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THE TIMES HERALD



MICHIGAN VOTERS GUIDE

Start Over



State House District 39

Members of the Michigan House of Representatives serve a 2-year-term, with a base annual salary of \$71,685.



Klint K. Kesto (R)
Incumbent State Representative 39th District, Attorney



Deb O'Hagan (R)
Former Business Owner

Change Candidates

Social Media

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Biographical Information

City of residence Commerce Township

City of residence West Bloomfield

Age 32

Education Wayne State University Law School Detroit JD 2006 University of Michigan Ann Arbor BA Political Science 2002

Vehicles owned Chrysler Sebring Jeep Commander

Professional Experience Incumbent State Representative 39th District, first term Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Wayne County 6 years US Department of Justice Law Clerk US Department of Energy Intern

Political Experience State Representative 39th District

Campaign Website
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Campaign Address [PO Box 1193](#)
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Age 56

Family Husband-Matt, Adult Children-Toni, Kelly, Matt

Education BS-Business Management, Computer Science

Professional Experience Slipcover and Window Treatment Workroom, Bridal Shop

Political Experience Precinct Delegate, MI Rep Party State Committee,

Campaign Website
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How should the state assist other municipalities and school districts whose solvency is threatened by its financial obligations to current and future retirees?

Klint K. Kesto:

First, assist with a recovery plan without the state getting involved and allowing the municipality or school district to submit that plan to the state.

Deb O'Hagan:

We can require adherence to the law and prudent budgeting. Prior to reaching a insolvency situation the state should ensure the political

If that does not work, then the state would need to be involved by appointing an emergency manager to assist in the transition to solvency for a municipality. For a school district, the district would need to transition into some type of school reform district.

subdivisions of the state are adhering to the Constitution - Art. 9, Sect 24 which requires cities, townships, and the state to fund the contractual obligations for retirement pensions and benefits in the year in which they are earned. Nor can they borrow against the fund. When solvency is threatened we must require any city or township unable to fund their pension contracts to switch to defined contribution accounts and eliminate their defined benefit accounts going forward. The state cannot bail out every municipality and school district that has made poor decisions, it is not fair to the other municipalities and taxpayers who made the responsible choices.

Did you support, or would you have voted to support, the allocation of state funds to facilitate Detroit's emergence from municipal bankruptcy?

Klint K. Kesto:

I supported the oversight bills to facilitate Detroit's emergence from bankruptcy. However, I did not support the allocation of state funds because as I did not believe the requirements went far enough. First, the Detroit Water and Sewer Department financial issues were not part of the grand bargain. And, secondly, I believe some of the assets needed to be relinquished from the City in order to reduce the amount

Deb O'Hagan:

If a bailout was the answer, Detroit would be thriving. Detroit has already received special tax breaks, special funding formulas, and special loans not available to other cities. These special benefits were provided without requiring verifiable policy changes. To allocate more state funds would not solve the underlying problems. Detroit's history of waste, fraud, and abuse along with bad policies, poor

contributed.

management, and no accountability must be stopped. Until the citizens of Detroit understand this nothing will change. It is incumbent upon the media to assist in this 'education' process. Only so much can be done legislatively. Detroiters must take ownership of their problems and their comeback. It will build a sense of community and pride.

Do you support the construction of the Detroit River International Crossing? Why or why not?

Klint K. Kesto:

I believe that our Michigan economy would benefit from a second bridge and commerce would grow.

Deb O'Hagan:

The DRIC is an example of government competing with private enterprise and potentially putting them out of business. The government will be taking business from one company and handing it over to a group of chosen investors. It smacks of crony capitalism and back room deal making. It will be expensive and an ongoing financial burden on the taxpayer. Whose business is next?

Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony? If so, please explain.

Klint K. Kesto:

No

Deb O'Hagan:

No.

Have you ever filed for personal bankruptcy?

Klint K. Kesto:

No

Deb O'Hagan:

No.

Did you support, or would you have voted to support, legislation to make Michigan a right-to-work state? Explain your stance on this issue.

Klint K. Kesto:

I would have supported the legislation. Clearly, we have seen significant investments into our state simply because the legislation was passed, and that needs to continue.

