

Name: Padma Kuppa

Candidate for: MI House District 41

Occupation/Current Position: Representative for HD41

Education: Mechanical Engineering, BS

#### Qualifications/Experience:

Serving my first term as a legislator, I am also an engineer, a mom, and a community builder. My husband and I moved to Troy 20 years ago because of the good jobs, great public schools, and vibrant community services. I love the community and want to help it thrive. I volunteered in K-12 PTAs throughout my kids' years in public schools; I was a Troy Planning Commissioner and a Zoning Board member. I serve on the boards of the Troy Historical Society and the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion, and worked with multiple civic and interfaith organizations.

In the Legislature, I bring my technical background to the Energy Committee, and my municipal experience to the Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee to solve critical problems. Problem solving requires working together; I advocate for and provide resources to my constituents, and have taken on leadership as Co-chair of both the Equal Pay Task Force and Asian Pacific American Caucus, and Historian for the Black Caucus. I want to expand on the work I've started, because I want to improve how I serve my community. We need to protect public education, the environment and small businesses, promote sustainable development and ensure access to clean water, affordable prescription drugs and healthcare.

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## QUESTIONS

### ECONOMIC ISSUES

- 1. A package of bills (HB 328-339 and SB 4629-4640) concerning pay equity was introduced in the Michigan House and Senate committees in April, 2019. The bills address transparency regarding pay, asking job applicants about past compensation, and informing employees about equal pay laws. Do you support or oppose bringing these bills to the legislature for a vote? Please explain.**

I support this legislation - and in fact, as co-chair of the Equal Pay Task Force, I led the legislative efforts to move this bill package forward. However, the opposition to it comes from the Republican legislative leadership which will not even consider giving them a hearing. I am working hard with the Equal Pay Day Coalition to raise awareness.

**2. Do you support or oppose a minimum wage of \$15 an hour? Please explain.**

Yes. I co-sponsored HB4299/SB168, which would reinstate the minimum wage increase in the original One Fair Wage ballot initiative. This initiative was supported by nearly 400,000 Michiganders who signed on to the proposal.

**3. Do you support or oppose earned paid sick leave for all workers? Please explain.**

Yes I support paid sick leave for all. . In fact, I introduced HB 5628 to restore the MI Paid Medical Leave Act. This bill would provide paid medical leave to 1.7 million workers in Michigan, restoring protections stripped during the “lame duck” period after the voter initiative passed in 2018. The pandemic has shown the importance of health care and paid sick leave. Everyone should have access to affordable health care, and no one should be denied because of pre-existing conditions. I also introduced legislation to protect health care for those with preexisting conditions as part of the Healthy MI Bill package. Paid sick leave allows workers to stay home when they are sick, instead of choosing between their health or paying the bills.

## **EDUCATION**

**1. What is your position on funding K-12 private or parochial/religious schools with public monies?**

The use of public tax dollars for private institutions is both unconstitutional as well as harmful to students and families throughout the state. Public money must be for public schools, which are transparent and held accountable, not to lining the pockets of for-profit entities who continue to prioritize profits over our students' educations. Transparency and accountability should be applied to any educational institution that receives taxpayer dollars. I introduced HB 5683 to ensure that charter schools receiving tax dollars should be required to provide the same transparency and held to the same standards of accountability as public schools.

**2. What is your position on providing additional funding for equitable public education to ensure that all students have access to remote learning by qualified teachers when necessary because of COVID-19 or a similar situation?**

While we strive to contain the pandemic and teach our children safely through virtual campuses, we will need to provide supplemental funds to our schools to help low income families obtain access to computers and reliable internet service. I am a strong advocate for reforming our public school funding model; in fact, I was motivated to run - leaving my job as an IT professional in the automotive industry - because of the confirmation of our current secretary of education in DC. I believe that there are enough studies that show we are severely underfunding poorer districts and we must change.

## **GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

- 1. Current Michigan law allows for open carry guns in Michigan schools. What is your position on legislation that would eliminate guns in schools with the exception of law enforcement officers?**

Guns in schools are not compatible with a healthy and safe learning environment. I am a Moms Demand Action Gun Sense Candidate, for the second time, and proud of my record on ensuring people are safe, especially school children, and seeking ways to ensure that we value life. Over 100K people are shot and injured each year due to gun violence, over 36K die - and over 60% are suicides. Limit gun access for people who are dangerous to themselves or others. Institute common sense gun control measures such as background checks, Red Flag laws; disarm domestic abusers, hold the gun industry accountable. With millions of Americans staying at home due to the pandemic, gun safety advocates have raised concerns about increased risk from gun violence. Other states have several bipartisan measures to protect Second Amendment rights while ensuring public safety. I would champion for such efforts in MI.

- 2. Extreme Risk Protection Order legislation has been proposed that would allow a judge to temporarily remove a person's firearm if presented with clear evidence from family or law enforcement that there is serious risk to the individual or others. Do you support or oppose this legislation? Please explain.**

Yes. See comments above. I support Red Flag laws.

## **HEALTHCARE/REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

- 1. Should decisions regarding women's healthcare, including reproductive rights, be legislated by the state? Yes or no? Please explain your position.**

I believe in a woman's right to choose her healthcare and plan what is best for her and her family. Legislation should protect and safeguard healthcare for all women.

- 2. What is your position on health care providers, hospital systems, insurance companies, and employers refusing care or coverage based on their religious or moral beliefs?**

A woman and her doctor/medical professionals with expertise should have the right to choose the care that is best for the patient without interference from someone else who may have a different religious or moral belief.

## **EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT**

**The Equal Rights Amendment has been approved by more than the 38 states needed to put it into the Constitution. Would you vote to remove the time limit on the Equal Rights Amendment to allow this to happen? Why or why not?**

I have urged the extension on the time limit of ERA, by introducing a resolution on this topic. HR 240 encourages Congress to extend the ratification deadline of the Equal Rights Amendment and affirm the amendment's adoption. I also introduced

HR 298, a resolution to declare August 26, 2020, as Women's Equality Day in the state of Michigan.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. What are your top environmental priorities?**

Clean water; mitigating climate change; and retaining and maintaining public lands.

### **2. What is your plan for protecting the Great Lakes and Michigan's drinking water?**

We need to upgrade our infrastructures so that sewage is not polluting our lakes, streams and waterways. We need to make sure that adequate funding is given to drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities so that infrastructure that was built with funds from the 1970s Clean Water Act are being upgraded and maintained. We need to make sure that the MI DNR is funded so it can identify and mitigate contaminated sites and hold those who are causing the pollution accountable. I have also introduced HB 5452 to eliminate an environmental rules special review committee whose members included corporate polluters .

By submitting this form as a candidate for state office, I certify that the answers given to this survey are either completed or reviewed by me before submission.

(Name and contact information for campaign staff person completing this form if not the candidate.)

Date: Aug. 31, 2020