

# Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



Dear CCDP Newsletter Readers - we are *so close* to **200 members**! Your energy and engagement is propelling us forward in new ways and we are so excited! Let's top that 200 mark! Who will be our 200th member? Will it be you?

**Join today!**

**March 2025**



## A Few Words on Gratitude

*By Kathie Elliott.* The ground is thawing, the sun is shining, and many of us are observing Lent. It's in this time of year, whether through faith or simply the response to the change of seasons, that gratitude, reflection, and hope seem easier to tap into. In the spirit of the spring season, today I share with you **gratitude**.

To all of you reading this newsletter, you've made the choice to connect with CCDP. You can't imagine how energized we are to see how many of you read about the work we're doing. This newsletter goes out to nearly 800 people. Amazing!

To everyone who has made an even greater commitment and **joined MDP/CCDP**, thank you. It may not seem like an important step, but it's actually a big deal, especially in a non-election year. Don't underestimate the value of a potentially free membership thinking that "you get what you pay for." This is one of those situations where it really counts. As our member numbers rise, Clinton County gains visibility, representation, and influence at the state level. As a rural county, we have to work twice as hard to get a second look from candidates and influencers. When we report increased membership, donations, and

volunteer hours, people take notice!

To members who actively participate in meetings, office hours, coffees, book reads, rallies, outreach, etc., you have our gratitude. We love to see you, and you fill our tanks so we can be ready for the next call to action. You are truly gifts to CCDP and the community for making it a priority to lift up your fellow warriors for democracy! A very special thank you for CCDP leaders and committee members who work tirelessly to keep us moving forward! Beyond words, membership, donations, and your physical presence, you continuously give your time, talents, and ideas to make CCDP stronger.

Finally, I'm grateful and humbled to know how hard our frontline defenders are working to protect our lives, liberties, and pursuit of happiness and self-expression. Whether you are appointed to a board or commission, or are a local, state, or federal official; OR you are a civil servant trying to keep your careers and families afloat in these tough times, know that right now everyone else reading this is giving you a standing ovation!

As you read this newsletter, plan for your next action to support democracy, and honor your commitments to family and career, it's our hope that some of the gratitude we feel gives you a sense of hope and security, just as you do for us. We will not go back, so let's keep marching forward... together!



## Join Us for Coffee & Conversation

We look forward to seeing you for CCDP's Coffee & Conversation on **Thursday, March 13, at 1:00 p.m.** at Biggby Coffee, 13181 Schavey Road in DeWitt. We are eager to hear what is on your mind and how you feel we can be most effective as a county party. Bring your ideas and your enthusiasm!



## Our First Common Read Discussion is Next Wednesday!

*By Melany Mack.* Perhaps you are one of the several million in the US who reads Heather Cox Richardson's daily Letters from an American to try to make some sense out of how we have ended up as we have in our country. Richardson, a professor of

history at Boston College and an expert on American political and economic history, provides a clear and historical perspective on the turbulent times we're living in.

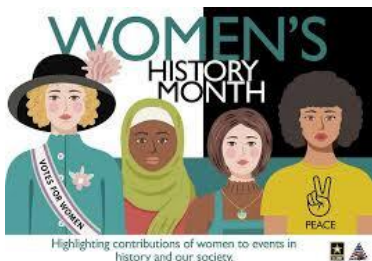
It was no surprise when members of CCDP selected Richardson's most recent book, *Democracy Awakening*, as our first common read. We'll be gathering at CCDP's office, 105 W. Railroad Street in St. Johns from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. on March 19 to share what we've learned from the book, which details how a small group of wealthy people have for decades made war on American ideals by weaponizing language, promoting false history, sowing division and discord, turning Americans against one another, and creating an imagined past where disaffected people could feel important again.

It's bound to be a lively and interesting discussion, which can help focus our efforts in Clinton County in the weeks and months ahead. We'd love for you to join us. **Please RSVP here** so we know how many people to expect and can make plans for seating and refreshments. Thank you!