Deb O'Hagan:

Freedom to work without being forced to join or pay dues to an organization is a basic civil right. It is a principle that affirms the right of every American to work at a job without being compelled to affiliate with an organization. Samuel Gompers, father of the AFL, apparently agreed, "The workers of America adhere to voluntary institutions in preference to compulsory systems which are held to be not only impractical but a menace to their rights, welfare and their liberty." When an organization provides value, people will voluntarily join. To mandate membership is contrary to American principles.

Do you believe Michigan's tax system is generally fair? If not, what changes do you support?

Klint K. Kesto:

I believe the tax system is fair.

Deb O'Hagan:

No. We have a complex and unfair tax system fueled by poor spending policies based on whatever the loudest special interest lobbyists cry out for. In

order to meet all those special interest wishes the legislature and government bureaucracies merely go to the citizens, as if we were their personal piggy bank, and simply raise taxes or add fees. In order to fix this 'tax and spend cycle' we need to address the underlying problem. First, get a handle on the spending side of the balance sheet. Identify state governments true role and necessary expenditures; set priorities and fund those; use zero balance budgeting; focus on policies that bring about economic prosperity for all, not a select few. Second, revamp the tax system so that it is fair to all and everyone has 'skin in the game'. This can be accomplished with a Fair or Flat tax and will also remove the 'hidden' taxes consumers never see yet pay for in their purchases. Third, remove the waste, fraud, and abuse by allowing communities to; keep their resources locally; identify and care for those in need; determine the priorities and needs of their community; enable local oversight and transparency. And finally, leverage our assets as Senator Colbeck has suggested.

Do you think there is a need to simplify the state's tax code? If so, why and how?

Klint K. Kesto:

Deb O'Hagan:

It was simplified with the tax changes previously passed.

Yes. One merely needs to look at Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) relative to the tax code which are chapters 205-211, the subsections of those chapters, and the references to external chapters. It is convoluted, confusing, unfair, loaded with loopholes, and littered with authorities which take away control from the legislature and accountability to the taxpayer. Add to that the ability of government departments to draft regulations and rules that carry the weight of law even though our legislature has not voted on them. This is not government by the people for the people, it is centralized power and control by the elite for the elite, regardless of party.

Do you favor amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation?

Klint K. Kesto:

At this time, I have not seen all of the evidence to indicate whether or not action should be taken.

Deb O'Hagan:

Special rights are not equality and are not fair. Giving one group preference is itself discrimination toward another group.

How should the Legislature respond if the U.S. Supreme Court agrees with a federal judge's ruling that Michigan's ban on same-sex marriage violates the U.S. Constitution?

Klint K. Kesto:

It depends on the ruling and order

Deb O'Hagan:

Candidate did not provide a response.

given by the US Supreme Court as to what states shall or may do.

Have you signed any public pledge to support or oppose any organization's public policy objectives, such as outlawing abortion or barring any increase in taxes?

Klint K. Kesto:

No

Deb O'Hagan:

Candidate did not provide a response.

How should Michigan respond to President Obama's executive order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Klint K. Kesto:

Michigan must retain its autonomy and protect its rights under the 10th amendment. Michigan is moving in the right direction and although there still is a long way to go, Michigan is the come back state. Any restrictions on growth would be detrimental to our state economy.

Deb O'Hagan:

First, request a 'power source' in the constitution that gives him that authority. Second, share with the citizens the details of the global warming/climate change fraud that he is perpetuating and profiting off of.

Do you support reforms to minimize or eliminate the influence of political parties on drawing lines for legislative districts?"

Klint K. Kesto:

No

Deb O'Hagan:

Political party influence is only part of the equation. Legislative districts are drawn based on many rules imposed by the federal and state governments. Some of which actually discriminate and force 'gerrymandering' in order to meet mandated 'diversity quotas'. Like it or not, political party influence will

always exist. Even if we use 'appointed, non-partisan' boards, the politicians are still doing the appointing. The backroom deals and threats are still there. I am open for suggestions. It belies common sense when you look at some of these boundaries and the government mandates.

