

POLITICS

Attorney general hopeful Eli Savit's travel cost taxpayers, records show



Craig Mauger

The Detroit News

Updated April 17, 2026, 1:09 p.m. ET

Update: [Washtenaw County prosecutor to repay thousands in gas purchases](#)

Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit has repeatedly used a government gas card to purchase fuel for his travels to and from campaign events for his bid to become Michigan's next attorney general, according to internal county records obtained by The Detroit News.

The News compared the location of gas stations where Savit's county government card was used over the last 12 months with posts on his Facebook page and elsewhere about his campaign stops, finding at least 21 instances where the purchases matched locations Savit was campaigning.

All of those 21 locations — places where Savit's county card purchased about \$838 worth of gas — were outside Washtenaw County.

Savit, who's a Democrat and was first elected Washtenaw County prosecutor in 2020, said his use of the county resources to get him to campaign stops around the state over the last year has been legal because his county compensation package provides him "unlimited use of a county-provided vehicle."

"Expenses related to any personal use ... are tracked and reported as 'personal,'" Savit said Thursday. "The value of those personal trips is part of my personal

income."

Yet, it seems unlikely that some of the taxpayer-backed income Savit has received would have happened if he weren't campaigning for a higher political office.

Michigan law bans government employees from using money or equipment to contribute to a candidate.

Bob LaBrant, a longtime Michigan lawyer and a campaign finance expert, said Savit should have used his personal credit card, not the county's card, to purchase gas.

"I think this is a clear example of a violation of Section 57 of the campaign finance law, using public resources for a campaign," said LaBrant, former general counsel for the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

The documents obtained by The News raised new questions about Savit's work as a county prosecutor ahead of Sunday's Democratic Party convention in Detroit, where Democrats will decide whether to nominate Savit, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald or longtime public defender William Noakes to be the state's top law enforcement official.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, can't run again because of term limits.

Where Eli Savit traveled

The News obtained an internal county record tracking the use of Savit's gas card. It showed a clear pattern of purchases connected to campaign events since he launched his bid for attorney general in May.

Savit's card bought more than \$3,300 in gas outside of Washtenaw County during the last 12 months.

In late September, Savit made a series of campaign appearances in the Upper Peninsula.

"Thank you to the Dickinson County Dems for hosting me — and for the great conversation spanning consumer protection, workers' rights and healthcare accessibility in the western UP," Savit wrote on Facebook on Sept. 30.

Over those same days, in late September and early October, the government gas card purchased \$41 in fuel at a station in Ontonagon on Oct. 1 and \$31 at a station in Iron River on Sept. 29, according to county records.

Ontonagon is about 551 miles away from Ann Arbor, where Savit is the elected county prosecutor.

Savit posted on Facebook that he attended the Ottawa County Democratic Party's summer picnic on July 13. That same day, the county gas card purchased \$48 in fuel at an EZ Mart in Grand Haven, about 165 miles away from Ann Arbor.

On July 4, Savit posted on Facebook that he walked with Democrats in the Clarkston Independence Day parade. The card purchased \$39 in gas at Speedway in Clarkston that day.

On Oct. 11, Savit posted that he had spent time that day canvassing for a candidate for Southfield city clerk. He included photographs of himself holding campaign materials for the candidate. Also, on Oct. 11, Savit's card purchased \$15 in gas at an ExxonMobil in Southfield.

Later that day, Savit participated in an event in Sault Ste. Marie for Democrats there. A photograph on Facebook showed Savit holding campaign brochures. On Oct. 12, Savit's card bought \$36 in gas at a station in Sault Ste. Marie.

Earlier this year, the Michigan Black Summit, which drew an array of Democratic candidates, took place Feb. 6 and 7 in Benton Harbor. Savit's gas card purchased \$39 in fuel at a Shell station in Benton Harbor on Feb. 6.

Are gas purchases part of Savit's compensation?

If he becomes Michigan's next attorney general, Savit has vowed to "take on corporate polluters, protect workers and consumers from exploitation and hold powerful interests accountable."

Savit said he uses the county gas card for trips with the county vehicle because it allows him to track his travel for tax reporting purposes.

Like his paycheck, Savit contended the money from the county "ceases to be county funds when it's allocated to me as part of my compensation."

As of the end of last year, Savit's campaign hadn't disclosed any in-kind contributions from Savit for the gas purchases for the various campaign events. Michigan campaign finance law indicates travel expenses over \$500 in a calendar year should be disclosed.

Asked about McDonald's campaign travel, Olivia Bradish, a spokeswoman for McDonald's campaign, said the campaign and the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office are "separate operations."

