

# 2024 WCDP Endorsement Questionnaire Responses

Office: United States Senate

**Candidate: Elissa Slotkin for United States Senate**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://elissaslotkin.org>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

My professional background is in national security, working in intelligence and defense. I was recruited into the CIA directly out of graduate school, where I was trained as a Middle East analyst and served three tours alongside our military in Iraq. This bipartisan, country-first approach has informed my work in Congress. Additionally, I have proudly worked for both Republicans and Democrats in my career, including directly for President Bush and President Obama. This also means that I take a deeply bipartisan approach to all of my work in Congress. I believe in bipartisanship in my bones: my guiding principle in office has always been to work with people based on how committed they are to serving their constituents, not by party affiliation. Finally, I hope to bring a different style to the Senate. If elected, I'll be the youngest Democratic woman in the U.S. Senate. The whole world around the Senate has changed, and we need a new generation of leaders in the Senate.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I have fought to pass legislation on the issues that benefit Michiganders. I was a strong advocate of the Inflation Reduction Act, CHIPS Act, and Infrastructure bill, all of which supercharged MI's economy, equipped our state for the 21st century, and created good-paying jobs for Michiganders. Additionally, I have worked to reduce the cost of healthcare through the Real Time Benefits Act, cosponsoring legislation that would allow Medicare to negotiate Rx drug prices and capping the cost of insulin at \$35/mo. Beyond legislating, I believe in using the convening power of my office, and delivering tangible results to my constituents. To that end, my office has returned over \$19.7 million owed to constituents from government agencies like the VA and Social Security Administration. I have also brought over \$50 million back to my district – including \$1.3 million to the Lansing Police Dept in the wake of George Floyd's murder to hire more social workers to work alongside our police officers.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I've hosted many events in Washtenaw County – both during and before my campaign for Senate. In August of 2023, I held an event in Ann Arbor with Rep. Jamie Raskin and Ann Arbor Reps Jennifer Conlin and Jason Morgan. I've also toured small businesses and co-ops across Washtenaw County, including the Growing Hope urban farm and the We The People Opportunity Farm in Ypsilanti. I've held multiple meetings with local

leaders, including elected officials, to discuss issues specific to Washtenaw county, such as cost of living, and will continue doing so while I'm an elected official and long after.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Since the beginning of my time as a Congresswoman, I have felt it important to mentor others, particularly women and service candidates on how to run for office. One example I am particularly proud of: I've had a close relationship with Sen. Sarah Anthony since her first run for office in 2018, and in her current position as the first Black woman to chair the Senate Appropriations Committee in Lansing. I've taken her on fundraising trips to New York, hosted events for her in DC, and invited her as my guest at the most recent State of the Union address.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

Washtenaw County has historically been a bastion of Democratic support in Michigan, proving the difference maker in many tight elections. Not only this, but the WCDP has been at the forefront of social change in Michigan. With its crucial position and effectiveness at organizing for Democrats, the WCDP's endorsement is critical in mounting a comprehensive, statewide campaign. Specifically, WCDP's help in organizing GOTV efforts, as well as spreading awareness about Michigan's Senate race, would be incredibly helpful. Furthermore, the WCDP's commitment to bringing its community together resonates deeply with my campaign and our values. Your routine Environmental Council, Black Caucus, and community meetings are an example that many should follow. Finally, young voters have proven critical to victory in previous elections. Given the unique challenges of this election cycle, WCDP is uniquely positioned to bring young voters into our efforts to keep Donald Trump out of the White House.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Since I left the national security world, I've spent my time meeting with parents, teachers, business owners, and community leaders throughout our state. I've worked with Michael McKissic, a father in Lansing who lost his son to gun violence and founded the Mikey23 foundation, to amplify his message and connect him with national organizations and efforts to reduce gun violence. I've also worked closely with Black community leaders in Wayne County to develop my Opportunity Agenda, which focuses on eliminating long-standing barriers to opportunity. This collaboration has been critical to creating a broader sense of connection between Michiganders and their elected representatives, and also serves to amplify the effectiveness of community members and organizers by coordinating their initiatives with federal efforts.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I've been incredibly supportive of Democratic efforts across Michigan. In 2018, I was a strong supporter of Prop 2, which created an independent redistricting commission in Michigan. In 2018 I also supported Prop 3, strengthening our voter rules and allowing no-reason absentee voting in our elections. Finally, I have been a staunch supporter of women's reproductive rights and Prop 3 in 2022, enshrining these rights in the Michigan constitution.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

n/a

**Office: Michigan House - District 33**

**Candidate: Morgan Foreman for Michigan House - District 33**

*(1 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://forwardwithforeman.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

Having worked in Lansing for several years, I am the best candidate due to my deep understanding of the legislative process and policy-making intricacies. My success is rooted in my ability to build and maintain strong relationships. By fostering relationships with colleagues, community leaders, and constituents, I address issues collaboratively. My active community involvement shows my commitment to serving the people, allowing me to bring a genuine understanding of community needs to the legislative process.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I will be deeply committed to serving my constituents through continuous engagement and responsive action. I will hold regular coffee hours, town halls, and listening sessions to stay connected and understand your concerns. Through newsletters, I will keep you informed about key issues and legislative updates.

By actively listening, I will draft and champion policies that reflect your needs and aspirations. Whether it's improving education, healthcare, or economic opportunities, I will ensure that your voices guide my legislative efforts.

Additionally, I will respond promptly to constituent needs, assisting with unemployment claims, Medicaid, and other requests that my office can handle. My goal will be to be a reliable advocate, ensuring that you receive the support and services you deserve.

My approach will be rooted in continuous engagement, transparent communication, and dedicated advocacy, ensuring that your interests are always represented and addressed effectively.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I've been actively involved in politics during non-election years as well. I served as the treasurer of the Black Caucus. As a precinct delegate, I represented my community's interests and ensured their voices were heard in party decisions. Additionally, as a county committee member, I contributed to shaping policies and strategies at the local level.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

As a 2019 Leaders of Color Fellow, 2021-2022 MSU Educational Policy Fellow, and participant in MSU's Michigan Political Leadership Program, I mentor others by sharing my passion for education and policy. I also advocate for healthcare equity, promoting minority organ donation to address transplant disparities. Through community engagement and my forward-thinking approach, I inspire and guide individuals to make a positive impact. My holistic mentoring fosters awareness and drives change for a better future. As a former educator, I stay connected with many students who seek my guidance as they enter early adulthood. I'm active in service organizations and regularly give back to the community through various initiatives.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I seek the Washtenaw County Democratic Party endorsement to leverage my experience and dedication to our community. This support will amplify my efforts to promote equity, improve education, and protect citizens, ensuring we build a more just and prosperous Washtenaw County together.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have actively supported initiatives with Food Gatherers and other community organizations within my service organizations working to address food insecurity. Additionally, I continue to mentor and tutor former students, providing ongoing support and guidance. These efforts allow me to personally engage with community members and organizations, contributing to positive change and support within our community.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

Working in the legislature, I've traveled across Michigan, interacting with residents to help flip the House and Senate, which we successfully achieved. I've stood with Planned Parenthood to protect reproductive rights, supported local candidates, and served as an election inspector.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

**Candidate: Rima Mohammad for Michigan House - District 33**

*(2 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://voterima.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I'm running for Michigan State Representative because I want to ensure that we make all decisions by fostering community involvement through open communication, transparency and inclusiveness. As a healthcare worker, I've seen firsthand the challenges in our healthcare system and its impact on the community. As a school board member and educator, I've seen firsthand the challenges our educational

system has on the school community. As a child of refugees, I know how racism and inequities can impact people at their core. I made it my mission to give back to the community. I've been a strong advocate for ensuring that voices of marginalized communities are heard and represented. I'll continue to address these challenges. I'm passionate about addressing issues facing our community including housing, healthcare, childcare, PreK-12 and post-secondary education, reproductive rights, gun safety, inequities and climate change. My experiences will be an asset to the Michigan State Legislature.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

My top priorities include education, healthcare and equity. I will advocate to:

- Ensure expansion of state's pre-k capacity, support robust enrollment program, strengthen our education workforce, and coordinate our efforts with preexisting birth-to-five early learning and care systems
- Attract and retain top talent in our schools and implement initiatives that incentivize educators to stay in public schools
- Improve education outcomes
- Ensure everyone has access to healthcare services
- Support education and training programs to attract and retain healthcare professionals
- Advocate for fair wages, safe and inclusive working environments, and more support for healthcare workers
- Push for insurance reforms that improve transparency, reduce administrative costs, and make healthcare more affordable
- Prioritize mental health services and eliminating barriers to access
- Address significant inequities surrounding healthcare, education, housing, transportation, reproductive rights and childcare

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

More recently, I have been engaging more with the Muslim community to be more involved in events related to the WCDP, but primarily, my involvement is around election years focused on increasing awareness of candidates and stressing the importance of elections.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have mentored many people throughout my life, from mentoring graduate students through job experiences and research studies, to mentoring middle and high schools through navigating internship opportunities and experiences, to mentoring faculty through promotion and organizational involvement, to coaching lego robotics elementary school teams. I have always had a passion for mentoring all people through many different experiences.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the endorsement of the WCDP because I believe I encompass the values of the Democratic Party. I also bring a unique perspective to the WCDP as a refugee, a person of color, a person of a marginalized religious group, a child that was in poverty, a researcher, an educator, a healthcare worker and a school board member. I will ensure all voices are heard and addressed as a Michigan State Representative. Also, I believe I am a strong community leader due to my lived experiences. The support of WCDP would aid

in advocating to bring these unique perspectives and skills to the Michigan State Legislature.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have been involved in providing community volunteer services, such as vaccination clinics, to various members of the community, especially for marginalized, refugees, immigrants, underserved communities. I am also serving on the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education and engaged in many events and efforts in the various communities, especially the marginalized and underserved communities. I have been an active part of the community in Ann Arbor and other cities throughout my life.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have strongly advocated for Democratic causes such as implementing accessible healthcare, canvassing for reproductive healthcare for all initiatives and proposals, addressing inequities in our schools and communities, helping with initiatives to assist refugee resettlement and access to services, strongly support union groups among healthcare workers, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members and lecturers, and staff, and work on expanding collective bargaining organization to areas that are necessary among healthcare workers and faculty. I have also strongly supported Democratic candidates at all levels of government through activities such as canvassing for candidates, fundraising and increasing voter turnout and education.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

I have not been convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over the office of the WCDP.

Office: Michigan House - District 47

**Candidate: Carrie Rheingans for Michigan House - District 47**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.carrierheingans.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the best candidate to continue to serve as State Representative for House District 47 because my leadership style is one of inclusivity. I believe that the best legislation is crafted in partnership with the stakeholders most affected by it. I bring everyone to the table, both people who agree with my position and those who do not, and work to get the best possible end product that will help the greatest number of people. My constituents and everyone I have worked with in Lansing know that my door is always open and that I will gladly talk to anyone. In addition, I am the only legislator in Lansing with a Master of Public Health. Many of my colleagues look to me to help explain complex health policy ideas. I think my expertise is needed, especially as we continue to bounce back from the pandemic and deal with the opioid crisis.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I have been able to secure a lot of wins for my constituents in the last term. We codified abortion rights and LGBTQ+ rights in Michigan law, repealed right-to-work and strengthened the power of unions, passed crucial gun safety legislation, passed bills to address the climate crisis, provided universal breakfast and lunch to all Michigan students, made voting more accessible, and so much more.

I have secured funding for vital projects in my district like the construction of the Dexter Senior Center, the Border-to-Border Trail and my office has assisted hundreds of constituents to meet their needs.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have been a member of the WCDP and various organizations in Washtenaw for years. I regularly attend WCDP meetings, Ann Arbor Dems meetings, and the Dexter Forum. I have previously served on the Washtenaw Emergency Medical Services Commission and Board of Health, and the Ann Arbor Dems Leadership Board.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have experienced no greater joy in my professional career than mentoring young people and helping them to find a career where they are able to use all of their skills and talents. In the last 2 years alone, I have:

Taken on Progressive Turnout Project fellows during my campaign to teach them about campaign work entails and how to advocate on behalf of progressive policies that matter to them

My office has been designated by the University of Michigan School of Social Work as a work placement site. I have mentored two graduate students each year I have been in office, helping them to learn how to use their voice effectively and show them what working in a macro-social work setting entails

I have also made my office open for high school students to shadow me and find out what the job of a state representative looks like. Thus far, I have had 2 students shadow me this way

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the endorsement of the WCDP because as an active member, I know just how important of an institution you are for our county. Our county party is the best in the state and you play a crucial role in getting out the vote for Dems up and down the ticket. As the most progressive county in Michigan, the WCDP's get out the vote effort can literally determine which way the state goes. In this election year, when democracy itself is on the line, your efforts will be pivotal for the country. Being endorsed by you would be an honor.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Giving back to the community has always been incredibly important to me. As I mentioned before, I have

previously served on the Washtenaw Emergency Medical Services Commission and Board of Health, and the Ann Arbor Dems Leadership Board. I have used my expertise in health policy to try to ensure that our county is as healthy as it can be. Beyond that, I have always been someone who has felt comfortable using my voice to help advocate on behalf of causes that we as Democrats hold dear. On the day of the Dobbs decision, I stopped campaigning and threw together a rally on the diag at U of M with Eli Savit and Katie Scott. The rally was attended by hundreds of community members and Congresswoman Dingell and provided an outlet for all of the anger and hurt that we were all feeling that day.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have supported Democratic candidates and causes for years. I was at the TCF Center in Detroit on November 4, 2020 to defend our democracy and make sure that every vote was counted. The day before, I had been a poll watcher with the Detroit NAACP, and I've served as a poll watcher and registered voters for elections since 2000. In 2017 and 2018, I hosted an Ann Arbor town hall for Voters Not Politicians and campaigned for the passage of expanded voting rights, which won at the ballot box in 2018.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No, I have not.

