Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter

March 2026

"Courage is more exhilarating than fear and in the long run it is easier. We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it is not as dreadful as it appeared, discovering we have the strength to stare it down." - Eleanor Roosevelt

CCDP's Unique Value Proposition and Why the Strength and Visibility of CCDP Should Be on All Our Minds

By Kathie Elliott. Because we as CCDP members and allies can see with our own eyes the dismantling of our democracy in both the profoundly obvious and seemingly inconsequential actions of Trump and others committed to their own wealth, power and privilege, we have all looked for ways to connect with others to speak out against the daily assaults against our democracy, our systems, and common decency. And, there are many means, organizations, and opportunities available to help us do this important work.

But, it’s been difficult and disheartening that others don’t see what is obvious to me - that many organizations and events overlook critical local needs in favor of high energy, high visibility events that give attendees an outlet for their frustrations but which are not tied to the most important actions we need to take locally. Time is finite, and I see members and volunteers use much of their disposable time and resources engaged in activities that are not directly linked to the needs of Clinton County in ways that produce tangible results at a time when CCDP struggles to find volunteers for county activities. Yes, protests are

critical, as are meetings and calls with legislators, etc. But, those efforts are meant to influence those already in power, who are unlikely to cede it. Does anyone know how many millions of protestors it will take to finally scare Republicans away from the Trump agenda?

But, in Clinton County, it could only take a small number of us to make a difference that reverberates beyond our borders, and we are missing out on tangible, powerful opportunities right here at home. The distinction between CCDP and the many organizations out there vying for your attention is that CCDP is focused on and uniquely positioned to address the needs of residents of Clinton County; our small but critical corner of the world where we sleep, send our children to school, work, pray, shop, and operate businesses.

When your CCDP leadership team is making decisions about when and how to deploy our volunteer resources, our key priorities are: getting out the vote for Democrat candidates in Clinton County; finding Democrat candidates for elected and appointed offices; and supporting and sustaining our elected and appointed Democrat incumbents so they can continue to defend our values at all levels. This means that when CCDP is choosing between multiple activities, we sometimes choose the less glamorous and more uncomfortable tasks like talking to your neighbors and walking door-to-door, staffing a table at protests instead of marching at protests, and sending postcards instead of standing outside Barrett's office on the off chance a staffer will walk by. To be clear, these are all great, and, to be honest, I would love to have time to do these activities too. But, there are many fundamental activities that we want to do here in Clinton County to meet our core goals and we often struggle to get volunteers. We seem the same members volunteer locally over and over again, which can lead to burnout. And there are higher-level activities that we can't invest in unless the basics are covered. This has been a source of frustration for some members who would love us to be working on higher order projects (as would we), but who aren't volunteering to help us first with the core needs.

So, I'm asking you to consider making a bigger impact in Clinton County by signing up for our volunteer activities and putting at least some of your energies directly into the growth and visibility of CCDP at local events. And, when you do go to events beyond Clinton County (because you absolutely should be part of those great programs), please keep your eyes and ears open for other Clinton County residents and introduce yourself to them. Be sure to tell them about us, and invite them to a meeting. Even away from home, please be thinking about ways you can get out the vote for Clinton County and recruit CCDP members or local candidates. Let's make sure we are routinely directing our energy, wherever we are, to those three key Clinton County priorities: votes, candidates, and support of current officials. It will make a big difference towards meeting the ultimate goal of electing Democrats in November!

Membership Deadline - Don't Miss Your Chance to Vote

By Kathie Elliott. Your MDP/CCDP membership entitles you to vote at the county and state conventions, where resolutions and candidates are discussed and endorsed. The deadline for membership to vote at the Clinton County Convention on March 21 has passed, but you still have time to join or renew your membership in time to vote at the April 19 Michigan Democratic Party State Convention, Constituency Caucus meeting, or Congressional District Caucus.

