



Lapeer County Democratic Party Newsletter

December 2024

Volume 4, Number 41

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- Information about LCDP and other news.

Interesting web pages

<https://www.secure.actblue.com>

You can make political contributions to LCDP

<https://www.michigandems.com>

Home to Michigan Democratic Party

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Find us & follow us at:

www.lapeercountymichigan.com (web page)

<http://www.facebook.com/lapeerdems>

Lapeer Dems meet the fourth Thursday of the month at 6pm (potluck then meeting) in the Lincoln Room at the Center Building, Lapeer.

Lapeer Democratic Party News:

Join the Lapeer Dems on December 5th for a holiday get together. A

ham will be served and our potluck starts at 6pm. Free will donations will be collected for Habitat for Humanity our 2024 selected charity.

This is a time for relaxing and socializing. Dinner will be in the Lincoln Room at the Lapeer Center Building, Lapeer.



Monthly Meetings:

January County Committee meeting is 1/9/25 at 6pm. The meeting is held at our office in Lyric Mall, Lapeer. The January General meeting is 1/23/25 and is held at 6pm in the Lincoln Room, Lapeer Center building.

Welcome New Executive Board Members and County Committee Members

Thank you to these members who will steer the direction of the Lapeer County Democratic Party for the next two years.

Anissa Buffin, Chair
Alexander Diedrich, Vice Chair
Patty Bradshaw, Treasurer
Susan Beal, Secretary

County Committee Members:

Linda Berker	Rose Bogardus	Lisa Hile
Rebekah Fitts	Gigi Griffith	
Dennis Harrand	Daniel Howe	
Rhonda Laur	Laura Mikus	
Jim Mikus	Dante Pirouz	
Shirley Tomczak	Heidi Waid	
Jim Waid	April Jakubowski	

A Letter from the Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, Lavora Barnes

I am writing to share that after over 9 years at the Michigan Democratic Party, nearly 6 of them as Chair, I have decided to not seek re-election as Chair in February.

We have been in the eye of the storm here in Michigan, and I'm immensely proud of the work we have done and the organization we have built together. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to work with this MDP staff who are truly the best in the business. I have had the honor to work side by side with Michigan's amazing elected Democrats, many of whom have been true partners and for that I'm grateful. And this party is lucky to have strong volunteer leaders who serve with power and dignity as Executive Committee members, State Central Committee members, and officers of local organizations.

I look forward to taking on new challenges, pursuing projects close to my heart, and continuing the fight for what is good and right – for all of us and for our families. (Original letter was longer.)

In Solidarity, **Lavora Barnes**, MDP Chair

What Happened in 2024... and Why

Election Night was far from pleasant, bordering on manic, for many of us and for most the overriding question was “What HAPPENED!!!” That’s a question that deserves some answers but first let’s get our bearings and understand what did NOT happen.

This election was not a Presidential blow out, a ransacking of Democrats or any kind of mega-mandate for the winner. While the Electoral College makes it look like a landslide (which is one purpose of the College, to reinforce the strength of the win), the reality is very different.

Nationwide, VP Harris lost by a total of 2,563,000 votes – less than 1.5% of the vote count. Say it differently, my friends – only .08% of the vote had to swing to her from the other side and she wins. This was an exceptionally and amazingly close race in the hearts and minds of voting Americans.

It was just as close in a state-by-state exam:

In Michigan, Harris lost by 1.4% - barely 80,000 votes or a .07% swing. In Wisconsin, the difference is 1.1% - 30,000 votes – or .055% of the vote. Georgia’s margin was 2.2% or a 1.2% swing; North Carolina was 2.5% or 1.3% swing and in Pennsylvania a margin of 1.7% is a .09% swing to her wins the election.

Add them all up as needed for a clean electoral win for VP Harris and we get a total of 518,000 votes in 5 states and we’re all attending her inauguration in January. Still, we did get edged out in every state we needed and that screams to us that our problem is systemic, ingrained and vitally important to address facing some critical elections (especially here at home) in 2 years.

