spaces. Equipped with a grassroots group of advocates, important local data about smoking, secondhand smoke, and their impact on business, and many conversations with residents and business willing to tell their stories, Ottawa County successfully passed the first Smoke-free Indoor Air Regulation in the western half of Michigan. This was no small feat with an all-Republican Board of Commissioners, but they listened and understood that a healthy population and a healthy economy depend on each other. Ottawa County's example made it possible for the businesses, citizens, and legislators of Michigan to later consider the benefits of a statewide law. Now, eighteen years later, the same values and skills are needed to restore and preserve Ottawa County government and remove the chilling effect observed across many local sectors. This second legislative bookend can strengthen government transparency and public health laws, but it will require a courageous voice who will speak and act for others, without regard to personal costs. I have demonstrated my integrity, experience, and heart for people and have earned the public's trust. This equals effective representation.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

Three top issues facing West Michigan businesses, and specifically Ottawa County ones, are talent acquisition and retention, housing costs and supply, and more recently, the instability of local county government. My purpose in running for State Representative is specifically to address the turmoil, expense, and harm caused by a ruling majority of Ottawa County commissioners since 2023. There are legislative solutions that are not being discussed or considered by any of the current State Representatives representing Ottawa County. I have had an inside front row seat and understand where we are statutorily vulnerable. Well-crafted policies should also benefit other communities outside Ottawa County. Work that had been established and gaining ground around affordable housing and talent acquisition and retention has been interrupted by these same county commissioners. While many stakeholders are still invested, these are big issues that need multi-sector collaboration and funding. Having the involvement of all levels of government is an asset. As State Representative, I would be uniquely positioned to work locally in the state, and at the federal level to bring resources and expertise to West Michigan to assist our communities in solving these issues.

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?





The prospect of what happened to Ottawa County following the 2022 elections is the opposite of what is needed to continue or create positive growth. If it is permitted to continue, it will spread to other areas in Michigan and contribute to fiscal folly and authoritarian decision-making. Our tradition of transparent, competent government is at risk. I'm watching it happen — and I have demonstrated that I will raise my voice and do the work necessary to protect the health and welfare of my community. If we are able to restore and continue transparent trust among our residents and institutions, we will be able to continue the positive growth, collaboration, and innovation we are known for. Success is best achieved when government is a trusted and ethical partner, not an authoritarian, power-seeking body. I will strengthen important laws and seek opportunities to bring innovation and funding to our local units.

Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

marciaformichigan.com





86TH DISTRICT HOUSE CANDIDATES

Nancy DeBoer

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

I have served the community as a teacher, wife, mom, nonprofit executive director, committee/board member, council member, mayor, and now state representative. As an incumbent legislator, I feel I can hit the ground running after working hard and getting connected the last two years.

I love helping people, creating positive vision, accomplishing great things as a team, and inspiring students to be all they can be because the world needs them.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

Businesses have told me that they are having trouble with increasing state regulations and fees, followed by a lack of accessibility to state employees, willing to work through the issues.

They are still finding it tough to locate enough qualified employees. Competition for good people is high in West Michigan.

The cost of doing business and the cost of providing services to others is threatening the economic health of West Michigan.

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

I would expect to remain a member of the Appropriations Committee and will continue to advocate for state money to support local projects/initiatives. I will continue to work with businesses to understand their challenges and propose legislation that will help them, as well as connect with state agencies to bridge the gap.

Sometimes, more legislation is counterproductive. Perhaps some standards have become onerous. I would support reviewing 20% of business-related regulation per year, till all of it has been reassessed.

Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

nancydeboer.com





Abby Klomprens

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

Served as a Member of the Macatawa Transportation Authority Board
Served as Member of Holland Area League of Women Voters
Serving on the Holland Human Relations Commission
Served as a Legislative Aide in the Michigan House of Representatives
Served as the West Michigan Regional Coordinator for Sen. Gary Peters
Completed the Michigan Political Leadership Program through Michigan State University
Completed Holland Citizen's Police Academy

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

Competitive Market: West Michigan businesses need to feel empowered in a highly competitive market as consumer demand ebbs and flows. As a legislator, I will advocate for West Michigan businesses to have access to capital and resources that will allow them to stabilize and grow in a highly competitive, ever-changing economy.

Pandemic Recovery: From supply chain disruptions to loss of revenue, West Michigan businesses are still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The "Make It In Michigan" strategy, introduced by the Governor's office last year, works to lift up Michigan businesses and workers by addressing pandemic setbacks and increasing Michigan's competitiveness on the national and global stage.

Employee Recruitment and Retention: We must improve the quality and access of Medicaid and MICHild to support Michigan workers and their families, as well as ease the burden of these benefits' costs for small businesses.