MDP membership is required to belong to CCDP, and it also determines the dates for your membership in CCDP. We are notified by MDP when you join and when your membership has lapsed. If you are a member on or before February 19, you are eligible to vote in both the County and State Conventions. If you join or renew after February 19, but before March 20, you cannot vote in the County convention, but you can vote at the state convention. If your membership lapses between February 19 and March 21, you must renew it on or before March 21 to participate in the County Convention. If it lapses between March 21 and April 19, you must renew it on or before April 19 to participate in the State Convention. Complete details about membership eligibility are covered in the **MDP Call to Convention**.

Please **email us** if you'd like to check on your membership status. Join or renew online by **clicking here**. Printable applications can be **found here**. Note that printed membership applications may take several weeks to be received and processed.

"Big Gretch Out" - Governor Whitmer's Last State of the State Address

By Tim Hughes. In her sixth and final State of the State address, Governor Gretchen Whitmer set legislative goals for her last year in office and looked back at seven years of progress on kitchen table issues that helped improve the lives of Michigan's working families. Her 2026 legislative goals focus on literacy, housing and health care affordability.

Whitmer called for enactment of an Every Child Reads program that helps parents encourage reading earlier in life, when young people's brains are primed to learn, including funding of free, full-day PreK education, because studies show that kids in PreK are more likely to achieve above grade learning levels. She called for statewide effective curriculums, funding of professional learning for teachers, and extra help and tutoring for struggling students who need more support.

The Governor hailed the success of her previous housing initiatives, pointing out that 6,000 state residents were able to buy their first homes last year with mortgage and down payment assistance loans, helping to make Michigan's homeownership rate higher than the national average. She called for a new state affordable housing tax credit to incentivize the construction of new homes for working families and urged the elimination of "nonsensical" construction requirements and streamlining of zoning ordinances.

Last year, the Republican Congress and the President slashed Medicaid and SNAP by $1 trillion, ripping health care and food away from millions of Michiganders. Their actions allowed the cost of Affordable Care Act insurance policies to skyrocket. The Governor called on Congress and the President to "renew the ACA subsidies to provide real relief to Michiganders who now must pay thousands more for the same coverage they had last year. She proposed several common sense actions to make health care more convenient and more affordable, including capping interest rates on medical debt, preventing medical debt from showing up on credit reports, requiring hospitals set up financial assistance programs for patients, and banning liens or foreclosures on homes because of medical debt.

Looking back on her first seven years in office, Whitmer took pride in her record of accomplishments, including eliminating taxes on retirement, tips, overtime, and Social Security; ensuring that insurers can no longer charge more for preexisting conditions; enacting a law to require that mental health is covered equally as physical health, making Michigan the first state in the nation to do so; establishing the best earned-sick time policy for workers in the country; repealing the state's anti-labor right-to-work law, the first state to restore workers' right to organize for better pay and benefits in 70 years; making abortion a constitutional right so women can have control over their own bodies, lives, and futures; enacting common sense gun violence prevention laws, including background checks, safe storage orders; and protecting LGBTQ+ Michiganders against discrimination in their homes and at work by law.

Whitmer closed her address by thanking Michigan citizens for giving her the opportunity to lead the state. "I start and end every day thinking about you.

Because of you, the state of our state is strong," she said. And because of you, I know it always will be. Big Gretch out!"

No Kings III on March 28 - Make Your Plans Now

By Mari Douma and Monica Goble. The 3rd No Kings national day of events will take place March 28 from 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m. and will be a day of nonviolent and peaceful protest. In Lansing at the State Capitol, participants will first hear from several speakers and will then have the option to march as a group along Michigan Avenue. Collaborating groups include Courage in Community Coalition, Indivisible Michigan 7th, SPARC (Solidarity, Progress, Action, & Resistance Collective), the Crowded Table Coalition, Bee Accepting, MI Resist, and Common Defense. Prior to the Lansing No Kings event, the St. Johns Action Coalition will gather in front of the St. Johns Courthouse from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. **In support of both of these important gatherings, CCDP's office will be open from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** to allow people to meet beforehand, mingle, make signs, and join in the solidarity of the events. Additionally, Shiawassee Dems have shared that they will be gathering from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at Curwood Castle Park, 400 West Main Street in Owosso. We have lots of options to show up and be heard!

