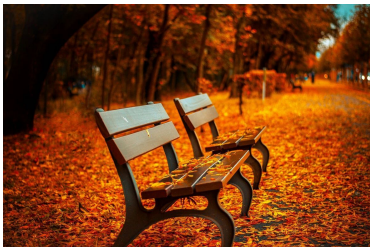


Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



November 2025



Thanking Those Who Show Up for Clinton County

By Kathie Elliott. On November 6, MI 7th Congressional Democrats (which includes, among other counties, Clinton County) hosted an important Impact Panel Discussion focused on

sharing the real life effects of DOGE, the Big Beautiful Blunder, and other Trump administration actions on the lives and livelihoods of millions of hard working Americans. U.S. Representative Tom Barrett, as is so often the case, didn't accept the invitation to attend, once again delivering the message that he doesn't want to hear the truth about how he is impacting his district. But, this isn't an article about Tom not having the courage to speak to his constituents.

This is to remind you of our elected officials who **are** showing up for us, making tough decisions, and facing a lot of scrutiny, and sometimes, threats. Let's remember to thank, to show up for, and support our elected officials who lean into this difficult work every day with very little positive feedback. Yes, we should call out the legislators who aren't acting in our best interest, but let's remember how hard it is for anyone to take on the challenge of running for, and serving in, office and show appreciation for their willingness to do a largely thankless job that all too often goes unrecognized unless we have a complaint. Let's look at the body of their work and the values they exemplify, knowing they cannot possibly please all of us all the time, and recognize their effort, intent, and heart for this work. I challenge you to follow these legislators on social media, join their newsletter list, and attend one of their events. Show them that they aren't forgotten and that you appreciate the work they are doing on behalf of Clinton County!

Senator Sam Singh

Representative Penelope Tsernoglou

Representative Emily Dievendorf



Don't Miss Pints & Politics This Thursday, Nov. 13!

Join CCDP members and friends for our first ever Pints & Politics event on Thursday, November 13, from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. at Jimmy's Pub, 16830 Chandler Road, East Lansing. We'll enjoy casual conversation with fellow Democrats over beverages of your choice. All are welcome, including those that aren't CCDP members, but an [RSVP is required](#). Please note that individuals are responsible for their own tab. We hope to see you there!



Court Tells Republican Speaker to Release Pro-Worker Bills

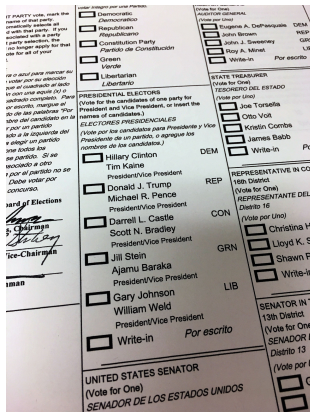
By Tim Hughes. A bipartisan Michigan Court of Appeals panel [has ordered](#) Republican Speaker Matt Hall to present nine bills to Governor Gretchen

Whitmer for her signature. The bills were passed by the Michigan Senate and House at the end of the 2024 lame duck session and deal with a variety of issues affecting working families, including healthcare affordability for teachers and first responders, pension security for corrections officers and debt collection reforms. Speaker Hall, who took control of the House in January of this year, has refused to forward the bills to the Governor.

Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks took Hall and the House of Representatives to court, saying that the House had an inherent duty to present the bills to the Governor regardless of the Speaker or the session. Hall disagreed, saying the court could not bind the legislature on procedural issues and that the duty to present the bill expired with the end of the 2024 session.

Judge Thomas Cameron, an appointee of Republican Governor Rick Snyder, and Judge Daniel Karobkin, an appointee of current Democratic Governor Whitmer, disagreed with Hall and ordered that the bills be presented to Governor Whitmer for action. Speaker Hall has not responded to the October 27 decision and has six weeks to file an appeal, which ends December 8.

Majority Leader Brinks hailed the decision, saying that “No matter how deep our political differences, the Constitution must be followed. I hope this case serves as a warning to all future legislators – following the law is your oath, and you will be held accountable for doing your job.” Michigan AFL-CIO President Ron Bieber said the decision “is a declaration that the rule of law and state Constitution still matter in Michigan” and “it’s time for Speaker Hall to stop wasting taxpayer dollars, end his war on workers and present these bills to Governor Whitmer for her signature.”



