

# Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



February 2026

**"There comes a time when you have to say something. You have to make a little noise. You have to move your feet. This is the time." — Rep. John Lewis**



## **Saving Our Democracy: An Olympic Effort**

*By Kathie Elliott.* Welcome to another edition of the CCDP newsletter, packed with information that we hope will help you become more informed, engaged, and connected. This month,

we see athletes from all around the world gather in competition at the Winter Olympic games. They bring a vast array of stories of their nations, their families, and their place within them. They are competing for their nations of birth and nations with which they hold citizenship. Some are even competing without a sponsoring country.

These athletes represent the culmination of years of hard work, commitment, choice, and the knowledge that one cannot excel at any endeavor without deliberate, continuous, sacrificial devotion of body, soul, and mind. It's clear that they love what they do, even in challenging moments. They show that true love isn't easy or untested, but steady and committed, one that holds on and keeps loving, reaching, and committing every moment even through the most difficult times.

So it is with patriotism and engaged citizenship. To love one's country, to love democracy, and to love those who live and work and die on this soil requires the slow burn love that asks us to show up even when we want to lay down.

Adlai Stevenson said that “patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.” This month, we encourage you to find ways to show love for this country, democracy, and everything you have as a direct result of living in the United States with the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.



## CCDP February Meeting Recap

*By Ann McCulloch.* It's always a good sign when you have to bring out more chairs for CCDP's monthly meeting! We were delighted to do so, and thank everyone who came out in spite of the weather as well as those who took the time to join us online. It

was a pleasure to welcome our State Representative Penelope Tsernoglou (D-75) who briefed us on her current legislative projects, tensions between the Republican-led House and the Democratic-led Senate, and her efforts to encourage more Democrats to run in state and local races.

CCDP President Kathie Elliott and Vice President Matthew Boak shared important updates and reminders, most notably the change in the date of the Clinton County Democrats Convention, which was scheduled for March 28, the date of the No Kings Rally. The county convention will now be held on March 21. Please see the story below for key membership deadlines and more details about the meeting. Members also had the chance to offer initial thoughts on CCDP's 2026 budget which officers will continue to socialize and provide opportunity for feedback.

We know that the days ahead will continue to be full, and we hope to see you at our next meeting on Thursday, March 5, at the Clinton County Courthouse in St. Johns, with social time beginning at 6:30 p.m. and the business meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. Please consider bringing a friend and we will see you next month!



## Important! Change to Key Membership Renewal Deadlines

*By Kathie Elliott.* Please note the new membership deadlines in order to be able to vote in the March 21 County Convention (moved up one week to

accommodate the No Kings Protest on March 28) and April 19 State Nominating Convention:

**February 19 – Deadline for CCDP/MDP Membership in Order to Be Eligible to Vote at March 21 County Convention.**

**March 20–Deadline for CCDP/MDP Membership in Order to Be Eligible to Vote at April 19 State Convention, Constituency Caucus meetings, or Congressional District Caucus.**

Please note that MDP membership is required for CCDP membership. Your MDP membership triggers the same membership dates for CCDP and we are notified of your membership when it's updated in the MDP system. If you start a new membership or renew your membership on or before February 19, you are eligible to vote in both the County and State conventions. If you become a member or renew your membership after February 19, but before March 20, you cannot vote in the county convention, but you can vote at the state convention. If you do not join or renew by March 20, you will not be eligible to vote at the state convention. Complete details about membership eligibility are covered in the [MDP Call to Convention](#).

Want to know if you're a member? [Email us](#) and we can confirm. You can join or renew your membership with CCDP/MDP by [clicking here](#). *Note that free memberships are available as well, and that every membership makes a difference.* A [printable application](#) is also available, but may take several weeks to process. Don't miss your chance to be eligible to vote at the county and state level. Join or renew today!



## **Ride in Comfort to the April 19 State Convention!**

*By Kathie Elliott.* Attending an MDP State Convention is exciting and energizing, especially the first time! To accommodate such large crowds, the convention is normally held in Detroit which can cause concerns for members unfamiliar or uncomfortable with driving into the city. To help make attendance easier, the Eaton, Ingham, and Clinton County Democrats have tentatively booked a bus for the convention. This bus will have a lift for anyone who uses wheelchairs.

To manage costs, we are asking riders to pay \$35/seat and we need at least 45 of the 55 seats “spoken for” by February 16 or we will release the bus contract. If we have 45 seats booked by February 16, we will move forward with the contract and begin to collect payments from riders. At present, we have 33 of the minimum required 45 seats spoken for. Don't miss your chance to ride in comfort with other party members! [Follow this link](#) for details about where and

when to meet the bus and to reserve your spot. You will not be asked to pay unless/until we meet our minimum rider requirements.



