

**Primary Election: August 7, 2018**  
**Michigan State Senate District 5**  
**Candidates: 1 Republican + 2 Democrats**  
**Vote in one political party's primary only.**

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

**Qualifications:** State Senators may serve a maximum of two full terms. They must be at least 21 years of age and a registered voter in their district. There are 38 State Senate districts which are re-apportioned after each census.

**Term: 4 years VOTE for ONE (1)**

### DeSHAWN WILKINS, Republican



**Website:** [www.deshawnwilkins.com](http://www.deshawnwilkins.com)

**Facebook:** <http://facebook.com/wilkins4statesenate>

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/wilkins4senate](https://twitter.com/wilkins4senate)

**Occupation / Current Position:** 1) Senior Pastor / District Elder - Immanuel Outreach Cathedral 2) Insurance Sales - State Farm

**Education:** Aeon Bible College - Ministerial / Ordination Studies Kaplan - State Mandated - Property and Casualty Insurance Courses

**Qualifications / Experience:** Over 16 years of Christian church pastoring, ministerial and operational oversight. Over 3 years producing a weekly Christian Radio Program. Church fundraising to pay for church programs. Community outreach to those in need. Over 21 years as a small business owner/operator. Former Chair and Vice-Chair of the RTA's Citizen Advisory Committee. Committees and boards. Insurance Sales and service.

#### Questions:

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

**A:** 1) Auto Insurance Reform - Increase efforts to uncover insurance fraud. Remove the mandates and allow the consumers to have the choice of insurance coverages that you want or don't want. Ensure that auto related medical billing is in line with non-auto related medical billing (same rules). etc. 2) Develop Public/Private partnerships to work to eliminate the "Skills-gap" in Michigan. 3) Roads, and Infrastructure. - The use of better quality, longer lasting materials for our roads and bridges. And start the long process of replacing all of the lead pipes throughout Michigan.

**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:** I support the possible elimination of the Michigan Department of Education or at least rethinking its purpose in the education of our children. Elimination of Common Core standards and return back to a Michigan standard of education rather than Federal. Provide teachers with all of the necessary tools to educate our children. Close chronically failing schools. Strengthen our public schools while maintaining school choice for parents.

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

**A:** Put skilled trades and other vocational training back in the schools. Help our citizens to develop marketable skill-sets to land better paying jobs. Public/Private partnerships that more broadly focus on the elimination of the "skills-gap" here in Michigan.

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

**A:** I support requiring all political contributions to Political Action or Campaign Committees to be electronically reported and publicly available within 48 hours of receipt of contribution. I support "no-reason" absentee voting 30 days before elections.

**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:** We must maintain high standards for the protection of our natural resources. We must use all of the technology at our disposal to fix or replace the Enbridge Pipeline 5.

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

**A:** I plan to promote programs that will lower the recidivism rate among Michigan inmates and pursue alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders. I also plan to address the issue of redlining within our urban areas.

## **BETTY JEAN ALEXANDER, Democrat** **Did Not Respond in Time for Inclusion**

## **DAVID KNEZEK, Democrat**



**Website:** davidknezek.com

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/DavidKnezekMI>

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/davidknezek](https://twitter.com/davidknezek)

**Occupation / Current Position:** State Senator

**Education:** Bachelors, UM-Dearborn

**Qualifications / Experience:** After serving in the United State Marine Corps from 2006-2012 and graduating from UM-Dearborn in 2012, I was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives. After serving from 2013-2014 I ran for and won a seat in the Michigan Senate where I've served since 2015.

### Questions:

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

**A:** My top legislative priorities are jobs, education, and lowering auto insurance rates. As we continue to recover from the recession, we must make sure no one is left behind. I want to start by raising the minimum wage to ensure that everyone can make a living wage. We must also diversify our economy and invest in talent so businesses looking to open or move begin to choose Michigan. Education is a big part of that plan. We must invest in our students and ready them for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Auto insurance rates continue to drag Michigan's economy down. We must find a way to lower rates for everyone.

**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:** Michigan needs to make a renewed investment in education at all levels, beginning with universal pre-kindergarten. Every child needs to have access to preschool in order to be socially and academically ready for kindergarten and future grade levels. We must also invest more in K-12 education so that our students graduate high school ready to either enter college or a trade school. Finally, we need to make college affordable for every child who wishes to attend. That begins with ensuring free access to community colleges but also by working to lower tuition rates at four-year institutions.

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

**A:** Michigan must make sure that no one is left behind as our economy continues to improve and that begins with raising the minimum wage. No one who works full-time should be forced to live in poverty. We must also invest in talent and education at all levels - pre-K through secondary. The only way we can attract the jobs of tomorrow is by investing in our talent pool today. We need to cultivate the talents of the people in our state and work to diversify Michigan's economy.

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

**A:** Michigan needs more transparency in our government and it all starts with campaign finance. We need more reporting and stricter rules and punishments for those who consistently fail to report where they receive campaign dollars from and what they spend them on. With voting rights under attack across the country, Michigan should make a renewed effort in ensuring the franchise for every eligible citizen. We should adopt common sense reforms such as early voting and no-reason absentee voting that will make voting easier and more accessible.

**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:** Our state benefits from a wealth of natural resources and an abundance of natural beauty. We owe it to future generations to protect and conserve all that Michigan has to offer. Here that all begins with protecting our most precious natural resource: our water. We must push back against corporations who pay next-to-nothing to take our water, bottle it, and sell it off for massive profits. We must also ensure that pipelines such as Line 5 do not threaten our water supply. We need to invest in 21st century infrastructure projects to make sure our water is safe and consumers pay a fair price for their energy needs.

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

**A:** I recently introduced legislation that would finally put an end to auto insurance redlining in Michigan. Not only would my bill end unfair practices such as using credit scores, income, and education levels when determining insurance rates, it would also eliminate the use of zip codes. For far too long, the insurance industry has charged exorbitant rates to people living in our largest cities. A resident of Detroit can pay upwards of 4-5 times what someone from a surrounding area pays for insurance. That is unfair and we must put an end to this practice that disproportionately affects minority Michiganders.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan national organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party. Candidate responses are included as submitted and have not been edited except in cases where the replies have exceeded the stated word limitations. **Spelling and Grammar were not corrected.** The inclusion of candidates' statements and opinions is solely in the interest of public service and in no way is to be construed as an endorsement by the League of Women Voters which takes no responsibility for any views or facts stated by the candidates.