

## South Lyon Area Democrats: Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire

*Application for recommendation by the SLAD to voters in support of your campaign.*

*City of South Lyon, Lyon Township, and Green Oak Township.*

*Please email to SLAD candidate endorsement committee: [matthew.kardel@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.kardel@gmail.com)*

Candidate Name (as it will appear on the ballot): Lorie Savin

Office/Position running for (including district number of applicable): 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Judge, Non-Incumbent Position

Date of submission: September 20, 2020

Please share a brief biography and personal background:

I grew up in Oak Park and Southfield, having graduated from Southfield-Lathrup Senior High School. I obtained an AB degree in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Michigan in 1992 and a JD from Wayne State University Law School in 1995. My husband and I have raised our two daughters in West Bloomfield. Abby is a senior at West Bloomfield High School and Elizabeth is a senior at U of M.

I have volunteered with my children's schools and athletic teams, including serving as PTO Treasurer for a two-year term and PTO Diversity Committee Chair for six years. I am also a member of communal organizations that focus on charitable work, gender equality, domestic violence, and social justice. I also volunteer at my temple, Temple Israel, with programs that benefit senior citizens, the homeless, and people who are struggling financially.

Last, I have been very involved in professional organizations that seek to improve the legal system, including addressing issues such as equal access, fair treatment by judicial officers, ethical conduct of judicial officers, civility within the legal profession, and education of lawyers and judicial officers. I am President of the Referees Association of Michigan after having served many other leadership roles of the organization. I have served on the State Bar of Michigan's Judicial Ethics Committee for ten years and am an appointee to the State Bar's Professionalism Workgroup. I was also Treasurer of the Michigan Inter-Professional Association on Marriage, Divorce and the Family. I am a peer editor for the Family Law Journal's domestic violence column. I am also a published speaker and author on topics including ethics, family law, cultural competency, and domestic violence.

Qualifications for running (include previous appointed or elected public office positions and short resume):

I have been an attorney for twenty-five years with a focus on family court, including juvenile court matters. I started my legal career in the family law unit at a legal aid organization because I wanted to help low income individuals have an advocate in court where representation would really make a difference in what happened to them and their family. I was also a court-approved

mediator in this position and completed a significant amount of training and continuing education on mediation. I then took a position with a non-profit organization representing children in abuse and neglect cases, which led me to also represent them in other types of related cases like termination of parental rights, guardianships, adoptions, and delinquency matters. I had the unique opportunity to also participate in one of the first problem-solving courts in the country that served families that came into the neglect system due to a parent's substance dependency. I have also been an attorney in private practice in a small law firm, where I primarily focused on family law matters, but also handled a wide variety of other legal issues including probate court, estate planning, civil lawsuits, landlord-tenant and real estate matters, minor criminal and traffic matters, and social security appeals. During my practice, I have also handled appellate matters.

For the past 17.5 years I have served as a referee with the Oakland County Friend of the Court. I conduct evidentiary hearings in family court related to custody, parenting time, child support, and spousal support modification motions and enforcement of those orders. I have spent thousands of hours in high-conflict cases demonstrating patience, diligence, and an earnest effort to understand the specific facts and apply those facts fairly to the law in every case that comes before me. In the course of my job I also utilize my mediation skills to help parties resolve disputes without the need for an evidentiary hearing because I know that parties are more invested in the outcome if they come to agreement. By ensuring that parties have a full and fair opportunity to be heard in court, fewer than 1% of the matters I hear are taken to the judge for a decision. Additionally, I draft clear recommendations and proposed orders so the parties understand what the decision was, why it was made, and what they are expected to do under the terms of the order.

I hope to serve in the Family Division of the court because that is where my passion lies and I am committed to staying in that division for my entire career on the bench. Most judges do not want to do this because of the nature of these high-conflict, emotionally charged cases, which results in a revolving door for families that have cases lasting many years, if not for their child's entire minority. I look forward to return to juvenile court, too, because I would like to help families involved in the neglect system and young people in the juvenile justice system. Judges in the Family Division hear divorce, paternity, custody, child support, personal protection order, abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights, adoption, guardianship (only certain types), name change, and judicial bypass (when a minor wants permission to have an abortion without asking a parent) cases. I have significant experience in all these types of cases except the judicial bypass hearings.