"The campaign reimburses the county for any campaign-related mileage," Brandish said.

Republican attorney general candidate Doug Lloyd is Eaton County's prosecutor. The Eaton County Prosecutor's Office only has one vehicle, and it's used for "county official business," said Gary Koutsoubos, spokesman for Lloyd's campaign.

"For the campaign, Doug uses his personal vehicle or his son's vehicle to travel the state, both of which have over 200,000 miles," Koutsoubos said.

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POLITICS

Washtenaw County prosecutor to repay thousands in gas purchases



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Updated April 17, 2026, 4:50 p.m. ET

Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit said Friday he'll repay the county government for spending on his fuel for travel across the state [after The Detroit News revealed](#) that some of the government expenditures had directly supported his campaign for attorney general.

Twelve hours after The News Investigation was published online, tying \$838 in gas purchases to campaign events outside Washtenaw County, Savit's campaign released a statement that said the candidate "will be voluntarily reimbursing the county in the amount of any gas purchases he has made since he launched his campaign."

"As a public servant, Eli has always strived to hold himself to a higher standard than simply what is allowed," his campaign's statement said. "And Eli will always strive to maintain the public trust.

"When, upon reflection, he believes a course-correction is necessary to avoid unnecessary questions or concerns, he will do so."

Savit's statement didn't specify the tally of how much he would repay, but it said he would reimburse the county "in the amount of any gas purchases" he made since [launching his campaign on May 13, 2025](#).

That would equal about \$4,644, according to an analysis of county records by The News.

More: [Attorney general hopeful Eli Savit's travel cost taxpayers, records show](#)

On Sunday, Michigan Democrats will gather for a convention in Detroit, where they will decide whether to pick Savit, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald or longtime public defender William Noakes as their nominee for attorney general.

As Washtenaw County's prosecutor, Savit has a county-provided vehicle and a government gas card to buy fuel for the vehicle.

Internal county records that listed the locations of his fuel purchases and a review of Savit's campaign Facebook page showed at least 21 instances when the purchases matched places outside Washtenaw County where Savit was campaigning.

Some of Savit's gas purchases using the county gas card were as far away as Ontonagon and Iron Mountain in the Upper Peninsula, more than 500 miles away from Washtenaw County.

Michigan law bans government employees from using money or equipment to contribute to a candidate.

Savit, who was first elected Washtenaw County prosecutor in 2020, said his use of the county resources to get him to campaign stops around the state over the last year has been legal because his county compensation package provides him "unlimited use of a county-provided vehicle."

"Expenses related to any personal use ... are tracked and reported as 'personal,'" Savit said Thursday. "The value of those personal trips is part of my personal income."

In his campaign's Friday statement, Savit said the policy of the county prosecutor being allowed unlimited personal travel pre-dated his being elected to the position.

"Though his use of the car for personal reasons is fully consistent with county policies, it is fair to note that this compensation arrangement — which again, predated his tenure — likely did not contemplate the amount of personal travel he has done over the past year as he campaigns for AG," the statement said.

"Prosecutor Savit does not want this to be a distraction from the important issues facing Michiganders. And more importantly, he cares about honoring the spirit of his compensation agreement."

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POLITICS

Michigan Democrat says she broke rules, voted in convention from home



Craig Mauger

The Detroit News

April 27, 2026 | Updated April 28, 2026, 2:14 p.m. ET

Lansing — A Michigan Democrat said Monday that she voted in [the April 19 state party convention](#) from her home in Antrim County, raising questions about whether party rules requiring in-person voting were followed.

The Detroit convention, where Democrats [endorsed candidates](#) for attorney general, secretary of state and university board positions, was hotly contested and drew about 6,600 voting members. It's been unclear in the nine days since the event whether some candidates who lost races would publicly contest their defeats, citing potential policy missteps.

Amid that uncertainty, Cathy Albro, a Democratic former U.S. House candidate from Antrim County, told The Detroit News on Monday that she left Detroit, after getting her credential for the convention, on the morning of April 19. When she arrived home in Bellaire, she voted to test whether it was possible to cast her ballot through the electronic voting system, Albro said.

A copy of the initial unofficial results reviewed by The News showed Albro's vote counted in the races. For instance, she cast a vote for Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II in the race for the secretary of state nomination, according to the unofficial records.

"Yeah, it did concern me," Albro said about being able to vote remotely. "If it's easy to breach something like that, what else is possible?"

For the convention, Michigan Democrats had to become party members by March 20 to be eligible to vote. Then they had to get credentialed in person at the convention.

After that, Michigan Democrats were supposed to receive a link to the voting system and were supposed to be able to cast their votes through their personal phones. However, the convention's rules required them to be present in person at the Huntington Place convention center to participate.

