

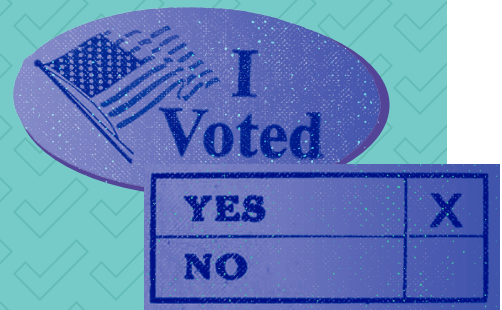


NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER
ACTION FUND



2022 Michigan Gender Justice Candidate Guide

The NWLC Action Fund aims to inform the public about candidates' positions on issues affecting gender justice. We encourage voters to get informed, learn where their candidates stand, and to encourage candidates to adopt policy positions that support women and girls.






Michigan Attorney General



Dana Nessel	Policy	Matthew DePerno
CHAMPION	Protect and strengthen abortion and contraception access	OPPOSE
UNKNOWN POSITION	Fund affordable and accessible child care	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Strengthen paid family and medical leave	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Raise the minimum wage	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Protect women, especially women of color, and others from discrimination and harassment in the workplace	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Keep all children—including LGBTQI+ children—safe from discrimination and harassment	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Oppose censorship in school curricula	OPPOSE
SUPPORTS	Advance gun safety measures that keep schools free from gun violence	OPPOSE
SUPPORTS	Expand voting access	OPPOSE
UNKNOWN POSITION	Build diverse courts that work for everyone	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Strengthen and expand access to maternal health care	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Strengthen and expand access to affordable housing	UNKNOWN POSITION
SUPPORTS	Protect and expand food security	UNKNOWN POSITION

NWLC Action Fund does not endorse candidates. These voter guides are an educational resource for the public and are not intended to be an endorsement of any candidate or political party. Candidates' positions on the issues are determined using recorded votes for and against legislation; statements from interviews, press appearances, press releases and candidate events; social media posts from verified accounts; and endorsements from organizations and associations.



Champion: This candidate has led legislative efforts addressing the issue, including introducing and/or co-sponsoring legislation; created an organization or association dedicated to supporting the issue; and/or made the issue stance a cornerstone of their campaign on their website or in speeches.

Support: A candidate is considered in support of an issue area if they have shown support for the majority of policies within the issue area.

Unknown position: We could not find a record of a clear policy position from this candidate during our research.

Opposes: A candidate is considered in opposition to an issue area if they have shown opposition for the majority of policies within the issue area.

Dana Nessel – Attorney General

Abortion

- Codify the right to abortion in-state and support the creation of a nationwide right that stops abortion bans and guarantees that the right and access to abortion does not depend on where a person lives.
 - » Nessel believes that the right to abortion should be protected across state borders. Nessel shared in an [interview](#) that she believes “If you choose to come to the state, and this is where you’re going to live and work... you don’t lose rights when you cross the borders. We consider you to be an equal and we respect the decisions you make about your bodies.”
 - » Nessel refuses to enforce Michigan’s 1931 abortion ban. In response to two lawsuits challenging Michigan’s 1931 abortion ban, Nessel [released a statement](#) saying, “Let me be very clear, I will not use the resources of my office to defend Michigan’s 1931 statute criminalizing abortion... Abortion care is an essential component of women’s health care. As this state’s top law enforcement officer, I have never wavered in my stance on this issue, and I will not prosecute women or their doctors for a personal medical decision.”
- Ensure that people’s access to health care is free from stigma, barriers, and restrictions, including abortion care, contraceptives, and maternal health care.
 - » AG Nessel supports the injunction on the Michigan abortion ban, granted by a Michigan Court of Claims judge in May 2022. Nessel called the injunction a victory, [stating](#), “The judge acted quickly in the interest of bodily integrity and personal freedom to preserve this important right and found a likelihood of success in the state law being found unconstitutional. I have no plans to appeal and will comply with the order to provide notice to all state and local officials under my supervision.”
 - » In 2020, Nessel voiced support for abortion access amidst anti-abortion activists’ calls for restrictions to reproductive health care during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a joint release with the Democratic Attorneys General Association, Nessel [stated](#) “We won’t dictate services physicians choose to perform and we won’t interfere with the doctor/patient relationship.”
- Make sure quality pregnancy supports are accessible, affordable, and culturally competent for all - including protections and supports that advance the maternal health of Black and Indigenous women and pregnant people in Michigan.
 - » Nessel supports legislation aimed at combatting inequity in maternal health care. Nessel [joined a coalition](#) of 21 attorneys general in urging Congress to pass the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2021.
- Safeguard and expand access to contraception.
 - » Nessel joined an amicus brief challenging religious exemption for birth control coverage to employees under the Affordable Care Act. “For millions of women across this country, contraception is a critical part of their health care,” Nessel [said](#). “The Affordable Care Act provides for this preventative care, and employers shouldn’t get to substitute their interests in place of a doctor’s professional judgment. The federal government should look for ways to support and promote women, not create barriers that affect a woman’s health and well-being.”

