

The Eastern Echo

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EasternEcho.com



Voter Guide

2026 Ypsilanti Midterm Election

About this guide:

In Michigan, Election Day is Nov. 3. *The Eastern Echo's* nonpartisan voter guide covers Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County and statewide candidates and proposals. Candidate information is compiled from publicly available campaign materials supplied by candidates through their websites and Ballotpedia as available, along with information provided by some candidates in interviews with *The Echo*. Candidate photos are sourced from campaign materials. Races are presented in the order in which they appear on the ballot and candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name. More information about candidates and proposals is available at EasternEcho.com.

Voter guide compiled by Hannah Borders, AnnaBelle Favre, Lauren Holloway and Lilly Kujawski

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Michigan Governor



Jocelyn Benson - Democrat

- Current secretary of state
- Prioritizes affordability
- Supports housing, healthcare and education
- Endorsed by state Sen. Jeff Irwin, Michigan House of Representatives Democratic Leader Ranjeev Puri, Reproductive Freedom for All



Donna Brandenburg - U.S. Taxpayers

- Michigan U.S. Taxpayers Party chairperson
- Entrepreneur
- Hopes to eliminate property tax
- Wants to implement Department of Government Efficiency



Douglas Campbell - Green



Anthony Hudson - Libertarian

- Wants to eliminate property and state income taxes
- Wants to eliminate renewable energy mandates
- Supports small business growth
- Endorsed by Patriots United



John James - Republican

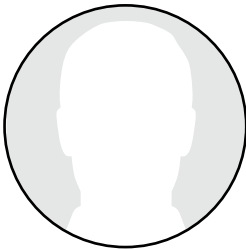
- Current U.S. Representative
- Leader of James Group International
- Wants to apply the state Freedom of Information Act to the governor's office and the Michigan legislature
- Supports a Parents' Bill of Rights
- Wants to eliminate income tax
- Endorsed by President Donald Trump, Michigan Senate Minority Leader Aric Nesbitt, Michigan Chamber of Commerce



Evan Space - Write-in Independent

- Entrepreneur
- Served in the Army National Guard
- Supports environmental protections
- Hopes to improve correctional facilities and constrict the opioid epidemic

Michigan Secretary of State



Scott Aughney - U.S. Taxpayers



Eric Borregard - Green

- Hopes to lower the voting age to 16
- Supports rank choice voting



Anthony Forlini - Republican

- Clerk of Macomb County
- Owner of Design Financial
- Supports election integrity
- Advocates for government transparency and accountability
- Endorsed by former Secretary of State Candice Miller, the Detroit News, former gubernatorial candidate Tudor Dixon



Garlin Gilchrist II - Democrat

- Current lieutenant governor
- Software developer
- Advocates for taking money out of politics
- Supports data protection
- Endorsed by the Detroit Free Press, Planned Parenthood of Michigan, Arab American Political Action Committee, State Rep. Jimmie Wilson Jr.



Christine Sloan - Libertarian

- Supports government accountability and transparency
- Advocates for protection from surveillance

Michigan Attorney General



Doug Dern - Natural Law

- Natural Law Party of Michigan chairperson
- Corporate mentalist and trial attorney



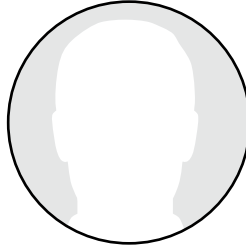
Jason Dye - Libertarian

- Founder of We The People News
- Hopes to create a public corruption task force
- Pushes for increased transparency



Doug Lloyd - Republican

- Eaton County prosecutor
- Wants to fight corruption and political lawfare
- Endorsed by former Attorney General Bill Schuette, former Gov. John Engler, Congressman Tom Barrett



John Ludtke - U.S. Taxpayers



Jeff Polonowski - Green Party

- Wants to end poverty and oppression
- Pushes for consumer protections



Eli Savit - Democrat

- Washtenaw County prosecutor
- Aims to promote justice and human rights, seeks to protect the environment and workers, hopes to work with local communities
- Endorsed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib and Sen. Gary Peters

