



CLINTON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

# NEWSLETTER



## ***Message from the Chairman***

*I take great pride in all our Clinton County Democratic Party volunteers. I have been involved in county politics for 8 years now and it hasn't been easy. Working for Dems in a heavily biased Republican County feels like continually banging your head against a wall and getting nowhere. Putting up candidates year after year knowing full well that their chances are slim can be demoralizing, and we have volunteers that have been working in this environment for much longer than I have! Truthfully, I am inspired daily by their tenacity and understanding of how important this work is. I am inspired daily by their willingness to sacrifice time out of their impossibly busy lives to toil at something that can be very unrewarding.*

***That all changes now!***

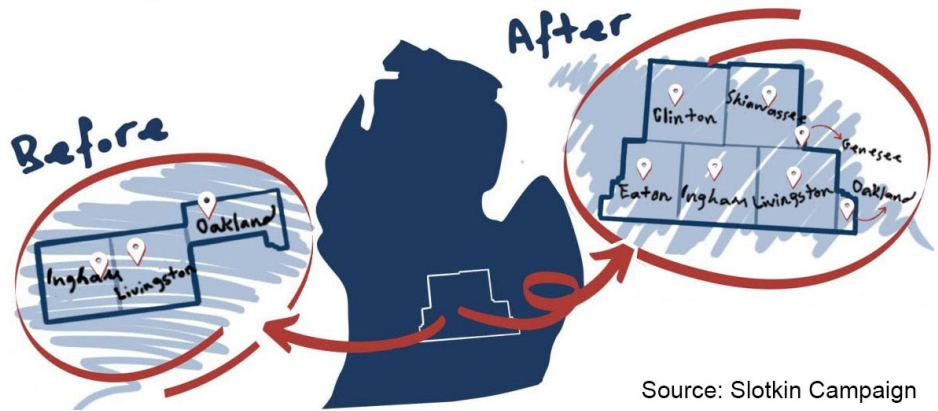
*We have been following the news regarding the Michigan Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission over the past couple years. We've listened to the arguments, the lawsuits, and the comments from both sides. It's easy to get lost in all of this and not see how truly*

transformational this process has been. Only by looking closer at the changes at the local level do you see how much is going to change for some communities.

In Clinton County, the first thing you will notice is the number of districts that represent us. We now have three MI House

Districts instead of one. Looking beyond that you see the changes that will have the biggest effect on local politics. The 93<sup>rd</sup> is still a 61% to 36% Republican advantage in the very northern edge of the county but the 75<sup>th</sup>, which ranges from St. Johns to Bath, will enjoy a 59% to 39% Democratic advantage. The 77<sup>th</sup>, ranging from Westphalia Twp. to DeWitt to Northern Lansing Twp., will have an even larger 60% to 36% Democratic edge. Don't get me wrong, we still need to put the work in, but it's a huge difference having multiple, highly qualified candidates in a primary because the race is winnable. The Senate District is also more competitive, with a 54% to 43% Democratic edge. To top it all off, the new 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, in which Elissa Slotkin who represents the current 8<sup>th</sup> district, will run, has a 49% to 48% Democratic edge. Our efforts will matter in these races!

## Michigan's New 7th Congressional District



Source: Slotkin Campaign

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The last maps I want to address are the new County Commissioner maps. After reapportionment we have gained a strong Democratic district for a total of 2, and a toss-up district that leans Democratic by 5%. This means that we have the potential to have a County Commission that accurately

represents the voters of this county, which is a big change from the last decade! All of this means that volunteers in Clinton County will feel like their efforts are really making a difference and Democrats will feel effectively represented. I predict that as more and more Democrats in Clinton County become aware of the far-reaching changes happening, they will be more interested in getting involved. Everybody likes working for a winning team!

I invite you to check out those changes. Peruse the bios of candidates listed on our webpage. There are more to come. Check out the Spring Banquet on May 6 as there will be a robust lineup of speakers present. There is a lot going on in Clinton County and we aren't slowing down!!

Yours in solidarity,  
Eric Schlenkermann

# Under the Dome

## Legislative Update for Clinton County Democrats

By Tim Hughes



Governor Gretchen Whitmer cited major accomplishments from her first three years in office and called for continuing action on kitchen-table priorities in her 2022 State of the State address. The speech was delivered at Detroit Diesel, home to cutting-edge electric vehicle technology built by the hardworking members of UAW Local 163.



