NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

Elevating & advancing local business.

2026 Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance Candidate Questionnaire

Name: John Damoose
Email Contact: jndamoose@gmail.com
Phone Contact: 231-838-5895
Campaign Website URL: damooseforsenate.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?

   I am seeking re-election to the office of Senator for Michigan's 37th District because I believe I absolutely love northern Michigan and the eastern Upper Peninsula and believe I am uniquely positioned to help accomplish good things for our region. The most exciting part of this job for me is getting my hands dirty to help with local issues – whether that means attracting additional investment in northern businesses or helping develop new tools to address our housing crisis. I am willing to work across the aisle to make sure northern Michigan and Upper Peninsula needs are taken seriously and believe my record in the first four years in the Senate proves my commitment to providing good, responsible government for our region and the state.

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?

   I will continue to advocate for tangible legislation that addresses the factors holding us back and helps secure new opportunities for our region. Through my constant travel and meetings throughout northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, I have gained a solid understanding of the key issues holding us back – especially access to affordable housing and workforce development.

   To address these issues, I have been a continuous champion for finding new solutions to these challenges like expanding what MSHDA can do, supporting CTE and our community colleges, and working to ensure that our regions are included in economic development opportunities.

   I have also been a tireless advocate for manufacturing – especially the small to medium sized manufacturing that can transform our region. These efforts have led me to be

named the Michigan Manufacturing Associations "Legislator of the Year" for 4 straight years – every year I've been in the Senate.

I will continue a bipartisan effort I started with a key Senate colleague to help develop a ten year economic development plan for the state of Michigan that ensures the needs of the region I represent are included in any statewide plans. And lastly, I will continue to advocate for the strategic direct appropriations to help our area as I've done throughout my first term.

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 meet with the Alliance frequently and will continue to try to make our shared ideas a reality. At times this means advocating for policy changes, as I have done in introducing legislation to allow school districts like Beaver Island to use school funds to provide teacher housing – if we are going to solve this problem, we need to be willing to try new things. At other times, this means helping to secure funding for housing projects, which I have done numerous times, including a creative approach to housing that involved a unique coalition of school advocates in Traverse City. We are currently in the early stages of seeking state investment in a beautiful housing and commercial project in Petoskey, and have been involved with several housing related issues in partnership with our local tribes. These efforts are emblematic of the types of things I will continue to support if re-elected to a second term.

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 absolutely support these programs and have been a vocal opponent when funding cuts for these programs have been proposed. To help attract, retain, train and grow the workforce we need, I will continue to support increased funding for CTE programs and policy changes that allow more access to such programs.

   I will also continue to seek investment in our community colleges, as I have successfully secured a $9.8 million grant for North Central Michigan College's CATEE Center and another nearly $5 million grant for Northwestern Michigan College's aviation program.

   Lastly, I support decreasing the Michigan Reconnect age to 21, so more students can access the program.

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?

Childcare is a critical challenge facing our region, and I am very impressed with the innovative solutions being proposed. I recently supported expanding the Tri-Share program, and have introduced legislation to allow for the development of child care "microcenters" which was brought to me as an idea from a constituent. That legislation may not be signed into law this term, so I intend to reintroduce it next term and will continue to seek solutions from partners throughout the District.

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 need to bring back some of the accountability measures that have been stripped from law in recent years, especially related to A-F school ratings, teacher accountability and the 3rd grade reading laws. But, even more, we need to continue to pursue efforts related to the science of reading since our entire state struggles in this regard. Related to higher education, I do not believe this money should come from the School Aid Fund, and will support efforts to return that funding to K-12 education.

   Importantly, there are several categoricals we need to protect in northern Michigan – especially the transportation funding categorical and section 22d small rural district funding. I am in support of switching to a weighted formula for school funding, as long as transportation is included as one of those weights. Doing so would provide schools a more consistent budget that they can count on.

   And, most importantly, we can never again miss the deadline for approving school budgets. Missing that deadline last year did nothing but hurt our schools.

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 am very concerned about the regulatory environment related to energy. Several bills were passed in recent years that will do nothing but weaken our ability to guarantee reliable and affordable energy that is needed to grow our region.

   I also am very concerned to see several recent laws and several proposed ideas that would raise taxes for our northern businesses – things like the proposed new tax on services and last year's "decoupling" that disallowed several new tax cuts that would have greatly helped many of our businesses.

   I am very open to ideas related to streamlining permitting process and cutting unnecessary regulations where possible. And, to make our state's regulatory environment

more predictable, we need to scale back the rulemaking authority that state agencies have been given over the last few decades.

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?

   I believe we need a consistent plan for economic development. We are in competition with other states that have proven far more inviting to businesses. It is a constant complaint that businesses never know what they can expect from our state. I will continue to spearhead this effort in Lansing.

   As mentioned earlier, I will continue to seek productive and innovative solutions to help develop affordable housing and child care. See above for some of the things I have already done in this regard.

   And, lastly, I believe we need to market the state better and get back to full funding for "Pure Michigan." That campaign really started to chip away at the negative impression many people have around the country about Michigan, and invited people to take another look at Michigan. So many people have a wrong picture of this state, and once they've visited, it has been proven that many people decide to make Michigan their home.