

Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

November 2025

Volume 4, Issue 11

Our Goals

- Ensure honest and transparent government.
- Restore and protect our environment.
- Support strong economic growth and opportunity.
- Strengthen voter access and turnout.
- Promote affordable education and health care for all.

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Notice of Our November Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, November 20th**, at the Brentwood, 178 Park Drive, Caro, MI. Mark Totten, Democratic candidate for Attorney General of Michigan, will join us as guest speaker. Social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

See you there!

Highlights of Our October Meeting

Chair Deb Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on October 16th at the Brentwood. Eighteen members and one guest were in attendance. Alex Krisch gave us a run-down of current events. Mark Putnam informed us that Nancy Barrios has been appointed Tuscola County Commissioner for District 1, and he thanked members for helping with the East Frank Street sidewalk cleanup on September 27th. Chuck Stockwell told us about the work of the Communications Committee. Sharon Schwab reminded us about the upcoming "*No Kings*" protest on October 18th. Sherene McCloy reminded us about the upcoming Fall Fundraiser on November 5th. Mona DeQuis asked us to support a write-in candidate, Wynette Guy, for Southfield County Clerk in the upcoming election. The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Tuscola Dems Welcome Your Donations



To donate, simply aim the camera on your smart phone at the QR image shown here, and it will take you directly to *ActBlue*, where you can donate whatever amount you wish.

Thank you!

“No Kings” Day of Protest



On Saturday, October 18th, Tuscola Democrats held a protest on the sidewalk in front of the Tuscola County courthouse. More than three hundred local citizens joined at least seven million Americans across the nation who took to the streets on the second “No Kings” Day of Protest against Trump’s assault on our democracy. This was the largest single-day demonstration against a sitting president in our nation’s history. The protesters committed no acts of violence, and none were arrested.

“Our rights are not given to us, they must be won,” said Alex Kirsch, spokesperson for the Caro protest. “The president is trying to be a dictator — abducting immigrants, occupying American cities, gutting healthcare and education, bullying political opponents, rewarding billionaires, and ignoring struggling working families.”

Are Immigrants Draining Our Social Services?

Trump and his sycophants claim that immigrants are coming into our country and siphoning off vital social services from native-born Americans. Really?

USAFacts is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization founded in 2017 by former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer. This organization gathers information from government agencies and arranges it into easy-to-understand charts. They offer no analysis or opinion; they simply present the data and let us draw our own conclusions.

On the next page, you’ll find a chart from *USAFacts* showing exactly which social services and duties immigrants are eligible for and which ones they are not eligible for.

What programs and duties are immigrants eligible for?

Eligibility assuming applicant meets all standard program requirements.

Waiting period before eligible:

5 5 years 0.5 180 days

☐ Changed by 2025 legislation

Services	Citizen	Green card	Refugee & asylees	DACA	Non-tourist visa	Aylum applicant	Unauthorized
Social Security	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	No
SSI	Yes	Yes 5	Yes	No	No	No	No
Medicare	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Medicaid	Yes	Yes 5	No	No	No	No	No
CHIP	Yes	Yes 5	No	No	No	No	No
Marketplace insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Maybe	Maybe	No
Marketplace subsidies	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
SNAP	Yes	Yes 5	No	No	No	No	No
TANF	Yes	Yes 5	Yes	No	No	No	No
Section 8 housing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Federal student aid	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Head Start	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Public K-12 education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duties	Citizen	Green card	Refugee & asylees	DACA	Non-tourist visa	Aylum applicant	Unauthorized
Pay taxes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vote in fed. elections	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Eligible to work	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe 0.5	No
Eligible for work-auth SSN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe 0.5	No
Serve in US military	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Note: This chart reflects rulings as of August 12, 2025. Some marked as “changed by 2025 legislation” are not yet in effect. Emergency Medicaid is not included. DACA refers to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients. Unauthorized refers to residents without any immigration status, including those unknown to the US government or who overstayed legal entry. Eligibility reflects rules for immigrants arriving after 1996, earlier arrivals may have different requirements.

