

Name: Luke Meerman

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Office Sought: State Representative

Party: Republican

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1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?

I have served as a state representative since 2019. From 2012 - 2018, I served as a township trustee in Polkton Township, Ottawa County.

2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe.

I am a lifelong dairy farmer and previously operated a cheese making business. I have also owned and operated a mechanic's shop on my family's farm in Polkton Township.

3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office.

To be an effective state representative, it is critical to work in a bipartisan fashion to effectuate change and enact policies that benefit the state as a whole. The state house sees individuals from all walks of life come together in the same chamber on behalf of their constituencies and working with others is what it takes to get the job done. While we all have our own viewpoints, I am ready to work with officials from the opposite party to find bipartisan solutions and will never close doors because someone has different political beliefs than myself.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

It is the job of a state representative to be the community's voice in our state's legislature, to advocate on its behalf and to assist in state government matters when needed. The role of a lawmaker is to sponsor legislation that improves government efficiency and fixes issues facing constituents and businesses.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

The three issues I see and will work to address are 1) the income tax increase that is a result of increased government spending in the 2024 tax year. Tax year 2023 saw the income tax decrease due to a 2015 law that would automatically lower the income tax if state revenue growth outpaced the rate of inflation. Increased spending will see the income tax increase on

taxes filed in 2025 and I will work to lower government spending so the state can once again reduce its income tax rate for individuals and small businesses to keep more of their income.

2) Rising inflation is making the cost of doing business more expensive and necessary goods and services are increasing in cost for consumers. While inflation is not an issue that any one lawmaker may address, government spending must be reeled in so we do not lose the value of the dollar. Encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses will lead to growth that can help drive inflation down.

3) Muskegon businesses rely on talented and knowledgeable workers to fill positions and creating educational opportunities for workers to acquire in-demand skills is vital for businesses. I believe changes can be made to the Michigan Merit Curriculum to allow for high school students to focus on the skills they will need to be competitive for the roles they wish to fill in the future.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

The responsibility of an elected official is to work on behalf of the constituency and to be a voice for the community's values. Making difficult decisions on legislation is necessary and during my time in office, I often enter discussions with those who have beliefs that differ from mine. I am willing to discuss all issues that are related to the public's interest however, there are issues that intersect with my personal beliefs that I will be unable to change my opinion on.

7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official?

I believe my knowledge and understanding of Michigan agriculture places me in a position to advocate for the family farm operations that provide Michigan its food. I have worked in agriculture my entire career and I firmly believe the ever changing regulatory environment affecting Michigan farms is bad for business. I will work to be a voice for Michigan agriculture to support farmers' work.

I also have worked on school safety legislation that will support students' mental health and safety in schools. I will continue to work in this area to identify policies that will keep students safe and provide increased access to mental health resources.

8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected?

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce is a valuable resource when working with local businesses and advancing economic policy. I previously worked to secure funding for the Southeast Regional Force Main project that will connect the City of Coopersville in Ottawa County, and area businesses, to Muskegon County's wastewater treatment facility. This project will allow farming operations that faced wastewater limitations to continue to grow and contribute to the economy. I appreciated the role the Chamber had in making this project possible and will work with the Chamber in the future to find solutions to support the business

community. The Chamber has also provided insightful information on the economic conditions of Muskegon County and I will continue to use the Chamber as a resource.

9. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?

My top priorities will be to 1) address the regulatory environment created by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE). As a farmer, EGLE regulations have burdened family farming operations with ever shifting expectations and are making the job of growing and raising our food extraordinarily difficult. 2) Promoting school choice and empowering parents to take a more active role in their students' education, whether that be through enrolling them in a charter public school, private school, or homeschool. 3) Supporting school safety initiatives and policies to keep students safe.

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

I appreciate the opportunity to address these questions and look forward to meeting with Chamber officials to further discuss my candidacy for state representative.

Send completed questionnaires to:
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
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