Albro, who posted on Facebook about leaving the convention, acknowledged that she checked a box, saying she was in person at the convention before casting her vote. Albro said the party's leaders can take away her vote if they so choose.

Candidates who participated in the convention have the right to challenge votes through an appeals process, said Derrick Honeyman, a spokesman for the Michigan Democratic Party. The deadline for any appeals is May 4.

"Members were required to be in person at Huntington Place to credential and vote," Honeyman said Monday.

Secretary of State candidate raised concerns about electronic voting

There were concerns about the electronic voting process before the April 19 convention. [Suzanna Shkreli](#), a candidate for secretary of state, asked the party in the days before the gathering to outline its plans to ensure the in-person voting requirements were enforced and to detail its verification processes.

Liano Sharon, a progressive activist from Lansing, had also questioned the enforcement of the party's rules.

On Monday, Sharon said he asked Albro to vote in the convention from her house to see whether it was possible and determine whether the party's system included a virtual perimeter to prevent votes from being submitted outside of the convention hall. It apparently didn't.

"I've had reports from many other people who were also able to vote from home," Sharon said, adding that he's heard of one person who voted in the Democratic convention from outside of the country.

However, Sharon contended that progressive members of the party showed up so strongly for the convention that the voting questions wouldn't affect the results in the main races.

Sharon wasn't the only Democrat who claimed to have heard about people voting outside of the convention hall. Michelle Price-Miletic of Oakland County said she had heard of four or five people who voted from their homes through the electronic system.

Voting started two hours late at the convention. The gathering featured "vile" comments [against some Democrats](#), like U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens of Birmingham, who's running for the U.S. Senate, and no one in leadership went on stage to stop the anger, Price-Miletic said.

"I grew up in New York," she added. "I've seen crap. This was ... I've never seen anything like this before."

More: [Michigan rep rips fellow Democrats for 'troubling' convention behavior](#)

More: [Insider: Tlaib responds to KMR on Democratic convention behavior](#)

What were the unofficial results of the Michigan Democratic Party's endorsement convention?

The Michigan Democratic Party hasn't released official results. However, according to unofficial numbers obtained by The News on Monday, Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit got about 59% of the vote [in the attorney general race](#), while Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald received about 41%.

Olivia Bradish, campaign spokeswoman for McDonald, said Monday night that her team had received voting data from the Michigan Democratic Party and was still

reviewing it.

“We continue to work closely with MDP Chair Curtis Hertel and his team to identify and address all voting issues,” Bradish said.

In the race for [secretary of state](#), Gilchrist got about 58% of the vote, while Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum received about 22% and Shkreli, a former state lottery commissioner, got about 20%, according to the unofficial numbers.

The race for the nomination for two seats on the Michigan State University Board of Trustees was much closer. According to the unofficial numbers, incumbent Trusee Brianna Scott of Muskegon got about 38% of the vote, locking up one of the spots.

Fellow incumbent Kelly Tebay received about 30.9% for the other nomination. Tebay beat state Sen. Sylvia Santana, who received about 30.8% of votes cast, losing by a margin of about 15 votes, according to the unofficial numbers reviewed by The News.

For two seats on the University of Michigan Board of Regents, Regent Paul Brown got about 44% of the vote, while challenger and Dearborn lawyer Amir Makled got about 40%. Regent Jordan Acker of Huntington Woods [finished in third place](#) with about 15%, according to the unofficial numbers.

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POLITICS

Leaked records show Democrats lined up behind UM board challenger



Craig Mauger

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Updated April 29, 2026, 4:16 p.m. ET

Lansing — A Democratic candidate for a seat on the University of Michigan Board of Regents whose [social media posts about Israel drew a backlash](#) from some top state Democrats won his April 19 convention race in overwhelming fashion, according to internal voting records obtained by The Detroit News.

The unofficial numbers collected by the Michigan Democratic Party showed, on average, nearly two out of every three of the 6,500 party members who voted in the race for two seats on the UM board supported lawyer Amir Makled. High-ranking state and congressional officials supported the two incumbents over Makled.

At the convention, Makled, an Arab-American attorney based in Dearborn, effectively unseated Democratic incumbent regent Jordan Acker, a lawyer who's Jewish and [had been targeted by pro-Palestinian demonstrators](#) who wanted the university to divest from its endowment companies contributing to Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza.

Another Democratic incumbent, Paul Brown, got about 44% of the vote. Makled got about 40%, beating Acker, who received about 15%, according to unofficial results of how each participant voted, obtained by The News.

State Rep. Mai Xiong, D-Warren, was among the Michigan Democrats who supported Makled on April 19.

