NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

Elevating & advancing local business.

2026 Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Anthony Forlini for Secretary of State
Email Contact: info@anthonyforlini.com
Phone Contact: 517-490-1614 (Campaign manager, Amy Hawkins)
Campaign Website URL: www.anthonyforlini.com

1. **Purpose and Responsibility**
   Why are you seeking this office, and how would you define the responsibility of the office to the people of northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula?

   Northern Michigan is a special place that draws people from all over the state, other states and even other countries. I am seeking this position to help the people of Michigan with government transparency, smarter government processes and easier access to government services. This will help the citizens of Michigan participate in elections, start and manage their businesses and have access to documents they need to work, buy a home and manage a business.

2. **Jobs, Investment, and Competitiveness**
   What specific policies would you support or develop if elected, to ensure northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula can compete for jobs, investment, infrastructure, and other state and federal resources?

   As I have traveled throughout the state I hear from business people that the Secretary of State website is not friendly to people looking for their licenses, reporting business activity or file their start-up paperwork. This has to stop. This department has to be responsive to questions and concerns, software needs to be updated in a timely fashion and we need to be available to answer questions when asked. For Northern Michigan and the UP, we need to make sure we invest in technology to make it easier to use the web to interact with our office. I also want to make sure that I personally visit the offices to make sure we have fast and friendly people to help our northern neighbors. So many times statewide candidates make a visit to one city and then say they know Northern MI. We need to make a commitment to be there and listen.

3. **Housing and Regional Partnerships**
   NMCA's policy framework calls for housing solutions and regional partnerships to address the region's critical housing shortage. What policies or ideas do you have in which you can partner with the Alliance to make a positive impact?

This is a perfect example of the government not working to help Michiganders.

The one thing I see in Northern Michigan is that it is about people. We see businesses moving to Northern Michigan, but they need the workforce-from healthcare, to mental health care, to teachers and first responders along with manufacturing and seasonal employees.

They all need to live somewhere near their work or they have an hour plus drive to work. But even before housing, we need infrastructure-roads, sewer, water, wells and septic. This is where the government needs to get out of the way.

There is a way for all levels of government to work together, not stumble over one another with too many regulations, multiple levels of approvals and websites and bureaucrats that aren't helpful. I understand that schools, local housing officials and State legislators worked together to create education workforce housing and housing based around public transportation. Interesting ideas!

4. **Workforce Development and Talent Attraction**
   What are your views on programs such as Going PRO, Michigan Reconnect, and talent attraction programs? What would you do to help attract, retain, train, and grow the workforce needed by northern Michigan and Upper Peninsula employers?

   I have been a long supporter of Going PRO and MI Reconnect. I believe we need to work with all of our educational organizations throughout Northern MI to ensure we have the workforce ready for whatever growth moves North. This has to be a regional effort.

   High schools, ISDs, community colleges, universities, as well as the Northern Chamber Alliance need to work together to ensure we are ready. This is already happening. I understand the drone program has businesses, government, and colleges working together to make Northern MI a hotspot for drone driven technologies.

   And having the third largest airport in the state, it is great to see NMC working together with the airport to train pilots, as well as technicians to service the planes.

5. **Childcare Access**
   Please describe your view of the need for childcare in the region, and what would you do to enhance access to this resource?

   I understand a few years ago there was a real push at regulation reform from former State Rep. Jack O'Malley. He would carry around the three feet of printed paper of the regulations required to open and maintain a child care center. We have made some headway, but we really need to do a lot more to decrease overlapping regulations, inspections and heavy reporting. I understand we need some regulations to make sure workers and children are safe. But we can do it with a lot more efficiency. And that requires a government willing to look at what they do and why, and make sure there isn't

duplicative reporting and burdensome regulation keeping people from opening centers where they are needed. Tri-share is also a model that could be expanded.

6. **Education Outcomes and Funding**
   What do you believe is the best action you could take to support growth in measurable outcomes for k-12 students in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula? How well is Michigan's funding of our higher education systems working, and would you make any changes to the way we fund education in this state?

   We have been sending record amounts of per pupil funding, as well as so many categoricals. Here again, are we putting limits on this money because it is better for the kids? Or for bureaucrats and administrators? We should loosen the ties and allow local schools to decide how best to spend the money. If money comes out of a transportation bucket, and they have more than they need, why can't they move it over to another area instead of buying next year's tire allotment. It could be used to hire an extra reading tutor, or supplies for students. Again, I just have a view of the government getting out of the way and letting local input rule the day. Parental involvement needs to be expanded and encouraged.

7. **Regulatory Climate and Small Business Growth**
   What regulations, permitting processes, taxes, mandates, or compliance burdens do you believe most limit small business growth in our region? What would you do to make our state's regulatory environment more predictable?

   When people outside of Michigan, and many times within Michigan, when you talk about businesses here, they talk about the big businesses. But that isn't what drives job creation in Northern MI. Companies like Britten Banner, Alfie and Bowers Harbor Winery need to be encouraged to expand their businesses while we encourage new businesses to start. The Secretary of State has to be part of that and make it easy to file paperwork.

   Entrepreneurs start their business because they like, and are good at, the business they start. They are rarely good at filing paperwork. Let's make that easy so they can go back to running and growing their passion.

8. **Affordability and Economic Vitality**
   What meaningful changes do you believe would help advance Michigan's economic vitality by making this state a more affordable place to live, work, and do business?

   My main thought is to get out of the way and reduce regulations. Let's work together to figure out the information that we need and the most efficient way to obtain it. We have so many amazing people that are, or want to build things-housing, better schools, stronger business climate. Lets encourage the best to come here and reinvent how we do things to make it easier, less expensive and use less time to start and run a business. I believe that organizations like the Chamber Alliance are a vital part of the transformation building a better business climate.