

Garlin Gilchrist's Stand TALL (Transparency, Accountability, Limits, and a Level Playing Field) For Democracy Agenda

Michigan's campaign finance system needs significant reform. Right now, dark money floods our elections. Anonymous donors buy influence over our government. Contribution loopholes that have allowed politicians to subvert the rules, and let the wealthy and well-connected drown out ordinary Michiganders. And a broken reporting system means the public often can't find out who is trying to influence their elections until months after the ballots have been counted, if at all.

Garlin Gilchrist's Stand TALL Agenda — Transparency, Accountability, Limits, and a Level Playing Field — is a plan to fix all of that.

The Stand TALL Agenda will shine a light on dark money, end anonymous political contributions, stop government contractors from buying influence with campaign cash, lower contribution limits, crack down hard on violators, and rebuild Michigan's campaign finance reporting system.

T – Transparency

If you spend money to influence an election, voters should know who you are before they cast their ballots.

1. Require Political Money and Dark Money Donors to Be Disclosed Before Election Day

Garlin will push to close loopholes that allow political spending to stay hidden until after an election is over.

Michigan already requires many campaign committees to file pre-election reports, but some political spending can still be disclosed later or fall outside the state's standard committee reporting system.

Garlin will support stronger, faster disclosure rules so voters can see who is funding efforts to influence their vote, and ensure that information is accessible before Michiganders cast their ballots.

Because if you put money into Michigan politics, you should have to stand behind it publicly before Election Day.

2. Revamp Michigan's Campaign Finance Reporting System

Michigan's campaign finance reporting website has faced significant challenges. Garlin Gilchrist is a computer engineer. He will lead the revamp of Michigan's campaign finance reporting infrastructure so that it is accessible to every Michigander.

A – Accountability

Transparency rules are only as strong as their enforcement. Garlin will invest in new campaign finance enforcement capacity.

1. Create Real, and Real-Time Enforcement Capacity

Too often, Michigan's enforcement system can only punish violations after the fact, when the damage to our democracy is irreversible. Real enforcement means the ability to stop a violation while it's happening, not just fine the people responsible months later. That's why Garlin will fight to:

- Empower the Bureau of Elections to petition the Court for an injunction to stop campaign finance violations in real time, before an election is over and the harm is done.
- Bring additional resources to the Bureau of Elections for enforcement and investigations.

2. Deepen Coordination Between the Secretary of State and Attorney General

Serious campaign finance violations — particularly those involving potential fraud, corruption, or willful disclosure failures — require prosecutorial capacity that the Secretary of State's office does not possess alone. Garlin will strengthen joint enforcement protocols between the Secretary of State and the Attorney General's office:

- Create a standing interagency Campaign Finance Task Force with regular case review, shared investigative resources, and referral protocols for criminal matter
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L – Limits

Michigan should limit campaign contributions from companies that stand to profit from government decisions.

1. Support and Enforce Michiganders for Money Out of Politics Ballot Initiative

Garlin supports the Michiganders for Money Out of Politics ballot initiative. It would ban political contributions from regulated monopoly utilities and from corporations that hold or seek large state or local government contracts worth more than \$250,000. Companies should not be funding the same elected officials who regulate them or decide whether they get taxpayer-funded contracts.

If voters approve the initiative, the Department of State would have responsibility for administering and enforcing the campaign finance laws. As Secretary of State, Garlin would enforce those rules rigorously and work to hold violators accountable.

2. One Leadership PAC Per Elected Official

Contribution limits should mean what they say. Elected officials should not be able to get around them by creating multiple leadership PACs that raise money alongside their campaign committees.

Garlin supports efforts to ensure that there can only be one leadership PAC per elected official. That would make it harder for politicians to use multiple political committees to sidestep contribution limits and would make it easier for voters to see who is funding an elected official's political operation.

L – A Level Playing Field

Every reform in the Stand TALL Agenda adds up to the same thing: restoring the fundamental democratic principle that our government should answer to all Michiganders, not just the wealthy, the well-connected, and the powerful.