

PLANNED PARENTHOOD ADVOCATES OF MICHIGAN 2018 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan (PPAM) is the advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood in Michigan. We are committed to ensuring that Michigan women and families have access to the quality, affordable healthcare and sexual health information they need and deserve. We are uniquely positioned to lead strategic reproductive health care advocacy and organizing initiatives. We have a proven track record of organizing supporters and volunteers on campuses, in health centers, in local communities and online to have an impact on legislation, hold legislators accountable, and further advance the reproductive health care movement in Michigan.

Planned Parenthood believes that sexual and reproductive health rights are basic human rights. We believe that access to health care doesn't depend on who you are or where you live. And we believe every person should have the opportunity to choose their own path to a healthy, meaningful life. We believe that every woman—regardless of income, age, race, or marital status—has the fundamental right to decide if, when and how to have a child. It is government's role to support personal childbearing decisions with medically-accurate reproductive health information, including sex education, access to contraceptives, and safe, legal abortion.

PPAM uses the questionnaire to determine who to endorse in the primary and general elections as well as if and to whom we will contribute funds via the Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan Political Action Committee (PPAM PAC). For incumbent or former members running for an elected office, we will also review voting records. An endorsement by PPAM does not guarantee funding from PPAM PAC. Our endorsement list will be available on our website at www.miplannedparenthood.org and shared publicly.

Please email your responses by Sunday, May 6, 2018 to Amanda.west@ppmi.org, or mail to her attention at PO Box 15041, Lansing, MI 48901. If you have questions, feel free to contact Amanda West, Director of Government Relations, at 517-482-1080 x3.



Candidate Name: _____ Date: 3/12/2018

CANDIDATE FOR:

STATEWIDE OFFICE

STATE SENATE

STATE HOUSE

COUNTY/LOCAL OFFICE

PLANNED PARENTHOOD ADVOCATES OF MICHIGAN 2018 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate's Name: Tom Choske

District & Office Sought: State House of Representatives - District 6

Party Affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

Campaign Committee: Tom Choske For Representative

Campaign Address: 1538 Centre St, Unit 605

City/Town: Detroit **Zip:** 48226

Campaign Phone: (313) 288-8662

Campaign Website: www.VoteChoske.com

Campaign Email Address: Info@VoteChoske.com

Campaign Manager (if applicable): Washington Youson, Jr

Cell phone: _____

Email: Info@VoteChoske.com

Are you currently or were you previously an elected official? If so, please indicate which office(s) you held and for what period of time.

No, not currently elected

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan Core Issues

CORE ISSUE #1: Protecting Planned Parenthood’s Ability to Serve Patients Planned Parenthood is the nation’s leading provider of and advocate for high-quality, affordable reproductive health care for women, men and young people as well as the nation’s largest provider of sex education. Last year, Planned Parenthood of Michigan’s 19 health centers served approximately 60,000 medical patients and reached more than 19,000 teens, young adults, parents and community members with its science-based sex education and outreach programs.

Through important federal, state and local programs, Planned Parenthood provides services including: breast cancer and cervical cancer screenings; routine well-women exams; birth control; HIV testing; sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment; screening for cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes; prenatal care; comprehensive sexuality education and more.

When our opponents discuss “defunding,” they are really talking about blocking our patients from receiving care at a Planned Parenthood health center. PPMI is a safety net provider, offering care to patients who use Medicaid especially when so many other providers limit or do not accept those patients. Additionally, PPMI is one of 29 Title X (the federal family planning grant) providers in Michigan, yet we see approximately 65% of the state’s Title X patients. If we are not able to serve these low income patients, they will most likely be left unserved and unable to access birth control and other family planning services. PPMI also receives federal funding through teen pregnancy prevention grants to facilitate evidence-based curriculum.

1. Will you defend Planned Parenthood against efforts to eliminate or prevent federal, state or local funding for programs and health centers?

Yes No

Comments, if desired:

CORE ISSUE #2: Eliminate Inequity in Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care

Reproductive Justice: The human right to have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and healthy environments

Planned Parenthood commits to recognize and address the broader social issues that prohibit women from having the ability to control their own reproductive lives.

2. Would you support measures that increase access for women- especially women of color and low income women to not only adequate prenatal and pregnancy care, abortion, contraception, comprehensive sex education and STI prevention and care, but also to domestic violence assistance, adequate wages and earned paid leave time to support families, safe homes and more?

Yes No

Equal Access for people of color and LGBTQ people People of color experience significantly worse health outcomes than their white peers as they relate to maternal and infant mortality, unintended pregnancy, and HIV infection rates, as a result of a system that has not adequately prioritized their health care needs. Likewise, people in the LGBTQ community often do not have access to reproductive health care that is sensitive to their specific needs since the traditional care systems often marginalize such care.

3. Would you support efforts to expand programs and health care access to these marginalized communities?

Yes No

Ensure all people have access to reproductive health care, regardless of income or zip code There are many barriers

that undermine access to reproductive health care for people with lower incomes. Today, Medicaid (a public insurance program) prohibits the use of Federal dollars to cover abortion except in rare cases. In Michigan, private health insurance providers are also prohibited from including coverage for abortion in a health plan except if the insurance company offers a specific “rider” policy that women would have to purchase separately from their regular policy. Planned Parenthood believes that a person’s income should not determine whether their insurance covers quality reproductive health care, including abortion.

4. Do you support repealing the prohibition on public and private health plans covering abortion except with an additional rider?

