

Michigan State Senate District 33

3 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)

RICK OUTMAN, Republican

Did Not Respond in Time for Inclusion

MARK BIGNELL, Democrat



Website: <https://www.bigmarkforsenate.com>

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

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Occupation / Current Position: Professional Commercial Motor Vehicle Operator

Education: I attended Montcalm Community College, obtaining an associates in accounting; transferred to GVSU Seidman School of Business, majoring in Accounting and taking a theme in ethics.

Qualifications / Experience: This is my first election, so my experience is mostly in my education, background in labor, and various independent studies after departing

GVSU. I have a background, which grounds my viewpoint in a humble resolve, making me empathic to the needs of the average blue collar class of Michiganders in my district. With this background, I will truly understand the needs, of those I seek to represent.

Questions:

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

A: My top 3 issues are government reform, education reform, & Infrastructure. For government reform, I'll introduce legislation complying with my CWAC agreement with the people. My proposals on education reform can be found in #2. My top infrastructure priorities are roads & water systems, I propose we increase funding for roads by a mix of bonds, new tax formulas, & lowering the gas tax while shifting the lost revenue to a negligible increase to sales tax. Last; we address the tax anxiety by implementing full disclosure on sales prices; whereas all prices displayed must be the after tax price on all products statewide.

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: In order to reform K-12 education, I support funding schools with need based formulas, instituting full year school, eliminating standardized testing (4 yrs), eliminating homework, adding counselors, ensuring lower student/teacher ratios, & fully funding school lunch programs. Also, I support increasing access to early childhood education, through new facilities, expanded programs, and funding formulas based on need. Lastly, in order to diversify our state's talent pool, I propose expanding existing skilled trades ed, state grant programs for CC, & starting new apprenticeship programs.

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

A: I support a workforce job retraining program, in order to retrain workers who wish to move out of a job and into a skilled trades profession. Michigan, currently has many skilled trade professional jobs, going unfilled, which hamper the economic growth of our state's economy. We could accomplish such retraining with public/private partnerships, grants, and apprenticeship programs. Also it's crucial, to diversify Michigan's economy, by attracting new industry to Michigan; by increasing our workforce skills levels, investing in our infrastructure, & by having the right economic climate (not just have low taxes).

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

A: I support improving our state's elections with early voting, expanding voting day to voting week (statewide elections), enacting ranked choice voting, and instituting automatic voter registration/update. I support fully revamping our state's campaign finance laws & disclosure rules in order to increase transparency of disclosure in candidates campaign financing, by requiring a financial asset disclosure be submitted to a state ethics office a month before a primary. Last, I support a ballot access measure, requiring a disclosure of income tax returns to the state, in order to qualify for ballot access.

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: It would be my policy to decommission line 5. The impacts would be Canadian tar sands needing established different routes to refineries in the gulf coast and likely would arrive via a different pipeline. LP gas could be delivered to the UP, via new infrastructure, preferably not submerged through the Straits of Mackinac. These policies will cost, but they will cost less than the cost of a future disaster cleanup. In addition, the DEQ must be reformed, in order for it to fulfill its mission of conservation of Michigan's natural resources. The corporate advisory board, must be reformed or disbanded.

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

A: I support expanding state codes of employment, housing, & credit/consumer access protections to include LGBT+ as a protected anti-discriminatory class. Also, I support stepped up enforcement of existing anti-discriminatory codes, & labor force anti-bias retraining programs as a means of avoiding fines. Lastly; I support efforts in legalizing cannabis; expungement of nonviolent criminal cannabis related records & commutation of nonviolent cannabis related sentences. In support of these policies, our state could advance the causes of criminal justice reform, racial justice, & begin restoring the social fabric.

CHRISTOPHER COMDEN, U.S. Taxpayers



Website: www.comdenformisenator.com

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Occupation / Current Position: Candidate for State Senator

Education: Master of Theological Studies, Ave Maria University's Institute for Pastoral Theology; Bachelor of Arts, Aquinas College

Qualifications / Experience: I worked for 17 years at non-profit organizations related to the Catholic Church and then began serving in a different way as Rural Carrier Associate (a.k.a. substitute mail carrier) for the USPS. Unfortunately, the Hatch Act of 1939 makes it illegal for a mail carrier to run for office. I left the Post Office job to run for State Senator. I currently work at a manufacturing facility in Alma.

Questions:

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

A: It is challenging to give only three priorities when there is so much that can be done to make Michigan even better. My main goal is to listen to constituents so their goals are my goals as their senator. Roads, Education and Healthcare are high on the list. We need to be innovative with these issues. Roads need to actually be improved. Education dollars need to be more wisely spent and authority over education returned to local districts instead of using state mandates, and the entire healthcare industry needs to be explored to eliminate grossly inflated prices for patients and unnecessary costs to providers.

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 main goal is to listen to constituents so their goals for education are my goals as their senator. Currently, I believe that the state should relinquish some of its claimed authority over the education system and return it to the local districts. This includes decisions over when to start school, curriculum, etc. We need to review the teacher certification system which is one of the most difficult in the nation and I believe a reason some great teachers choose to either not come to Michigan or to leave Michigan to get their credentials. We also need to standardize salaries for teachers across the state.

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

A: My main goal is to listen to constituents so their goals are my goals as their senator. The most basic step to improve the position of Michigan citizens is to bolster the Career & Technical Education programs at local high schools so students can step into high paying jobs immediately or soon after graduation. Our colleges also need to focus more on education for the workforce instead of education for the sake of education. A talented workforce will be an even greater attraction to employers than low taxes, although that does help. We also need to be sure we are not overregulating industries.

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

A: My main goal is to listen to constituents so their goals are my goals as their senator. I realize that the popular answer is to restrict campaign donations, but there are two realities that need to be faced. First, if you don't trust the candidate to not be unduly influenced by donors then you shouldn't trust the candidate. Second, the existence of PACs makes these restrictions void of any real effect. I am very much in favor of finding ways to make it easier for people to vote, but I am also in favor of requiring proper ID as long as a generic State ID can be issued free of charge.

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: My main goal is to listen to constituents so their goals are my goals as their senator. I support realistic efforts to preserve the environment and reduce air, water, and land pollution. I am against the diversion or sale of Great Lakes or Michigan ground water for bottled drinking water. I am in favor of pursuing new forms of energy while relying on traditional methods. The Enbridge Pipeline 5 is an example of Michigan shirking its responsibility to guarantee the safety of its environment by relying on inspections done by the company itself. We have a responsibility to the environment and cannot pass it off.

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

A: My main goal is to listen to constituents so their goals are my goals as their senator. I believe the larger issue is poverty. Unfortunately, historic circumstances have trapped areas of the state in a cycle of poverty where the majority of residents are black and other minorities. That cycle can be difficult for individuals to break. We need to focus on improving the educational system in the poorer districts of the state and review our social programs to determine where we can improve to assist people in breaking the cycle of poverty instead of remaining in it.

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