

2018 UAW CAP Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Home Address: 1538 Centre St #605

City: Detroit Zip Code: 48226

Cell Phone: (313) 288-8662 Campaign Phone: (313) 288-8662

Fax Number: N/A Email Address: Tom@VoteChoske.com

Elected Office you are seeking: State House of Representatives - District 6

Please circle your answer. If necessary, use the space provided for additional comments.

I. Freedom to Choose a Union

Employers routinely use intimidation, threats and coercion to deny workers their right to decide freely whether or not to organize a union and bargain collectively.

We are challenging employers to commit to basic democratic principles for fair union elections. A copy of our principles is attached.

1. If elected, would you take a public position on behalf of working people by endorsing the UAW's principles for fair union elections and urge employers in your district/state to adopt them as well?

Yes - as the son of a union member (Detroit Federation of Teachers), I have always been a strong supporter of fair union elections and will continue to be when elected.

2. If elected, would you take a public position that employers should give employees a free choice without pressure or intimidation as to whether or not to join a union, by supporting Employee Free Choice Act legislation?

Yes. I have previously supported free and open union elections and will support the EFCA, as well as will fight for a repeal of Right To Work.

3. Will you publicly support organizing drives in your district/state by:

a) Writing letters of support for workers' organizing efforts?

[X] Yes [] NO

Why is this important?

b) Attending community forums in support of organizing efforts?

Yes **NO**

Why is this important?

c) Helping to pass resolutions of support?

Yes **NO**

Why is this important?

d) Speaking at a rally?

Yes **NO**

Why is this important?

e) Walking in a picket line?

Yes **NO**

Why is this important?

4. Will you support legislation and/or administrative actions to prohibit state and local funds from being used for contracts unless the contractors agree to remain neutral in organizing drives and respect the right to a free and fair union election?

5. Will you support legislation and/or administrative actions to prohibit contractors from using state and local funds to oppose organizing drives?

II. Right to Bargain Collectively

The right of workers to bargain collectively over their wages, benefits and working conditions is under attack. We strongly support the right of all workers in both the

public and private sector to join together for a collective voice at work. Collective bargaining is a way to solve problems and make workplaces function better for workers, employers, customers and the general public.

1. [For those states where public employees do not have the right to organize] Will you support legislation to give public employees – including home-based workers, such as child care providers and home health aides, who are paid with public funds -- the right to organize and bargain collectively?

2. [For those states where public employees do have the right to organize] Will you oppose legislation to limit the scope of collective bargaining by public sector employees, or dictate the terms of collective bargaining agreements? Where such legislation is already in place, will you support efforts to repeal it?

3. Do you support the right of academic student employees, such as teaching and research assistants, to organize and bargain collectively?

4. Will you oppose efforts to restrict the ability of unions to bargain with employers for automatic dues deduction, or to limit the ability of unions to collect and spend union dues for legislative, political and community involvement purposes?

5. Unions and employers often negotiate “union security” clauses to ensure that all of the workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement pay their fair share for the benefits they receive from union representation. Some politicians and corporate interests are trying to weaken the voice of working families by prohibiting union security clauses. Will you oppose so-called “right to work” legislation to weaken unions and disempower working families?

III. Electability

It shall be requisite that organized labor support not only candidates who are

labor friendly, but who have a reasonable chance of getting elected.

Please explain what motivated you to run for this office and give a brief description of your campaign plan (include other means of organizational support and financial plan).

Serving our community has been my lifelong dream. From a young age, I've strived to live up to President Kennedy's famous quote, "to whom much is given, much will be required." My parents, both public school employees, taught me the value of hard work. Working as a Detroit Public School teacher for 30 years after serving in the US Air Force, my father exemplified dedication to service. With the support of the union, he and my mother were able to provide me with a good home, great education, and the passion to help others.