## A CCDP Member's Open Letter To Trump Supporters Who May Be Reconsidering

In a recent **blog post**, CCDP member Jake Lippert penned *An Open Letter to Trump Supporters Who May Be Reconsidering*. We urge you to read his excellent submission and share the piece among your family and friends. If you've been noodling something in the news, or have a perspective you would like to share, consider submitting a blog post. Contact **Ann McCulloch** for more information.



## Understanding Women's History

*By Ann McCulloch.* Somewhat surprisingly, the United States only has been celebrating Women's History since 1980, when President Jimmy Carter declared one week in March be set aside to recognize "the achievements, leadership, courage, strength, and love of the women who built America." In 1987, Congress passed Public Law 100-9 which designated the month of March as Women's History Month.

Since 1983, the **Michigan Women's Hall of Fame** has been recognizing

extraordinary women and their contributions to Michigan and the nation. Its inaugural class included human rights crusader Sojourner Truth, women's suffrage leader Anna Howard Shaw, and civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks. The museum has inducted more than 300 women since its founding, noting that "history is not complete without her story."

In our **latest blog post**, CCDP member Shelly Neathammer encourages us to look at women's history more critically through the health care lens, noting that historical injustices have contributed to the challenges women face yet today. Inspired by the courage of the women we celebrate this month, let's also learn and take action!



## Vote Yes on St. Johns Bond Extension

*By Matthew Boak, President of the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education.* Voters residing in the St. Johns Public Schools District will soon have the opportunity to cast an important ballot in a special election on a bond proposal sought by the district.

Absentee ballots will be available from clerks starting Thursday, March 27, with in-person voting taking place on Tuesday, May 6. The question on the ballot will be to approve the extension (**this is not an increase**) of the current millage of 7.0 mills so that the school district can undertake needed updates regarding security of buildings; aging infrastructure; critical improvements to classrooms, athletics, and fine arts. The extension would also provide an Early Learning Center for the community, create a new transportation building, and much more.

With this proposal on the ballot, the district is asking the community to continue its support of the district like it has been for decades. For those wanting more information about the bond proposal, the district has put together a **comprehensive webpage** regarding the bond proposal. A more in-depth perspective can also be found on the **CCDP blog page**. Please vote YES on this extension and encourage your friends and family to do the same!



## Governor's FY26 Budget To Lower Costs, Create Jobs, and Improve Student Outcomes

*By Tim Hughes.* Governor Gretchen Whitmer's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 focuses on kitchen table issues designed to lower costs, create jobs, and improve student outcomes. The \$83.5 billion budget includes \$15.3 billion in general fund expenditures, \$21.2 billion for school aid and a \$50 million deposit in the state's Budget Stabilization Fund. Highlights of the budget proposal include:

- Continuation of the Working Families Tax Credit, which gave an average of \$3,500 in tax relief to 650,000 families last year
- Almost \$6 billion to fix roads and bridges, provide support for transit and rail programs, and install electric vehicle charging stations across

the  
state

- Historic investments in education, from preschool to postsecondary, including an additional \$392 per student, for a total of \$10,000 per pupil
- \$202.4 million to continue expanded support for special education and \$250 million to implement the Governor's Students, Metrics and Results with Transparency plan to drive improvements in student

outcomes

- A call to invest \$2 billion to build, buy, or fix 11,000 homes, create more than 10,000 construction jobs and help more families to achieve the American Dream

“In 2025, I’m excited to keep working across the aisle to lower costs, create jobs, and continue delivering results that make a real difference in people’s lives,” said Governor Whitmer. “Michiganders are tired of the games and want strong, bipartisan leadership. Let’s lead by example and show the rest of the country how to get things done.”

