

## **State Legislative Candidates – House District 100 – Tom Kunse**

### **1. Why are you interested in serving the people, families, and businesses in northern Michigan?**

I've lived in Clare for 50 years and have been blessed to raise a family here. The 100th District is the poorest district in the State of Michigan. I see it in the kids that I tutor at High School. I see it when we work at the food pantry. I want to serve the 100th District to show our youth the way out of intergenerational poverty. I want to serve to keep Lansing out of our lives. I've been a small business owner for nearly 30 years – and we need the government to get out of the way and let entrepreneurs create opportunities and good paying jobs. Short answer: This is a way to give back to the community that has so generously blessed my family and me.

### **2. How will you use your role to support the economic vitality of our region?**

I am already working with our CTE and Mid-Michigan College on skilled trades exposure for high school students. This is my top priority. I want kids to learn they can have a good paying job without a college degree. I'm not opposed to college; I've been to a couple of them – BUT it is not mandatory for everyone to be successful. I am dedicated to shrinking the bureaucracy in Lansing. Minimize government intrusion into our lives. Nothing works better than the Free Market with limited government overreach. If you want private investment, encourage communities to be business friendly, with shovel ready sites and low tax burdens. At the Township level, we have been working with Broadband suppliers to expand services to underserved areas. Lastly, I would like to be on the Energy Committee to ensure that we have competitive rates.

### **3. Do you believe local government should have broad authority to regulate short-term rentals?**

No.

### **4. How would you address the shortage of skilled labor in northern Michigan?**

Again, this is my top priority. I preach it when I tutor. "If you want to make \$80,000 and live in Harrison, be an electrician" Or pipefitter, or welder. I am already working with our CTE and made the connection for them to Speaker Wentworth. The Magnus Center received a \$15,000,000 grant to expand their offerings to high school students. The welding program has 54 seats and there is a waiting list. With this grant, they will provide additional bussing and have added a second session (another 54 opportunities). We need our young adults to be exposed to these good paying jobs while still in their formulative years. Michigan is a great place to live – we need to give our youth the opportunity to make a living here.

**5. How would you prioritize leftover funds from federal aid packages and surplus dollars in the state's general fund?**

Pay down existing debt and reduce the tax burden on individuals and businesses. I could be convinced to apply funds towards broadband expansion if it were competitive and efficient – I would not accept writing Spectrum / et al a check to do with as they saw fit. I do not believe those companies have the best interest of the 100th District constituents as their goal.

**6. The availability of housing is a barrier to business growth and talent attraction in our region. How do you intend to address the affordable housing shortage?**

- The government has no business competing with the private sector. I am not interested in having a tax dollar vs private investment situation. The Legislature should make it as easy as possible for new construction and encourage communities to lower property taxes – that would encourage new construction without direct government involvement. I vote to let the Free Market work.

**7. Many families struggle to secure quality childcare. This can be a barrier to attracting talent and keeping people in or bringing people back into the workforce. How will you work to increase access to affordable and quality childcare?**

- If we want more childcare options, we should make it easier for child centers to operate. This is an area that I am not personally knowledgeable of; Our children were taken care of by a family friend – which I appreciate is not a viable solution for all parties. I understand this is an issue; I do not have a specific solution for it.

**8. What are your solutions for supporting businesses being affected directly by inflation and supply chain costs?**

- I would encourage efforts to lower the tax burden on businesses and individuals. I would strongly encourage Washington to stop printing money we do not have - which is the root cause of inflation. Global macroeconomic issues are not going to be resolved at the district level. With my small business, we found that local vendors are more reliable than potentially less expensive, but undependable sources located out of state or in other countries. I would encourage businesses to source locally whenever possible – aka, shorten their supply chain.