

Kathy G. Pelleran-Mahoney, House District 102

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

It's personal with me. As a native of northern Michigan and someone who represented it while on staff of both former U.S. Senator Carl Levin (six years) and State Senator Mitch Irwin (two years), I have worked to ensure that our people, families and businesses were well served. I was responsible for constituent services and economic development projects working with business, manufacturing, and local developers across northern Michigan. I later added nine counties in mid-Michigan serving as lead staff representing 34 counties for Senator Levin. I worked closely with the business community knowing that they were also serving the needs of our local citizens. Growing up, my family owned a small business in Alpena. It was a market that sold fresh produce and nursery items. I have had a small business, Lakeshore Consulting, for nine years where I have dealt with public relations and writing grants.

2. Describe three statewide strategies/policies that you would support to enhance economic growth in the region.

To enhance economic growth in the region, I'd like to frame my answer to the question by first sharing that I believe the top three issues facing our local businesses today are labor, supply, and impact.

Labor: Recruitment & retention of a diverse workforce representative of our thriving community, skill development, and worker transportation and childcare.

Supply: Cost of supplies, availability of supplies to produce products and deliver service, transportation ease to receive goods and to deliver to market.

Impact: Manufacturing, agri-processing, service, retail, and helping local consumers have access to buy local, and other consumers to buy our products/services. Available to consumers via transportation or telecommunication; maintaining customer base via quality, quantity, and affordability.

In my role as a state representative, I will address these issues by pursuing the following strategies:

- reviewing regulations with stakeholders to streamline and modernize them to reduce redundancies in agencies;
- provide an oversight eye to the executive branch that handles regulations;
- supporting our healthcare sector that is vital to all to live, work, and play in our west shore community;
- supporting a strong public education to ensure a strong workforce -- pre-K through college and trade school to ensure accessibility and affordability;
- supporting childcare solutions for a vibrant workforce;
- supporting partnership opportunities for business and labor with all entities to ensure pipelines from school to careers that are in demand;
- supporting infrastructure to do business and move products – communications, transportation, public safety to deliver products and services;
- support for infrastructure like utilities, transportation, communications, and public safety to ensure production/service
- providing incentives to bring and keep domestic production to ensure availability of supply chain products and parts for manufacturing;
- advocating for solid trade agreements with domestic and foreign markets;
- part of the role of being a state representative is in facilitating stakeholder meetings to align parties, reach consensus, achieve goals.

3. Describe the policies that you see being the most effective/ineffective at addressing the housing shortage in our region?

Promising policies that can help to address the housing shortage in the region include:

- Providing more affordable housing: Increase affordable housing through a blend of public housing and incentivizing private developers to build affordable housing stock whether it be single-family units, condos, apartments, or even projects that include case-management options to help vulnerable populations navigate the challenges of rental and home ownership.
- Addressing zoning laws: As local zoning laws often have purview over the types of rentals and/or building that can restrict affordable housing, laws on the state level can be reviewed for modernization and/or reform to address pitfalls and benefits to enhancing affordable housing issues.
- Addressing public health through housing: case-management in public housing to assist in client health and well-being. This could also have positive implications on homelessness.

- Addressing housing standards linked to more resilient construction materials and the promotion of energy efficiencies.
- Addressing lower housing energy costs through community solar projects where homeowners and renters can “invest” in unit solar applications to lower their housing energy costs. This also has an environmental benefit related to climate action.
- Incentivizing local revitalization through a business or government partnership that offers employees a voucher or payment for purchasing housing in and around their place of employment. For example, as a college trustee, I supported a \$5,000 incentive to those staff/faculty who purchased a home in and around the urban center of the college and walked to work. This helped to revitalize and stabilize the area around the college and also alleviated our parking issue on campus.

4. What statewide policies best support talent retention and attraction in Northern Michigan?

It is my belief and experience that talented workers want to have amenities for themselves and their families. Statewide policies related to affordable and accessible healthcare, a strong public education -- pre-k through college and trade school, supportive childcare solutions, public transportation options, affordable housing, insurance, wage and hour benefits, libraries, and recreational and cultural programs for themselves and family growth and development are all related to statewide policy elements that help to attract, support, and retain a stable workforce.

5. How will you work to increase access to affordable and quality childcare?

Childcare quality, affordability, and accessibility requires working with decision-makers from the provider network, state licensure oversight agencies, federal program funding agencies, and state and federal legislators who authorize funding and policies. I will work with local childcare providers to ensure that their voice is heard on redundant or onerous regulations that we can modernize legislatively. I will also work with my colleagues in both chambers, as well as our federal lawmakers, to ensure they have the research and current data for solid decision-making that considers the need, cost, and benefits of high-quality childcare and the value of its accessibility to families statewide, and the value to the businesses and communities dependent upon a vibrant workforce.

I have a proven track-record in this arena. My public policy experience over my career was directly involved in childcare policy that was aimed at providing affordable and accessible programs for parents of children, assisting providers of childcare services with licensure regulation issues, staff

development and retention, and blending and braiding various programs for the highest efficacy in childcare services. As the state director of a nonprofit organization I worked for fifteen years to increase access to affordable and quality childcare in Michigan. I worked to package relevant research to help educate lawmakers on the value of high-quality care and education that led to investments in pre-k, afterschool programs, and the state-designed federal childcare subsidy program that ensured working families had access to quality childcare programs for their children. Braiding and blended funding for early childhood care and education enables Michigan to use “maintenance of effort” with its investment of pre-k dollars to help leverage more federal monies for childcare.

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

- supporting partnership opportunities for business and labor with all entities to ensure pipelines from school to careers for workers that are in demand;
- supporting public infrastructure to do business and move products – communications, transportation, public safety to deliver products and services;
- supporting infrastructure like utilities, transportation, communications, and public safety to ensure production/service;
- providing incentives to bring and keep domestic production to ensure availability of supply chain products and parts for manufacturing;
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