

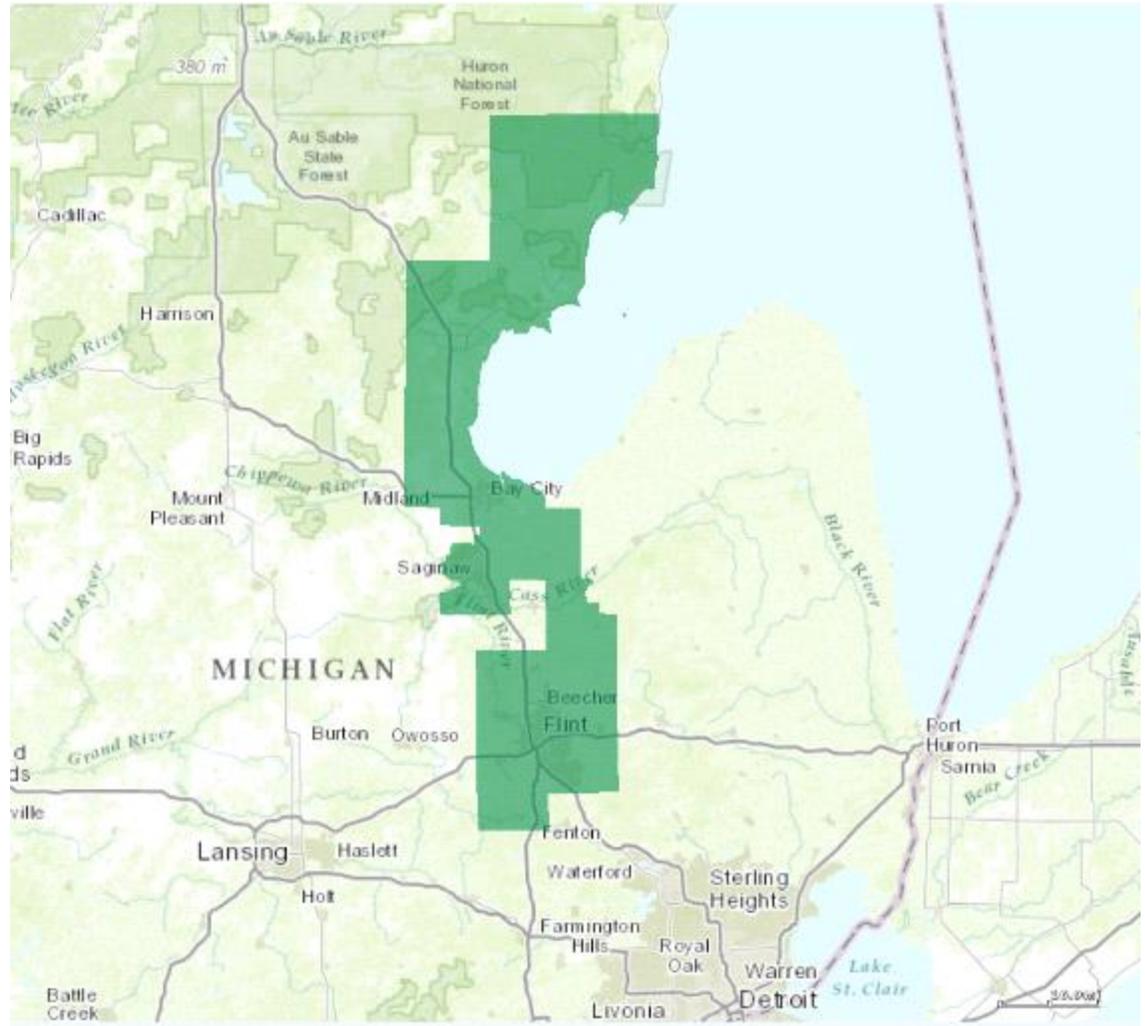
## 2020 Endorsement Questionnaire - U.S. House Representative

### Candidate Information

- Candidate's Name: Matthew Clauss



- You are a candidate for what office in what district?  
The Fifth Congressional District



- Website Link:

### Political Ideology

I grew up in the common situation among people my age of having divorced parents. My mother was a social worker in Flint for a granted human resource organization and my father a factory machinist from a family almost exclusively of factory machinists. I attended Arthur Hill High School in Saginaw which is where most of my most held values originated due to its diverse student body of all races, cultures and even some I knew there with family who were undocumented immigrants. My proximity to this melting pot in my formative years and the values of understanding people from all backgrounds instituted by my mother are what drives me to understand people, people different than me.