United States Senate



Lydia Christensen - Libertarian

- Founder of Iron Fortress LLC
- Wants to end the 100-Mile Constitution-Free Zone
- Supports a Digital Bill of Rights
- Hopes to repeal the Patriot Act



Abdul El-Sayed - Democrat

- Former executive director of the Detroit Health Department and the Wayne County Department of Health, Human and Veterans Services
- Co-author of “Medicare for All: A Citizens Guide”
- Advocates for corporate money out of politics
- Wants to bring money to people’s pockets
- Supports medicare for all
- Endorsed by former Vice President Kamala Harris, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, U.S. Sens. Elissa Slotkin and Gary Peters



Timothy Long - U.S. Taxpayers



Douglas P. Marsh - Green

- Journalist
- Supports universal healthcare
- Supports universal basic income
- Wants to stop Line 5 Tunnel



Mike Rogers - Republican

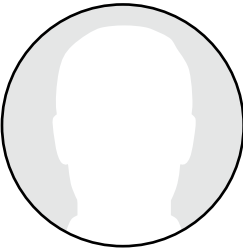
- Former U.S. Rep.
- Former lieutenant in the U.S. Army
- Supports lower interest rates
- Hopes to encourage the building of new homes
- Wants to expand access to Trump Rx
- Endorsed by President Donald Trump, the Detroit News, Michigan Chamber of Commerce

U.S. House of Representatives District 6



Debbie Dingell - Democrat

- Current U.S. representative
- Advocates for lower cost of living
- Wants expanded access to healthcare
- Hopes to reform Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- Endorsed by the National Education Association, the Detroit Free Press, Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition PAC



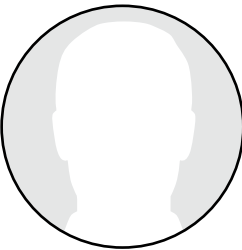
Timothy A. Teagan - Libertarian

- Michigan Libertarian Party chairperson
- Has background in militia and activism



Heather Smiley - Republican

- Former auto industry worker
- Wants to eliminate wasteful spending
- Supports election integrity
- Hopes to ensure education focuses only on academics, global competitiveness and American excellence
- Endorsed by Gun Owners of America, Michigan Rep. Jim DeSana, Americans for Tax Reform



Michael Mickevicius - U.S. Taxpayers



Clyde Shabazz - Green

- Supports environmental and wildlife protections
- Wants universal basic income



Linda Rayburn - Working Class

- Former Michigan Senate candidate

State Legislature

Michigan Senate District 15



Felicia Brabec - Democrat

- Clinical psychologist
- Former Michigan representative
- Supports mental health care, gun violence prevention and criminal justice reform; prioritizes cost of living
- Endorsed by Michigan Education Association, State Rep. Jimmie Wilson Jr., Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit



Jason Rogers - Republican

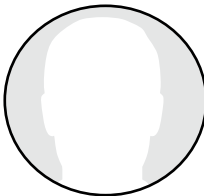
- Software engineer
- Washtenaw County GOP chairman
- Advocates for election integrity, First and Second Amendment rights and traditional family values
- Endorsed by Citizens for Traditional Values Michigan PAC, state Rep. candidate Mike Eller, Washtenaw County Republican Party

Michigan House of Representatives District 32



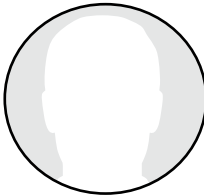
Mike Eller - Republican

- Member of the Washtenaw County Republican Party Executive Committee
- Hopes to eliminate income and property taxes, cut wasteful spending and restore parental authority in education
- Endorsed by the Washtenaw County Republican Party



Ryan Sample - Green

- Supports universal basic income
- Advocates for monthly Black reparations
- Wants to repeal 24% state tax on marijuana



