

NEWSLETTER

It's a great time to be a Democrat!

Remember that blue and white bumper sticker you used to see on car bumpers, the one that read “*You’re not the only Democrat in Clinton County?*” It seemed that Democrats in our neck of the woods were few and far between. Well, those days have changed. There couldn’t be a better time to be a Democrat in Clinton County than right now!

For starters, we have representation in the state legislature and in Congress. Most of Clinton County, save for a small section in the northwest, is in the 28th Senate District, and we are very well represented by Democratic [Senator Sam Singh](#). Twelve of the 16 townships in the county are represented by Democrats, [Penelope Tsernoglou](#) in the 75th and [Emily Dievendorf](#) in the 77th. We elected a second Democratic commissioner when [John Andrews](#) won in District 6 and joined [Dwight Washington](#) who represents District 7. Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission put Clinton County in the new 7th Congressional District, a seat held by the incredibly capable Democrat [Elissa Slotkin](#).

Our state senator and representatives are part of a Democratic Caucus that hit the ground running. In their first 100 days in the majority, Democrats took action to:

- Roll back the unfair retirement tax
- Expand the Working Families Tax Credit
- Amend the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination against LGBTQ+ Michiganders
- Reinstate prevailing wage
- Repeal the outdated 1931 abortion ban
- Restore workers’ rights to negotiate for safer workplaces and fair pay
- Require universal background checks for all firearm purchases
- Require safe storage of firearms for child access protection
- Allow Extreme Risk Protection Orders to temporarily intervene to suspend a person’s access to firearms if they show clear warning signs of violence.



Many thanks to Sen. Sam Singh for compiling this list!



Our governor has also been laser-focused on making Michigan a better place to live and work by growing Michigan's economy, creating good paying jobs, investing in education, and lowering costs for families, just to name a few of the things she's been working on.

You can find a more extensive list of Gov. Whitmer's accomplishments [here](#).

And it's not just on the state level where exciting things are happening! Read on to learn about the results of Clinton County Democratic Party's first ever survey and how we are trying to build a party that is more effective, responsive, and engaged in our community. You'll find short articles on what it means to be a member of our county party, how your donations are put to work, and another fabulous *Under the Dome* column by Tim Hughes, who spent decades working for the legislature, and more.

We hope this issue of our newsletter helps you remember why we are proud Democrats and encourages you to get involved. Let's build on this momentum as the important 2024 election cycle is just around the corner!

In solidarity, Clinton County Democratic Party



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FIXING THE DAMN ROADS



How Elissa Slotkin "Lost Better" to Win Michigan's Seventh Congressional District: A Lesson and Warning for Democrats in 2024

By Logan Byrne



In the fiercely contested race for Michigan's Seventh Congressional District in 2022, Democrat Elissa Slotkin emerged victorious by “losing better” in rural counties. In addition to winning urban voters, Slotkin's campaign strategy was anchored on winning rural voters, which proved to be a critical factor in her success. Focusing significant time in rural counties, Slotkin performed well in Eaton, Clinton, Shiawassee, and Livingston counties. More specifically, she captured 51.7% of the overall vote by securing 51% in Eaton County, 47% in Clinton County, 42% in Shiawassee County, and 41% in Livingston County. Her game-changing performance and capture of this coveted rural Republican territory should serve as both a lesson and a warning to Democratic congressional candidates in 2024.

Slotkin's recently announced Senate campaign puts mid-Michigan Democrats in a difficult spot. Slotkin's approach was untested in rural Michigan, and now, only months later, the Dems need not only a viable replacement for their charismatic moderate but someone to run against and beat the former state representative, state senator, and hometown hero, Republican Tom Barrett. As several potential Dems eye the congressional seat, the Democratic party must endorse a candidate who not only appeals to Slotkin's base but who can avoid a primary bloodbath on the path to “losing better” in the general election.

