

Detroit News 2010 Primary Voter Guide

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County: Oakland

Candidate name: Eric Coleman

Place of birth: Chicago, Illinois

Family: Married to Judith (Judy) Coleman; one Son, Eric, Jr.; three Grandchildren.

Community and Civic Involvement:

- Former Chairperson, City of Southfield Parent Youth Guidance Commission (Now Youth Assistances)
- Former President, Southfield Lathrup Village Optimist Club International
- Former Lt. Governor, Michigan District Optimist Club International
- Founder & Former Advisor, Southfield Youth in Government Club -Founder & Former President, Southfield Schools Educational Foundation
- Former First Vice President, South Oakland County NAACP
- Executive Committee Member, South Oakland County NAACP
- Former President, The Civic Citizens of Southfield-Lathrup Village, Inc.
- Executive Committee Member, Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
- Former Chairman, Finance Committee, Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
- Member, Finance Committee, Regional Clearing House Committee, Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments
- Former President, National Association of Counties (NACo)
- Executive Committee Member, National Association of Counties (NACo)
- President, Past Presidents Council, National Association of Counties (NACo)
- Member, Community & Economic Development Committee, National Association of Counties (NACo)
- Executive Committee Member, Democratic National Committee (DNC)
- Member, Michigan Democratic National Committee
- President, Michigan Democratic County Officials (MiDCO)
- Finance Chairman, National Democratic County Officials (NDCO)

Education (college, degree(s) and dates):

The School of The Art Institute, BFA, 1971 Wayne State University, MBA Candidate

Military service:

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? No

Are you now or have you been a member of a radical group (KKK, Weather underground, etc?)

No

Are you current on your debts and taxes? Any liens or litigation filed against you? Ever filed for bankruptcy?

No

Career (most recent to oldest):

Real Estate Investor Former President, Quaker Service Corp. Former President, Service Maid Corp. Taskforce Engineer, Allied Chemical Corp. Former Elementary, High School, & Community College Educator

Political affiliation:

Democratic

Previous political involvement?

Currently, Oakland County Commissioner, since 1996. President, Secretary, Treasurer, Southfield Board of Education (1986-90) Oakland County Parks Commissioner (1999) Tri-County Taskforce (Macomb, Oakland, Wayne and the City of Detroit) Chair, Environmental Affairs, Michigan Association of Counties (MAC)

Campaign address:

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Campaign website:

www.EricColeman.org

Is the level of taxation in this state appropriate? Too high? Too low?

Overall, 26 states have a higher tax than Michigan, according to a national study by the tax foundation. Michigan's taxes are not appropriated distributed. Oakland County has been a "donor county" for many years - contributing far more local tax dollars to the state than are received in return. Since Southeastern Michigan was especially hard hit with the decline in the auto industry, it is time for more resources to be redirected to serving the region with the largest population and the greater need from the state.

Do you favor expanding the base of the state sales tax?

Yes. The State needs to identify additional resources for revenues, which could include expanding the sales tax to additional products and services. Some projections indicate that this could generate up to \$14 billion in additional revenue.

Should the business tax surcharge be repealed?

Yes.

Do you favor raising the state gasoline tax?

Only if the funds generated can be dedicated to the regions in which the funds are raised. Should the distribution formula for state transportation revenues be changed to direct more funds to southeast Michigan?

Oakland County and Southeastern Michigan have been a "donor" region to the rest of the State for far too long. The formula for distribution of gas tax revenue needs to be revised to give priority to those communities with the greatest density of roads and population.

Should mass transit - buses, rail lines - receive less, more or the same amount of state funding?

Mass transit is essential to the survival of Southeastern Michigan. It must be efficiently run and operated. Every effort must be made to receive federal funding to build a strong and sustainable mass transit infrastructure. State funding needs to be redistributed to provide Southeastern Michigan with a level of funding comparable to the needs of the population and ridership.

How should the state budget deficit be trimmed? If you favor spending cuts, where, specifically, should they be made?

