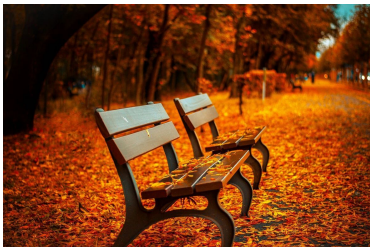


# Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



October 2025



## A New Season of Opportunity

*By Kathie Elliott.* Welcome to the official start of the pumpkin and spice season! In addition to preparing to spend a lot more time indoors, we hope you are cultivating a sense of empathy, gratitude, and compassion as we are now in the

high holiday season for many faiths. It's a time to reflect on what, and who, is important to us, and how we can be in service to the greater good. The passion and energy of spring and summer advocacy may fade, but a deliberate, less frenetic, "inside voice" advocacy can be just as impactful. And, it's not just one "side" that feels the pull to rest, recover, and seek peace; making this an important season to be compassionate and patient; and to let our actions be in alignment with our words, slogans, and campaign promises.

Having said this, it would be naive to ignore the proud and loud minority (emphasis on minority) that seem singularly focused on sowing division, creating distractions, and looting democracy while generally reasonable and caring people are manipulated into chaos and division. This is why CCDP's work doesn't end after summer festival and parade season; nor do the opportunities to stay involved with the party and in our community during these frightening times. How do you plan to keep hope and democracy alive in your home, in Clinton County, or across the country this fall? In what ways will your actions align with your words? Here are a few ideas:

**Be in community with like-minded people.** Attend a CCDP meeting, office hours, or event; host a small event for friends and neighbors to prove "you're not the only Democrat in Clinton County;" support a candidate by volunteering or attending a fundraiser or meet and greet; take a friend to a local school board

or government meeting and speak in support of an issue or elected official taking an important position.

**Seek community with others and brighten someone's day, regardless of their political persuasion.** Participate in a community event; take a walk and make small talk with people you encounter; open a door for someone; tell a harried parent they're doing a great job; pay for the coffee order behind you, collect donations for an important cause.

**Seek knowledge and test assumptions.** Listen to a conservative podcast; pick an issue you feel strongly about and read an opposing editorial; talk to an "apolitical" neighbor about a low-risk topic, and see if you share viewpoints; read *I Never Thought of it That Way*, the CCDP October Common Read.

These days are shorter and the sun sets early, but don't let the sun set on your commitment to democracy. Choose one of these, or create your own ways to keep active and engaged year-round.



## Speaking of Democracy...

CCDP would like to offer very special thanks to member Darrilyn Fraser who shared the following reflection which she wrote "to calm my mind amidst increasing toxicity, plus remind myself of the things I value and find important." Thank you, Darrilyn, for this inspiration!

### Thoughts on Democracy

**D**enounce violence, political or otherwise.

**E**ngage with your community.

**M**entor others without judgement.

**O**pen your ears and your mind.

**C**reate an inclusive environment.

**R**emain calm in turbulent times.

**A**ssist those in need without question.

**C**hoose love over hate.

**Y**our voice and your vote matter!

**Don't Miss Pints & Politics on  
November 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!



## Where Did It Land? A State Budget Overview

*By Tim Hughes.* (Editor's Note: Please visit [CCDP's website](#) for the full article.) After months of

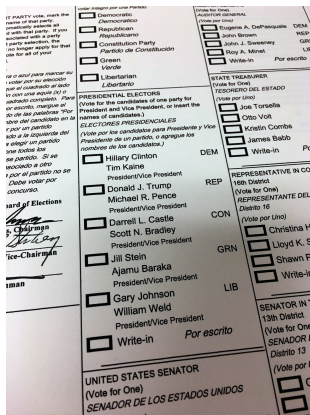
negotiations with the legislature, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed into law an \$81 billion balanced, bi-partisan state budget. A key element of the package was a plan to allocate almost \$2 billion to help “fix the damn roads.” Nearly \$2 billion will be spent to improve state and local roads over the next four years, with significant new ongoing investment in bridges and public transit.

The road spending will come from a variety of sources, including a 24% wholesale tax on marijuana products, expected to raise \$ 420 million annually. The Michigan Cannabis Industry Association is challenging the constitutionality of the tax. Corporate income taxes will pay \$688 million for road funding this year, growing to \$1 billion by fiscal year 2030. Another \$540 million will come from delaying some tax breaks for businesses that were expected under the federal “big, beautiful” budget and tax law.