The most recent No Kings event in October drew crowds of about 7 million across the country, with more than 2,700 events across all 50 states. Planning a safe and productive event for an expected 10,000 or more people at the Capitol requires a community-wide effort and financial support. One of the goals for the March 28 event is to improve the sound system so the crowd can clearly hear those speaking. Monetary donations are encouraged, using our **local Indivisible ActBlue link**. Volunteers are also needed to welcome people, staff information booths, for setup and take down, and to serve as marshals, medics and as mental health support. Some positions require specific skills and experience, but many do not. To volunteer for a shift or to help supply needed items, please **use this link**. Additionally, the medics for this event are self-funded, but they do have an **Amazon wish list** for those who want to support their efforts. Questions about all things No Kings can be directed to **Indivisible Michigan 7**.

While just taking in the many different signs and costumes makes it a worthwhile afternoon, our involvement is critically important in the ongoing effort to stand up to Donald Trump and his MAGA agenda. As the No Kings website so aptly states, "each time we show up, we disrupt President Trump's attempts to rule through repression and remind the country, and the world, that people

power is our path to a truly free America...If this Administration believes we will roll over and surrender our freedoms, they are mistaken." Let's all do our part - whether that is volunteering, donating, or protesting. We will not give up!

Congressional 7th Dems Making Strides to Defeat Tom Barrett

By Melany Mack. The meeting of the 7th Congressional District Dems on February 19 was well-attended, organized, and productive—due, no doubt, to the all-star members on the organization's board. Check out their biographies on the **7th Congressional Democrats' website** to learn how very well-qualified and experienced they are. Chair Liam Richichi shared that the board meets monthly with the chairs of the county parties in the district (Clinton, Eaton (majority), Ingham, Livingston, and Shiawassee and small parts of Genesee and Oakland Counties. CCDP is grateful for their collective leadership!

Chair Richichi requested a moment of silence to acknowledge the deaths of 32 individuals killed by ICE before giving his report. It is very well known throughout the district that Tom Barrett has marched in lockstep with the Trump administration and against the interests of the people in the 7th District. Chair Richichi encouraged everyone to call and write Rep. Barrett to hold him to account for his actions. They've created an online "**Barrett Tracker**" to document contacts made by constituents and record any responses that were received. Chair Richichi requested that the tracker be faithfully used each time someone contacts Barrett's office. The plan is to broadcast widely how unresponsive he has been.

It was noted that members attending the state Democratic Party's convention on April 19 will be voting to select a candidate for Secretary of State and for Attorney General, as well as two Supreme Court judge candidates. In addition, candidates will be selected for the State Board of Education, MSU Trustees, Wayne State's Board of Governor, the University of Michigan's Board of Regents. You must be a member of Michigan Democratic Party for at least 30 days prior to the convention to vote. To meet that deadline, **join or renew online** by 11:59 p.m. on March 20.

A lot of activity is happening as part of various 7th District Dems committees. Vice Chair Sheila Nicholas is working on Rules and By-Laws; Treasurer Marie Wicks is focused on Communications and encourages everyone to follow **Mi7Dems** on social media. Joann Galloway heads the Policy & Resolutions committee. In addition to the committees, there are also several caucuses. We heard from Karl Syme who is part of the Rural Caucus and from Zak Spurlock, chair of the LGBTQ+ Caucus. Stakeholder reports were given by most of the counties in the 7th district. Leading off was CCDP's own Matthew Boak who did

a great job summarizing all the progress that has been made building a stronger party in the county. Susan Anderson provided an update on the Blue Brigade and shared the exciting news that Jocelyn Benson, candidate for governor, will be at their meeting in March.

There is a lot happening with MI 7th Congressional Democrats! They are laser-focused on defeating Tom Barrett and electing Democrats up-and-down the ballot. The board is striving to create unity in its messaging, and they are devoted to working with all the county parties in the district. We are fortunate to have them in place for the elections this year. You can help them achieve their goals by **donating** to support the work they are doing. Thank you!

Celebrating Women's History Month

By Monica Goble. In 1987, after petitioning by the National Women's History Project, Congress passed legislation designating the month of March as Women's History Month. This year's theme, as designated by the National Women's History Alliance, is "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future." Its website features numerous resources to spread the word, including a dedicated **webpage and toolkit**.