The budget needs to address structural changes to the budget. Some of the structural changes and/or cost reductions that should be adopted include: -Implement recommendation in performance/financial audits -Consolidate state government departments -Eliminate undocumented and fraudulent child care payments-a state audit last year found \$230 million in undocumented and potentially fraudulent payments for child care assistance -Reduce cost in Department of Corrections: excess overtime; better price negotiations for products/services; undocumented transportation costs, etc..

Do you favor expanding education choices for parents through more charter schools or vouchers?

No. I am a staunch supporter of the public school system. Every effort should be made to strengthen our schools.

What are your views on supporting higher education in Michigan?

General fund Community College spending is down by about one-fifth and general fund spending on universities is down by more than a quarter. In order to move our communities and families forward, we must invest in having a highly trained and skilled work force that can compete in a global economy.

What, if anything, should be done to curtail the cost of state prisons and prisoners?

The corrections budget is out of control the number of corrections employees has tripled since 1980. Department of Corrections employees now comprise over 30 percent of all state Civil Service employees 20 percent of the Michigan General Fund. It does not make sense for our State to spend more on incarceration than on education.

Areas to address the cost in the Department of Corrections, include: -Michigan has a higher incarceration rate than neighboring states. We should investigate what is the cause and incorporate alternative to incarceration measures. -Management oversight to control overtime costs, undocumented transport costs, prison guard bonuses, dry cleaning allowances, shift reorganization, negotiations for better prices for goods/services.

What sort of incentive should the state extend to attract and retain business?

What restrictions should there be on such incentives?

Emphasis should be on supporting small and medium sized businesses. Incentives should be provided for hiring displaced and retrained workers. All incentives and/or tax abatements to any business-large or small-should be contingent upon job creation. There needs to be an entire overview of existing and complicated system that provides over \$30 billion in tax incentives and tax breaks to make certain that those businesses that are benefitting are also producing jobs and economic activity that was promised.

How, if at all, should the state change laws on health insurance?

Laws relative to health insurance should always be reviewed to determine if they are meeting the demands of consumers and reflects the advances in medicine and technology. Also, every effort should be made to ensure equity in coverage. particular areas that the state laws should consider addressing include requiring insurers to provide evidence based, early intervention autism therapies equity in the provision of mental health coverage.

Are you accepting PAC funds? From whom? What will be the major source of your campaign funding?

No PAC funds have been received to date. Campaign funding has been derived primarily from individuals within my district, the region and State.

Who has endorsed your candidacy?

Hon. Dennis W. Archer
Hon. Dave Bing, Mayor, Detroit
Barbara Talley, Former Councilwoman, Southfield
Hon. Kristen Judge, County Commissioner
Hon. Janet Jackson, County Commissioner
Hon. Mattie Hatchett, County Commissioner
Hon. William Morgan, Supervisor, RO Twsp
Hon. Sidney Lantz, Mayor Pro Tem, Southfield
Hon. Irv Lowenberg, Treasurer, Southfield
Hon. Craig Covey, Mayor, Ferndale
Hon. Nancy Banks, City Council, Southfield
Mayor Gerald Naftaly, Mayor, Oak Park
Hon. Paul Levine, Oak Park

Hon. Larmar Fredricks, Supervisor
Hon. Paul Massaron, Trustee, Wayne State Univ.
Hon. Woodrow Stanley, State Representative
Hon. Linnie Taylor, Councilwoman, Southfield
Hon. Joan Seymore, Councilwoman, Southfield
Hon. Emile Duplesis, Councilman, Oak Park
Hon. Kyrian Nwagwu, Councilman, Lathrup Village
AFSCME Council 25
UAW Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
Greater Detroit Building & Construction Trades Council
Metro Detroit AFL-CIO
And countless others. Visit www.EricColeman.org

What has this questionnaire failed to ask?

How would you resolve Michigan's structural budget deficit? And my answer would be: I support a change to our tax structure, either a graduated tax and/or an additional tax on services. In addition, I would propose a 3-5 year budget projection. I would also eliminate tax incentives and loopholes for companies failing to create and retain jobs. Require yearly performance reviews for all remaining tax credits and incentives and audit government contracts to eliminate waste.

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