Office: County Prosecuting Attorney

**Candidate: Eli Savit for County Prosecuting Attorney**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.elisavit.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I have dedicated my career to public service. I formerly served as a law clerk to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, was a civil-rights and public-interest attorney, and started my career as a public-school teacher.

Prior to being elected Washtenaw County Prosecutor, I served as the City of Detroit's senior legal counsel, where I led criminal-justice reform work for Michigan's largest city. In that capacity, I also led successful public-interest lawsuits against adversaries such as banks, the opioid industry, slumlords, and corporate polluters.

In the Prosecutor's Office, we have prioritized the prosecution of gun crime, domestic violence, and sexual assault. At the same time, we've launched multiple successful programs that allow people dealing with behavioral health and substance-use issues to obtain rehabilitative services. We have also litigated multiple cases in support of reproductive justice, LGBTQ+ rights, worker and consumer rights, and gun safety.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**



I have spearheaded various successful diversion programs aimed at promoting healing and rehabilitation, allowing individuals facing lower-level crimes to avoid criminal records. These initiatives boast a recidivism rate of less than 5%.

Our Office now houses a Conviction Integrity and Expungement Unit, helping over 1,000 individuals clear old criminal convictions, & an Economic Justice Unit that addresses wage theft, consumer protection, and workers' rights. I have also litigated in support of civil rights, gun safety, & reproductive justice--including litigating alongside Governor Whitmer to prevent the criminalization of abortion in Michigan.

Our office remains focused on gun violence, intimate-partner violence, and sexual assault. We work to support the most vulnerable victims of crime. We now have a specialized Sexual Assault Kit Initiative to handle "cold-case" sexual assault cases, and provide comprehensive support for crime victims in multiple languages

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have been a member of the Washtenaw Dems--and have been actively involved in the Democratic Party--since I moved back from DC in 2016. I have served on the Executive Board (as bylaws chair), canvassed and volunteered for multiple candidates, and have supported multiple candidates (and the Party) financially as well.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Mentorship is one of my favorite parts of my job. During my first campaign, in 2020, we had over 100 high school and college-aged volunteers working for the campaign. I have stayed in contact with a great many of those volunteers and interns. Some continue to work in politics, helping local Democratic officials and Democratic candidates across the state. Others have started their career in the criminal-justice reform space. Still others have attended law school; I'm immensely proud that both my campaign manager and deputy campaign manager are recent law school grads (with the deputy campaign manager having accepted a job at the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office)!

We also maintain a robust internship program in the Prosecutor's Office, and I take great pride in mentoring the young people that serve as interns. Several have returned to the Prosecutor's Office as full-time staff. Others--with whom I regularly keep in contact--have gone on to great success in the legal field.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am a lifelong Democrat, and a longtime member of the WCDP. Simply put, WCDP's values are my values, and I consider myself a part of the WCDP community.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have been a member of multiple nonprofit boards. I currently serve on the board of Women and Men Working For Change (an Ypsilanti-based community group) and have previously served on the boards of the FLY Children's Art Center, among other organizations. I regularly volunteer with community groups as well (including SafeHouse Center, Moms Demand Action, and others). I am also a lifetime member of the NAACP - Ann Arbor Chapter, as well as the ACLU. I have served as a pro-bono cooperating attorney for the ACLU on multiple cases, and also have volunteered each election cycle since 2016 as part of the Michigan Democratic

Party's Voter Protection Team.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have supported too many Democratic candidates and campaign to count. My PAC, the Pursuit of Justice PAC, has endorsed and financially supported dozens of Democratic candidates across the state and the country. I have also canvassed for Democratic candidates for state Legislature and other positions across the state. And I regularly personally donate to candidates and to the Democratic Party.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: County Sheriff

**Candidate: Alyshia Dyer for County Sheriff**

*(1 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://dyer2024.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I decided to run for this seat after the current Sheriff announced his retirement. After spending nearly a decade working for the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, I knew from firsthand experience that more of the same wasn't going to cut it. It's time for a new vision that prioritizes accountability and transparency. This office needs an experienced leader with direct, on-the-ground experience who has seen the gaps firsthand and knows what needs to change.

The Sheriff's Office has been around since the 1800s, and we have never had a woman in this seat. There are currently no female Democratic sheriffs in Michigan. We need more women in law enforcement leadership to address gaps in handling domestic violence and internal harassment.

My decade of experience working as a deputy sheriff at the Sheriff's Office, along with my recent experience as a therapist and licensed social worker, gives me the tools necessary to create a Sheriff's Office that truly puts people first.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I plan to serve my constituents by implementing the following reforms:

In-Person Visitation: I will reintroduce in-person visits at the jail. These visits reduce recidivism, strengthen family ties, and promote successful reentry.

Racial Justice and Accountability: I will end coercive interrogation techniques, address racial disparities in policing, and stop collaboration with ICE.

Environmental Protection: I will establish a Corporate Accountability Crimes Unit to enforce environmental laws and hold corporate polluters accountable.

Community-Driven Approaches: I support unarmed community response and restorative justice for young people to enhance public safety and reduce reliance on punitive measures.

Officer Mental Health and Wellness: Having officers working in our community with PTSD and a gun puts everyone at risk. I will ensure we are prioritizing the mental health and wellness of first responders so they can safely serve and protect our community.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have served as a precinct delegate since 2020 and I have led programs within WCDP that helped raise participation in the party especially in Eastern Washtenaw. I also helped distribute our voter guide last cycle, helped knock doors locally, and across the state to flip the house, and was a former organizer with the Defend Black Voters Coalition.

Additionally, I was able to get resolutions passed through WCDP to support local community organizations fighting for more accountability in rescue plan dollars. I have also served on the county executive committee.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I was a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor as an officer and mentored many youth that have been impacted by our legal system. This work brings home for me why change in our local legal system is important. One young person I mentored was getting into trouble—getting them opportunities and using restorative justice when they committed offenses kept them out of our legal system. Now, they are able to thrive in our community. My ability as a law enforcement leader to offer young people more opportunities has prevented harm associated with keeping them involved with our legal system.

I also mentor other young women in politics and grassroots organizations. I am the person I am today because of strong women who have been in my corner. We must do better at collectively supporting women and non-binary people from historically oppressed or minoritized backgrounds. Politics, like policing, is embedded with classism, sexism, and racism and it is up to all of us to raise the bar in this arena.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I value the ideals of the Washtenaw County Democratic Party and we are a more progressive democratic stronghold to help also support our party at the state level. The work that Washtenaw Dems has done in our community from voter engagement, to education, to advocacy is vital to our community growth as well as public safety. As a sheriff candidate I recognize how connected this is. For example, I want to limit petty traffic stops so we can focus on serious safety concerns more. The more you pull someone over, the less likely they are to vote. WCDP also values criminal justice reform and ensuring our basic freedoms here locally are

protected.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have been a precinct delegate for two terms, I served on the Washtenaw County Community Action Board, and served on the Ford School executive committee at U of M.

I come from a working-class family with many family members involved in Unions. I have picketed with GEO (my former Union) and AFSCME, working in collaboration with WeROC to mobilize people to participate in organizing for strikes, pickets, and bargaining. I have supported Sweetwaters and Starbucks workers in organizing and spoke publicly at a local Starbucks Workers United rally.

I additionally brought together labor and community organizers in shared interests, especially involving WeROC's organizing to protect a COVID test site from getting shut down by administrators during the pandemic in one of our local municipalities. My background as an organizer provides me with experience in building broader movements and bringing together community and labor organizers which has positive outcomes on all of our public safety.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have supported many candidates locally and beyond and have knocked thousands of doors to help keep Michigan blue. I also have held fundraisers and events to support Democratic candidates.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

**Candidate: Derrick Jackson for County Sheriff**

*(2 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://jackson4sheriff.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

For 15 years, I've been the leading architect of change at the Sheriff's Office. We've transformed the values, training, policies, structure, and culture. When I started we didn't invest a single dollar into diversion or alternatives to incarceration. We now invest more than \$4.7 million annually. I've helped manage a \$60 million budget, not once being over budget. And helped position the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office as a national leader in police reform. Where many candidates make promises of what they would do or could do with your support, I'm running on the work that has been done and a vision for a transformative future. This experience and proven track record is what has prepared me for this position.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

The best predictor of future behavior is past actions. For over 20 years I have been a servant leader, working to improve systems and I will continue to do so. I will prioritize community engagement and transparency, and continue working to build trust between law enforcement and the community we serve. I will also focus on improving training for deputies to handle diverse situations effectively and with empathy. We will continue to invest in programs that support mental health services, restorative justice practices, and diversion programs to reduce recidivism rates and address the root causes of crime. My goal is to create a more inclusive and fair justice system that serves and protects all members of our community.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

At one time I was a member of the WCDP executive board, where I worked hard to improve our party and bring new voices to the table. In 2005 I went to work as the Director of Elections under County Clerk Lawrence Kestenbaum, and stepped away from directly sitting on the party board. However, during my time as the Chief Deputy Clerk, I spent countless hours educating voters on the process of voting, registering new voters, and working to ensure safe and secure elections.

During the first campaign of President Barack Obama I helped to organize the volunteers that made up Michiganders for Obama prior to the official campaign engaging here in Michigan. Ultimately I was elected as a convention delegate and attended the DNC's national convention in Denver. Since that time I have volunteered for numerous local candidates, attended WCDP events as both a speaker and visitor. Ultimately, I have tried to embody the progressive values of the WCDP and implement them throughout county government.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Working in youth development at Ozone House many years ago, much of my professional career has been focused on mentoring young people. It just so happens that on this campaign I was able to reconnect with one young person I mentored all those years ago. Back then he was a young person struggling to find his way, in and out of trouble, and living from couch to couch. Today, he's married, has a beautiful family, is months away from beginning his master's program, and is eager to engage in local political action. Just last week he introduced me at a campaign event and shared just how much my mentorship set the foundation for where he is today. A fact I am proud to have played a role in.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a Democratic candidate, I share many of the values of the WCDP and hope for many of the same reforms to take place in our criminal legal system. I am seeking the endorsement of the WCDP to communicate these shared values and goals to the voters of Washtenaw County.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Board member of Ann Arbor YMCA, Washtenaw Technical Middle College, Washtenaw Justice Partnership,

and planning team member of Washtenaw My Brother's Keeper. I've previously sat on numerous other local boards, developed programs still operating today that have made the lives of many better, and served as youth track coach for nearly ten years, helping to mentor and develop hundreds of young people.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

As an active member of the Washtenaw County community, I have supported numerous candidates and causes with the goal of making our county a better place for all residents. I have done so by volunteering to knock doors, endorsing candidates who aligned with my values, attending and supporting fundraising events, and working to provide guidance to candidates on how we can best reform our criminal legal system and the issues we face. One candidate I am most proud to have supported is President Obama. I traveled the country knocking doors and helped organize the volunteer group known as Michiganders for Obama. I was even elected as a convention delegate and able to attend the convention in Denver.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: County Water Resources Commissioner

**Candidate: Gretchen Driskell for County Water Resources Commissioner**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://votegretchen.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I have worked over many years to improve our infrastructure, environment and fresh water. I have experience in local, regional and state government. I understand the importance of working with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure success. I have a strong financial background and recently completed a degree at the University of Michigan Ford Public Policy School.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I am currently a township trustee but have served in the past as a councilmember, mayor and state legislator. I believe the best practise of electeds is to actively listen by going to your constituents and provide opportunities for constituents to be educated as to what the office priorities and impacts on our world can be. Accountability and transparency are paramount.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have supported the WCDP financially and while in elected partisan office. I have been involved in regional

organizations as a volunteer or board member (United Way, Rotary, Destination Ann Arbor)

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I've supported other state/federal candidates financially and with moral support (fundraising, door knocking, shoulder to lean on)

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

The WCDP is instrumental in ensuring democratic values and candidates are successful. Educating and registering voters are all key components that the WCDP is known to perform at a very high level.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

In the fall of 2022 I purchased my new home in Dexter township and completed the move in the winter of 2023. I am on the Dexter township board. I helped to start a lake association last year to educate our homeowners to protect our fresh water. I served on the committee that allocates funds to protect farmland and open space in 2023.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

i have mentored and financially supported Democratic candidates at the local, regional, state, and federal level.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No

Office: County Commissioner - District 2

**Candidate: Crystal Lyte for County Commissioner - District 2**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.electcrystallyte.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the best candidate for Commissioner District 2 because I love, advocate, and work for this county. I stand in the gap for those that believe they have no voice in this world that we live in. I am the best candidate because I am submissive and welcome to change that our county and state continues to receive, however I am protective and a gate keeper to nonsense!

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I have used my office to benefit my not only constituents in my district but throughout the county. This office has allocating funding to housing & homelessness, adopted a millage for seniors, will open a community center on the eastern side of the county, and has allowed me to build relations with constituents that were hidden.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

My journey begin with the WCDP in 2020 as part of community engagement/outreach/events and however else I could be of use to the Democratic Party. I am here for Good!!!

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have mentored students and even my peers by illustrating, advocating for the Democratic Party and they have slowly but surely begin to become more active and involved.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking this endorsement because I want constituents to know that the party I represent stands with me and supports me!