Photo by Julia Picket



I want to keep delivering on the kitchen-table issues," said Whitmer. "A good-paying job. Great schools. Clean water. Safe communities. Thriving small businesses. A chance to get ahead and hope for the future."

Whitmer cited accomplishments from her first three years in office, including the creation of 20,000 auto jobs, fixing 13,198 miles of road and 903 bridges, \$400 refund checks per vehicle for Michigan drivers and the biggest education investment in Michigan history for three years in a row.

### **Governor Whitmer outlined five major priorities for 2022:**

- Eliminate Michigan's pension tax, saving half a million households \$1,000 a year.
- Raise Michigan's Earned Income Tax Credit to give 730,000 working families an average combined state and federal tax refund of \$3,000.
- Expand access to mental and behavioral health by retaining or recruiting hundreds of mental health workers.
- Work with Attorney General Nessel to hold drug companies accountable for skyrocketing insulin prices and work with the legislature to cap insulin costs.
- Enact a \$2,000 rebate on electric vehicle purchases and a \$500 rebate on at-home charging stations.

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*“I will work hard every day to put Michiganders first,” said Whitmer.  
“I will always believe in Michigan because we are strong and  
getting stronger every day.”*

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## **Ballot Proposals Could Impact Elections, Minimum Wage, Abortion and More**

Thirteen ballot proposals are in various stages of development, with the goal of obtaining enough voter signatures to put them on the November 2022 ballot or having them approved by the legislature.

The proposals fall into two main categories: constitutional amendments and initiated laws. The legislature doesn't get to vote on proposed constitutional amendments. If enough signatures are collected, a majority vote of the legislature can enact the proposal into law without a signature from the governor or approval by voters. With a Republican majority in both the House and the Senate, many Republican-backed ballot proposals are pursuing the initiated law strategy.

Here are the issues that may appear on the November ballot:

**Promote The Vote** – This plan would amend the constitution to make it easier to exercise the right to vote by allowing 9 days of early voting; continuing the current practice of allowing voters without ID to cast provisional ballots; allowing voters to request absentee ballots for future elections; requiring ballot drop boxes for every 15,000 voters; providing publicly paid postage for absentee ballots; and establishing that only state and local election officials can conduct post-election audits. The proposal is backed by Promote the Vote Michigan, ACLU of Michigan, League of Women Voters and Voters Not Politicians.



**Secure MI Vote** – A Republican-backed initiated law that would suppress the vote by eliminating a current provision in law that allows voters without ID to cast a provisional ballot that would be reviewed by election officials for authenticity. Under this plan, these voters would have to present required ID within 6 days to local clerks or their vote wouldn't be counted. The plan would require voters to give Social Security information to register to vote, ban unsolicited absentee ballot applications, and restrict mail-in ballots. The proposal is heavily funded by the Michigan Republican Party and Republican dark money PACs.



**Raise the Wage MI** – The proposal would initiate a law to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour over 5 years, starting at \$11 per hour in 2023 and topping out at \$15 in 2027. The proposal would require automatic adjustments for inflation every year after 2027. It would also phase out the existing sub-minimum wage for tipped workers, people under 20 years of age and people with disabilities. It is backed by One Fair Wage, a national worker advocacy group.

**Reproductive Freedom for All** – This would amend the constitution to make reproductive freedom a right and repeal an old law that makes abortion a felony. That law was overruled by the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision but would be reinstated if Roe was overturned. It is supported by the ACLU of Michigan, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan and Michigan Voices.

**Let MI Kids Learn** – Two petitions that would initiate laws to create and fund voucher plans to use public tax dollars to pay for private schools. One petition would create the voucher plan, the other would provide tax credits equal to the contributions made to the voucher program. If enacted, private school students could receive up to \$7,830 per year from the voucher plan, while public school students would be limited to receive only up to \$500 (\$1,500 for students in special education programs). Senate Fiscal Agency analysts predict that this would cause a \$500 million loss in state revenue the first year. The proposal is heavily backed by the DeVos family and major Republican organizations.