Family Economic Security

- Make millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share of taxes.
 - » Research into this candidate has yielded no statements indicating support or opposition
 - Nessel has committed to ensure workers are paid their full wages and benefits they are entitled to. Nessel has launched a [payroll fraud initiative](#), which includes establishing a Payroll Fraud Enforcement Unit, strengthening whistleblower protections for employees who report related wrongdoings, and toughening penalties against payroll fraud.
- Help families with the rising cost of child care by investing in high-quality, affordable child care.
 - » Nessel supported the expanded Child Tax Credit. In July 2021, Nessel [joined](#) 23 other attorneys general in calling on Congress to permanently extend the expanded Child Tax Credit in the reconciliation package.
- Establish universal paid family and medical leave.
 - » Nessel called on corporations to provide paid sick and family leave during COVID-19. Nessel [joined other attorneys general](#) in calling on Amazon and Whole Foods to provide up to 12 weeks paid sick and family leave to their employees as required under the Families First Act.
 - » Nessel [joined other attorneys general](#) in calling on Walmart to adopt paid leave policies in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Protect women, especially women of color, and others from discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
 - » Nessel has denounced workplace harassment. In a [2017 campaign ad](#), Nessel said “I will not sexually harass my staff, and I won’t tolerate in your workplace either.”
- Create an economy that centers women and people of color and enables them to meet their needs, including affording stable housing and food access.
 - » Nessel supports safeguards for fair, affordable housing. Nessel [joined a coalition](#) of attorneys general in combatting banking discrimination in relation to affordable housing.
 - » Nessel has issued consumer alerts warning of rental and housing scams. Her [statement](#) shares that the elderly and those with low incomes or poor credit are particularly vulnerable.
 - » Nessel opposes restrictions on SNAP benefits.
 - In [September 2020](#), Nessel joined 21 other attorneys general and the city of New York in a letter urging the federal government to waive certain administrative measures slowing the distribution of SNAP benefits during the pandemic.
 - In [September 2019](#), Nessel joined other attorneys general in a comment letter urging the US Department of Agriculture against a proposed rule change that would revise the categorical eligibility for SNAP, causing millions to lose critical nutrition assistance.
- Pay workers fairly, including ensuring equal pay for all and raising the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for all working people.
 - » Nessel supports Governor Whitmer’s executive directive barring the state from inquiring about a new employee’s salary history. Nessel [said](#) she contacted the Attorney General’s Human Resources department to comply immediately with this directive. In a written statement, Nessel [said](#) “I am so proud to be working with Gov. Whitmer and I am grateful for her swift action on pay equity. Women have been short-changed for years and it’s time we led by example.”