Next, we must generate access to safe, affordable housing in West Michigan to encourage employees to live and work in our communities.

Third, we must create pathways for businesses and schools to invest in skilled labor and workforce education to generate opportunities for students and young people, helping them obtain good-paying jobs in manufacturing, energy, aviation, and technical vocations.

And lastly, we must support and fund early education and childcare access for Michigan families who require two incomes to keep up with the cost of living.

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

Abby knows that Greater Holland is a community that is vibrant, forward-thinking, and experiencing rapid growth. She wants to be sure our residents can count on neighborhoods that are safe with well-funded municipal services and public schools. Safeguarding the Great Lakes for generations to come is key to the prosperity and future for our families. Bringing a fresh voice to the conversation in Lansing is how Abby will advocate for future-forward inclusive policies and programs that make a difference in our lives.





Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

voteklomprens.com





88TH DISTRICT HOUSE CANDIDATES

Greg VanWoerkom

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

I have served as State Representative for three terms. During that time, I was the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor and Economic Opportunity and am currently the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Tax Policy. Last year, I was named the Small Business Association Legislator of the Year, for my work on childcare and economic development.

I have also served on various local boards including School Board President of Western Michigan Christian and on United Way of the Lakeshore. I am a small business owner and am raising three children here on the lakeshore.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

I believe that the top 3 issues facing Muskegon businesses are the continually rising costs, the need for increased access to affordable childcare, and the poor economic environment for Michigan businesses.

It is clear that businesses and families are struggling with inflation. I voted for individuals, families, and retirees to keep more of their hard-earned money in their own pockets as government policies and excessive spending have contributed to rising costs.

In the childcare sector, I worked to create the Tri-Share program to expand access to childcare for working families. There are still steps we can take to improve upon this program and further policies we can enact to expand access to childcare for all Michigan families.

Michigan's population has continued to stagnate. This is in part due to our state's struggles in bringing high-paying jobs and the need for the creation of a better economic climate. As described below, I have worked on multiple plans to help address this.

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

I think that one of the areas I have made the most difference in as an elected official is the appropriations process. During my time as the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government, I worked to get funding for many projects such as the Muskegon Airport roof, Mona Lake watershed remediation and study, Muskegon Boys and Girls Club, etc.

However, there are still many other projects I have worked on outside of the appropriations process and I think this position has allowed me to work in many different sectors. This past term I worked closely on crime victims' rights legislation, economic development legislation, and expanding access to childcare.





Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

votevanwoerkom.com





Tim Meyer

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

Founded, operated, and owned Rock 'n' Road Cycle bicycle stores since 1985. We answer the phone, are responsive to customer needs, and have always performed fast repairs. We listen, respond, and flourished through COVID with masks.

I'm fiscally conservative and responsible. On social issues I'm in tune with the district which includes the Tri-Cities and Norton Shores.

As a Democrat I know Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist and am endorsed by State Reps Will Snyder and Phill Skaggs. Joey Andrews knows me. I can work with the party in charge to address concerns and issues of our district.

Our voters know me from serving in business and our community, First Presbyterian Church (GH) and Grand Haven schools.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

1. Removing the scourge of Ottawa Impact; my opponent espouses the same negativity and exclusion in Lansing and is endorsed by Michigan Impact. I'm attending our Chamber's DEI seminar next week. Our church is a welcoming place, as is our family business.

2. Employee housing. We give lip service to affordable housing, and in some cases, we work toward positive solutions. Many solutions aren't popular, lot size, setbacks, zoning. I studied housing and urban studies in college, in addition to majoring in economics and political science. I'll go to Lansing to work on positive outcomes for more affordable housing, not just vote as instructed.

3. Quality public education including two years post-secondary and trade education. Democrats fund education and have that record from the past two years. Let's continue and expand.

(#4 is roads!)

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

Most people in the district have no idea who their state representative even is. People know who I am from my 40 years of business experience and community involvement, including Chamber membership, two terms on Grand Haven's DDA and substitute teaching.

I represent everyone in the district, and as our public servant at the state level, can work to create consensus in policies that work for all.

We need great schools, good roads, fair taxation, and good legislators in touch with their voters to get it done.

Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

timmeyer.vote





89TH DISTRICT HOUSE CANDIDATES

Luke Meerman

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

To effectuate change in the state legislature, it is necessary to work with people from a variety of backgrounds and differing opinions. Every legislator in the state house is working to represent their community and I will be an advocate in Lansing for the constituents of the 89th House District. Elected officials are entrusted by the voters to uphold the values and principles shared by the community and I will always stand by the ideals of those in the 89th District.

