

Name (first & last): \*

Tom Choske

What office are you seeking?: \*

State House of Representatives - District 6

Phone #: \*

(313) 288-8662

Email address: \*

Tom@VoteChoske.com

Website (or social media if no website): \*

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EDUCATION:

Michigan State University - Bachelors of Arts-International Relations and German, Specialization in Muslim Studies 2004-2008

University of Michigan – Dearborn, College of Business - Masters of Business Administration 2015-2017

Resume:

Intern, Michigan State House of Representatives - District 15 - May-August 2005

Intern, Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) - Lansing Office - Aug-December 2005

Transition Team Volunteer, Bernero for Lansing - November-December 2005

Intern, Michigan State Senator Hansen Clarke - February-May 2006

Intern, US Foreign Commercial Service - Berlin, Germany - May-August 2006

Legislative Aide, Michigan State Senator Hansen Clarke - September 2006-May 2008

AdWords Account Associate, Google, Inc - June 2008-May 2009

Secretary, Young Democrats of Michigan - February 2009-February 2011

Senior Online Advertising Specialist, Brand Labs - June 2009-February 2011

Power To The People Volunteer, Hansen Clarke for Congress - March 2010-August 2014

Business Relations Representative, Rep. Hansen Clarke (D-MI-13) - February 2011-January 2013

Search Marketing Analyst, Core3 Solutions - January 2013-October 2013

Co-Founder and President, Freshwater Transit - September 2012-October 2016

Account Manager, iProspect - October 2013-May 2017

Political Advisor, Brian Stone for Dearborn - January 2015-August 2016

Campaign Manager, Washington Youson for Greater Detroit - December 2015-August 2017

Political Advisor, Leslie Herrick for Dearborn - February 2017-November 2017

Associate Director, Reprise Media/UniversalMcCann - May 2017-January 2018

**CIVIL RIGHTS: What's your position on systemic problems facing people of color, including police brutality and the prison industrial complex? \***

I will work to reform the criminal justice system in Michigan to be more focused on 'correction' than 'punishment' while also working to end the systemic racism that creates the 'school-to-prison pipeline' which plagues communities of color. I will fight to legalize marijuana to cut down on the incarceration of nonviolent drug offenders, reinstate and fund drug treatment and veteran court diversionary programs, improve officer training for dealing with people who have mental health challenges, raise the age so that children can no longer be sentenced as adults, and restore and fund the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI) to prevent recidivism. I will also introduce statewide Ban The Box legislation to help those with felony convictions get back into the workforce, building on work I did as a State Senate and Congressional staffer.

**CIVIL RIGHTS: What's your position on LGBTQ+ rights, and what actions do you plan to take to protect those rights? \***

I fully support LGBTQ+ rights and will be a strong advocate to enshrine protections and equality into our laws. I will advocate for full employment protection for all LGBTQ+ people being included in Elliott-Larsen Non Discrimination, and will work to remove damaging legislation modeled on the federal Restoration of Religious Freedom Act.

**DRUG WAR: Do you support the war on drugs? \***

No - it has destroyed countless lives and billions of dollars while doing nothing to curtail substance abuse in our communities.

**DRUG WAR: Do you support legalizing recreational marijuana and remove marijuana from the Schedule 1 drug classification? \***

Yes - it will help make our communities safer and create new economic opportunities for our residents, as well as helping to make our criminal justice system more equitable.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE: What are your thoughts on economic justice in Michigan, and what, if anything, do you plan to do regarding the matter? \***

I believe that the economy in Michigan is getting more and more unfair as Republicans and corporate interests continue to systematically destroy our regulatory safeguards and corrupt the tax system. Economic justice is critically important and I will work to restore it in our state's economy. I will fight in Lansing to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to enter the workforce and to be paid a fair wage for their labor. I will fight to ensure the right of workers to form unions and bargain collectively will be protected, while job-killing restrictions like Right To Work will be repealed. I believe that a contract is a contract, and that pension promises made to retirees are inviolable. I will fight to grow new jobs through investing in improving Michigan's infrastructure and public transit systems. This can all be achieved by ending handouts to corporate cronies and implementing a tax system that ensures the wealthiest pay their fair share.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE: What actions do you plan to take to protect those most vulnerable among us, including those living in poverty or barely getting by in the working class? \***

Those who need help must get it, and the government has a moral obligation to provide that help. I will fight in Lansing to protect our social safety net programs, such as Medicaid, and will work to end the eligibility 'cliff' system, whereby people risk losing all support as they begin to earn more.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE: Do you support raising the minimum wage? If yes, how would you accomplish this raise and how high would you raise the minimum wage? If no, why not, or do you have an alternative suggestion to increase low-income wages?**

Yes - I support changing the law to have a \$15/hour minimum wage and to end the huge disparity between tipped and non-tipped workers.

**ELECTIONS: In 2015, Michigan ranked last in a national study of state ethics and transparency. What initiatives or concepts do you support**

in the areas of campaign finance reform and influence of money in our political system? \*

I will be a staunch advocate for reforming campaign finance disclosure laws, joining with groups such as the Michigan Campaign Finance Network to demand that all money spent on elections in the state, especially on judicial elections, is quickly reported and the information is made available to all citizens. I will also fight for stronger disclosure rules for elected officials, ensuring that members of the State Legislature are held to the same or tougher standards than elected officials in Washington, DC.

