

# Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

January, 2023

Volume 2, Issue 1

## 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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## HAPPY NEW YEAR, DEMOCRATS!

### Notice of our January Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 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 December Meeting

Chair Deb Parker called the monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party to order at 6:30 p.m. on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Twelve members were in attendance. Deb Parker reported that at our County Convention on November 30<sup>th</sup>, we reelected Deb Parker as Chair, and elected Alexander Kirsch as Vice-Chair, Charles Stockwell as Secretary, and Lisa Bertsch as Treasurer, each to serve a two-year term beginning on January 1, 2023. Alex Kirsch gave us a rundown of current events. We formed two committees— (1) a Candidate Recruitment Committee, comprised of Bob Decoe, Gary Greenia, David Sierocki, and Jack Adams, and (2) a Party Building Committee, comprised of Sharon Schwab, Lisa Bertsch, Mark Putnam, Sherene McCloy, and Claire Kirsch. We spent a great deal of time discussing plans for the 2024 election. Deb Parker reminded us that there will be a second brainstorming session at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Brentwood. We solicited funds from members for the Good Samaritan Fund of Caro. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

## Remember?

On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Tuscola Dems held a food drive in the parking lot in front of the Sav-A-Lot grocery store in Caro. It was the coldest day of the winter—0 deg F. Despite the cold, generous folks stopped by and dropped off food and money. Some of them went into Sav-A-Lot, purchased cans and boxes of food, and brought them out to us. We ended up donating lots of food and \$1400 in cash to the Food Pantry of St. Christopher Parish in Caro.



## Governor Whitmer's Big Win

Governor Whitmer has now had two big general-election wins back-to-back. Last November, she beat Tudor Dixon by more than 10 points. Only two other Democrats, Barack Obama in 2008 and Bill Clinton in 1996, have done better in Michigan in the last 50 years.

It didn't hurt that the Supreme Court handed Governor Whitmer a political gift by overturning Roe vs. Wade. She highlighted abortion rights as a vote-deciding issue for swing voters. And this wasn't just talk. Michiganders placed Proposition 3, Reproduction Freedom for All, on the November ballot and voters overwhelmingly approved it. The Dobbs decision could have

effectively banned abortion in Michigan (because of a dormant law from the 1930s), but Governor Whitmer sued and got courts to block enforcement of that law. No doubt the abortion issue helped Michigan Democrats to increase voter turnout. Estimates from the U.S. Elections Project show voter turnout in 2022 was down about 6 percent nationwide from the 2018 midterm, but in Michigan, turnout was up nearly 5 percent.

It also didn't hurt that Republicans handed Governor Whitmer a political gift by nominating Tudor Dixon, the election-denying, Trump-endorsed conservative talk show host, who was bankrolled by the unpopular billionaire Betsy DeVos and her family. For months, Governor Whitmer reminded voters of Dixon's connections to DeVos and how Dixon's tax plan—working-class tax hikes, cuts to schools, and the like—would benefit rich folks and hurt the middle class.

Although Governor Whitmer ran big on abortion, her main point was that economic good news really makes a difference. Whether it was a new semiconductor plant or once-in-a-generation investments by G.M. in electric-vehicle battery plants, Governor Whitmer fought to bring them to Michigan. In multiple TV ads, she told voters, "I can't solve the inflation problem, but we're doing things—right now—to help." She listed tangible benefits that she had either proposed or gotten done, like more affordable community college, insurance refunds, and tax cuts for seniors. She passed four balanced budgets with no tax increases, and she let voters know about that. Across the country, a lot of Democrats talked about economics, but few did so as consistently and effectively as Governor Whitmer. And it wasn't just talk: When a new business opened, she was there to cut the ribbon.

Governor Whitmer also developed a deep connection with Black voters. She picked as her running mate the state's first Black lieutenant governor, Garlin Gilchrist. After winning Black voters decisively with high turnout in 2018, she deepened that connection in 2022. The "Big Gretch" song ("We ain't even about to stress/we got Big Gretch") and memes that came out of Black Michigan spoke of the deep appreciation Black voters had for her decisiveness in the pandemic to keep people safe. This was on top of a lot of other work to help Black voters, things like bringing the first new auto plant to Detroit in 30 years and making sure Detroiters had a first crack at the plant's jobs. This did not come at the expense of talking to white voters: She won Macomb County, ground zero for voters who cast ballots for Barack Obama, then switched to Donald Trump, by about 60 percent more in 2022 than in 2018.

What Governor Whitmer did in 2022 can be done again in 2024. Democrats can talk about economics and abortion, we can work to increase voter turnout, persuade voters with economic good news, and strengthen our appeal to both white voters and voters of color.

