NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

Elevating & advancing local business.

2026 Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance Candidate Questionnaire

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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?

   I am running because the Upper Peninsula has a history of being represented by effective and serious legislators. The Upper Peninsula deserves to maintain that level of leadership, over those purely motivated by self-interest. I have a direct stake in the U.P.'s future, because I'm the only candidate in this race who has raised a family here. I want my daughter, and every kid across the U.P., to have access to the opportunities that they need so they can live fulfilling and prosperous lives here at home.

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?

   The Upper Peninsula is facing an immediate energy crisis. Access to affordable and reliable energy is essential for any new opportunities in the region, and we're heading in the completely wrong direction. That's why as a first step, I introduced HB 4283 alongside Rep. Bohnak's HB 4007. While overall we need to repeal artificial restrictions on energy generation designed to satisfy a political agenda, these bills are a significant and practical step towards preventing the bleeding that will happen if PA 235 is implemented over the coming years.

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?

   I am developing legislation that would introduce a parallel program to Wisconsin's Local Use Lumber Act. The plan would allow individuals looking to build 1- or 2-family homes with Michigan lumber to construct Michigan houses, without needing to go through the traditional grading process. Instead, a state program would train people in grading, who

could then identify the appropriate lumber to sell directly to a future homeowner or their agent. This policy has been in place in Wisconsin for nearly 20 years, and has also been adopted in states like Tennessee, Alaska, and New Hampshire. It won't be a silver-bullet solution, but it will help drive construction for family homes.

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 am a strong proponent of these sorts of programs. In my professional career, I switched industries several times, and many times these changes meant that I needed to pursue certifications in completely new fields or I had to expand my expertise to a higher level of certification. From my experience as a student and as an employer, I know how valuable well-trained personnel are, but I also know how cost prohibitive it can be for employers (especially small businesses). Having these programs connect employees and students looking to expand their skillset with employers who need help is a worthwhile investment for both parties, and for our communities more broadly.

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?

   The U.P. lost a significant amount of our childcare programs during the pandemic, and we still face a critical shortage of providers. The U.P. relies significantly on informal childcare providers that aren't necessarily inside the licensed framework of centers or in home care providers. I want to explore ways of bringing these sorts of providers out of the legal gray area, enabling them to provide care to more kids.

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?

   The poor state of our education system is no secret, but I frequently find myself reminding my colleagues that when it comes to poor K-12 results, it's not our schools behind that trend. Our schools and teachers in the U.P. and in northern Lower do a great job; it's predominantly the urban school districts that underperform and drag results down. We can still do a better job, particularly with helping our kids prepare for life after they graduate high school. I'm a strong proponent of dual enrollment, Early Middle College, and CTE programs that provide students with educational opportunities that get them ready for whatever comes next. Making sure that every student has a path forward to a future that suits their talents and interests is extraordinarily important, because college isn't the best choice for every student.

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?

   I want to see the state pursue a policy like the President's that requires departments to repeal a rule or two before they can enact another one. Michigan's bureaucracies have become far too accustomed to unilaterally issuing rules, since the legislature effectively only has the power to delay administrative rules and can't adequately block them. These often arbitrary rules were a major contributor to why I decided to sell my truck stop. We simultaneously need to see rules repealed and we need to take legislative action to strengthen the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, so future legislatures can take more proactive steps to block arbitrary rules created by out of touch bureaucrats.

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?

   Energy and infrastructure are the lifeblood of a healthy economy. If we can bring our energy costs down and create a framework that makes it easier for communities to expand public infrastructure to accommodate new employers, the U.P. and northern Michigan will be far more attractive for new businesses and for existing businesses looking to expand. We consistently have new employers or existing businesses who would love to expand in the U.P., but we don't have the public infrastructure that they need: roads, electricity, telecomms, or water/sewer service where they need it. I have advocated for funding proposals for these projects to expand these services, and I will continue to do so. These projects are essential but our local governments don't have the sort of capital to put it up themselves. Expanding critical infrastructure across the U.P. and northern Michigan is the most important thing that we can do to grow our economy.