

**MICHIGAN AGRI-BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
AGRI-BIZ PAC QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR CANDIDATES SEEKING ELECTION**

Rick Olson, Republican candidate for State Representative, 55th District
525 Judd Road, Saline, MI 48176
734-944-0794 (h), 734-646-5286 (cell)
olson48176@comcast.net campaign and personal

Please provide a brief summary of your background: See resume

Public offices held currently and in the past: None (if this question is “elected” offices)

1. Please provide any other information you would like to share with the Michigan Agri-Biz PAC evaluation committee: I have spent most of my career in business management – a great deal in agriculture. In fact, I went to Stanford Law School to be a better agricultural business manager after working for Michigan Farm Bureau after graduate school. My wife, Linda, and I are both Michigan natives, but after law school we moved to Washington State where I had the opportunity to work with the Washington State Legislature for 3 years and a year in the Governor’s Office. Then I spent the rest of my career in business management. Not all of my experiences in agriculture ended in success, as the volatile prices caused havoc with three of the companies I managed. Nonetheless, all served as excellent learning experiences. I intend to take that experience and hit the ground running in Lansing in January.

I have appealed to the voters in the primary election with my experience, my energy, and the fact that I am not a career politician, as I have not been involved in politics since we came back to Michigan from Washington State in 1989 until early last year. In hotly contested primary, I took 49%, vs. others’ 25%, 21% and 4%.

2. Please list the groups/organizations you are involving in your election campaign. I have received endorsements from:

- Michigan Farm Bureau
- Michigan Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business Association of Michigan
- Right to Life of Michigan PAC “meets endorsement criteria”
- County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM)
- Both Washtenaw and Monroe Republican Executive Committees
- Many individual volunteers from “Tea Party” like organizations

3. What do you see as major concerns and opportunities for Michigan agriculture? A major concern is the increasing regulation of agriculture and ag related businesses. As the vast majority

of citizens no longer have connections with the farms, the understanding of farming and farming practices, and their related businesses has declined, and with it, support for ag activities. Loss of farm lands and the inter-generational transfers are also major issues.

Long term, I see Michigan agriculture as well poised, as we get rainfall here, as contrasted with the arid West where irrigation is essential. Water will become an increasingly scarce resource as our population grows, and water now devoted to agriculture will be reallocated to “higher” uses, namely municipal and residential use. Our diversified agriculture with natural rainfall will benefit from the loss of ag production in those arid lands.

4. What is your vision of Michigan agriculture and agri-business currently, and in the next 5 years? I see Michigan currently as a well diversified industry, ranking number 2 in the state. Farming is always a tough game, and associated businesses, both pre-farm and post-farm are also challenged by fluctuating supplies and prices. It certainly is not an industry for the faint of heart.

I see the likelihood of continued consolidation of farming operations as producers attempt to achieve economies of scale and also due to the lack of “the next generation” to take over the farms. I don’t have a clear vision for the ag supply end of the business nor for the processing industries, other than the trend appears to be continued consolidation of firms. Running counter to this vision is the farm-to-local market activity which is growing in popularity, but I see this as only a small percentage of total production.

If you are endorsed by the Michigan Agri-Biz PAC Committee and would like to be eligible to receive a campaign contribution, please complete the information below:

Rick Olson – The Voice for the People, 525 Judd Road, Saline, MI 48176

Campaign Committee Treasurer: Rick Olson

Candidate Signature: 

Date: 8/15/2010

Please return this completed questionnaire not later than August 20, 2010 to:

Michigan Agri-Biz PAC Evaluation Committee, 1501 North Shore Drive #A
East Lansing, MI 48823
fax to: 517.336.0227 or email to: maba@miagbiz.org