

Funnelling in through the room's central entrances, the Rackham Auditorium at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor rocks with youthful energy, brimming at its capacity of 1,040 for a town hall with former Governor and Assemblyperson and current House candidate /u/madk3p and a performance by the hip-hop group BROCKHAMPTON—personal friends of madk3p (they go way back). Podiumless, /u/madk3p stands up from their stool, gives Kevin Abstract a hug, and high-fives the rest of the group filing out backstage as the crowd applauds. With their mic, the backdrop of the flags of Lincoln and United States, and a small notebook with a few notes, madk3p sits back down and begins to speak as the applause settles down.

Madk3p: "Thank you, thank you UMich! Back in my days in Springfield, I did all I could to support the Fighting Illini an hour and a half away, but perhaps it's time to start bandwagoning with the Wolverines—if this crowd's any indicator, I don't think anyone can beat your home field advantage! I'm incredibly glad to be here in Ann Arbor with all of you tonight. In fact, I just came from our campaign office at Main and Washington, and every volunteer calling voters across the state has left me in awe with their energy for this campaign. We're fighting for a Great Lakes and a country for all of her people, and I couldn't be more proud of all our volunteers across this great state for fighting for this campaign.

Now, as you all know, this is a town-hall but I'd like to begin with a quick introduction of myself and the campaign we're running. I've been a Great Laker my whole life, born in the beautiful city of Chicago, educated at the University of Nebraska—". *The audience jeers and laughs a bit at their failing Big Ten rival (sad! hah!).* "yes, yes, but they're on the up-and-up!—and lived the next several years back in my home city as a community organizer, fighting for reform of the broken Chicago Public School system. Our former Governor /u/el_chapotato brought me into the state government as Lieutenant Governor and soon resigned from office, catapulting me, perhaps unorthodoxically, to serve as your Governor. After a great partial term, you re-elected me back to the Governorship as we--together--successfully took on the hyperpartisanship of then-Republican PresentSale.

In Springfield, I fought to end the War on Drugs, reform the criminal justice system, make the economy work for the many, equalize and open education to all, establish universal healthcare, rebuild and expand our infrastructure, and make the Great Lakes a state open to every single one of her people. I left office for a short time to support union activists in Michigan, but when I saw Republican extremism rip apart our communities across the State, I knew I had to come back to the Assembly where I passed extensive housing reform, put forth criminal justice legislation, and continued to support unions and workers owning their labor. Recently, I was appointed to fill a House vacancy where I boasted a perfect voting record, and I'm running for re-election from my home in Lansing. I'm open to taking questions about my platform, history in office, and plans for the upcoming term. If you have a question, please let the volunteers in green shirts—why don't you all wave?—know and they'll get you a mic."

Student 1: "Hi, my name's Alex, I'm a junior majoring in natural resource management here. I'm worried by the right's positions on climate change. As someone who is deeply concerned by the trend of climate change, giving so much of our land to corporations for factories, as some have suggested in the past, and other high-emission buildings seems reckless and dangerous. Do you support this kind of policy and what do you think we should do about climate change at the national level?"

Madk3p: “We do have a lot of federal and state protected lands here in the Great Lakes, but opening our wilderness up to corporations is the absolute wrong step. In fact, if we want to use open land, we need to sustainably expand public housing in many areas to help quell poverty rates before we start building polluter factories, which I took the lead on by passing the Housing Reform Act of 2019 in the Lincoln Assembly. Now, on climate change, I share your concerns. Of course, we look to the federal government for leadership on issues like this, and the Socialist Party has put forth bold plans for climate action.

TopProspect17, over out west in LN-4, has put forward a revolutionary Green New Deal that takes on emissions in three stages: framework by 2020, 100% renewable energy for electricity and transportation by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050. We might have to be bolder on that final stage and decarbonize earlier, but this bill is a fantastic first step. Now, a lot of folks on the right might tell you we’re going to get rid of jobs. They’re lying. The Green New Deal guarantees a transition for every single person that will be affected by this necessary and patriotic plan, so the hometowns you all grew up in that were factory towns or mining towns will be able to see economic prosperity in the future. We know how those markets are dying today. We can’t rely on them any further, and the Green New Deal will revitalize the heartland by investing about \$900 billion straight into our communities and guarantee a job for every person affected. It’s bold. But it’s necessary for our environment, our economy, our future, and our country. It’s the most patriotic policy we can pass right now.

