

US Rep. Elissa Slotkin, Candidate for US Senate

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

My overarching priority is to make it easier for Michiganders to get into and stay in the middle class and beyond. I've long said Michigan is the state that invented the middle class; it did so by making investments in small businesses and critical manufacturing areas, which I hope to reinforce in the U.S. Senate.

I think economic development works best when all levels of government – local, state, and federal – and the private sector are rowing in the same direction. Economic development requires buy-in from everyone – the community, policymakers, and businesses – so transparency is key. And it requires making the right investments – ones that yield the highest returns on investment in terms of creating good-paying jobs, supporting the local economy, spurring additional private-sector investments, and more.

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

The primary concerns that I hear from small business owners is that they aren't able to find enough qualified job candidates to meet their needs. This impacts everyone from restaurants looking to hire teenagers for summer work to employers in the tech sector looking to hire engineers with advanced degrees. Improving both our education system and our immigration system to meet the workforce needs of employers in our community can help develop and strengthen critical talent pipelines to address this issue.

Second, I hear about inflation and the impact that's having on their bottom line. To that end, I believe that we need to make more critical items in America so that we are in control of our own economic security – supply-side shocks like COVID have the potential to wreak havoc on our economy and

middle-class families, so I'm committed to bringing critical manufacturing back to the United States.

Finally, we need to invest in our infrastructure – which means finding a way to pay for those investments and ensuring they are adequately funded in the short-, medium-, and long-term. While infrastructure investments can yield economic benefits that may help to offset or even cover their cost in the long-term, it's also important to ensure that those who are benefiting from the investments are paying their fair share. For the biggest projects, like dams, bridges, etc, it often requires federal resources, which is why I am so proud to have championed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which has brought billions to Michigan to support the state's infrastructure needs, including investing in rural broadband.

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

Investing in affordable housing is key to driving economic growth and it requires collaboration between the public sector and the private sector – both of whom are needed to address this critical issue. I've been proud to tackle this issue at the federal level in a way that both helps Michiganders and spurs economic development. Last September, I introduced the Workforce Housing Development Act, which would create a competitive grant program at HUD to encourage housing developers to create, rehabilitate, and preserve affordable workforce housing. Additionally, I was a co-sponsor of the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act, a bipartisan bill allowing a business-related tax credit to be applied to certain housing development costs, with the goal of producing half a million starter homes in under-resourced communities over the next decade. And in this year alone, I have secured over \$1.6 million in federal funding to create an affordable housing development in my district.

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

When I talk to younger folks around the state, I can hear how badly they want to stay in Michigan – to work here and to raise their families here. But they will ultimately go where there are the best opportunities – so we need to make sure that is here. That means fostering workforce pipelines that start in college, alternative post-secondary routes, or even as early as high school that lead to immediate, good-paying, and local jobs. Whether it is expanding apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, lowering the cost of in-state

tuition at community colleges and four-year universities, or attracting businesses to the state that will hire local talent, there needs to be a whole-of-government – and private-sector – effort to retain and attract talent in every corner of this state.

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

One of the number one issues I hear about from working families across Michigan is the cost of childcare – an issue that is directly impacting businesses who desperately need more workers, many of whom are kept out of the workforce when they cannot access or afford childcare. That is why I have championed proposals to make childcare more affordable like the American Family Act, which would make permanent the expanded Child Tax Credit, and the Child Care Investment Act, which improves three existing child care tax incentive programs, including one that directly benefits companies who help their workers access and afford childcare. And it's why I directly advocated for and secured over \$2 million to establish a Child Development Lab in my district, which will serve the dual functions of providing affordable child care to families in the area and training the next generation of childcare professionals.

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

I believe that we need to make more critical items in America so that we are in control of our own economic security. I co-led a Defense Critical Supply Chain Task Force to identify vulnerabilities in our defense supply chains and bring more defense manufacturing back to the U.S. I introduced the Strengthening America's Strategic National Stockpile Act, which has since been signed into law, to increase manufacturing of critical supplies in America to diversify sources of personal protective equipment. And I created the Domestic Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Caucus to prevent drug shortages and create good-paying jobs in a critical industry here at home. In the U.S. Senate, I will work every day to bring critical supply chains and manufacturing back home. Additionally, to complement our domestic manufacturing efforts, it is imperative that we strive to buy products made here at home. As a former CIA and DOD official, I worked with "buy American" provisions on a weekly basis. I have also fought to ensure that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included comprehensive "Buy America" provisions so that we rebuild our state using American steel, American iron, and American-made construction materials – some of which have a direct connection to Michigan.