In 2022, Slotkin's strategy involved a purposeful attempt to reach rural voters. She not only established connections with them but presented policies that resonated with their concerns. She prioritized their events and parades and showed up looking like the locals. She wore flannel, duck work boots, and talked pork with local farmers. She lent a patient ear to small business owners over soup, and charmed retirees and young professionals alike. She gave them her time, as well as interest, appreciation, and respect for their issues. Her national security service, her family business background, and her mother's healthcare struggle connected her to Michiganders. And because of this, she proved an ideal opponent for Barrett—despite his military service and prior legislative experience.

To win in 2024, the Democrats need someone who can connect with rural voters in a similar way. First, the candidate must have within themselves an ability and willingness to focus on rural life in modern America. That's the voting base of this district, and it is critical to winning the seat. Beyond town hall meetings, and knocking on doors, authentic engagement is needed. The ideal candidate is someone equally capable of addressing typical Democratic priorities and the tension between economic development and agricultural preservation.

Simply put, in 2024, Democrats need to accept that it isn't about winning big, it's about “losing better”, and making gains where moderate rural voters believe you can hear them, will act for them, and will own their issues. To win, Democrats must value the power of these voters, engage and embrace those whose first Democratic vote may have been in 2022, and own a strategy that makes their vote a priority.

SHOULD I DONATE?

By Cathy Lippert, Treasurer CCDP

I ask myself this question when I receive multiple email and snail mail pleas for funds. If there is a cause I'm passionate about, I usually head to Charity Navigator to check out how much of my donation goes to the charity—and how much is spent asking people like me for those donations. Some smaller charities that may not have the resources to report such statistics are still viable 501c3 organizations and worthy of both cash and time donations.

As treasurer of the Clinton County Democratic Party for the past four years, I have collected and dispersed funds on the Party's behalf. During election years, the amount spikes along with the hope that we will help elect candidates that match our morals and values. At the very heart of that hope is ensuring that the least among us will have an equal opportunity for an abundant life. We know that government at all levels plays a vital role in the education, health, environment, and security of all citizens. At CCDP, we feel that Democratic candidates align most with this sentiment and that our monetary support is necessary and appreciated.

You will not find CCDP on Charity Navigator, so here is a little insight into our receipts and spending habits. My reporting is simple; a single-page spreadsheet records receipts from just \$805 in 2021 to \$13,000 in 2022. In typical years, we receive approximately \$3,000 in donations. Our disbursements are equally varied and simple, we spend around \$400 in non-election years and wrote checks for just over \$19,000 in 2022. Typical years show us buying stamps, flyers, office supplies, website fees, and a prepaid cell phone. We like to keep the lights on, as it were, so we can give donations to candidates in support of their campaigns for election and keep the blue wave going at all levels of government.

In addition to soliciting donations through mailers and our website, we hold an annual fundraising event that is a banquet or gathering of some kind. The camaraderie with like-minded individuals is enjoyable and uplifting. We host candidates who speak to the group and are available for one-on-one conversations. Plus, there is always great food and conversation that is both satisfying and energizing. If you are not on our mailing list, please think about signing up so you receive an invitation to these events.

We do promise not to over-solicit funds. We know you have many ways to support your community, and we hope that you will consider supporting the work our county party does to ensure sound policy and quality candidates. It is important work!



Under the Dome

Legislative Update for Clinton County Democrats

By Tim Hughes



Democratic Values in State Spending Plan

President Joe Biden has frequently said; "Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget and I will tell you what you value." With the passage of the state's \$81.7 billion 2023-24 FY budget, Michigan Democrats have shown that they value education, public health, public safety, infrastructure, housing, and economic development.

"The Make it in Michigan budget will build a bright future for our state," said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. "It will power 'Make it in Michigan,' our comprehensive vision for economic development so we can win more projects, invest in people, and revitalize places. I am so grateful to the new leadership in the legislature for getting this done. Let's keep our foot on the accelerator."

Two local legislators played a major role in shaping the budget. Representative Angela Witwer, D-Delta Township, and Senator Sarah Anthony, D-Lansing, Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.



Rep. Witwer

Sen. Anthony

"This budget sets the priorities Michiganders asked for," said Witwer. "We've invested in health-care worker recruitment and retention to strengthen our economy and shorten wait times to see providers. We've prioritized public safety by allocating funding to graduate a new class of officers to help keep us safe. We're supporting the small local businesses that are the heart of our local economies."