Would you support efforts to change the law that awards all of Michigan's electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the state's popular vote?

Klint K. Kesto:

Yes

Deb O'Hagan:

Keep in mind, no matter what system is in place, it takes an involved and informed electorate to keep it fair and successful. The United States is a complex constitutional representative Republic (shared powers with delegated responsibilities), not a democracy (majority rule, best described as two wolves and a lamb deciding what is for dinner). I believe that a healthy compromise to 'winner take all' or 'popular vote' would be to proportion electoral votes by congressional districts.

How would you come up with the money to maintain Michigan's roads?

Klint K. Kesto:

First look within the state budget. The House of Representatives passed a

Deb O'Hagan:

Money to maintain Michigan's roads should come from the \$52 BILLION the

package of bills that would generate \$450-500 million from essentially existing revenue. This is a step in the right direction. I supported this package of bills. A sales tax increase for roads would need a vote of the people. A gas tax increase would reach into tax payers pockets and it may not be the most fair way of capturing funding for roads because of advancing technology and fuel efficient vehicles.

state of MI is planning to spend next year. In addition we need common sense policies regarding quality and warranties in the construction and maintenance of our roads. The problem isn't whether the state has the money, it is how the legislature appropriates and prioritizes 'our' money. Would you raise taxes to subsidize private business? Would you raise taxes to pay higher than average salaries? Would you raise taxes to give money to flourishing industries? That is the equivalent if we were to create a new and higher wholesale gas tax, which by the way has an automatic increase, rather than prioritizing appropriations. We need to redirect money, currently being handed out to private businesses by the MEDC and the 21st Century Jobs Fund, to help pay for roads, a responsibility of government. The current tax on gas should actually go toward roads as many had believed it to be. Eliminate state prevailing wage requirements which artificially inflate the cost of roads. Make a conscious effort to pay off the road debt thereby eliminating interest payments which would save about \$238 million per year. Increasing your taxes cuts your spending. We must choose responsible budget priorities rather than take more from Michigan families and businesses.

Would you support increases in taxes or vehicle registration fees to fund road improvements?

Klint K. Kesto:

I believe that we can look within our state budget and dedicated certain funds directly to roads instead of increasing taxes.

Deb O'Hagan:

No, it is not necessary.

Did you support, or would you have voted for, legislation to restrict private insurance coverage for abortion?

Klint K. Kesto:

Yes

Deb O'Hagan:

Candidate did not provide a response.

Will you make the Detroit Free Press Editorial Board's Sunshine Promise? It includes the following a) require office holders to disclose their sources of income, assets, creditors and debtors b) require both lobbyists and public officials to report expenditures on behalf of an official c) adopt standards for term-limited legislators who seek future employment while holding office d) establish a mandatory "cooling-off" period between office-holding and lobbying. Read all of the promise' points at www.freep.com/SunshinePromise.

Klint K. Kesto:

Disclosing income, assets, creditors and debtors is intrusive on one's individual privacy, and potentially their family's privacy. Reporting requirements are currently in place in the state of Michigan. Requiring standards for future employment seems preventative in nature and would possibly be to the detriment of one's family.

Deb O'Hagan:

Character and morality cannot be legislated nor accounted for in the many 'promise contracts' candidates are asked to sign. Just as water will always find a way to run downhill, those who seek to control or to benefit will always find a way around promises, legislation, and regulations. Much of the requested information is public knowledge, it just requires some

research with an objective eye and analysis.

If you do not intend to make the Sunshine Promise, describe how you make Michigan's government more transparent.

Klint K. Kesto:

Candidate did not provide a response.

Deb O'Hagan:

Government transparency is the foundation of citizen oversight. Transparency is required on many levels: State Finances; Legislative Activity; Communication with Constituents, and is incumbent upon principled elected officials and government employees; an objective press; and an informed and engaged constituency. I personally will support efforts such as Senator Colbeck's successful legislation, referred to as '10 Million Accountants', which enables any citizen to download a rollup of each state agency's spending plan for review and then provides an opportunity to send spending reduction suggestions. I will encourage constituents to use the Mackinac Center's app: 'vote spotter'. I will keep constituents informed of my votes and the reason for a vote and I will not omit unpopular votes in my constituent literature.