John Tatar - U.S. Taxpayers



Jimmie Wilson Jr. - Democrat

- Current Michigan representative
- Former member of the Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees
- Wants to expand homeownership, increase funding for K-12 schools and protect reproductive healthcare
- Endorsed by former Washtenaw County Sheriff Jerry Clayton, United Auto Workers, Michigan League of Conservation Voters

Michigan State Board of Education

Voters may select no more than two candidates

Terence Collins - Republican

- Financial analyst and former member of the Grosse Pointe Public School board
- Campaign focuses on parental rights and transparency and fiscal responsibility
- Highlights fairness, opportunity, support for teachers, limiting bureaucracy
- Advocated for return to in-person classes and ending mask mandates following the COVID-19 lockdown

Bree Moeggenberg - Republican

- Business owner and childcare provider from Mount Pleasant
- Co-author of the children’s coloring book “Pronouns. Pronouns. Pronouns. NOT SHMONOUNS”
- Campaign focuses on classroom stability and neutrality, learning outcomes

Judith Pritchett - Democrat

- Current member of the Michigan State Board of Education since 2019
- Has experience as chief academic officer for the Macomb Intermediate School District, superintendent and assistant superintendent for curriculum of Center Line Public Schools, administrator and principal of Mount Clemons Community Schools, and assistant principal and social studies teacher of Utica Community Schools
- Macomb County resident

Tiffany Tilley - Democrat

- First elected in 2018 and currently serves as co-vice president of the Michigan State Board of Education
- Background in education, real estate, community and economic development, and nonprofit and municipal government leadership
- Campaign focuses on literacy, equitable funding, student support, success and opportunity, technology investment, a teacher and educator pipeline, strong governance and leadership, community engagement
- Endorsed by the Michigan Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, the Michigan Democratic Party Black Caucus, the Progressive Caucus and the Arab American Caucus

Third party candidates include Libertarian candidate Charles Essner, U.S. Taxpayers Party candidates William Mohr II and Christine C. Schwartz, Green Party candidate Wissam Charafeddine, Working Class candidate Mary Anne Hering and Natural Law candidate Kelli Monroe. For more information on all candidates, visit easternecho.com

University of Michigan Board of Regents

Voters may select no more than two candidates

Paul Brown - Democrat

- Current U-M regent first elected in 2018
- Supports labor unions, affordability and diversity initiatives
- Has voiced opposition to the Textile Road location for the U-M/Los Alamos National Laboratory data center proposed for Ypsilanti Township; promises to stand with residents against any project they oppose

Lena Epstein - Republican

- Co-owner and top executive of Vesco Oil Corporation and serves on the Board of Directors for the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, the Detroit Historical Society and the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Served as President Donald Trump’s Michigan campaign chairperson in 2016 and on his 2020 National Finance Committee
- Wants to increase affordability, access and hold university leadership accountable

Amir Makled - Democrat

- Civil rights attorney and U-M Dearborn graduate
- Prioritizes access and affordability, academic freedom and free expression, fair treatment of workers
- Has voiced opposition against the U-M/Los Alamos National Laboratory data center proposed for Ypsilanti Township

Michael Schostak - Republican

- Current Bloomfield Township treasurer, former finance lecturer at Wayne State University, U-M alum
- Wants to put Michigan kids first, improve affordability by expanding the income thresholds of the Go Blue Guarantee and removing the home equity and small business assets from the financial aid formula, protect free expression and encourage fiscal responsibility
- Opposes any new real estate development, including data centers, without the support of the local government

Third party candidates include Andrew Chadderdon running as the Libertarian candidate and Kyle Maas running as the U.S. Taxpayers candidate. For more information on all candidates, visit easternecho.com

Scoop says... Election Day is Nov. 3.

Find your polling place by
scanning the QR code:



Voting early begins Saturday, Oct. 24 and is allowed until Sunday, Nov. 1. Citizens can register to vote within 14 days of Election Day, including day of, in person at their city or township clerk’s office. Voters must be in their clerk’s office by 8 p.m. on Election Day in order to register and vote.