"Budgets are moral documents and what they include reflects the values of our state," said Anthony. "Our budget is the product of conversations and meetings with constituents across our state from all walks of life. This transformational budget prioritizes the needs and wants of the people of Michigan—and that's always how it should be." K-12 and higher education spending are in SB 173. Individual department budgets are included in an omnibus budget bill, HB 4437. Both bills were given immediate effect.

Highlights of the budget include:



Substantial increases in **education funding**, including \$611 million to increase K-12 per-pupil funding by 5 percent, an additional \$458 per student, for a total of \$9,608 per pupil. Other education funding includes \$254.6 million to expand free pre-K for up to 5,600 kids and a \$204.5 million increase, for a total of \$952 million in funding for academically at-risk, economically disadvantaged students.

University and community college funding includes a 5 percent ongoing increase for university and community college operations, \$112 million to assist community colleges and universities to improve existing facilities, infrastructure, technology, and campus security and a \$50 million additional investment for the ongoing costs of the Michigan Achievement Scholarship.

Public health spending includes \$140 million to increase wages for direct care workers, \$156.8 million to increase reimbursement rates for Medicaid services and \$56.4 million to fund Healthy Moms/Healthy Babies, a bipartisan initiative that supports pregnant women, new mothers, and infants.

Public safety spending includes \$171.5 million in local community public safety grants, \$34.2 million to enact recommendations from the Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform, \$30 million for cameras to keep drivers on Detroit freeways safe and \$18.2 million to provide in-service training to licensed law enforcement officers.



Transportation and infrastructure spending will fund \$416 million to “fix the damn roads” and upgrade public infrastructure, \$80 million to replace or rehabilitate more than 20 structurally deficient bridges across the state and \$21.3 million for clean energy and electric vehicle infrastructure investments.

Economic development spending includes a \$500 million annual deposit in the Make it in Michigan Fund and \$350 million for the Make it in Michigan Competitiveness Fund to obtain federal grants.

Housing improvement efforts include \$212 million for residential energy efficiency improvements through federal point-of-sale rebates for home appliances and \$50 million for the Housing and Community Development Program to address affordable housing needs and revitalize downtown areas.



Fiscal responsibility is a hallmark of the budget with a \$200 million deposit into the state’s rainy-day fund, bringing the balance to nearly \$2 billion by the end of FY24, an all-time high. There is also a \$450 million deposit into a new rainy-day fund for schools.

Bills Restoring Public Workers' Rights on Governor's Desk

Decades of attacks on public employee collective bargaining rights by previous Republican administrations have been erased by a package of bills soon to be signed by Governor Whitmer.

The package restores collective bargaining rights for school employees and other public sector workers and moves them closer to having the same rights as employees in the private sector.

"We applaud Senate Democrats for taking action today to restore the voices of Michigan's hardworking public employees and call on the Governor to sign them as swiftly as possible," said Michigan AFL-CIO President Ron Bieber.



The bills in the package include:

HB 4044 (Rep. Kolezar) – Eliminates penalties on public school employees when their union contracts expire.

HB 4233 (Rep. Churches) Allows school employees to collect dues through payroll deduction, the same as private sector unions and public firefighter and police unions.

HB 4354 (Rep. Weiss) Restores several issues as permissible subjects for collective bargaining, including evaluation standards, layoffs, recall, hiring, position elimination, discipline and discharge.

HB 4356 (Rep. B. Carter) Allows school employee unions to bargain over contracting out of noninstructional support services.

HB 4357 (Rep. Hood) Updates the state school aid act to reflect changes in the other bills in the package.

Early Voting, Faster Vote Counting Highlight Proposal 2 Implementation Package

The Legislature approved a package of bills to implement Proposal 2, a constitutional amendment to expand voter rights that was approved by Michigan voters in 2022.

State Representative Penelope Tsernoglou (D-East Lansing), Chair of the House Elections Committee, played a leading role in negotiating and passing the legislation.

