

2026 Michigan Defense Economy Candidate Questionnaire

Federal Offices: U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate

• November 2026 General Election • thedrdc.org

Return no later than September 14, 5pm Return to: info@thedrdc.org

Candidate	 	Office sought	
District	 	Party (if applicable)	

Why this matters

Michigan’s defense and aerospace ecosystem is both a national-security asset and an economic engine. It connects military installations and commands, federal civilian expertise, prime contractors, thousands of suppliers, universities, skilled trades, engineers, and dual-use innovators. Decisions made in Washington and Lansing directly affect readiness, industrial capacity, high-wage employment, and Michigan’s ability to compete for future missions and investment.

DRDC independently prepared this questionnaire using its defense-focused economic-development expertise and review of publicly available state, federal, regional, and industry data. Source citations document the underlying figures; they do not indicate participation in, sponsorship of, or endorsement of this questionnaire by any cited organization.

DRDC’s Michigan defense economy snapshot

\$30 billion	Approximate annual statewide defense-and-aerospace economic activity.[1]
166,000+ jobs	Michigan jobs supported across defense and aerospace.[1]
75% regional share	Southeast Michigan—the region represented by DRDC—accounts for approximately 75% of Michigan’s defense economy.[8]
4,000+ + 900	More than 4,000 defense suppliers and 900 aerospace suppliers.[1]
\$7.2 billion	Direct federal defense spending in Michigan in FY2024: \$5.0B in contracts, \$1.5B in payroll, plus other spending.[2]

23,700 personnel	FY2024 DoD footprint: about 854 active-duty, 10,000 civilian, and 12,900 Reserve and Guard personnel in Michigan.[2]
6,000+ people	Detroit Arsenal's Michigan-based workforce, supporting Army ground-systems acquisition, research, contracting, logistics, and sustainment. [3]
17 assets	Military commands, organizations, and installations statewide, including Detroit Arsenal, Selfridge ANGB, Camp Grayling/NADWC, Alpena CRTC, Fort Custer, and Battle Creek ANGB.[1]

DRDC analysis: how the ripple effect works. Federal contracts and payroll first support direct jobs and purchases. Contractors then buy from Michigan subcontractors and service providers (indirect effects), while workers spend wages in local communities (induced effects). The widely cited \$30 billion figure is a broad economic-impact estimate; it should not be treated as a formal multiplier applied to the \$7.2 billion FY2024 spending figure because the source years and definitions differ.

Michigan primes and the supplier network

Publicly available information reviewed by DRDC identifies major defense and aerospace employers with operations in the state, including General Dynamics Land Systems, BAE Systems, American Rheinmetall, GM Defense, GE Aerospace, SAPA Transmission, AM General, RTX/Raytheon, Oshkosh Defense, RENK America, Saab, and many others. Published project examples include:

- American Rheinmetall: 450 new Michigan jobs announced with a \$31.7 million expansion in 2025; the company reports more than 1,500 employees across its multistate U.S. footprint.[6]
- Saab: 70 new high-paying jobs announced with a \$75 million Grayling Township manufacturing facility.[7]
- Macomb County alone received more than 4,800 defense contract actions worth \$3.2 billion in 2024. [4]

Michigan does not publish a current, standardized Michigan-only employee count for every named prime. Accordingly, this questionnaire uses the state's 166,000+ supported-jobs total and clearly labeled state-announced project commitments rather than mixing incompatible or stale company headcounts. These examples are not additive employment totals.

Instructions to candidates

Please answer every question. Check the applicable response and provide the requested concise explanation, action, funding level, and timeline. "Support" without a specific action or timetable may be interpreted as a general statement rather than a measurable commitment. Unless otherwise noted, please limit each narrative response to 150 words.

All questionnaires received by the stated deadline will be published verbatim and simultaneously on the DRDC website and shared through DRDC's social media channels, industry forums, and relevant news outlets. Candidate responses will be published without editing, analysis, or evaluative commentary by DRDC.

This is each candidate's opportunity to speak directly to Michigan's defense and aerospace community—in their own words.

Return by: _____ to: _____ Questions: _____

Federal candidate questions

1. Will protecting and expanding Michigan's defense industrial base be a stated priority in your first term?

☐ Yes—top-tier priority ☐ Yes—important priority ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Identify the priority level, the specific outcome you will pursue, and how you will communicate progress.