Yes No

Comments, if desired:

CORE ISSUE #3: Safe and Legal Abortion Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan believes every woman should have access to the full range of reproductive health care services, including access to safe and legal abortion. Roe v. Wade is the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized the right to an abortion by affirming that a woman’s right to privacy extended to her medical decisions. Since 1991, teen birth rates in Michigan have declined 67% and abortion rates are at historic lows. Opponents of safe and legal abortion have tried to erode access to abortion through a range of abortion restrictions, including targeted restrictions designed to shut down health centers that perform abortion (known as Targeted Restrictions of Abortion Providers, TRAP laws), and laws designed to shame and judge women.

Decisions about whether to choose adoption, end a pregnancy, or raise a child must be left to a woman and her family in the context of her faith and with the counsel of her doctor or health care provider — not to politicians.

5. Will you support Roe v. Wade as the law of the land and oppose any effort to undermine a woman’s access to safe, legal abortion?

Yes No

6. Will you oppose any attempts to limit the right of a woman to make her own health care decisions, including: attempts to create unnecessary abortion bans (heartbeat bills, 6-week and 20-week abortion bans, etc.), criminalize health care providers who provide abortions, impose medically unnecessary restrictions for doctors and facilities, or otherwise interfere with the best medical judgement of physicians and decisions made in the doctor-patient relationship?

Yes No

7. So-called "personhood" measures are those that define life beginning at conception, and confer upon fetuses at any stage of development the rights and privileges of born people. Such legislations could interfere with the personal and private medical decisions relating to birth control, access to fertility treatment, management of a miscarriage, and access to safe and legal abortion. These extreme and dangerous measures have been both rejected by voters and defeated in the courts, but that has not discouraged proponents from introducing similar measures in a number of states. Will you oppose any “personhood” measures in the state of Michigan?

Yes No

Comments, if desired:

CORE ISSUE #4: Responsible Sex Education Ninety three percent of parents of junior high school students and 91% of parents of high school students believe it is very or somewhat important to have sexuality education as a part of the school curriculum. Planned Parenthood believes young people need access to scientifically accurate, comprehensive sexuality education to be able to make responsible choices, prevent sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS) and avoid unplanned pregnancies.

8. Do you support making scientifically accurate, comprehensive sex education part of the core curriculum for public schools in Michigan?

Yes No

Comments, if desired:

CORE ISSUE #5: Religious Refusals “Religious Refusal” laws undermine medical standards of care by permitting doctors, hospitals, and health insurance plans to disregard evidence-based standards of medical practice and withhold critical information from patients when that information is in conflict with the provider’s religious beliefs – even if withholding that information puts a patient’s health is at risk. If a state law allows a physician or an entity to refuse to provide comprehensive information that is in the patient’s best medical interest about a diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment options, the state is allowing the doctor or institution to violate their professional standard of care.

While refusal laws are often framed as protecting or preserving religious liberty, in reality, the laws reduce women’s access to safe and legal medical care, such as contraception and abortion, and interfere with a woman’s personal decision-making. All individuals deserve access to quality health care without discrimination or delay in settings that preserve their privacy, and provide the medically upheld standard of care.

We all want to respect religious freedom - the heart of religious freedom involves all individuals being free to make personal decisions based on their own beliefs and according to what is best for their health and the health of their families.

9. Will you oppose actions that would allow health care payers, health facilities, and health providers the right to decline to provide or pay for certain health care services based on the provider’s or institution’s religious beliefs?

Yes No

10. In the current political climate, there is increasing concern that access to quality health care may be denied by insurers and providers based solely upon one’s sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. Would you oppose any effort that would allow employees, employers, health professional, law enforcement, and others to refuse to provide services based on their own “closely held religious or moral beliefs.”

Yes No

Comments, if desired:

CORE ISSUE #6: Birth Control Coverage Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, and nearly half of those unintended pregnancies end in abortion. Access to and the use of contraceptives have a proven track record of enhancing the health of women and adolescents, preventing unintended pregnancy, and reducing the need for abortion.

In spite of this evidence, some who oppose women’s healthcare have tried to erode this benefit by promoting policies that would allow employers to determine whether their employees have access to coverage for birth control. Unfortunately, the protections provided by the Affordable Care Act and the “birth control mandate” are now under attack by President Trump and his administration. Previously, health insurance plans were required to fully cover women’s preventive health care services, including the full range of birth control methods, with no co-pays. Because of the Supreme Court ruling in the “Hobby Lobby” case, for-profit corporations are allowed to deny insurance coverage for their employees’ birth control because of the business owners’ personal religious or moral beliefs.

11. Will you support efforts that prevent for-profit corporations and/or non-religious organizations from denying their employees access to basic health care services such as birth control?

Yes No

Comments, if desired:



Candidate Signature: _____ **Date:** 03/12/2018

PPAM strongly encourages endorsed candidates to champion women's health issues above and beyond maintaining a 100 percent voting record while in office. Below is a list of ways for endorsed candidates to champion Planned Parenthood, its patients, and programs. Note: response to the below statements are a means of gauging a candidate's commitment to reproductive health issues and will not factor into the endorsement process.

Please check the boxes below that indicate your commitment to Planned Parenthood.

My Commitment to Planned Parenthood:

- I will speak out publicly in support of Planned Parenthood.
- I will speak out publicly in support of federal and state family planning programs, as well as sexuality education programs.
- I will attend a Planned Parenthood Function or Event.
- I will visit and tour a Planned Parenthood Health Center.



Candidate Signature: _____ **Date:** 03/12/2018