In the mid 2000s I spent some time homeless, now looking back the lessons I've

learned from that experience are both tangible and relevant to every progressive issue. Working myself out of that situation, I attended Delta Community College to make an attempt at pursuing more than just an existence but a life. I loved the environment and the constant feeling of growth but due to financial and work obligations I had to stop attending so I could pay my mounting bills.

I then went into the mental Health field as a Supported Employment Coach for people with degenerative and congenital cognitive disabilities. I took my clients to work and through moral and physical support attempted to teach them to do their jobs on their own with the goal of full independence. The organization I worked for hit an issue with funding and so I now work as a machinist, like the last four generations of my family. All these experiences have shown me the places in our society where progressive reform would not only help people but give them avenues in life they may not even know are possible.

- Why are you running for office?

I have paid attention during the violent summers in Saginaw, the water crisis in Flint and most currently the U.A.W. strike. I had always wondered how local and even congressional leadership could be so indifferent at best and so counter-productive at worst. I've felt powerless to not only help myself but everyone around me in all of the least humanized pieces of our society I've seen. I don't have anything to lose, even if I can help raise awareness of social programs and assist in other progressive candidates winning, I win. It all stems from something my grandma told me when I was young "If you are talking about a problem but not doing anything about it, well then you're just whining."

- Many progressives feel that the United States of America has a serious problem with wealth inequality and social/racial injustice. It is our ideology that a political revolution is needed in this country, one that changes our current law system from only benefiting the millionaires and billionaires and makes America an equal and just society for all. Other than the Progressive Caucus, organizations such as Justice Democrats and Democratic Socialists of America share this ideology. Do you?

Yes, of course. I genuinely want to know any politicians answer to how taking hundreds of thousands of dollars in corporate P.A.C. and millionaire campaign donations is compatible with the fact they should be serving their constituents? Genuine question.

- When necessary, are you willing to publicly oppose your own party to stand up for progressive issues?

Yes, people should take precedent over party. No exceptions.

- How would you define the difference between equity and equality?  
Equity is the ability for those who start at a lower place to have the opportunity to reach a common goal without hindrance. Equality is everyone having the same no matter what.

### Policy Questions on the Issues

- K-12 education equity
  - How will you support equitable public K-12 education?

Back policy with more of an emphasis on life skills and building context on how the world works as a whole as opposed to standardized testing.

- Will you pledge to support extra funding for poorer schools to bring the health and safety of the facilities up to basic standards?

Yes

- College Education and Student Debt
  - Do you support making college tuition free and canceling student loan debt?

Yes, I've seen the pitfalls and traps of loans and the confusing web of navigating the collegiate system. Also why wouldn't we want people in our country to have the ability to learn as much as possible?

- What will you do to make sure that everyone has access to a higher education and help those facing crushing student debts?

The most important answer to that is that I would fully stand behind Senator Bernard Sanders S. 806 and encourage others in the house to do the same. I would also appeal to other Progressive Democrats to reinstate blocks on "nickel and dime" fees financial institutions are allowed to put on loans.

- Climate Change and Environmental Policy
  - The consequences of climate change rise with every fraction of a degree of warming. According to the IPCC, net emissions must drop to zero by 2050 to avoid exceeding two degrees C of warming. When do you think the United States can achieve net-zero CO<sup>2</sup> emissions? How do you plan to bring us there?  
With humility I will say I am not well versed on the explicit science behind climate change other than the ground level basics. Conversely I know I personally will not bring us there alone, when we pass policy that moves America towards our goal of net-zero CO<sup>2</sup> emissions it will be the work of progressive policy, activism and financial incentive policy that will get us there.

- Do you support the Green New Deal?

Yes

- Is water a human right?

Yes, and one of the reasons I'm running at all is because I feel the incumbent congressman has only done half the job for his own "home town" of Flint. Yes writing comprehensive policy to fix a situation is fine but then you actually have to push for it, be loud, show the urgency and immediacy of the situation at and the future repercussions that are inevitably going to come from it. He is not and has not done that.

- Environmental crisis disproportionately harm communities of color. Do you support actions to remediate this imbalance?

Yes

- Who do you think should pay for externalized costs brought by environmental malpractice?

The multinational corporations who have caused the issues and the "Independent" organizations that give false benefit of doubt that it is their fault should also be held accountable for their false information.

- Everyone needs a fundamental understanding of environmental science to do well in the 21st Century. How would you ensure our schools are equipped to teach the next generation the skills they need to succeed?

Climate change should be an unquestioned transparent module in every earth science class from early middle school onward. The ideal situation allows and equips schools to show the causes and repercussions of the exponential worsening of conditions of the on-going climate crisis.