Trustee of Michigan State University

Voters may select no more than two candidates

Julie Maday - Republican

- Former Novi City Council member and parent of MSU graduates
- Hopes to ask difficult questions, be transparent, ensure university spending matches mission, and be an independent voice on the board
- Highlights affordability and free expression
- Endorsed by Citizens for Traditional Values - PAC

Brianna Scott - Democrat

- Attorney and entrepreneur from Muskegon; MSU alumna who has served as Michigan State Trustee since 2019
- Supports transparency, accountability, independent oversight, structural policy reforms, strict audit standards, campus infrastructure upgrades and student safety and wellbeing resources
- Advocates for agricultural industry, research extension programs, and statewide economic partnerships; supports accessible and affordable higher education
- Endorsed by the Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan Education Association, the UAW

Roger Victory - Republican

- Current state senator, owner and chief-operator of Victory Farms, former state representative
- Aims to protect academic excellence, strengthen MSU’s agriculture and extension programs, and promote affordability, accountability, transparency and trust
- Member of the Great Lakes Leadership Academy Advisory Committee
- Endorsed by the Michigan Farm Bureau AgriPAC

Kelly Tebay Zemke - Democrat

- MSU trustee since 2019 and director of government and external relations at The Henry Ford in Dearborn
- Hopes to expand the Spartan Advantage, a free tuition program at MSU, eliminate barriers to student success, and build on cost-free student health efforts at MSU
- Endorsed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, the Michigan Education Association, the UAW

Third party candidates include Libertarian candidates Daniel R. Patterson and Will Tyler White, U.S. Taxpayers Party candidates Janet Sanger and John Sanger, Green Party candidate John Anthony La Pietra, Working Class candidate Yaz Ozbek. For more information on all candidates, visit EasternEcho.com.

Governor of Wayne State University

Voters may select no more than two candidates

Shereef Akeel - Democrat

- Attorney in Troy, Michigan with a focus on civil rights
- Focuses on affordability through expanded financial aid and scholarship programs and investment in open education resources, investment in research facilities and faculty retention, protection of civil rights and liberties, and increased student success programs and opportunities
- Highlights policies to protect marginalized communities, anti-bias training and restorative practices in public safety, increased partnerships in Detroit, and more oversight on contracts and spending
- Endorsed by the Michigan Education Association, the UAW, U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib

Andy Anuzis - Republican

- Principal of Lincoln-King High School in Detroit and former chief of staff in the Michigan House of Representatives and U.S. Congress
- Supports affordability and lower tuition costs through eliminating wasteful spending, underscores importance of university mission, highlights universities’ role in building civil society through public spiritedness and constructive debate across ideological spectrums
- Pledges support for Wayne State to adopt the Chicago Statement, a free speech policy that affirms a university’s commitment to free expression for all students and faculty

Richard Mack - Democrat

- Union-side labor and civil rights attorney; former Detroit Charter Commissioner; Wayne State alumnus
- Supports budgeting that prioritizes varied class offerings, smaller classes and accessibility; supports fair pay for faculty and staff; increased support and connection with Detroit and Michigan; advocates for expansion of Labor@Wayne program
- Endorsed by the Michigan Education Association, the UAW, the People’s Coalition

Christa Murphy - Republican

- Professional experience in technology strategy at Meta, Samsung and General Motors; Wayne State alumna; serves on board of directors at Vibe Credit Union
- Campaign focuses fiscal discipline through regular program reviews that prioritize degrees with strong employment outcomes, workforce development through increased partnerships with Detroit’s business and civic communities, and upward social mobility through student support programs, co-op and internship programs

Third party candidates include Libertarian candidates Alex Avery and Jami Van Alstine, U.S. Taxpayers candidate Jeff McDonald, Green Party candidate Paul M. Ragan, Working Class candidate Suzanne Roehring, and Natural Law candidate Kathleen Oakford. For more information on all candidates, visit EasternEcho.com.