I've been honored to work on behalf of our region for years, fighting as a staffer in the State Legislature, US House of Representatives, and as a board member of PartnershipUs to make our community better. In my time working with great leaders like former Congressman Hansen Clarke, I helped fight against polluters who are destroying our neighborhoods and health, against Republicans who wanted to bust unions and give handouts to big corporations, and against the scourge of illiteracy in our communities. My experience on the front-lines of the biggest battles in Lansing and Washington DC have prepared me to skillfully serve our community as State Representative.

I'm running a campaign to restore hope in our community that people have an elected representative who truly fights for us and not corporate special interests. I'm honored to have the support of the Progressive Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party in my quest to wage a smart, grassroots campaign to bring change to Lansing. I've put a large portion of my personal savings into the campaign and have been raising funds from friends and family to give voters the confidence that I am running for them and not for anyone else. I'm proud to say that our campaign is well on its way to meeting its financial goals and we've got a growing volunteer base that'll help us drive an effective field campaign.

IV. Tax and Budget Fairness

Instead of seeking progressive solutions to revenue shortfalls, many states are attempting to balance their budgets on the backs of working families, retirees and the poor.

1. Will you support a fair tax system that requires corporations and the wealthy to pay their share and oppose shifts of the tax burden onto the middle class and poor?

Yes - I support moving to a progressive income tax that will ensure that the wealthy pay their fair share as well as fighting against corporate welfare handouts that have drained money from schools and infrastructure. I will also work to end the pension tax that hurts our retirees.

2. Do you support measures, such as a state-earned income tax credit, to ensure that no worker is taxed into poverty?

Yes - I will fight to reinstate the state EITC that Snyder and the Republicans eliminated

3. Will you oppose austerity budgets that cut critical programs for low- and middle-income Americans?

Yes

V. Occupational Safety and Health

The federal and state Occupational Safety and Health Acts were enacted to help assure the safety of workers in the workplace. Thanks to these laws, our workplaces have become safer, healthier and more secure. Despite this progress, too many workers are still injured or killed on the job, or suffer from illnesses caused by occupational exposures.

Will you support efforts to strengthen workplace safety and health and oppose any legislation that would repeal or weaken worker protections and training?

Yes

VI. Education and School Budget

Private school vouchers undermine public education by taking scarce funds away

from public schools, which are open to all students, and shifting them to private schools. It is in the interest of all workers that we maintain quality public education for all children. In today's global economy, this must include a strong system of public higher education with access for the children of working families and decent pay for college and university employees.

1. What is your position on charter schools and on lifting the cap on the number of charter schools chartered by universities?

I am opposed to charter schools. I do not support uncapping the number of schools that a university can charter, nor the uncapping of the overall number of charter schools that exist. I will fight against all expansions of charter schools and will work to cap-and-close

existing schools, shifting students and dollars back to quality public schools with union teachers.

2. State laws regulating charter schools in Michigan are among the nation's weakest, allowing for a variety of different abuses of taxpayer money to benefit the for-profit companies running them. Will you support legislation to increase regulation of these existing charter schools to ensure they are held accountable for how their funds are used?

Yes - I support ensuring that all charter schools are answerable to their local school boards, the same as public schools.

3. Will you actively oppose all private school voucher proposals?

Yes

4. Many public schools continue to close due to poor performance caused by over-crowded classrooms and low budgets for essential supplies. Will you work with school board members and support legislation to increase funding to these schools?

Yes - as a product of public schools and the child of public school employees, I will be a strong fighter for public education.

5. Will you support action to increase access to higher education for working families of modest means?

Yes, and one way to achieve this that I am passionate about is restoring the Michigan Education Trust program, which I was able to use to make my undergraduate education affordable without putting me or my family into crushing debt.

6. Public school teachers have seen continuous budget cuts and pension loss throughout the years. Will you actively support efforts to improve their pay and benefits?

Yes - with a retired public school teacher for a father, this is personal to me.

7. Academic student employees, adjunct faculty and postdoctoral researchers carry out an increasing share of college and university teaching and research activities, but are paid much less than full-time, tenured faculty. Will you actively support efforts to improve their pay and benefits?