The call for bipartisan cooperation seemed to fall on deaf ears in the House of Representatives, where the new Republican majority rammed through a budget bill that would defund school aid. On a partisan vote, Republicans approved HB 4161, cutting \$5 billion from the 2025-26 school aid fund, an almost 25% cut from the previous K-12 education budget, with no funding for universities or community colleges. The Republican House Speaker called the bill a “good faith” proposal to start budget negotiations. The bill is dead on arrival in the Democratic controlled Senate.

## MDP State Convention: A First-Time



## Attendee's Perspective

*By Evelyn Quiroga-Klein.* Attending the 2025 Spring Democratic Convention reaffirmed my decision to join CCDP. It was far from a perfect experience and much of that was due to the management of the convention, but as a hopeful and excited first-time attendee, I was able to set that aside and appreciate the multiple

positive and enriching elements of the event.

I really appreciated being among so many like-minded people. I only knew a few people in the sea of faces, but found everyone smiling and welcoming. In the face of very long lines, I opted to attend the caucus meetings. Attending these helped me better understand the party structure and the people that are working in specific areas to bring about change. I attended the Senior Caucus and the LGBTQ+ Caucus, but would have liked to attend almost all of them.

Once credentialled, I hurried to the 7th Congressional District meeting. Here again, I was excited to understand more about what it meant to be an active member of the Democratic Party. I listened and proudly cast my votes for the leadership and delegate members that will be guiding us through the coming years. I was glad to see so many young people. There was spirited debate and speeches from members. It made me feel hopeful for our future.

The final session was the General Meeting. Much of this time was again tinged with disappointment as the proceedings did not start promptly, but I followed suit with the rest of the convention attendees and found myself having conversations with fellow CCDP members and others that helped pass the time. I appreciated that all of the CCDP members were able to sit together. The business of the party proceeded with some raucous attendees voicing their concerns and it felt good to hear words of unity between the new party chair, Curtis Hertel, and the other party chair candidate, Al Williams.

I left feeling that the experience was very much worth the time and effort and am more committed to the work of the party and the preservation of our democracy. I know now I'm in the right place and with the right people in the big tent.

## Many Hands Needed for First Clean-Up!

CCDP has made it a tradition to pitch in and tidy our local roads and parking areas. Our first spring clean-





up will take place Saturday, April 5, at 10:00 a.m. at the Williams Road/Price Road carpool lot located just off of US-127 at 5900 South Williams Road, St. Johns. Once this lot is cleaned, we will move south to the Round Lake Road carpool lot, located at 2377 East Round Lake Road in DeWitt. MDOT reflective vests and trash bags will be provided. Please bring your own gloves, water, and dress for the weather. Please note that the following day, Sunday, April 6, at the same time, will be the backup day in case of inclement weather. Please email **Matthew Boak** with any questions.



## Upcoming Events

**March 13 - Coffee and Conversation:** 1:00 p.m. at the DeWitt Biggby, 13181 Schavey Road.

**March 15 - Rep. Emily Dievendorf Legislative Coffee:** DeWitt District Library, 13101 Schavey Road, #9008, DeWitt, 12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m.

**March 16 - Rally for LGBTQ Rights:** 2:00 - 5:00

p.m., State Capitol Building. **More information.**

**March 19 - CCDP Common Read Discussion:** CCDP Office, 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**March 20 - Virtual Coffee and Conversation with Senator Sam Singh:** 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. **Sign up here.**

**March 30 - Trans Day of Visibility Rally:** Michigan State Capitol lawn, 2:00 p.m.

**April 3 - CCDP Membership Meeting:** DeWitt City Hall, 414 East Main Street. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

**April 5 - Rep. Emily Dievendorf Legislative Coffee:** 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Location TBD.

**April 5 - CCDP Parking Lot Cleanup:** 10:00 a.m., 5900 S. Williams Road, St. Johns, MI 48879. Once this lot is cleaned, we will move south to the Round Lake Road carpool lot, located at 2377 E. Round Lake Rd, DeWitt.



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