



# Alberta Griffin

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT 61

## SISTER DISTRICT POLICY SCORECARD

This candidate has pledged commitment to the following statements:

- ✓ We must protect a **woman's right to choose** the health care and reproductive services she wants and needs.
- ✓ We need to protect and expand our **social safety net**, not dismantle it.
- ✓ We should pursue **common-sense gun safety** policies, consistent with the Second Amendment and local community standards and needs, which vary from community to community.
- ✓ Climate change is real and we need to **protect our environment**.

## TIMELINE & VOTER INFO

**Election Day:** November 6, 2018

### Last day to register:

30 days prior to Election Day

**Vote by mail / absentee voting:** Voters must [apply for absentee ballots](#). Note that if you have never voted in Michigan and register by mail, you must appear in person to vote in your first election, unless you are over 60 years old, disabled, or live overseas.

**Nested Congressional Districts:** 6

## PAST RESULTS

### 2016 Presidential Election

Hillary Clinton (D)	25,569	49.2%
Donald Trump (R)	23,319	44.8%



## 2016 State House Election

Democrat:	22,755	44.7%
Republican:	25,149	49.4%

## Cook Partisan Voting Index

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## BACKGROUND

A mother of three school-aged children, founder and president of her own company; AGS Data Analytics Consulting and an instructor and Thurgood Marshall Doctoral Fellow at Western Michigan University, Alberta Griffin is no stranger to hard work, persistence and achieving impact driven success. A longtime resident of Kalamazoo County, she has devoted herself to improving the health and well-being of those in this community.

Early in her career, "Berta" as she is affectionately known, served as Head Start Nutritionist and WIC Program Coordinator. Her love for seeing data-driven results lead her to serve as an epidemiologist and Public Health Coordinator for Calhoun County. Wanting to do even more and

see a broader impact for the community she took a position to serve at the State of Michigan on the Infant Mortality Reduction Plan.

Berta's work with families intersects systems of health, education and economic development. This work has made her a strong advocate for policies that lead to equality in education funding, equitable access to healthcare and providing an opportunity for families to advance their social and economic welfare. At her core, Berta believes that our society should be one that is safe and that our community can come together to achieve real success when it comes to education, health and economics.

## **ON THE ISSUES**

### **Education**

Alberta Griffin, an educator herself, knows firsthand that education and educators are undervalued. Each year teachers are asked to inspire the next generation to reach for the stars on ever-shrinking budgets. Now the discussion has turned to arming our teachers with weapons, effectively adding "security guard" to their increasing list of roles. Berta's entire career has been in education in some form, from Western Michigan University to health education.

Berta will be an advocate for teachers, working to support their needs - from improving the infrastructure of school buildings, fighting against decreased teacher benefits, and working toward reinstating counselors at our schools every day to support students. We need to arm the teachers not with weapons - but with resources!

### **Mental Healthcare**

Berta will promote research funding for mental health and she will be a strong voice forward on ensuring mental health benefits with insurance companies are equal to physical health benefits as well as savings and increased productivity.

Berta believes that "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is as true to mental health conditions now as fire prevention was to Benjamin Franklin in 1735. Mental health conditions are treatable and manageable however, according to National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), there is an 8-10 year gap between the onset of

symptoms and treatment, often due to limited access to mental health care.

During this time, loss of jobs, the breakdown in the family structure and many other costly things occur. The consequences of untreated mental health conditions are unnecessary and Berta will work to destigmatize the shame and fear of coming forward to seek treatment of mental health conditions. She will promote research funding for mental health and she will be a strong voice forward on ensuring mental health benefits with insurance companies are equal to physical health benefits as well as savings and increased productivity.

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is like the foundation to a house. When the foundation is cracked and buckling, "patch-work" is no longer a suitable fix. In Michigan our infrastructure is cracked and buckling. We have water crisis, sinkholes and potholes so deep, that in one case you can stand up in the pot hole and only see from a person's chest up. In 2017 the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) recommended that an additional \$4 billion is needed to MAINTAIN our roads alone. Instead of making our infrastructure a priority, our Michigan legislators have continued to decrease its funding annually. Berta wants to change this! As your next State Representative from the 61st District, she will be committed to changing course. She will fight for true investment into our economy and infrastructure, helping to rebuild a solid foundation that Michigan deserves.

## **ABOUT THE INCUMBENT**

Brent Iden was first elected to serve the 61st District in the Michigan House of Representatives in November 2014. Prior to serving in the House, he was Kalamazoo County Commissioner, serving in that position for two terms before his election to the House of Representatives. He lives in Oshtemo Township and is the owner of Identity Management and Consulting Inc., a real estate development and management company. He is a graduate of Kalamazoo College, where he studied political science. Iden was convicted in 2010 of misdemeanor operating while intoxicated. He was sentenced to 180 days of probation, though

he later lied about the conviction to a local newspaper.

I den was an early Donald Trump supporter and continued to support the Trump/Pence ticket throughout the 2016 election.

### **ABOUT THE DISTRICT**

As of the 2010 census, a total of 103,705 civilians reside within Michigan's 61st state House of Representatives district.

Gender  
51.7% Female  
48.3% Male

Race  
85.7% White  
6.8% Black  
3.1% Asian  
2.9% Two or more races

### **WHY IS THIS RACE IMPORTANT?**

Michigan is an important place to engage new voters and win back old Democratic voters who veered into the Republican camp due to their "support" for unions and trade protection. Michigan's economy is built on automotive and steel industries as well as vast skilled trade works. Union membership is extremely high in Michigan compared to the rest of the country as is the headquarters for a number of unions - including the United Auto Workers (UAW). Michigan was a reliable Democratic presidential vote since 1988, but was won by Trump by a little over 30k votes amidst lower voter turnout.

Republicans have controlled the State House (and Senate) since sweeping into power in 2010. But this year, all 110 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election. Republicans control 63 seats of 110 seats. Five districts in the House voted for Clinton, but are represented by a GOP legislator.

### **MORE ABOUT MICHIGAN**

Michigan is also surrounded by the nation's largest freshwater resource - the Great Lakes. As the headquarters of three larger automakers - Ford, GM, and FiatChrysler - Michigan is on the frontlines of joint environmental-economic issues

and their interrelationship.

Additionally, the people of Flint, Michigan were poisoned by lead and other toxic chemicals due to a poorly managed water infrastructure switch while under state management. The Republicans in Michigan have not fought nearly enough for the residents as many of them are still seeing toxic levels of lead in their water. This hot button issue will be on voters' minds in November.

### **REDISTRICTING IN MICHIGAN**

Following the lopsided win by Republicans in 2010 - where House control flipped exactly from 67-43 under Democratic control to 67-43 GOP control - Michigan House Districts are very skewed in favor of Republicans who have been in control since that election.

### **CANDIDATE LINKS**

SDP ActBlue: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sdp-mi-griffin>

Website: [www.albertagriffin61st.com](http://www.albertagriffin61st.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/albertagriffin61st/](https://www.facebook.com/albertagriffin61st/)

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/berta\\_griffin18](https://twitter.com/berta_griffin18)