List requirements you have completed for the office (# signatures collected, date filed, fees paid):

I filed 5,152 signatures to get on the ballot on March 18, 2020. I filed 170 additional signatures to supplement prior to the original filing deadline of April 21, 2020. I am the only candidate circulating petitions for this office that was prepared and filed more than the required 4,000 signatures on time.

Amount of money raised as of date of submission: about \$37,000, not including personal loans to the campaign. I have also had a significant amount of labor donated through volunteers.

Principal duties of the office you are running for:

Judges are responsible for effectively and efficiently managing a docket of court cases from beginning to end. This involves hearing motions, conducting settlement and status conferences, conducting trials, sentencing hearings, and evidentiary hearings, and drafting and issuing opinions and orders. Judges also review and sign many orders and judgments that are entered by agreement of the parties.

Judges are responsible for supervising their staff in chambers and assuring that attorneys, litigants, and members of the public interacting with the court are provided information and assistance with courtesy and respect. Judges and their staff also have to work with members of the public that serve as jurors in a way to ensure jury trials are conducted appropriately.

Judges are leaders in the community and must uphold the standards expected of them to serve in this position of authority. This means they must adhere to certain expectations both in their personal and professional lives to ensure that the public has faith in the fairness of the legal system. Judges are not required to beyond the initial training when they are elected or appointed, but should continue their education to stay up to date on changing laws and court rules, new cases, and in other areas necessary to fulfill their role satisfactorily in any court assignment such as cultural competency, diversity and inclusion, accommodations for people with disabilities, ethics, technology, and domestic violence.

Top priorities once elected:

1. I will be an effective judge that resolves disputes in a meaningful, fair, and timely fashion.
2. I will have a courtroom and staff that will provide excellent customer service as our courts are a service to the public.
3. I will continue to improve access to the legal system for everyone and improve civility and professionalism within the legal community by being a role model for these values and use my standing as a judge to effectuate this change.
4. I will partner with community organizations and programs that support struggling families, reduce intimate partner violence, and help our youth avoid entering the juvenile justice system. I know that families and children will have better outcomes if they get support, so they do not need the legal system's involvement. I would also be an advocate for Youth Assistance to try to help them secure more resources to do more in communities across Oakland County.

Plans for communicating with constituents once elected:

I will always have an open door and make myself accessible to the public once elected. I want to expand my existing network of community leaders and encourage them and members of the public to be open and honest with me about concerns they may have about myself, my courtroom, or the legal system in general. As an elected official serving the public, I want to be actively involved in educating others about and discussing our legal system. Whether this is inviting students into my courtroom for a mock trial so they learn about the legal system, being on a speakers panel to talk about how the court functions, or being part of a working group to learn more about barriers the public faces when trying to engage in the legal system and brainstorming solutions to these problems, I want to do this because I see this as part of a judge's responsibility to serve the public. So long as my actions would not be prohibited by the Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct, I would be engaged in all these efforts within the community. The best example of a prohibition would be to discuss a specific case that is pending before myself or another judge.

What are your primary sources for information/news?

I listen to NPR, read the *Detroit Free Press* (paper subscription) and *New York Times* (digital subscription), watch television news on various networks like CBS, ABC, and CNN. Sometimes I watch the news on CBC or listen to the BBC on NPR for a different take on what is going on in the US and in the world. I also read articles that I access online from many different sources that I know are reliable. I also read information from original sources, like a press release from the Governor, a new piece of legislation that was passed, or information on our county's public health department website or the CDC website.

### **Local Issues**

*Indicate your position on the following topics, including solutions. A response is needed only if applicable to your prospective office*

City / Township / County's Master Plan:

Not applicable

Tax Abatement & Business Development:

Not applicable

Local Environmental Policies:

Not applicable

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services:

Not applicable

What do you see as the role of the city / township / county in the school system?

Not applicable

Public Safety:

The court has a large role to play in ensuring the public's safety. I support problem-solving courts that are effectively run. Examples are team-driven court programs that focus on offenders with a mental health problem, substance dependency or have served in our military. I think it is a far better use of our resources to try to address the underlying problems that led to the person committing the crime instead of imposing unrelated punishments like fines and incarceration on the offender. Incarceration in and of itself does not help offenders with mental health problems or substance dependence. In fact, it can exacerbate their problems. This does need to be balanced with a need to protect the public, but both can be accomplished through a well-run problem-solving court.