- » Nessel defended state minimum wage protections for employees of federal contractors. Nessel [joined](#) other attorneys general in defending state minimum wage protections for employees of federal contractors. Nessel [stated](#) “I stand with my colleagues in asserting that state minimum wage laws are applicable to any entity that conducts business in a state regardless of the entity’s status as a federal contractor.”
- » Nessel defended protections for tipped workers. Nessel [joined](#) a coalition of nine attorneys general in filing a lawsuit challenging a US Department of Labor rule that sought to eliminate protections for tipped workers.
- Expand food assistance programs like SNAP, school meals, and WIC
 - » [Won a lawsuit against](#) the Trump Administration’s cuts to SNAP in Michigan.
 - » Advocated for continued additional assistance during the pandemic in a Facebook post
- Expand rental assistance
 - » Nessel [agrees](#) rental assistance programs during the pandemic were important, but has not commented on expanding or continuing assistance.
- Improve down payment assistance programs for first time home buyers
 - » “Since its passage, the CRA has helped Michigan residents access capital for investments like mortgages and small business loans that have helped them transform their neighborhoods. However, the CRA can do more. That’s why I stand with my colleagues in asking that the rule implementing the legislation be strengthened to respond to the financial crises precipitated by COVID-19, a crisis that affects low-and-middle-income communities disproportionately,” Nessel [tweeted](#).

Education

- Support students’ ability to learn and be themselves by keeping them safe from discrimination and harassment in school.
 - » Nessel supports equitable student discipline in schools. Nessel led a [coalition](#) of 23 attorneys general in urging for the reinstatement and expansion of a 2014 guidance package designed to help schools meet their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline equitably. Nessel [stated](#), “Current statistics prove more must be done to ensure every student - regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability - has an equitable experience in our public school system.”
- Oppose efforts to fuel divisions in our communities by vilifying and excluding transgender students.
 - » Nessel ruled a requirement of sex reassignment surgery for changes to sex designation on birth certificates to be unconstitutional. “The law violates Michiganders’ most basic and fundamental protections under the Constitution,” [said](#) Nessel. “As written, it is a tool of intolerance that treats one group of people different from the rest of us by requiring thousands of residents to undergo expensive and invasive medical procedures in order to amend their birth certificates to reflect their true identity.”
 - » Nessel tweeted in celebration of Transgender Day of Visibility.

- Oppose censorship of schools' ability to teach truth, including about race and gender and how they have been used to divide us.
 - » In 2021, Nessel quote tweeted her support of a MI representative's speech in opposition to MI [HB 5097](#), which sought to [prohibit the promotion of race or gender stereotyping in classrooms](#).
 - » Nessel supports social and emotional learning and restorative practices in schools. Nessel has launched a [restorative practices initiative](#) for schools that shares guidances, toolkits, and calls out for feedback from educators on restorative practices.
 - After visiting a [Michigan middle school](#), Nessel said “Educators across the state are implementing restorative practices and it’s important we recognize the success of those efforts. I look forward to visiting more schools that are focused on this approach to education.” Attorney General Dana Nessel visits Crestwood Schools ([arabamericannews.com](#))
- Safeguard students' ability to live full, dignified lives free from gun violence.
 - » Nessel supports taking action to end gun violence in schools. She [tweeted](#): “we must act properly to address gun violence in our schools and the ongoing threat of another unconscionable tragedy if we continue to only offer thoughts and prayers.”
 - » Nessel supports creating best practices to protect students from gun violence. In an [interview](#) following a school shooting in Oxford, Nessel said that her department planned to review current safety practices, recommended practices from the 2018 School Safety Commission, and try to learn from this experience to find out how to better protect students.
- Oppose discriminatory discipline policies in schools, including increased policing of students
 - » Nessel has not commented on discriminatory practices
- Ensure full funding that meets every school's needs - including schools building safer environments by prioritizing COVID safety measures.
 - » Nessel supports COVID vaccine mandates. Nessel [shared](#) that she will not challenge the mandate because, to her, “the fastest track to normalcy is for everyone who was medically eligible to become vaccinated and to do so immediately.”

Democracy

- Protect and expand access to the ballot and restore the Voting Rights Act.
 - » In [February](#) and [August](#) 2021, respectively, Nessel joined a coalition of attorneys general in calling on Congress to pass the For the People Act, even if it means ending the filibuster.
- Unrig our democracy by ending corporate and PAC donations to extremist politicians who support voter suppression efforts.
 - » Have not found evidence
- Ensure all voters have equal access to the ballot box and their votes are counted fairly, including expanded early voting days, language access protections for Limited English Proficient (LEP) voters, and a district map that empowers all voters.
 - » Nessel has engaged with voters directly on how to avoid misinformation. Nessel met with members of the Saginaw community to provide tips on how to avoid misinformation in June 2022.

