Michigan State Representative District 61
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)

BRANDT IDEN

Website: www.voteiden.com
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Occupation / Current Position: State Representative, 61st District
Education: I graduated from Kalamazoo College with degrees in Political Science & Economics.
Qualifications / Experience: I have served the past 4 years as your State Rep and the 4 before that as your Kalamazoo County Commissioner. In all my time of serving you, I have remained accessible, continue to listen, and work hard on policies that matter most to you and our community. I am also a business owner and have served on the Boards for Big Brother Big Sister and for Junior Achievement of Southwest Michigan.

Questions:

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

A: My top three legislative priorities have been to enhance community safety, to continue to grow jobs and the economy, and to ensure government responsibility. I have strengthened community safety through my efforts against sexual abuse and assault. I have promoted a growing economy and increased jobs through passing meaningful reforms that expand career paths for our students, especially those in skilled trades and vocational careers. I have ensured government responsibility by eliminating oppressive and unnecessary government fees and I continue to work towards increased transparency in our state government.

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 have continually sponsored and voted for policies that expand educational options for our students, especially those related to skilled trades and vocational careers. Specifically, I passed P.A. 185 of 2018 which allows high school students to obtain real life experience, earn school credit, and explore future careers. I also voted in support of the 21st Century Skills package, which gives students a greater variety of high school credit options. Further, I voted for the largest education funding increase in state history, and I will continue to work to ensure all of our public schools have the resources they need.

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

A: I have continuously voted for incentives that attract businesses and entrepreneurs to our region. I have helped our community employers to establish thousands of new, stable, and high paying jobs and have sponsored various methods of connecting students to meaningful and successful careers. I support the historic preservation tax credit and have voted in support of incentives for urban redevelopment projects around the state. Our community has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Michigan and we need to continue policies like this so that Michigan can stay on the right track.

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

A: Out of all 50 states, Michigan recently ranked very last in transparency. This is unacceptable. We need increased transparency in government, and that includes transparency of campaigns and campaign finance. Further, I voted in support of no reason absentee voting and continue to support that policy to make sure every person has an adequate opportunity to voice their opinion.

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: Ensuring clean water is paramount in Michigan. I helped create a unit at the Michigan DEQ that is now equipped to detect and treat PFAS. I obtained state funding for PFAS testing and clean up because Michigan residents deserve clean water. I voted for reduced energy waste, encouraged use of renewable resources and environmental cleanup, and continue to support measures that protect our outdoors. Enbridge Line 5 is not a long-term solution to Michigan's energy needs. The state should pursue one of the many other studied methods of energy delivery to continue to ensure affordable and reliable energy to northern Michigan

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

A: In order to pursue social and racial justice, I have to listen. A top social injustice I continuously hear about is the challenge of workforce re-entry for those with a criminal record. A great force of change is gainful and meaningful employment and I have been working hard on encouraging workforce access. We need to be better at rehabilitating those in our criminal justice system instead of handing out oppressive, lifetime barriers. I have sponsored a variety of measures that make it easier to enter the workforce to be able to provide for oneself and a family and I will continue to promote these policies.

ALBERTA GRIFFIN, Democrat

Website: https://www.albertagriffin61st.com/
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Occupation / Current Position: Professor at Western Michigan University, and President AGS Data Analytic Consulting
Education: BS of Dietetics and Biology, MA of Family Education and Nutrition Education, Ph.D.C. in Health Science and Statistics
Qualifications / Experience: BS of Dietetics and Biology, MA of Family Education and Nutrition Education, Ph.D.C. in Health Science and Statistics

Questions:

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

A: Education, making sure we are not only investing in our children, but also making long term investments in our schools and staff. Equality, we are facing a trying time in our nation's history. The current administration is leading attack after attack on our American values. We need to be prepared to have open and honest discussions at all levels of government. Choice, the potential new make up of the courts can create a pre-Roe set of circumstances. In that scenario the number of abortions, deaths and infections goes up dramatically. As a data scientist I want to study these issues.

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 believe reliance on input from the educators as professionals is the first step. Next is funding, Prop A changed the make up of general funds education dollars in the 90's, since then the funding formula has been off balance, and created a separation of resources to the districts who need it most. This then spirals into so many other places of our society, and then costs us as taxpayers more. The last step is utilizing metric based performance reviews to generate quality assessments of process, protocols, and professionals over time to determine what is working and what is not.

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

A: The fair wage and the time to care ballot initiatives are great examples of ways we can fight wage disparity without crippling business. People at those income levels are spenders, they spend to zero almost monthly. I know, I've been there. That will generate economic growth in our small businesses and retail communities. Then if we couple that with real tax reform to allow our large employers to find incentives to create jobs and take risks for growth.

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

A: The security of our democracy is key to all we hold dear. We need to audit our security, build programs that will promise its security in future elections. Election hacking is the #1 threat to our democracy. Campaign funding has been a very tough issue to address, we need to provide a space for open forum and debate while not limiting the freedom of speech that the Supreme Court has determined the law of the land regarding SuperPAC funds. I believe that if there is to be free speech attached to money and politics, all contributions should be disclosed and made public.

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 deserve responsible leadership in Lansing that understands that Michigan's access to clean, fresh water is one of its greatest assets. It has made us unique throughout history. We seem to be the only state in the Midwest that has no comprehensive plan for wind and solar energy. The pipeline needs maintenance, waiting any longer could be dire. The long term environmental implications need to be reviewed. As a member of the House, I will review those items and work to build plans where everyone can benefit and our assets are protected.

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

A: As the mother of three African American children, I am scared. When my kids leave the house I have to remind them how to respond and act when approached by any person of authority. This is something I learned as a child. I had hoped we would live in a world by the time I was a parent where those conversations were obsolete. Sadly, they are not. As for specific policies, I can tell you that I believe that fairness and justice should be a key part of our governing policies. Police should be allowed to protect themselves, citizens should not live in fear of police, we cannot govern from fear and expect just outcomes.