An Open Letter to the People of District 80 and Michigan,

First and foremost, it has been a tremendous honor to serve you and I deeply regret that I have let so many people down by some of the personal decisions I have made, and I am genuinely sorry for that. I want to sincerely apologize for the difficult road this has been for our district. During the extremely hard moments preceding my expulsion, at 4:15am on September 11th, I addressed my colleagues on the House floor, which you can view here (Found at ClickonDetroit) where I explain in part why I pressed on to see it all the way through.

Through this process it has weighed heavy on my mind that the voters of Allegan County had no voice in what was happening. I have spent the last 8 months fighting for the voice of our district in Lansing and I believe the voters, not Lansing, should have the power to determine who they want as their representative. After discussing as a family what the best path forward would be, we decided it was to continue to fight to give the voters a voice in this matter. So yesterday I filed as a candidate for the upcoming election to fill the seat of State Representative. Already I am hearing reports that Lansing is trying to configure some political maneuvering to prevent or influence your voice in this matter.

In about 6 weeks you will get to cast a vote regarding who will be representing our district. Serving you and fighting for the promises I made at your door has been extremely important to me. The picture that has been painted over this past month is a distorted and an inaccurate resemblance of the last 8 months and it’s time you get to hear some of the rest of the story. Regardless if you decide to cast your vote for me or not, there are some things that I believe the people of Allegan and of Michigan ought to know about their government. It cannot all fit into one letter, but here is a start.

On January 15th, during an off site caucus meeting on the day after being sworn in, Speaker Cotter asked all the Republican Representatives to sign a pledge to commit to voting with caucus on all procedural votes and standing with caucus on difficult votes and issues. It was disturbing and offensive to me to be asked to pledge my vote to the caucus, instead of my district.

Your voice and your vote should not be relinquished at the door and pledged away to someone else. Therefore, I refused to sign the pledge and my refusal led to a private meeting later that day with the Speaker, where he informed me that signing the pledge was required. My response was that I would only sign on the condition that I could make changes to put my district first in all of my decisions. Later, back at my office I duplicated the modifications I made on an extra copy and that copy is attached here.

Since the beginning I have experienced tremendous pressure to vote with the caucus above all else, and since the beginning I have stood strong to cast the votes I promised I’d cast, regardless of the cost. Due to standing firm for the district, I was told a number of times that I wasn't displaying that I was on “the team”. However, to me, my team was the team that sent me there, my team was my district and the people of Michigan. I made it clear that I worked for you, not for the caucus or the Speaker.

In hindsight I could have been more diplomatic about how I addressed this situation, and if re-elected I would try and have a better approach to Lansing and my colleagues who serve there. However, I do not regret putting my district and the people of Michigan first above everything else while I served. You have a right to decide what your expectations are of your representative and what you consider as effective, whether it is voting, sponsoring legislation, constituent services, committee responsibilities, communicating with the district, etc..

Each candidate who runs makes campaign promises of what they hope to do if elected to office. With a family with three teenage children, I knew that I would not be able to attend all the meetings around the district as the previous Representative. However, I felt confident in the local leaders who were elected, so I set up town halls and coffee hours around the district, posted my votes on Facebook, sent out email updates, made calls and wrote letters to constituents, and also attended meetings as I was aware and able.
As a new Representative, I made it a priority to make sure I did my due diligence in the responsibilities of voting, legislation, and committee work since they fell to my shoulders alone. I ran on a clear platform of standing strong for life, limited government, liberty, and not raising taxes on the people of Michigan. I promised to vote and sponsor legislation according to those platforms and I have followed through on those promises I made to you.

My record of nearly 300 votes shows an unequivocal stand against increasing spending, taxes, fees and regulations on the people of Michigan. Click here to see my complete voting record. Instead of attending the typical Lansing cocktails parties, I spent many nights preparing for upcoming votes, speaking at events against Prop 1, and combing through budgets and finding 23 possible ways to pay for the roads without raising taxes.

Constituent services were also very important to me and when I saw that the office was not meeting standards I began to make changes. When addressing the issues with staff did not work, I interviewed and hired new staff with 30 years experience in management and administration. Over these months I have met and talked with with nurses, doctors, right to life leaders and activists, firefighters, road commissioners, township officials, energy providers, environmentalists, clergy, mental health providers, elected officials, business owners, educators, parents, builders, homeowners, farmers, parents, youth, veterans, etc..

I also followed through on my promises to put forward legislation that protected life, our second amendment rights, free market health care, local control of education, and lower taxes among others. You can click here to view the bills I sponsored, such as Life at Conception, Constitutional Carry, Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, Pastors Protection Act, Repealing Health Care Facility Rationing, Banning Income Tax and Business Tax, Banning Subsidies and Corporate Tax Breaks, Establishing a 5 Year Sunset on Regulations, etc..

I was also working on many others bills such as Part Time Legislature, a bill that would require health care providers to display the costs of their services up front so that people could shop around for the best prices, and a bill that would prevent the government from collecting data on our children through Common Core and the new testing methods.

I poured myself into learning the process and spending hundreds of hours of research, meeting with others, reading drafts, revising drafts, etc.. Also, during my service I did not miss any votes nor did I miss any committee meetings of the 5 committees I served on.

I am sharing all this with you so that you will know that District 80 had a strong voice in Lansing, and that when necessary I stood independent for the people of our District and Michigan. Although the House Legal Counsel, after reviewing the evidence, recommended to the committee that censure would be appropriate, unfortunately Representatives on the committee voted instead for expulsion. It took two failed votes and a 16 hour marathon session on the House floor until enough deals were made to secure enough votes for expulsion.

Through this process I have tried to take responsibility for the things I have done. Although I disagree with many things in the House Business Report, I have admitted that the audio and emails provided in the investigation were accurate and that misconduct occurred due to my involvement in an inappropriate relationship. Although I did not author or send the offensive email in question, there was a conversation in my office with staff regarding a personal family matter which appears may have violated a House Rule resulting in the misuse of taxpayer dollars. I requested to pay back whatever costs to the state that were incurred for the violation but during the hearing the House Legal Counsel said it wouldn't be worth the cost to do the work necessary to calculate the fines. As to the allegations of the RNC campaign, I hired an outside private consultant to help on that race and instructed my staff not to work on that during Lansing hours. I have attached two emails below that I sent to the staff regarding this.

Whether you decide to cast your vote for me on November 3rd or not, it is important to me that you know that you were not forgotten, in fact it was just the opposite, there were many times I sacrificed personally to put my district first and do the best job I could while serving as your State Representative. I truly do care and did my best to stand strong for the interests of our district and the people of Michigan. As we
move forward from here, I pray for reconciliation along with a continued strong stand for the voice and the interests of the people of Allegan County.

With Firm Reliance on Divine Providence,
Cindy