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Nutrition Service, Internal Revenue Service, USAGov, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, US Congress.

 USAFacts

Our Fall Fundraiser



On Monday, November 5th, Tuscola Democrats held our annual Fall Fundraiser at the Brentwood to raise funds for next year's David Sierocki Memorial Scholarship. Sherene McCloy, head of our scholarship program, introduced the current scholarship recipients, Audrina Hartwick and Chase Wilkinson, and told us about the accomplishments and future plans of these outstanding young people. Our guest speaker, Pat Zabawa, *Rank MI Vote's* executive director, told us about ranked choice voting. Sharon Schwab, organizer of the fundraiser, drew winning tickets for the door prize and table centerpiece giveaways.

Everyone had a great time!

Autocrats Sometimes Lose Elections

According to a recent poll, Americans have lost faith in our country's political system. Five years ago, in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, most American voters still believed we could solve our political problems. Today, only 33 percent of voters feel that way.

There's still hope. Remember that in most countries, autocrats continue to hold elections, even as they do their best to subvert the election process — prosecuting political opponents, suppressing independent news media, spreading disinformation through state-controlled media, packing their courts, declaring states of emergency, deploying the military among their citizens, and fabricating vote counts. Sound familiar? Yet despite these efforts, autocrats sometimes lose elections.

In 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India declared a state of emergency, allowing her to rule by decree, cancel elections, and suspend civil liberties. She imprisoned more than 100,000 political opponents and censored the press. Two years later, Gandhi allowed a new election and was promptly voted out of office.

In 1986, dictator Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines called an election. The opposition leader, Corazon Aquino, rallied voters by exposing the Marcos regime's rampant fraud. Key Philippine military, diplomatic, and religious officials broke with him. More than a million citizens protested peacefully. Marcos was shocked to learn he had been voted out of office and fled the country.

In 1988, dictator Augusto Pinochet of Chile was forced to hold a plebiscite to determine if he should remain in office for the next eight years. Pinochet lost the plebiscite and then tried to get members of his junta to seize the capital. They refused, and Pinochet had to accept the fact that he had been voted out of office.

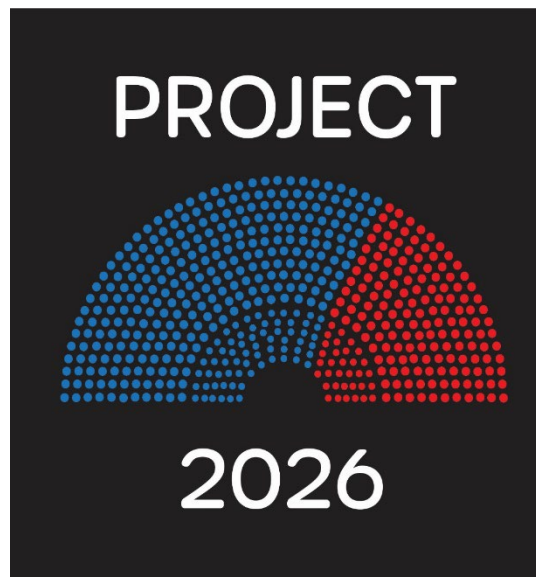
In 2000, dictator Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia was defeated by Vojislav Kostunica in an election he was forced to hold in order to suspend sanctions against his regime. The Election Commission refused to accept his defeat and called for a runoff election, but the opposition objected and called for a general strike. Demonstrators invaded Belgrade, surrounding the Parliament building and the offices of Radio Television Serbia. The Election Commission reversed its call for a runoff election, and Milosevic finally accepted his defeat.

In 2016, dictator Yahya Jammeh of Gambia unexpectedly lost the 2016 presidential election to Adama Barrow. Initially Jammeh refused to accept the results, but international pressure and regional military intervention led to his eventual departure and exile.

In 2022, dictator Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil lost the election to his rival, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. In response, Bolsonaro's supporters immediately set up roadblocks across the country, but Brazil's supreme court ordered these roadblocks dismantled, and the country's electoral court certified da Silva's victory.