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I work with youth, I provide in-kind services with a local farmer, I advocate and assist individuals that are in need of assistance with business matters.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I support TRUE Democratic candidates by campaigning, providing information to constituents about the Democratic party and the candidates.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

none

**Office: County Commissioner - District 5**

**Candidate: Justin Hodge for County Commissioner - District 5**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*



**More Information:** <https://www.votejustinhodge.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

Experience matters. As your County Commissioner for the past four years, I have been honored to work on bettering our community for all. I know firsthand where we have made improvements, but also know where work is left to be done. This knowledge of how to resolve issues from within, what stakeholders need to be engaged, and understanding of county processes make me the best candidate.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

From expanding broadband access for rural Washtenaw residents in Augusta Township to working to make an eastern Washtenaw recreation center come to life for Ypsilanti Township residents, I have spent every day in public service focused on improving the health, wealth, and safety of my community. If elected, I am laser-focused on continuing in this mission.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have served on the WCDP board for multiple terms and am currently the Vice Chair of the county party.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

In my day job, I serve as a professor of social work at the University of Michigan, working with students who have specific interest in macro-level social work at the intersection of providing services and policy.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking this endorsement to show voters that I share their values and their political viewpoints and will faithfully represent them on the County Commission.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

My service goes beyond elected office and I regularly attend and participate in meetings and organizations which aim to better the lives of my constituents. From food banks to religious organizations it is vital that elected leaders contribute to their community and I have and will continue to be an active participant in these ways.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have a strong history of supporting democratic candidates and causes through my work as a board member of the WCDP. Whether by attending fundraisers, knocking doors, promoting candidates, or helping to advise first-time candidates, I am proud of my years-long record of supporting our local party and causes.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

**Office: County Commissioner - District 6**

**Candidate: Ryan Hunter for County Commissioner - District 6**

*(1 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://ryanforwashtenaw.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

As a lifelong resident of Washtenaw County, I hold a deep care and concern for the welfare of our residents and the community as a whole. I am convinced that effective community service requires the development and maintenance of positive, productive relationships both across the county and within the district one represents. Having served on the Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees I see the ways our greater Ypsilanti community have been siloed. I want to end that and unite all of District 6. I have striven to maintain positive relationships with residents, elected leaders, as well with non-profit organizations, and the business community. During my time working on staff for Congresswoman Debbie Dingell I learned that we are to be servants to our community and listen to the needs of people.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Since joining the Board of Trustees, I have been committed to echoing the community's voice, ensuring that I listen carefully to the residents' wishes and champion their needs. My service on the Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees has deepened my grasp of the complexities of local governance and the board's responsiveness to the community's issues and needs. In August, a topic regarding the Supreme Felons garnered considerable public attention, with concerns that the Township was planning to stop the Supreme Felons' activities. However, the board aimed not to terminate their work but to modify their communication with the County. After considering the substantial public input, it was evident that the residents did not want to impede the Supreme Felons in any way. As a result, another Board Member and I proposed to postpone the discussion about the Supreme Felons, which effectively concluded the issue and ensured the continuation of the Supreme Felons program in Ypsilanti Township.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I volunteered on the 21st Century Policing Compliance Commission and also volunteered on the Ann Arbor Area Transportation as a representative for Ypsilanti Township.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I participated with Mentor2Youth in 2017-2018 and served as a mentor for an Ypsilanti High School student. This mentorship included meeting with them once every two weeks, and also offering guidance and advice as they completed their high school education.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I'm seeking the endorsement of the WCDP because I wish to serve the community, and I respect the leadership of the WCDP. I want to bridge the gaps between certain areas of the county, and I want to serve as someone who will unite and bring all of us to the table I believe having the endorsement of the WCDP would not only show the continued commitment to diversity but would also serve to inspire other voters of color to engage and believe in the Democratic Party.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have served in several volunteering roles including the AAATA Board of Directors, the Community Action Board, and also the 21st Century Policing Committee.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I was honored and humbled to have worked on staff for Congresswoman Debbie Dingell from 2016 to 2019 and was her representative for all local concerns and issues regarding the Ypsilanti Community.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No

**Candidate: Annie Somerville for County Commissioner - District 6**

*(2 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.VoteAnnieSomerville.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am running for re-election because I am committed to further enhancing human services, improving access to housing, and providing robust support for youth and older adults in Washtenaw County. I do this work because it's personal. Growing up, I experienced periods of extreme poverty. I know what it's like to experience food insecurity, lack of access to water or electricity, and unstable housing. I watched my Mom struggle with substance use issues as well as housing stability. In 2008, after two years of sobriety, my mom passed away during a period of homelessness. My lived experience has guided me to prioritize human service needs in our community and shows through the work done over the last 6 years in public service.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Since being elected to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners in 2022, I have been steadfast in making sure that residents in my district are being represented and that I am using my to get the county to invest more in human services. Together with community support, we have been successful in increasing the amount of money that Washtenaw County Government invests in housing and homeless, nutrition access, youth programming, and services for seniors.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I've been involved with the WCDP since 2018 by actively attending meetings, participating in fundraisers, forums, and encouraging community members to join.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have actively recruited first-time candidates to run for local office, and have helped to encourage diverse members of the community to join appointed and volunteer boards.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

The Democratic Party represents diverse values which aim to build a better community, and I share many of these values. I am seeking this endorsement to communicate these shared ideals with the voters of my district.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I am very engaged in my community. I am a board member of We the People Opportunity Farm, and in the past, I have volunteered at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum and Chaired Ypsilanti's Bicentennial Celebration. I regularly support organizations in my community that do work to promote mentorships to youth, promote access to literacy, provide support for seniors, provide support for the formerly incarcerated, and work towards addressing environmental concerns.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have worked on democratic campaigns since 2016 across Washtenaw County and in marginal state legislative races. In the last 3 cycles, I have spent an immense amount of time traveling across the state of Michigan to help deliver democratic wins(most recently helping flip the state house and senate).

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No. But I don't think this should be a question on the WCDP candidate questionnaire.

Office: County Commissioner - District 7

**Candidate: Andy LaBarre for County Commissioner - District 7**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.andylabarre.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I have served for almost 12 years and have had major successes in the areas of human service protection and expansion. I work hard and I'm honest. I am effective. People trust me. These things make me the best candidate for the 7th District of the BoC. Also, I am the only primary and general election candidate on the ballot, so I feel like I have a good case here.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I have lead the efforts to ensure our safety nets remain strong and grow in their ability to serve our residents. The effort I have been most successful on has been the expansion of mental health services with the millage (authored original millage) and in increasing resources for these services in our budgets. I have also directly helped on tough issues like the winding down of CoFu and the implementation of NHSP, negotiation of our HSHV policies, and the Platt Rd. site and others.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I served on the executive board from 2007 through 2012. I have been part of the county committee since 2013. I attend meetings and have spoken at meetings and helped get speakers. I have attended fund raisers and contributed to the party.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I think there are four colleagues who would tell you I have directly helped them as they were new on the BoC in a way that helped them as they were first doing the job and become better at it. Those are Jason Morgan, Katie Scott, Justin Hodge, and Annie Somerville. I will not say this was mentoring but I will say I worked to be a very engaged and supportive fellow commissioner.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a Democrat, the party's endorsement speaks to my efforts to best reflect the policies and principals of our party and demonstrate my usefulness as a commissioner.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I serve on the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health Board, I provide a large amount of personal time to the efforts related to being an effective commissioner, I speak at events as an elected official, and I frequently meet with local social service leaders and community group leaders to help them best succeed in any work related to the county. I work to put in place what I believe are the very best county policies.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

Since I turned 18 (year 2000) I have always supported Democratic candidates at the federal and state (Gore, Kerry, Obama, Obama, Clinton, Biden, Biden) (Stabenow, Granholm, Levin, Stabenow, Granholm, Levin, Bernero, Stabenow, Schauer, Peters, Stabenow, Whitmer, Peters, Whitmer) levels, and local level (. I have also actively supported causes our party stands for such as civil rights, voting access, environmental efforts, and pro-worker efforts.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No.

Office: Ann Arbor City Council - Ward 2

**Candidate: Jon Mallek for Ann Arbor City Council - Ward 2**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.votejonmallek.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

While I am the only candidate for the position I seek, I think I am the best candidate for Ann Arbor City Council Ward 2 because I plan to advocate for and listen to the residents of Ward 2, all while attempting to balance the current and future needs of Ann Arbor.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I am seeking office for the first time. As such, I plan to do extensive outreach to keep my constituents informed, including a regular newsletter, community outreach events, and dialog sessions. I will then take the information and input I receive to influence my decisions on council.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

As a relatively new resident of Washtenaw County, and new as of the pandemic, my involvement has been mostly limited to attending monthly meetings and candidate forums.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I think the idea of mentorship is extremely important as it allows for education and experience-sharing in a safe, dedicated space. Most examples that come to mind are work related. For example, I have always advocated for hiring (paid) interns to allow them access to spaces they wouldn't otherwise have access to; I am then able to mentor and share my experiences with them to help foster their growth.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the endorsement of WCDP to gain the support and credibility the party can lend. While I am uncontested, I would like to tap into the brand and platform the party can provide. In turn, I hope to uphold the values and priorities of the WCDP in and outside of office.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I do my best to remain involved in as many community spaces as possible. This can include attending and engaging at community events; it can also include volunteering, where I have enjoyed donating my time for primarily food- and -agricultural-based organizations like community gardens and climate groups.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have supported democratic candidates or nonpartisan but democratic-leaning candidates exclusively my entire life. This started with my own mother, who ran for county clerk in my home county in Wisconsin in 2006. As an active member of college democrats, I supported and campaigned for democratic candidates up and down the ballot in 2010 and 2012. Post college, I have helped fundraise and donated money to local democratic candidates. In the most recent election of 2022, I campaigned door-to-door for local state house and senate candidates.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: Ypsilanti City Council - Ward 3

**Candidate: Evan Sweet for Ypsilanti City Council - Ward 3**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://evanforypsi.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I believe that I am the best candidate for Ypsilanti City Council because I bring a care and concern for all residents of Ypsilanti. I believe that we must prioritize the people, which is why since my time on City Council I have supported 3 new housing developments that will bring hundreds of new units of housing to Ypsilanti. I

have also been a strong proponent of investment in infrastructure approving millions in investment on our main roads and bridges throughout the city.

I believe my experience on City Council currently, and other relevant experience outlined below, make me the best candidate to continue in this role.

- Over a decade of experience in municipal government, employed by Canton Township
- Served on City of Ypsilanti Parks & Recreation Commission from 2015-2022
- Served on the Board of Directors for the Ypsilanti Senior Center from 2016-2022

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Actions I've supported to improve the lives of Ypsilanti residents.

- Amended zoning to permit supportive housing developments.
- Supported housing projects to bring hundreds of new units of housing to Ypsilanti.
- Advocated for increased pedestrian safety measures on neighborhood streets.
- Implemented process for speed radar signage on city streets.
- Supported grant applications for new playground equipment.
- Secured grant funding for free kayak trips, park repairs, and new park amenities.
- Added a new city park on southside of the city to preserve public spaces for all residents.
- Reconstruction of major city roads including Michigan Avenue, Huron, Hamilton, and Washtenaw Avenue with new pavement, traffic signals, and added bike lanes to enhance safety.
- Supporting maximizing use of dedicated federal and state funding for remediation of Water Street property to get full scope of the site conditions and contamination.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have served on the Ypsilanti Senior Center Board of Directors, Eastern Michigan University Alumni Association Board of Directors, and the former Ypsi P.R.I.D.E Day Community Clean Up Day Planning Committee

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have received mentorship, but not mentored others.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I want to continue to serve the residents of Ypsilanti. I have worked hard over the past two years on City Council to serve and improve the lives on Ypsilanti residents, and I want to continue much of the work that has been started in the past two years. Endorsement from the WCDP will further enhance my work in Ypsilanti

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have been an organizer in my neighborhood on the east side of the city for several years, and been highly



engaged in taking the lead on planning neighborhood gatherings, including an annual block party, Halloween events, and neighborhood wide yard sale. I have been engaged with residents from my time on the City Parks and Recreation Commission by working with residents on tree plantings, park clean ups, park improvement projects, and much more to enhance our public parks.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I've supporting and voted only for Democratic candidates since I've been able to vote. I believe in the values of the party, and want to see Democrats be successful in their roles.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No.

Office: 15th District Court - Judge

**Candidate: Sharifa Kerene Moore for 15th District Court - Judge**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.moorejustice2024.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

The 15th district primarily handles evictions, lawsuits less than 25K, and minor criminal offenses. It's where people either receive resources needed to move forward, or go deeper into the system. Our community has an affordable housing crisis; MI ranks dead last in crime victim services; charges are disproportionately pursued against black community members in Washtenaw Co.; and those who can afford counsel appear to have privileged access to the courts. I started my career representing hundreds of people who could not afford an attorney, including tenants and crime victims. I fought discrimination at the Dept of Civil rights. And since 2021, I've helped implement justice reform in Washtenaw.—first, behind the bench as a judicial attorney/juvenile referee and currently as the Director of Conviction Integrity at the Prosecutor's office. If elected, the community can trust that I will work to guarantee equal access to justice for community members from all walks of life.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

As Judge, I will fortify our treatment courts; prioritize victim services; and continue justice reforms. While the 15th District Court has 3 treatment courts, they currently run on a shoestring budget. I will pursue funding and establish partnerships with community organizations to ensure that services are sustainable. I will establish local court rules that facilitate victim access to compensation and recovery support. I will work hard to connect with treatment court participants to help each find a path forward. I will not only use my landlord-tenant experience to increase eviction diversion and pro se support, I will also design a housing treatment court that provides judicial oversight over termination of tenancy cases involving low-income households. I will also work hard to promote alternatives to incarceration and absolutely minimize cash bail or other punitive measures that

cause unfair collateral consequences.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

Since 2012, I have been heavily involved in the WCDP. I've supported several candidates by knocking doors, engaging in the endorsement process, and helping build the WCDP Black Caucus. I currently support the caucus endorsement committee. For example, prior to running for this seat, I helped establish policies and design an endorsement questionnaire for vetting applicants.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have been the beneficiary of several strong Dem mentors. My introduction to the WCDP was through a Justice Caucus training where I learned about grass roots organizing from Yousef Rabhi and gained important campaign expertise from Jeff Irwin. However, most importantly, I met many strong women like Barb Fuller who explained the distinct barriers placed before women candidates. Having had the opportunity to attend numerous campaign trainings, I've met with and shared my personal handbook, and encouraged and endorsed other successful candidates, including Linh Song, Carrie Rheingans and Ayesha Ghazi-Edwin. I also normalize mothering on the campaign trail. We see each other. We support each other. We know how hard it is to work, raise kids, and serve as community leaders. We keep at it to make sure children have role models and that women are represented up and down the ballot.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

While judicial candidates are required to be nonpartisan officials under Michigan law, I am seeking the endorsement of the WCDP to communicate to voters my shared values and desire to serve our community in a way which promotes justice, equity, compassion, and diversity.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I play an active role in both community-based and statewide legal organizations. I served a four year term on the Ann Arbor District Library Board of Trustees. I've also served on the boards of the Jim Toy Community Center, Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission, Neutral Zone, Equality Michigan, and the LGBTQ+ Law Section of the State Bar. Finally, as an established leader in the legal field, I regularly share my expertise as both a speaker and author on issues such as bail reform, LGBTQ+ rights, and domestic violence. I serve on the editorial boards of legal journals for the State Bar's LGBTQ+ Law Section, as well as the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan. I enjoy mentoring students, both through the pro bono project I founded and supervise at U-M Law School, as well as younger high school students participating in mock trials or engaging in leadership activities at the Neutral Zone.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I work hard to support Dem candidates whether on the partisan or nonpartisan section of the ballot. For example, I have knocked over a thousand doors for Gretchen Whitmer, Tracy Van den Bergh, and Jimmie Wilson, Jr. Although I am a career public servant, I have also donated to numerous local and state Dem candidates. When not running for a judicial seat and limited by ethical constraints, I publicly endorsed

Democratic candidates. I am always at the polls helping with GOTV, and have helped distribute the WCDP Voter Guide door-to-door. I signed and encouraged others to sign the reproductive health petition. I actively fought for reforms while on the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission, including establishing a community-police oversight committee and supporting a ban on conversion therapy.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

Not applicable.

