



Michigan Democratic Party Chair Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate for Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party,

The Michigan Democratic Party is Michigan's core organization devoted to electing democrats in Michigan and to represent Michigan in congress and the White House. In the era of Trump and divided politics it is more important than ever that the leader of the MDP be someone with integrity, creative ideas, and a modern approach. With so many key issues of importance such as health care, immigration reform, climate change, police brutality, prison reform, the student loan crisis, wealth inequality and many more, we need a progressive leader that can help us win back our democracy. We can only do this if OUR democratic party operates as a collective democratic organization with absolute transparency.

The MDP Progressive Caucus, the MDP Cannabis Caucus, and the Young Democrats of Michigan have developed a joint screening and endorsement process for the MDP Chair's election on February 2nd. The following questions are split into categories which represent the values of the three MDP caucuses. If selected as our endorsed candidate, you will get 1) your name, picture, and website advertised on our website and in our social media, and 2) the potential to have our members support/volunteer for your campaign. This candidate questionnaire is due by January 5th. You can type your answers directly in this document, print it out, sign it, scan it, and then send the completed and signed questionnaire to pcyendorsements@gmail.com. You can also email us with any questions or concerns. We will be conducting in-person screenings the last week of December and the first two weeks of January.

Sincerely,

The PCY endorsement committee

Core Principles

We'd like to know where you stand on some of the most talked about progressive issues. The following issues will likely play a large role in the 2020 election and beyond. These questions only require "Yes" or "No" responses.

1. Do you support the "Fight for 15" movement to raise the minimum wage to \$15 dollars per hour?

Yes

2. Do you support expanding civil rights protections to include members of the LGBTQ community?

Yes

3. Do you support the Black Lives Matter movement?

Yes

4. Do you support the "Green New Deal," as proposed by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the Sunrise Movement?

I support the creation of a House Select Committee on the Green New Deal and legislation at the state and federal level that takes immediate actions to protect our environment while taking advantage of the workforce development and economic growth opportunities prevalent in the renewable and clean energy sectors.

5. Do you support moving the US and Michigan to a single-payer, "Medicare for All" style healthcare system?

Yes

6. Are you pro-choice?

Yes

7. Did you support Proposal 1, which legalized marijuana in Michigan?

Yes

8. Do you support expungement for those who were charged with non-violent drug offenses?

If they relate to marijuana, yes.

9. Do you support a ban on assault weapons?

Yes

10. Do you support the right of all workers, including campaign workers, to bargain collectively and to unionize?

Yes

Money in the Michigan Democratic Party

1. What are your plans for fundraising? Would you support the MDP taking money through its soft-money account directly from corporations (i.e, Blue Cross Blue Shield) and fossil fuel companies such as DTE Energy, Consumers Energy, and Enbridge?

I will continue to fundraise using the successful model we used in 2018 although I am always open to new and improved ways to raise money for the MDP.

I do believe we need campaign finance reform at the federal, state and local level to improve transparency and simplify compliance.

2. (Yes / No) As Chair, would you support disclosing donors to the MDP's soft money accounts, including the 21st Century Fund?

All MDP donors that require reporting are reported. I do believe we need campaign finance reform at the federal, state, and local level to improve transparency and simplify compliance. However, until the law is changed and all entities are required to equally disclose and on an equal playing field, I will continue to rigorously comply with current campaign finance law. That is why I am going to do everything I can to win campaigns and create Democratic majorities that will take on these issues with progressive campaign finance reforms.

Transparency, Diversity, and Inclusion

1. As Chair, what would you do to bridge the divide within the party?

It is critical we not label or lump those with different viewpoints into categories or camps, particularly before hearing the issue or policy matter in question. We must take each issue that arises and seek common ground before determining that we are divided as a whole. More often than not, compromise is attainable. However, I also reject the premise that there is a "divide" in the party. As with any healthy democratic organization, there are undoubtedly passionate disagreements over issues, tactics, strategies, and even

candidates. However, we are firmly united when it comes to goal of electing strong, progressive Democrats at every level of government. That is why I support:

- Improving communications to the membership and public.
- Creating a stronger infrastructure, where party members can easily access information from their elected officials, local clubs, districts, county parties, and caucuses.
- Ensuring there are meaningful action items, or calls to action, for members, wherever in the state they are located to encourage involvement.
- Improving the feedback loop -- too many times information and insights are not conveyed to the people that need the information to act on.
- Continuing to work toward a full-time MDP presence throughout the state.
- Encouraging everyone to lobby for the candidates or issues they are in support of from a positive standpoint. We should all be able to say why we like or think one candidate or idea is better, without going negative on other candidates. We need to learn how to agree to disagree but still respect one another.

2. As Chair, what would you do to increase the representation of communities that have been traditionally disenfranchised, especially young people and communities of color? What steps would you take to increase access for members with disabilities, such as allowing absentee voting at conventions?