Governor Whitmer will deliver her fifth State of the State Address on Wednesday, January 25th. The address will be held in the Michigan House Chambers in front of a joint session of the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate and broadcast live throughout the state.

## Letter from Marcus Flowers

Here's a letter from Marcus Flowers, Democratic candidate who ran last November against Marjorie Taylor Greene for U.S Representative of Georgia's 14<sup>th</sup> District. He wrote the letter to Donna Brown, member of the Sanilac County Democratic Party:

*Donna,*

*I've been thinking for a long time about what to say. Frankly, "thank you" just doesn't cover it. You didn't just support a campaign. You started something spectacular. In case you didn't know what a difference you've made, let me show you. Because of you:*

- We knocked over 100,000 doors*
- We were the first Democrat to earn more than 27% of the vote in GA-14*
- We hired 16 people who were dedicated to organizing and engaging Democrats in this District leading to record turnout and newly energized local Democrats*
- And the additional Democratic voters we turned out in GA-14 were 1/4 of Raphael Warnock's margin in November.*

*Those metrics are impressive. But you did something even bigger and more important. You sent a message that's impossible to ignore. You put your foot down and told the whole country: we're fighting everywhere. I'm an Army guy, so I often see things from that perspective. And across the country, Democrats aren't occupying all of the battleground. Democrats are ceding territory, retreating where we should be fighting, and – maybe worst of all – flat-out failing to try. Even against the most extreme Republicans. But that wasn't the case here, in Georgia-14. With you, we fought – hard. We forced MTG to answer to voters. We made her come home and answer to her constituents when she wanted to travel the country with Donald Trump. We knocked on doors that hadn't been knocked on in decades. We talked to folks who felt left behind, forgotten, dismissed. We showed up. And none of it would have happened without you.*

*You might be wondering if now that the election's over, I'm done. Of course not. I'm not finished. I doubt you are, either. Fact is, the mission has just started. Together, we've started something really powerful. And this mission – this movement that you're already part of – has only one direction: forward.*

*So today, at the beginning of the new year, I wanted to send a personal, very heartfelt, thank you. Thank you for helping build a movement. Thank you for sending a message the whole country needs to hear. And thank you for fighting...everywhere. Stay tuned – I'll have more about how we can continue the fight together.*

*Marcus*

## More Talking Points

Here's a list of good things that President Biden did last year. This list was compiled by Marc Thiessen, columnist for *The Washington Post*, plus a few additions of our own.

- **He saved Ukraine.** After Russia invaded, Biden rallied our allies to support Ukraine's self-defense—providing arms, money, intelligence, and diplomatic support that stopped Putin from seizing Kyiv.
- **He declared that the United States will defend Taiwan.** Not once, not twice, but four times since taking office, Biden has vowed that the U.S. military would defend Taiwan if Communist China attacked.
- **He killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.** Biden ordered the drone strike that took out bin Laden's right-hand man and successor.
- **He won support for Finland and Sweden to join NATO.** Biden got our NATO allies and the U.S. Senate to support the admission of the two Nordic nations to the Atlantic alliance—a major blow to Putin.
- **He kept Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on the U.S. list of foreign terrorist organizations.** Despite threats from the Iranians, Biden said the IRGC would remain on the list and that the decision was “absolutely final.”
- **He nominated Ketanji Brown Jackson for the U.S. Supreme Court,** the first Black woman ever to serve on the court.
- **He secured extradition of Abu Agila Mohammad Mas'ud,** a Libyan intelligence operative suspected of building the explosive device used in the 1988 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 190 Americans—the first terrorist linked to that attack to face justice in the United States.
- **He signed the first bipartisan gun legislation in decades.** Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which protects the rights of lawful gun owners while cracking down on criminal misuse of firearms, including incentives for states to implement “red-flag” laws; increased funding for mental health and school safety; added scrutiny of gun buyers who are under 21 or domestic abusers, and stronger penalties for straw buyers and gun traffickers.
- **He launched a “full-court press” against China's semiconductor industry.** Biden blocked U.S. companies from selling chips or semiconductor equipment to China.
- **He is sending B-52s to Australia to counter China.** Biden announced plans to deploy up to six nuclear-capable B-52 bombers to a dedicated air base in northern Australia to help counter Chinese hegemony.
- **He got Brittney Griner out of Russian prison.**
- **He prevented a crippling national rail strike.** Biden got Congress to pass bipartisan legislation forcing rail worker unions to accept the contract his administration had negotiated, avoiding a strike that could have crippled our economy and exacerbated inflation.

