



# Snyder, Schauer talk **state, local issues**

**T**o introduce its members to the 2014 gubernatorial candidates, and to give township officials better insight into how those candidates feel on a variety of township-related issues, *Township Focus* asked Republican Gov. Rick Snyder and his challenger, Democrat Mark Schauer, a series of questions on issues of importance to local government. Their responses, published as submitted, give a glimpse into how Michigan's next governor views the important relationship between state and local government.



Snyder



Schauer

## 1. What makes you the best qualified person to be Michigan's next governor?

**SNYDER:** My wife, Sue, and I were out to dinner one evening back in 2009. Like most Michiganders, I was growing increasingly frustrated with the direction in which Michigan was going. Our unemployment rate was among the highest in the country, our kids were moving to other states to find jobs, and our favorite businesses were closing their doors. Too many of us thought that our best days were behind us. So, Sue said to me, "Rick, why don't you run for governor?"

When I first ran in 2010, the other candidates were hard-working and good people, but they were all career politicians who kept talking about "fixing" Michigan. "Fixing" Michigan wouldn't cut it. We needed to reinvent Michigan, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Michigan is on the road to recovery. We've put people over politics, focused on solutions, and solved the tough problems.

In my first term, we've created nearly 300,000 new private sector jobs. We have balanced our budgets and erased our \$1.5 billion deficit. We repealed the job-killing Michigan Business Tax, lowered the income tax rate, and reformed the personal property tax on small business. And we have invested in our schools, so much so in fact, that funding for K-12 education is higher than at any point in state history.

Detroit is coming back, agriculture is thriving, and tourism is reaching new heights. Overall quality of life is getting better. We're taking care of our kids and our families. Together, we have put Michigan on a solid foundation that ensures this recovery will last for generations.

**Michigan is on the road to recovery. We've put people over politics, focused on solutions, and solved the tough problems. ... But there's more to do, and I know that the job's not finished. That's why I'm running for re-election.**

**—Gov. Rick Snyder**

But there's more to do, and I know that the job's not finished. That's why I'm running for re-election.

Let's close the skills gap in Michigan. Let's continue to create more and better jobs. Let's invest even more in education and ensure that our kids are prepared for the new opportunities they'll have as Michigan's economy continues to grow. These should be our new goals as we work together for a brighter future—for everyone—right here in Michigan.

Now's not the time to slow down. I'm proud of my record as governor, and with your support, Michigan will accelerate down the road to recovery.



While his 2010 gubernatorial opponents called for "fixing Michigan," now-Gov. Rick Snyder aimed to "reinvent Michigan, and that's exactly what we're doing," he said.

**SCHAUER:** Throughout my lifetime of public service, I have served on the Battle Creek City Commission, in both the state House and Senate, and the U.S. Congress. I've always fought for regular people to ensure they have a voice, and that's why I'm running for governor. We need a governor who will make education a top economic priority, because good jobs come from a good education. I believe a strong economy is built on a strong middle class that has the economic security to afford a safe home, reliable car, a kid's college fund, and an occasional family vacation. As Michigan's next governor, I'll wake up every day fighting to build an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy.

## 2. How has the recent tax restructuring impacted Michigan's economy? Over the next four years, what would you do to encourage Michigan's economic recovery?

**SNYDER:** Michigan had a bad reputation for having an uncompetitive and overly complicated tax code. The tax foundation ranked us among the worst in the nation. Additionally, the nature of our credits and exemptions put an increasingly disproportionate burden on younger families.

The tax reform efforts of 2011 created a simple, fair and efficient tax code that is among the most competitive in America. It eliminated the unfair double taxation of small businesses, simplified the forms and lowered the overall burden.

These reforms contributed to an environment where nearly 300,000 private sector jobs have been created. Last year, per capita income in our state rose at a top 10 rate and our unemployment has fallen from 11.3 percent to 7.7 percent.

# cover story

Michigan's recovery is gaining momentum. Now is the time to accelerate that momentum by giving kids and parents more and better options to gain skills needed to fill the thousands of jobs available in Michigan right now, including or especially those in skilled trades areas. Additionally, Michigan needs to build on the \$470 million in increased transportation funding allocated in recent years for our roads and bridges, and establish a comprehensive structurally sound transportation package.

**SCHAUER:** There has been a broader tax shift onto families and individuals. We should grow the economy from the bottom up and the middle out, not the top down. I will work to repeal the Snyder retirement tax, increase both the earned income tax credit and the homestead property tax credit, and restore the child tax credit, which will put more money in people's pockets to spend at local businesses. We should give companies tax incentives to come to Michigan, but hold them accountable for creating jobs here. I will work to provide small businesses with tax credits, grants and loans to create good jobs in high-tech industries like automotive research and development, life sciences, and renewable energy.