**Office: 22nd Circuit Court - Judge**

**Candidate: Jinan Hamood for 22nd Circuit Court - Judge**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.jinanforjudge.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am rooted in this community, practice in this community, and have experience in all areas of law that arise before the Circuit Court - criminal, family, and civil litigation. My years of experience working directly with residents of Washtenaw County in our criminal legal system set me apart from my opponent because my practice is rooted in the community I hope to represent, and makes me uniquely qualified to understand where we need to improve as a court system.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I believe that judges, like any other elected official, should serve transparently, with compassion, and with concerns of residents in mind. If elected, I would do just that. I would seek to ensure court services are accessible to more people by encouraging access to justice reforms, translating forms into more languages, and working to ensure people are not hindered by financial burdens to access the legal system. Furthermore, I would work to communicate changes via court social media and press release channels, and encourage my colleagues on the bench to do the same. Finally, I am committed to individual review of all manners with an open mind so all of my constituents feel heard - we must ensure that everyone is granted equal access to their day in court.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have attended meetings and events hosted by the WCDP in non-election and election years.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I volunteer for mock trial/moot court, both for judging and for playing a role (client, witness, expert, etc.). When

I'm assigned to a group as a participant, or during judging, I often share my contact information. I've had several students follow up and ask to meet at the conclusion of our work together. When we meet, I provide advice and access to connections, events, and continued follow up so long as the student is receptive. I do the same with new/young lawyers, and particularly women and women of color. I will invite a mentee to an event, introduce her to everyone I speak to, and often make reference to her if I'm presenting at the event. It's important to have a more senior person in your profession to receive feedback and advice from. I've always had that and want to pay it forward.

### **Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the endorsement of the WCDP to communicate to voters that my judicial philosophy aligns with their values, and that I will be a judge focused on diversity, inclusion, compassion and reforms.

### **In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Over the course of my professional life, I have been active in numerous organizations including nonprofits, bar associations, HOAs, and more. In every community I am a part of, I always try to give 110% and leave things better than when I first became a part of the group.

### **Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

While judicial candidates are specifically prohibited from endorsing or supporting candidates for partisan office under the Judicial Canons of Ethics, I can say that I have donated to and volunteered for Democratic candidates prior to seeking judicial office.

### **If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: Augusta Township - Trustee

**Candidate: Terrance Green for Augusta Township - Trustee**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:ElectTerrance@gmail.com>

### **Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

Transparency and Accountability: Keeping all things open and honest

Commitment to Transparency: Not trying to do things that may appear improper.

Accountability:

Collaborative Approach: Working with the whole board and not just doing what your friends want

Listening to Residents: Listening to the concerns of the residents and taking them seriously

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Not ever held office

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

N/A

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have been a Full-time Classroom teacher, teaching Carpentry to High school students.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

Alignment with Democratic Values:

Shared Principles:

Policy Advocacy:

Enhanced Credibility and Support:

Trust and Credibility:

Network and Resources:

Community Engagement and Representation:

Broadening Support Base:

Inclusive Representation:

Strategic Advantage in the Election:

Electoral Strength:

Voter Mobilization:

Commitment to Local and Countywide Collaboration:

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I Have served on the Augusta Twp Planning commission.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have been a Lifelong Democrat

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

no

**Office: Dexter Township - Supervisor**

**Candidate: Lonnie Scott for Dexter Township - Supervisor**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information: <https://www.VoteLonnie.com>**

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the only candidate in this race with experience on the Dexter Township Board and having run local government meetings when I previously served as the chair of Ypsilanti Township Park Commission.

I was born and raised in Washtenaw County, and my wife, Heather, and I are excited to raise our family in Dexter Township.

From 2013 to 2023, I led Progress Michigan, one of the state's largest progressive non-profits, fighting for better government transparency, paid sick time, higher minimum wage, and strong public schools. My work in the Michigan legislature with progressive leaders Alma Wheeler Smith and Jeff Irwin gave me valuable experience in public budgeting and the importance of listening to our community.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

As a current Dexter Township Trustee, I'm proud of what my colleagues and I have accomplished which are too numerous to list here, but include improving local roads, preserving farmland and open space, hosting several clean-up days, and increasing transparency and communication. I am eager to continue my work expanding our cellular service across the township and to continue serving as one of Dexter Township's representative on the Dexter Area Fire Department board. Our board is very active and continuously working to make Dexter Township a better place for all of our residents.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have previously served on the WCDP as vice-chair for communications, though that was many years ago. Recently, I presented at a WCDP meeting about Townships in the county being ready for change and have helped several dem candidates file and run for township board positions. I have also been engaging with the WCDP chair to be helpful with other party initiatives.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

As the Executive Director of Progress Michigan for a decade, I mentored numerous individuals, fostering their growth both personally and professionally. After leaving Progress Michigan I have been consulting on several campaigns, helping others learn new, cutting-edge techniques for voter communication.

In addition to my professional life, I volunteer as a youth hockey coach in the Chelsea area. This experience allows me to mentor young athletes, teaching them the values of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. I've served as a volunteer coach for six years now and have coached some of the same kids the entire time, it's been incredible to watch them succeed and grow.

For over 15 years I have also been a college leadership speaker. Traveling to college campuses around the country training young adults in leadership and political activism.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

The members of WCDP fight for the same values I share every day. They are the backbone of our party and share their talents and time in an effort to make long-lasting change. I am proud to have been supported by the WCDP previously and would be honored to their support again.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

When I was elected to fill a vacancy on the Dexter Township board in 2022, I immediately went to work setting up additional community engagement events. We've hosted an outdoor family movie night at the Township Hall, several coffee chats with the Trustees, marched in parades, hosted booths at community events, and held several community engagement sessions around different topics. In addition, I have supported other efforts such as community clean-up day and strategic planning sessions. I also serve as one of two Dexter Township Representatives on the Dexter Area Fire Department Board. In addition, I am a volunteer hockey coach with the Chelsea Hockey Association.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have volunteered on Democratic campaigns since before I could vote. In a professional role I have worked on several progressive ballot measures and now consult with campaigns and organizations to help them communicate with voters better. While most of my work with Progress Michigan was on the Independent Expenditure side, I led one of the largest progressive SuperPACS in the state, supporting progressive candidates up and down the ballot.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: Dexter Township - Trustee

**Candidate: Karen Nolte for Dexter Township - Trustee**

*(1 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofKarenNolte/>

### **Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am running as an incumbent in 2024 for a Trustee position in Dexter Township . During the past 3 1/2 years, it has been an honor to serve our community in this position. Our administration has been extremely active and my desire is to complete or finalize some of the projects which I am currently working on and to launch new initiatives.

My 3 1/2 year history already working as a Trustee accompanied with my business ownership background supplies me with the ability to juggle many projects while paying attention to the budget and it's outcomes. I stay focused to transparency, financial governance and community. Additionally, I wish to complete the projects I have in process including: broadband to our underserved residents, continuing to improve our communication methods, finish restoring our historic cemeteries, and improving our waste water treatment plant. Additionally, we need to look forward to our traffic patterns and create some solutions to our challenges.

### **If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

### **If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I created the new communication methods to our residents: our monthly email "in the loop" updates and printed newsletters. Additionally, I initiated the Hudson Mills Metropark pass program, launched the restoration of our historic cemeteries and our Fall Clean-Up Days. Of course, each project is a group effort, garnering support of the Broad or building volunteer teams to complete the tasks.

I support financially sound projects that create wins for our community, like improving our roads, community engagement evenings, balancing our budget and smart investment of those dollars, emergency planning. Financial oversight is our main focus as a Trustee to protect our residents.

### **Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I support the Democratic process, candidates, and overall philosophy of our party with my voice, my dollars and my vote.

### **Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have built a couple volunteer teams within our township to assist with the recycling film project, to assist with rebuilding our cemeteries and to work on our clean-up days. I will continue to bring people into our roles in the township and look for younger people to assist and fulfill future roles.

### **Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a life long Democrat and elected official, I seek the backing of the organization that I support and follow.



Our job is to work to improve our residents quality of life and get assist getting out the vote for our President.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Besides my approximate 15 hours per week working on Township community projects, I also an involved in creating our Lake Association and completing water quality testing to collect data for future use in conjunction with the Huron River Watershed Council. Additionally, I organize and maintain our private road which serves 38 homes in our neighborhood.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have been a life long Democrat, supporting the party agenda and progressive agendas. As a gay citizen, I have fought for our rights and equity for over 50 years. People think I am political, but I have to be to fight for my rights as a citizen. I have worked collecting signatures on petitions, such as gerrymandering. One reason to rerun within this election cycle is to work to get the Democratic voters out to the polls, so important at this juncture.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

**Candidate: Karen Sikkenga for Dexter Township - Trustee**

*(2 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:karen@huronrivergroup.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am an experienced Trustee with a track record of successful policy and program implementation. I am a public sector budget and finance professional, with over 30 years experience helping local and state government entities use their tax dollars to maximum benefit for their constituents. Most recently my work has focused on federal, state, and local public gardens, land conservancies, parks and trails. I have a masters degree in public administration with a focus on policy and budget.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

In my tenure as trustee and then supervisor, we have:

- Brought all Dexter Township's local gravel roads into good condition
- Implemented a land preservation program with a new mileage
- Approved a master plan with extensive community engagement, and created a five year strategic plan to guide our policies and programs
- Brought forward public safety mileages for police, fire, and ambulance services that were approved by over

80% of voters

- Initiated a free MetroPark pass program for Dexter Township residents
- Initiated clean-up days and new recycling options
- Initiated print and eNewsletters, social media, and community engagement activities to keep our residents informed
- Upgraded our emergency warning sirens and brought them into conformity with county standards
- Digitized, preserved, and publicized our records

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have not been involved. I wish WCDP would provide better support for newly elected officials. I could have used the support.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Our local roads management is being used as a model for other townships throughout Washtenaw County. We developed a rubric for prioritizing road repair, developed a model for multi-year capital budgeting, and established a local roads committee to ensure public engagement. We have met with trustees from several townships, referred to us by the Road Commission, to distribute our best practices countywide.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

The democratic slate has been much more proactive in improving quality of life for Dexter a townships than the prior republican slate. Your endorsement will help us get re-elected and continue to do our good work.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

In addition to serving as a trustee, I am a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters. I have a low-income little sister for whom I serve as a mentor and adult ally. I also work hard to offer her enrichment opportunities to which she would not otherwise have access. I am working toward helping her achieve goals that she and her parents set out for us at the beginning of our match over a year ago.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have supported elected officials (almost all democrats) since the start of my career. That is my profession. In addition, I have campaigned for Hillary Clinton and Gretchen Driskell, and have donated to many democratic candidates over the years.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No none

Office: Lodi Township - Clerk

**Candidate: Eric John Roberts for Lodi Township - Clerk**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://Roberts2024.org>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

With a Graduate Certificate in Election Administration, and being one of just 60 Master Municipal Clerks in Michigan's history, I have the skills and experience to make this Clerk's Office work well for all residents and expand understanding of elections all the while. Currently, the Lodi Township Board violates the Open Meetings Act routinely and I, having studied this law in depth in previous elected roles, will fix this and train the entire board (and public) on this law to ensure compliance. I intend to make Township government far more transparent by reworking the outdated Lodi Township website, streaming meetings, publishing FOIA responses, and other best practices in transparency so that more residents can be engaged here in local decisions.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Next March, for "Sunshine Week", I intend to do a FOIA training directed at the public wherein I go over all the types of information that the FOIA gives a public the right to, and how to best use the FOIA to hold government accountable. This includes subscribing to regularly produced documents for up to six months at a time, like a board packet for any public body. I will build a newsletter for residents that shares what the Township Board is working on and solicits feedback from residents on local issues. I will propose new policies that require streaming and recording of public meetings and policies requiring all boards that report to the Lodi Township Board to fully comply with the OMA (not currently required). We will implement best practices in transparency and communicate the shortcomings in current law to our legislators to strengthen democracy statewide.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

Since moving here in 2023, I have been engaged in WCDP programming and helped support the priority setting for the newly established Young Democrats Washtenaw. I have been vocal about recruiting candidates in Washtenaw townships that now lean Democratic.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

When I was a school board member for Kenowa Hills Public Schools, I routinely encouraged other young people to run for office as I had. Upon a resignation to the Walker City Council, I encouraged Carol Glanville to apply for this role and shared my experience as a public official in the area. Then-Commissioner Glanville, now a State Representative, and I met with precinct delegates to encourage them to run for office or be part of one of Walker's many appointed boards and commissions. I value the many ways that folks can be involved in government and often recruit folks to run for office or seek appointment to a public body, if

campaigning/spotlight is not for them.

