



2019 UAW CAP Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Lisa DiRado

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Elected Office you are seeking: Michigan Democratic Party Chair

Please circle your answer. If necessary, use the space provided for additional comments.

I. Freedom to Choose a Union

Employers routinely use intimidation, threats and coercion to deny workers their right to decide freely whether or not to organize a union and bargain collectively. We are challenging employers to commit to basic democratic principles for fair union elections.

1. If elected, would you take a public position on behalf of working people by endorsing the UAW's principles for fair union elections and urge employers in your district/state to adopt them as well?

Yes

2. If elected, would you take a public position that employers should give employees a free choice without pressure or intimidation as to whether or not to join a union, by supporting Employee Free Choice Act legislation?

Yes

3. Will you publicly support organizing drives in the state by:

Workers deserve the fruits of their labor and this will only occur if labor organizes. Power cedes nothing without demand and, in the absence of organizing, employers have all of the power. I support a powerful, independent labor

movement. This movement must include all workers - those that are unionized, those that are not yet unionized, and those Fighting for 15. The Michigan Democratic Party is the voice of democracy in our State and we must support all workers any way we can and especially support organized labor. As Chair of the MDP I will work with all unions and labor groups as they fight for fair wages, benefits and worker safety.

a) Writing letters of support for workers' organizing efforts?

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Why is this important?

The Michigan Democratic Party is a critical partner in the organization of workers and we must show our solidarity in support of, and in service to, our brothers and sisters. It is our shared values that unite us.

b) Attending community forums in support of organizing efforts?

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Why is this important?

I am well aware of the influence the party has as an advocate for worker rights and understand the need for a public show of support both by the members of the Michigan Democratic Party as well as in my role as party leader. This means showing up in the right places at the right time, it means communicating calls to act and working together to organize members in support of labor.

c) Helping to pass resolutions of support?

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Why is this important?

The process of passing resolutions shines a spotlight on issues, generates discussion and brings solidarity to a cause. Michigan Democratic Party must support labor through MDP resolutions.

d) Speaking at a rally?

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Why is this important?

The Michigan Democratic Party must organize our members to support labor at rallies. We must speak at rallies and organize our members to attend because the umbrella of social justice covers us all.

e) Walking in a picket line?

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Why is this important?

The MDP must support organized labor on picket lines and MDP members must not cross a picket line. Only when a majority of workers organize will the rights of workers be restored.

II. Michigan Democratic Party (MDP) Future

With the current political climate becoming unstable due to both the extreme far-left and far-right, it is imperative that the MDP stay on the correct path.

1. What are your goals for the MDP?

OUR PARTY VISION

A Democratic Party presidential win, a Michigan House majority, a local candidate farm team: We need to own the loss of 2016 and deliver our Electoral College votes to our Democratic Candidate in 2020. We must deliver a Democratic State House to Governor Whitmer. We need to begin electing Democrats into local offices in every county so we will develop a farm team as the basis for future electoral success throughout the state.

A bold, values based message: No matter where we fall on the spectrum from progressive to traditional, we share the same foundational values. As Democrats, we believe in having empathy for those around us. We believe in taking responsibility for ourselves, but also for one another. And we believe that government can be a force to promote the common good. These values are what we stand for; now, we need a bold, unifying message to help us share them and our vision with voters.

Meeting people where they are: The 2018 midterms showed how important organizing is to win elections. We can win in unexpected places when our members canvass and phone bank everywhere they can, not just in areas where we get a large percentage of the vote. We need to let local activists leading from the bottom up, not try to force fit a one-size fit all strategy. When we speak to urban, rural, and suburban voters, we learn a lot about what our citizens' want and need from us, community by community. We need to do more of this, even in off-years so we can understand the unique challenges people face based on where they live.

Leveraging our partnerships: We are so powerful when we work together. There are so many of us working in groups throughout the state, all toward the common goal of success for Democratic candidates. We need to network more and create forums for sharing resources and knowledge. Let's collaborate, not duplicate our efforts.

Training: People within our organization have a ton of valuable knowledge and experience to share, but we need a structured and organized process for getting

new candidates and activists up to speed. Also, too often our party's resources float up to the State-level candidates when we should actively support candidates up and down the ballot. We need to make quality training accessible to everyone in our party.

Transparency: Transparency is keeping our party members in the loop about the decisions we're making instead of relying on handshake deals behind the scenes. Transparency is empowering our local activists because they know what their neighborhoods and communities need. We all deserve to be part of the conversation and to trust that our leadership is making decisions that are in the best interests of our party.

OUR VALUES – United We Are Democrats

Our values are simple, but they inspire us to work together to change our society for the better and they unite us as Democrats.

- Empathy
 - Responsibility for Ourselves and Each Other
 - Governing for the Common Good
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2. What is your background in the MDP?

I'm a political organizer with a proven track record of organizing in a red area and turning it blue. In 2018 we flipped five seats from red to blue and I can't stop smiling! I did that by lobbying people into action, training them, planning outreach and volunteer events and most importantly creating a Democratic community. Our success came from collaboration and empowering volunteers. I know that the things we did in Western Wayne and Oakland Counties can be done throughout the state.