From the website: "As we look to address the many issues our world faces today, the past - women's history - is a key resource to find both solutions and sources of empowerment. From looking to historical women for inspiration to analyzing and adopting the tactics used by past female leaders and activists, women's history provides many important lessons. We can learn from the past how to create a better future. This can empower people and institutions to take action toward sustainability, equity, and justice within their spheres of influence. Building connections across generations, regions and disciplines can foster collaboration, mentorship and shared learning."

Women's history is an essential and indispensable part of our country's narrative. Here in Michigan, "**Those Women From MI**" - Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel, and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, were elected in 2018 and reelected in 2022. They've built a national reputation as strong female leaders. Museums and libraries across the state will be celebrating women's history throughout the month. The **East Lansing Public Library** is a great local resource as is the **Henry Ford Museum**.

Right here in Clinton County, CCDP is partnering with the Basic Needs Center in St. Johns to collect donations for women in our community. We are collecting unopened lotion, hand soap, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, and menstrual

products. If you have items you would like to donate, please bring them to our March office hours on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. (March 28's hours are 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.). If you have items you would like to donate, but cannot make those hours, or have questions, please email **Shelby Neathammer** with subject line: CCDP Donations.

What to Expect at CCDP's March 21 Convention

By Kathie Elliott. Are you wondering what to expect at the CCDP County Convention on March 21? For new members, your first county and state conventions may feel a little overwhelming. Here's what you can expect at our county convention March 21 which begins at 10:00 a.m. and will be held at CCDP's office, 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

CREDENTIALING
When you arrive, you will be greeted and asked for your name so you can be credentialed, meaning we confirm your eligibility to vote in, and accept assignments during, the county convention. Eligibility means you were a member of MDP/CCDP on or before February 19 with no lapse in membership between February 19 and March 21. In the event your membership lapses between February 19 and March 21, you may renew prior to March 21 (keep your proof of membership), including being able to renew your membership before the convention begins. This is for renewals only. If you are a Precinct Delegate with a lapsed membership, you may renew your membership on site prior to the convention.

CONVENTION AGENDA
This year's agenda includes the Call to Order, election of Convention Officers, reading of the Credential Report and Rules Report, election of County Committee Members, election of a male alternate to the state Credentialing Committee, election of a female member to the state Rules Committee, the consideration of resolutions, and other announcements. We are currently expecting to review approximately half a dozen resolutions which will be sent to members in advance. This discussion may cause the convention to go longer than an hour, but typically the county convention is under an hour.

We hope that you will stay after the convention to visit with other members and to make signs for No Kings 3 which takes place the following weekend. We look forward to a strong turnout and seeing many members on March 21!

Save the Date for Pints and Politics on April 15!

CCDP hopes to see you on April 15 at 5:30 p.m. at Phillip's Cider Bar, 3000 Vine Street, in Lansing for our second Pints and Politics gathering. In addition to

time for mixing and mingling, we will also provide the opportunity to build upon some of the conversational skills we've learned by reading Monica Guzman's *I Never Thought of It That Way* and Amanda Ripley's *High Conflict*. This will be an easy way to gain confidence in having short conversations about critical issues with an eye towards canvassing and talking with neighbors leading up to the election. We look forward to an evening of good food, good drink, and good conversation. Watch your email and social media for RSVP information which will be coming soon!

Carpooling for April 19 State Convention

By Kathie Elliott. Are you planning to attend the State Endorsement Convention on April 19 in Detroit? CCDP is working to identify carpool options for members that wish to go with others. Please **email us** and let us know and specify if you prefer to be a driver or passenger. If you are willing to drive, please note how many passengers can you take and a good location for others to meet you. We are excited to get as many delegates as possible to ensure a strong CCDP presence. We hope you will join us!

