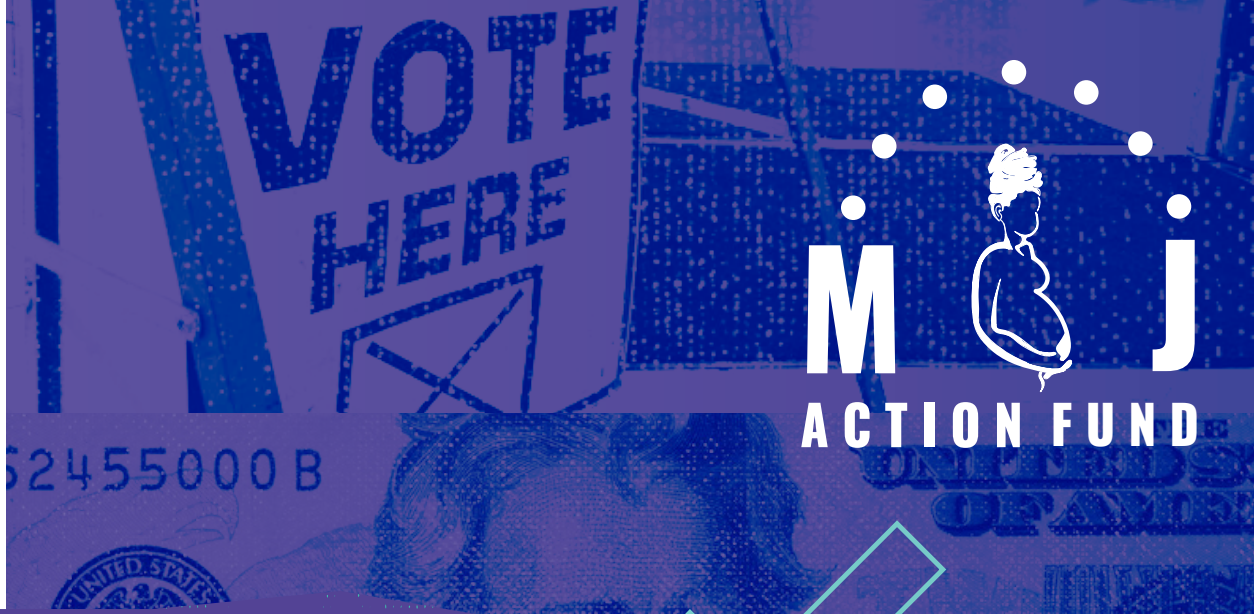




**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER
ACTION FUND**



2022 Michigan Gender Justice Voter Guide



We are at a crucial point in our democracy.

The approaching 2022 midterm elections are shaping up to be some of the most consequential for gender justice.

To meet the moment, Mothering Justice Action Fund and the National Women’s Law Center Action Fund are teaming up again.

Since our last midterm election, we have seen our democracy pushed to the brink: a devastating Supreme Court term featuring an extremist majority handpicked to steal our guaranteed freedoms; insurrectionists, and their sympathizers, who continue to hold office while failing to deliver economic relief to everyday households and families; and radical politicians across states who have rolled back voting rights, silenced communities by unfairly redrawing district lines, banned books, endangered LGBTQ+ students, restricted access to critical care, including abortion and contraception, and dismissed the pressing concerns of parents afraid for their children’s safety in the face of rising gun violence. And today, abortion access and voting rights are literally on the ballot in Michigan—along with almost all of our rights.

It is time that our country and our elected officials show up for us. Our fundamental rights are at stake, but with our collective power, we can change things.