We also need to expand clean rapid transit across the country—in concert with states, we can assemble that network to help us rely less on cars and more on public transportation. All of the necessary products for that future, by the way, will be built here in Michigan and in other auto industry communities in the state. We are not going to leave a single soul behind. We know how dangerous this crisis is, and we can only overcome it if we’re working in lockstep with everyone else in the country. We have a beautiful state, we have an obligation to keep it beautiful, and I’m proud to champion the best plan for the future of Lincoln and the nation.”

Alex: “That’s fantastic, thank you.”

Mic transfers to another homie

Student 2: “Hi, my name’s Amelia and I’m a freshman double majoring in biology and economics. I’ve seen my share of gun violence as a child in Detroit and, of course, the many mass shootings that have claimed lives across this country like in Parkland and Santa Fe. As Governor, you never took any concrete steps to limit gun violence in this state. What’s your stance and why should voters choose you when you’ve never come out with a plan?”

Madk3p: “Let me preface my response by saying this is a difficult issue for me. I grew up in Chicago and am certainly no stranger to gun violence. Even with that, I respect the Second Amendment. I do not wish to see it abolished under any circumstance, as some have suggested. That being said, I absolutely support reasonable gun control measures that keep firearms out of the hands of people that shouldn’t have them. We need to ban accessories like bump stocks and high capacity magazines that make

firearms more dangerous than intended. We need to increase the buying age to 21 year minimum. We need background checks on all purchases from the second someone wants a permit to the second a gun is handed to them at the store. We need to move towards ending concealed carry which, to me, has been too deadly in our communities to continue support. We need to establish a judicial framework for red flag laws so we can get guns out of the hands of people who intend to commit violence and instead give them the care they need. With Socialists and Democrats who are friendly on the issue in Congress, we can get all this done—that's why I need your vote.

We've got to recognize, though, the threat of gun violence that I think goes under-discussed: police. I will put a bill to demilitarize police on the floor of the House the first day I get there. Minority and marginalized communities, specifically Black and Native, have been targeted by police for decades. We need justice on that front. We'll get rid of qualified immunity so any public official can be held responsible for their actions if they are not protecting and serving the public. We'll find alternatives to policing in our communities, as well as national police accountability statutes, to build a better world from here on out. We have a full plan, are committed to it, and with your vote, we'll make this state much, much safer."

Amelia: "Thank you, madk3p!"

Volunteer gives a student on the opposite side of the room a mic to speak

Student 3: "Good evening. My question's on the topic of criminal justice. When you served as Governor, you took many steps in closing down the War on Drugs and demanding that law enforcement conduct themselves properly, signing an Executive Order to end civil forfeiture. This was great progress at the state level, but we don't know your federal level plan. What do you plan on doing in a full term on criminal justice?"

Madk3p: "Thanks for the question. The short answer is there's still a whole lot to do. I'll note that in Lincoln, under the leadership of myself and many others, we've already [banned](#) state-funded private prisons and legalized [marijuana](#), [LSD](#), and a host of other drugs that the State has been locking folks up for using and possessing while introducing rehabilitation clinics to help our neighbors in need—another reason to support experienced leaders like myself. In the assembly, I put forth legislation to end solitary confinement. In the House, I already put up a [bill to make prison calls free](#), so people can talk to their families--something that demonstrably reduces recidivism, according to a host of studies. There is a lot more work to do.

I already discussed police demilitarization and ending qualified immunity. I'll also unveil a package to protect the rights of the incarcerated, take on the monopolies that control so much of our prison systems, ensure a just transition for incarcerated people, close off the War on Drugs at the federal level, and expand our support for public defenders, civil and criminal, across the nation. If there is one issue I will never back down on, it's criminal justice reform. I am tired of incarceration as a method for public safety. It's a tool for wealthy hacks to lock up working people who don't listen to their demands. Without a doubt, we will make this state about rehabilitation."

“Alright, folks, it’s getting late and I don’t want to hold y’all back from studying, so I think we’ll end the town hall here. Thank you all for coming out tonight, asking questions, and being politically active. We’re making progress in the Great Lakes and across the country, let’s keep that momentum going this summer. Vote /u/madk3p, vote for the Socialist-Democratic coalition, and vote for a heartland for the many, not the few. Thank you all again, good night!”