Other significant aspects of the state budget include the end of the business subsidy Strategic Operating and Attraction Reserve fund supported by the Governor who had sought to continue the program with a \$500 million appropriation as well as tax breaks for Michigan working families through exemptions on income from tips, overtime pay and Social Security.

Additionally, the education budget includes a record \$10,050 in per-pupil funding for Michigan schools, up from \$9,608 this year. It also adds \$321 million for mental health and safety grants and will continue to make school meals free for all students. It includes \$201.6 million to cover meals for students who don't qualify for no-cost programs through the federal government.

More information on the state budget can be found at the [State Budget Office website](#).



## 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 will provide factual summaries in the next few newsletters. Next year, we will offer a bit of analysis on some which may be helpful and harmful. Below is our first batch of factual summaries. Stay tuned for more in the November newsletter!

**Americans for Citizen Voting (Version 1 submitted 03/20/25)** - Constitutional amendment to require individuals to verify United States citizenship during voter registration; require photo ID for in-person voters; allow voters without photo ID or citizenship verification to vote by presenting ID or verifying citizenship within 6 days after election; provide free photo ID and proof of citizenship to hardship applicants; require driver's license, state-ID, partial social security numbers, or photo ID when applying for and voting by absentee ballot; require secretary of state to verify citizenship during voter registration, verify citizenship of registered voters, remove individuals from voter rolls that fail to verify citizenship, and report annually on citizenship verifications.

**Americans for Citizen Voting (Version 2 submitted 7/22/25)** - Constitutional amendment to require citizenship verification for all voters through statewide program, document submission, or provisional voting; require removing noncitizens after notice and 45-day rebuttal; require proof of citizenship by showing birth certificate, passport, and/or other documents; track separate federal and state/local election eligibility requirements; beginning 11/2/2027, prohibit counting ballots from voters with unverified citizenship unless documents shown to election administrator within 6 days post-election; eliminate affidavit alternative for voters without photo-ID; require photo-ID, or driver's license or partial social security number to vote absentee; require state-funded hardship program for obtaining required documents; subject violators to \$1,000 fine and/or up to 5 years imprisonment.

**AxMITax** - Constitutional Amendment to prohibit state, county, or municipal property taxes; require 60% of voters to approve local taxes; require a 2/3 vote of both State House and Senate to increase any state tax to raise revenue by more than 0.1% over 5 years; increase percentage of state sales tax revenue distributed to local governments from 15% for municipalities only to 20% for

municipalities and 10% for counties; require that municipalities and counties each receive 10% of tax revenue from income, marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco; require that tax revenue distributed to municipalities and counties be used only to fund essential government and infrastructure services; require legislation implementing these requirements.

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



## A Special Shout Out to Recycling Royalty Ellen and Terry Link!

WILX TV recently featured CCDP members Ellen and Terry Link on its [Make an Impact feature](#) for their nearly four decades of service in the

creation and continuation of Greater Laingsburg Recyclers. The story captures the inspiration and dedication behind this all-volunteer effort as well as its significant, positive environmental impact. The story noted that they have processed over 100 tons of recyclable materials in the last two years and are on track to set a record this year. Congratulations and a well-deserved thank you to Ellen, Terry, and the dedicated team of volunteers who provide this service to the community! For more information on the Greater Laingsburg Recyclers, [please click here](#).



## Storytellers Needed

*By Kathie Elliott.* Several organizations, including the [Michigan Democratic Party](#), are seeking volunteers impacted by the actions of the Trump Administration and Republican-dominated Congress to serve as storytellers and help humanize the issues within our communities.

Additionally, Michigan State University Board Member Dianne Byrum shared information with CCDP about an opportunity to highlight health care impacts through [Protect Our Care](#). Diane, on behalf of Protect Our Care, is looking for people willing to share their impact story relating to Medicaid, Disability, Enhanced Premium Tax Credit, and Insurance through the Health Exchange. Volunteer storytellers will be given support as needed and requested by the volunteer. Assistance includes ghostwriting your story, media preparation, helping you develop key points and practice your presentation, or even helping



you share your story with another person who would share on your behalf. No potential volunteers will have their name or stories shared without their express permission. If you would like to explore this important opportunity, please [email Diane](#).



