

Know Before You Go: MI-11 District Primer

August, 2018 • Researched, summarized, and edited by Swing Left's all-volunteer research team!

Demographic changes and opposition to Trump's election make this open district competitive.

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

About the Republican Candidate

Introduction: Republican **Lena Epstein** was nominated as MI-11's Republican candidate for the 2018 midterm election. Epstein is a businesswoman whose professional experience includes co-owning her family's business, Vesco Oil Corporation. Epstein is mostly self-funding her run for Congress. Epstein has tied herself to President Trump after serving as a co-chair of his Michigan campaign.

Issues: Epstein supports Trump's "America First" policies, including Trump's push for a border wall. Epstein's major platform includes reining in excessive government spending, reforming the tax code, repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. Epstein also supports school choice policies.

Strengths: MI-11 has traditionally been a Republican district, and narrowly supported Trump in the 2016 election. Epstein's close ties and support of Trump may be popular with Republicans in MI-11 who supported Trump in 2016.

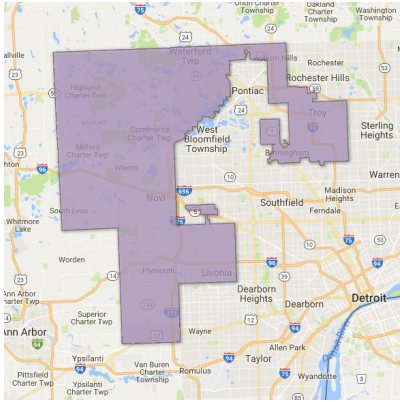
Potential Weaknesses: Shifting demographics have been moving support to Democratic candidates in MI-11. Epstein's close ties to Trump may be unpopular with some Republicans in MI-11, given the narrow margin by which Trump won in MI-11 in 2016, as well as the fact that Trump's approval rating remains below 50 percent. Epstein has been endorsed by outgoing Representative Dave Trott, who has proven unpopular in MI-11.

About the Democratic Candidate

Introduction: Democrat **Haley Stevens** is a former Obama administration official who has spent her career in economic and workforce development. Stevens' progressive policy positions have been popular in MI-11, a traditionally Republican district experiencing shifting demographic trends and blowback from Trump's narrow 2016 win in Michigan.

Issues: Stevens' major platform planks include making healthcare affordable and accessible through a number of measures such as implementing a public option and allowing those aged 55-65 to buy into Medicare. Stevens also favors increasing the minimum wage and investing in public education, as well as policies to protect the environment and support the LGBTQ+ community. She supports comprehensive immigration legislation, including legislation that grants citizenship to DACA recipients. Stevens also supports paid family leave, women's right to choose, common sense reforms in gun laws, and ending the gender pay gap.

Strengths: Stevens served as Chief of Staff on the Auto Task Force—the team responsible for returning the auto industry to financial stability and saving over 200,000 Michigan jobs. Stevens' work on the Auto Task Force has given her a strong understanding of the manufacturing and engineering resources of MI-11. Stevens has a sophisticated understanding of the issues confronting workers and employers in MI-11. During the primary, Stevens was endorsed by Hillary Clinton and the Teamsters Joint Council #43. The August, 2018 primary had the highest voter turnout for a congressional primary in the last twenty years, showing an enthusiasm from Democratic voters that could help Stevens win the November election.



MI-11: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Canton, 90,000
- Novi, 58,000
- Livonia, 95,000
- Waterford, 73,000
- Troy, 81,000

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 177K (45%)
- Trump: 194K (50%)

2016 House Results

- Kumar (D): 152K (40%)
- Trott (R): 201K (53%)
- Other: 26K (7%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 172K
- Eligible, not registered: 97K

2014 House Results

- McKenzie (D): 102K (40%)
- Trott (R): 140K (56%)
- Other: 9K (4%)

MI-11: Better Know the District

Geography

MI-11 consists of the wealthy western and far northwestern suburbs of Detroit. The F-shaped district excludes heavily Democratic Pontiac, but also meanders around to encompass more Republican Farmington and Troy. Many of the population centers started as bedroom communities, but today there are a large number of major employers in the various cities. Birmingham, where Trott lives, is a thriving, wealthy, small city with a cute downtown.

Citizenry

The district is 80% white and 10% Asian, with significant immigrant populations from India and Japan, particularly in Novi, which sits in the northwest corner of the district. Hispanics make up 4% and African-Americans 6%. Many residents are white-collar professionals tied to the automotive industry. The unemployment rate is 4.2% and the median income is \$77,000.

Elections

Trott won the 2016 election by 13 points over Anil Kumar. The district has been under Republican control for more than a decade, with Thaddeus McCotter holding the seat for nine years until resigning in 2012 amid scandal. Despite this history, the district could be won by a Democrat: Obama won it in 2008 and lost by a small margin to Romney, despite Romney's local ties. The growing Asian population also could make it a toss-up district. Marc Corriveau, a former state Representative from the district, was a successful young Democrat who stepped away from politics because of his young family in 2011. His seat was filled by a Republican.

Higher Education

Oakland University in Rochester borders the district and is the major college in the area, though there are a number of smaller schools, including Oakland Community College and Baker College (Auburn Hills), Schoolcraft College, and Madonna University (Livonia).

Industries

MI-11 is the heart of the automotive industry's white-collar employment base. It is home to dozens of small and large automotive suppliers as well as Fiat Chrysler Automobile's North American headquarters in Auburn Hills. Novi and Troy, in particular, host significant automotive suppliers. Other large employers include health care, employment staffing services, and a host of professional services, many of which are tied to the automotive industry.

Tourism

This suburban community has very little tourism, but it is home to the Rock Financial Showplace, a convention center in Novi that brings in significant shows, like Comic Con, large boat shows, and regional conventions.