What did happen, and we saw it unfolding all through election night as vote totals in various areas were unveiled, is VP Harris underperformed President Biden in every single critical area. Dane County, Wisconsin (Madison) was a prime example as was Philadelphia County, PA and here at home, Wayne, Washtenaw and Ingham Counties. We knew trouble was brewing when turnout in these key areas was lower than the Biden election and that fall-off was all measured on the Harris side. Harris’ results were nearly 3% lower; her turnout simply could not overcome the strong (but not historic) turnout for the opposition.

If we want to see a (modestly horrible) illustration:

In Detroit, Obama won 325,000 and 281,000 votes, Clinton won 235,000, Biden won 241,000 and VP Harris won... 221,000. 20,000 votes there alone was a quarter of her loss in the state and these numbers are mirrored in Saginaw, Pontiac and across the state.

Abysmally, her opponent went from winning 7,682 votes in Detroit in 2016 to 13,000 in 2020 to 20,000 votes this year. Most telling: Harris totaled more than nine million votes fewer nationwide than President Biden in 2020 and nearly all those voters stayed home. And that, my friends, is what happened.

So why did it happen?

There is never one reason or issue causing an epically close election to be won or lost but this year is as close to a single cause as there may have ever been: inflation and the economy.

Notice, 2026 follows historic norms – since 1836, exactly one sitting Vice President has been elected President (GHW Bush) and that came following an unprecedentedly popular President (gag if you want) Reagan and an incredibly inept Democratic candidate with worse campaign.

Vice Presidents must separate themselves from the sitting occupant of the Oval Office but never can without appearing disloyal, alienating the President's supporters, and confusing voters about the policies that governed the country for the previous terms. It is a near impossible task but was doable in this election year with a different focus.

Despite that, VP Harris destroyed her opponent on two key questions: Who has the “mental capacity” and who has the “moral character” to be President but never capitalized on these values with new, innovative, detailed and strong proposals.

What did not work, was all our issues:

Not-Trump was simply a loser. The former President has some of the lowest approval numbers in history but everyone knew what he is/was and isn't/wasn't.' Playing to the never Trump crowd did not win any new voters and, in fact, alienated some of our potential voters who were looking for a reason (ANY reason!) to support Harris.

The amount of time, money, energy and effort that VP Harris and surrogates put into playing the Not-Trump card was excessive and, as we know now, completely unneeded. Voters KNEW she was the Un-Trump; what they didn't know was what Harris was.

That's where issue management and separating from the President was a critical failure.

- 1- Inflation was a killer for much of Biden's term and Harris never pounded the solution drum. “Pandemic Inflation (remind voters why we had mega-inflation) defeated by strong Biden economics.” Scream it! Yell it! Broadcast it 10,000 times a day like they did the Un-Trump ads and maybe we win.
- 2- The Border Is Becoming Secure! Scream it! Yell it! The numbers of illegal border crossings in 2024 were dropping to record lows and no one talked about it. Then follow that with catching and imprisoning the lawbreaking illegals – Prosecutor Harris will DRIVE the capture and imprisonment of criminals...

These two issues were hammered home by the opposition relentlessly. Kamala – Dangerous. Kamala – Open Border. Kamala – High Costs. Made us all sick to see on signs and even worse, it worked.

Therein is another factor we did not expect and, maybe, could not have overcome. The huge rush of support that surged to Harris in September and October scared the bejesus out of the GOP. The influx of money, into all the

battleground states, driving home their theme (Kamala – Dangerous! Kamala – Open Borders!), was incredible and effective.