2. Will you support maintaining and strengthening the missions, workforce, research, and funding of Detroit Arsenal and its Army organizations?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Conditional—explain

Describe the specific steps you would take in Congress or with federal agencies, and when you would begin.

3. Will you oppose federal cuts or organizational changes that would significantly reduce Michigan defense jobs, expertise, or military readiness without a clear public justification?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Case by case

Explain what information you would require before supporting such a change and how you would protect affected Michigan workers and businesses.

4. Which Michigan defense capabilities would you make priorities for federal support?

Select or identify the areas you would champion—such as military vehicles, aircraft, shipbuilding and maritime technology, drones, robotics, cybersecurity, space, research, or advanced manufacturing—and explain why.

5. Will you work to protect Michigan's military bases, training centers, and testing facilities and seek new or expanded missions for them?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Conditional—explain

Identify at least two actions you would take for assets such as Selfridge, Camp Grayling, Alpena, Fort Custer, or Battle Creek, and give an expected timeframe.

6. What will you do to help more Michigan businesses—especially small and midsize manufacturers—win defense contracts and subcontracts?

Describe the federal programs, contracting reforms, outreach, or business assistance you would support and identify one measurable goal.

7. Will you support policies that give Michigan defense manufacturers greater stability and help keep critical production and suppliers in the United States?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Conditional—explain

Explain what actions you would support to prevent essential production lines and specialized suppliers from disappearing between major orders.

8. How will you help Michigan recruit, train, and retain the skilled workers, engineers, and technology professionals needed by the defense industry?

Identify the programs or partnerships you would support and one measurable workforce goal.

9. If you currently or previously held public office, what specific actions have you taken to support Michigan defense missions, employees, installations, or companies?

List legislation, appropriations, letters, oversight, convenings, or economic-development actions and the result. If none, state "None."

10. What will you accomplish within your first 100 days and first 12 months to advance Michigan's defense economy?

Provide one action and deadline for each period, plus the staff member or office responsible for industry and installation engagement.

Sources and data notes

1. State of Michigan, published defense-and-aerospace industry figures and FY2025 strategic report.
<https://www.michiganbusiness.org/industries/defense/>
2. U.S. Department of Defense, Michigan State Fact Sheet (FY2024). https://www.repi.mil/Portals/44/Michigan_StateFacts_1.pdf
3. U.S. Army TACOM, "Serving at the Detroit Arsenal". <https://tacom.army.mil/about/detroit-arsenal>
4. Macomb County Planning & Economic Development, A&D Intel Quarterly (March 2025). <https://www.macombgov.org/node/53/news/intel-quarterly-march-2025>
5. State of Michigan, "Reimagining the Arsenal of Democracy" (July 2025). <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/news/2025/07/reimagining-the-arsenal-of-democracy-how-michigan-leads-the-defense-industry/>
6. State of Michigan, American Rheinmetall expansion announcement (Sept. 2025). <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/press-releases/2025/09/rheinmetall/>
7. State of Michigan, Saab Grayling facility announcement. <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/industries/defense/>
8. Detroit Regional Defense Coalition, Southeast Michigan regional defense-economy analysis. <https://theDRDC.org>

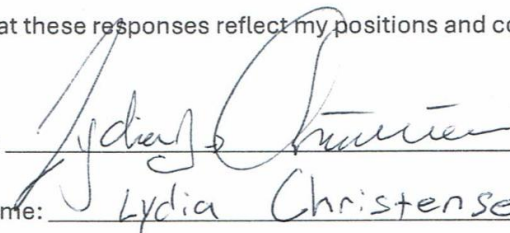
Interpretation note

DRDC compiled, reviewed, and contextualized these figures as part of its independent defense-economic-development work. Counts are rounded and reflect the most recent authoritative or publicly reported figures located as of August 17, 2026. "Defense economy," "defense and aerospace," "suppliers," direct federal spending, and economic impact are not identical measures. The questionnaire keeps those measures separate to avoid double counting or implying a model-derived multiplier that the cited sources do not establish. Citations identify original public sources and do not imply that any cited organization participated in, sponsored, approved, or endorsed this questionnaire.

Candidate certification

I certify that these responses reflect my positions and commitments as of the date signed and may be published verbatim.

Signature:



Date:

9-14-2026

Printed name:

Lydia Christensen

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