

Michigan State Senate District 29

4 Candidates on the November 6, 2018 ballot

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)

CHRIS AFENDOULIS, Republican



Website: www.chrisafendoulis.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/afendoulis2018>

Twitter: twitter.com/RepAfendoulis

Occupation / Current Position: - Co-Owner, Afendoulis Cleaners and Tuxedos
- State Representative, 73rd District

Education: University of Michigan, Bachelor of Business Administration

Qualifications / Experience: CPA and auditor, worked as an accountant in the private sector for 25 years.

Questions:

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

A: 1) Roads and Infrastructure This year, Michigan will spend \$1 billion more on roads and bridges than when I first came to the House in 2015. While I am encouraged by the progress we have made, it is crucial that we continue to invest in our infrastructure. 2) Education I am committed to increased funding for education in Michigan, including more funding for our public schools, more money in classrooms, and greater pay for teachers. 3) Skilled Trades We must prepare our workers for the jobs of the 21st Century. This also means showing students the wide array of career options available to them in the skilled trades.

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: As I mentioned before, I am in favor of greater funding in Michigan's classrooms and better pay for our teachers. We must be competitive in attracting the nation's best teaching talent to Michigan. It's also crucial that we focus on outcomes for students -- ensuring that no student falls through the cracks in attaining educational benchmarks (such as 3rd grade reading). In high school, we have to show students all educational and career options available to them, whether in college, the skilled trades, or otherwise. We must give students the practical skills they need to succeed in life's next chapters.

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

A: We must continue to cultivate an environment in which job creators can thrive and bring more good-paying jobs into our communities. I believe that we do this by maintaining a fair and consistent tax structure (both for individuals and businesses), cutting back on red tape, and investing in our infrastructure. We also will never maintain a thriving economy if we don't invest in education -- both for young people and for those already in our work force. We currently have a deficit of skilled workers, and employers are looking to other states in our region to find talent. We have to work to reverse that trend.

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

A: As Americans, one of our most cherished rights is our right to vote and actively participate in our government. I want to be sure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to participate in this process. I have supported a number of reforms to expand access to voting, including the passage of no-reason absentee voting in Michigan. In terms of campaign finance law, I believe we must bring Michigan's reporting and disclosure laws in line with 21st century technology. We should expand transparency in reporting and require more immediate reporting of campaign contributions.

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: Michigan has no greater natural resource than our Great Lakes and fresh water. It is important that we are vigilant in our fight against water contamination and pollution so that we may continue to protect these resources. I believe we should work with our partners (in the education and research community, in industry, in state government, and with citizens interest groups) to work toward reasonable and proactive reforms which will help protect our environment against contamination. I am in favor of shutting down Line 5. We must find a safe alternative for transporting the oil that currently moves through the pipeline

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

A: We must treat all people with the same dignity and respect. I believe that we start to make positive changes when we learn how to better communicate and relate with people who are different from us. Our state must learn how to better accommodate the needs of all of its residents, including the most vulnerable in our society. I believe we accomplish this in part by investing in education, creating work opportunities, and improving access to entrepreneurship.

WINNIE BRINKS, Democrat



Website: www.WinnieBrinks.com

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Occupation / Current Position: State Representative - 76th District, MI House of Representatives

Education: Calvin College, Bachelor's in Spanish and a concentration in sociology

Qualifications / Experience: State Representative, 76th District Caseworker, The Source

Questions:

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

A: Education: From early childhood education programs through high school, Michigan's colleges and universities to skilled trades programs, it's clear that our kids need a world-class education that prepares them for a bright future. Water: All families deserve safe drinking, free of harmful chemicals like PFAS and lead. Polluters must be held accountable when they put the health and economic security of families at stake. Jobs: When working families do well, the economy as a whole prospers. I will continue to fight for policies that help Michigan workers find jobs, keep jobs and, just as important, be paid a fair wage.

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've worked in the classroom, and my husband is a school teacher. I support measures that provide the opportunity for every student — no matter where they live — to get a world-class education. High quality early childhood education is an important foundation for success, both in school and in life, and I'm proud to have voted to expand access to more 4 year olds in our state. In addition, we must invest in teachers, support them, and ensure they have the tools they need in the classroom to provide the best education possible to help our children succeed now and in the future.

