



# Know Before You Go: MI-07 District Primer

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**In the last election, Republican Tim Walberg won this district by 50,311 votes (15.0%).**

With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

## About the Incumbent

**Introduction:** Republican Tim Walberg became MI-07's representative in 2007. After losing the seat to Democrat Mark Schauer in 2008, he was re-elected in 2010 and has held the seat since. Prior to entering politics, he served as a pastor and was a representative in Michigan's House.

**Issues:** Walberg's main areas of focus are economic growth and defending what he sees as American values, including protecting religious institutions and individuals and defending the right to keep and bear arms. He supports balancing the federal budget while maintaining Social Security and Medicare, reducing the tax and regulatory burden, expanding American energy production, defeating "radical Islamic terrorism," and repealing the Affordable Care Act.

**Recent Elections:** In 2016, Walberg defeated Democrat Gretchen Driskell by 55% to 40%, up from a margin of 53% to 42% in 2014. Since Republican-led redistricting took place in 2010, it has become more difficult for a Democrat to win this district.

**Strengths:** Walberg's history as a pastor seems to appeal to conservative religious voters in the district, as do his anti-abortion stance, support of religious institutions, and support of the Second Amendment. He pitches himself as a representative for working people and has a record of introducing or co-sponsoring legislation that deals with issues affecting the district, including fighting the opioid epidemic and expanding job-training and apprenticeship programs in schools.

**Potential Weaknesses:** Walberg has been a vocal opponent of the Affordable Care Act and has voted in line with President Trump 100% of the time as of the beginning of March 2017. He has accepted campaign donations from big-name Republican donors and PACs.

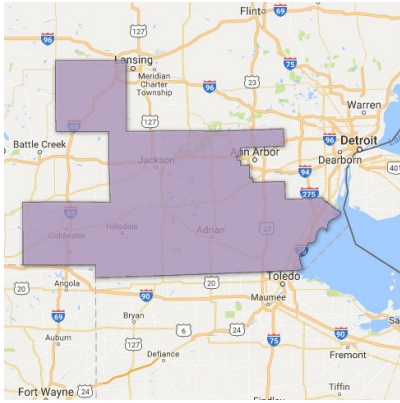
## About the Democratic Candidate

**Introduction:** Democrat Gretchen Driskell hails from a family of Navy veterans and is passionate about community service. Following a career in public accounting, Driskell became a commercial real estate agent while also being a full-time mom. Prior to becoming Saline's first female, and longest-serving mayor (14 years) Driskell's civic passion led her to 6 years of service on Saline's City Council. In 2012 she was elected to the Michigan State Legislature, serving MI-52.

**Issues:** Driskell is a committed supporter of affordable health care, believing that: "Every Michigan family deserves the security of knowing they will never go without affordable healthcare for their children and themselves." She supports preserving Social Security and Medicare and lowering prescription drug costs. She believes that bad trade deals, automation and outsourcing have destroyed the opportunity for Michiganders to make a good living while continuing to live in their own hometowns. Driskell wants to invest in vocational job training programs and support local community college programs that will prepare students for well paying jobs in technical fields.

**Strengths:** Driskell is a trusted candidate who combines her civic and business background with her stellar reputation as a hard-working grassroots organizer who cares deeply about each and every Michigander. While Driskell was working to attract new companies and to revitalize her downtown into one of the best small towns in America, her opponent was taking campaign contributions from Wall Street and putting their profits over creating jobs in Michigan. Driskell loves to campaign and listen to the challenges and concerns from Michiganders where they live. She famously knocked on 25,000 doors when she ran for the state legislature.

Learn more at [swingleft.org/resources/MI-07](http://swingleft.org/resources/MI-07)



## MI-07: Facts & Stats

### Population Centers

- Jackson, 160,000 (metro area)
- Monroe, 21,000
- Bedford, 31,000
- Adrian, 20,000

### 2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 132K (39%)
- Trump: 190K (56%)

### 2016 House Results

- Driskell (D): 134K (40%)
- Walberg (R): 184K (55%)
- Other: 16K (5%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 116K
- Eligible, not registered: 112K

### 2014 House Results

- Byrnes (D): 92K (41%)
- Walberg (R): 120K (53%)
- Other: 12K (5%)

## MI-07: Better Know the District

### Geography

MI-07 includes a large portion of southeastern and south-central lower Michigan. It occupies the space between the larger cities of Detroit, Toledo, Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Kalamazoo, and consists of smaller cities and towns surrounded by suburban and rural areas. The district is made up of Branch, Eaton, Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, and Monroe counties, as well as part of Washtenaw county.

### Citizenry

MI-07's population of 700,000 is predominantly white (90+%), and skews toward those 50 and older. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the median annual household income is \$54,000. More than 57% of residents have attended some college courses, and 23.4% have attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

### Economy

Like much of the upper Midwest, MI-07 is no longer the manufacturing center it once was. However, manufacturing is still a major employer, along with health care and social assistance, and retail. Prominent employers include La-Z-Boy, Allegiance Health Systems, Consumers Energy, and the Michigan Department of Correction. Several labor unions represent manufacturing and other workers in the district.

### Education

Michigan is unique in that it does not fund education with property taxes. Michigan's total 2016-2017 education budget is \$14.2 billion, of which \$1.8 billion is federal aid, and the remaining \$12.4 billion is state funding. MI-07 has two community colleges (Jackson College, with 5,400 students, and Monroe County Community College with 4,400), and five private, religiously-affiliated schools (Adrian College, Siena Heights University, Olivet College, Spring Arbor University, and the arch-conservative Hillsdale College.)

### Elections

In the 2016 presidential election, the district supported Trump 56% to 39%. Past elections were closer: In 2012, Romney won 51% to 48%; in 2008, Obama 52% to 46%; and in 2004, Bush 51% to 45%. In 2008, the district elected Democrat Mark Schauer to Congress. Since 2004, an average of 319,200 people have voted in presidential election years; about 70% of those voters show up for the midterms. 62% of 2016 primary voters voted in the Democratic primary.