## Democratic Control of Michigan Senate at Stake in Special Election

*By Tim Hughes.* The candidates are set for a May 5 special election in the Saginaw area that could determine partisan control of the Michigan Senate.

The Senate is currently controlled 19-18 by Democrats, with 19 votes needed to pass legislation. Democrats in the 35th District elected Chedrick Greene, a Saginaw fire captain and a retired Marine, in a February 3 primary election to set candidates for the seat left vacant by the election of Kristen McDonald Rivet to the U.S. House. His Republican opponent will be Jason Tunney, a Saginaw lawyer.

Democrats will maintain control in the Senate if Greene is elected. If Tunney wins, the upper chamber will be tied at 19-19. Democrats will likely retain leadership positions and chair Senate committees thanks to the tie breaking vote of Democratic Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist. However, it will be more difficult for Democrats to get the 20 votes then needed to pass a bill. Gilchrist can only cast a vote to break a 19-19 tie. If one Republican doesn't vote, there will be no tie for Gilchrist to break.

Greene, a 31-year union member, defeated Pamela Pugh, the Chair of the Michigan Board of Education, by a 60-28 margin in the primary. The Republican primary was a tighter race with Tunney defeating Christian Velasquez, a retired Dow Corning engineer, by a 51-42 margin. Democratic voters had a bigger turnout in the election, outnumbering Republicans by a 59-41 margin. The 35th district includes Saginaw, Bay City and surrounding areas. Greene was endorsed by the Michigan AFL-CIO, Vote Vets, the Michigan Association for Justice, the MDP's LGBTQ and Allies Caucus and other community groups. Congresswoman Kristen McDonald Rivet and State Representative Amos O'Neal, whose House district encompasses much of the 35th Senate district, also endorsed Greene.

"Leading as a Marine, Firefighter, and community member, I've always stepped up to protect what's important," said Greene. "And what's most important right now is for working families in mid-Michigan to have a working class leader they can trust fighting for them in Lansing...standing up for us and standing up to MAGA extremists." More information on Greene's candidacy can be [found here](#).



## 2026 Midterm Election Update

*By Matthew Boak.* Is your head spinning as much as ours in terms of knowing who is running in what race in this critical election year? We've got you covered!

The landscape for the 2026 midterm election has changed as candidates have switched races and dropped out. Here is an up-to-date list of the Democratic candidates that are running for statewide and federal office:

- **Governor:**

Jocelyn  
Benson;  
Chris  
Swanson

- **U.S.**

- **Senate:**

Rachel  
Howard;  
Mallory  
McMorrow;  
Abdul  
El  
Sayed;  
Haley  
Stevens

- **U.S.**

- **House  
District**

7:  
Bridget  
Brink;  
William  
Lawrence;  
Matt  
Maasdam

- **Secretary  
of**

- **State:**

Barb  
Byrum;  
Garlin  
Gilchrist;  
Suzanna  
Shkreli\*

- **Attorney**

- **General:**

Karen

McDonald;  
Eli  
Savit

While the races for Governor, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House will be decided in an August primary, it is the body of delegates to the April 19 Democratic Convention that will choose the final candidates for Secretary of State and Attorney General. See above for more information on how to secure eligibility to vote at the April 19 convention.



## Love Your Legislators This Month

*By Kathie Elliott.* In the month of February, we celebrate love. As we were reminded this week by Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio (AKA Bad Bunny), “The only thing more powerful than hate, is love,” so let’s lean into that with a special shout out to our amazing Michigan Senator **Sam Singh** and Representatives **Emily Dievendorf** and **Penelope Tsernoglou**. Only recently has Clinton County been able to claim Democratic leadership at the state level. Each represents us with heart and courage, making a real difference in Clinton County and statewide.

It’s easy and appropriate to react strongly to presidential overreach and illegal actions taken by this administration. We should be constantly aware of the threats to our democracy and to our neighbors. Sometimes, this takes our attention away from the people and agencies that are upholding the constitution, our interests, and our priorities. Many of our elected officials, their staff, and families devote great time and energy to Clinton County, often at great personal sacrifice and sometimes at risk to their personal safety. Some, like Tom Barrett, betray us by consistently voting against our values and priorities. Please join us this month in thanking those elected officials who truly do represent our interests for their service in these difficult times by signing up for their newsletters, following them on social media, and sending them an email thanking them for their service and commitment. It takes very special people to answer the call to service as elected officials. They don’t ask for or expect gratitude, but we can help lift them up and show them that their work is appreciated. Reach out today!