**We need to have a partnership between the state and all local units of government. ... My job will be to listen to local community leaders, including township officials.**

**—Mark Schauer,  
2014 gubernatorial candidate**

3. Numerous laws and reforms have been enacted impacting local units of government. What reforms, if any, do you propose that would further restructure local governments? Please explain.

**SNYDER:** A good example of collaboration is what we did with the personal property tax reforms. We recognize and support the essential services local communities provide. Currently, municipalities depend on the personal property tax to help fund vital services, but the revenue is unreliable and subject to change. Proposal 1 guaranteed that 100 percent of the revenue lost will be replaced, and creates a more stable and secure funding system for local services like police, fire, schools and parks. It is this kind of innovative and forward-thinking, problem-solving strategies that we will continue to use to reinvent Michigan in my second term.



A former city commissioner, state legislator and U.S. congressman, gubernatorial candidate Mark Schauer “has always fought for regular people to ensure they have a voice, and that’s why I’m running for governor,” he said.

Another example is a comprehensive road funding and infrastructure strategy for our state. For too long, our state has failed to properly invest and maintain our infrastructure. Modern roads, clean water and broadband access are among the building blocks of Michigan's prosperity; therefore, I am focusing on four primary needs:

- A modern transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently, reliably and safely.
- A multimodal system serving the movements of a new generation of Michiganders that is more active, urban-based and tech-savvy.
- Water and sewer systems that support and protect Michigan's rich environment.
- Integrating the broadband telecommunications network, connecting every business and household to the Internet.



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**SCHAUER:** I support local revenue sharing as it is used to support police and fire protection across the state. As governor, I'll support common-sense policies to streamline local government and ensure tax dollars are invested efficiently while respecting local control.

#### 4. What do you view the relationship to be between state government and Michigan's 1,240 townships?

**SNYDER:** Put simply, a partnership. My vision for reinventing Michigan is creating more and better jobs, revitalizing the educational system, and revamping government to focus on providing excellent service to its customers, our state's 10 million people. I believe that to provide the best possible customer service, we must work together and form partnerships amongst every unit of government. Michigan is on the road to recovery, and with everyone working together; we will ensure our best days are ahead.

**SCHAUER:** We need to have a partnership between the state and all local units of government. We should reverse cuts to local revenue sharing to ensure townships have the resources they need. My job will be to listen to local community leaders, including township officials.

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# Secretary of state candidates weigh in

To highlight how the 2014 secretary of state nominees—incumbent Secretary of State Ruth Johnson, a Republican, and Detroit attorney Godfrey Dillard, a Democrat—feel on several key election-related issues, *Township Focus* posed a series of questions to each candidate. The following are their responses, as submitted.

1. Please share your top priorities as Michigan's secretary of state.

**JOHNSON:** My priorities as Michigan's secretary of state have and continue to be increasing access to the ballot box while securing Michigan elections, fighting fraud, and delivering better, faster and smarter customer service. And we're doing all of this despite millions in budget cuts and having 25 percent less staff than the office had just 10 years ago.

In the past four years, I've led the charge to:

- Increase organ donation. Today, nearly half of all eligible adults have signed up on Michigan's Organ Donor Registry, compared to just 27 percent in 2011.
- Toughen campaign contribution reporting rules with things like robo-call disclosure, expanded electronic reporting and felony charges for the worst offenders.
- Ensure election integrity with Michigan's first-ever post-election audits and online training for poll workers.
- Help our veterans get the benefits they've earned and deserve and making it easier for troops overseas to vote as part of OPERATION: OUR TROOPS COUNT.
- Shorten branch office lines by putting the most popular Secretary of State services online at ExpressSOS.com. Launched in 2011, the website has handled 5.5 million transactions.
- Allow customers in our 10 busiest branches to take a number electronically, so they can run errands while they wait.
- Work with police and prosecutors to fight insurance fraud and protect consumers.



Ruth Johnson was first elected secretary of state in 2010.

**DILLARD:** My top priorities are:

- Protecting the fundamental right to vote.
- Transparency and enforcement in administration of elections and auditing of campaign financing.
- Increasing access to the ballot box
- Privacy protection of citizen's data.
- A consumer advocate for improved quality of services and reduction of costs associated with those services.

2. What is your position on early voting? If you support the concept, how would you propose to accommodate communities with clerks who do not maintain full-time business hours?

