

Section/Question	Response
Name	Tom Choske
Legislative District	HD-06
Party	Democrat
Address	1538 Centre St # 605, Detroit MI 48226
Telephone	313-288-8662
Age	31
Email	Tom@VoteChoske.com
Website	www.VoteChoske.com
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
Ever been arrested?	No
	My years of experience as a legislative staffer in Lansing and with the US House of Representatives, combined with involvement in campaigns and the political process as well as the business community, have given me the expertise to skillfully serve in the State House of Representatives. 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
Please provide your personal and professional background, and explain how it contributes to what you have to offer. You can attach a resume if you choose.*	
Have you ever been convicted of a crime?	No
What is the biggest problem confronting this state?*	Economic inequality leading to poverty is the biggest problem facing Michigan residents. While the economy has improved since the depths of the 2008 Great Recession, much of the 'improvement' has been concentrated in equities markets that primarily benefit the top 1% of earners. Real wages haven't increased at all in inflation-adjusted terms over the last 10 years, creating some of the worst economic inequality this nation has seen since the 1920's. However, government tax policies have not kept up, leading to disinvestment in our public sector. Our crumbling roads, failing water systems, and dilapidated schools are the result. The solution requires action across education, infrastructure, the state's regulatory regime, and tax reform.
What is your plan for addressing it?	I have laid out on my website a list of policies and actions I will support and take to help end inequality and create a stronger, consumer-based economy for our state: - I will work with businesses and the Department of Education to expand opportunities for job skills training for both school children and adults, ensuring that they can gain the soft-skills and technical know-how to compete for the jobs of the future. I will advocate for funding to continue the IT skills training program I helped pilot in 2011 with Congressman Hansen Clarke. - I will work to ensure that Michigan becomes a livable wage state, with a \$15-per-hour minimum wage for all workers that is indexed to the Consumer Price Index. - I will stand in solidarity with organized labor against all attacks on collective bargaining and will never give up the fight to repeal Right To Work. - I will defend Prevailing Wage laws to ensure government projects are done by the highest-skilled and most competitive workers possible. - 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 fight to implement my Transit and Infrastructure agenda to help hire Michigan workers and grow our consumer base. By letting working people earn money, we can generate the demand that will attract and grow even more jobs. - To pay for these investments, 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. - I will work to help improve energy efficiency to drive down energy costs and reduce pollution through funding weatherization tax credits for businesses & individuals, while partnering with organizations like Young Detroit Builders to ensure that our neighbors and children are the ones hired for these jobs. - I will join with others in the legislature to spur investment by helping to support investment in new and early stage businesses by restarting the 21st Century Jobs Fund, which generated \$7 in investment for every \$1 spent, and will continue to fight for tax credits for Angel Investors. - I will fight to bring more jobs to our community while improving our environment through making Michigan a leader in recycling technologies. I will work to make curbside recycling universal while bringing advanced single-stream recycling facilities to the area.
Is the current level of state taxation too high, too low or just about right?	No - the current tax system hurts the poor and elderly too much while providing massive benefits for millionaires and billionaires through corporate tax breaks and other incentives. I will fight to repeal the Republican pension tax on seniors and to restore the Earned Income Tax Credit for all of Michigan's working families.
How would you structure the state's spending priorities?*	When I go to Lansing, I will work with my colleagues to prioritize investments in education, infrastructure, cities, and small business. Spending must be increased on the people who need help the most. Lansing has repeatedly taken money away from infrastructure, education, and social services only to redistribute the wealth to the richest and most-connected in our state. Once elected, I will work to stop further handouts to corporations and ensure that money is redirected to build stronger communities.