WEEKLY VOTER TIP

Get Ready for Early Voting

Saturday, Oct 24 – Sunday, Nov 1

You can take your absentee ballot to an early voting location

Check your registration and get personalized ballot information at VOTE411.org



VOTE 411

VISIT VOTE411.ORG



Michigan Supreme Court



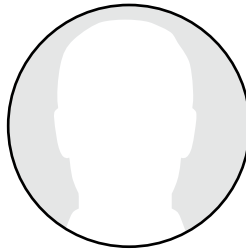
Megan Cavanagh

- Nominated by the Michigan Democratic Party
- Current chief justice
- Wayne State University Law School
- 15 years experience practicing appellate law
- Endorsed United Auto Workers, Reproductive Freedom for All



Noah Hood

- Nominated by the Michigan Democratic Party
- Current Michigan Supreme Court justice
- Appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer
- Harvard Law School
- Previous Third Judicial Circuit Court judge
- Previous Michigan Court of Appeals judge
- Endorsed by United Auto Workers, Reproductive Freedom for All



Thomas Howe

- Nominated by the Michigan U.S. Taxpayers Party
- Genesee County resident



Casandra Morse-Bills

- Nominated by the Michigan Republican Party
- Presiding judge in the 23rd Judicial Circuit Court
- Thomas M. Cooley Law School
- Member of the Michigan Judicial Council
- Prosecuting attorney of Oscoda County, Michigan
- Endorsed by Michigan Chamber of Commerce, the Detroit News, Michigan State Medical Society



Michael D. Warren Jr.

- Nominated by the Michigan Republican Party
- Member of the Michigan Board of Education
- Judge for the Oakland County Circuit Court
- Former law school professor
- Author of “America’s Survival Guide” and “The Revolutionary Words that Forged America.”
- Endorsed by the Detroit News, Michigan State Medical Society, the Libertarian Party of Michigan



Jody White

- Nominated by the Michigan U.S. Taxpayers Party
- Part of the National Association of Realtors and Michigan Association of Realtors
- Former Michigan House of Representatives and Michigan Senate candidate

Judge of Probate Court Non-incumbent Position

Alethia Jean Battles

- Attorney, legal scholar and social worker
- Associate general counsel at the University of Michigan and clinician and supervisor in the Department of Social Work at Michigan Medicine
- Endorsed by Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, Ypsilanti Mayor Nicole Brown, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor Brenda Stumbo, EMU College Democrats

Jennifer Lawrence

- Practices family law in the Law Office of Jennifer Lawrence in Ann Arbor
- Former president of the Washtenaw County Bar Association
- Endorsed by the Washtenaw County Democratic Party, Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor, State Sen. Jeff Irwin, County Commissioner Annie Somerville

Washtenaw Community College Board of Trustees

Ruth Hatcher

- Elected to her second six-year term on the board in 2020; serves as board secretary
- Retired writing and literature professor
- Endorsed by the Huron Valley Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO

Daniel J. Katanski

- Ypsilanti resident
- Part-time advanced manufacturing instructor at WCC
- Former DTE senior business analyst

David A. DeVarti

- First elected to the WCC Board of Trustees in 2014; reelected in 2020; serves as board treasurer
- Community activist and former Ann Arbor council member, serves on the Ann Arbor Zoning Board of Appeals
- Endorsed by the Washtenaw County Democratic Party and the Huron Valley Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO

Christina Fleming

- First elected to the WCC Board of Trustees in 2014; reelected in 2020; serves as board chairperson
- Has professional experience as a help desk technician, data center administrator and independent contractor
- Endorsed by the Washtenaw County Democratic Party

Ypsilanti Community Schools Board

Jason Sprague

- Substitute teacher at Ypsilanti schools and former EMU lecturer
- Prioritizes transportation and communication improvement

Yvonne M. Fields

- Joined the YCS board in 2021
- Focuses on students and eliminating debt

KJ Pedri

- Current EMU student and parent in the YCS district
- Focuses on safety and inclusion

Statewide Proposals

Proposal 2026-01: Constitutional Convention

“A proposal to convene a constitutional convention for the purpose of drafting a general revision of the state constitution
Shall a convention of elected delegates be convened in 2027 to draft a general revision of the State Constitution for presentation to the state’s voters for their approval or rejection?”