**JOHNSON:** As a home-rule state, Michigan is fortunate to have 1,700 hardworking clerks across the state oversee and

administer elections. Our 34 staff members in the Bureau of Elections support them with efforts like Michigan's first-ever online training for poll workers and the first-ever post-election audits, which helps clerks identify areas where training is needed for election workers. In fact, earlier this year, Michigan was named as the sixth best state in the nation in elections administration by the Pew Charitable Trust.

As a township resident myself, I very much support this local control. Our clerks know their communities, they know their residents. They have a high level of direct accountability. More than half of them work part-time or out of their homes.

Given those variables, early voting could not be offered equitably or consistently throughout the state. Instead, I support no-reason absentee voting, paired with safeguards to protect the integrity of the vote. In addition to maintaining that critical local control, no-reason absentee voting would offer the same voting opportunities for all voters, whether they live in urban or more rural communities as well as convenience and integrity in our system of elections.

**DILLARD:** I support wholeheartedly early voting. We should not limit ourselves to “one day” on such an important element of democracy. The concept of early voting does not necessarily restrict itself to a physical clerk being present. For example, absentee ballots are a form of early voting. New technologies with appropriate authenticity and security modules also provide innovative solutions; i.e., online voting, voting kiosks.

### 3. Do you support allowing people to register to vote on Election Day? Why or why not?

**JOHNSON:** Under Michigan's current system of elections, there are several layers of safeguards in place to ensure a voter's eligibility. Given current technology, and because of home rule and state law, there must be adequate time to process voter registrations. That said, I do support reducing the time between voter registration and eligibility to vote, which is currently 30 days, provided that the technology is available to do so.

Currently, 7.4 million or 98 percent of Michigan's eligible adults are registered to vote. In fact, Michigan was No. 1 in the country in terms of registering voters through the Secretary of State's office in a recent *USA Today* story.

Registering eligible voters continues to be a top priority for me and our office. Under policies we implemented, every voter who changes their address within the state also has their voter registration automatically updated.

We send every 18-year-old a birthday reminder to register to vote. We are currently on our second 3,000-mile, 20-stop college voter registration tour that will hit every public university in the state. Additionally, we register new citizens after naturalization ceremonies and ask eligible customers at our branch offices if they would like to register to vote.

**DILLARD:** Absolutely, I support same-day registration. One of my major priorities is increasing access to the ballot. The larger the number of registered voters enhances the numbers of actual voters. The problem is that it would require legislative approval to implement. However, I would jawbone vigorously for its passage.



Secretary of state candidate Godfrey Dillard supports both early voting and same-day registration.

4. Local units of government are continually expected to do more with less. As secretary of state, what would you do to help ensure that election reforms initiated by either the federal or state government not place an undue financial or procedural burden on local communities?

**JOHNSON:** Local units of government and their leaders are so often called upon to help and they answer that call. They work long hours. They are dedicated to doing their very best for their communities and they do, under Michigan's home-rule system, oversee our critical and sometimes complicated system of elections. They make democracy work in the state of Michigan.

Our Bureau of Elections works very hard to support their work in terms of training, providing critical resources, communication, and machine and programming support. I pledge to continue to do what we can to support those local communities. Local clerks, for example, have begun the long-term process of looking at potential voting equipment to replace equipment that is worn out or obsolete. My office has saved and set aside millions of dollars awarded to Michigan through the Help America Vote Act so we can assist local elections officials secure this important equipment.

**DILLARD:** Doing more with less does not necessarily mean more financial and procedural burdens on citizens. It means making better uses of the financial resources we already have. I support the establishment of “Secretary of State Super Centers.” This approach would allow us to consolidate large number of lines, services and employees at a single location with free parking, improved quality of service and lower wait times. The purchasing and construction of low-cost land and buildings would also support urgently needed economic development and jobs. We would reduce even further the number of branch offices. Other states have taken this approach. With the savings, I would anticipate reducing fees for a variety of services.

# Putting the AG race into *Focus*

**T**he office of state attorney general acts as official legal representation for the state of Michigan and also as the “people’s lawyer” for all citizens.

The attorney general also offers opinions and interpretations of Michigan statute, based on inquiry from legislators and state departments, which often impact townships. *Township Focus* reached out to the two attorney general candidates—incumbent Bill Schuette, a Republican, and attorney and law professor Mark Totten, a Democrat—to share insights into their goals for the office. The following are their responses, as submitted.