Potential Michigan Ballot Proposals

By Melany Mack. To date, there are nine proposed ballot initiatives that have been brought forth by various constituencies to be placed on the ballot in 2026, with two more proposals under consideration by the Board of Canvassers. To better understand what is going to be on the ballot, CCDP is offering factual summaries in our newsletters. In the [October newsletter](#), we covered Americans for Citizens Voting and AxMITax. In the new year, we will offer a bit of analysis on some which may be helpful and harmful. Stay tuned for more in December!

Citizens for Local Choice

A proposed initiated law to allow local units of government to retain authority to regulate the development of solar, wind, or energy storage facilities in their jurisdictions by repealing laws that mandate statewide standards for energy facilities and permit the Michigan Public Service Commission to override local energy facility development decisions. If enacted, this proposal will allow local units of government to continue to determine their own standards regarding setback distance, structure height, and the amount of light and sound emitted by energy facilities, and to exercise final authority over the construction of energy facilities within their jurisdictions.

Invest in MI Kids

Constitutional amendment to: add, beginning in 2027, an additional 5% tax on annual taxable income over \$1 million for joint filers and over \$500,000 for single filers. This tax is in addition to existing state income taxes, and is to be deposited into the State School Aid Fund and required to be used exclusively on local school district classrooms, career and technical education, reducing class sizes, and recruiting and retaining teachers; and subject funds to annual

audits.

Michiganders for Money Out of Politics (MMOP)

Initiation of legislation to: prohibit regulated electric and gas utilities, contractors with over \$250,000 annually in government contracts, and people and organizations with substantial connections to these utilities/contractors from making direct or indirect campaign contributions to those who run for or hold offices that impact them; expand campaign finance laws and restrictions that regulate spending on political contributions, including laws that require disclosing donor information, to apply to communications clearly identifying candidates or ballot questions, even if they do not expressly advocate voting for/against them; expressly apply the law requiring disclosure of who paid for political communications to internet political communications.

See the status of all current statewide petitions and read the full text of each on the [Board of Canvassers website](#).



Seeing the Need, Clinton County Dems SNAP into Action!

“If you can’t feed a hundred people, feed just one.”
— Mother Teresa

Last year, the Greater Lansing Food Bank (GLFB) provided 1,051,803 meals to over 10,000 of our Clinton County neighbors. With GLFB's purchasing power, every \$1 donated can purchase three meals. Last year, it cost over \$360,000 to send those meals into Clinton County. Only three Clinton County food banks participate with GLFB, so these numbers do not take into account additional meals distributed by non-participating food banks. Additionally, 2024 data has Clinton County population at just over 80,000, so in 2024, one in eight Clinton County residents needed food support. With the recent Federal government shut down and the withholding or delaying of SNAP benefits, food insecurity is even worse this year as we head into the winter holiday season.

Generous Clinton County Dems are stepping up to try to help here at home. Beginning Saturday, November 1, and continuing through the end of the year, CCDDP will be collecting non-perishable food, household cleaning and personal supplies, and cash donations to support the agencies that support our neighbors.

Between donations made at the office and at meetings and members delivering

their own donations on our behalf, we estimate the value of donations made over the first two weeks of this initiative to be approximately \$1,500. We are also pleased to report that members voted to authorize CCDP to send an additional \$500 donation (representing about 1,500 meals) to GLFB with a specific request that these meals be distributed in Clinton County. We will continue to accept donations through the end of the year in the office and at our December meeting. Thank you so much for your care for and support of our Clinton County neighbors!



Navigating the Holidays

By Katie Speirs. The crisp autumn leaves crunch beneath the feet. The nostalgic and aromatic smell of turkey, stuffing, and green bean casserole permeate the house. Freshly baked pumpkin and apple pies tempt from the aptly decorated table, waiting their turn to be served. Laughter and joy radiate from each room in the house, where people have gathered, as loved ones savor each other's presence.

The holidays are approaching, and for many, they are less idyllic than the preceding description. Our country is going through a period of division, and this isn't just experienced in the abstract. Division is the reality in many personal and familial relationships. The next few weeks may present multiple opportunities to engage with those who hold different worldviews and with whom relationships have become strained or have eroded. So what are some strategies for showing up in these spaces, in a way that is both genuine and peaceful?