I also have a long history of being an active Democrat. I'm President of the Northville Dems, the second largest club in the state. I'm also coordinator of the Western Wayne Dems leaders group, 2nd vice chair of the 11th Congressional District, MDP Justice Caucus Board Member, State Central Committee member and part of the SCC Rules & Political Reform committee. I was elected as a delegate to the 2016 National Convention and the 2016 State of Michigan Elector for the 11th Congressional District.

3. How will you increase dues paying membership?

The MDP bylaws state that 'A financial contribution is not required to be and to remain a member of the MDP'. Today there is a suggested donation level but it is not clear what benefits come with each level. Many people ask why they should donate any more than they have to. We need to understand why our members join and why do they renew...or not renew. Using modern technology to make it easy to check membership status, join or review will invite new members.

The party needs an honest assessment of the value we bring to members. What are the benefits at each donation level? With the current political climate and increase in activism, we should be recruiting and welcoming new members. We need a bold membership growth goal! I believe we can grow our membership from 14,000 to 50,000 by first developing a value proposition that meets the needs of activists of all ages. Once we have a message, we can reach out with a digital recruitment campaign. Most importantly, we must follow up with providing services so that members want to stay, grow and lead.

4. Describe your plan to bring more young Democrats into the party.

If we execute on the above described membership plan, people of all ages will seek out our community. We must meet the digital natives where they are by providing ease of entry, training and coaching. We must lead as good role models by welcoming newcomers and sharing our institutional knowledge so we can blend our knowledge into a powerful and unique community of activism.

5. Explain how you will handle the far-left progressives in the MDP.

My own daughter and son-in-law are Democratic Socialists. The world has changed so much, and young people today don't have the same opportunities that we had, so I get it. While I support our capitalist system, I understand we need government to stop the huge wealth and income inequality and break the crony capitalism that exists today. One of the biggest ways to do that is through organized labor.

I would give every Democrat a seat at the table and include all Democrats in the party. I would continue to emphasize our support of the labor movement and I know that Democrats on the far left support the labor movement too.

We share common values of empathy, protection, common good, dignity, equality and public support for private success. These values bring all Democrats together and unite us.

6. Who else will be on your slate?

I pride myself in being able to work together with anyone who has the courage to run for the two vice chair positions.

Electability

It shall be requisite that organized labor support not only candidates who are labor friendly, but who have a reasonable chance of getting elected.

Please explain what motivated you to run for this office and give a brief description of your campaign plan (include other means of organizational support and financial plan).

After many years of hard work resulting in loss after loss in my red district I was rewarded by a win of five seats! The difference was an influx of activism, fresh ideas and new thinking. It was the partnerships forged with Indivisible and other groups that pushed me out of my bubble so that I could support candidates in a new way. We recruited precinct delegates and trained them. We used digital strategies to reach out to voters. We ran campaigns to register new voters. We worked together up and down the ballot. We talked through personal differences instead of ignoring them. We took ownership for our 2016 loss and changed our ways. I'm running for office to bring a proven grassroots approach for winning to every corner of the state.

I'm using that same grassroots approach to run my campaign. I'm meeting people where they are. In December I attended 18 Dem club holiday parties in 12 days. I'm making calls to supporters almost every day. I have a volunteer team helping with my digital presence and communications. I have an experienced campaign manager. I reached out to caucus, county and club chairs across the state, coordinating meet and greets in every district, including district 1. My goal is to reach out to every precinct delegate, every Dem club leader and all Indivisible group leaders to get people to register as members and make plans to attend the spring convention.

If we can raise adequate funds, we plan to purchase the MDP member data so that we can send mailers, make calls and send texts. We know that the day of convention is what really counts. The team is preparing a creative day of election campaign that will offer a fun experience for members and some surprises.

III. Vehicle Ownership

UAW members assemble an impressive array of vehicles that are second to none in quality, styling and value.

What model car do you currently own and would you consider buying a UAW vehicle as your next purchase?

I drive a 2013 Honda Accord. Although my Accord was not made by union workers 80% of it was made by American workers. My hope is that the UAW will expand unionizing into plants such as the one that made my Accord. But until that is the case I commit to

purchasing a UAW vehicle immediately upon election as Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party.

IV. Current and Past Positions Held

1. What positions, if any, do you currently hold?

- President of the Northville Dems, the second largest club in the state
- Coordinator of the Western Wayne Dems leaders group
- 2nd vice chair of the 11th Congressional District
- MDP Justice Caucus Board Member
- State Central Committee member
- SCC Rules & Political Reform Committee

2. Have you held any other elected positions in the past?

Precinct Delegate, Northville Township Precinct 3: 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018

3. Are you a member of a labor group?

No, but in 2014 my Director at Wayne County Homeland Security & Emergency Management attempted to turn my consultant position into a full time position which would have been with the Wayne County Government Administrators Association, but he was not successful. I would have been proud to be a member of a union.

V. Endorsements

1. Have you received UAW or AFL-CIO endorsements in the past?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, when and was it for the same office that you are currently seeking?

2. What other endorsements/support have you received for this election?

Check out <https://www.lisadirado.com/> for an up to date list of my endorsements.

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