- Money in Politics - Campaign Finance

- What is your plan regarding campaign finance reform, especially regarding political donations from fossil fuel executives, Wall Street execs, and corporations?

I would like to see a few things happen to fix the horrible corruptions surrounding campaign finance in our current political system. I'd like to see citizens united vs. the F.E.C. overturned as soon as possible. I would also like to raise a growth of movement to invoke Article 5 of the constitution to make an amendment allowing only small dollar donations as legal contributions.

- What have you done to ensure political contributions are transparent and

representative of the interests of the residents in your district and not the interest of for-profit entities?

First everything I've spent on my campaign has been out of pocket so far. We at my campaign have started an ActBlue account as a firewall to make sure any contributions coming in are from actual people. I would like to think that any contributions given to my campaign to further its interest are because people truly believe it's the right thing to do.

- If elected, please describe campaign finance reform legislation you would support or create?

Article 5 of the constitution to insure an amendment that prevents the type of corruption that has been prevalent in our government. I would support only legislation that makes campaign donations given via actual individual citizens.

- Health Care

- Depending on private health insurance companies to provide financial coverage for medical bills is not working. We need a single-payer health care system which would reduce the administrative cost currently allocated to the multi-payer system we have now. Single-payer would reduce costs by 24%, saving \$829 billion in the first year by cutting administrative waste and allowing negotiation of prescription drugs ([Friedman, 2013](#)). While private health insurance executives and pharmaceutical companies are profiting off of sick people, average Americans are going bankrupt and relying on go-fund-me campaigns to cover the costs. Will you co-sponsor H.R. 1384 which will create a single-payer healthcare system for all Americans?

Yes, of course

- What have you done to reform health insurance and/or make healthcare more accessible?

I have worked with and supported the Medicare For All Bay County canvassing group to raise awareness about the urgency of enacting a single payer system.

- Given the continued rising death toll from overdoses, would you support legislation developed with the medical community and public health experts to form safe use clinics?

Yes

- Mass Incarceration

- Do you believe that our country over incarcerates and if so what have you done and what will you do in the future to help reduce the number of citizens and

undocumented immigrants held in detention facilities in our state and nation?

Yes, I would like to help co-author legislation that prevents government funds from subsidizing for-profit prisons and eliminate the need for the police to be a revenue raising system for municipal governments.

I would take the greatest form of pride and confidence in being one of the legislators who wrote the policy that shut down the disgusting un-American concentration camps at our countries border.

- If elected would you commit to introducing a bill similar to California Assembly Bill 32 at the federal level which bans the government from renewing or entering into contracts with for profit prison companies or immigration detention centers?

Yes

- Living Wage

- What is your idea of a living wage, and how do you plan to enact it?

I am a firm supporter of the Fight for \$15 movement but after or in addition to that it would be more worth it to find what the inductive productivity of the American worker versus what the average pay is for anyone considered working class and move the actual living wage to that.

- Institutional Racism

- How will you address white supremacy?

Harshly and with extreme prejudice. Pun intended. I don't put up with racism and fascism in any form.

- Communities of color have historically been disproportionately targeted in countless instances. One of those significant ways being redlining, only to be exploited decades later by gentrification. How will you address institutional racism, such as gentrification, if elected?

- What is your opinion on

- Reparations?

Some form of reparations must be considered and legislated over but I will admit I am currently underinformed on what policies are being considered. I will also say I don't know how to approach it myself as I haven't yet had an opportunity to speak with any of the trusted people in the African American community I know.

- Police Brutality?

As a congress person I would support and co-sponsor policy that would enforce transparency in the law enforcement community. As a person with a public platform I would fight tooth and nail so that the atrocities committed by police forces are shown as just that, in addition I would also like to write policy that improves and

increases what is considered acceptable police training. Certain types of police trainings would also be refuted and denied.

- Police Demilitarization?

What comes to mind while discussing police demilitarization is the use of the police for revenue building instead of the peace keeping institution it should be. A severe reform in the way law officers budgets work including regular pay and "ticket quotas" is the first step in reforming the culture of the police system.

- Strengthening Unions

- What plans do you have for strengthening unions and what have you done to support unions?

I have proved I stand with union workers already, during the recent U.A.W. strike I stood on the picket lines outside the G.M. plants in flint and Bay City. I feel it's extremely important for representatives to do jus that because people are their constituent's not big corporations. I would stand for repealing "Right To Work" and encourage any form of working community to unionize.

- Will you oppose HR 2561, the national "right to work" act?

