

Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Curt VanderWall

Photo:

District: 102

Email: curtvanderwall101@gmail.com

Link to Campaign Website: curtvanderwall.com



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

I have been a resident of northern Michigan for my whole adult life where I have raised 3 kids, operated a grocery store, and started and operated my own business. I know that it is one of the best places in the world and filled with amazing people who truly want to be here.

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

We need to provide relief for businesses by lowering taxes. I support lowering the individual and corporate income tax to make it more affordable for people in Northern MI.

We also need to take immediate action to address the disastrous minimum wage hike and elimination of the tipped wage. This single policy will result in hundreds of small-town restaurants in our area to close their doors over the next 5 years. On top of that, the same change will require sick leave for employees which will destroy many industries, especially season industries.

We also need to continue pursuing public/private partnerships through programs like Pure Michigan that drive economic activity to Northern MI through tourism and agribusiness. This is good for our businesses and creates thriving communities.

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

Housing has been a huge concern in Northern MI, especially the Traverse City area. I think one policy that we can implement that will continue to combat this is the expansion of Community Land Trusts. I supported this effort during the last legislative term and it takes concrete steps to lower the cost of housing and keep it low. However, the best thing we can do is lower the cost of input prices for building materials and labor. That means more construction workers, cheaper lumber, cheaper skilled trades like electricians and plumbers. We do all of that by building a workforce and driving competition in these sectors.

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

As the former Chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee I have authored bills that would increase tuition assistance for healthcare professionals that move to high need areas like Northern MI. I also sponsored another bill that would allow for schools to get paired with counselors while they are still getting their graduate degree to increase retention when they graduate. Creative programs like this can help address specific need areas like medical professionals.

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

I was a huge supporter and sponsor in the Senate of the Tri-Share program which leverages business, parent, and state dollars to lower the cost of child care for eligible parents. Having quality and available child care is a win-win for businesses and families by getting their people back to work without having the stress of piecing together a childcare plan. We need to continue decreasing the burdensome regulations on these centers. I have heard directly from child care workers how difficult it is to operate in this space with all of the hoops they have to jump through.

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

So much of those costs are driven through national policies, but we need to make a dent in them where we can. That means easing the financial burden on businesses through lowering taxes. One tax elimination that will directly affect supply chain costs is the reduction or elimination of the gas tax. This will decrease shipping costs directly. However, the only

way long-term to address these issues is to ensure stability and availability of labor. That means we need to encourage kids to pursue skilled trade programs and work to build our workforce. Additionally as stated before, the minimum wage and sick leave change is going to be very hard on businesses, even those not in the restaurant industry.

