

# Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

February 2024

Volume 3, Issue 2

## 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 February Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, February 15, 2024**. 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 January Meeting

Chair Deb Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 18. Twelve members and one guest were in attendance. Mona DeQuis told us about current activities of the Michigan Democratic Party. Vicki Leland told us about a recent decision of the Tuscola County commissioners to hold committee meetings behind closed doors. Mark Putnam told us about the Contest Every Race program sponsored by the Rural Power Lab. Bob DeCoe brought up several topics, including immigration, the Israel-Hamas war, disarray in the Michigan Republican Party, and membership issues in the Michigan Democratic Party. Then we broke into working groups. One group worked on the Contest Every Race program and the other worked on our phone banking campaign aimed at recruiting volunteers for this fall's elections. 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 desire.

Thank you!

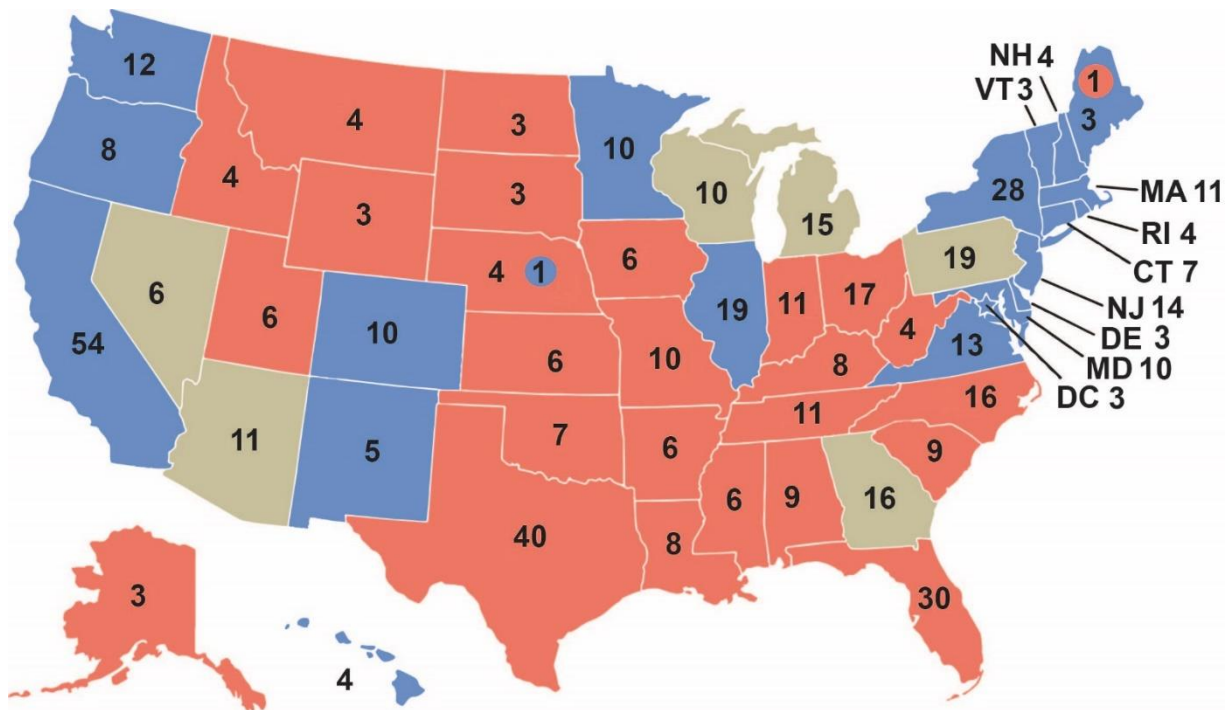
## Biden vs. Trump

Even though it's only February, it already looks as if the November election will be a showdown between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Both men have lived in the White House and both know what it's like to be the most powerful person on the planet. Otherwise the two men could hardly be more dissimilar. Joe Biden is the leader of Blue America that, as he sees it, embraces diversity, democratic institutions, and traditional norms, and considers government at its best to be a force for good in society. Donald Trump is the leader of Red America where, as he sees it, the system has been corrupted by dark conspiracies and the undeserving are favored over hard-working everyday people.

It's important to remember that in the United States, we do not elect presidents by popular vote, but rather by vote of the Electoral College. In 48 of the 50 states and in the District of Columbia, state laws mandate that the winner of the plurality of the statewide popular vote receive all of that state's Electoral College votes. In Maine and Nebraska, two electoral votes are assigned in this manner, while the remaining electoral votes are allocated based on the plurality of votes in each of their congressional districts.