### **Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As the sole Democratic candidate for Lodi Township Clerk, I would like the backing of WCDP to show that I pursue the ideals of justice, fairness, and supporting democratic elections. We need more bright, hardworking election officials that want to show the community more of the process and work with other election administrators to continually improve the experience for voters at every step of the electoral process.

### **In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I am a trained Legal Observer and the President of the UToledo National Lawyers Guild, an organization that defends the right to assembly and speech against repressive police forces. I intend to do defense, mass defense, when I receive my J.D. As a baseball umpire assigner, I have always fought for increased wages for my independent officials. Additionally, I will raise \$80,000-\$100,000 for Michigan charities this calendar year as a supplier of charitable gaming, wherein I also employ a dozen poker dealers and we do not ask about felony status on applications. When in office, I would love to organize a "Pull Over Prevention" (POP) session where volunteers fix up small issues on cars to make it less likely they will have a negative interaction with police at a traffic stop.

### **Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

When I was 12, I went to my first Grand Rapids City Commission meeting to give public comment asking the City to "ban the box," making it unlawful for businesses in the City to ask on employment applications whether someone has been convicted of a crime. At age 17, I met with my Republican state representative and asked him to make noise about overturning Citizens United v. FEC (2010). He said he liked the idea, but I was the only person who ever asked him about it so he declined to do anything. Later that year, I got the City of Cedar Springs to pass a resolution opposing Citizens United v. FEC and asking the MI Legislature to propose changing the US Constitution to defeat Citizens United. Suffice to say, I have tried to tackle injustice where it lay throughout my life. Specific to the party, I previously served as YDM's electoral director and I served briefly on MDP State Central Committee.

### **If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

I was suspended from high school, but that's about it. I defended a classmate against a teacher that was demeaning and rude to her.

**Office:** Lodi Township - Supervisor

**Candidate:** Barry Wauldron for Lodi Township - Supervisor

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://barryforlodi.org>

### **Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

Under Michigan law, the township supervisor is also the head assessor. Most supervisors have no assessing training or experience and hire an assessor to perform that work.. I am a Level III advanced certified assessor and can bring an experienced eye to the assessing practices in my township. I also have a masters degree in urban planning and can contribute that education to the master plan and comprehensive planning process.

### **If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

### **If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I believe our township government needs to communicate more consistently and transparently with the constituents and I plan to use my teaching expertise to improve communication and our efforts to be a useful source for information. I also look forward to participating actively in the master plan development process, achieving the goals of the plan that the residents helped define.

### **Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I've lived in Washtenaw county for the last 10 years, and have been a municipal employee for much of that, working with county equalization on many occasions. I have not been directly involved with the WCDP prior to now, but have been a registered Dem my whole adult life.

### **Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I was a lecturer at UofM Dearborn for 12 years, mentoring numerous students in my time there. I supervised student senior projects, research efforts, and actively facilitated them learning more about their local government functions. I have also held supervisory positions that included training and developing staff members under my supervision.

### **Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am running for Lodi Township Supervisor as a Democrat, the first to attempt this in some time. I have a supportive situation with fellow Dem running mates, and the numbers seem to indicate we have a good chance of flipping a traditionally Republican township. I would like the endorsement and support of the WCDP to run a successful campaign and bring a more progressive agenda to the township.

### **In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I work as a municipal assessor, appraiser and code enforcement officer, so I am regularly engaging with residents and property owners about property tax matters, ordinance issues, etc. I consider this work to be valuable and essential public service that I've dedicated myself to.

### **Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have always voted Democrat in local and national elections. I was actively involved as a union organizer for 10 years and support organized labor and the right of workers to form unions. I am an environmental activist and have spent a lot of time advocating for renewable energy investment, carbon emission reductions, wildlife habitat protection, agriculture and sustainable food system reforms, etc.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

My last traffic citation was about 10 years ago. I've never been arrested, charged with, or formally accused of committing a crime. I've never been named as a defendant in a lawsuit.

Office: Lodi Township - Trustee

**Candidate: Leslie Blackburn for Lodi Township - Trustee**

*(1 of 5 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://LeslieforLodi.org>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I'm a passionate advocate for community empowerment, bringing a unique fusion of technical expertise and nature-inspired wisdom to my campaign for public office. I have a robust background and over fifty years of life experience including fifteen years in corporate engineering and management, and another fifteen as an entrepreneur in empowerment, healing and body sovereignty work. I've honed problem-solving skills, community facilitation, and strategic planning abilities, offering efficient solutions to intricate challenges. I am now answering my calling to serve both the land and the broader human community, which led me into the realm of politics.

My vision emphasizes care and connection, aiming to create governance that is fair, transparent, inclusive, and prioritizes the needs of all residents. My approach is characterized by a blend of joy, wisdom, and a commitment to care—care for our bodies, for each other, and for the planet we call home.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I am seeking office for the first time. I intend to serve by listening, creating accessibility and care, paving the way for mentorship and learning, co-creating changes to legislation by collaborating with the public, supporting land conservation and preservation options including creating more public access to nature and its healing properties. I will support an overhaul to our website and communication practices to allow the public to have access to information and have their needs heard and incorporated into decision making for our community.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I volunteered handing out Voter Guides in my region in 2020. And during non-election years I've brought repair to the land by planting trees and native plants, supported the Washtenaw County Conservancy District native tree and plant expos, and borrowed tools from their resource library. I've participated in water testing to support clean water in our area. I volunteer with Washtenaw County Bird and Nature Alliance to count birds in Lodi Township during May migration count. I also collaborate with Huron River Watershed Council, River Raisin Watershed Council, Legacy Land Conservancy and other preservation and conservation organizations in our county to support land preservation advocacy and actions.

Also - I have advocated at our county meetings listening and amplifying black voices to more equitably make decisions given the disparity of needs between the east and west sides of the county.

### **Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I've mentored others at many points during my life. Back in engineering, as a part of the Society of Automotive Engineers, I volunteered to share about engineering with students in middle school classrooms. I've spent many years co-creating community and have been in mentor roles supporting young, queer land and garden tending and herbalism. As a successful entrepreneur I've also mentored others to learn how to start their own businesses/self-employment. I've also been an anchor in intentional community building by offering a caring, grounded presence. With this presence along with skills and training, I listen and facilitate social technology practices that support getting to know each other's worlds and build intimacy and connection in communities. This then builds a fertile soil that reduces conflict and builds trust together.

### **Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I align with the values of the WCDP and am seeking your support in the Voter Guide to win this election and bring these values into action in our local township. We have only had unopposed republican candidates for all seven Board positions for decades, yet our township has proven to vote democrat in all cases it's had the chance to since 2018. It's time to give our community the chance to vote dems for our Township Board. I am running with an ally group, we six democratic candidates are running for progress and sustainability in Lodi Township. Team Progress is a group of caring and skilled public servants that are small business leaders, lifelong learners, and active listeners. See [Progress4Lodi.org](http://Progress4Lodi.org) for more about our group of six.

### **In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I've been an active participant and community advocate in our Lodi Township Planning Commission and Board meetings for the past several years to support our community voices to be heard. As mentioned above I am also a founding member of Livable Lodi. Community building with collective liberation at its core has been a major focus of mine in the past five years. I have been active in co-creating a new culture of creative non-violence and sharing social technologies to support it. I've also been part of a team working to build a co-operative model of running NOW Studios as part of the Express Your Yes foundation in Ann Arbor.

### **Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

When I began voting at age 18 in college, I left my parents' republican influences and felt into what was true for me, which meant voting dem where possible. I avoided taking a public political stance for years, something I now see as connected with "white silence is violence" and a fallout of white privilege. Then I had a wake up call

in 2018 where I began to see my own impact as a white person and began doing the work to unwind racism from my body and from our systems & structures. This collective liberation work is now central to all I do. I began tithing in 2019 to support social & racial justice, and continue to this day, to pay a percentage of my income to families & orgs that support folx disproportionately impacted by systemic oppression: BIPOC, trans, queer. I'm now more clear and vocal with my support for environmental & social justice, anti-racism work, and humanity care. I also support fellow democratic candidates as one of an ally group of 6 running for Lodi Twp positions.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No

## **Candidate: Steve Marsh for Lodi Township - Trustee**

*(2 of 5 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:marshforlodi@gmail.com>

### **Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I have worked and lived in Lodi Township for over 3 decades. Lodi Township is the place where my wife and I decided to start our family businesses and a 501(c)(3) non-profit. As the owner of small businesses, I have experience in accounting, HR, and management. All of these skills would help foster a professional environment at the Board of Trustees. As the founder for The Creature Conservancy, a non-profit focused on promoting conservation through education, I have always been passionate about bettering my community. I have spent the past 20 years waking up before sunrise every day to make sure that each animal has the highest standard of care. I have partnered with dozens of schools to ensure that kids have access to wildlife education. I have made my little corner of Lodi a space where people can become passionate about animals, people, and our planet. As a business owner and wildlife educator, I have the tools to make sure that Lodi puts sustainability and family businesses first.

### **If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

### **If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I am not a politician, but I have been attending local government meetings for long enough to know that people want elected officials who are clear, open, and communicative. As a wildlife educator, I spend my days taking confusing concepts and making them accessible for all. I hope to use this same skill on the Board of Trustees. I will always prioritize communication so that everyone's voice is heard, especially those who are often ignored.

Additionally, I would like to create more transparency so that community members can have access to what's going on in the Township. It would be simple to update the Township website to make sure that residents can stay up to date on their concerns as well as get notified of upcoming hearings and meetings. I will prioritize the organization of documents and notes to keep a clear record of every issue before the township. We deserve a Board of Trustees who makes it possible for Lodi Township residents to stay involved in decision-making.



**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I was born and raised in Washtenaw County and have always been a strong advocate for Democrats up and down the ballot. I have encouraged my neighbors to run for positions in the county as Democrats, such as Leslie Blackburn who I am running alongside in this race. Even if I am not elected, I will stay committed to supporting this party.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

At The Creature Conservancy, non-profit I founded, I work with lots of young people interested in conservation. It has been such an honor to help push their careers forward and teach them what I know about wildlife. I have taken my mentorship a step further with my coworker Alex Matelski, who I encouraged to run as a Democrat for the Lodi Township Board of Trustees.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a lifelong Democrat, when it came time to run, running as a Democrat was a no-brainer. The endorsement of the Washtenaw County Democratic Party would give me the credibility that I need as a first-time candidate. I would love to work alongside other local Democrats to ensure that we all succeed in November.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Running a non-profit animal rescue and education center has been my way of contributing to my community for the past 20 years. Every kindergartener and first grader in our school district comes to The Creature Conservancy. This is the place where kids first learn the difference between mammals and reptiles. This is the place where students from University of Michigan come to expand their studies. This is the place where retired people come to volunteer. I am so proud to have created a place where people can give back to animals and the planet every day.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have been voting blue since I turned 18. I am proud to have donated to Democratic candidates candidates in the past and I will continue to do so. My daughter has been volunteering on democratic campaigns since she was 14 and every election cycle I am excited to help her and her candidate of choice knock doors and make calls.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

I do not have a criminal record, I do not use social media, and I have never worked in politics before.

**Candidate: Alex Matelski for Lodi Township - Trustee**

*(3 of 5 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://matelskiforlodi.org>

### **Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

For too long, Lodi Township residents have felt unheard and unsupported by their government. It's not enough to just show up at meetings; you need to truly listen to the people, understand their concerns, and work to address them fairly. That's what true representation means to me. I've been attending every township meeting for the past two years, not just to observe, but to learn the community's needs and challenges. I understand the importance of clear and accessible information, especially when it comes to ordinances and zoning. I'm committed to working with residents, not against them, to ensure they have the support they need. I believe my experience and dedication make me the best candidate to bring real change and effective representation to Lodi Township.

### **If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

### **If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

While this is my first time seeking elected office, my commitment to serving the community is deeply rooted in my actions. For the past two years, I've consistently attended township meetings, not as a passive observer, but as an active listener, absorbing the concerns and needs of Lodi Township residents. I understand that true representation means being a voice for the people, ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed fairly. I'm dedicated to providing clear and accessible information about ordinances and zoning, making sure residents understand their rights and options. My commitment to collaboration is key, as I believe in working with residents, not against them, to ensure they have the support they need. I believe my experience and dedication make me the best candidate to bring real change and effective representation to Lodi Township, even in my first elected position.

### **Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have lived in Washtenaw County for just a few years, but during this time, I have actively supported the community through voting and engaging in local politics. Before deciding to run for office, I made it a priority to understand the needs and concerns of our residents by attending town hall meetings, participating in community events, and volunteering for local initiatives. My involvement has allowed me to build strong relationships within the community and stay informed about the issues that matter most to our constituents.

### **Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

As a wildlife educator, I have mentored young minds through educational programs, organizing and leading summer camps and field trips to teach children about wildlife conservation and the importance of preserving natural habitats.

In the book industry, I dedicated myself to promoting literacy and the love of reading. I actively fought against book bans, advocating for intellectual freedom and access to diverse literature. I supported local schools by organizing book fairs and literacy events, ensuring students had access to quality reading materials.

Additionally, I taught English as a second language in Brazil as a tutor, helping students improve their language skills and gain confidence. These experiences have enabled me to mentor and empower young

individuals, fostering their growth and encouraging their pursuit of knowledge.