"One of our most sacred responsibilities as legislators is to ensure that we have free and fair elections. This package will aid in implementing the measures that voters overwhelmingly supported in Proposal 2," said Tsernoglou. "With Democrats in charge, voters can rest easy knowing that when the majority speaks on Election Day, their leaders will listen."



Rep. Tsernoglou

The bills would enact the following reforms:

SB 367 (Sen. Moss) – Establishes the process for nine days of early voting and provides for early tabulation (but not early reporting) of votes for up to eight days, in certain municipalities.

HB 4696 (Rep. Tsernoglou) – Would make disclosing election results from an early voting site a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

SB 370 (Sen. Santana) – Revises the absentee voter application and requires them to have prepaid postage.

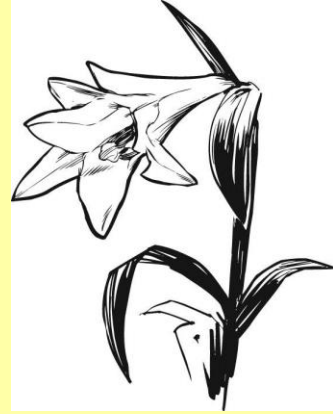
HB 4697 (Rep. Kolezar) – Requires at least one ballot box for every 15,000 voters in a municipality.

HB4699 (Rep. Byrnes) – Allows any registered elector to become a permanent mail ballot vote

SB 373 (Sen. Chang) – Expands the definition of photo IDs that can be used at elections.

HB 4702 (Rep. Tsernoglou) – Increases the maximum size of a precinct from 2,999 active registered electors to 5,000.

SB 339 (Sen. McMorrow) – Provides for an online tracking system telling absentee voters the status of their absent voter ballot application or absent voter ballot.



Special presentation!

In partnership with DeWitt District Library, we are pleased to offer a special presentation by Gabi Mayer, **The How and Why of Green Burials.**

When: August 11, 2023, 10 am

**DeWitt District
Library/Woodruff Annex**

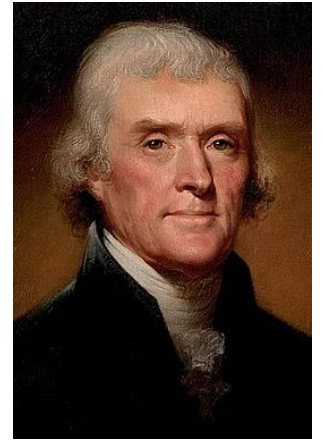
13105 Schavey Road

DeWitt 48820

Seating is limited to 25, and [registration](#) is required. There is no charge to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

A Very Brief Look at Democratic Party History

By Lois Husby



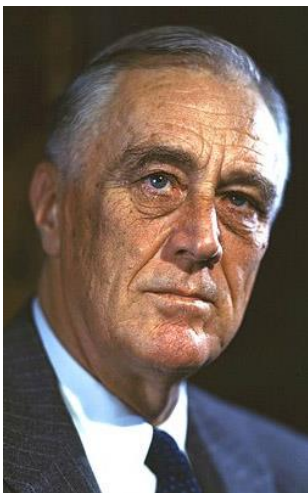
Many Americans recently celebrated the 4th of July with cookouts and fireworks. If they were asked about the significance of the day, they likely would be able to identify it as our nation's Independence Day. But what does that mean? What is our history as Democrats? And how do we best put our Democratic beliefs into action today?

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress unanimously adopted the Declaration of Independence, declaring the colonies' political separation from Great Britain. The primary author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, later wrote, "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only objective of good government."

In 1792, supporters of Thomas Jefferson adopted the name "Republican" or "Jeffersonian Republican" to distinguish themselves from the pro-monarchical views of the Federalist party led by Alexander Hamilton. The Federalists coined the term "Democratic Republican" to identify the party of Jefferson with the radicalism of the French Revolution. The Democratic Republican Party supported expansive presidential power, the interest of slave states, agrarianism, and westward expansion prior to 1860. During that time, it opposed a national bank and high tariffs.

By 1824, the Democratic Republican Party had largely collapsed. In the election of 1828, Martin Van Buren rallied politicians in every state around Andrew Jackson who referred to his followers as simply "Democrats." In 1844, party officials officially adopted the name "Democratic Party."