The electors of each state meet in their respective state capitals on the first Monday after the second Wednesday of December (between December 13 and 19) to cast their votes. The results are sent to the U. S. Congress, where they are tabulated in the first week of January before a joint meeting of the Senate and the House of Representatives, presided over by the current vice president, as president of the Senate.

Deep divisions in the United States are not new, but today Americans do not just disagree with each other, they live in different worlds. The split is so complete that 44 states are decisively Blue States or Red States when it comes to the fall election, as shown in the map below.



The current consensus among political analysts is that President Biden starts the presidential election with 226 likely votes in the Electoral College from the Blue States and Trump starts with 235 votes from the Red States. To get to the 270 votes needed for victory, one of them will have to harvest enough of the 77 votes up for grabs in six swing states (shown in brown on the map). The swing states are Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

## What About Joe Biden?

When he took office, President Biden rejected “supply side” economics and vowed to restore buying power to the demand side of the economy, that is, to ordinary Americans. In the first two years of his administration, when Democrats controlled both chambers of Congress, lawmakers did much of what Biden asked. They passed (1) the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan to help restart the nation’s economy after the pandemic-induced crash, (2) the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to repair roads, bridges, and waterlines, extend broadband, and build infrastructure for electric vehicles, (3) the roughly \$280 billion CHIPS and Science Act to promote scientific research and manufacturing of semiconductors; and (4) the Inflation Reduction Act, which sought to curb inflation by lowering prescription drug prices, promoting domestic renewable energy production, and investing in measures to combat climate change.

Now the numbers are in. The U.S. economy has shown higher growth and a faster drop in inflation than any other G7 country over the past three years. Growth accelerated to an astonishing 4.9% annualized rate in the third quarter of last year while inflation cooled from 6.4% to 3.1%, and the economy added more than 2.5 million jobs. The S&P 500 ended last year up 24%. The Nasdaq composite index gained more than 40%. New businesses are starting up at a near-record pace, and holiday sales last year were up 3.1%. Unemployment has remained below 4% for 22 months in a row for the first time since the late 1960s.

Biden has also helped to strengthened NATO, which is now more united than at any time since the end of the Cold War. This wouldn’t have happened without Biden’s leadership. He has coordinated NATO’s massive flow of arms, ammunition and intelligence to Ukraine — enough to stop Putin’s forces in their tracks. Moreover, the Russian invasion has spurred Finland to abandon its long-standing neutrality and join NATO. Sweden is also coming in.

After Hamas fighters bulldozed the fence surrounding Gaza, stormed into Israel, massacred more than 1,400 Israelis, and took more than 200 hostages, President Biden responded immediately with round-the-clock diplomacy and a promise of uncompromising support for Israel. With that promise came a whisper in Netanyahu’s ear — a warning not to let overpowering anger drive Israel into going too far. Since then, Biden and his foreign policy team have been working around the clock to stop Iran’s proxies in the region from igniting a wider war, establish a demilitarized Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and promote normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Applause! Applause!



Despite his accomplishments, President Biden opens this re-election year with an approval rating of just 38 percent, the lowest of any president since Harry Truman in 1948. Truman's approval rating was 36 percent at the same point before re-election, but let's not forget that he won that election (to the surprise of everyone, including himself).

## What About Donald Trump?

He inherited a fortune from his father, a real-estate developer from Queens, and then expanded the family business to Manhattan where he became a socialite, known for his lavish lifestyle and exuberant behavior. Trump created a non-profit organization, the Trump Foundation, which was closed for illegally misusing charitable funds for political purposes. (Trump used the money donated to his foundation to pay for his presidential campaign and the New York attorney general ordered him to pay more than two million dollars as restitution).

As president, Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives for exerting pressure on Ukraine in exchange for political information and support in his reelection campaign. Then he was impeached a second time for attempting to remain in office after his defeat in the 2020 presidential election, which resulted in a violent riot at the United States Capitol .

Trump begins his 2024 election campaign with baggage that would stop any other politician. He is now facing criminal trials for his conduct as a presidential candidate, as president, and as former president. He has said that if elected, he will behave like a dictator on "Day 1" and direct the Justice Department to investigate his political rivals and his critics in the media. He has said he intends to require independent federal agencies — like the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission — to submit any new regulations to the White House for approval before issuing them. He has said he intends to reclassify about fifty thousand career federal employees as as employees who serve at the pleasure of the president, which means he could fire them at will. He has vowed to impound funds, that is, refuse to spend money appropriated by Congress for programs he doesn't like.

