



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN, MICHIGAN

Michigan Questionnaire for Michigan House and Senate Candidates 2026

Dear Candidate:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire to educate the voters in your district.

1. Briefly provide biographical information, and relevant experiences, qualifications, and skills you bring to the position.

I am Brenda Carter, the state representative for House District 53, serving Pontiac and parts of Waterford Township and Auburn Hills. Before serving in the Legislature, I spent eight years on the Pontiac Board of Education and held a leadership role with the Michigan Association of School Boards. I bring that school and community perspective to my work on education, health care, public safety and insurance. I have served four legislative terms and worked across party lines when it helps the people I represent. I listen to residents, examine how a bill will work in practice, and hold agencies and insurers accountable for the results.

2. What are the top three priority issues that the legislature should address?

First, make health care affordable and accessible. That includes protecting Medicaid and reproductive care, improving maternal health, lowering prescription costs, and making insurance work for patients and families. Second, strengthen public education, from literacy and special education to student mental health, college access and skilled trades. Third, keep our communities safe while protecting civil rights: prevent gun violence and hate crimes, invest in young people and violence prevention, and protect every eligible citizen's right to vote. These priorities come from the people I serve in Pontiac, Waterford and Auburn Hills.

3. Please answer the following questions on specific areas of concern to our members and supporters:

EDUCATION

Background: *Michigan lawmakers periodically consider proposals that would allow public funds to be used to support students attending private or religious schools.*

Question: What types of legislative proposals would you be most likely to support or oppose, and why?

I would support stable, equitable funding for neighborhood public schools, special education, literacy, student mental health, safe buildings and the educators who serve our children. Public schools must welcome every child and answer to the public for how they spend taxpayer dollars. I would oppose vouchers, education savings accounts or tax-credit arrangements that divert public resources to private or religious schools without the same requirements for access, transparency and accountability. Families may choose private education, but our first obligation as legislators is to provide every child with a strong public school.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Background: *In 2022, Michigan voters approved Reproductive Freedom For All (Proposal 3), which amended the Michigan Constitution to establish a constitutional right to reproductive freedom, including a right to choose abortion.*

Questions:

1. How should Michigan legislators approach future legislation that would affect reproductive healthcare in light of Proposal 3?
Michigan voters settled the central question through Proposal 3. I will respect that constitutional choice and judge future bills by whether they protect a patient's ability to make reproductive health decisions with a qualified clinician, free from political interference. I would support practical access to contraception, abortion care and maternal health services, including in communities where transportation, cost or provider shortages create barriers. I would oppose measures that try to recreate restrictions the voters rejected, impose medically unnecessary hurdles, or expose patients and providers to intimidation or unwarranted disclosure of private health information.
2. Should access to mifepristone (medication abortion, which is available through telemedicine and mail) be protected? If so, how can it be protected within Michigan's existing legal and regulatory framework? If not, please explain.

Yes. For patients who need it, medication abortion is part of reproductive health care, and access should be protected consistent with medical standards and applicable federal law. Michigan should allow licensed clinicians to use telehealth when clinically appropriate, preserve lawful pharmacy and mail access, and protect the privacy of patients and providers. I would oppose state restrictions designed to block mifepristone for political rather than medical reasons. I would also ask state health and licensing officials to keep guidance current as federal rules and litigation change, so clinicians and patients know what is lawful and safe.

HATE CRIME PREVENTION

Background: *In 2025, Michigan enacted the Michigan Hate Crimes Act, which expanded the state's hate crime law and established criminal penalties for offenses motivated by bias against protected characteristics. According to FBI data released in 2025, reported anti-Jewish hate crime incidents increased by 5.8% from 2023. In March 2026, Temple Israel in West Bloomfield was the target of an attack that authorities investigated as a hate crime.*

Questions:

1. What role should the Michigan Legislature play in implementing, evaluating, and, if necessary, modifying Michigan's hate crime laws to protect the safety of all communities from bias-motivated violence?

The Legislature should make sure the hate crime law is implemented fairly and effectively. That means clear guidance and training for police and prosecutors, consistent collection of reliable data, and regular public review of whether victims are being heard and cases are handled appropriately. The attack on Temple Israel and threats faced by Jewish communities deserve a serious response; so do threats against Muslim, Black, immigrant, LGBTQ+ and

other communities. I would hear directly from those affected before changing the statute, protect constitutionally protected speech, and focus any revisions on demonstrable gaps in safety or enforcement.

2. Are there additional legislative or budget actions you would support or oppose to prevent hate crimes, improve law enforcement training and response, assist victims, or enhance security for communities that are at increased risk of bias-motivated violence?

I would support funding for culturally competent victim services, trauma care, and training that helps officers identify bias, document evidence and respond promptly without dismissing a victim's experience. Schools and community organizations also need tools to prevent harassment and extremism before violence occurs. I would support risk-based security grants for synagogues, other houses of worship and community sites facing credible threats, with privacy and civil liberties protected. The people targeted should help shape the response.

VOTING RIGHTS

Background: *In 2022, Michigan voters approved Promote The Vote 2022 (Proposal 2), which amended the Michigan Constitution to expand several voting policies, including early in-person voting, a permanent absentee voter list, and prepaid postage for absentee ballot applications and ballots. In Congress, proposals such as the federal SAVE Act have sought to establish additional federal requirements for voter registration and election administration, including documentary proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote in federal elections. In Michigan, the Americans for Citizen Voting ballot proposal (which echoes the federal SAVE Act on a state level) seeks to place a constitutional amendment on Michigan's November 2026 ballot.*

Question: What policies do you support or oppose regarding elections, access to the ballot and voting rights?

I support the voting rights Michigan voters placed in our Constitution through Proposal 2: accessible early voting, absentee voting, prepaid postage and secure ballot drop boxes. I also support accurate voter rolls, paper records, audits, well-trained clerks and meaningful penalties for threats against election workers. I oppose documentary citizenship requirements that would block eligible voters who lack ready access to a passport or birth certificate, especially voters who have changed their names, seniors and low-income residents. Election security and access go together. Any new requirement should be tested against its real effect on eligible voters and the capacity of local clerks to administer it fairly.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Background: *Some lawmakers have proposed prohibiting the sale and manufacture of assault-style firearms for civilian use, while others believe such restrictions violate constitutional rights and would have little impact on violent crime.*

Question: Do you support or oppose restricting civilian access to assault-style firearms? Please explain your position and the factors that would guide your vote.

I support restricting new civilian sales of assault-style firearms through a carefully drafted law that defines the covered weapons clearly, respects constitutional requirements and can be enforced fairly. My vote would be guided by evidence about preventing mass casualties, the effect on lawful

owners, and whether the proposal includes workable implementation rather than a label alone. I have supported universal background checks, secure storage and extreme risk protection orders, and I sponsored a bill in Michigan's universal background-check package that became law. Gun violence has touched my family. I will continue pairing responsible firearm safeguards with community violence prevention and support for survivors.