Yes

- Do you support workers co-ops?

Yes I do as long as it is value and community driven and not driven by profit or alternative political agenda.

- How will you legislate based on your support or opposition of (b) or (c)?

Any working American based legislation will always come first, thinking of the people who work forty plus hours a week for less than \$30,000 a year will always be primary to how I approach any policy.

- LGBTQ rights

- Did you/will you support the Equality act HR5?

Yes

- Do you believe that religious freedom ever supersedes the rights of an LGBTQ person?

No, religious rights and human rights are equal and have no precedence over one another, a person's existence as a member of the LGBTQ+ community is in no way an affront to a religious person.

- What anti-LGBTQ+ legislation have you supported in the past if any?

I do not have governmental experience but I will always support LGBTQ+ people being able to live their truths in the military, the government at any level and having a complete right to work in any field without the fear of losing their job because of who they are.

- Voting Rights

- Do you support ranked choice voting?

No, Rank choice voting allows for subterfuge and confusion in primaries especially, both maladies that are generally taken advantage of by Republicans to subvert the democratic system.

- How would you prevent voter purging?

“Opt out” mailing lists should be made a campaign penalty and rooting out and removing conflicts of interest such as governors appointing election committees and judges and being the heads of election boards.

- Would you support automatic voter registration?

Yes

- Would you support giving prisoners the right to vote?

Yes

- Cannabis Policy

- Would you support the plan to federally legalize recreational marijuana?

Yes, Marijuana has been used as a tactic to institutionally oppress minority and low income communities since its inception into the political lexicon. It does not have the incident rate of alcohol and has shown to produce tax revenue.

- Affordable Housing

- How do you plan to combat historical and future racism/inequity through housing policy?

Make sure complaints are taken seriously and followed up on by the organizations overseeing them, the more complaints are investigated the more people are likely to report when there is an issue and the less likely for a violation to occur if the penalties are severe. More egregious violations against less

powerful communities such as the homeless and those with congenial disability should have more severe consequences.

- Do you support the affordable housing credit improvement act (H.R. 3077)?

Yes

- What in your voting record shows your commitment to affordable housing?  
I currently have no transcribed voting record but I live in a rent controlled apartment and understand the hardships of meeting required payments.
- What will you do to help low to no income families with housing?  
I will fight for funding for community action organizations that place those families in their own housing, particularly homeless families. I also will support “housing for all” bills because no one should have to live in our country without the dignity of a place to call their own.

- Foreign Policy

- If elected will you fight to curtail military spending and the reckless use of military force across the world?

Yes, the bloat of the military budget and kick outs to military contractors and corporations has far exceeded itself. It appears to me that a majority of such spending should go toward social programs but we generally are not given the information in those terms because those same contractors and corporations are major political donors.

- In your opinion, are there places where the U.S. is currently utilizing military force or funding the use of military force that you believe to be inappropriate, and if elected, how would you use the power of your office to change this.

Yes, I would work with the governor to end the use of the Michigan’s National Guard reserve to be used for offensive maneuvers not sanctioned by congress. I also would fight for the return of military personnel from unneeded places such as Saudi Arabia by using activism and solidarity with other progressive congress people.

- Conversely, are there places that you believe the U.S. should be engaging militarily that we are not?

Not currently, I won’t say that in absolutely no instance should military intervention be used but for some reason the responsibility of congress to say where and when has been done away with and that is incorrect.

- While it's important to make good trade agreements and ensure Americans have access to good jobs, protectionism and isolationism is on the rise globally. What will you do to protect Americans from being harmed by trade while ensuring the US maintains the benefits of trade and do not cut ourselves off from the rest of the world?

As a congress person all you can do is support proper diplomacy and trade agreements, but the loss of international trust is gone and the rise in unneeded tariffs has ravaged many occupations that may never recover such as Michigan soy farmers. I intend to oppose the trade wars and seek out diverse avenues Americans can align with to improve lucrative trade.

- Immigration

- Do you support a moratorium on all deportations?

Yes, until we can fix and amend the humanitarian crisis at our southern border we need to figure out what exactly were doing first and halting deportations and detention raids would be one less thing to worry about until we can straighten out exactly how to move forward.

- Members of the Latinx community live in a constant state of fear and anxiety due to the Trump Administration's demonization of Latinx/Chicano people. If elected, how will you fight for the Latinx community?

I would reach out to the Latin community and ask what they think the proper ways to continue would be. I'm already in contact with the Saginaw Mexican American Counsel to have just that conversation. I would also stand for reinstating DACA and instituting immigration case workers who could be non-biased social workers who help undocumented peoples and those who are nervous or unsure about their status to have the tools to move forward with their citizenship and at the very least know their rights.