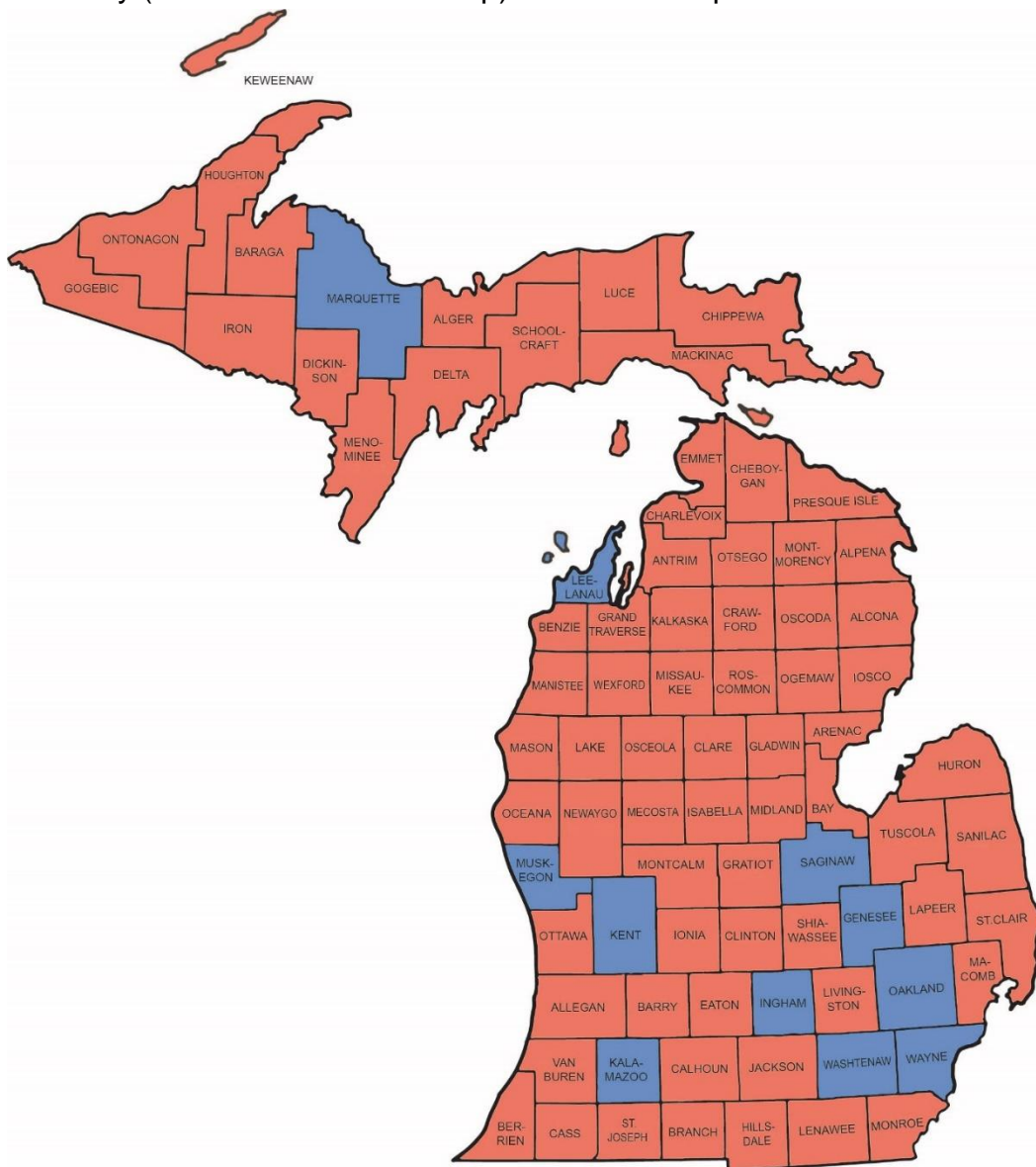
If elected, Trump would almost certainly cut off U.S. aid to Ukraine — as his followers in Congress are already attempting to do, at his behest. He says he would end the Ukraine war "in one day" by telling Zelensky that Ukraine would have "to make a deal." He says he might not come to Taiwan's defense because it "took all of our chip busines. " He has vowed to "carry out the largest domestic deportation operation in American history," with most migrants presumably being sent south of the border. He has talked about firing missiles at drug labs in Mexico and about developing plans to use military force against Mexican drug cartels — a move that no sovereign nation could tolerate.

Nope!

## What About Michigan?

Michigan is one of the six battleground states. In 2016, Trump beat Hillary Clinton by 2,279,543 votes (47.50%) to 2,268,839 votes (47.27%) and thus was awarded Michigan's 16 votes in the Electoral College. In 2020, Biden beat Trump by 2,804,080 votes (50.62%) to 2,649,852 votes (47.84%) and thus was awarded Michigan's 16 votes in the Electoral College.