## A Deeper Understanding of Black History

*By Shelby Neathammer.* Black History Month is

# BLACK HISTORY

FOR

# WHITE PEOPLE

important not only for understanding the history of our neighbors but also for understanding the generational impact inflicted upon this community by white history. As actor and director Malcolm Jamal Warner said, “slavery is white history, how we survived it is Black history.” For white folks, with overt racism besmirching the highest office in our country, this is the perfect month to challenge ourselves and sit with the discomfort of learning the impact of white history. Learning creates understanding of the systemic influences we unintentionally embody and makes space for practicing unlearning this conditioning.

On the podcast *Black History for White People*, we are offered such an opportunity to grow. In the episode, “Black Midwives: Celebrating Legacy and Advancing Maternal Care with Cessilye Smith,” the podcast host interviews Smith, founder of Abide Women’s Services, an organization with a goal of combating disparities in Black maternal and infant health. *Please note that this episode discusses sexual violence, which may be sensitive for some audiences.*

The podcast looks at the history of midwifery in birthing not only generations of Black children, but also how these practices were often appropriated by white communities, only to be demonized as cultural shifts occurred. We learn how the bodies of Black women were used to develop current medical practices and knowledge, and yet today, they suffer maternal death outcomes at a rate of 3-4 times higher than their white counterparts. As highlighted in the episode, 90% of those outcomes are preventable, demonstrating the continued need to eradicate outdated ideals and combat implicit bias. Conclusively, the episode challenges us to think beyond the binary camps in reproductive health and consider a third option: reproductive liberation.

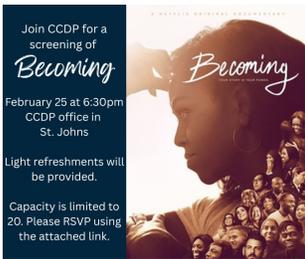
For more insight into this important history, please listen to this episode wherever you stream. For a free streaming service, consider using your library card for access to Hoopla. Finally, this month, let’s support the Black creators we learn from by paying them for their labor and knowledge. To support the work of Abide, please visit [their website](#).

## Postcard Campaign This Saturday During Office Hours!

By Ann McCulloch. CCDP is partnering with [FieldTeam6](#) in an effort to send postcards to unregistered voters in key races across the country,



including the very competitive race to defeat U.S. Representative Tom Barrett. We will have postcards and scripts available during CCDP's Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. office hours, 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns. Join us this month and help send 500 postcards to potential voters in Tom Barrett's district. Let's use our pens to make a difference in this critical election!



## Join Us February 25 for a Special Screening of Becoming

*By Ann McCulloch.* We invite CCDP members and friends to join us on Wednesday, February 25, at 6:30 p.m. at the CCDP office, 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns, for a screening of Michelle Obama's

*Becoming.* We'll enjoy light refreshments while watching this joyful documentary that celebrates hope and connection. Seating is limited to 20 people, so be sure to [RSVP today](#). We can't wait to see you there!



## How You Can Help Keep CCDP Going

*By Matthew Boak.* With an organization like ours, there is never a shortage of opportunities for interested individuals to lend a hand. That could look like taking part in meet and greets or social events or

tasks that aren't nearly as glamorous but necessary, like shoveling snow or participating in door-to-door canvassing. We all need to put effort into CCDP's care and upkeep to move forward toward our goals and be successful. Current volunteer opportunities with CCDP include the following. Please [email us](#) if you are interested in any of these opportunities!

- **Office Staffing:**  
This is crucial to maintaining visibility in

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- **Hospitality  
Committee:**  
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our  
members  
experience.

- **Spring Banquet:**  
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help!
- **Resolutions  
and  
Bylaws:**

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Looking further ahead, we will have opportunities for yard sign delivery, door-to-door canvassing, and environmental clean-up projects. We hope you find a way to lend a hand, as many hands make light work!



## Upcoming Events: Your Chance to Get Involved

**February 19 - MI 7th Congressional District**

**Meeting:** 5:30 p.m. social time, 6:00 p.m. meeting start. [RSVP here](#).

**February 19 - CCDP Communications Meeting:** 7:00 p.m. [Email us](#) if you'd like to join this committee.

**March 5 - CCDP Membership Meeting:** County Courthouse, Commissioner's Room, 100 E. State Street, St. Johns. Social time at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

**March 9 - Community Conversation with Senator Sam Singh:** Bath Township, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., location TBD. For more information, [click here](#).

**March 21 - CCDP County Convention:** CCDP Office, 105 W. Railroad St., St. Johns, time TBD.

**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 Rally:** Michigan State Capitol Building. More details TBD.

**Join CCDP/MDP or Renew Your CCDP/MDP Membership**



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