## Lisa McClain's Legislative Record

Lisa McClain, our representative to the U.S. House, recently sent out a flyer touting her accomplishments as a freshman congresswoman. She listed six bills and four resolutions that she has introduced, as follows:

- **H. R. 8970, National Community College Cybersecurity Challenge Act**, to strengthen cybersecurity programs for community colleges (in committee).
- **H. J. Res 86**, providing for congressional disapproval of a Department of Justice rule relating to “Definition of ‘Frame or Receiver’ and Identification of Firearms (no action).
- **H. R. 6312, Preventing Mandates on Toddlers Act**, to prohibit the use of Federal funds to enforce a HHS rule relating to COVID–19 vaccine and mask requirements for Head Start programs (no action).
- **H. R. 7036, Preventing Abusive Government Efforts Act**, to prohibit the Federal Government from compiling or maintaining any record of Federal employees who have requested or been granted a religious exemption or accommodation to any Federal requirement for a Federal employee to be vaccinated against COVID-19 (no action).
- **H. R. 6686, Stop CCP Act**, to provide for the imposition of sanctions on Chinese National Communist Party Congress members (no action).
- **H. Res. 1228**, expressing support for the Supreme Court’s decision on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* (no action).
- **H. R. 5527, Accountability in Foreign Animal Research Act**, to prohibit NIH from conducting or supporting research that involves testing on vertebrate animals in any country determined to be a foreign adversary (no action).
- **H. R. 3613**, to designate a post office in Saint Clair, Michigan, as the “Corporal Jeffrey Robert Standfest Post Office Building” (signed into law on June 16, 2022).
- **H. R. 5754, Patient Advocate Tracker Act**, to improve the ability of veterans to electronically submit complaints about the delivery of health care services by the Department of Veterans Affairs (signed into law on September 16, 2022).
- **H. R. 5142**, to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to service members who perished in Afghanistan during the evacuation of U. S. citizens and Afghan allies (signed into law on December 16, 2021).

She failed to mention the bills and resolutions she has voted against. Here’s a partial list:

- **H. R. 1, For the People Act of 2021**, which expands Americans' access to the ballot box, reduces the influence of big money in politics, strengthens ethics rules for public servants, and implements other anti-corruption measures.
- **H. R. 4, John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021**, which sets new criteria for determining which states and political subdivisions must obtain preclearance before changes in voting practices.
- **H. R. 5, Equality Act**, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in public facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing, credit, and the jury system.

- **H. R. 6, American Dream and Promise Act of 2021**, which provides a path toward permanent resident status and contains other immigration-related provisions.
- **H. R. 7, Paycheck Fairness Act**, which addresses wage discrimination based on sex, defined to include pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics.
- **H. R. 8, Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021**, which establishes new background check requirements for firearm transfers between individuals.
- **H. R. 1280, George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021**, which addresses policies and issues regarding policing practices and law enforcement accountability.
- **H. R. 1319, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**, which provides relief to Americans from the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses.
- **H. R. 1446, Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2021**, which revises background check requirements for firearm transfers between licensed gun dealers and individuals.
- **H. R. 1620, Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021**, which reauthorizes programs to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- **H. J. Res. 17, Removing the Deadline for Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.**
- **H. R. 2547, Comprehensive Debt Collection Improvement Act**, which provides additional financial protections for consumers and places restrictions on debt collection activities.
- **H. R. 3233, Establish a National Commission to Investigate the January 6<sup>th</sup> Attack on the United States Capitol Act.**
- **H. R. 3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**, which provides new funding for infrastructure projects.
- **H. R. 2119, Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act of 2021**, which expands funding for emergency shelters and other assistance to victims of domestic violence.
- **H. R. 5376, Build Back Better Act**, which provides funding in many areas, including education, labor, childcare, health care, taxes, immigration, and the environment.
- **H. R. 3967, Honoring our PACT Act of 2022**, which expands access to medical care for military veterans who served around toxic burn pits.
- **H. R. 5376, Inflation Reduction Act**, which invests in domestic energy production and manufacturing and reducing carbon emissions, allows Medicare to negotiate for prescription drug prices, and extends the expanded Affordable Care Act program for three years.
- **H. R. 8873, Presidential Election Reform Act**, which revises the process of casting and counting electoral votes for presidential elections.
- **H. R. 5314, Protecting Our Democracy Act**, which addresses issues involving abuse of presidential power and election accountability, transparency, integrity, and security.
- **H.R. 4346, CHIPS and Science Act**, which appropriates \$54 billion to strengthen domestic industries that produce semiconductors, microchips, and telecommunication equipment.
- **H.R. 8404, Respect for Marriage Act**, which prohibits the federal government from retaliating against any person or group for adhering to sincerely held religious beliefs and moral convictions about marriage.
- **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023**, a \$1.7 trillion spending package, including \$47 billion for aid to Ukraine and \$38 billion for disaster funding.

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