There are 83 counties in Michigan. In 2020, eleven counties (shown in blue on the map below) went for Biden — Wayne, Oakland, Genesee, and Saginaw (densely-populated counties along the I-75 industrial corridor), Kent and Muskegon (cities of Grand Rapids and Muskegon), Ingham (city of Lansing), Washtenaw, Kalamazoo, and Marquette (college towns), and Leelanau (which has seen a recent influx of wealthy retirees from Detroit and Chicago). What these counties have in common is an affluent and well-educated electorate. Every other Michigan county (shown in red on the map) went for Trump.



The 2020 census showed a population decline in Michigan, so we lost a seat in Congress and will have only 15 votes in the Electoral College in 2024.

Today, the November presidential election in Michigan is a tossup. Recent polling shows Trump with a slight lead over Biden, 43.5% to 40.8%. A looming problem for Biden is that the state's large Arab American population, which voted strongly for him in 2020, might not back him in November because of his strong support for Israel's war in Gaza. Another concern is that third party candidate, Robert Kennedy, Jr., could take enough votes from Biden to cost him a plurality of Michigan votes. On the other hand, Biden's chances were boosted recently by a strong and early endorsement of the United Auto Workers union. Furthermore, the Michigan Republican Party is in disarray and major donors seem to have taken a walk.

Republicans won't win many votes by attacking Biden on the economy, although Trump still says the economy is "so fragile" and "running off the fumes" of his administration and will soon crash. They are also in big trouble due to the overturning of Roe v. Wade. They desperately need an election issue, so they are trying to turn the influx of migrants at our southern border into an issue that can win for them in November.

## **What About Tuscola County?**

From 1884 to the present day, Tuscola County voters have failed to back the Republican presidential candidate in only four elections. Bill Clinton won in Tuscola County in 1992 and 1996, Lyndon Johnson won in 1964, and Teddy Roosevelt won in 1912. Otherwise, Tuscola County went for the Republican candidate every time. In 2020, they went for Trump over Biden 69% to 30%. In 2016, they went for Trump over Hillary Clinton 66% to 29%.

Tuscola County is Trump country. Many voters are saying that government assistance programs amount to a "handout", that too many undocumented migrants are entering the country, and that the government wants to take their guns away. They are saying that Trump was the legitimate winner of the 2020 election. They are saying that charges brought against Trump — (1) for falsely recording the hush money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels as a "legal expense," (2) for sexually abusing E. Jean Carroll and calling her a liar when she wrote about it, (3) for inflating the value of his assets to obtain favorable loan terms and lower insurance premiums, (4) for taking top-secret documents to Mar-a-Lago and trying to hide them from the FBI, (5) for scheming to overturn his 2020 election loss — amount to nothing more than a political "witch hunt."

What can Democrats do in Tuscola County? It's highly unlikely that we can flip the county for Biden, but that's O.K.. Every vote for Biden, no matter which county it comes from, goes toward making Michigan a Blue State in the Electoral College.

So c'mon, Democrats! Let's get as many Biden voters to the polls as we can!

## **Jerry Tkach, 1959-2024**



We were saddened to hear that Jerry Tkach passed away on February 3. Jerry was born in 1959 in Hamtramck, Michigan. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan (Flint) in 1986 and a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University in 2006. For many years, he taught English, history, and writing in Lapeer Community Schools and G.E.D. at the Genesee County Jail. He helped establish the Mt. Morris Alternative Education Association and was voted the association's first president. Jerry was an active member of the Columbiaville United Methodist Church. He worked tirelessly to promote democratic principles throughout the state as Vice-Chair of the Lapeer Democratic Party and as a member of the League of Women Voters and Voters not Politicians.

Jerry enjoyed nature, hiking, kayaking, cheering on his sports teams, exploring new cities, reading, and writing. He loved a good quote, poetry, music, and art. He had a great sense of humor, his laughter was infectious, and he never missed an opportunity to make a joke.

A celebration of Jerry's life will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, February 9, at the Columbiaville United Methodist Church. Family and friends may visit from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 8, at Jansen Family Funeral Home in Columbiaville, and on Friday, February 9, at 10:00 a.m. till time of service at the church. Memorial contributions in memory of Jerry Tkach may be made to the Lapeer County Democratic Party.

Make  
Tuscola County  
a better place  
to live.



*Paid for with regulated funds  
by the Tuscola County Democratic Party  
P.O. Box 605, Caro, MI 48723*

**Elect Democrats**