**MI Right to Vote** – This promotes two constitutional amendments, one to end the legislature’s ability to enact initiated laws through ballot proposals and the other to make it easier for citizens to vote. It would include two weeks of in-person absentee voting, allow voters to verify identity through ID or signature, and prohibit the legislature from imposing an undue burden on the right to vote. It is supported by a group of activists with a Facebook page, website and a post office box in Ypsilanti.



**Michiganders for Fair Lending** – An initiated law that would cap interest rates for payday loans at 36 percent and allow the state attorney general to prosecute lenders who violate the law.

**Michigan United** – An initiated law that would repeal truth in sentencing laws that require persons convicted to serve their entire minimum sentence. It would provide for credits to reduce sentences for those who earn degrees in prison.

**Unlock Michigan II** – An initiated law that would limit the length of emergency orders from state or local health officials to 28 days, unless extended by the legislature.



**Audit Michigan** – A proposed initiated law that would require a “forensic audit” of the 2020 election, take away auditing authority from the secretary of state and local election officials, and create a 20-member bipartisan auditing board chosen by the legislature to conduct election audits.

**Michigan Initiative for Community Health** – Initiated law that would decriminalize the use and production of natural plants or mushrooms and lower controlled substance violations from a felony to a misdemeanor.

## Gov. Whitmer's 2022 Budget Invests in Education, Workers & Infrastructure

After laying out her policy proposals in the State of the State address, Governor Whitmer released her executive budget proposal, showing how to pay for everything.



In a presentation to a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee, Whitmer and Budget Director Christopher Harkins outlined a \$74.1 billion spending plan that provides for a school aid budget with the biggest education funding increase in more than 20 years without raising taxes.

The Education budget includes a 5 percent increase in per-pupil funding to \$9,135, \$222 million to fully fund support for economically disadvantaged students, and \$150 million in increased support for special education students.

The Whitmer budget supports workers by calling for \$500 million for hero pay for frontline workers in support and recognition of their sacrifices during the pandemic.

The budget also calls for \$500 million for economic development projects, \$85.8 million for workforce development, \$578 million for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and \$480 million for roads and bridges.

### [2023 Michigan Executive Budget](#)





**Elisa Slotkin with Theresa Kidd and Melany Mack at a campaign event.**

## **Ways you can help Elissa Slotkin's campaign!**

We have an outstanding candidate for the newly drawn 7th Congressional District, and it is up to each one of us to help Elissa Slotkin win this race. Here are specific ways you can help her campaign:



1. Introduce Elissa to new people. Jeremy Blatt, the campaign's deputy organizing director, can help to schedule friend-raisers, fundraisers, or get-togethers with groups of people across the county who Elissa should meet, particular the non-political types who might otherwise not be engaged. Contact Jeremy at 810-923-6872 or email him at [Jeremy.blatt@elissaforcongress.com](mailto:Jeremy.blatt@elissaforcongress.com).
2. Be in touch with the campaign about what they need to know! If there is a community event coming up that you think Elissa should attend, or an issue that she should be thinking about, or feedback that you are hearing from your friends and neighbors, please don't hesitate to share it with the campaign team.
3. Contribute! Elissa is in the most competitive Congressional race in the state and one of the most competitive in the entire country. You can help assure she can get her message out be contributing through ActBlue [here](#).

**Do your part. Remember, Democracy is on the ballot in 2022!**

# Buckle Up Neighbors

By Fred Clark

I'm a fan of old movies. In the 1950 drama, All About Eve, Betty Davis tells party goers, "fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night." This is good advice for Democrats in this upcoming election. Democratic control of Congress is on a knife's edge and Republicans are measuring the curtains in both leadership offices.