Democrats held the White House for 24 of 32 years between 1828 and 1860. In the election of 1860, Democrats, split over the issue of slavery, ran separate presidential candidates, one northern and one southern.



After the Civil War, the states of the former Confederacy formed a solid voting block of Southern Democrats who rejected attempts at reconstruction and civil rights for former slaves. In the latter part of the 19th century, the Democratic Party began to support labor and working-class citizens, in contrast to the mainstream Republicans who supported the industrialists of that era.

In the early 20th century, the Democratic Party supported progressive reforms. The effects of the Great Depression led to the landslide election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932. Democrats under FDR introduced programs and reforms referred to as the "New Deal" to provide relief and recovery from the impact of the depression. The party promoted a socially liberal platform, including Social Security and unemployment insurance.

Democrats continued to support working-class citizens after the Second World War by encouraging participation in labor unions. With the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 under President Lyndon Baines Johnson, Democrats officially rejected the beliefs of Southern Democrats, also known as the Dixiecrats, who had consistently tried to obstruct civil rights legislation.

Since the election of FDR in 1932, the Democratic Party has focused on civil liberty and equality with support for social justice as well as a well-regulated mixed economy. Major modern examples include the New Frontier (John F. Kennedy), the Great Society (Lyndon Baines Johnson), and the Affordable Care Act (Barack Obama).

The party's philosophy of modern American liberalism blends civil liberties and social equality with support for a mixed capitalist economy. On social issues, it advocates for issues such as reproductive rights, the legalization of marijuana, stricter gun safety laws, and LGBTQ+ rights, criminal justice, and immigration reform. Expansion of social programs (including expansion of universal healthcare coverage, equal opportunity, and consumer protection) forms the core of its economic agenda. President Joe Biden's plan—Bidenomics—is rooted in the recognition that the best way to grow the economy is from the middle out and the bottom up. It's an economic vision centered around three key pillars: Making smart public investments in America and empowering and educating workers to grow the middle class.

During his Nobel lecture President Jimmy Carter may have summarized these concepts best when he said, "God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these choices—and we must."

Today we, as Democrats, have numerous opportunities to follow our forefathers' examples of providing services to those in need. We must make that choice. Consider joining CCDP members at our monthly meetings and other events and add your voice and hands with ours. It's a great time to be a Democrat!

CCDP Assists Community to Celebrate Earth Day!

This past April, members of CCDP came together for two community service activities: assisting the [Clinton Conservation District](#) with preparation for their annual spring tree sale and cleaning up trash at [Motz Park](#) and [Clinton Lakes County Park](#). Both events ushered in the start of spring and offered the chance to contribute to the community around us.

On April 17 and 18, several members gathered at the Clinton County Fairgrounds in St. Johns City Park to assist Clinton Conservation District staff with wrapping trees and plants ahead of their spring tree sale. The group wrapped a wide variety of saplings, from white pines to red maples. With help from CCDP volunteers and other community members, a total of 17,000 trees and plants were wrapped in just a day and a half!

Rain didn't deter CCDP members from lending a hand on Earth Day, April 22. Joining in clean-ups at Motz Park and Clinton Lakes Park with trash bags in hand, members picked up trash ranging from food wrappers and soda cans to golf balls and fishing lines. It was surprising to see just how much waste accumulates—a reminder to be kind to our Earth!

See below for some photos from the festivities. A big thank you to all who participated in these community events. We look forward to more civic-minded projects in the future. If you have suggestions for ways CCDP can assist with community projects you are involved with, just let us know!





Refreshed and rejuvenated!

We are pleased to announce the logo that received the most votes from Clinton County Democratic Party members. The logo chosen artfully blends the official Michigan Democratic Party style colors with an image that is unique among Michigan county parties. The new logo is part of our plan to refresh and rejuvenate CCDP. Coupled with the results of our recent survey, party leaders are making every effort to make our county party more engaging and effective. We'd like to thank everyone who participated in selecting the logo and those who completed the survey. It's a great time to be a Clinton County Democrat!