## What an Amazing Fall Harvest Festival!

*By Matthew Boak.* Thank you to all who made last month's Third Annual Fall Harvest Festival fundraiser a success! The event went on without a hitch, and we could not be happier with the turnout. We had a great group of attendees (over 80 tickets sold!), a fantastic lineup of speakers, and the perfect fall setting for the event. We want to especially thank Phillips Orchards & Cider Mill for being gracious hosts for a third consecutive year. We have enjoyed our partnership with them immensely and are grateful to them for providing such a great space and delicious treats as well as opening their apple orchard to our guests.

We also want to thank our special guest speakers for taking time to speak to our event attendees. They included State Senator Sam Singh, State Representative Penelope Tsernoglou; MI-7 Congressional candidates Elyon Badger, Bridget Brink, and Josh Cowen (Josh has since withdrawn his candidacy); Gubernatorial candidate Chris Swanson; Attorney General candidate Eli Savita; Nate Engle on behalf of Attorney General candidate Mark Totten, and East Lansing City Council Candidate Liam Richichi. Thank you as well to the representatives from Rank MI Vote and Voters Not Politicians who spoke about their ballot petitions.

If the Fall Harvest Festival is any indication of the energy we are seeing to take back our democracy next year, then we are excited for what's to come. Please stay tuned for additional opportunities to hear directly from candidates as we progress towards next year's primary elections.



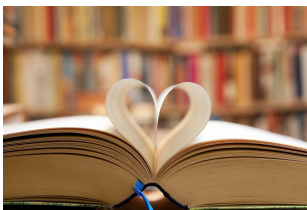
## Podcast Recommendation: Cults, Culture & Coercion

*By Shelby Neathammer.* Amidst the barrage of negativity and, for many of our fellow citizens, the life-altering news that continues to break under the Trump administration, we find ourselves asking the question "how did we get here?" Understanding the historical context and psychology behind this question is an essential step in answering the question

"how do we fix it?"

In a time when it may feel demoralizing to attempt to answer something with such breadth, Dr. Steven Hassan, founder of the Freedom of Mind Resource Center and host of the podcast *Cults, Culture & Coercion* is using his platform to address some of the complex, underlying issues. For 47 years, Hassan has been writing about and conducting research on cults, their language, and the process of deprogramming individuals from their influence.

In the episode *Red Orchestra: The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends who Resisted Hitler*, he interviews Anne Nelson, author of the book with the same title. Nelson, a professor at Columbia University specializing in human rights, media, and conflict, offers thoughtful context about how "following the money" can provide insight into how the Right's modern-day alliance with the Evangelical community laid the groundwork for groups such as The Heritage Foundation to become mainstream. Hassan and Nelson discuss how the power of language, through propaganda, can lead people to vote against their own interests, ultimately harming not only themselves but those around them. Nelson and Hassan conclude by suggesting the importance of temporarily setting aside aspects of conflicting cultural identities to build a broad pro-democracy coalition, with a call for all of us to serve.



## From CCDP's Library

Erwin Chemerinsky's *No Democracy Lasts Forever* argues that due to structural flaws like the Electoral College and a non-representative Senate, the U.S. Constitution is a threat to American democracy and may lead to secession. Pointing out that just fifteen of the 11,848 amendments proposed since 1789 have passed, Chemerinsky argues that fundamental flaws, intentional exclusions, and assumptions baked into the Constitution may in fact have created the very government, systems, and public distrust that put us where we are today. Chemerinsky proposes that the Constitution is beyond fixing through amendments and suggests a new constitutional convention to draft a dramatically different document if secession is to be avoided, noting that the Founding Fathers replaced outdated Articles of Confederation with the Constitution. If this isn't possible, he argues that Americans must give serious thought to forms of secession, including a United States structured like the European Union, based on a recognition that what divides us as a country is, in fact, greater than what unites us. There are mixed views on whether Chemerinsky is being fatalistic or realistic about the state of our democracy. Read for yourself and see where you land!



## Upcoming Events

**October 18 - Second “No Kings” Protest:** 3:00 - 6:00 p.m., Michigan State Capitol, 100 N. Capitol Avenue, Lansing.

**October 22 - Tailgate with Governor Whitmer:** 5:00 p.m., Address provided 48 hours ahead, purchase your ticket by [clicking here](#).

**October 23 - Virtual Community Conversation with Senator Sam Singh:** 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. virtually. [Click here](#) to RSVP.

**October 27 - Penelope PAC CD 7 Candidate Meet and Greet Fundraiser:** 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., address provided [upon registration](#).

**November 6 - CCDP Membership Meeting:** Clinton County Courthouse, 100 E. State Street, St. Johns. Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m, with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

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

**December 4 - 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.



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