- » Nessel [denounced](#) bills that would restrict voting rights. A Secretary of State news release outlined that “Senate Bills 303 and 304 would force anyone who arrives at their polling place without ID to vote a provisional ballot, which would only be counted if the voter is later able to provide proof of ID to their local clerk.” Nessel denounced the bills, [saying](#) “The bill is looking to solve a problem that doesn’t exist and instead puts forth an obstacle that asks Michigan voters to make themselves vulnerable in order to vote.”
- » Nessel is committed to election integrity. The Department of Attorney General pressed charges for ballot tampering in the August 2020 primary. In a [statement](#), Nessel said “Our department remains committed to prosecuting election violations, regardless of the political party of the perpetrator.”
- » Nessel is committed to protecting voters from attempts to deter their vote. Nessel filed charges in October 2020 against two political operatives who attempted to suppress the vote in the November general election. Nessel [stated](#) “Any effort to interfere with, intimidate or intentionally mislead Michigan voters will be met with swift and severe consequences. This effort specifically targeted minority voters in an attempt to deter them from voting in the November election... Michigan voters are entitled to a full, free and fair election in November and my office will not hesitate to pursue those who jeopardize that.”
- Reshape the makeup of the judiciary by working with federal lawmakers to nominate and confirm judges with a strong record of supporting gender and racial justice issues and who affirmatively declare they will uphold equality, opportunity for all, individual liberty, and the freedom to make personal decisions about our bodies and relationships.
 - » Nessel has not spoken on judicial nomination issues.

Matthew DePerno – Attorney General

Abortion

- Codify the right to abortion in-state and support the creation of a nationwide right that stops abortion bans and guarantees that the right and access to abortion does not depend on where a person lives.
 - » DePerno supports the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. DePerno: “I am thrilled to read the opinion of the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. We finally have a law that upholds the lives of all Americans—born and unborn.”
 - » DePerno opposes exceptions to abortion bans, including to save the mother’s life or in pregnancies caused by rape or incest. DePerno: “Real conservatives... understand that life begins at conception.” *Roe* overturned: [See where Michigan governor, attorney general candidates stand | Bridge Michigan](#)
 - » DePerno is a supporter of heartbeat bills.
- Ensure that people’s access to health care is free from stigma, barriers, and restrictions, including abortion care, contraceptives, and maternal health care.
 - » See above evidence.
- Make sure quality pregnancy supports are accessible, affordable, and culturally competent for all - including protections and supports that advance the maternal health of Black and Indigenous women and pregnant people in Michigan.
 - » Deperno has not commented on policies to provide quality pregnancy supports.
- Safeguard and expand access to contraception.
 - » DePerno does not support federal protection of birth control. [During a debate](#), DePerno said that *Griswold*, the Supreme Court case that first recognized a constitutional right to contraceptives, was wrongly decided and the issue should be left to the states.
 - » DePerno believes that emergency contraception should be banned from Michigan. At the Conservative Political Action Conference in August 2022, [DePerno said](#) that the morning after pill “should be banned” and that “you have to stop it at the border. It would be no different than fentanyl!”

Abortion

- Make millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share of taxes.
- Help families with the rising cost of child care by investing in high-quality, affordable child care
- Establish universal paid family and medical leave.
 - » Research into this candidate has yielded no statements indicating support or opposition
- Protect women, especially women of color, and others from discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
 - » Research into this candidate has yielded no statements indicating support or opposition
- Create an economy that centers women and people of color and enables them to meet their needs, including affording stable housing and food access.
 - » Research into this candidate has yielded no statements indicating support or opposition
- Pay workers fairly, including ensuring equal pay for all and raising the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for all working people.

- Expand food assistance programs like SNAP, school meals, and WIC
 - » Deperno has been silent on food security support.
- Expand rental assistance
 - » Deperno has not commented on rental assistance programs
- Improve down payment assistance programs for first time home buyers
 - » Deperno has not commented on down payment assistance programs
- Expand refundable tax credits
 - » Deperno has not commented on refundable tax credits.