CCDP's Inaugural Member Survey Results Are In!

By Ann McCulloch

Thank you to the more than 80 CCDP members who took the time to share their thoughts as part of our inaugural member survey! We asked questions relating to meetings, programming, activities, and social media and you answered. Over the coming weeks, we will study the responses and use your feedback to help us plan better, smarter, and more inclusively leading up to the important 2024 elections.

In addition to learning about your preferences for meeting attendance and social media use, the survey asked what other events and programs you would be most interested in seeing CCDP offer. It was clear from your responses that you would like more interaction with candidates and elected officials, with more than 75% of the respondents indicating they would be interested in these opportunities.



Nearly 70 percent of respondents indicated that they were interested in CCDP offering more speakers on relevant topics. Many offered great comments and suggestions for speakers and meeting topics, like the county-wide energy project moratorium and rural internet access. There was also an interest in learning how national conversations on issues like the environment and gun safety affect us at the local level.

Members also expressed the need for CCDP to be more visible in the community and there was a strong interest in community service activities, with nearly 50 percent of responses indicating they would like this type of interaction.

Thinking ahead to 2024, we were heartened to see that an overwhelming majority of respondents, more than 80 percent, plan on displaying yard signs. We know these efforts gave

our candidates a big boost in 2022. You also indicated your willingness to pitch in with time and resources, with 63 percent planning on giving to or attending fundraisers, and nearly 50 percent planning to donate time, materials, or services. We will need all of this and more as we expand our footprint in the county and work to elect the strongest candidates!

We are grateful for your feedback and hope the survey sparked your imagination and interest in getting more involved. And for those who indicated an interest in serving as a precinct delegate or running for office, please reach out to us by calling 517-512-9555 for more information. We'd love to continue the conversation about how to best meet your needs as a Democrat in Clinton County and find ways to make your involvement with CCDP a meaningful and fulfilling experience.

Look for more great content, events, and programming to come based on your suggestions and thank you again for your participation!

We'd Love for You to Join Us!

Kathie Elliott, CCDP Chair



Happy Summer! I hope you find this newsletter informative and inspirational because I continue to be inspired by the talent and commitment of CCDP leadership and committee members who passionately curate and deliver important information and updates through this newsletter and social media. We know that you want a vibrant, visible, and influential county party which makes our work all the more important.

We're pleased to report that new developments in the first half of this year included increasing the frequency of our newsletters and social media postings, hosting guest speakers at membership meetings, applying for a grant, adding representation to the Michigan Democratic LGBTQ Caucus, participating in Earth Day and Adopt a Highway, completing a logo redesign, and distributing our first membership survey. Additionally, every month we have been contacted by Democrats who want to volunteer, run for office, or become members. It's an exciting time to be a member of the Clinton County Democrats as we continue to position ourselves to be a county to watch and one that candidates will see as critical to their success.

As hard as it is to believe, we must turn our attention fully to the next election and we need "all hands" to elect Elissa Slotkin our next U.S. Senator, maintain the 7th district for Democrats, and put a Democratic candidate on the ballot for each county/local position next year.

Here's a sample of what you can expect from us in the next six months: collaborations with neighboring county parties (including a focus on young Democrats), a fundraiser/friendraiser in September, creation of candidate resources, candidate recruitment activities, guest speakers and training at member meetings, and special interest programs.

We invite you to join CCDP, renew your membership, attend a meeting or event, and volunteer on one of our committees. And please tell others about the work we're doing! Will you help us with your membership, time, and talents? There's no better time to be part of Clinton County Democrats!

Opportunity to participate in community service project!

CCDP is excited to announce our participation in MDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program! Our first pick-up of the year will take place on Saturday, July 22nd from 9am-noon. We will be meeting at the Lansing-Northwest Park and Ride Commuter Lot, which is located at 7585 W. Grand River Hwy, Watertown Twp, MI 48906.

If you are interested in joining us that morning, please RSVP as soon as possible to CCDP Vice Chair Matthew Boak at matthew@clintoncodems.org. Important event notifications and updates will be sent to those who RSVP.