Two absolute maxims in campaigns are you must never let your opponent define your issues and you must ALWAYS respond to counter theirs. We did neither. In fact, we never even tried. Why didn't we try? Because we had issues that looked good but turns out were not. The Not-Trump issue we covered but there's more:

- 1- 1 - Reproductive Rights was a dud issue and in hindsight (gracious, we are good at that), it's obvious why. In most states, and all the battleground states, the question of abortion access and protection had been resolved. Michigan and Wisconsin passed protections in prior elections. In Nevada, abortion rights are largely protected as well.
- 2- In Pennsylvania and North Carolina, abortion is strictly limited but did not become a driving issue for most the swing voters because it's a state level issue – not one the Federal Government can dictate. Certainly, on college campuses and in college communities, there is no evidence of an increase in turnout.
- 3- Other elements of Reproductive Rights, such as IVF, seem to be simply too abstract and detailed to become effective campaign issues at a national level.
- 4- 2 - The Economy was THE issue of the campaign for all the swing voters (remember – we're only talking about 2% to 3% of the total electorate). While we all know the economy has been strong and bounced back from the pandemic remarkably well, the 3% swing voters are not seeing it. Unemployment or (critically) underemployment among those on the margins and the stress of inflation in rents, housing costs and especially food drove voters to the other side.

But! But! The Other Side offered no solutions to those issues (or for anything else, to be honest) but did register with voters as a “strong leader” “capable of handling a crisis” and with the “right policy ideas”. When the late voters broke, they broke on these measures and they broke against VP Harris across the board.

As they say, fellow travelers, that was all she wrote and for 4 years, we'll be wailing and writing epitaphs if we want or we'll be organizing, discussing and deciding how we're going to recover for the 2026 elections when 13 Democratic and 20 GOP Senators are up for election and, most important to us, the Michigan Senate seat held by Gary Peters will be heavily attacked by the Republicans.

Perhaps more critical, our Governor, Secretary of State and Attorney General seats will be contested and we should not expect the GOP to run the same cast of low quality candidates they ran last time. The Republicans will be gunning for Michigan in 2026 so... let's start working."(Submitted by Gary F.)

“Shocked” by Comments from County Official (Reprinted with permission of author, Susan Beal. Originally printed in the County Press on 11/24/24)

I am shocked that Gary Howell, Lapeer County Commissioner, would describe diversity, equity and inclusion as discrimination in his comments against MSU Extension Service.

Those three factors are used to fight against discrimination, which the less advantaged people in our county are facing every day: How about diversity? “We want only the right people to apply.” What about equity? “We don't care about fairness; the rich people know how to run things.” What about inclusion? “Who do you think you are, you are not important enough to have a voice in our community?”

People came here because they saw a diversity of backgrounds, equity if you worked hard and inclusion into the middle class. These were hallmarks of the United States, as much as the Statue of Liberty and the American flag. To say that these words cause and result in discrimination is hard to understand. That is, unless you are

part of the ruling group who do not want to share the benefits of power. Does sharing mean less for those currently in charge? If we are a Christian nation, isn't sharing what Christianity is all about.

In Defense of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Michigan State University 4-H Extension

It was encouraging to see many citizens and our members speak out in support of the University and the goals of inclusion, despite the actions and attitude of our County Commission. I would encourage you to go to the Lapeer County website and watch the video of the 11/21/24 meeting and listen to the commissioners and our community firsthand.

In case you have not seen the County Press notification or our emails, our Lapeer County Commissioners are declining to sign the memorandum of agreement to work with the Michigan State University 4-H Extension Office. The County Commission has taken issue with the following language of inclusion in the preamble of the agreement:

“As an organization committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, we will work collaboratively with our community partners to ensure participation from the broad human diversity of each community (including race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, height, weight, marital status, gender, gender identity [gender expression], political beliefs, sexual orientation, family status, veteran status or any other factor prohibited by applicable law) and work to make our programs accessible and inclusive of the multiple realities and forms of knowledge that will support equitable outcomes for all throughout Michigan's 83 counties.”

The Commission on November 21st, in explaining their opposition of this language listed several reasons- “this language is divisive”, “we believe in merit based achievement”, “didn't earn it”, “this language is license to discriminate”, “DEI is being imposed on us” as some examples.

