

Michigan US Governor 2026

THE ISSUES

JOCELYN
BENSON

DEMOCRAT

JOHN
JAMES

REPUBLICAN

Learn how to vote in Michigan at michigan.gov/vote!

See guides.vote for online guides with links and sources.	jocelynbenson.com	johnjamesmi.com
ABORTION Ban or legal?	Legal. Would “fight to make sure women can make their own decisions on how and when to start a family.” Opposes overturning of Roe v. Wade; says it has resulted in “draconian bans.” Supported Proposal 3, which “ enshrined reproductive freedom” in the Michigan Constitution.	Ban. In 2018 said “I am 100% pro-life.” In 2022 opposed exceptions in cases of rape or incest. In 2023 supported such exceptions. In 2024 said Michigan voters had “already decided” the issue in passing Proposal 3 . Voted to introduce criminal penalties for healthcare practitioners who fail to provide the required degree of care for an infant who survives an attempted abortion.
CLIMATE CHANGE Should climate change be a top priority?	Yes. “ Finding solutions” to climate change is “both an imperative and an economic opportunity.” “Michiganders are grappling with a changing climate in real time.” Supported the clean energy provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act. Supported bills that would transition the state to 100% clean electricity by 2040.	Mostly no. Calls the state law requiring 100% renewable electricity by 2040 “insane.” Voted for a bill that ended Biden-era clean energy tax credits. Supports cutting “emissions through innovation rather than mandates.” In 2023 voted to repeal clean energy provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act. In 2025 called for extending the “the sector-wide energy tax provisions” in the IRA.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE How to ensure effectiveness and fairness in law enforcement?	Launched a program to give newly paroled inmates state IDs or driver’s licenses to help them “move forward.” Supports a program for people with communication challenges to help law enforcement “build trust, improve communication...with Michigan drivers.”	Would “ensure every officer in this state has the training, equipment, legal protections, and respect.” Would “lock up violent criminals and get rid of politicians and liberal judges who put them back on our streets.” In 2020 said would “focus...on economic opportunity...and how we bring people out of poverty....not police them better in poverty.”
EDUCATION Use public funding for private and/or for-profit schools?	Unclear. “ Opposes “policies that further drain resources from the neighborhood public schools.” Supports Michigan’s public charter schools as long as they’re “held to the same rigorous standards we expect of all public schools.”	Yes. Voted for a bill that includes providing federal tax credits for donations to private school scholarships. Would opt Michigan into that tax credit program “on DAY ONE of my administration.”
ENVIRONMENT Loosen or tighten environmental regulation?	Tighten. Calls for “increase[d] penalties for corporations that pollute Michigan’s water, land, and air.” Would “stop the toxic runoff and contamination that threatens our health, tourism economy and natural resources.” Would create “enforceable guardrails” to protect the Great Lakes.	Mostly loosen. Introduced a bill to overturn the EPA’s stricter emission rules for cars. Voted in 2023 and 2025 to limit the scope of the Clean Water Act. Voted to end a 20-year protection against mining at the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Secured federal funding for Lake St. Clair’s sewer system. Opposed the permanent storage of nuclear waste in the Great Lakes basin.

ISSUES	BENSON (D)	JAMES (R)
GUN LAWS Loosen or tighten gun laws?	Tighten. Would “support commonsense gun laws.” Supported a gun safety bill package establishing red flag laws, universal background checks, and requiring safe gun storage. “We need to protect our communities against gun violence.” In 2020 banned open carry of guns at Michigan polling locations.	Mostly loosen. “The Second Amendment is not up for negotiation.... SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED.” Sponsored a bill to allow concealed carry of guns across state lines. Introduced a bill to incentivize parents to purchase a gun safe; “ doing nothing...is unacceptable.” In 2019 said expanded background checks were “reasonable things to consider.”
HEALTHCARE Increase or decrease government support for health care?	Increase. “Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege.” Would “increase options for low or no-cost preventive healthcare service across Michigan.” Would push for restoring “healthcare cuts at the federal level.” Would ensure “people seeking resources can actually access them from our government.” Would expand medical debt relief and “ pass a \$5,000 caregiver tax credit.”	Mostly decrease. “The path to fixing healthcare is not more government, it’s less.” Voted against extending Affordable Care Act payment subsidies by 3 years. Calls for “market-based reforms” in healthcare. Voted for a bill that cut Medicaid. Would “implement work requirements and... eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse” in Medicaid. Would expand rural health care access.
IMMIGRATION How to handle immigration?	“At a time when we need to working together... we can’t have a president overreaching his authority and sending in...ICE agents that will be only harming the safety of our communities.” Calls the Executive Order to withhold federal funding from sanctuary cities “a tool that bullies use.” In 2019, supported issuing driver licenses to undocumented immigrants.	“We also need to lock our borders to protect us from drugs and terrorists.” Voted to increase ICE funding by \$75 billion, then for \$70 billion more for DHS. Voted to build 900 miles of border wall, limit asylum, and require employers use E-Verify for new employees. Opposes sanctuary cities .
LABOR Make it easier or harder for unions to organize workers?	Easier. “Unions built the middle class in Michigan,...I’ll always defend your right to organize.” Supports “policies that extend and protect collective bargaining and unemployment benefits even while you’re striking.”	Mixed. Supports right to work; it “would be a massive win for freedom.” Voted against restoring the collective bargaining rights of federal workers. Said UAW members “helped build the Motor City” and “ deserve a fair wage.” Joined a picket line with nurses at Henry Ford Genesys.
LGBTQ RIGHTS Limit or expand LGBTQ rights?	Expand. “I’ll always stand with” LGBTQ+ Michiganders. Supported expanding an anti-discrimination law to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Opposed an effort to overturn a U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage. In 2019, made it easier for transgender people to change the sex-indicator on state IDs.	Mostly limit. Voted to make providing gender-affirming care to minors a federal crime. Voted to prohibit transgender students from participating in women’s and girls’ sports. Voted to require parental consent for children to receive gender-based accommodations. In 2018 said employers shouldn’t be able to fire someone for being gay.
TAXES How to handle state taxes?	Would not support raising taxes on the middle class. Proposes a tax credit for down payment assistance for first-time home buyers & “second-time homeowners as well as people moving up in the system” to free up housing stock for first-time buyers. Would cut government costs to free up revenue without requiring tax hikes.	Would eliminate income taxes. Supports reforming property taxes. Proposes a tax credit for workers relocating to Michigan. Calls for “a 100 percent tax credit for businesses that invest in scholarships for students pursuing skilled trades.”
VOTING RULES Make voting harder or easier?	Easier. Would “fight for your freedom to vote.” Supports a state version of the Voting Rights Act ; says it advances “the fight against voter suppression.” Opposed a state proposal and a federal bill requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote. Said it “would be taking a chainsaw to our election system.”	Harder. Supports amending the state constitution to require proof of citizenship and “ mandate voter ID at the polls.” Would audit Michigan’s voter rolls to “eliminate non-citizens from voting.” Voted to require anyone registering to vote in a federal election show proof of U.S. citizenship.

[guides.vote](#) is a nonpartisan effort to show where candidates stand. We do not support or oppose any political party or candidate. We have space for candidates polling 15% or more; use the QR code on the right for online versions, including links to credible sources and other candidates. [Vote411.org](#) offers guides to local races and how to vote. For campuses, see Campus Vote Project’s [state-specific guides](#) to student voting rules.

[guides.vote](#) | [facebook/guides.vote](#) | [@guidesvote](#) | [instagram/guides.vote](#)



© 2026 [guides.vote](#).
All Rights Reserved.