	<p>Our region's transit and infrastructure are among the worst in the country, but we can seize this opportunity to make Michigan a national leader. The American Society of Civil Engineers, 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, Business Leaders For Michigan, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, and other groups have laid out the blueprint for how to revolutionize our roads, electrical systems, water, and public transit networks. Together, we can reinvest in our infrastructure and once again make Michigan the first-in-class state, with the best roads, most comprehensive and innovative public transit systems, safe and durable electrical & water systems, and greenest power grid in the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I will fight to implement the bipartisan recommendations of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a 'Michigan Infrastructure Council' to centralize information from across the state on the status of our infrastructure and to provide recommendations for its upkeep - Leveraging advanced database systems to improve project planning and minimize waste - Replacing aging water systems, from drinking water to sewers, while investing in environmentally sustainable ways to manage stormwater. - Building a new lock in Sault Ste. Marie within the Soo Locks system. - Investing in cybersecurity and intelligent vehicle systems - I will work to find ways to help Michigan reach the \$4 billion per year needed to upgrade our roads, water systems, and other infrastructure through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and eliminating wasteful corporate welfare subsidies to big business - Identifying and eliminating wasteful government contracts, such as for IT systems that don't work - Push Michigan to have a progressive income tax so that the wealthy pay their fair share - Aggressively pursuing road work contractors who have failed to meet quality standards for previous road projects, seeking damages - Private investors shouldn't be able to reap huge profits from public works. I will work to make utility rate increases, such as water rates, subject to state oversight to protect citizens. - I will bring my experience in transit to bear, helping to improve coordination between the public transit providers in the RTA and supporting the growth of bus, light rail, and heavy rail systems throughout Michigan. - I will defend Renewable Portfolio Standards, ensuring there is a strong market to support the development of new, green power generation and transmission technologies.
<p>What is your answer for funding Michigan's infrastructure needs?</p>	<p>No - we should provide incentives and opportunities for those on Medicaid to seek work or take job training programs, but the legislation the Republicans in Lansing have introduced is horrible and will only serve to hurt those who need help the most. I believe that the only way to truly control the cost of healthcare programs in the state is to move to a universal single-payer healthcare system in our country. Until then, I will continue to support Medicaid expansion and urge Washington DC to preserve the reimbursement scheme to the states for their increased costs.</p>
<p>Do you favor requiring able-bodied Medicaid recipients to either work or seek job training? How would you address the rising costs of Michigan's health care programs?</p>	<p>I support full legalization of marijuana for medical and recreational purposes. I support the ballot initiative to regulate marijuana like alcohol, and I also believe in establishing a pathway to exonerate non-violent marijuana offenders after legalization.</p>
<p>Do you favor the legalization of marijuana for recreational use?</p>	<p>Tax incentives have a purpose, but they are not the best or only way to spur economic development. I do not support 'Transformational Brownfield' legislation that I believe robs our schools to reimburse billionaires for costs incurred in development they would have done anyways. I believe in controlling TIF programs and targeting them away from areas that are rife with development programs so that other, traditionally underserved, communities benefit. Furthermore, I believe that the incentive package put together for Amazon shows the overall folly of relying too heavily on tax incentives to attract businesses: I support a tax policy that will enable Michigan to have top-notch infrastructure, public schools, and public safety. This will do more to help our state's economy and attract businesses than low tax rates.</p>
<p>Should the state use tax incentives to spur development, and if not, why? If so, how should they be structured?</p>	<p>Returning local schools to local control is key. I grew up in a union household with my father retiring from DPS after a long career as an educator. I know how horrible the Republican attacks against students and teachers have been and how they've hurt our schools. I will fight in Lansing to protect teacher tenure and the right of teachers to unionize. When educators are mistreated, I believe they should have the same rights as other workers to protest. Finally, we must move away from over-testing our children and changing curriculum every other year and create a reasonable testing system with consistent curriculum. I will fight to cap charter schools and work aggressively to close underperforming locations. I support making local elected school boards in charge of the curriculum of all schools, private and public, in their cities. I will work to improve investment in K-8 education, promote early-childhood education, and ensure that students receive culturally-relevant education so that all histories are treated equally. I will also support literacy and other programs for adult caregivers of children.</p>
<p>What is your one big idea for improving the performance of Michigan schools?</p>	<p>No - I support the State and local school boards and believe that they should have authority over all schools in the state, both public and charter schools.</p>
<p>Would you support a proposal to eliminate the state School Board?</p>	<p>I support term limits, though I'm open to reforms that would give more flexibility for how time can be spent (ex. a system where legislators can serve a maximum number of years, regardless of which chamber the time is spent in).</p>
<p>What is your position on term limits?</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>- The amount of money entering elections is creating a media 'arms race' that forces politicians to worry more about special interest donors than voters. I will work to limit the amount of money that millionaires and billionaires like the DeVos' can give to candidates and spend in elections so they cannot buy our government from us.</p> <p>- I will stand with Democrats to expand Michigan's Freedom of Information Act to subject the Governor and the Legislature to the same scrutiny as other branches of government.</p> <p>- I will continue to 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.</p>
<p>How can Michigan improve its ethical rules for lawmakers?</p>	
<p>What is the primary source of your campaign funds ?</p>	<p>Personal savings, friends, and family. I do not have wealthy corporate backers, so my accountability is to the voters and not large special interests</p>