

Which Democratic candidates in Michigan are ‘pro-life for the whole life’?

Michigan Democrats for Life is trying to find out. We have identified 22 so far, and we hope to find more before the election.

All Democratic and non-partisan candidates are welcome to fill out our endorsement questionnaire. In addition to identifying candidates to receive our endorsement, this questionnaire is an educational tool to help candidates and voters broaden their perspective on what it means to be pro-life. Pro-life candidates can learn more about promoting life as Democrats, and even mainstream Democrats can find ways to broaden their message to promote the cause of life. **You are invited to fill out the questionnaire too, even if you are not running for office.** [<https://www.michdemsforlife.org/survey>]

Whole-Life Candidates in 2020

We have sent endorsement invitations to candidates in 27 of Michigan’s 83 counties. (We were unable to reach those from counties that do not publish candidates’ email addresses.)

In addition to supporting policies and initiatives that are traditionally associated with the pro-life movement, the candidates endorsed by MDFL also support pro-life policies that are often opposed by Republican politicians, such as:

- health, economic, and social policies that reduce the number of women who feel that abortion is their only viable option, and
- policies that respect the health, lives, and human dignity of workers, people with low incomes, immigrants, minority groups, and everyone else.

Please consider giving them financial support or contacting them to see if they need help making phone calls to voters or other volunteer assistance.

Candidates Endorsed by *Michigan Democrats for Life*

**State Representative, Michigan House District 93
(EATON and GRATIOT counties)**

Muhammad Salman Rais

Email: salmanrais@yahoo.com

Web: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Political-Candidate/Muhammad-Salman-Rais-for-State-Representative-104542854629647/>

**State Representative, Michigan House District 105
(ANTRIM, CHARLEVOIX, MONTMORENCY, OSCODA, and OTSEGO counties)**

Jonathan Burke

Email: JonathanBurkeRN@gmail.com

Web: <http://jburkern.us/>

CLINTON County

Clinton County Commission

Patrick Witt

Email: patrickwitt@hotmail.com

Web: <https://www.facebook.com/Patrick-Witt-for-Clinton-County-Commissioner-103786028038114>

St. Johns Public Schools (non-partisan position)

Scott Darragh

Email: scottdarragh23@gmail.com

EATON County

Vermontville Village Trustee (non-partisan position)

Kimberlee Kenyon

Email: kenyon49096@gmail.com

INGHAM County

Ingham County Commission-District 1

Victor Celentino

Email: victorcelentino8201@comcast.net

Web: <https://www.votecelentino.com/>

KALAMAZOO County

Kalamazoo County Commission-District 10

Michael Quinn

Email: mikedquinn@sbcglobal.net

Web: <https://www.facebook.com/Quinn4Kalamazoo/>

LIVINGSTON County

Howell School Board (nonpartisan position)

Adam Mason Doby

Email: Adam.doby@gmail.com

MACOMB County

Prosecuting Attorney

Mary A. Chrzanowski

Email: MACforProsecutor@gmail.com

Web: <https://www.marychrzanowskiforprosecutor.com/>

OAKLAND County

Oakland County Commission-District 6

Jeffrey Long

Email: jefflongfor6th@gmail.com

Web: jefflongfor6th.us

Oak Park Board of Education

Benjamin Vineburg

Email: Ctebenv@gmail.com

Web: www.BenVineburg.com

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/VoteBenVineburg/?_xts__\[0\]=68](https://www.facebook.com/VoteBenVineburg/?_xts__[0]=68)

WAYNE County

Plymouth Canton Community Schools Board of Education (non-partisan position)

Sebastien Ostertag

Email: sebastienostertag000@gmail.com

Web: <https://sebastienostertag0.wixsite.com/mysite>

Democrats Endorsed by *Michigan Right to Life*

(those who are not also listed above have not yet completed a questionnaire for MDFL)

BAY County Executive

Jim Barcia

BAY County Clerk

Cynthia Luczak

BAY County Commission-1st District

Marie Ann-Fryzel Fox

BAY County Commission-2nd District

Ernie Krygier Jr.