**ELECTIONS:** Do you intend to accept campaign donations from Super PACs, large corporations and other forms of “big money”? If not, how can you demonstrate to us that you will not be under the influence of Super PACs, large corporations and other forms of “big money” or “dark money” before and after you are elected? \*

No - I have started my campaign with my own money and with that of my friends and family. Throughout my time in politics, as a staffer and campaigner, I've always been in the grassroots. I pledge to continue that as a State Representative.

**ELECTIONS:** Is voter suppression a concern of yours? What do you plan to do to ensure a free and fair elections process for all? \*

Yes. I will continue the fight to ensure the integrity of elections in Michigan by supporting legislation that will make all ballots able to be recounted, especially if there are discrepancies with polling books or other aspects of the election.

**HEALTHCARE:** Do you think healthcare should be a right to all people and if so, what steps will you take to protect that right? \*

Yes, healthcare is a right of all people, and I believe the country needs a fully socialized medical system. As a State Representative, I will will fight to keep Medicaid expansion in Michigan so that more citizens can have access to the care they need. I will also fight to provide dental coverage as part of Medicaid, giving more residents access to quality healthcare that is essential for their health. I support a Healthcare Bill of Rights, which ensures citizens get the highest-quality care possible.

**EDUCATION: What are your views on education? Where do you stand on tuition for higher education? Do you support public education, and if so, what will you do to protect our public school system? \***

Ensuring our children receive the best life possible is not only our moral duty, it is also the constitutional duty of the State of Michigan. However, 22% of children in our state live in poverty; an increase of 15% from 9 years ago. I believe that every child should have access to a high-quality, free, local public education. I will work to help reduce Lansing interference, bringing the power back to the people. I will make sure that families are put first in education, and that schools can serve as community resources for all. I will fight to return all public schools back to the people, where they belong, and to abolish the undemocratic, unconstitutional Emergency Manager law and School Reform Office. I will oppose all expansions of charters, and will work to implement a 'cap-and-close' law, limiting the number of charters and closing the underperforming ones. Finally, I will lead the fight in Lansing to return adequate funding to our public schools through working to reform the Foundation Allowance funding formula and 'hold harmless' provisions so that urban districts can receive the same funding as wealthy suburban districts.

**ENVIRONMENT: What legislation would you propose or support to ensure we are doing more to protect our environment? \***

Access to clean, safe, and affordable water is a right. I will fight to restore water quality throughout the state and to ensure water rates are affordable for all residents. I will continue to fight against polluters like Marathon and AK Steel, who seek corporate welfare at the expense of our community. I will build on my track-record of holding polluters accountable to the community and helping those impacted by pollution seek damages, as I did working in the State Senate and with Congressman Hansen Clarke. I will join with fellow Democrats to ensure that a citizens oversight commission is created over the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), so that a tragedy like the Flint Water Crisis can never be swept under the rug again. I will push to ensure that Nestle pays its fair share to extract Michigan drinking water and sell it to out-of-state customers. I believe that Enbridge Line 5, an aging oil pipeline under the Mackinac Straits, is a clear and present danger to all Michigan citizens and must be immediately and safely shut down. I will be proud to bring together a coalition to close the pipeline and hold Enbridge accountable for its environmental damage. Finally, I will fight against hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, calling for an immediate ban on the practice and

requiring all companies who have fracked to disclose exactly what chemical solutions were pumped into our ground.

**ENVIRONMENT: What steps will you take to transform our energy systems away from fossil fuels as we transition into renewable energy systems? \***

I support investing in clean and renewable sources of power. I will work to increase Michigan's Renewable Portfolio Standard, mandating that utilities produce a higher percentage of their electricity from clean sources. We must support increased research into alternative forms of power and in improving energy efficiency.

**IMMIGRATION: What's your stance on sanctuary cities and other protections for immigrants? \***

I support sanctuary cities and am proud that Detroit is one. I will fight against all efforts in Lansing to harm cities with a sanctuary city designation.

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Do you support mosque surveillance? \***

Absolutely not - it is totally illegal and against the values of this country.

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Should businesses be allowed to discriminate based on their beliefs or the beliefs of their customers? \***

No, not at all.

**TAXES: What is your stance on our current tax system? What would you do differently? \***

I believe the current tax system hurts the majority of our citizens and only benefits the ultra-rich and large corporations. The state shouldn't seek to balance its budget on the backs of retirees – I will continue to oppose all efforts to break union contracts and pension obligations for our retirees. I will work with the Legislature to give strict scrutiny to all state-issued business tax breaks and end Lansing corporate welfare. I will also continue the fight to move toward a progressive state income tax.

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS: What is your position on a woman's right to choose? Will you legislate based on your position? Explain. \***

I fully support a woman's right to choose. I will vehemently defend the right of women to control their own bodies and healthcare, and will fight tooth-and-nail to protect the right to choose and to ensure medical procedures like abortion are covered by insurance.

**WORKERS RIGHTS:** Do you support workers co-ops and/or unions?

Will you legislate based on your support or opposition of either?

Explain.

Yes - I grew up in a union household and will continue to support co-ops and unions.

**WAR:** What is your stance on America's declaration of and involvement in war, foreign or domestic? \*

As a state legislator, foreign policy wouldn't be in my purview, but I personally oppose the needless military interventions our country has had over the past several years. I also do not believe that declarations of 'domestic wars', like the 'war on drugs', are effective.