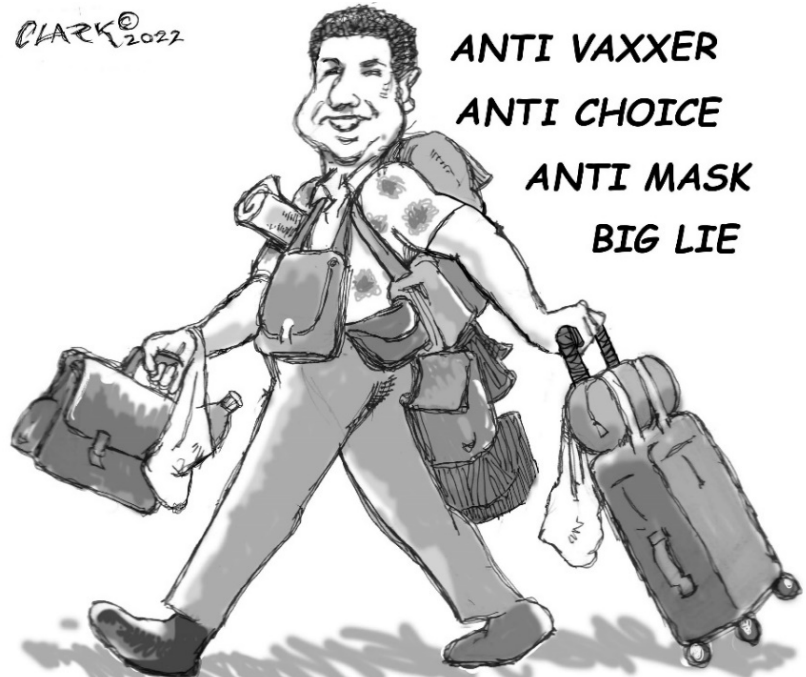
Elissa Slotkin, running for the newly drawn 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District which includes Clinton County, is a marked Republican target. Elissa is a moderate who has concentrated on health care issues and national defense. She is a former CIA analyst, and her expertise is respected on both sides of the aisle. Her opponent, State Senator Tom Barrett (R) is a strong advocate for Trump's "Big Lie." He has opposed Governor Whitmer's covid-19 policies at every turn. Buckle up!

Governor Gretchen Whitmer faces a swarm of Republican candidates. After their primary, the national GOP is sure to focus

like a laser on our gubernatorial race. Whitmer's strong science-based leadership has saved lives and spared Michigan the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. But polls indicate that the race will be close. Oh yes, QAnon crackpots and anti vaxxers are showing up at local schoolboard meetings. Buckle up!

Michigan is a majority Democratic state, but Republicans dominate the legislature. Yet here, we have a bright spot. Clinton County has strong candidates running for both state legislative seats. Michigan's Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission eliminated the worst gerrymandering in Michigan, and if we all do our part, we could elect Democrats and flip the legislature.

Democrats can expect a tidal wave of Republican dark money, alternative facts, and vitriol. Dirty, issueless campaigns are not good for democracy, but we can expect dirty to become filthy. Things are not desperate, but this is a pivotal moment, and we have our work cut out for us. So, buckle up!



**TOM BARRETT HAS A LOT OF BAGGAGE!**



# Citizens' Corner

By Theresa Kidd

## Awesome News for Democrats in Clinton County

This August's primary will challenge Democrats in Clinton County in ways we haven't seen in maybe forever. In fact, our cup runneth over with Democrats running in the primary! The Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's (MICRC) district lines were finalized this past December and Clinton County is now part of three House districts, two Senate districts and a brand new Congressional District 7. A few of the County Commission district lines have changed, too.



Two of the new districts, House Districts 75 and 77, have been determined to lean Democratic. Both districts include southern portions of our county. Third is House District 93 that leans Republican and includes northern parts of the county. Let's get to know them! Do you know yet what district you're in? (The names in parenthesis after each district

description below are the Dem candidates running in the August Primary.)

**House District 77** leans Democratic and includes Westphalia, Eagle, Riley, Watertown, and DeWitt townships. It also includes portions of Eaton County that include some of Grand Ledge, and Ingham County that include the northern part of Lansing. (DEM CANDIDATES: Logan Byrne, Jon Horford, Emily Dievendorf)

**House District 75** leans Democratic and includes Bingham, Ovid, Olive, Victor, and Bath townships. It also encompasses portions of Shiawassee County and Ingham County that include East Lansing, Haslett, and Okemos. (DEM CANDIDATES: Emily Stivers, Penelope Tsernoglou)

**House District 93** leans Republican and includes these Clinton County townships: Lebanon, Essex, Greenbush, Duplain, Dallas, and Bengal; it also includes parts of Gratiot, Montcalm, and Saginaw counties. (NO DEM CANDIDATES TO DATE)

But, that's not all . . .

