

Steve Kwasny, DEM
53rd District,
Answers On Next Pages

Dear Michigan House candidate,

The **Michigan Campaign Finance Network** is a nonprofit nonpartisan organization based in Lansing. Our mission is to shine a light on the role of money in state politics. As reform efforts gain more and more support from the public, **we are asking candidates for the Michigan House to answer the following questions about where they stand.** Replies will be shared with the public and local media.

What To Do With Responses: Responses can be emailed to **Craig Mauger**, MCFN's executive director, at craig@mcfn.org or can be sent standard mail to him at the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, 600 W. St. Joseph, Suite 3G, Lansing Michigan, 48933.

***Additional comments** can written on the back of this page or added in the email.

Our questions:

1. Do you believe the role money is playing in our state's political system is a problem that deserves legislative attention? YES _____ NO _____
2. Do you believe donors paying for so-called "issue ads" that don't expressly advocate for the election or defeat of a candidate should have to be disclosed? YES _____ NO _____
3. Do you believe Michigan lawmakers should have to file personal financial disclosures to combat potential conflicts of interest as lawmakers do in 47 other states? YES _____ NO _____
4. "Super PACs" can take unlimited contributions but are supposed to act independently of the candidates they support. Should state candidates be able to participate in fundraisers for "Super PACs" that support them? YES _____ NO _____
5. Should lobbyists have to disclose all their spending for food and beverage hospitality for state lawmakers and administrative officials and identify the beneficiaries of that hospitality from the first \$1 they spend? YES _____ NO _____
6. Currently, lobbyists can buy gifts for state lawmakers valued at less than \$58. Should lobbyists be able to purchase gifts for state officials? YES _____ NO _____
7. Do you believe all donations to candidates should be disclosed and reported in advance of election dates? YES _____ NO _____
8. Do you agree with the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling? YES _____ NO _____
9. If you are elected and start a nonprofit to help pay officeholder-related expenses, support political advocacy or to make charitable contributions, will you disclose your donors? YES _____ NO _____



1) Yes, more legislative attention is required in our state's political system because money has a tendency to be given priority over people. This campaign will lead by example, showing politicians money does not have to be valued over people during a quest for candidacy, by suspending all donations. Come election time, the political climate demands politicians shift their focus away from the voices of their constituents in order to pad their budgets with dollars in order to retain their office. Recent legislation gravitates towards fulfilling this quest for campaign dollars putting us all, even our equal democracy, in peril. When an elected official is not listening to the voices of those they represent they are not doing their job. In addition, most of these "donations" are admitted by out of state interests with hidden intentions, expectations, and deceitful messaging which misleads communities. Any productive legislative movement grinds to a halt when money is valued over people.

2) Yes, absolutely. Issues drive a candidate's platform, and most electioneering communication portrayed is a distortion from reality. When individuals are hiding their political standpoints, one must question their true motivations and intentions. Full disclosure is the only fair method for properly informing the public.

3) Yes, Michigan lawmakers should file their personal finances because politicians should be transparent. If people are trusting you to represent them, then they should know who you truly are, your history, your interests, and so on. However, I am less concerned about their

personal wealth. In terms of conflict of interest, I am more concerned with a politician's personal gains attained by interfering with or manipulating new legislation.

4) The way candidates and "Super PACs" interact is confusing for the general public. It's illegal for candidates to interact with "Super PACs" supporting them and vice versa. I believe at the end of the day federal reform is required to severely restrict or even outlaw "Super PACs."

5) Yes, lobbyists should have to disclose hospitality spending on state lawmakers and staffers. We should increase access to these records. Having full financial disclosure gives Michigan voters a better understanding of their candidates' and elected officials' priorities. It all circles back around to transparency.

6) The issue is lobbyists have the capability of granting financial gains to candidates greater than \$58 but that is separate issue. Sure, allow lobbyists to buy small gifts for candidates, but the public should be granted full disclosure of these transactions.

7) Yes, under current Michigan law most forms of donations are disclosed and reported. When Super PACs are outlawed our legislative transparency process will be a slightly clearer.

8) I am disappointed with the FEC v Citizens United ruling. We started creating entities that have zero accountability such as Super PACs. When we don't have financial transparency we began to make various forms of bribery legal and that is a major problem for communities. True political campaign finance reform begins with overturning Buckley v Valeo.

9) We'll focus on getting elected first. Yes, there will always be full disclosure within my representation in office.