What changes, if any, would you support in the way Michigan authorizes and regulates charter schools?

Klint K. Kesto:

I would support changes that would require a review or assessment of the charter school to determine its success and transparency for its system of operation, and make it a standard across the board.

Deb O'Hagan:

We all pay taxes for education and should be allowed the freedom to choose a school that will meet the needs of our children. I support a parent's ability to place their children in an education system best suited for them. Charter schools provide families with an alternative to the government school system monopoly, especially for those unable to afford private school tuition. By inserting government regulations into charter schools we will end up turning them into the same type of institution the family left. All schools must be adaptable to their changing population. If they are meeting the needs of the families then their population should be relatively stable.

What should state legislators do, if anything, to make college more affordable?**Klint K. Kesto:**

Continue to allow for college credits to be earned during high school, and to create tuition incentive programs. Additionally, the easiest way is to make sure there is a JOB available for graduates.

Deb O'Hagan:

Who determines what is affordable? Each college and university determines the cost of education at their institution based on the programs they wish to offer; the endowments they wish to raise, and the grants and loans they wish to offer. It is up to students to choose, from the many options in Michigan, the college that will fit into their budget and priorities. It

is not up to the legislature to determine 'affordability'. It is about value to the student in relation to their goals.

Workforce development has been touted by the state and area economic development officials as something best done regionally. How would you improve the way regions across the state approach their workforce development strategies?

Klint K. Kesto:

An easy way is to allow reciprocity with certain licenses and certifications. Additionally, eliminating unnecessary regulations that are burdensome.

Deb O'Hagan:

Why is the state involved in workforce development? There are private entities providing this service. Companies also provide training for employees and are more adept at providing what is needed when it is needed. There are community programs that offer personal and professional development training and coaching. This is yet another example of government taking taxpayer money to put through another government program that builds dependency on government.

A minimum wage increase from \$7.40 to \$9.25 an hour was signed into law by Gov. Rick Snyder after parties came to a compromise amid a ballot proposal for an even higher jump. If you were in Lansing, would you have cast your vote in support of the minimum wage hike? Why or why not?

Klint K. Kesto:

Although I believe that each individual should be able, through the market, to dictate their minimum wage, and I

Deb O'Hagan:

Wages should be left to the free market which will naturally find a balance between the needs of the

believe there should be certain safeguards to protect employees from underhanded employers, I did support the minimum wage increase signed into law. The ballot proposal was poorly written and it would have been to the detriment of various industries in Michigan, especially the restaurant industry. This would have been an impediment into Michigan's current growth.

business and those of the community. Artificially imposing a wage limit doesn't add value to the product or service but it will increase the cost for that product or service. Increased cost will lead to either higher prices or fewer workers, thereby negating the increase and actually working against those it is intended to help. A company has a right to determine what the value is of each job to that company. A worker has a choice of accepting that wage or seeking other opportunities. It is not up to government to guarantee a wage. Actually, I believe a minimum wage holds wages down because it eliminates competition.

Where do you come down on the ballot proposal to replace personal property tax revenue with a portion of revenue from the state's 6 percent use tax?

Klint K. Kesto:

I support the proposal.

Deb O'Hagan:

The personal property tax is a job killer and must be eliminated. However, adding a statewide taxing authority which removes local control and resources is not the answer. It is a poison pill in a high stakes shell game. Like every solution it must solve the real problem or it just makes things worse. The real problem is there are communities relying on the PPT as their major source of revenue yet it is a grossly unfair and burdensome tax on

business. It would be equivalent to the state taxing your washer, dryer, oven, lawnmower, etc., annually, after you paid the sales tax. You would, as is the case with businesses, pay for the equipment several times over in the form of taxes. The legislator must repeal the PPT, the communities relying on those funds must re-evaluate their needs and sources of income.

Do you support decriminalization of recreational marijuana?

Klint K. Kesto:

I believe we need to look closely at what we already have in place, the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act, and work within the confines of what the people voted on.

Deb O'Hagan:

Candidate did not provide a response.

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