In a December 2024 Psychology Today blog post "How to Navigate Your Family's Political Divides" by Kimberly Horn Ed.D., the author provided support for maintaining difficult relationships and offered several suggestions for managing the holidays with those who hold opposing political views. As the festive season returns, many of the tips shared by the author may be useful to consider. [Explore the full blog post](#) for insights and strategies.



Podcast Recommendation: Cults, Culture & Coercion

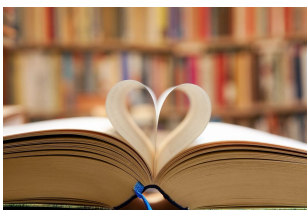
By Shelby Neathammer. The government shutdown has led to a plethora of finger-pointing in an already tense political atmosphere. While the blame game continues, even on federal websites that are supposed

to remain non-partisan, we have also seen people from both sides come together to aid their communities with food, household supplies, and other donations. A terrible situation has led to dialogue and curiosity for the thing that ultimately matters here: each other.

In September, Ezra Klein, a political commentator and journalist with *The New York Times*, published the podcast episode, “**We Are Going to Have to Live Here With Each Other.**” Recorded right before the assassination of Charlie Kirk, Klein interviews Ben Shapiro, a conservative political commentator and writer, about his new book, *Lions and Scavengers: The True Story of America (and Her Critics)*. Klein and Shapiro engage in a dialogue about the current political climate, explore how we got here from a conservative lens, and reach some surprising moments of agreement. While many liberal listeners, including myself, may disagree with most of Shapiro’s points, they provide insight into the conservative movement and where the fractures exist within the Right.

Both Klein and Shapiro maintain respectful dialogue. Klein clearly holds respectful ground on divisive topics while challenging false or misleading statements. He shows confidence in rebutting challenges, and he stays the course in eliciting direct answers to the questions he poses to Shapiro. As tempting as it is to stay within our comfortable silos, seeing the issues from a conservative lens helps to provide a better understanding of how we can move forward to challenge our competitors for the soul of our country and, perhaps, even to partner with some of them.

Listening to a podcast can be a safe way to practice self-regulation techniques that will serve us well in meeting the challenges of face-to-face interactions. Klein’s example of how to engage in this type of conversation is well worth the listen, particularly as we approach the holiday season and the anxiety of arduous political conversations around the dinner table sharpens.



January's Common Read Selection: High Conflict by Amanda Ripley

Mark your calendars for the evening of January 14! CCDP's next Common Read discussion will feature *High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get*

Out by journalist Amanda Ripley, a suggestion from CCDP member Jake Lippert. January's Common Read is perfectly timed so you can get some reading in over the holidays. From Simon and Shuster: "High conflict is what happens when discord distills into a good-versus-evil kind of feud, the kind with an us and a them. In this state, the brain behaves differently...eventually, we

can start to mimic the behavior of our adversaries, harming what we hold most dear...people do escape high conflict. Individuals—even entire communities—can short-circuit the feedback loops of outrage and blame, if they want to." We will give the a copy of the book away at our December membership meeting and will have full event details as well as an RSVP link available soon.



No Kings - Showing Up in Lansing and St. Johns

By Monica Goble, Photo courtesy of Mari Douma

On Saturday, October 18, our voices joined with millions across the country and the world at the second “No Kings” mass protest. In Lansing, hundreds of people spread from the edge of Michigan Avenue to the Capitol steps. A series of speakers spoke about federal policy regarding immigration, healthcare, workers’ rights, and more. As the event wound down, the chanting crowd spontaneously marched down E. Michigan Avenue, the line of people stretching into the city’s Stadium District. Additionally, an upbeat, small-but-mighty group gathered in front of the St. Johns courthouse, all supporting the need to stand up and stand together to resist tyranny. Drivers passing both locations honked their horns as they passed, showing solidarity with the chanting, sign-wielding protesters.

More than 2,500 protests occurred nationwide, with the estimated number of participants nationally in the millions. Many protestors carried handmade signs and flags with pro-democracy language, often greeting friends and family with hugs while taking pictures of rally signs. Some wore costumes, ranging from various inflatable animal suits to robes from *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Many donned frog costumes after a viral video of a Portland protestor in a frog costume getting pepper-sprayed by a federal agent. Since then, protesters at No Kings events and at I.C.E. detention facilities have embraced the frog as a symbol of resistance.