Women and gender justice activists have a track record of organizing and action, and we need it now more than ever. Activate your family, friends, and community members and **make certain that everyone votes.**



REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM & HEALTH EQUITY

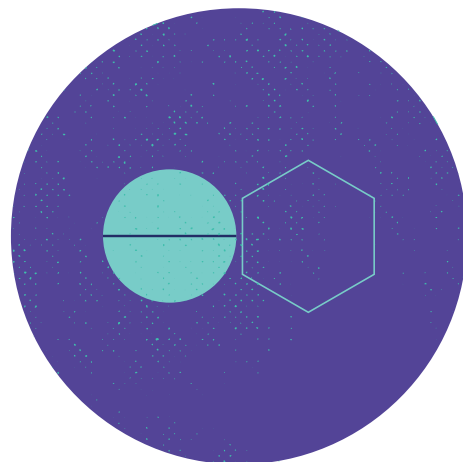
Abortion is an essential part of reproductive health care. Meaningful access to abortion is also fundamental to pregnant people's liberty, equality, and economic security. One in four women will need an abortion in her lifetime. Everyone, no matter where they live or their financial means, should have access to abortion when they need it in their communities without stigma, shame, or barriers.

But abortion access is in an unprecedented crisis moment because, on June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court callously took away our federal constitutional right to abortion—a right that has been fundamental to our society for nearly 50 years. The impact of overturning our right to abortion has been immediate: within days of the decision, multiple states enacted total bans on abortion, and anti-abortion extremist lawmakers in other states proposed laws to criminalize those who provide abortions, those who seek them, and anyone who helps another person obtain one as well as restrict travel to access abortion care. Since June, 17 million women and counting lost access to abortion. Nearly half of states have or are expected to ban abortion.

Banning abortion will ultimately mean that some people will not be able access abortion care and will be forced to carry their pregnancies to term. There will be lifelong consequences for them and their families. Denying a pregnant person an abortion creates economic hardship and

insecurity and health consequences that lasts for years. These impacts will be felt most by women of color, those who have low incomes, and people who already face challenges in accessing health care—the people who often lack job security and paid leave. This is especially key for Michiganders. Michigan has one of the highest death rates among Black pregnant people in the country. Moreover, many Michiganders of color, particularly Black and Indigenous Michiganders, live with reduced access to health care, fewer financial resources, less access to stable housing, and more food insecurity.

Michigan's women and all pregnant people, especially those of color, need elected leaders who work to address systemic poverty, expand and protect access to abortion care and contraception, and safeguard high-quality care before, during, and after pregnancy. It has never been more critical that lawmakers act boldly and swiftly to guarantee reproductive freedom.



Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- Guarantee the right to reproductive freedom, which includes the right to make and carry out decisions without political interference about all matters relating to pregnancy, including birth control, abortion, prenatal care, and childbirth, in-state and nationwide.
- Ensure that everyone, no matter where they live or their financial means, has access to health care—including abortion care, contraceptives, and maternal health care—free from stigma, barriers, and restrictions, when they need it, in their communities.
- 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.





Questions to ask candidates:

- Given the Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and as states continue to ban abortion, how have you—or how will you—work to protect and expand access to abortion?
- Will you commit to protecting pregnant people and those who help them, including abortion providers, abortion funds, and others?
- What will you do to guarantee our policies and budgets ensure affordable and available reproductive health care, including birth control, abortion care, and pre- and postpartum care?
- How have you advocated for women and pregnant people of color in Michigan? Will you commit to advancing policies and programs that improve the health outcomes of Michigan's Black and Indigenous women and pregnant people, without undermining access to other reproductive health care?
- What are you doing to learn about what is happening in Michigan for people who are seeking reproductive health care and those who are trying to support them? How are you making sure their needs are being reflected in the policies you support?



FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

We need an economy and tax system that work for everyday women and families—where working people are paid sustainable wages, where everyone can make ends meet in safety and with dignity, and where communities have the resources key to ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination and harassment. Michigan’s women, people of color, and families also deserve a higher education system that actually lives up to its promise of opportunity instead of saddling students and communities with debt—especially Michigan’s Black women. By ensuring that corporations and the very

wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, our communities reclaim revenue that can support the programs we need. If politicians unrig our economy, we will have more to invest in critical supports like access to quality child care, paid leave for all, affordable education, better infrastructure, enforcement of anti-discrimination protections, and other policies that center women and families.

