

About Debbie Stabenow

Born in Gladwin and raised in Clare, Debbie Stabenow knows what matters to Michigan. Elected to the United States Senate in 2000, she is respected for her ability to build coalitions to get things done for Michigan and our nation.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and a member of the Senate Energy, Finance, and Budget Committees, she has a powerful and unique role to play in shaping our nation's manufacturing, health care, and agriculture policies, which are so critical to our future.

Among her many accomplishments, she has cut taxes for small businesses and passed initiatives to revitalize our manufacturing sector. She also authored the retooling loan program for advanced manufacturers that is bringing jobs back to Michigan from Mexico.

She is a true friend and fighter for Michigan.

Early Life & Career

Growing up in Clare, Debbie Stabenow learned the value of a hard-day's work from her parents. Her family owned the local Oldsmobile dealership, and her mother was Director of Nursing at the local hospital. She graduated at the top of her class from Clare High School and went on to receive her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Michigan State University. She worked with youth in the public schools before running for public office.

Senator Stabenow was inspired to first run for office after leading a successful effort to stop the closure of a local nursing home. She was elected to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners when she was 24 years old, and in just two years, was elected Chair of the Board. She was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives where she served for twelve years (1979-90) and to the State Senate where she served for four years (1991-94). Her influence as a State Legislator is evident throughout Michigan law - from Michigan's historic property tax cut and small business reforms, to nationally acclaimed legislation to protect children and families.

Elected to the U.S. Congress in 1996 representing Michigan's Eighth Congressional District, she made history in 2000 when she became the first woman from the State of Michigan elected to the United States Senate.

Bringing Jobs Back to Michigan

Creating jobs in Michigan is Senator Stabenow's top priority. Her committee choices reflect her commitment to the success of Michigan's businesses and workers. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the Budget Committee, and

the Agriculture Committee, she has a unique and powerful role to play in shaping our nation's manufacturing, health care, and energy policies, which are so critical to our future.

As Co-Chair of the Senate Manufacturing Caucus, Senator Stabenow has been a successful advocate for Michigan's manufacturing. Motor Trend Magazine recognized her in their Power List for standing up for Michigan's automakers and saving jobs during the global credit crisis. She has passed new tax cuts, grants, and loan programs, such as the Advanced Energy Manufacturing Tax Credit, the Advanced Battery Manufacturing Grants, and retooling loans for automakers that have brought jobs back to Michigan from Mexico.

Senator Stabenow is a leader in the effort to level the playing field in trade, and she has authored legislation to hold countries accountable when they violate trade rules when competing with American firms. She is often heard saying, "We want to export our products, not our jobs." She also authored tough legislation after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 to crack down on international money laundering by terrorist organizations.

Health Care

Throughout her career, Senator Stabenow has made access to quality, affordable health care a top priority. She made sure that the landmark Affordable Care Act, passed in 2010, protected comprehensive health coverage for women including maternity care. Through her efforts, Michigan hospitals were recognized as a national model of quality and safety, and she authored an amendment immediately cutting taxes for small businesses that provide health insurance coverage to their employees.

Stabenow has long been recognized for her efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable, including provisions in the new law that lower the cost of medicine, and she has written legislation to allow the reimportation of safe prescription medicines from Canada. As Co-Chair of the Senate Health Information Technology Caucus, she has been instrumental in getting hospitals and providers to adopt electronic medical records to reduce medical errors and save money in our health care system.

She is also a leading advocate of community health centers, which provide affordable, high-quality care in over 180 communities in Michigan. As part of the Affordable Care Act, she ensured that these health centers would get immediate assistance to expand their operations and provide primary care services to up to 25 million Americans in need. That is why she has received numerous awards and recognition for her leadership. The Michigan Hospital Association has recognized Senator Stabenow for her health care advocacy. In addition, the Michigan Primary Care Association honored Senator Stabenow with its Champion for the Medically Underserved award and the National Association of Community Health Centers recognized her with its Distinguished Community Health Champion award.

Representing Michigan's Diverse Agricultural Industry

Debbie Stabenow has long been a champion of agriculture and forestry, Michigan's second largest industry. In 2011, she became Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee - the second Senator from Michigan to do so, over 120 years after her predecessor, Senator Thomas Palmer, who served as Chairman from 1887-1889.

In the Michigan State Legislature during the 1980s, Debbie Stabenow led efforts, working with the agricultural community, industry and environmentalists to update Michigan's Pesticide Control Act, establishing balanced and effective standards for commercial applicators of pesticides. She also sponsored the Michigan Family Farm Development Act. As Chair of the Michigan House Economic Development and Energy Committee, Debbie Stabenow actively worked to develop more food processing business in the state and to showcase agricultural products as a major economic force in Michigan. As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, the first bill she authored was the Wheat and Barley Protection Act of 1997 to combat wheat and barley scab, a devastating agricultural disease.

As a senior member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, she hosted field hearings in Michigan on the farm bill - the first such hearing since 1915. Whether it's Michigan's extraordinary crop diversity, its 19 million acres of forest land, its abundance of traditional crops, the importance of school lunches, or even Detroit's emergence as a leader in urban agriculture, Senator Stabenow has time and again brought together diverse stakeholders to find common ground.

Keeping our food safe and our children healthy has been a top priority for Senator Stabenow. She developed legislation to help producers and processors comply with new FDA food safety regulations. She also co-authored the original fruit and vegetable snack program in the 2002 Farm Bill, made it permanent in the 2004 Child Nutrition reauthorization, and expanded it nationwide in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Her leadership on the Agriculture Committee has led to an historic new focus on agricultural research, Michigan's specialty crops, the development of renewable fuels, and critical land, habitat, and water conservation efforts.

Strong Michigan Ties

After her election to the U.S. Senate, the first bill she passed into law was a ban on oil and gas drilling in the Great Lakes. She has fought against attempts to divert water out of the Great Lakes, and is leading efforts to stop the spread of invasive species, like Asian carp, and to clean up and restore our waterways.

With six offices around the State, she responds to thousands of citizens each week, solving their problems with the federal government and bringing resources to local communities for critical services such as new hospital emergency rooms and life-saving equipment for local fire departments.

She is a strong advocate for higher education - working to pass recent increases in college financial aid and securing millions in cutting-edge research dollars for Michigan's colleges and universities.

Senator Stabenow's leadership was recognized by the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs, both of whom have called her their Legislator of the Year. The Great Lakes Maritime Task Force has also named her their Great Lakes Legislator of the Year.

A musician at heart, Senator Stabenow sings and plays both the piano and the guitar. She grew up performing with her family in church and at many community functions. Her home is in Lansing where she is a lifelong United Methodist and a member of Grace United Methodist Church. She has two grown children, Todd and Michelle; a daughter-in-law, Sara; a son-in-law, Scott; and four beautiful grandchildren.