

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'm running for Secretary of State because I believe every Michigander deserves an election system they can trust and a government that actually works for them, whether they live in Detroit or Drummond Island. As Lieutenant Governor, I've made it a priority to show up in person across this state, which is why I've visited all 83 counties in Michigan at least three times. That's not a talking point, it's how I've come to understand that decisions made in Lansing can feel distant from the realities of daily life in our rural and northern communities, and it's shaped how I intend to run the office of Secretary of State. I intend to bring that same hands-on, accountable approach to this office.

For me, this office has two core responsibilities: safeguarding the integrity of our elections, and making sure the everyday services this office provides, such as driver's licenses, vehicle registrations, and certain business filings, are accessible, efficient, and fair to every resident, regardless of ZIP code.

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?*

While many of the levers for job creation and infrastructure investment sit outside the Secretary of State's office, I believe this office should be an aggressive advocate and changemaker for regional competitiveness. The services this office runs, relevant business filings and licensing, are the administrative backbone that businesses and workers rely on. These services either help or hurt a region's ability to compete. As Secretary of State I'd focus on faster, more accessible business registration and filing services in the UP and northern Michigan. A small business in Marquette or Alpena shouldn't face longer wait times or fewer in-person options than one in Oakland County. I'd prioritize expanding branch capacity and utilize my background as a software engineer to create online filing tools so entrepreneurs in our northern communities can start and register businesses as easily as anywhere else in the state.

The UP and northern Michigan's economy also depends heavily on trucking, logging, mining, and skilled trades. These are industries where CDL processing times and credentialing backlogs can directly slow down job placement. That's why I would ensure that Commercial driver's licensing and credentialing keeps pace with workforce needs in the region and reduce wait times for CDL testing and renewals in underserved rural counties.

Finally, tourism in Northern Michigan and the UP is one of the biggest economic drivers in the region. That's why I'll implement a modernized vehicle title and registration systems for recreational vehicles and motorcycles that support tourism and seasonal economies in the region.

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?

Housing policy itself sits largely outside this office, but the Secretary of State's office touches housing more than people realize, especially through manufactured and mobile home titling. Right now, the title and surety bond process for mobile homes is slow and burdensome, and that directly affects housing supply in a region where manufactured housing is a critical, affordable option. I'd prioritize streamlining that process to get homes titled, sold, and occupied faster.

Beyond that, I see this office as a partner to advocate for housing solutions and I'd welcome working with NMCA to identify other administrative bottlenecks, whether in business licensing for developers and contractors or other filing processes, that may be slowing housing solutions in the region.

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?

Michigan's workforce programs, including Going PRO and Michigan Reconnect, which I have championed and expanded during my time in office, have helped expand opportunity by connecting people with the skills employers need. We should continue investing in programs that respond to regional workforce demands while making it easier for people to earn credentials, apprenticeships, and degrees that lead to good-paying careers.

As Secretary of State, I'd use the direct levers of this office to support that workforce growth in northern Michigan and the UP. That means faster, more accessible commercial driver's licensing and credentialing for the trucking, logging, mining, and skilled trades industries the region's economy depends on, reducing wait times, and expanding testing availability so workforce training doesn't stall out on administrative backlogs. It also means making business filing and registration simple and fast for UP and northern Michigan employers and entrepreneurs looking to grow or relocate, so that when Going PRO and Reconnect succeed in training workers, there are fewer bureaucratic obstacles standing between that talent and a job. I see this office as a partner to workforce development, clearing the administrative path so the investments already being made can actually translate into hires.

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?

Access to affordable, reliable childcare is essential for families and Michigan's economy. Too many parents are unable to fully participate in the workforce because childcare is

unavailable or unaffordable, particularly in rural communities where providers are limited and travel distances are greater. For many employers across northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, childcare has become both a family issue and a workforce issue.

During the past seven years, our administration has made significant investments to stabilize childcare providers, expand capacity, and lower costs for working families. I personally oversaw the Caring for MI Future program that opened 1,400 childcare facilities in 13 months. Being a part of the effort to expand access to low or no-cost child care to 150,000 more kids and their families is one of my proudest accomplishments during my time as Lieutenant Governor. However, I also understand that while investments like that one made a meaningful difference, more work remains. I will continue to advocate for expanding access, strengthening the childcare workforce, and supporting policies that help families participate in the workforce while ensuring employers have the talent they need to grow and succeed.

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?*

As a candidate for Secretary of State, I can best speak to where this office touches students' lives directly, which is often through driver's education and a young person's first government-issued ID. I'm committed to making that experience simple and accessible, especially for rural K-12 students in the UP who may face long drives to the nearest branch.

On workforce pathways, my focus is on what this office controls: fast, accessible licensing and credentialing for trades and apprenticeships, so the state's investments in higher education and training translate into people actually working in their fields here in the UP

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?*

Within the Secretary of State's authority, the most direct burden I hear about while campaigning is the business filing and registration process itself, renewal deadlines, paperwork, and processing delays that fall harder on small businesses without dedicated compliance staff. These issues are compounded in northern Michigan and the UP by fewer nearby branch locations. I'd prioritize modernizing online filing systems and expanding rural branch access so entrepreneurs aren't losing time and money navigating basic administrative requirements.

More broadly, predictability matters as much as the rules themselves. I'd push this office to communicate clearly and consistently about filing deadlines and requirement changes, and to serve as a resource that helps small businesses understand what's expected of them

rather than penalizing them for confusion. Tax policy and broader regulatory mandates are set by the Legislature, and I'd defer to that process, but I'd use this office to make sure the pieces within its control are as simple and reliable as possible.

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?*

Michigan's long-term economic vitality depends on making it more affordable for families to build a life and for businesses to grow. That means tackling the biggest cost drivers—not just through tax policy, but by increasing the supply of housing, expanding access to affordable childcare, investing in infrastructure, and strengthening education and workforce development. Those investments help lower costs over time while making our state more competitive.