Politicians and lawmakers need to prioritize policies that provide Michigan’s women and families with the supports they need to thrive.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- **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.**
- **Ensure that publicly funded higher education is affordable, including creating incentive programs that forgive student loan debt, and that institutions of higher education have attendance policies that accommodate the needs of parenting students.**
- **Create an economy that centers women and people of color and enables them to meet their needs, including affording stable and accessible housing and food access.**
- **Protect women, especially women of color, and all workers from discrimination and harassment in the workplace.**
- **Pay workers fairly, including ensuring equal pay for all and raising the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for all working people.**

Questions to ask candidates:

- ❑ The tax code concentrates wealth in the hands of the privileged few, perpetuates racial and gender wealth gaps, and deprives our communities of revenues that could be put toward public investments that benefit us all. How will you ensure that corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes?
- ❑ Have you developed policy, advocated for programs or investments, or passed laws that help families meet their needs, including households struggling to find and afford the high cost of quality child care? Be specific. How will you support the child care workforce that provides this care?
- ❑ How have you advocated for the passage of comprehensive paid family and medical leave for all? Will you commit to ensuring that all working people have access to paid time off to care for themselves and loved ones?
- ❑ How will you further the fight for student loan relief, especially for overburdened communities like Black women, women of color, and student parents, and in light of the recent student loan wins?
- ❑ Have you advocated for and/or passed legislation that strengthens anti-discrimination protections, including protections against harassment and pay discrimination? How will you specifically address the especially large race and gender pay gaps experienced by Black women, Indigenous women, and other women of color?
- ❑ People working to support their families should be able to make ends meet, including paying for housing, health care, transportation, food and other basic needs. How have you advocated for raising the minimum wage to one fair wage of at least \$15 per hour for all workers before tips, including youth, workers with disabilities, and others? How will you ensure that anyone who works gets paid at least \$15 an hour, before tips? How will you further the expansion of refundable tax credits aimed at helping everyday households?
- ❑ How will you support creating more accessible and affordable housing, especially for people with low incomes?



SAFE & HEALTHY SCHOOLS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Schools should be places where all students—of every race, gender, disability, and identity—can learn with safety, dignity, and equality. In every school, educators should collaborate with students and families to build healthy environments rich with opportunity, imagination, and belonging. Instead, extremist politicians across the country, including here in Michigan, are working to ban books, prevent schools from teaching the complicated history of race and gender in this country, push out educators, exclude and police students of color, and shame and endanger LGBTQI+ students. Instead of creating safe and educational spaces for our children, some radical politicians in Lansing have

tried to weaponize schools to exert control. These extremists are pushing unpopular policies that exploit divisions and restrict our freedoms, so they can take and hold on to power and money. And at the same time, these politicians are refusing to take critical action to keep students safe from harassment and gun violence in schools.

Elected leaders must commit to keeping our children and schools safe and healthy. Politicians and lawmakers should prioritize protecting every student against discrimination and harassment and ensure that schools have the supports they need to help students grow, thrive, and live full, dignified lives.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- 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 and reject efforts to vilify and exclude transgender students.
- Oppose censorship of schools' ability to teach truth, including about race and gender and how they have been used to divide us.
- Safeguard students' ability to live full, dignified lives free from gun violence without compromising their access to quality classroom time.
- Oppose school disciplinary policies that disproportionately push students of color and disabled students into the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Ensure full funding that meets every public school's needs, including prioritizing COVID safety measures as well as academic and mental health supports to overcome the impacts of COVID.