EATON County Sheriff

Tom Reich

GENESEE County Clerk

John Gleason

INGHAM County Commission-1st District

Victor Celentino

KALAMAZOO County Commission-10th District

Mike Quinn

KENT County Commission-12th District

Monica Sparks

MACOMB County Commission-10th District

Robert Leonetti

SAGINAW County Sheriff

William Federspiel

SAGINAW County Commission-4th District

Sheldon Matthews

What about other Democratic candidates?

In addition to the whole-life Democrats who have completed our survey, we have also received responses from several pro-choice candidates. (The survey is designed for them too!)

Here is how their numeric scores compare with the scores of candidates who have been endorsed. (The figures represent the range from lowest to highest score.)

Life issues after birth

Endorsed candidates

Range: 9-10

Pro-choice respondents

Range: 9-10

Economic policies that reduce abortion

Endorsed candidates

Range: 13-14

Pro-choice respondents

Range: 10-14

Other policies that address abortion

Endorsed candidates

Range: 45-63

Pro-choice respondents

Range: 12-32

Total score:

Endorsed candidates

Range: 69-87

Pro-choice respondents

Range: 32-56

The endorsed candidates also provided pro-life responses to several key items on our questionnaire.

Although the pro-choice respondents clearly fall short of our endorsement criteria, they are in agreement with us on several important things. In addition to promoting human life and dignity after birth and economic policies that reduce abortion, they generally agree with us on such things as informed consent, pre-abortion counseling, promoting adoption as an alternative to abortion, and having the legality of abortion determined through a citizen referendum.

What do all of those numeric scores mean? The best way to find out is to fill out the questionnaire yourself and see what your scores are. You will find it at <https://www.michdemsforlife.org/survey>

Why does MDFL need to endorse candidates if endorsements have already been made by *Michigan Right to Life*?

From our perspective, the endorsement process of *Michigan Right to Life* falls short in two major respects. First, it does not encompass pro-life policies on which Republicans tend to do poorly, such as policies that protect human life and dignity after birth and economic policies that save lives by reducing the number of people who feel that abortion is their only viable option. Second, it fails to identify many pro-life candidates—particularly Democrats—even if they meet all of their criteria for being ‘pro-life.’

Many people assume that any candidates who are not endorsed must be less supportive of an organization’s positions, but that is not always the case. Like many other organizations, *Michigan Right to Life* considers several other factors in making its endorsements. [See <https://rtl.org/endorsements/> for more details.]

The most important factor that prevents them from identifying pro-life Democrats is that they do not endorse other candidates when a previously-endorsed incumbent is running for re-election. The challenger will not be endorsed even if the incumbent has been ineffective and the challenger has better pro-life credentials. This may be good politics—incumbents tend to win, and they are not well-disposed toward organizations that have endorsed their opponents—but it makes the organization’s endorsements much less useful for purposes of identifying candidates who are pro-life. This practice also has a disproportionate effect on Democrats: most pro-life Democratic candidates come from pro-life districts, and most pro-life districts have Republican incumbents who have already been endorsed.

(To their credit, they employ this practice without regard to the incumbent’s political party. Candidates who challenge previously endorsed pro-life incumbents are never endorsed, regardless of whether the incumbent is a Democrat or a Republican.)

Another factor that can prevent endorsement of pro-life Democrats is the practice of not making endorsements in certain heavily Democratic areas. If they endorsed candidates in Detroit, for example, they would end up endorsing a lot of Republicans with no reasonable chance of winning. That would make the organization’s endorsement look less influential and keep them from saying things like "RLM-PAC endorsed candidates had a total win percentage of 93.05%."

Again, this policy is applied to both political parties. Just as they fail to endorse pro-life Republicans with little chance of winning an election in cities like Detroit, they also fail to endorse viable candidates in the Democratic primary who could make a real difference in promoting the cause of life.