"I voted for Amir Makled because he came to my community, listened to local concerns and made a clear case for how he would serve students, faculty, staff and workers across all three University of Michigan campuses," Xiong said Tuesday.

The convention results underscored the lingering and vocal frustration among some Michigan Democrats toward the federal government's support of Israel's military operations in Iran and Lebanon, less than four months before the August primary election.

Makled [represented several UM students](#) who faced charges after protests calling on UM to divest from weapons manufacturing and Israel. Previously, he shared and then deleted social media posts praising members of [Hezbollah](#), an Iran-backed military organization based in Lebanon that has been designated a [terrorist group](#) by the U.S. Department of State.

Another post Makled shared last year said Republican former U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia was clearer "about genocide than 99% of Democrats."

Makled recently told MLive that criticism of his social media reposts mischaracterized his criticism of Israel.

"The only mistake that I made was deleting them, because they want me looking at tweets and they want the public looking at tweets because they don't want you looking at tuition, labor, free speech, civil rights and who the University of Michigan actually deserves," [Makled told MLive](#).

Makled's social media posts were slammed by high-profile Michigan Democrats before the convention.

Brandon Dillon, a former party chairman, said Makled's posts reflected "a pattern of extremism and bigotry." Likewise, U.S. Sen. Elissa Slotkin, D-Holly, denounced Makled's posts, according to the publication Jewish Insider.

"I'm going to have a problem with any candidate — Democrat, Republican or independent — who shares antisemitic and hateful posts on social media," Slotkin said, according to [Jewish Insider](#).

Convention delegates heavily backed Makled

However, voting records from the April 19 convention showed most party members in attendance didn't see Makled the same way.

About 4,200 of the attendees voted for Makled for one of their two University of Michigan Board of Regents nominations, according to the unofficial voting file.

The internal voting records obtained by The News reveal how every credentialed delegate at the state convention voted in individual races. Under the state constitution, the convention of party activists is held in lieu of a primary election to nominate candidates for attorney general, secretary of state and the governing boards of UM, Michigan State University and Wayne State.

Acker, a lawyer from Huntington Woods who was endorsed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, got votes from about 1,600 attendees.

Among those who backed Makled, according to the file, were Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit, who became the party's endorsed candidate for attorney general at the convention, and Shawn Fain, president of the United Auto Workers.

Savit didn't respond to a request for comment about his vote. A spokeswoman for the UAW didn't respond to a request about Fain's vote.

Two days before the convention, [The Guardian reported](#) that Acker appeared to have made obscene sexual comments about a Democratic strategist and lewd comments about a female UM student in Slack messages. Acker, when previously asked about the messages [by The News](#), said the allegations were "ridiculous" and "fake." The Board of Regents has hired an out-of-state law firm [to investigate the messages](#).

Acker and Brown told members of the Michigan Democratic Party's Jewish Caucus at the convention that Acker had been targeted in his role as regent and in the nomination race because he was Jewish. Brown described Acker's faith as the "elephant in the room."

How Michigan lawmakers voted on UM candidates

The News analyzed the voting records of the members of Congress and the state Legislature who attended the convention.

Among those elected officials, Brown won 35 votes and Acker got 25 votes, while Makled received only 12 votes, according to the results file.

Adrian Hemond, a Michigan political consultant, said the elected officials know what it takes to win elections.

"They don't think he has what it takes," Hemond, CEO of the firm Grassroots Midwest, said about Makled.

Among nine state senators who voted in the race at the convention, only Sen. Sylvia Santana, D-Detroit, who was running for a seat on the Michigan State University Board of Trustees, voted for Makled, according to the records. Santana didn't respond to calls seeking comment.

Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks of Grand Rapids voted for Brown and Acker.

Likewise, U.S. Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet of Bay City supported Brown and Acker. The other U.S. House member in attendance, Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Detroit, backed only Makled, the records show.

After the convention, McDonald Rivet posted [a series of tweets online](#) about the gathering. Without mentioning Makled by name, she said the party had nominated some individuals with "extreme positions" like calling Hezbollah leaders "martyrs."

Those positions "are out of step with my values and those of Democrats across our state," Rivet added.

Tlaib endorsed Makled before the convention, saying he had "represented University of Michigan students who were vilified, targeted and criminalized for their speech."

"Our right to dissent is critical and when students are organizing for justice for Palestinians or protesting for Black Lives or against ICE, we should never allow any university to target them," Tlaib said in a social media post. "The constitutional rights of students don't stop when they enter university property. That's not how it works."

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Staff Writers Beth LeBlanc and Sarah Atwood contributed.