**Our new Senate District 28 leans Democratic!**

**MICHIGAN  
INDEPENDENT  
CITIZENS  
REDISTRICTING  
COMMISSION**



Established in November 2018 by voter consent, MICRC was created to replace the more partisan way lines were drawn in the past. Michigan's constitution empowers this independent commission of citizens to draw district lines for the Michigan Legislature and Michigan's members of Congress for the 2022 election and beyond. If you would like to check out the interactive maps of the new districts, go to the MICRC website, <https://www.michigan.gov/micrc>, and scroll down to click on "Final Maps."

**Senate District 28** includes all Clinton County townships except Lebanon and Essex, as well as the majority of Shiawassee County and some of Ingham County including Meridian, Williamstown, Locke, and Wheatfield townships and the City of East Lansing. (DEM CANDIDATES: Sam Singh, Salman Rais)

**Senate District 34** leans Republican and includes only two townships in Clinton County, Essex and Lebanon. Also included in this district are Gratiot, Mecosta, Isabella, Osceola, Clare, and Gladwin counties, and portions of Saginaw, Midland, Bay, and Lake counties. (NO DEM CANDIDATES TO DATE)

**New Congressional District 7** includes all of Clinton, Shiawassee, Ingham, and Livingston counties; the majority of Eaton County; a small part of Oakland County; and a tiny portion of Genesee County. (DEM CANDIDATE: Elissa Slotkin)



**Clinton County Board of Commissioners:** Democrats currently hold only one of seven seats on the County Board of Commissioners. Dwight Washington is running for re-election this year. He represents Commission District 7. (NO OTHER DEM CANDIDATES TO DATE)

If you are interested in talking with us about running for office in the vacancies above or any other elected position in 2022, we are interested in talking with you. Our phone number is 517.512.9555.

As you can see, we have homework to do! Let's get to know all of the Democratic candidates before we vote in the August primary to select the person best qualified to serve our district. The Democratic winner of the primary, as we know, becomes our nominee in this November's election.

Go to our website <https://clintoncodems.org/> to get links to candidate websites. Once on our homepage, click on the "Voting Info" tab and then choose "Candidates." Our website has been redesigned and is updated on a regular basis. Check it all out! We think you'll like the new look and more timely information. Our Facebook page also posts candidate information so like and follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/ClintonCoDemsMI> .

Wishing you a great summer!

Theresa Kidd



# Climate Emergency Demands Action—NOW!

by Terry and Ellen Link

It sometimes seems like our Clinton County commissioners either don't care about the climate crisis or don't understand the implications. They need our help.



On Jan. 25, we attended the Board of Commissioners' meeting and urged them to take preventive measures to safeguard the future of Clinton County residents, farmers and businesses from potential climate-induced disasters. We presented [factual information](#) and the dire predictions issued by the world's climate scientists and asked that they "...publicly acknowledge the urgency of dealing with the climate crisis. In so doing, you will be telling the residents of Clinton County that climate change is real and that the people we elected to lead us into the future... have our backs." This was a follow-up to a request made in 2020 to adopt a Climate Emergency Resolution similar to one passed this year by the [Michigan League of Women Voters](#) and many other organizations and communities across the state and country. A plea for their response was submitted again in 2021 along with a petition to that effect. As far as we can tell, however, it has all fallen on deaf ears.

This is too important for us to give up on. The well-being and future of our families and communities are being increasingly threatened

by the catastrophes resulting from climate change. A plan is coalescing that would call on all concerned county residents to help our county commissioners realize what's at stake and take action. Those who can't make their morning meetings on the last Tuesday of each month at 9a.m. can call or email their commissioner with a request that they stop ignoring what the future likely holds for us all. Those who can attend the meeting should go prepared with an idea or two on actions or policies that could address the problem(s).

It would probably help to have a meeting where questions, ideas and strategies could be shared, which is much easier to do when you're working and speaking with others. If you're interested, please contact [Ellen](#) or [Terry Link](#) and one of us will get back to you. Let's get this done. Our future depends on it, and the climate won't wait.

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