### **Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the endorsement of the Washtenaw County Democratic Party because I share the values and priorities that the WCDP stands for: social justice, environmental sustainability, and the promotion of equitable opportunities for all residents. With this endorsement, I aim to strengthen our collective efforts in advocating for progressive policies that address the needs of our community, such as improving public education, ensuring affordable healthcare, and protecting our environment. I believe that the support of the WCDP will amplify our shared vision for a more inclusive and vibrant Washtenaw County.

### **In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I engage with and contribute to my community by regularly attending township meetings, where I stay informed about local issues and ensure that community voices are heard. I maintain open lines of communication with residents, listening to their concerns and working collaboratively to find solutions. As an educator with a community-based organization, I actively participate in programs that promote environmental awareness and literacy. For more details, please refer to my previous answers where I discussed my roles in wildlife education, promoting literacy in the book industry, and teaching English as a second language in Brazil. These experiences reflect my ongoing commitment to mentoring and empowering individuals within our community.

### **Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have consistently supported Democratic candidates and causes throughout my life, always voting blue to uphold the values of social justice, equity, and environmental sustainability. Coming from a predominantly red area, I made a conscious effort to represent and advocate for progressive values in my personal and professional life. I have engaged in meaningful conversations with friends and neighbors to raise awareness about the importance of Democratic policies and their positive impact on our community. My commitment to these principles has guided my actions and decisions, reflecting my dedication to creating a more inclusive and just society.

### **If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

I do not have a criminal record, I do not use social media, and I have never worked in politics before.

### **Candidate: Finn Roberts for Lodi Township - Trustee**

*(4 of 5 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://Roberts2024.org>

### **Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

As an artist, a queer person, and a young person, I understand the struggles of getting by today. My lived experience in poverty makes me someone who will understand the struggles of poor people in my community and come up with creative ways to build community interdependence. As opposed to the Republicans in office

today, I will value environmental rehabilitation and holding polluters accountable. I will oppose unsound development that needs to uproot old forests and wetlands to make way for luxury housing.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I hope to get Lodi Township to adopt the "Plain Language Campaign" by making its documents have far less jargon and be more readable by the public. I will support efforts to expand water testing for residents and work with other regional partners to advocate for clean water in Lodi and beyond. I will support Township-wide recycling efforts and look into contracting with our current provider to offer this to all Township residents.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I am newer to Washtenaw County, though I have attended some gatherings for the WCDP and sought to learn from panelists about topics to make our communities better.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Queer visibility is revolutionary. As an out queer young person, I am making space for myself and others to show up exactly as they are. I have not really formally mentored other folks, in that I'm a first time candidate at age 22, but I value others in my life that talked with me about running for office at an early age.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I have voted for Democratic candidates since I could vote because I recognize that environmental and economic justice are critical to safeguarding a livable future. I would like the support of the WCDP because I will champion environmental justice and try my best to include more voices at the table in our local democracy.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

Recently, I sold (and had some freebies) my art at Ypsi Pride and I have been a member of a queer social group that is building community and getting to know each other. As an artist, I hope that my art makes people think differently and challenge unfair systems and practices. I have also been involved in "Chalk the Block" for years, going to shows where I volunteer to make street art for the public to see.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have voted for Democratic candidates and increased voter rights since I could vote. I care about justice and support those who would try to make our government more fair and accessible to all. I am willing to work with anyone concerned about the grave climate crisis to push back against environmental destruction.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No.

**Candidate: Crystal Thrall for Lodi Township - Trustee**

*(5 of 5 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:crystal.thrall@gmail.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the only Democratic trustee candidate on the ballot, and the township will benefit from having more diversity on the board.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I will inform my decisions based on the township master plan. I would like to modernize communication between the board and residents in order to further encourage public engagement which will better inform board decisions. I will continue serving on the environmental committee.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have been an election inspector and election inspector chairperson for the last several elections. I also serve on the York Township Environmental Committee.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

As a graduate student, I served on the prospective graduate student visit planning committee and mentored incoming nuclear engineering graduate students. As a graduate student instructor, I mentored and taught undergraduate students. Currently, I am involved with a homeschool group and mentor families who are new to homeschooling.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a nonincumbent candidate, the WCDP endorsement would help with visibility and name recognition.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I attend township board meetings and serve on the York Township Environmental Committee. I have also worked several elections in my township both as an election inspector and election inspector chairperson.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

The most recent proposal I remember voting in favor of was for the Right for Reproductive Freedom Initiative. In general, I support millages for education, proposals that eliminate voting barriers, and Democratic candidates.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

I have not been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing.

Office: Pittsfield Township - Supervisor

**Candidate: Christina Lirones for Pittsfield Township - Supervisor**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/friends-of-christina-lirones-for-pittsfield-supervisor-1>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

My experience, and my passion for public service. I attend nearly all Board, Planning Commission, and Park Commission meetings, and know the issues residents struggle with. I served as elected Clerk and elected Treasurer for Pittsfield and have worked to make it the best place for all people to live. I helped stop a development that would have destroyed the Pittsfield Preserve, and other parks. This was a boon to residents, and a savings to rate payers who would have had to pay to serve the Preserve area with offsite utilities. I have responded to crises through teamwork and swift action. For example, when our team took office, led by Supervisor James R. Walter, the entire west side of the Township was served by one 16" diameter water main, and the Morgan Road booster station had frequent pump failures. Water pressures fell so low in the water tower, township residents frequently had to boil their water. We built a 5 million gallon reservoir and a 30" diameter water main to solve this.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I am not a current office holder, but I have served in the past. When I was Township Clerk (2000-2004) and Treasurer (2004-2008), and as Chair of the Planning Commission concurrently, I informed residents of activities that would affect individuals, their families, and their neighborhoods. We created a website. We provided the packet and information before meetings. Prior to the election of my colleague, Supervisor James R. Walter, the Supervisor thought meeting packets were not public. I followed the practice started by Clerk Judith Walter, the first Democrat elected as Clerk, and handed out all public information freely. We involved the public in Master Plan revisions. For voting, we worked with disability rights advocates for accommodations, and would drive ballots to anyone who had difficulty obtaining an absentee ballot. As Treasurer, I provided detailed information and hardship information to taxpayers, invested wisely, and as a member of the Board, kept the millage rate low.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have been a Precinct delegate for decades. I have served on the Executive Committee, and on the County Party Committee. I have attended meetings for many years and attended and voted at State and District Conventions. I brought my mother, as her age made it impossible for her to drive, and I have involved friends and neighbors for years.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have always encouraged Democrats to run for office, just as I was. Our team, beginning with Clerk Judith Walter and Trustee Pat Lennington, along with Trustee Judy Bocklage, were the first successful Democrats. In 1996, along with Trustee Marjorie Shelton (also a Democrat, who ran with a team of Republicans), the Township Board was, for the first time, a majority Democratic. In 2000, after James R. Walter and I had been distributing a newsletter, we encouraged a full slate of Democrats to run for the Township Board. We succeeded in taking every seat, except the Treasurer. That year, we did not field a slate of Park Commissioners, but, after one of the Republican Park Commissioners refused to provide services from his print shop to lesbians, we fielded a full slate of Democrats, including the first openly gay elected official in Pittsfield, Dr. Karen Brooke. I encouraged, helped, and funded current Trustee Andrea Urda-Thompson and many others through my PAC, Pittsfield Integrity.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

Because I have always been a Democrat, and strongly support the Democratic platform. Even though I grew up in a Republican area (Saline, Michigan was at the time strongly Republican), and even though my parents were Republicans, I was always a Democrat, and in time, my beloved, late mother also became a strong Democrat. Had my father lived longer, I like to think he would have come around as well. My sister is a strong Democrat and union activist in California. I truly believe Democratic values represent the vast majority of Americans, and that the liberal, progressive viewpoint is the most rational and best serves all people.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I am an active member and Secretary of the Board of Directors of Disability Network Washtenaw-Monroe-Livingston. Our mission is to advocate for, and help, people with disabilities. My daughter is intellectually disabled, and my husband and I are her caregivers. Our every effort is to help her live to her fullest potential. I am also a member of Washtenaw Lifespan. We are the parents of adult children who are intellectually and/or developmentally disabled. Our loved ones have aged out of the public school system into a world where they are unseen, forgotten, and left out of many social systems. We are their passionate advocates, and educate ourselves and others, in order to provide them with fulfilling, healthy lives. I am also an active member of Ann Arbor Host Lions Club, dedicated to preventing blindness and helping the blind. My late mother, and her mother, lived for many years with advanced macular degeneration. My husband and I helped my mother live at home, just as she wanted.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have very actively helped to elect Democrats at every level for many years, and my life is one of service to

others. I canvass, call, talk to others, and represent Democratic values always. My husband and I own a farm and work to protect the land and our environment at great personal cost; I am passionate about the environment and climate change. I operate a PAC, Pittsfield Integrity, that specifically assists grassroots Democratic candidates. I fundraise, recruit, and work especially to shift areas from Red to Blue. I am a strong union supporter and a member of the NTEU.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No. I have had multiple background checks, and have always been cleared for service. The most thorough was done for my job as a Revenue Officer at the IRS (2010-2015), and included in-person interviews with my friends and neighbors by an outside investigator. More recently, as member of the Board of Disability Network, a background check is performed annually and I have been cleared for service for the past three years.

Office: Scio Township - Trustee

**Candidate: John Reiser for Scio Township - Trustee**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.votereiser.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am a respected community leader and have long been committed to public service. I am a municipal attorney with a reputation for working collaboratively with others to reach solutions that benefit all residents.

In addition to serving as a Scio Township Trustee, I also serve the community as a Planning Commissioner and am a member of the Land Preservation Commission and the Parks, Preserves, and Pathways Committee.

My leadership experience includes serving as the former President of the Washtenaw County Bar Association. I am the Treasurer of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan and am on the board of the Home of New Vision, which assists those with substance abuse disorders.

I have experience in municipal law and a deep understanding of township governance which enables me to best serve our residents.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Over my two years in office, I have supported projects which directly impact my constituents. These include sidewalk expansions, enhanced township service delivery, fiscal responsibility, the preservation of open space, and more.

I am on the board of my local homeowners' association and led the charge to have a large dog park installed that is enjoyed by hundreds of residents in Scio Township. If elected, one of my goals is to advocate for using the Parks and Pathways millage to improve Scio Township parks and install more pathways and sidewalks.



Scio should also have a municipal park and a dog park, amenities we currently lack but are prevalent in adjacent communities.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have attended WCDP events and other county events and committees for years, whether or not it was an election year. This includes the annual Garden Party, July 4th parade, Black Caucus meetings, and other WCDP functions.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

As an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, and Municipal Attorney, I have mentored dozens of new employees or interns on various aspects of the practice of law, including handing dockets, legal writing assignments, and conducting trials.

As a municipal attorney, I have worked with new attorneys on the drafting and enforcement of various ordinances.

As a volunteer, I have trained and mentored new board members and helped them become instrumental members of various charitable organizations.

I was the long-time President of the prosecutors' union at Washtenaw County and mentored the new board in their respective roles before I left County employment for the City of Ann Arbor.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a Democratic candidate, I am seeking the endorsement of the WCDP because I support the party's mission and platform and hope to communicate this endorsement with voters in my community. I am proud to be endorsed by several state representatives, county, and local officials in my candidacy.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I am on the board of the Home of New Vision, a non-profit dedicated to helping those struggling with addictions to drugs and alcohol. I serve on the board of the local Women Lawyers Association. I am on the board of the Wheatland Music Organization, which sponsors educational opportunities.

I am on my HOA board, and will soon be the Chair of the State Bar of Michigan's Representative Assembly, the policy-making body of the state bar. I have volunteered in various parks and preserves in Scio Township. I am a member of the Ann Arbor chapter of the NAACP.

I am also a member of an all-attorney band (the Soul Practitioners) that raises contributions for local charities including Food Gatherers, the Humane Society of Huron Valley, the Foster Care Closet of Michigan, the Safehouse domestic violence shelter, and Toys for Tots.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I am a longtime supporter of local candidates and causes in our community and have actively donated, knocked doors, and attended events for these causes.

I have campaigned, including going door-to-door, for County Commissioners, judicial candidates, and local representatives—and will be doing so this fall in Washtenaw and Livingston counties.

When I worked in Detroit, I was a union member, a union steward, and board member of NTEU #24. I once led a picket line outside the McNamara Federal Building. In Washtenaw County, I was the president of the Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Association for approximately 20 years. My wife is a union member and we always purchase union-made GM automobiles.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: Superior Township - Clerk

**Candidate: Paula Jefferson for Superior Township - Clerk**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://paulajeffersonforclerk.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I have almost 8 years experience as a Deputy Clerk. As a former Deputy Clerk of Superior Township, I have extensive knowledge of the township's election equipment. As Deputy Clerk of Plymouth Township I have administered elections for a municipality with over double the amount of precincts as Superior Township.

Additionally, I am a former elected official. I was appointed to the Superior Township Parks & Recreation Commission in the spring of 2016. I was elected to the position in August of that year. I was chair of the commission for close to two years. So, I have experience in participating and running municipal meetings. As Deputy Clerk I also have experience writing minutes and resolutions. While at Superior Township I also maintained the township website.

In addition to Notarial services I can also provide passport processing services which would not only be a service to community, but would generate revenue for the township.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I will serve my constituents by ensuring that elections are run efficiently as well as ensuring that none of them are disenfranchised and will be free to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

In addition, I will assist them with getting the resources they need to live a quality life. In my time at Plymouth Township I have been able to get residents connected with their elected representatives to get help with social security payments and temporary rent assistance for a veteran.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

In my non-elected years I've done work with Habitat for Humanity. I have walked for charities as well.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Presently, I am mentoring a college aged student who works in my office. Additionally, we have signed up students from Plymouth-Canton Community Schools to work elections. If they can work elections at this time in their lives they will be less susceptible to election disinformation.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I believe I'm the candidate with the most all around experience and an endorsement from members of my community, who share my values, would go a long way in getting the opportunity to serve my community.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I donate to charities and organizations financially. As a caregiver for my mother, I don't have as much free time, so money is the best option for me.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I primarily donate to Democratic candidates.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No, I have never accused or convicted of any wrongdoing.

