

2024 Grand Haven Chamber of Commerce Questionnaire

Campaign Information:

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4. Employer: U.S. House of Representatives
5. Office Being Sought: United States Senate

General:

6. What qualifications/experience do you feel you possess that will enable you to fulfill the responsibilities of the elected office you are seeking?
 - a. **Answer:** *I was recruited by the CIA after 9/11 to be a Middle East analyst, and within a year I was sent on the first of three tours in Iraq alongside the U.S. military. My time in a combat zone led me to national security roles at the White House, where I worked for President Bush as a member of his national security staff and was asked to stay on when President Obama took office. In the Obama Administration, I helped negotiate some of the Pentagon's most sensitive national security matters from the fight against ISIS to the U.S. response to Russian aggression. I was first elected in 2018 to the U.S. House of Representatives, re-elected in 2020 as one of seven House Democrats to represent a seat Trump also won, and re-elected a second time in 2022 – because I believe in bipartisanship in my bones: Republicans and Democrats coming together to compromise and solve problems is how our legislative process should work.*
7. Have you ever run for political office before? If yes, please explain.
 - a. **Answer:** *I was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018 and served as the Representative of Michigan's 8th district until I was redistricted into Michigan's 7th district, which I continue to represent today.*
8. If elected, what would be your top priorities and why?
 - a. **Answer:** *My overarching priority is to make it easier for Michiganders to get into and stay in the middle class and beyond. I've long said Michigan is the state that invented the middle class; it did so by making investments in small businesses and critical manufacturing areas, which I hope to reinforce in the U.S. Senate.*

The primary concerns that I hear from small business owners is that 1. They aren't able to find enough qualified job candidates to meet their needs. This impacts everyone from restaurants looking to hire teenagers for summer work to employers in the tech sector looking to hire engineers with advanced degrees. Improving both our education system and our immigration system to meet the needs of employers in our community can help develop and strengthen critical talent pipelines to address this issue.

Secondly, I hear about inflation and the impact that's having on their bottom line. To that end, I believe that we need to make more critical items in America so that we are in control of our own economic security – supply-side shocks like COVID have the potential to wreak havoc on our economy and middle class families, so I'm committed to bringing critical manufacturing back to the United States.

Additionally, we have to protect our kids from the things that are truly harming them: the number one killer of children under age 21, gun violence. Other things that are truly harming our kids are diseases of despair, mental health issues and opioid addiction and fentanyl.

Economic Development, General Policy and Transportation

9. Please describe your general economic development philosophy for Northwest Ottawa County.
 - a. **Answer:** *I think economic development works best when all levels of government – local, state, and federal – as well the private sector are rowing in the same direction. Economic development requires buy-in from everyone – the community, policy makers, and businesses – so transparency is key. And it requires making the right investments – ones that yield the highest returns on investment in terms of creating good-paying jobs, supporting the local economy, spurring additional private-sector investments, and more.*

10. Do you support the use of tax abatements and/or special tax incentives to create jobs and spur economic growth? Why or why not?
 - a. **Answer:** *I believe the government has a role to play spurring economic growth, including the use of financial incentives to attract businesses that create good-paying jobs and drive further economic development. However, it is critical that these incentives have community buy-in and be structured in a way that benefits the taxpayers that are funding them, and not just the businesses that are receiving them. At the federal level, I have been proud to support financial incentives like this for key industries, such as semiconductor chip production and clean energy manufacturing, to reshore Michigan's jobs and make us less reliant on supply chains overseas. At the same time, while foreign investment in the U.S. can support much-needed economic development, jobs and innovation, it can also threaten our national security. To address that risk, we need to have official national security experts review these land purchases with clear-eyed expertise, and without fear or favor. And I have introduced a bipartisan bill to that precise end.*

11. Affordability and availability of housing for many that earn between 80 and 120% Average Median Income (AMI) is a serious problem in our community. How would you address this barrier to residency?
 - a. **Answer:** *Workforce shortages are one of the most common issues I hear about from businesses, and these shortages can be directly linked to a lack of*

affordable housing. Investing in affordable housing is key to driving economic growth and it requires collaboration between the public sector and the private sector – both of whom are needed to address this critical issue. I've been proud to tackle this issue at the federal level in a way that both helps Michiganders and spurs economic development. Last September, I introduced the Workforce Housing Development Act, which would create a competitive grant program at HUD to encourage housing developers to create, rehabilitate, and preserve affordable workforce housing. Additionally, I was a co-sponsor of the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act, a bipartisan bill allowing a business-related tax credit to be applied to certain housing development costs, with the goal of producing half a million starter homes in under-resourced communities over the next decade. And in this year alone, I have secured over \$1.6 million in federal funding to create an affordable housing development in my district.

12. As we move to a more regional community and in the face of continued fiscal constraints, what are your thoughts on consolidation of services (police, fire, schools, transportation to name a few)?

a. **Answer:** *When it comes to the consolidation of services, I think the first and most important question we need to ask ourselves is: will this lead to a reduction in the quality of services provided? If the answer is no, then I do not have a problem with consolidation as a means of improving efficiency. If the answer is yes, I would have reservations about consolidation in an effort to cut costs.*

13. How would you propose to fund key community infrastructure needs that have been identified over the next three to seven years?

a. **Answer:** *Investing in our infrastructure needs means finding a way to pay for those investments and ensuring they are adequately funded in the short-, medium-, and long-term. While infrastructure investments can yield economic benefits that may help to offset or even cover their cost in the long-term, it's also important to ensure that those who are benefiting from the investments are paying their fair share. For the biggest projects, like dams, bridges, etc, it often requires federal resources, which is why I am so proud to have championed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which has brought billions to Michigan to support the state's infrastructure needs.*