At best, these protestations are misguided. If the commissioners had any reading comprehension skills, they could see the language in this DEI initiative is quite simple and really nothing anyone should be fighting over. Since they can't, I will paraphrase it for them: “We want everyone to be able to participate.” That's it, that's all the MSU agreement is saying, in so many words. No Commissioners, it doesn't mean that a 4H winner is going to be picked because of any of their attributes and not merits. No, it doesn't mean your children have to identify as something else. No, it doesn't mean your kids are going to be left out because someone else's kids are included. Don't leave anyone out and don't be disrespectful, that's it. MSU 4H has had over \$11 million economic impact and over 1800 children in programs in Lapeer County. Denying participation in these programs over access to this language is patently ridiculous.

I have seen a lot of conversation recently in media and online that we as Democrats have been too vocal in our support for inclusion, and that to win political races again we need to back off of our support. I wholeheartedly reject that opinion. In fact, I believe the opposite is true, and our imperative now is to prove to our community when we say inclusion we mean them too. (Submitted by Alex D.)

Why Did Election Results Take so Long in 2024?

This information taken from “Votebeat” a nonprofit news organization reporting on voting access and elections)

Here is a list of reasons why reporting election results took time:

- Early voting and ballot processing helped speed up results but remember that 3.4 million Michigan voters voted early but 2.2 million voters came to the polls on Election Day.
- The Warren City clerk in Macomb County would not pre-process absentee ballots before Election Day. Warren is the third-largest city in the state and more than 25,000 voters returned absentee ballots.
- On election night a Wayne County poll worker crashed into a pole while transporting ballots.
- A record turnout of voters caused long lines in some cities. And due to these long lines some precincts remained open after 8pm so voters in line could cast a ballot. Election workers cannot begin their final work until all voters leave the precinct.
- Delivery of ballots from drop boxes across a large city can take time.
- Elections are a human process and some voting processes just take time. Remember that election workers worked 8-16 hours shifts (or more) and this is tiring. The MI Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson, did state that more workers are needed.
- Write in ballots must be checked against a list of legitimate write in candidates, forms completed and tabulated.
- Once polls close election workers still have lots of work to do: specific guidelines are followed and ballots and records are secured before transporting them and several reports are completed. Once the ballots are secure, voting machine tabulations and tapes are made and reports are completed then the election materials are transported to a central location (usually city hall or a county building) then final tabulations begin.

The work done at the polls is time consuming by its very nature, the security of our votes is paramount. Michigan moved quickly compared to other states, for example: Arizona and California. We probably cannot expect things to move faster, we must just do a thorough job. Thank you election workers for your time and diligence – this author has seen it first-hand. (Submitted by Anita H.)

Ballot Proposals and Millage Results in Lapeer County

Almont Renewal of Millage for Fire Department Operation and Maintenance
PASSED
Hadley Township Sale of Spirits and Mixed Drink
PASSED
Village of Clifford Police Protection Millage
REJECTED
Almont Community Schools Sinking Fund Millage Proposal
REJECTED

Link to the full Lapeer County election results

For individual township officers and county wide winners, as well as, to see the vote totals, please visit the website for the Lapeer County Clerk that is listed below:

<http://lapeercountymi.gov/departments/clerk/electionvoterinformation/electionresults.php#outer-296sub355>

The Lapeer Art Association Holiday Show at Gallery 194 in Lapeer

Come immerse yourself in the holiday spirit with art. This year's show features a diverse array of mediums by local artists. Prices range from \$10 to \$1200, find that special gift. The Gallery is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 12 noon to 6pm. Everyone is welcome!

News about the newsletter

This newsletter is published monthly and is available by email to all members. **All members are encouraged to submit articles and information to the newsletter.** Submissions for the newsletter should be 800 words or less and need to be sent by email to the editors by the 18th of each month.

Send submission to the editors:

Anita Harrand at aharr76@hotmail.com

Alex Diedrich at apdiedrich@gmail.com

Lapeer County Democratic Party needs your financial support.

Annual dues renewal is December for the year 2025. Please send your membership donation to:
Lapeer County Democratic Party, PO Box 185, Lapeer MI 48446. Or renew online:

Pay at Act Blue <http://www.secure.actblue.com>