Yes

VII. Living Wage

Living wage laws seek to ensure that employees of public contractors or of

companies receiving tax incentives and other public assistance do not live in poverty.

1. Do you support efforts to enact and enforce living wage ordinances?

Yes - I believe that this is something that must exist along with an increase in the minimum wage to a reasonable level.

2. Will you oppose legislation that would prohibit local municipalities from enacting living wage ordinances?

Yes - I support local governments and will fight against Lansing power-grabs

VIII. Health Care

The health care reform law that passed in March 2010 was a major step forward to ensure that every American has access to quality health care and that no American goes bankrupt paying for needed care.

1. Will you oppose efforts to repeal health care reform and speak out against wasting taxpayer dollars through deceptive legal challenges to the new law?

Yes, though I will take it further and fight to improve upon the ACA at the local level by pushing for a Michigan-based single-payer healthcare option.

2. Will you support a strong state exchange (i.e., one-stop insurance marketplace) through which individuals and small businesses can shop for quality, affordable coverage?

Yes, though I will take it further and fight to improve upon the ACA at the local level by pushing for a Michigan-based single-payer healthcare option

IX. Equal Pay

The Equal Pay Act makes it unlawful to pay women less than men for work that is deemed substantially equal and/or identical, unless the pay difference is based on seniority, experience or other legitimate factors. Although equal pay has been the law for 35 years, women are still paid less than their male counterparts, despite having similar education, skills and experience. Often, this is because women are concentrated in certain occupations that have historically been paid less than those dominated by men. Insisting on pay equity, equal pay for work of comparable value, even if jobs are not identical, is one way to address persistent inequality.

1. Will you support measures that would end pay discrimination?

Yes and I'm proud to have worked to support such legislation as a staffer in both the State Senate and US House of Representatives.

2. Will you co-sponsor pay equity legislation?

Yes and I'm proud to have worked to support such legislation as a staffer in both the State Senate and US House of Representatives.

X. Privatization

In order to cut costs, state and local governments sometimes privatize by contracting out union jobs to low-paying, non-union employers. The UAW opposes any privatization measures that undermine accountability in public programs.

Will you oppose measures to privatize basic services within the public sector?

Yes NO

If yes, state an example that might lead you to that decision.

One of the worst examples of privatized services in the public sector is our correctional food systems. When these were handed over to private businesses, they increased prices, decreased quality, and served incarcerated citizens food that was riddle with maggots. I'm glad to see these services being returned to the public sector, with public employees, where they belong.

XI. Minimum Wage

A fair minimum wage is fundamental to a social economic system that guarantees a decent minimum reward for work. A fair minimum wage not only reduces costs for safety net programs, but also acts as an economic stimulus in the communities in which low-wage workers live.

1. Will you support an increase in the state's minimum wage?

Yes - I support eliminating the disparity between tipped and non-tipped wages and moving to a \$15/hour minimum wage, indexed to the CPI.

2. Will you support a provision to index the state's minimum wage so that legislative action is not necessary to increase it to keep pace with inflation?

Yes, though the CPI is a better measure since inflation rates can be artificially depressed by decreases in, for example, energy prices.

XII. Unemployment Insurance

The deep recession and continuing high unemployment levels show the importance of a strong unemployment insurance system. Unfortunately, a

number

of states have responded to strains on system finances by enacting benefit cuts instead of insisting that employers replenish the funds.

Will you oppose cuts in support for the unemployed and instead support legislation to improve unemployment benefits and expand eligibility?

Yes

XIII. Investments in Infrastructure and Clean Energy

Public infrastructure across America is crumbling and in need of rebuilding, with the potential to create large numbers of quality jobs. At the same time, many states are promoting clean energy industries to create jobs and position themselves for future growth opportunities, while addressing important environmental and energy security concerns.

1. Would you support public investments to rebuild our infrastructure, including roads, bridges, mass transit and water and sewer systems?

