



MI3CD Democrats Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2025

- I. Call to Order - 11:38am
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll Call of Officers
 - A. Present: Chair Donna Secor Pennington, 1st Vice Chair Gary Stark, 2nd Vice Chair Pamela Redd, Secretary Chris Herweyer, Treasurer Richard Williamson
 - B. Absent/Excused: none
- III. Credential Report & County count
 - A. Chris Herweyer reported that a quorum was present (9/19 district committee members and officers)
 - B. Attendees at the meeting from the various counties:
 1. Kent: 9
 2. Ottawa: 4
 3. Muskegon: 5
- IV. Approval of Agenda - Ellen Beal moved to approve the agenda as distributed, seconded by Gary Stark. Motion passed by unanimous consent.
- V. Approval of Minutes (3.31.2025) - Ellen Beal moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Gary Stark. Motion passed by unanimous consent.
- VI. Officers Reports
 - A. Chairperson - Donna Pennington gave an update on the current MDP membership across the 3rd Congressional District. She thanked Gary Stark for his writing and speaking given his experience regarding the situation our nation is in. She reported positively on current engagement among the various counties.
 - B. 1st Vice-Chair - Gary Stark thanked those attending for making it out today.
 - C. 2nd Vice-Chair - Pamela Redd shared that she was gratified to be a part of this group and expressed the importance of the work we are doing.
 - D. Treasurer - Richard Williamson gave a report on the purpose of the money the congressional district committee raises in supporting our candidates and local county parties. The current balance in our PAC account is \$973. He recommended that we get started doing some smaller fundraisers over this year and next as part of our goal to be able to raise about \$9,000 this cycle. He encouraged folks to become recurring/sustaining donors, but our ActBlue account is currently down, so we will make an announcement when that is back.

- E. Secretary - Chris Herweyer shared that responses on our website form are forwarded to him and he will ensure rapid response to inquiries.

VII. Reports of Committees

- A. Communications - Linda Riepma shared that she is getting out 2-3 newsletter publications per month. The next one coming out this coming week will include another piece on “Strong Men and How to Get Rid of Them” by Gary Stark. The website has been updated as well. The chat page on Facebook for MI3CD has been taken down as well as it was not easy to monitor nor productive to the mission of MI3CD. She also shared that she has been working with Comfort Love to improve our structure for social media outreach and posting.
- B. Political Organizing - Sarah Woolsey announced that she has been hired as the new Party Affairs Director for the MDP and therefore will be leaving her role as the Project 83 organizer for Kent/Ottawa/Muskegon. She also introduced Nancy who will be the main liaison/point of contact for the Hillary Scholten campaign. Nominating petitions are live and available to get Hillary Scholten on the ballot for her 2026 reelection campaign. If you would like to help circulate petitions, that would be greatly appreciated. You are only allowed to sign one petition per seat to be elected for that office (i.e. only sign one nominating petition for the 3rd Congressional District).

- 1. Linda gave Sarah a gift from the MI3CD to thank her for her service.

VIII. State Central Report - Bridget Fox forwarded a report on what's been happening at the State Central Committee, including a review of election results, getting back to grassroots organizing, statewide organizing work that MDP Chair Curtis Hertel is working on, election of officers and DNC members, and ensuring that we hold onto all of our seats in 2026.

IX. Guest Speakers

- A. Mark Totten is running for the Democratic nomination for Michigan Attorney General in 2026. He shared some info about his background, growing up in Kalamazoo, teaching at MSU, running for Attorney General in 2014, serving as Governor Whitmer's Chief Legal Counsel during her first term, and serving as the US Attorney for the Western District of Michigan in the Biden Administration. His career has been focused on fighting for Michiganders, protecting our rights, and pushing back against those who would take away our democracy. If nominated and elected, one of his main goals would be to rein in the executive overreach of the Trump Administration and focus on protecting Michiganders' civil rights.
 - 1. The nomination for Attorney General is chosen by party convention, NOT by primary. MDP members attending the early endorsement convention likely to be held on April 19, 2026 will determine our nominee for Attorney General, as well as a number of other offices to be elected in 2026.
 - 2. Mark took questions from attendees relating to how he is messaging his campaign and how he will work to hold Trump accountable.
 - 3. Go to <https://marktotten.com> to learn more about his campaign.

X. County Democratic Party Reports

- A. Kent - Kim Gates reported on what the Kent Dems have been up to in Q2 of 2025. Their annual gala with special guest State Senator Mallory McMorrow brought in record profits. The Kent Dems have endorsed 4 candidates for local office in 2025 and have begun an off-year issue-based canvassing effort late in May. Participation in local protests and events has increased as well and our communications/social media efforts have also grown dramatically since the beginning of the year. A speaker series titled "Do Something Now: Ask Me How" has begun as well and will be continuing into Q3. A Kent Dems and allied organizations events calendar has also gone live on [the website](#).
 - B. Ottawa - Larry Jackson reported on what the Ottawa Dems have been up to in Q2 of 2025. Their communications outreach has seen a lot of growth and events have drawn a large number of attendees. He encouraged attendees to stay for the Ottawa Dems Picnic Fundraiser immediately after this meeting. There are 18 candidates for office that are attending the event today. Linda then shared that a new Northwest Ottawa Democratic Club has been chartered.
 - C. Muskegon - Susan Fabrick reported on what the Muskegon Dems have been up to in Q2 of 2025. They are holding a couple events each month to keep folks from all parts of the county engaged. They've experienced a trend in the townships over the past decade where they've become increasingly Republican-leaning, but they're working to reverse that trend. Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson was the keynote at their annual gala fundraiser and longtime activist Patsy Petty, who recently passed away from cancer, was able to attend and was honored for her lifetime of service. They have a new youth-based group that is working to engage that age group. They are also working on a series of informational handouts relating to the effects of the Big Ugly Bill locally. A community roundtable oriented around the Black community is being planned to help build bridges and increase voter engagement. They have another fundraiser coming up on Thursday, July 17 on the Aquastar in Muskegon Lake from 7-9pm. Tickets can be purchased online at www.muskegondems.org.
- XI. Old business - none
 - XII. New business - none
 - XIII. Good and Welfare
 - A. Ellie Daniels from Muskegon County shared that over 11,000 people attended Muskegon Pride this year which is a huge increase from last year. She shared that State Representative Will Snyder (D-Muskegon) voted with Republicans on the nonbinding HR 40 earlier this year which encourages high schools to not allow trans girls to compete in sports, but he has been held accountable by local party members since then.
 - B. Richard Williamson from Kent County spoke to the battle happening in Lansing right now over the state budget which has still not been passed. Democrats in the State Senate have been pushing back to protect funding for things like universal school meals from cuts that Republicans in the State House have been pushing. The 3rd Congressional District sits in prime territory for keeping and expanding our majority in the State Senate (flipping SD-30 and SD-32).

- C. Comfort Love from Kent County spoke to the need for us to effectively communicate our Democratic message to win in 2026 and going forward.
 - D. Chris Herweyer from Kent County spoke about the Trump administration action to force the Campbell Coal Plant to remain open as it was getting ready to shutter. There will be a rally/press event held at a park near the plant on either July 29 or 30 to help hold Consumers Energy and the Trump administration accountable. More details coming soon.
- XIV. Adjournment - Motion by Ellen Beal, seconded by Gary Stark. Meeting adjourned at 12:48pm.