Questions to ask candidates:

- ❑ How will you ensure that all students and their families, especially girls, students of color, disabled students, and LGBTQI+ students, feel safe and able to thrive within their school communities? What policies or programs have you advanced or supported to protect and meet the needs of girls, LGBTQI+ students, disabled students, and students of color?
- ❑ How will you work to ensure that transgender students are cared for and validated as they learn and play in their school communities?
- ❑ How will you work to ensure that Black, Indigenous, and other students of color, including girls of color, are protected from harmful and racist disciplinary practices that rob them of quality classroom time and opportunities?
- ❑ How will you champion educators' and students' freedom to teach, learn, and think critically about our nation's history and current events?
- ❑ How will you ensure that all students—particularly girls of color, disabled students, and LGBTQI+ students—can learn in spaces free from sexual harassment? And how will you hold perpetrators accountable for their actions?
- ❑ How will you ensure that schools are free from gun violence without instituting measures that push students into the school-to-prison pipeline?
- ❑ How will you ensure that schools have the resources they need to build safe learning environments for all, including schools promoting COVID safety measures as well as the resources needed to overcome the academic and mental health impacts of the pandemic?



VOTING RIGHTS & FAIR COURTS FOR ALL

Today—due to years of gerrymandering, partisan gridlock, and the sharp increase in extremist conservative activism within the courts—our democracy is increasingly of, by, and for the wealthy and the few. To fix this, Michiganders must demand that our democratic systems are legitimate, that voter registration and participation are easily accessible to all, that elected leaders are accountable to the majority, and that voters have a real impact on how our communities are governed. We can accomplish this by electing leaders who are committed to passing laws that will ensure everyone has equal access to register to vote, cast a ballot, and then have that ballot counted fairly. Michiganders need lawmakers who will promote the integrity of our elections instead of cheating the system by picking and choosing whose votes matter and when.

And it isn't just lawmakers we need to keep accountable—it's judges too. We elect the president and senators who appoint and confirm federal judges and justices for lifetime seats on the courts, which are meant to equitably protect fundamental civil and constitutional rights. Michiganders can use the power of our votes to reshape our courts so that our judges and justices support equal rights under the law for all, especially for women, families, and people of color.

Michigan's lawmakers must prioritize strengthening our democratic infrastructure and our courts to create a level playing field, restore fundamental protections and civil rights, and prevent future threats to our democratic systems.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

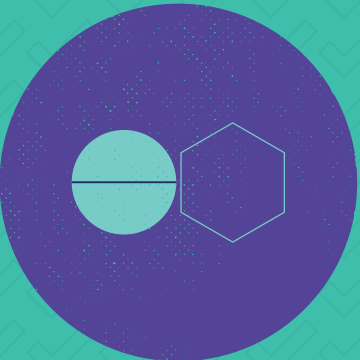
- **Unrig our democracy by ending corporate and PAC donations to extremist politicians who support voter suppression efforts.**
- **Protect and expand access to the ballot in Michigan, especially for women, people of color, the disabled, and everyday working people.**
- **Reshape the makeup of the federal judiciary by working with the U.S. Senate and the White House to support the nomination and confirmation judges with a strong record of supporting gender and racial justice issues and who affirmatively declare they will uphold equality, opportunity for all, and the freedom to make personal decisions about our bodies and relationships.**

Questions to ask candidates:

- What policies will you support to ensure that all eligible voters have equal access to register to vote, cast a ballot, and have that ballot counted fairly?
- Will you commit to actively supporting the full restoration of the Voting Rights Act?
- How will you work to ensure that more women—particularly women of color—in Michigan run for and win elected office?
- Have you recommended candidates to the White House and/or supported judicial nominees with a strong record on civil rights and gender justice? If not (because you are not an incumbent), will you commit to recommending and supporting judicial nominees with a strong record on civil rights and gender justice?
- How will you support candidates for federal judgeships who are committed to equality, freedom, individual liberty and rights to make personal decisions about their bodies and relationships, and opportunity for all?
- How will you safeguard every Michigander's right to vote and curb the influx of big money in Michigan politics, particularly efforts that further voter suppression. Be specific.



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