

Michigan State Representative District 56

2 Candidates on the November 6, 2018 ballot

Duties: The Michigan House of Representatives shares responsibility with the Michigan Senate to enact new laws and amend or repeal existing laws.

Qualifications: 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.

Term: 2 years Vote for ONE (1)

JASON M SHEPPARD, Republican

Did Not Respond in Time for Inclusion

ERNIE WHITESIDE, Democrat



Website: www.ernieformichigan.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ErnieforMichigan/>

Occupation / Current Position: Full Time Candidate

Education: BS, Business Management AS, Medical Laboratory Technology

Qualifications / Experience: Chair, Progressive Democrats of Monroe past Treasurer, Monroe County Democratic Party, Alternate Member Monroe County Board of Canvassers (2014-2018)

Questions:

1. PRIORITIES: What are your top three state legislative priorities and how would you address them?

A: 1) Fair share tax reform to roll back the effect of 2011 income tax reforms which left Michigan underfunded while virtually erasing corporate income tax revenue and shifting the tax burden to retired and low income individuals. 2) Roll back so-called Right to Work laws passed in 2012 along with countless other measures that have had a negative impact on everyday working people in Michigan. 3) Measures that would protect our water and environment for this and future generations.

2. EDUCATION: What measures do you support/propose to achieve improved educational outcomes and accessibility for Michigan students from early childhood through post-secondary education?

A: My principle concern is with the under-funding of K-12 programs, especially with the diversion of funds to largely unaccountable for-profit charter schools. Also, a higher level of tax-funded education is needed. I support tuition-free education at public colleges at least through the Associates Degree or Technical Certificate level of education. Something must be done to give relief to parents and students that are currently overloaded with college debt, possibly a state program to refinance and in some cases loans in whole or in part.

3. ECONOMY: What policies do you support to increase jobs and help Michigan residents improve their economic positions?

A: Certain cost of living issues are preventing people from participating in the economy. I support moves to make basic residential utilities like water, electric and gas more affordable and to expand and make Internet access more affordable. Fully implementing the Affordable Care Act or better yet adopting a State Single Payer Plan would not only reduce health care costs but could also reduce the outrageous cost of car insurance. Finally, I support "Michigan One Fair Wage" to gradually increase the hourly minimum wage from \$10.00 in 2019 to \$12.00 in 2022, the "Earned Sick Time Act" and "Protect Michigan Jobs".

4. ELECTIONS: What state policies do you support regarding campaign funding and voting rights?

A: I support the aims of "Voters NOT Politicians" to end gerrymandering and "Promote the Vote" to regulate the timing of issuing absentee ballots, authorize no-reason absentee voting, require a straight party voting option on general election ballots, provide for automatic voter registration, require post-election audits, and other voting changes. I also support the "National Popular Vote Interstate Compact" to award electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the popular vote and a "Vote by Mail" system to conduct elections entirely by mail.

5. ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY: What actions or policies do you support to protect Michigan's water, air and land for current and future generations, while meeting the state's energy needs? Explain how those actions or policies would affect the future of Enbridge Pipeline 5.

A: I support the aims of "Clean Energy, Healthy Michigan" to incrementally increase the mandatory renewable energy standard for electric utilities to 30% by 2030 and enact other changes to Public Act 295 of 2008. I also support various net metering bills that would promote distributed production of electric by customer owned renewable generation. Michigan needs to maintain its old energy infrastructure while simultaneously investing in new energy. Line 5 needs to be shut down YESTERDAY.

6. JUSTICE: What policies will you pursue to promote social and racial justice in our state?

A: One of my biggest concerns is that being poor, especially be a poor person of color, is almost a criminal act in and of itself. Many laws disproportionately seek out and punish the most disadvantaged members of our society and keep them in a perpetual state of legal and economic uncertainty. A simple traffic fine can devastate the life of a poor person while hardly effecting a well off member of society. Drug laws, especially marijuana, seem to be designed to hurt low income people of color. Also, programs that help low income people have suffered from fiscal austerity to pay for corporate tax cuts.

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