Yes - I support reforming our budget to bring an additional \$4 billion per year in infrastructure funding to bear, based off of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, to improve our systems and make our economy stronger.

2. Would you support establishing or increasing renewable energy requirements in your state?

Yes - I was proud to work on establishing Michigan's first Renewable Portfolio Standard and I support moving to '30 by 30', whereby 30% of Michigan's electricity would come from renewables by 2030.

3. Would you support a requirement that the electricity grid in your state be updated to the best standard available?

Yes - working with ITC and others to ensure grid efficiency is the best way to reduce energy consumption and reduce pollution.

XIV. Deregulation

In recent years, the government has deregulated many industries including cablevision, telephones, electricity and natural gas utilities. Consumers have paid a steep price in many of these areas.

1. Will you oppose further deregulation?

Yes

2. In cases where it is clear that consumers have not benefited from deregulation, would you support a reversal of these policies?

Yes

XV. Workers Compensation

Do you support efforts to improve benefits and coverage under the state's workers' compensation law?

Yes

XVI. Candidates for Judicial Positions and Prosecuting Attorneys

1. How would you describe your social and judicial philosophies?

I'm a progressive. A 'progressive' is someone who fights for policies and programs that help the least among us in order to make a better life for all of us. We recognize that we all have a social responsibility to our community, and that true wealth isn't measured in Bentleys and private jets; it's measured by how few of our neighbors are in poverty, how great our free public schools are, how safe our streets are, and how new our infrastructure is.

2. What kind of community groups, clubs and associations have you been involved in?

I am proud to serve my community. I am a board member of:

- PartnershipUs (Co-Founder and Board Member)
- Detroiters Vote (Treasurer)

I am also on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the M1-RAIL team, helping to advocate for inclusive developments in transit throughout the area.

I have been a lifelong Democrat, serving as:

- Precinct Delegate – Precinct 157, Detroit
- 13th District Democratic Party Organization – State Central Committee Delegate
- 13th District Democratic Party Organization – Communications Committee Chair
- At-Large Board Member, Young Democrats of Detroit

I am a member in good standing of:

- Detroit Economic Club
- Detroit Young Professionals
- 13th Congressional District Democratic Party
- Young Democrats of Michigan
- Michigan Democratic Party
- Michigan State University Alumni Association
- James Madison College Alumni Association
- Transportation Riders United (TRU)
- Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan
- NAACP
- Detroit RiverFront Conservancy and Riv28
- Sierra Club
- American Civil Liberties Union

In volunteering my time to assist those in need, I serve at:

- Adopt-A-Child Christmas
- Gleaner's Community Foodbank
- Forgotten Harvest Foodbank
- Focus:HOPE Foodbank
- Life Remodeled
- PartnershipUs
- Michigan Youth In Government
- Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation – Building For America's Bravest
- Detroit Economic Club – Young Leader's Career Readiness program

I also participate in events to raise awareness and help solve issues such as veteran homelessness, Multiple Sclerosis, and to advance cancer research, such as:

- Komen Race For The Cure
- American Lung Association Fight For Air Climb
- MS Society MuckFest MS
- Wounded Warriors Foundation – Tough Mudder
- Operation Gratitude – Merrell Down and Dirty Race

XVII. Vehicle Ownership

UAW members assemble an impressive array of vehicles that are second to none

in quality, styling and value.

What model car do you currently own and would you consider buying a UAW vehicle as your next purchase?

I currently own a 2007 Mercury Milan sedan, and will be buying a UAW-made vehicle within the next year to replace it.

XVIII. Primary Election Results

Whether you win or lose the primary election, will we have your support for all our endorsements on the ballot during the general election?

Yes

XIX. Past Endorsements

1. Have you received UAW or AFL-CIO endorsements in the past?

Yes NO

If yes, when and was it for the same office that you are currently seeking?

2. What other endorsements have you received for this election?

Progressive Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party