- How will you address immigration, ensuring a balance between documented and undocumented migrants who are already here and waiting for citizenship?

Ideally we should focus on documented immigrants and their status first making sure all the proper avenues are taken so they may gain citizenship as soon as they can. Then as take undocumented immigrants on a case by case basis making sure everyone possible has a fair and safe chance at their goals.

- Disability Equity

- What is your plan to ensure persons with disabilities are provided with the equitable services they require?

Supporting Medicare For All first off, then lifestyle expansions for anyone with special needs.

- Gun Safety

- Do you take contributions from the NRA?

No

- With the increase of gun violence in America, what policies do you support and what policies would you propose in regards to firearm safety?

I support universal background checks. I also support assault arms legislation.

- Please explain your position on school safety as it relates to educational facilities, including the issues surrounding retrofitting or upgrading buildings for safety and possibility of arming school staff.

The advent of buildings being made to counteract school shooting is an unfortunate result of the current climate of the world we live in but I can see its necessity, conversely are lower income areas going to get the same consideration when it comes to these special buildings? I don't think that's likely.

- Wealth Inequality

- Would you support a wealth tax such as the following: a 2 percent tax on net worth from \$50 to \$250 million, 3 percent from \$250 to \$500 million, 4 percent from \$500 million to \$1 billion, 5 percent from \$1 to \$2.5 billion, 6 percent from \$2.5 to \$5 billion, 7 percent from \$5 to \$10 billion, and 8 percent on wealth over \$10 billion?

No, those percentages are entirely too low and should be closer to 20% at the high end.

- Infrastructure

- What plans do you have to fix our country's crumbling infrastructure?

Primarily, target cities such as Flint MI and Newark NJ should get the effects of a widely expanded infrastructure budget that includes capitol for new, not fixed, new water piping then those policies should branch out from those places eventually reaching everywhere. All repairs made should be with sustainable technology and installed for the purpose of longevity and not "saving" money or cost.

- Do you support public transit implementation as a critical investment and multi-dimensional solution to the effects of climate change, road congestion and its wear and tear, and the income disparity preventing travel throughout Michigan communities?

Yes, I see it as one piece of the puzzle of alleviating the climate crisis.

- Would you support efforts to transition Michigan away from the solely automobile industry and into the mass transit industry, with the goal of becoming a global competitor in the needs of a more sustainable economy?

Yes, away from automotive but not directly into mass transit that seems like a lateral move for workers and industry.

- **Indigenous Rights**

- Will you include Tribal Nations in the conversation when initiatives affect Indigenous communities, so they have the opportunity to have their voices heard? This requires input on issues not just governed by Treaty, but as real negotiation and discussion.

Yes, I myself am part native and have a large family in pine ridge SD.

- Do you have a working relationship with Native Nations or representative Native organizations within the district/region you serve?

Not where I serve but I have many relatives who work for the Oglala nation office.

- Will you support and ensure the investigation of missing and/or murdered Indigenous men, women and children on and off the reservation lands as citizens of both their Tribal Nations and the State of Michigan?

Yes!

- Do you support replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day?

Yes!

### Campaign Structure

- **Contact with voters**

- Describe the different ways you are connecting with voters. Be as specific as possible.

I am personally reaching out to community leaders and anyone interested in my campaign. I would like to talk to as many people face to face as possible, door knocking phone conversations etc. I would like for those community leaders to say “yes I believe he has actual people’s best interests at heart” first. A lot of door knocking though. Then if anyone shows interest first I reply asking if they

are interested in being more active.

- Finance

- How are you funding your campaign? Please be as specific as possible and provide links to campaign finance records.

It is personally funded so far as of now, I have only spent out of pocket but I am only taking donations from small dollar donors.

[https://www.fec.gov/data/candidates/house/?q=H0MI05139&election\\_year=2020&election\\_full=True&is\\_active\\_candidate=true](https://www.fec.gov/data/candidates/house/?q=H0MI05139&election_year=2020&election_full=True&is_active_candidate=true)

- Staff/Volunteers

- How many individuals do you have as paid staff, and how many volunteers do you have?

As of now there are three of us, myself and two others both volunteering, one as a kind of manager and the other doing all treasury work.

- What is the nature of employment for your campaign staff? Union, hourly, salary, wages, benefits?

We are all civilian workers, I myself am a CNC machine, my manager is a cell leader in the same shop and the treasurer is a nurse.