Effective diversion programs for children that engage in unlawful conduct are key to giving these young people an opportunity to learn from mistakes they have made and help them avoid entering the adult prison system in the future. Early intervention programs are also important for our youth. Examples would be finding real solutions to truancy behavior, instead of suspensions or juvenile court involvement, and programming encouraging healthy relationships and what to do when young people find themselves in an abusive relationship.

Last, as a hearing officer I have always and will continue to treat everyone with compassion, respect, and fairness in my courtroom. I know how to show people that I care about them, but that I will also hold them accountable for their actions and do this regularly. A person's background and personal characteristics should never dictate how they are treated in my courtroom or the legal system itself. I come across a lot of people in my job and must be open to hearing what all people have to say regardless of any differences we may have. I will continue to advocate for this as a judge and advocate for further education of those in our legal system. If the legal system is not just, then we will have compromised the public's safety.

Public Transportation:

Not applicable

Other comments:

Which planks of the Michigan Democratic Party do you feel most strongly about on a local level (select all that apply)?

1. Education: Improving Public Education for Children and Adults
2. Economy: Using Aggressive & Comprehensive Economic Development Policies
3. Job Training: Improving the Skills of our Workforce
4. Trade: Using an Approach Based on a Level Playing Field

5. Economic Development: Improving Depressed Communities
6. Agriculture: Protecting our Farms and Rural Communities
7. Transportation: Providing Access to Opportunities
8. Information Technology: Expanding Access to Information
9. Small Business: Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Self-employment
10. Income: Rewarding Work
11. Taxes: Providing a Sufficient, Stable and Fair Tax System
12. Health Care: Providing Health Security for Families and Individuals
13. Children and Families: Providing Help for Working Parents with Children
14. Coping With Misfortune: Bankruptcy, Foreclosure and Homelessness
15. The Environment: Protecting Our Land, Water, Air and Open Space
16. Social Justice: Achieving Equal and Humane Treatment Under the Law
17. Women: Protecting the Rights of Women
18. Veterans: Respect and Help for Those Who Serve Our Country
19. Youth: Building Citizens Who Will Brighten our Future
20. Seniors: Providing Retirement Security and Needed Services
21. Voting: Nurturing Democracy and Promoting Civic Participation
22. Faith: Connecting Our Party with People of Faith
23. Public Safety: Creating Safer Communities for All
24. Energy: Providing Power to the People
25. Judicial System: Serving the People, not Special Interests
26. Government: Freeing Politics from Money Influence and Special Interests
27. Corporations: Insisting on Corporate Accountability
28. Consumer Protection: Protecting People in the Marketplace
29. Financial Services: Protecting People in Credit and Banking Transactions
30. Providing Proper Oversight of Our Financial System
31. Local Government: Defending Our Democracy

While I think many of these planks are important, the ones I find most compelling on a local level based upon the people that I have met in our community and through the course of my job are the highlighted platforms. In the event you cannot tell what is highlighted when this is printed, the numbers I indicated are : 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, and 25. These planks focus on lifting people up, providing more opportunities, ensuring equality, engaging the public in their civic responsibilities, and taking care of people.

### **Contact Information**

Campaign mailing address (if applicable): 6725 Daly Road #252373, West Bloomfield, MI 48325

Campaign website: [www.SavinForJudge.com](http://www.SavinForJudge.com)

Campaign social media (identify platform, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.):

<https://www.facebook.com/SavinforJudge/>

<https://twitter.com/savinforjudge>

<https://www.instagram.com/savinforjudge/>

Campaign hashtags: None

Campaign contact name and title (manager / assistant): Adam Larky, Campaign Manager

Campaign contact preferred phone number: (248)705-6772

Campaign contact preferred email address: adam@savinforjudge.com

Other contact & media info: none

**Thank you for submitting your candidate info to SLAD. By submitting this information, you agree that all information submitted, except for the \*\*starred items (candidate preferred email address, phone number, and street address), can be made public and shared on SLAD online platforms and physical documents.**