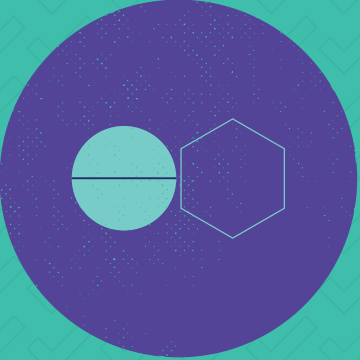
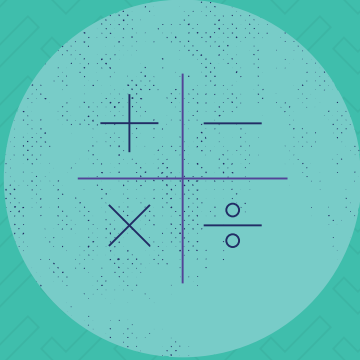
Education

- Support students' ability to learn and be themselves by keeping them safe from discrimination and harassment in school.
- Oppose efforts to fuel divisions in our communities by vilifying and excluding transgender students.
- Oppose censorship of schools' ability to teach truth, including about race and gender and how they have been used to divide us.
 - » Deperno commits to issuing an opinion declaring CRT unconstitutional and banning the concept if elected as MI AG. Deperno: "On day one, I will issue an opinion declaring CRT unconstitutional and banning this divisive concept. I will end this hateful ideology and advance Michigan as a place of freedom and America First [principles](#)." Matthew Deperno for Attorney General (depernoformi.com)
 - » Deperno believes the AG's office should weigh into education issues such as CRT. Deperno: "I think it is stuff that the attorney general's office would weigh into." [Attorney General should be involved in education issues](#), Michigan Republican candidate says - mlive.com
- Safeguard students' ability to live full, dignified lives free from gun violence.
 - » Deperno does not support regulations that would protect students from gun violence. Deperno's [policy platform](#) includes "Defend the Second Amendment and prevent infringement on lawful gun owners."
- Oppose discriminatory discipline policies in schools, including increased policing of students
 - » Deperno has not commented on discriminatory discipline policies.
- Advance gun safety measures that keep schools free from gun violence
 - » When Deperno was asked about his [stance on the second amendment](#), he said it was good as written and registration requirements were unnecessary
- Ensure full funding that meets every school's needs - including schools building safer environments by prioritizing COVID safety measures.
 - » Deperno does not support COVID-19 vaccines. Deperno [Instragrammed](#) a news report regarding a fourth COVID vaccine with the hashtag "#antivaxx."

Democracy

- Protect and expand access to the ballot and restore the Voting Rights Act.
 - » DePerno tried to undermine democracy by demanding a statewide full forensic audit of the 2020 election. DePerno represented a MI resident in a lawsuit against the county and MI Secretary of State's office to conduct his own audit of the Nov. election. His team "captured forensic images of the Dominion Voting machines and conducted forensic analyses of those images to fully understand the errors and inconsistencies in the voting process and tabulation procedures prior to, during, and after the 2020 general election." [Matthew DePerno for Attorney General](https://depernoformi.com) (depernoformi.com)
 - » DePerno believes the 2020 election was corrupt. DePerno: "When I am elected, I will keep my word to prosecute the people who corrupted the 2020 election and allowed fraud to permeate the entire election system: whether from Benson's fraudulent mail-in ballot campaign, misappropriation of HAVA funds, or the deletion and destruction of voting records. ... I will ensure the rule of law and constitutional rights are protected and I will prosecute those who corrupted the 2020 election system." [Matthew DePerno for Attorney General](https://depernoformi.com) (depernoformi.com)
- Unrig our democracy by ending corporate and PAC donations to extremist politicians who support voter suppression efforts.
- Ensure all voters have equal access to the ballot box and their votes are counted fairly, including expanded early voting days, language access protections for Limited English Proficient (LEP) voters, and a district map that empowers all voters.
 - » Deperno has caused mail-in voting "[fraudulent](#)."
 - » Deperno tried to [undermine the 2020 election](#) by calling it corrupt and calling for fraud investigations.
- Reshape the makeup of the judiciary by working with federal lawmakers to nominate and confirm judges with a strong record of supporting gender and racial justice issues and who affirmatively declare they will uphold equality, opportunity for all, individual liberty, and the freedom to make personal decisions about our bodies and relationships.
 - » Deperno has not commented on reshaping the judiciary.

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