

Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

June, 2023

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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.

Contact Info

Tuscola County
Democratic Party
P.O. Box 605
Caro, MI 48723

(989) 262-9885

TuscolaDemocrats
@gmail.com

Notice of Our June Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, June 15, 2023**. The meeting will be held at the Brentwood, 178 Park Drive, Caro, MI. Social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We hope you will join us.

Highlights of Our May Meeting

Chair Deb Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on May 18. Seventeen members and two guests were in attendance. Vice-Chair Alex Kirsch gave us a rundown of current events. Sharene McCloy and Sharon Schwab provided a calendar of local events for the month of June. They also announced plans for Tuscola Dems' participation in the Sebewaing Sugar Festival on June 16-18, Tuscola Dems' current and future efforts in support of the Caro Area District Library, and plans for making a Tuscola Dems logo, business cards, and T-shirts. Mona DeQuis reviewed 2022 vote tallies in Tuscola County and told us how to contact and motivate inactive party members. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Funding Community Service Projects



Tuscola Dems are hard at work making items that we intend to sell at local festivals and fairs to fund our community service projects. Shown here is one item: candy-filled jars with cross stitch tops, created by Sharene McCloy.

President Biden and Speaker McCarthy Make a Deal

On May 27, with only days to spare until a government default, President Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy announced a deal to fund the government for the next two years.

On May 31, the Republican-controlled House passed a codification of the agreement — the *Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023* — by a vote of 314-117 (149 Republicans and 165 Democrats voted for it) and sent it to the Senate.

On June 1, the Senate approved the measure by a 63-36 vote (44 Democrats, 2 Independents, and 17 Republicans voted for it).

On June 3, President Biden signed the bill.

Here's what is in it:

Suspending the debt ceiling. The agreement suspends the \$31.4 trillion debt limit until January 2025, allowing the government to borrow unlimited sums to pay its debts and ensuring that another debt ceiling fight will not occur before the next presidential election.

1. **Spending caps.** Republicans originally sought a 10-year cap on spending at fiscal year 2022 levels and called for dramatic cuts to domestic spending unrelated to defense, but the final deal does not return spending to 2022 levels. Instead keeps non-defense spending at current 2023 levels for 2024. It allows a one percent increase in non-defense spending in 2025. After that, there are no budget caps.
2. **Energy permitting reform.** The agreement streamlines the environmental review process, speeding up the time it takes to approve new projects. Included is a provision that approves all permits for the Mountain Valley Pipeline, a project championed by Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia and opposed by environmentalists.
3. **Student loans.** The deal means that student loan holders will have to begin repaying their loans after August, after a more than three-year suspension. It will also prevent the president from issuing another last-minute extension, as he has done several times.
4. **Unspent COVID funds.** Unspent COVID relief funds will be rescinded, a proposal made by Republicans and accepted by the White House. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the amount is about \$30 billion, but the White House says that much of that money was probably never going to be spent anyway.
5. **Work requirements.** Republicans had sought to toughen work requirements for able-bodied adults without minor dependents who apply for benefits, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid, but the White House pushed back. Currently, people eligible for SNAP do not have work requirements after the age of 50. The deal would raise that age to 54. At the same time, SNAP would see temporary changes that eliminate work requirements for veterans and homeless people, regardless of age. The deal does not add work requirements for those who receive Medicaid.

6. **IRS cuts.** Republicans wanted to cut about \$71 billion in IRS funding over the next decade. They were targeting money for tens of thousands of new agents funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, which was aimed at modernizing the IRS and improving enforcement against high-income tax cheats. The agreement rescinds \$1.4 billion given to the IRS last year and also takes \$20 billion from the IRS over the next two years and diverts those funds to other nondefense programs.
7. **Veterans' medical care.** The agreement fully funds medical care for veterans, including for the toxic exposure fund at the president's requested 2024 fiscal year levels, an increase over current levels.
8. **What isn't in the agreement:** Republicans had wanted to repeal key provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy and climate provisions, but the agreement doesn't make any changes to those provisions. Also there are no new tax increases in the deal, which Mr. Biden had suggested and Republicans rejected. The deal does not change Biden's proposal to cancel up to \$20,000 in student debt per borrower, which is now being reviewed by the Supreme Court. Biden had proposed closing a number of tax loopholes, but the Republicans ruled those ideas out. Republicans had fought for repealing some of the clean energy tax credits approved by Democrats last year. Biden objected to that proposal, and it fell out of the final deal.

So who won — President Biden or Speaker McCarthy?

The deal accomplishes much for both of them, enabling each to claim victory. Biden can point to a deal that, at least temporarily, frees him from the headache of the debt ceiling until after the 2024 election, while staving off Republican demands for steep cuts to domestic spending. The Biden team believes they have worked out a deal that allowed Republicans to claim big spending cuts even as the reality was far more modest. They were willing to give Republicans victory after victory on political talking points, which they realized Mr. McCarthy needed to sell the bill to House conservatives. They let McCarthy's team claim that the deal included deep spending cuts, huge clawbacks of unspent federal coronavirus relief money, and stringent work requirements for recipients of federal aid.

As the Biden team sees it, the agreement's spending cuts are no worse than they would have expected in regular appropriations bills passed by a divided Congress. Moreover, the cuts are structured so they appear to save \$1.5 trillion over a decade in the eyes of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, but White House officials estimate the actual cuts could total as little as \$136 billion over the next two years. There's one huge exception — a \$20 billion cut in enforcement funding for the IRS — but the White House says that cut will have little effect on the IRS's expansion plans in the short term. The funding approved for the IRS in 2022 was meant to last 10 years, after which they would have to come back to Congress if they wanted more money. The debt ceiling deal may force them to come back in eight years instead of ten.

Biden calculated that the more he bragged that the deal was a good one for his side, the more he would inflame Republicans on the other side, jeopardizing the chances of pushing the agreement through the narrowly divided House. His reticence stood in striking contrast to Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who has been running all over the Capital asserting that the deal was a "historic" victory for fiscal conservatives. While Mr. Biden knew that would aggravate

progressives in his own party, he gambled that he could keep enough of them in line without public chest-beating and figured that it was more important to let Mr. McCarthy claim the win to minimize a revolt on the hard right that could put his speakership in danger.


The president’s approach to the negotiations — and especially their aftermath — reflects a half-century of bargaining in Washington. No matter how much Mr. McCarthy assailed him for waiting 97 days to talk about the dispute, the president believed there was no point in rushing into extended talks, given that no important agreements in Washington are ever made until a deadline is looming with catastrophic consequences if the two sides don’t come together. While he initially insisted that the debt ceiling was “not negotiable,” Mr. Biden eventually abandoned that point of principle to do exactly what he said he would not. He maintained the fiction that negotiating about spending cuts was not the same thing as negotiating over the debt ceiling, a distinction few if any saw. When that was pointed out to him, he shrugged and said, “Well, can you think of an alternative?” Mr. Biden acted like the person who has been there before. Because he has. Many times. He assured us it would all work out in the end. And it did.

Let’s Keep Supporting the Caro Area District Library

The next meeting of the Library Board will take place at 5 p.m. on June 12 at the library. We need to be there! Then we need to be back in Probate Court in Caro at 8 a.m. on June 22 for another review of the recall petition. It appears the petitioners still want to recall certain Library Board members, but now they also want to ban books they feel don’t belong in the library.

The library staff really appreciates our support.





Make
Tuscola County
a better place
to live.

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P.O. Box 605, Caro, MI 48723*

Elect Democrats