About the proposal: Michigan law requires this question to appear on the ballot every 16 years. If the proposal is passed, the process of the constitutional convention would be very involved, said Eastern Michigan University political science professor Joshua Koss.

Delegates would be elected from every Michigan House of Representatives and Senate district. Those delegates would be elected by constituents, likely through a primary party contest. Once elected, delegates would hold a constitutional convention where they would look through the constitution and decide on general revisions. Revisions could be broad or narrow. Once revised, constituents would vote to either ratify or reject the new Michigan Constitution.

Proposal 2026-02: Money Out of Politics

“A proposed initiated law to prohibit campaign contributions from certain regulated utilities and government contractors and apply campaign finance laws and regulations to additional types of political communications

The proposal would:

- Prohibit regulated electric and gas utilities, contractors with over \$250,000 annually in government contracts, and people and organizations with substantial connections to these utilities/contractors from making direct or indirect campaign contributions to those who run for or hold offices that impact them.
- Expand laws regulating spending on political communications, including those requiring disclosing donor information, to apply to communications clearly identifying candidates or ballot questions, even if they do not expressly advocate voting for/against them.
- Expressly apply the law requiring disclosure of who paid for political communications to internet political communications.”

About the proposal: Proponents of the proposal say it would ban political funding from regulated utility companies and affiliates, protecting elections and politicians from outside influence and pressure. Opponents of the proposal say it threatens free speech and political discourse.

More information about the ballot proposals can be found at easternecho.com.

City of Ypsilanti Proposals

Proposal A: Non-Partisan Elections

“It is proposed City Charter Sections 3.01, 3.04, and 3.06 be amended to provide for election of non-partisan candidates for those offices by filing of nominating petitions and removal of reference to a candidate’s party designation on the ballot. Shall this proposed amendment to the Ypsilanti City Charter be adopted?”

About the proposal: Currently, the Ypsilanti City Charter requires candidates for an elective city office to compete in a primary, partisan election on a party ticket such as Democrat or Republican. If passed, this proposal would eliminate the partisan election.

Joshua Koss, an assistant professor of political science at Eastern Michigan University, said the intention behind the proposal may be to make voters focus on a candidate’s policies instead of their party affiliation. This would mean voters would have to do their own research and vote for the candidate they agree with most instead of simply voting Republican or Democrat, and maybe that would lead to a fairer evaluation, Koss said.

However, many voters may not have the time to do that research, Koss said, and that could lead citizens to vote for candidates based on other factors that don’t have as much meaning as their policies.

Another variable is that labeling a race as nonpartisan does not mean it suddenly becomes nonpartisan in the eyes of the voter, Koss said. Even without the clear label of a political party, the candidates are still the same people with policies that identify them as being Democrat, Republican, independent or other.

Koss said that the nonpartisan elections could increase the number of candidates on the ballot, contributing to vote-splitting that doesn’t necessarily reflect the majority opinion. Another factor to consider is that Ypsilanti tends to vote Democratic, so Proposal A might give Republican candidates a fairer chance by removing the label that comes with so many connotations, Koss said.

Proposal B: Police Budget

“It is proposed that City Charter Section 5.04 be amended to provide for a limit in the City Council’s provision to budgeted police expenditures above the previous year’s budgeted police expenditures unless such an increase be approved by a majority of voters in a regular city-wide election in a ballot question pertaining to no other issue. Shall this proposed amendment to the Ypsilanti City Charter be adopted?”

About the proposal: If approved by voters, the ballot proposal would create a charter amendment that would require any increase to the city police budget that is higher than the previous year’s expenditures to be voted on by constituents in the next citywide election.

Proponents of the proposal say it increases democratic input from voters, putting decision-making in the hands of constituents. Proponents also say it builds public trust, promotes fiscal responsibility and raises awareness of the police budget.

Opponents of the proposal say it could effectively defund the police and disrupt the city’s budgeting process; currently, city charter places budget approval power with city council and stipulates the fiscal budget must be adopted by June 7 each year.