Schuette



Totten

1. Please share your top priorities as Michigan’s attorney general.

**SCHUETTE:** As attorney general, I strive to serve as a voice for Michigan citizens. I am a voice for the victims of crime. For example, I have made it a priority to end the horror of human trafficking, in which young runaways are forced into the sex trade. We created the first state-level task force on human trafficking and have helped pass legislation with the goals of putting the pimps behind bars and treating the young survivors as victims, not criminals. And, I worked to secure funding to test thousands of rape DNA evidence kits that were left abandoned in a warehouse for years. That means the women who have been raped have been victimized twice — once by a brutal assault and a second time because the crime was never solved. That is changing on my watch.

**TOTTEN:** My top priority as Michigan’s attorney general will be to return that office to fulfilling its role as the people’s lawyer. Too often, the current attorney general has politicized his office, siding against Michigan’s people in favor of the well-connected and politically influenced. The average cost of an attorney in Michigan is \$233 per hour and without the

money to hire an attorney, it is incredibly difficult to receive real justice. Michigan’s attorney general is hired by the people to act as the people’s lawyer, and I will stand up for Michigan’s citizens and their families before all else.

Michigan has the weakest consumer protection law in the nation, and restoring it will be my number one legislative priority. Our state was rocked by financial crisis, and Michigan’s attorney general should be on the frontlines of holding Wall Street and other wrong-doers accountable. I will prioritize that as attorney general.

Michigan’s vast and unparalleled natural resources also need a fierce advocate for the sake of future generations. I will stand up against polluters and make it clear that there is a high price to pay for violating Michigan law.

And I will stand up for some of Michigan’s most vulnerable citizens. As a federal prosecutor, I put sexual predators preying on children behind bars and strengthened laws to protect children. I also have kept families safe from violent drug dealers and secured convictions for domestic abusers. The attorney general keeps people safe, and I will be tireless in making sure that wrong-doers are held responsible for their actions.

2. As Michigan's attorney general, you serve as the top lawyer for the state of Michigan. How would you determine when issues are relevant to pursue action on behalf of the state?

**SCHUETTE:** As I described earlier, as Michigan's attorney general, I am a voice for the victims of crime. And, I am a voice for our constitution. For Michigan to continue down the road to economic recovery, we must protect the victims of crime. And we must enforce the constitution, which I took an oath to defend when I took office on that cold January day in 2011.

**TOTTEN:** The office of attorney general represents the state in many matters. My office will take great care in reviewing each issue brought before it to determine whether the attorney general's office should play a role. Acting within the bounds of the Michigan and federal constitutions, I will make decisions based on an informed reading of the law—seeking justice for Michigan's citizens and their families. I will weigh many legal sides to an issue, giving due consideration to competing interpretations and potential outcomes.

I will not advocate for fringe positions based on weak legal pretense or engage in political grandstanding for the praise of special interests. I will act according to my constitutional duty to uphold justice.

3. What is the relationship between the attorney general and Michigan's local officials? As attorney general, how do you plan to work with local officials?

**SCHUETTE:** No community can successfully create an environment for families to thrive, children to learn or folks to find a job unless it makes public safety the priority. As Michigan's chief law enforcement officer, it is my duty to work with local law enforcement agencies to make Michigan a safer place, helping set the stage for Michigan's recovery to continue moving forward. I work daily to keep the lines of communication open and to listen to local governments because they serve on the front lines of keeping Michigan families safe.

**TOTTEN:** Michigan's local officials make up the most vital layers of public service. Charged with the responsible stewardship of efficient and effective local governments, they act as significant agents of local economic development, while providing citizens with a responsive neighbor to turn to for help. Having served on the Kalamazoo School Board and worked with other local officials, I have a deep respect for the work that local officials do to strengthen and improve their communities.

My top priority will be ensuring that Michigan's citizens and their families have a strong ally in the attorney general's office. My door will always be open to local officials who seek legal clarification of state law and, when appropriate, local officials will have a strong partner that will stand up on their behalf. My office will be a tireless advocate for Michigan's families and the communities that they call home.



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## MTA-PAC Committee makes November general election endorsements

**T**he MTA-PAC Committee has made the following endorsements for the Nov. 4 general election. It is the belief of committee members that these candidates will best benefit MTA and township officials in gaining positive legislation on behalf of townships.