As the [No Kings website](#) states: "America has no kings, and the power belongs to the people." Now, our task is to stay vigilant, stay united, and continue to push back.

PenelopePAC Hosts 7th Congressional Candidates

By Jake Lippert, Photo Courtesy of Penelope



Tsernoglou for State Representative. CCDP regularly offers special “perks” that are available to members only. On October 27th, CCDP’s board provided tickets for two raffle winners, each with one guest, to attend Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou’s annual PenelopePAC fundraiser. This was an especially interesting event since all four Democratic candidates for the 7th Congressional race were featured speakers. The

event drew a sold-out crowd and was full of lively discussion, community connection, and optimism for the 2026 campaign cycle. It was personally exciting to see this action of CCDP’s board come to fruition, since, as I gradually transition into the role of Membership Chair, I intend to work hard to ensure that there are many good reasons for joining CCDP.

When my dad, Rob Lippert, won one of the tickets, he invited me to join him as his guest. We sat at a table with fellow members of both Clinton County and Ingham County Democratic Parties, enjoying meaningful conversation and building new connections. Plenty of delicious appetizers were provided by the PAC, and a cash bar was available. It made for a great evening!

Each of the confirmed 7th District candidates delivered remarks and made themselves available afterward for direct dialogue. Each did an excellent job speaking, making it a wonderful evening of inspiration and engagement, reinforcing that, with energy and teamwork, we can reclaim the 7th District seat in 2026. Short profiles of each candidate follows below, drawn from their campaign materials and from my impressions of their presence at the event.

Elyon Badger: Badger identifies as a Michigan Army National Guard veteran, LGBTQIA+ activist, and small business owner running to build a government that works for the people rather than the powerful. His style stands out as authentic and community-focused, and his campaign appears to resonate most with energized progressive voters and activists. Whether that momentum can expand across the 7th District remains to be seen.

Bridget Brink: Brink brings deep experience, having served as U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine and as a diplomat under multiple administrations. She appears to be the establishment candidate in this field. At the event, she seemed more comfortable as someone who knows the job of public service rather than someone refining a campaign persona, which could work either to her advantage or as a challenge depending on voter expectations.

William Lawrence: Lawrence describes himself as a progressive activist entering the race to represent Michigan’s 7th District. At the event he generated

the most spontaneous energy in the room. Whether due to a strong ground game or broader support, his presence was commanding. His speech was polished, and in our one-on-one conversation he seemed very comfortable in the role of campaigning.

Matt Maasdam: Maasdam presents himself as a former Navy SEAL turned public servant who believes in “hard work, courage, and integrity.” His candidacy offers a clear contrast to Tom Barrett for voters who value service credentials. In my view, while his message is passionate and direct, it remains uncertain how much that will translate into cross-party appeal in the current political climate. He was among the more outspoken and enthusiastic speakers of the evening.

CCDP is maintaining its policy of strict neutrality in the race until after a winner emerges in the August primary. With such an interesting field of candidates, it will be easy for us to get behind the primary winner and work hard to take back the 7th District Congressional seat on November 3, 2026.



Upcoming Events

November 13 - Pints and Politics: 4:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m., Jimmy's Pub, 6830 Chandler Road, East Lansing.

November 18 - CCDP Hospitality Committee:

Virtual Meeting, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. [Contact us](#) if interested in participating.

December 4 - CCDP Membership Meeting: DeWitt City Hall, 414 E. Main Street, DeWitt, 7:00 p.m. Join us for some festive holiday cheer!

December 6 - CCDP Office Coverage Training 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. [Email us](#) to RSVP.

December 12 - Indivisible MI-7 Meeting: Downtown Lansing Capital Area District Library, 401 South Capitol Avenue, from 12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m. More information can be found by [clicking here](#).

January 8 - CCDP Membership Meeting: Clinton County Courthouse, Garden Level, 100 East State Street, St. Johns. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

January 14: CCDP's Common Read featuring Amanda Ripley's *High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out*. Date, time, and RSVP information coming soon!



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