POLITICS

AG Dana Nessel joins call for audit of Democratic convention results



Craig Mauger

The Detroit News

Updated May 4, 2026, 4:50 p.m. ET

Lansing — Three Michigan Democrats, including Attorney General Dana Nessel, are calling for an audit of their party's April 19 convention results, citing problems with the way votes were submitted and counted at the gathering of thousands of party members.

Over the weekend, state Sen. Sylvia Santana appealed her narrow loss in a race for a seat on the Michigan State University Board of Trustees and said the state Democratic Party's leadership didn't enforce a rule requiring people to be in person at the meeting to vote.

The 53-page filing from Santana's campaign contended there were "material errors" in the convention's vote-counting process and requested an audit of all the results by an outside firm. According to unofficial numbers, [previously obtained by The Detroit News](#), Santana finished in third place by about 15 votes for the second of two nominations for the MSU board.

The submission from Santana, a Detroit Democrat, put a brighter light on concerns from some in the party about how the electronic voting system, involving attendees' personal cellphones, functioned at the convention. Santana's campaign said it reviewed location data for devices used in voting and found more than 200 votes were cast remotely, from outside Detroit's Huntington Place convention center.

"Petitioners learned that members were voting from as far away as Montenegro and Antrim County during the convention," Santana said in her filing.

More: [Michigan Democrat says she broke rules, voted in convention from home](#)

Last week, Cathy Albro, a Democratic former U.S. House candidate from Antrim County, [told The Detroit News she was able to cast her vote](#) in the Detroit convention through the electronic voting system from her home in northern Michigan.

Michigan Democratic Party convention rules required members to be present at the convention at the time they voted in order to participate. If those 200 votes weren't counted, Santana would win by 50 votes, her campaign argued.

The unofficial results, reviewed by The News, showed [incumbent MSU Trustee Kelly Tebay](#) coming in second place, 15 votes ahead of Santana. According to the unofficial numbers, incumbent Trustee Brianna Scott of Muskegon finished in first place with about 38% of the vote. Tebay and Santana each got about 31%.

Santana's filing goes to the Michigan Democratic Party's Appeals Committee. She requested an audited recount in all the convention races to "ensure voter confidence in the election results."

That would include, if honored, the races for the party's nominations for attorney general and secretary of state. Under the current results, Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit won the attorney general nomination with about 59% of the vote, while Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald received about 41%.

In the race for [secretary of state](#), Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II got about 58% of the vote, while Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum received about 22% and Shkreli, a former state lottery commissioner, got about 20%, according to the unofficial numbers.

In a statement Monday, McDonald endorsed Santana's call for an audit. It's critical that every voter and every campaign have confidence in the vote, McDonald said.

"After reviewing the results of the MDP Endorsement Convention, it became clear that votes were incorrectly recorded, people voted who were not onsite, and some votes were not recorded at all," McDonald said.

More: [Leaked records show Democrats lined up behind UM board challenger](#)

Attorney General Dana Nessel raises convention vote integrity questions

Nessel, Michigan's top law enforcement official and an influential Democrat in the state, endorsed the call for an independent audit on Monday afternoon.

Nessel said the electronic voting system didn't correctly attribute her votes. Nessel's vote for attorney general was initially attributed to Savit, according to unofficial records reviewed by The News. However, Nessel actually abstained from voting in the race, according to a spokeswoman.

"There's a substantial and documented difference between voting on a third-party mobile phone application at a partisan convention and the long-established, decentralized process utilized by over 1,600 bipartisan clerks each election," Nessel said Monday.

Other candidates have until the end of the day on Monday to submit their own appeals.

Derrick Honeyman, spokesman for the Michigan Democratic Party, declined to comment on Santana's filing until the deadline passed.

Santana's submission said the party hadn't "fulfilled its responsibility of running a procedurally fair and transparent convention that complies with its own rules and regulations, thereby making it difficult — if not impossible — to honor the results of the convention."

Santana's appeal also said 302 people who cast votes were not on the party's master voting list and 208 voters shared a phone number with at least one other voter, including six members attached to a single phone number

"This means that one person had the ability to cast multiple votes," Santana's appeal said.

Santana's team also cited 16 instances of people's votes being recorded incorrectly and included an affidavit from longtime party member Rochella Stewart of Detroit, who said she received six different access codes for voting at the convention.

Stewart signed her affidavit under the penalty of perjury. It also said she was concerned about whether her vote "was actually counted."

The list of about 6,600 convention voters previously obtained by The News didn't include Stewart's name. It wasn't clear why.

Lawyer Melvin Butch Hollowell, former corporation counsel of the City of Detroit, filed the appeal on Santana's behalf.

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