As a state representative, I have worked in a bipartisan fashion to support initiatives that will better our state as a whole. I have worked extensively on school safety legislation that has had bipartisan support and I will continue to work on proposals that will support student mental health and school safety.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

The three issues that I see and will work to address are 1) the income tax increase that is a result of increased government spending in the current tax year. In the 2023 tax year, the income tax was decreased due to a 2015 law that automatically lowers the income tax if state revenue growth outpaces the rate of inflation. Due to increased government spending, the income tax will increase for taxes filed in 2025 and I will work to lower government spending so that the state can again reduce its income tax for individuals and small businesses.

2) The rate of inflation is affecting all businesses and consumers, and price increases have made the cost of doing business more expensive. While inflation is not an issue any one lawmaker can address, the legislature can pursue policies that encourage business growth and entrepreneurship. A stronger economic environment will combat inflation and provide job opportunities for Michiganders, and I will work on policy that supports Michigan businesses.

3) Businesses in West Michigan rely on talented workers with honed skill sets and expertise in their line of work. I support efforts that create educational opportunities in schools for students to begin focusing on their interests so they can become competitive candidates in the job market. The Michigan Merit Curriculum would benefit from increased flexibility for high school students to focus on their interests at a younger age so they can begin developing the skills that will benefit them in their future careers.





If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

A state representative is an advocate for the communities they are elected to represent. This advocacy includes being a voice for the businesses in the community and the workers they employ. A state representative should work to bolster the economic opportunities in the district and advocate for policies that will allow them to expand and provide more jobs and career opportunities. I will pursue legislation that promotes job growth and encourages entrepreneurship so more jobs are created in West Michigan. A vibrant and robust economy will allow the communities in West Michigan to thrive and attract further investment from companies that are looking to expand.





Lois Maassen

What qualifications and experience do you have that will give voters confidence in your ability to represent the district effectively?

My career includes nearly three decades as a leader in furniture manufacturing, followed by 15 years of consulting with businesses from global manufacturers to very small nonprofits. I started my corporate career as a proofreader and concluded it as a vice president in marketing and communications, which demonstrates my interest in continuing to learn and explore. My independent work has included the facilitation of strategic planning, the development and implementation of business and marketing plans, and communications to a variety of audiences through multiple media. I have a breadth of experience in approaching new issues and complicated problems, which has taught me to know what I don't know, how to locate credible experts, and how to gather perspectives from stakeholders. As an editor, I'm accustomed to considering various viewpoints (the writer and the reader), researching, and maintaining objectivity. I've been deeply involved in the West Michigan community through business, volunteer, and family engagement, and understand the culture and the diversity of interests to be balanced.

In your opinion what are the top three issues facing businesses in West Michigan, and how will you help to address these issues?

Attracting and retaining qualified employees: People are the brains and heart of any organization, so making sure that West Michigan is an attractive and welcoming place to live, work, play, and raise families is critically important. There are many aspects to a thriving community, from the very practical (affordable housing and transportation, e.g.) to the less measurable (feeling of acceptance, civility in day-to-day life, e.g.).

Assuring continuing workforce development: West Michigan has a well-earned reputation for the quality of its workforce. To maintain that quality, we must attend to education throughout life, including gaining the effects of early childhood education, primary and secondary education that is focused on development of the whole person, and opportunities for post-secondary education that support the goals and dreams of each person.

Ensuring environmental quality for future generations: While we're surrounded by natural beauty and express (through the number of parks, if nothing else!) the value it holds for us, we do have a responsibility to be clear-eyed about some responsibilities to future generations. We have groundwater issues to address here in Ottawa County, which will require education and collaboration. We need to be fact-based in addressing climate change, both for effects we currently see and for the legacy we're leaving to our children and grandchildren.

These are complicated issues with interdependent parts. My approach would be to, with constituents, identify the pain and leverage points, and then, with other legislators, find common ground and paths forward.

If elected, how do you see your position being most impactful in creating positive growth in our community/state?

I think the most impact I can have is through my commitment to democracy as it is intended to function. We need to recognize, respect, and engage with everyone with whom





we share this community. We need to see the biggest, most complete picture we're capable of, believing that common ground can be found, and compromises are valuable and necessary to finding a way forward. We can use the democratic process to make effective change, articulating a shared vision of a preferred future and then working together to create it. We need to learn as we go and take advantage of openings and strengths that we may not yet understand. We're called to take advantage of our diversity and multiple strengths. We will have a future--together. If we design it intentionally, that future can be one that we're proud to leave to our children and grandchildren.

Please provide a link to your website so voters can learn more about you.

maassenfor89th.com