We must continue to engage with all communities regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status or age. The most successful outreach, in my experience, is to put the issues that directly impact those communities out front. People will be more likely to engage when we are talking about what they care about. There is an educational aspect to that as well, there are times when we must go to a constituency to raise the issue they are unaware of, so they can understand how it is targeted at them or will impact their day-to-day life. We are working with the disability caucus on a pilot program to allow members unable to attend conventions the right to vote.

3. There is a perception that some decisions within the Democratic Party are made behind closed doors. As Chair, what systems will you create to increase the opportunity for feedback and the discussion of new ideas to improve and strengthen the Party?

Unfortunately, perceptions can be difficult to overcome, however, as COO I hear from members daily by email, phone or in person who have new ideas or thoughts on ways to improve the party. We must keep current with new technologies and take advantage of

them when we can, but the number one way to improve and strengthen the Party is by person to person contact.

Vision for the Party

1. Please describe your vision for the MDP. Please describe areas where you think the Party can improve, and how.

The elections of 2018 were a substantial first step toward building a robust party infrastructure that reaches all corners of the state. We must build on the geographic inroads that we have made, ensuring that we maintain contact with our base to have a strong foundation. I would like to see MDP with multiple local offices, regularly staffed and available for meetings. We need our technology to keep up with the best way to reach voters. We need to encourage participation at every level.

Most importantly, I am committed to having Michigan be Michigan. To have our coordinated efforts be run by Michiganders, hopefully in the communities they live in, and designed by Michiganders. To keep trained staff and to train more staff we must be able to fund that. To that end, I would not take steps that the MDP could not financially handle.

The Role of the Chair

1. Please describe your experience and qualifications to lead the Party.

I am currently the Chief Operating Officer at the MDP. I have extensive leadership and management experience in public relations, communications, politics and media at the national, state, and local levels. I was the Chief Operating Officer for the One Campaign in 2018 and the final decision-maker on that effort.

For the last ten years, I have worked in Michigan politics, including serving as the Political and Communications Director for the Michigan House Democratic Caucus and the Michigan State Director for Obama in 2012.

Previously I served in the Clinton White House in the Office of Media Affairs, as Press Secretary for the Clinton-Gore campaign and managed a number of races in Virginia.

2. As Chair, will you expand the SCC by adding officers-at-large, thus diluting the voting member of SCC district delegates? Please explain.

I will continue to follow the precedent of previous chairs by adding the Executive Committee as officers-at-large, as experience has shown this gives more people the opportunity to serve on State Central.

Party Infrastructure

1. The Democratic Party plays a critical role in providing “infrastructure” for Democratic Party candidates in Michigan via the VAN and other support services. As Chair, what projects/trainings would you undertake to strengthen the Party’s infrastructure?

One thing became very apparent during the One Campaign, many people that believed they knew how to use the VAN did not. We need a ground zero training on VAN for our in-house organizers who can then train our club, district, county, and caucus chairs, their political directors and then precinct delegates and the general membership if they are so inclined. Other technologies that exist are more intuitive and may not require significant re-training to use. However, when it comes to VAN, we have to assume no one knows how to use it and begin there.

2. There is currently a staffing crisis in Democratic politics. Every two years, candidates struggle to find enough talented staff (fundraisers, organizers, etc.) to work on their campaigns. Many races are lost as a result of this. As Chair, what will you do to address this persistent problem?

It is the job of the candidate to find experienced and effective staff, but the MDP can assist once the primary is over, or if there is not a primary in a particular race. There are many campaign schools or clinics that train organizers, and the One Campaign trained many organizers internally. While we will offer training, we cannot guarantee jobs or third-party employment for participants. I will continue to support national, state and local training efforts particularly those programs that train women and people of color to take on campaign roles.

3. Many people who are active with different MDP chartered organizations are not members of the Party, despite being members of their local organizations. As Chair, what will you do to bridge the “membership gap?”

I believe it is more important for people that are active to stay active at their comfort level. I will continue to encourage local activists to join the MDP and keep their membership current through better communication.

Democracy in the Party

1. As Chair, what will you do in order to ensure that the rules of the MDP are properly followed, especially as it relates to proportional voting?

I will continue to advise and counsel all party chairs to follow the rules of the MDP.

2. (Yes / No) As Chair, would you support a proposal to change the MDP rules to allow previous MDP members whose membership has expired to re-sign up the day of a convention and vote?

We will lose members with this policy, as there will be less incentive to keep a membership current. I do not believe it is an undue hardship or a burden for members wishing to attend a convention to recognize they need to keep their membership current, and they need to do so 30 days prior.

Candidate Information

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I, _____, candidate for MDP chair in the year 2019 do hereby declare that I have answered all questions truthfully, and if elected as the next chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, I will uphold these values during my tenure in office. I acknowledge the PCY committee will share my questionnaire answers to all members of the Progressive Caucus, Cannabis Caucus, and Young Dems through their email lists and websites.

Signature  Date 1/6/2019