*Endorsements were made based on candidates' responses to an MTA questionnaire on issues of importance to MTA and local government, as well as input from MTA-member officials. Township officials are encouraged to assist endorsed candidates in their areas as much as possible. All political activities must take place outside of public office and may not involve public funds in any manner.*

### Michigan Senate

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
1	D-Coleman Young	11	D-Vincent Gregory	21	R-John Proos
2	D-Bert Johnson	12	R-Jim Marleau	22	R-Joe Hune
3	D-Morris Hood	13	R-Marty Knollenberg	23	D-Curtis Hertel Jr.
4	D-Virgil Smith	14	R-David Robertson	24	R-Rick Jones
5	D-David Knezek	15	R-Mike Kowall	25	R-Phil Pavlov
6	D-Hoon-Yung Hopgood	16	R-Mike Shirkey	26	R-Tonya Schuitmaker
7	R-Patrick Colbeck	17	R-Dale Zorn	27	D-Jim Ananich
8	R-Jack Brandenburg	18	D-Rebekah Warren	28	R-Peter MacGregor
9	D-Steve Bieda	19	R-Mike Nofs	29	R-Dave Hildenbrand
10	R-Tory Rocca	20	R-Margaret O'Brien	30	R-Arlan Meekhof

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
31	R-Mike Green
32	R-Ken Horn
33	R-Judy Emmons
34	R-Goeff Hansen
35	R-Darwin Booher
36	R-Jim Stamas
37	R-Wayne Schmidt
38	R-Tom Casperson

**Michigan House of Representatives**

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
1	D-Brian Banks
2	D-Alberta Tinsley Talabi
5	D-Fred Durhal
6	D-Stephanie Chang
9	D-Harvey Santana
10	D-Leslie Love
12	D-Erika Geiss
13	D-Frank Liberati
14	D-Paul Clemente
15	D-George Darany
16	D-Robert Kosowski
17	D-Bill LaVoy
18	D-Sarah Roberts
19	R-Laura Cox
20	R-Kurt Heise
21	R-Carol Ann Fausone
22	D-John Chirkun
23	R-Pat Somerville
24	R-Anthony Forlini
25	D-Henry Yanez
26	D-Jim Townsend
27	D-Robert Wittenberg
28	D-Derek Miller
29	D-Tim Greimel
30	R-Jeff Farrington
31	D-Marilyn Lane
32	R-Andrea LaFontaine
33	R-Ken Goike
34	D-Sheldon Neeley
35	D-Jeremy Moss
36	R-Peter Lucido
37	D-Christine Greig
38	R-Kathy Crawford
39	R-Klint Kesto

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
40	R-Michael McCreedy
41	R-Martin Howrylak
42	R-Lana Theis
43	R-Jim Tedder
44	R-Jim Runestad
45	R-Michael Webber
46	R-Bradford Jacobsen
47	R-Henry Vaupel
48	D-Pam Faris
49	D-Phil Phelps
50	D-Charles Smiley
51	R-Joseph Graves
52	D-Gretchen Driskell
53	D-Jeff Irwin
54	D-David Rutledge
55	D-Adam Zemke
56	R-Jason Sheppard
57	R-Nancy Jenkins
58	R-Eric Leutheuser
59	R-Aaron Miller
60	D-Jon Hoadley
61	R-Brandt Iden
62	D-Andy Helmboldt
63	R-David Maturen
64	R-Earl Poleski
65	R-Brett Roberts
66	R-Aric Nesbitt
67	D-Tom Cochran
68	D-Andy Schor
69	D-Sam Singh
70	R-Rick Outman
71	D-Theresa Abed
72	R-Ken Yonker
73	R-Chris Afendoulis
74	R-Rob VerHeulen
75	D-Brandon Dillon

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
76	D-Winnie Brinks
77	R-Tom Hooker
78	R-Dave Pagel
79	R-Al Pscholka
80	R-Cindy Gamrat
81	R-Dan Lauwers
82	R-Tom Courser
83	R-Paul Muxlow
84	R-Edward Canfield
85	R-Ben Glardon
86	R-Lisa Posthumus Lyons
87	R-Mike Callton
88	R-Roger Victory
89	R-Amanda Price
90	R-Daniela Garcia
92	D-Marcia Hovey-Wright
93	R-Tom Leonard
94	R-Tim Kelly
95	D-Vanessa Guerra
96	D-Charles Brunner
97	R-Joel Johnson
98	R-Gary Glenn
99	R-Kevin Cotter
100	R-Jon Bumstead
101	R-Ray Franz
102	R-Phil Potvin
103	R-Bruce Rendon
104	R-Larry Inman
105	R-Triston Cole
106	R-Peter Pettalia
107	R-Lee Chatfield
108	R-Ed McBroom
109	D-John Kivela
110	D-Scott Dianda



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