Office: Superior Township - Park Commissioner

**Candidate: Nahid Sanii-Yahyai for Superior Township - Park Commissioner**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:nyahyai@comcast.net>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I believe in giving back to my community. As a scientist my focus is on physical, social & environmental benefits of parks on the community/people's lives. Especially when it comes to children, I try to plan programs and events that can help their development and be educational while fostering an appreciation for nature.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

Through helping to plan and put on local community events, I enjoy giving back and providing outlets for learning and fun.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have been part of grassroots/ OFA for a long time and I was nominated and selected as volunteer of the year in 2011 by the WCDP. Due to my activism I had the honor of being invited to the White House to meet President Obama and the First Lady. The 2nd time again I was invited to meet the President when he came to MI again due to my activism. 2 years ago I was given the honor of being the honoree by WCDP for my district.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I trained many people on how to do the canvassing & phone banking effectively. Through my canvassing efforts I educated people about our democratic values and why it's important to vote for Democratic Party candidates.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I believe in the Democratic Party and its values.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I have volunteered with several different organizations and efforts over the years, but one of my most involved volunteer roles has been with Meals on Wheels. For 15+ years I have volunteered to assist with meal drop offs for the elderly and disabled in WC. I also volunteer teach Zoom language lessons for those in the Washtenaw County area who are looking to learn Persian.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I've been involved with canvassing/ phone banking for Gary Peters, Debbie Dingell, Debbie Statbenow and other candidates.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/a

Office: Superior Township - Supervisor

**Candidate: Emily Dabish Yahkind for Superior Township - Supervisor**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.emilyforus.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the best candidate for Superior Township Supervisor not only because of my career and education but because of my ability to listen to others and distill their needs down to strong public policy and decision-making. I am a current Planning Commissioner, former member of the Master Plan Committee, have worked in State and local government -- where I worked on pro-immigration policy for the State and served the Detroit City Council during the bankruptcy. I have entrepreneurial experience as the founder of a sustainable wine brand, SolSummit. I have sincerely served our community and our State throughout my career and am committed to public service. I am results driven with a long track record of deploying programming and strong policies within our community.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I am seeking the current office because so much hangs in the balance for our community. I will serve as an advocate and bring resources to our community to serve seniors, youth, and our environment. I will work to make our community more connected through physical infrastructure like pathways and sidewalks as well as cognitively through organizing and township-wide programming. I will work to maintain and enhance our quality of life.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have been involved in State politics throughout my career -- supporting through fundraising, planning, and contributing elbow grease to presidential, congressional, and local-based candidates.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I've mentored youth through supporting programs that help young people find summer jobs, creating and developing programs for organizations that help middle school and high school students after class, and fundraising for various youth-oriented community groups across our State.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the WCDP endorsement because of my sincere commitment to democratic values.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I am a Planning Commissioner, Master Plan Committee Member, Board member of the Dixboro Village Green, Volunteer to Mott Children's Hospital, Michigan Advisor to the Environment for CIV:LAB, regional lead and member of Johns Hopkins University's Alumni Council

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have long worked on and supported campaigns at every level of government. Working on campaigns is one of the most enriching experiences a person can have. I have also donated my time and efforts to causes supporting immigration, animal welfare, the environment, and more.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No

Office: Superior Township - Treasurer

**Candidate: Lisa Lewis for Superior Township - Treasurer**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.treasurerlewis4superior.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the ideal candidate for this position due to my extensive experience as an elected leader in Superior Township, serving as a Trustee, Deputy Treasurer, and now Treasurer for twenty-four years. As a financial manager, I prioritize residents' best interests by maintaining integrity in investing the township's funds. I advocate for impactful policies and services that benefit our community. Additionally, I recognize the importance of long-term vision and sustainable growth while enhancing our economic structure.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

In my current role as Treasurer of Superior Township, I assist new and current homeowners by ensuring they understand the process of completing and filing their Principal Residence Exemption with the assessor's office. This exemption allows them to claim relief from the school operating millage. Additionally, I guide residents through the criteria for completing deferment forms, if necessary, to avoid interest on partial or late tax payments beyond county deadlines. As a board member, I strategically collaborate on initiatives such as reliable waste/trash collection, a community center, a community garden for fresh produce, walking paths, speed humps for safety, dependable drainage systems, land conservation efforts, and promoting controlled growth within the township.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

As a dedicated Democratic constituent, I actively participate in the Washtenaw County Democratic Party Black Caucus (WCDPBC) and support fellow Democratic leaders on all levels of government. My commitment aligns with the Democratic Party's vision and goals. I advocate tirelessly for the health, safety, and welfare of Washtenaw County residents. My community engagement extends to serving as a mediator at the Dispute Resolution Center and being a member of the Victim Services Unit and Critical Incident Stress Management, all within Washtenaw County. Additionally, I have dedicated over a decade as a board member for The Corner Health Center and several years of service for the Ypsilanti Area Foundation Community.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

As the treasurer, I educate and mentor residents about my role and responsibilities. I provide valuable tax information and deadlines through the bi-annual township newsletter, which covers tax deferment options and an online payment process. Additionally, I actively participate in voter rights initiatives, including voter registration. In my previous career as a School Social Worker, I mentored Master's level social work students, helping them apply their classroom learning to real-world situations. I also guided youth aged 12-17 in exploring post-high school career options to support their personal growth and productivity.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

As a dedicated long-time member of the Democratic Party, I believe it's crucial to seek endorsement from the organization I wholeheartedly support. My goal is to continue serving and advocating for all residents of Superior Township and the broader Washtenaw County area over the next four years. Moreover, I emphasize the importance of Democratic leaders who champion diversity, provide equitable resources, and promote justice within our legal system.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

As a leader for the past 24 years, I've prioritized engagement in various areas, including education, voter rights, and senior programs. I've participated in feeding programs, organized clothes drives for vulnerable populations, and supported mental health initiatives. During the pandemic, I assisted with providing essential COVID items and delivered Meals on Wheels in Ypsilanti. Additionally, I believe leaders should be directly accessible to community members. I've personally shopped for neighbors, taken out their trash, picked up medications, prepared meals, provided childcare, and attended sports activities. I've also assisted residents with paperwork for county assistance, childcare, federal medical programs, and financial aid. Building relationships with generations of community members has been essential to my approach.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have actively kept up with local issues, collaborated with Democratic leaders at the local, county, state, and federal levels, endorsed candidates, engaged in phone banking, canvassed, distributed literature on election

days, and provided financial support to the candidates I believe in.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

This question does not apply to me.

**Office: Superior Township - Trustee**

**Candidate: Brenda Baker for Superior Township - Trustee**

*(1 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:BBakerforTrustee@gmail.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

Superior Township Resident since 1987

Township government experience: Wetlands Board – 12 years; Planning Commission – 6 years; Steering Committee to update the Master Plan – 3 years, just completed

Township volunteer experience: Committee to Promote Superior Township – 2008–present; Neighborhood Watch Block Captain – 1990-present

NGO Experience: Superior Land Conservancy/Superior Township Chapter of Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy – Founding member, current Co-Chair

I have considerable connections in both the southern (densely populated Urban Services District) part of the Township because that's where I live and the northern (rural) part of the Township because of my land conservation work. I consider land use planning to be my major strength, due to formal work on the Planning Commission, Wetlands Board, and Master Plan Steering Committee in combination with extensive volunteer work in land conservation.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

- Communication – Despite existing, traditional channels of communication, I believe that today's constituents feel disengaged and not heard. I plan to organize "listening sessions" by neighborhood where one or two Trustees meet with constituents where they live to hear and address concerns.
- Responsible management of vendors – Just since the pandemic, Superior Township has had major service and/or cost issues with builders, construction firms, solid waste collection, brush removal, IT, and sidewalk repair. I gained relevant experience managing vendors in my career as a Manufacturing Engineer and Project Manager, and I feel I can provide practical advice in this regard.
- Land use planning – I will vigorously defend the Master Plan against any outside force that tries to override the established plan for land use set forth by the people of Superior Township. The way we choose to



use our land sets the foundation for how we develop as a community.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

The Superior Township Chapter (which I Co-Chair) of Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy interfaces and partners with Washtenaw County Parks (Natural Areas Preservation Program) from time to time on projects ranging from recommending land for protection to conducting educational hikes.

I am currently participating in the Lunch n Learn Workshop series offered by Washtenaw County's Racial Equity Office. It is informative and enjoyable.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I chair the all-volunteer Committee to Promote Superior Township. Our mission is "to foster pride, unity, and a sense of place among Superior Township residents." When topics arise that take the conversation outside the realm of our mission statement, I ask the group, "How does that promote Superior Township?" They may see that the discussion is drifting off-topic...but once in a while, they can explain how their thoughts DO promote the Township!

Some residents know that I am familiar with our Master Plan, and I've received a few inquiries about how it can be applied so that those who want solar panels can install them consistent with building codes and Township policies. I explain to them that the Master Plan does not prohibit solar panels; it is the Zoning Ordinance that is out of date and (in my opinion) causing the problem. A contract was just awarded to a vendor to rewrite the Zoning Ordinance. I have written to the current Township Board asking to participate in the rewrite.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I believe that a significant percentage of voters in Superior Township vote "straight Democratic" as a matter of principle. I want them to know that my values align well with theirs, and those of the Democratic party.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I serve as Co-Chair of the Superior Township Chapter of Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy. In addition to the leadership and administrative duties required of a co-chair, this affords me the opportunity to participate alongside friends and new acquaintances in activities such as hikes, plantings, invasive species removal, and tabling events.

As part of my contribution to the Committee to Promote Superior Township, in 2024 I am staffing an information table every Friday at the Dixboro Farmers' Market. People that I know do stop by, but most of the visitors to the table are new to me. I enjoy sharing my knowledge about Superior Township, answering their questions when I can, and learning about their stories and concerns related to the Township.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I generally support the candidate or the cause based on my belief in similar values. The vast majority of the time, those candidates and causes align with Democratic party values.

Years ago, when the State of Michigan got rid of the Open primary and party affiliation was required in order to vote in the primary, I knew I had to register Democratic to participate in Superior Township elected government, since most local elections (as in 2024) are decided in the primary. Our Township is that heavily Democratic.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

There are no such issues.

**Candidate: Rhonda McGill for Superior Township - Trustee**

*(2 of 2 candidates for this office who are seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://rhondafortrustee.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

The Democratic Party has always spoken to the importance of restoring confidence in our government. I am a firm believer in this and it is why I ran. I came into this position with an independent mindset and a willingness to challenge our local government to be transparent and engaging with the community. Many of our residents had expressed a desire to have more access to their government, yet for those without transportation that access was impossible. To solve this I pushed for access to meetings via Zoom. This has been a game changer and has allowed for community engagement on a new level and while there is still work to be done on restoring confidence, our residents know that they now have access and a voice. That is what democracy is about and I take pride in doing my part in ensuring our residents understand how important they are to that process.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I push for transparency in all areas of our government and question anything that I don't feel is in the best interest of our entire community. I pushed for and a resolution to commit 100% of our ARPA funds to support the needs of the most underserved residents in our community, resulting in programs to support children and families, We addressed the food desert that exists in the community by supporting a local farmer to develop a community farm. We acquired land that will be preserved and used to educate the community (especially our youth) on the importance of land conservation. I supported the development of Garret's Space which will offer a residential treatment programs for young adults that have attempted or considered suicide. I recognize that every resident has things that matter to them and I work across the entire board to ensure we are focused on the importance of being representative of all of our residents,

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

Whereas my involvement may have not been direct to the WCDP, I have been active with the WCDP Black Caucus by attending meetings and assisting as needed.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I believe in the importance of engaging our residents and early on I met a young man that had recently moved to our community. He and I began to connect regularly as he had questions about how the local government worked. He observed things that he liked and saw opportunities where he could make a difference. Through this mentorship, I am proud to say that he made the choice to run for one of the Trustee seats.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I have been a proud democrat all of my life and supporter of so many of the candidates that have come through at the state and local level. I pay my membership fees annually at all levels and donate to candidates at all levels.

Because commitments with family including a disabled sibling, an aging parent and raising my family, I have not been an active "at all of the meetings" member, but there is not one person in the community that could say anything about me other than I am loyal to my party and when asked to support candidates, I do my part. I feel that I have represented my party with pride and hope that I have earned the endorsement, not because of the connections, but because I uphold the values of our party and will continue to do so. I was honored to receive the endorsement of the 12th Congressional District in my first run and hope to receive the same now that we are the 6th!

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

My husband (who is a Police Officer at EMU) and I work in collaboration with some of his colleagues purchase Thanksgiving dinners for families in our community. Each box is a complete dinner including the Turkey, sides and desserts.

Every Thanksgiving and some Christmas we host students from the university in our home for dinner and take dinner to individuals at the University that have to work and can't be with their families as well as a few elders in our community that are unable to prepare meals for themselves.

In 2023 we assisted former U of M Football player, Blake Courum with the distribution of Turkeys and Milk to families in multiple low income areas including, Sycamore Meadows, Huron Heights and Perry Elementary. I collaborated with a couple of local Realtors and friends to create "Blessing Bags" for the homeless to provide warm socks, hygiene items and snacks. We created over 150 bags, many of which were donated to local nonprofits for distribution.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I am a life long candidate as far back as my high school years when I worked on the Jesse Jackson campaign, even attending his rally at Chrysler Arena and handing out campaign literature. I have supported every local, county, state and federal election by donating, campaigning, attending events etc. I am a supporter of

reproductive rights, and proud mother of a member of the LGBT community, voting rights and I will continue to voice my support on these causes and more as we navigate the current political climate.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

N/A

Office: Sylvan Township - Clerk

**Candidate: Douglas Jackson for Sylvan Township - Clerk**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <mailto:dqjsjcksn@yahoo.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I consider myself to be skilled organizationally, analytically, mathematically, and in communication, as well as being professional, trustworthy, prompt, diligent, and considerate – as a clerk should be.