In 2023, Poland's ruling right-wing party campaigned on an anti-immigrant, anti-European platform. They declared Poland under siege and stacked the courts with allies, declared the opposition leader, Donald Tusk, as a foreign agent, investigated domestic critics, and intimidated business executives to discourage them from supporting the opposition. Tusk and his Civic Coalition fought back. When the election came around, a record-breaking 74 percent of the electorate turned out, and Tusk won.

We have an election coming up in 2026. It's a mid-term election, so Trump himself won't be on the ballot, but 33 senators and all 435 members of the House will be running. If Democrats can win a majority of seats in one chamber of Congress, maybe we can shut Trump down. If we can win a majority of seats in both chambers, maybe we can impeach and convict him, and thus remove him from office. It won't be easy, but autocrats have lost elections before, and they will again.



The Epstein Files

On November 11th, the House of Representatives finally got down to business after a 54-day shutdown. It was always clear what the Democrats wanted from the shutdown—lower costs for healthcare insurance premiums — but it was never clear what the Republicans wanted. As it turns out, they wanted to keep the Epstein files under wraps.

In theory, the House operates by majority rule, but in practice, the speaker and the leaders of the majority party control how (and whether) bills move to the House floor. Speaker Johnson and Republican house leaders are vehemently opposed to the *Epstein Files Transparency Act*, which would require the Justice Department to “publicly disclose all unclassified records, documents, communications, and investigative materials in its possession that relate to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.” After it became clear that Speaker Johnson was not going to bring the bill to the floor, Representatives Thomas Massie, Republican of Kentucky, and Ro Khanna, Democrat of California, turned to an arcane procedural tactic, known as a *discharge petition*, which allows them to circumvent the House leadership and bring bills to the floor if at least 218 members sign the petition. The problem was that the only 217 members signed on — one short of the number required. Then on September 23rd, Adelita Grijalva, Democrat of Arizona, was elected to the House and pledged to be the 218th signature on the petition. The shutdown gave Speaker Johnson an excuse to delay swearing her in, but once the House was back in session, he had no choice. On November 12th, Representative Grijalva was sworn in and promptly added her signature to the discharge petition.

Once it has reached the required 218 signatures, a discharge petition must “ripen” for seven days — not calendar days, but days when the House is in session. Then, a member can call up the measure on the floor, and the speaker must schedule it for a vote within the next two days. Because of the House’s schedule, which includes a weeklong Thanksgiving break, it first seemed that the House would not vote on the Epstein bill until the first week of December, but Speaker Johnson has said he would not wait that long and would schedule the Epstein vote for next week.

If every representative who signed the petition also votes for the Epstein bill, it would pass the House. In fact, it is expected to draw even more votes than that. Republican leaders say that some of their members who did not sign the discharge petition — which many lawmakers frown upon as an act of party disloyalty that undercuts their leaders — are likely to vote for the measure itself. Many of them are facing constituents who voted for Trump in the belief that he would release the Epstein files as he promised. Others do not want to be seen as participating in the coverup, especially with the threat of even worse material waiting to drop.

If the bill does pass the House, it will then be sent to the Senate, where it faces tough odds. The Senate is under no obligation to take up bills sent by the House, and it would take 60 votes to force any action on the floor. Democrats hold 47 seats, and so even if they all backed the measure, they would still need 13 Republicans to join them.

If the bill were to pass the Senate, it would be sent to the president’s desk, and surely he would veto it.

About This Newsletter

This newsletter is published monthly. It is sent by email to members of the Tuscola County Democratic Party and is posted on our website, <https://www.tuscoladems.com>. Members are encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter. Please limit your submissions to 800 words or less and email them by the first of the month to Chuck Stockwell at cwstockwell@gmail.com

A photograph of a wooden hunting blind on stilts in a field. The blind is made of dark wood and has a small window. It is elevated on a wooden frame. The background shows a field of tall grass and trees in the distance under a blue sky.

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Tuscola County
a better place
to live

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