Spring Banquet Date Set & Silent Auction Items Needed

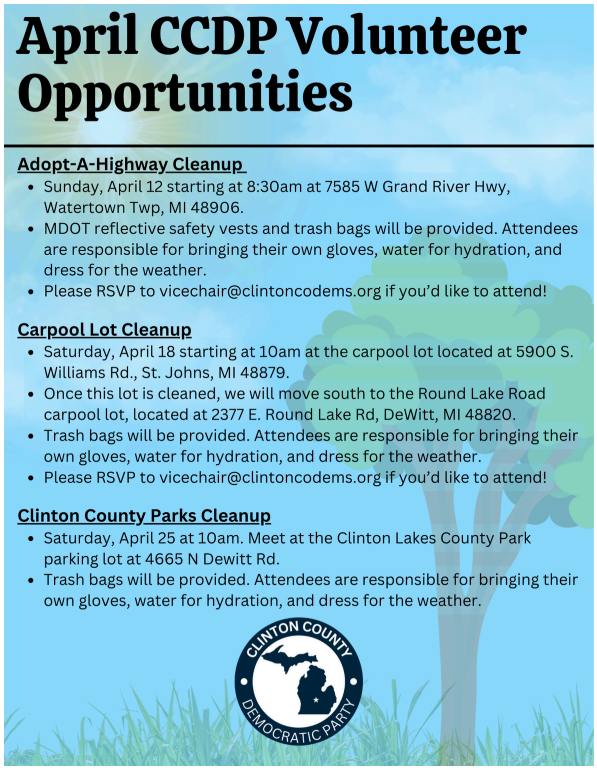
By Evelyn Quiroga-Klein. We are excited to announce that ticket sales for CCDP's May 1 spring banquet at Eagle Eye Conference Center will begin this week, with members receiving notification a couple days before public sales commence. Ticket prices are $25 for students and $70 for all others. Watch your email and social media for our keynote speaker announcement and ticket purchasing information!

Additionally, the Spring Banquet Silent Auction is one of our strongest fundraisers, with donations used to help support CCDP activities, especially critical in this election year. We plan to showcase items such as themed gift baskets, craft items, gift cards, political merchandise, and signed books. We are excited to share that we currently have 19 items donated! A big shout out and thank you to those that have committed to donating their time, treasure and skills to ensure our Silent Auction is successful. This is such an amazing start to reaching our goal of 30 items. Please consider helping us fill the gap by donating an item. If donating is not an option for you, do you know a local business that might be willing to donate? Please reach out to **EvelynQuiroga-**

Klein with any questions about how to donate an auction item or contact a local business. We can't wait for you to see what will be up for auction this year!

CCDP Wish List

We need your help as CCDP prepares for what is sure to be a busy summer parade and festival season! We are looking for the following items, either as gifts or for us to borrow: a foldable wagon, with a "tailgate" if possible to fit yard signs. The tailgate is not required, but just a "like to have" if possible; and a button maker so we can make event specific buttons/pins to give volunteers and event attendees. Please contact **Kathie Elliott** if you are able to donate either of these. Thank you!



Additional Upcoming Events

March 11 - Secretary of State Candidate Virtual Forum: 7:00 p.m. Hosted by LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party and Michigan United Action. **RSVP here**.

March 16 - Community Conversation with Representative Penelope Tsernoglou: 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m., East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbott Road.

March 16 - Singing Resistance: 7:00 p.m., Grace United Methodist Church,

Lansing, 1900 Boston Boulevard.

March 21 - CCDP County Convention: CCDP Office, 105 W. Railroad St., St. Johns, 10:00 a.m.

March 23 - Virtual Coffee Hour with State Senator Sam Singh: 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. **Click here** for more information.

March 28 - No Kings St. Johns: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., in front of Clinton County Courthouse.

March 28 - No Kings Lansing: Michigan State Capitol Building, 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m.

March 28 - No Kings Owosso: Curwood Castle Park, 400 West Main Street, Owosso, 1:00 -3:00 p.m.

April 2 - CCDP Membership Meeting: DeWitt City Hall, 414 E. Main Street, DeWitt. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

April 15 - CCDP Pints and Politics: Phillips Cider Bar, 3000 Vine Street, Lansing, 5:30 p.m. RSVP information coming soon.

Join CCDP/MDP or Renew Your CCDP/MDP Membership

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