My education with degrees in physics and math has given me a solid foundation in analytical thinking and complex problem solving. My professional experience includes owning and operating my own franchise business where I expanded the customer base and doubled gross sales in just four years. My work demanded employee management, accurate record keeping, and responsibility with payroll, taxes, accounts payable and receivable, advertising, and proper certification and licensing procedures.

I am currently employed part-time as a naturalist with the Michigan DNR in the Waterloo Recreation Area – a gem within our township. I also regularly contribute my naturalist articles to the Chelsea Update. In both these vocations, I have demonstrated strong communication and people skills.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

As one seeking office for the first time, I would strive to serve my constituents through diligence and thorough work. I would listen to them and consider their views and concerns. I would aim for transparency, to be honest and forthright on issues, law abiding and compliant to rules and regulations. I would be timely and communicative, courteous and empathetic.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

My involvement with Washtenaw County includes serving on a volunteer board of the Interfaith Roundtable of Washtenaw County for many years, volunteering with AFS Intercultural Programs for over 12 years helping bring foreign exchange students into our schools as well as sending our own students abroad on exchange, and liaison roles with Dexter and Chelsea Public Schools. I have been a regular columnist contributor to the Chelsea Update with my nature articles. I am the volunteer program coordinator for MNFI's Vernal Pool Patrol

citizen science program in the Waterloo Rec Area. I work as a part-time naturalist with the DNR in that park. I am the recording secretary for my township's Planning Commission. I financially contribute to the B2B project, the Land Conservancy, and am a member of the Michigan chapter of the Nature Conservancy. I coordinated exchange student with the United Way to help with tornado relief after the Dexter 2012 storm. I try to support local small business.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have worked with numerous high school exchange students in helping them adjust to and learn about cultural differences. As a business owner and operator, I trained my own employee. As a naturalist at the Eddy Discovery Center I have mentored most of the college-aged summer workers. And I train and support my volunteers in the Vernal Pool Patrol program.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

Though I've always considered myself an independent who votes on issues and best candidates rather than party lines, these days I align most strongly with the Democratic Party and cannot, in good conscience, align at all with the Republican Party. It seems that they have obliterated some of their core values such as fiscal responsibility and ethics and replaced them with self-serving, hypocritical, and deceptive theatrics. I admire the composure and stance the Democrats maintain in protecting individual rights and addressing climate change, among others.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

As stated in a previous answer, I am the recording secretary for my township's Planning Commission. I've volunteered with my schools, AFS Intercultural Programs, and am the volunteer program coordinator for the Michigan Natural Features Inventory's citizen science program, the Vernal Pool Patrol. I write nature articles for the Chelsea Update. I have written Letters to the Editors to the Sun Time's News and Chelsea Update. I have contributed to support local projects and land conservation. And I have been an ambassador for the State and community as a park naturalist in the Waterloo Rec Area.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

Since the '80s I have voted independently until 2016. From then on, I could only vote Democratic and have voted the straight Democratic ticket in all elections since.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No

Office: Webster Township - Trustee

**Candidate: Shelly Vrsek for Webster Township - Trustee**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://shellyvrsekforwebstertwp.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am dedicated to serving the community and I take all opportunities to listen to our residents. I am an experienced nonprofit leader and a risk manager. As a result, I am able to juggle the needs of our community, the sustainability of Webster Township, and the rules we must follow--even when they don't seem to complement each other. I am fiscally responsible, practical and transparent.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

In my past four years as Trustee, I spent a lot of time listening and learning how to support the ZBA and the Planning Commission. I helped write a grant to obtain matching funds to fix culverts in Webster Township. I advocated for a public meeting where residents can ask the Board questions, and I will continue to advocate for those opportunities. I am direct, and speak my mind--even when it's hard--in order to facilitate difficult decisions.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I was an elected Delegate for two years in Webster Township. I started Dexter Indivisible and worked closely with WCDP to coordinate several activities and actions. My husband is currently a delegate and we have volunteered for several activities: tables, literature, voter guides, etc.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have been very concerned about the Democratic race for Supervisor in Webster Township. As a result, I helped recruit a candidate--Mike DeAngelo. I have been working closely with him in his race. In addition, I started Dexter Indivisible. While not solely a Democrat group--it was mainly composed of Dems. We did a lot of really great work together. I helped create a leadership group. In my professional life, I am a nonprofit leader, and I have mentored many, many social workers in their career.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I have been volunteering since high school (the late 80s). I worked on Levin's campaign, and several after that. I was appointed to the Board of Social Work by Governor Whitmer and I previously worked at Planned Parenthood. I embody the values of the WCDP, and I would like others to know that too.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I am the President of the Dexter District Library Board. I am a Whitmer appointee to the Michigan Board of Social Work. My family is a licensed foster home for teenagers. I'm engaged with Dexter Community Schools. I am a licensed Masters Social Worker. As mentioned, I started and am still involved with Dexter Indivisible.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I am previous employee of Planned Parenthood of Michigan, and a strong supporter of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people. I have been a Democrat since childhood. In the 90s, President Bush came to my high school to campaign. My choir was asked to sing for him, and I refused. This garnered a lot of negative media attention for my family. But it galvanized me. I have been involved in many campaigns since then. Door knocking, phone calls, petitions, parades, tables. Whatever can be done.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

None.

Office: Ypsilanti Township - Trustee

**Candidate: Joshua McAllister for Ypsilanti Township - Trustee**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.mcallister4trustee.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am the best candidate for Ypsilanti Township Trustee because of my proven track record in leadership, community service, and business acumen. From my time in the Marine Corps to co-founding "2 MARINES," I have demonstrated a commitment to effective governance and community advocacy. I bring a strategic approach to addressing our township's challenges and a passion for fostering positive change.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

If elected, I will prioritize transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in serving constituents. I will actively engage with residents to understand their needs, advocate for inclusive policies, and work tirelessly to improve quality of life in our community.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have participated in WCDP events, volunteered for local Democratic candidates, and engaged in discussions on policy issues affecting our county. I am committed to contributing to the Democratic Party's mission of progress and equality year-round.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

Throughout my career, I have mentored youth in leadership and community service through programs like

Junior Achievement. I have also supported aspiring entrepreneurs in developing business skills and navigating challenges, fostering growth and empowerment.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I seek the endorsement of the WCDP to align my candidacy with the Democratic Party's values and leverage the party's support in advancing our shared goals of equity, justice, and community empowerment.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

I engage with my community through initiatives like "2 MARINES," promoting economic development and supporting local businesses. I also volunteer for community clean-up events and advocate for public safety and education.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have actively supported Democratic candidates at local, state, and national levels, participating in campaign activities, canvassing, and fundraising efforts. I believe in the Democratic Party's vision for progress and am committed to advancing its principles.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No, I have not been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues.

Office: Chelsea School Board - Trustee

**Candidate: HEIDI REYST for Chelsea School Board - Trustee**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.reystforchelseaschools.com/>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

I am a product of public education, and I believe strongly in the value that it brings. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Kalamazoo College (June 1991) and a PhD in Applied Social Psychology from George Washington University (August 2001). Education is near and dear and is why this is an important endeavor. Education in every form is critical, be it a trade school, college, or other paths.

Advocacy as it pertains to the Board of Education entails being a champion of the district's causes, engaging with the community and fostering relationships to get the important work done. Being a good advocate also means ensuring accountability to students, staff, and the larger community. I have decades of leadership as an executive, a small business owner, and significant experience as a board member and board chair.

Research shows that school boards working alongside strong superintendents positively impact student



achievement, and I wish to be a part of that success.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I've not previously run for School Board. However, a seat was vacated this January. I applied for the seat and was appointed to a term ending in November 2024. In the 6 intervening months, I have learned a profound amount of knowledge regarding the following: how school boards operate and how school board members interface with administration, teachers, staff and students. School board members have a responsibility to educate themselves about the role, and school-related activities. That education process is in full swing, inclusive of requisite training for superintendent evaluation which is critical aspect of being a board member.

There are many areas where I have gained knowledge as it pertains to this role include the following: school budget, policy, strategic planning, curriculum, personnel, operations and facility management. I've had the distinct honor of meeting remarkable teachers and staff, and seeing up close the significant effort it takes to provide quality education.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

As it pertains to this question I am new to "formal" politics. That being said, I am a lifelong Democrat, and avid voter. While not formally involved in WCDP politics, I am very much in tune with politics. I am a member of Chelsea Equality, which is affiliated with Michigan Equality, and am passionate about LGBTQ+ issues. I am horrified by the ever-evolving anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and am sickened by the level of vitriol the far right has espoused. I am steadfast in my mission to live authentically. As an out queer woman, wife, and mother, I am determined to be a positive role model for queer youth. Being an out school board member shows students (or anyone for that matter) aren't tied to limits others may put on them.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I have been in leadership roles for more than 3 decades. I've lead numerous teams and dozens of clinicians and employees. An area I feel I positively impacted was modeling how to be leader. I listened. I worked hard. I worked alongside them when navigating complicated client situations. I provided recognition. I provided constructive feedback, even if it wasn't what they wanted to hear at the time, but always with an eye toward learning from the experience. I was always available, and they knew I would respond day or night.

In my first career in brain injury rehabilitation, professional growth was not only important, it was also my mission. I developed educational programs alongside clinicians to ensure we had the best skilled teams. Those collaborations were some of my most cherished experiences as a supervisor, mentor and leader.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I'm seeking endorsement so that voters in my district understand my values, my experience, and the skills I bring to the School Board position I am seeking to keep.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

As a political novice of sorts, I have come to very much appreciate the opportunity to give back to my community. Being a member of the school board is extremely rewarding. As a result of the appointment to the school board I have established many new relationships, both political and non-political. This has increased my community engagement in meaningful ways.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I have voted as a democrat in every election since 1992, and nearly every primary since that time as well.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

No, I have not.

Office: Saline School Board - Trustee

**Candidate: Brad Gerbe for Saline School Board - Trustee**

*(Only candidate for this office seeking an endorsement.)*

**More Information:** <https://www.votegerbe.com>

**Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

For four years I have fought for and cared for the values I mentioned in the previous paragraph.

As the grandson of a UAW leader, and someone I am proudly named after, William Gerbe, I believe strongly in affirming individuals who are committed to building up the next generation. Your endorsement is important to me as I wish to affirm my grandfather and the life I have to be named after him and carry his UAW Spartan ring.

I am also the best candidate because I want to continue to do this work and I think (hope) I have faithfully served the community of Saline.

**If you're a current officeholder, how have you used your office to benefit your constituents?**

**If you are seeking office for the first time, how do you plan to serve your constituents?**

I have been an advocate every day for strong public schools taught by teachers and supported by individuals who are compensated as professionals. As the finance chair and Treasurer it has been important to me to establish fair contracts, while also maintaining fiscal responsibility.

I was also a strong supporter of policies that affirm inclusivity including the transgender policy that Saline was a leader in passing.

I have used my voice at the table to make sure that curriculum is inclusive of all learners including adopting health curriculum that worked to support at risk pupils populations.

We passed a significant bond. As such, we have work to do and I want to continue to support and drive, especially in the financial end, bond initiatives that will make Saline a leader in student supports. Exciting things like state of the art STEM (STEAM) facilities.

**Please tell us how you've been involved in the WCDP or Washtenaw County in non-election years.**

I have engaged with many elected officials such as Shannon Beeman.

During elections 2 years ago I canvassed for WCDP individuals.

I am the bargaining chair for the Manchester teachers (I teach Biology, Chemistry, Anatomy & Forensics) union where I've fought for wages and benefits for Washtenaw county Indians, students and residents.

**Please tell us how you've mentored others, with specific examples.**

I am a mentor and leader in a number of ways.

Obviously, as a teacher.

Further, I've mentored others as they've joined our Saline Board team. Individuals like Dr. Lauren Gold who is an incredible advocate for students and families, but didn't have some of the knowledge that I possess about school finance as a bargaining chair and/ or finance chair/ Treasurer. Engaging in that professional development has been awesome annoyance greatly enjoyed it. Lauren is incredible.

I believe I also have been a mentor as part of our Board team. I engage in a lot of phone calls and conversations where I learn from my teammates and also offer perspective where my strengths lie.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of the WCDP?**

I am seeking the endorsement because I align with the values of the Democratic Party.

While I am a Trustee for all, and I do believe it is important for me to listen to and learn from the perspective of those who think differently from me (these individuals have kids in our schools), when I evaluate my own personal belief system- I am a Democrat.

As such, I'm hoping you'll help me continue to serve Saline students and families through your endorsement.

**In what ways do you personally engage with and contribute to your community (excluding faith-based involvement)?**

As an elected individual I often engage with others. Even those who see the world differently from myself.

These conversations happen in a lot of areas and places.

I am also engaged with many constituents through emails and phone calls.

**Please discuss your history of supporting Democratic candidates and causes.**

I've been supporting Democratic candidates my whole adult life. And before.

My dad was a public school teacher. I am a proud public school teacher. I vote accordingly. Democratic candidates believe in fair working conditions, wages and benefits- as such I need them to be in places of influence.

I'm my "elected era" as I've stated previously I've helped other Democrats become elected through canvassing, attending conventions (MEA bargaining), and in my conversations with other potential voters.

**If you have ever been accused or convicted of any wrongdoing or character-related issues that have or could cast a shadow over your office of the WCDP, please describe below.**

Never