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

A: I've worked with businesses that understand the value of investing in their employees and improving their quality of life, which helps boost the company's bottom line. In addition, access to health care, reliable transportation, and affordable childcare are key elements of economic success for any family. Finally, I will continue to vote for and sponsor policies that reward local businesses that stay in Michigan and invest in our communities.

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

A: Elections should be about the will of the people, not special interests. We must put an end to gerrymandering by establishing an independent redistricting commission, because elected officials should not have the power to pick and choose their constituents. Unlimited amounts of money from anonymous donors have corrupted politics and reduced trust in government/public servants; the health of our democracy depends on meaningful campaign finance reforms. We must ensure elections are fair, early voting and no-reason absentee voting are implemented in Michigan, and acts of voter suppression or intimidation are eliminated.

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: Michigan is rich in natural resources, from our lakes and rivers to our forests. We must do all we can to protect our environment now and for future generations. Our ecosystem is complex, and I will continue to champion and support sustainable energy and environmental policies that meet the needs of our residents, safeguard our resources and create jobs for Michiganders. This means taking a hard look at existing pipelines, including Enbridge Pipeline 5, and closing those pipelines that have the potential to devastate our natural resources.

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

A: There are so many opportunities in the policymaking process to shape a society that is more fair and just, from expanding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to removing the unfair tax on feminine hygiene products. I have introduced, supported and voted for bills to promote social and racial justice over the course of my time in the state House. I will continue to champion policies that achieve pay equity and earned sick leave for Michigan workers, criminal justice reforms and a public education system that provides opportunities for all children to succeed.

ROBERT VANNOLLER, Libertarian

Did Not Respond in Time for Inclusion

LOUIS PALUS, Working Class



Website: www.workingclassfight.com

Occupation / Current Position: Holland Home Fulton Manor\Cook CHEF

Education: Grand Rapids Community College ASSOCIATES DEGREE CULINARY ARTS

Qualifications / Experience: I have been a member of the working class all my life.

Questions:

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

A: The working class needs more jobs, higher wages, safer working conditions, and wider access to advancement. For the most part the working class has been neglected or impugned for organizing in pursuit of interests as legitimate as those of the AMA or the Business Roundtable or the Attorneys Bar Association. My first priority is an amendment to the state constitution protecting the right to organize and bargain collectively.

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: Education is a right. Presently, it is an elite privilege bracketed with disadvantages for the working poor. Michigan can provide equal education for all our children because education is not an expense, it is an investment. Educated citizens are prosperous and productive. Education improves the economy and stimulates civic participation. To this end I would promote the elimination of property taxes for education because property taxes stitch inequality into our educational system. Education should be funded by income taxes. I would advocate for teachers to lead the urgent redesign of our public school system.

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

A: A prosperous working class is the foundation of a strong economy. Raising the minimum wage to fifteen dollars would stimulate the economy. Minimum wage workers spend all their income locally. Policies that promote and protect the right to organize unions have a proven track record. A well organized working class benefits a broad spectrum of society. The working class can not thrive in this delusional economy where only the very wealthy benefit.

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

A: Corporations have no legitimate place in politics. Corporations do not promote the common welfare. The notion that corporations have the same rights as individual citizens is absurd. Corporate campaign funding should be banned. Gerrymandering is a devious power grab. It should be outlawed. Working class voting rights must always be protected. People who have served their time for crimes should not be stigmatized and denied the right to vote. We all deserve representation.

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: The Great Lakes are Michigan's greatest natural resource. Michigan must do everything possible to protect and enhance its water, air, and land. First, the closing of the Enbridge Pipeline 5. Michigan cannot afford to risk Lake Superior. Second, ban fracking. Third, cancel the contract with Nestle which allows them to sell Michigan water for exorbitant profit at minimal cost. Corporations must be held accountable for hazardous pollution. When corporations are permitted to walk away from toxic sites without recompense to the community, reckless behavior is condoned and encouraged.

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

A: Our police deserve to be educated and trained as well as any other profession. I believe improper training is one cause of undue use of force and racial profiling. Secondly, we need to provide more resources to social service and mental health agencies so that police are not required to intervene in situations which call for a social worker. They should provide support to the social services and not be forced to respond to situations for which they do not have proper training. Prison has not proved to be a deterrent nor is prison cost effective. We should have alternatives that are corrective rather than punitive.

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