

# Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

September 2022

Volume 1, Issue 6

## 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 September meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022**, at our campaign headquarters, 852 Hooper Street, 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 August Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on August 18<sup>th</sup> by Chair Deb Parker. Twenty-three members were in attendance. Vicki Leland provided an update on the status of the Promote the Vote and Reproductive Rights ballot proposals. Paul Whitney, candidate for State Representative (97<sup>th</sup> District), spoke about his plans for the upcoming campaign. Mona DeQuis provided an update on Project 83. Bob DeCoe provided information about the Inflation Reduction Act. Sharon Schwab appealed for volunteers to help construct the Democratic float for the Pumpkin Festival parade. Deb Parker discussed plans for Democratic T-shirts and appealed for volunteers to staff the Tuscola Dems booth at the Pumpkin Festival. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

## Tuscola County Pumpkin Festival



The Tuscola County Pumpkin Festival will take place from Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, through Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. We will have a booth in the Merchant's Building at Fairgrounds on each of those days.

On Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, we will be marching in the Pumpkin Parade behind our awesome Democratic float proudly wearing our Democratic T-shirts!

If you are willing to help by staffing our booth or plan to march in the parade (or both), please call Deb Parker at (989) 673-6569 or email her at [jdarker@charter.net](mailto:jdarker@charter.net) to let her know.

## Our Campaign Headquarters

During the month of September, our campaign headquarters at 852 Hooper Street in Caro will be open Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from noon until 6:00 p.m. We have the newly-drawn precinct maps available so you can find out exactly which candidates will be on your ballot in November. Please stop by, take a look at the precinct maps, pick up yard signs, donate to your favorite candidate, and talk politics with fellow Democrats who are always hanging out there.

As always, we are looking for volunteers to staff our headquarters. If you are willing to help out, please call Deb Parker at (989) 673-6569 or email her at [jdarker@charter.net](mailto:jdarker@charter.net) to sign up.

## Sanilac County Dems Fundraiser

The Sanilac County Democratic Party will hold a fundraising dinner at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, at the Bark Shanty Community Center, 135 Church Street, in Port Sanilac. Cost will be \$20 per plate with cash or check accepted at the door. Robert Mroczek, Democratic candidate for State Representative (98<sup>th</sup> District), and Bert Van Dyke, Democratic candidate for State Senator (25<sup>th</sup> District), will be there. Let's all attend the dinner, show support for our neighbors, and hear what our candidates have to say!

## Talking Points



During the past 18 months, President Biden and Congressional Democrats seem to have gotten the U.S. government working again. Here's a partial list of their accomplishments:

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act, a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill, which allotted more than \$360 billion to state and local governments to keep front line workers on the job, \$160 billion to stop the spread of COVID-19, \$130 billion to help schools reopen, and \$1 billion to states to cover cash assistance to families. It provided a \$1,400 check to every American making less than \$75,000 per year, a \$300 per week supplement to unemployment insurance, emergency aid to cover back rent, a 15 per cent increase in SNAP benefits, an increase in the Child Tax Credit from \$2,000 to \$3,000 per child, an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit for 17 million workers, a tax credit for spending on childcare for children under age 13, lower health insurance premiums for millions of low- and middle-income families, and subsidized premiums for COBRA.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, President Biden started pulling American troops out of Afghanistan, marking the end of a twenty-year war. It did not go well. The Afghan regime that we bankrolled fled the country, the Afghan troops that we trained laid down their guns, and the Taliban took over within days. Biden got immense flak over the Taliban's swift takeover of Afghanistan, although his critics offered few suggestions about what he should have done differently.

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the U.S. Congress declared Juneteenth to be a national holiday.

On July 1, 2021, the U.S. House formed a Select Committee to Investigate the January 6<sup>th</sup> Attack on the United States Capitol Complex. The committee has assembled a mass of evidence and testimony—provided mostly by Trump's aides and other Republicans—and in a series of eight public hearings, has laid out a detailed account of Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This bill authorizes \$550 billion in new spending for infrastructure projects over the next 5 years, including \$110 billion to fix roads and bridges, \$39 billion to modernize public transit, \$66 billion to upgrade Amtrak, \$73 billion to upgrade the power grid, \$5 billion for new school buses, \$55 billion to improve drinking water, \$65 billion to expand broadband coverage, \$21 billion to clean up pollution, and \$11 billion to improve highway and pedestrian safety.

Since February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the West has become united in opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Much of the credit goes to President Biden, who has demonstrated remarkable acumen in his handling of this crisis. Thus far, the United States has committed more than \$10 billion in security and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Biden signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. As U.S. Senator, Biden wrote and championed the original Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that passed in 1994. In the nearly three decades since, he has worked with members of Congress from both parties to pass legislation to renew and strengthen VAWA three times: in 2000, 2005, and 2013. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence, wherever it occurs and in whatever form, has remained a cornerstone of Biden's career—from VAWA reauthorization to combatting campus sexual assault to addressing sexual assault and harassment in the military.

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act, which will alleviate the Postal Service's financial troubles by lifting a burdensome requirement to prefund employee retirement benefits more than fifty years in advance.

On April 11<sup>th</sup>; 2022, President Biden issued a rule to regulate "ghost guns"—kits that anyone can buy without a background check and assemble at home into a working gun. The rule requires manufacturers of these kits to be licensed and to stamp a serial number on the frame of each kit. It also requires sellers of these kits to be federally licensed, to keep a record of sales, and to run a background check prior to each sale—just like they must do with other guns.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. This bill falls far short of the tough gun control measures that Democrats sought, but still represents a breakthrough after years of stalemate in Congress on addressing gun violence. For the first time, juvenile records will be included in criminal background checks for prospective gun buyers under the age of 21, and authorities will have more time to conduct the checks—10 days, up from the current 3 days. The bill provides \$750 million in federal money to states that create so-called red flag laws, which allow guns to be temporarily confiscated from people deemed dangerous by a judge. The bill expands current law that bars people convicted of domestic violence or subject to a domestic violence restraining order from buying a gun, closing what has come to be known as the “boyfriend loophole.” The bill allocates \$13.2 billion to schools and communities to expand mental health programs and boost school safety. The bill cracks down on “straw purchasers”—people who buy guns for those who would not qualify.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Ketanji Brown Jackson was sworn in as the newest member of the U.S. Supreme Court—the first Black woman ever to serve on the court.

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was killed by a missile fired from a U.S. drone while he stood on the balcony of his safe house in downtown Kabul.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Biden signed the CHIPS and Science Act, which provides \$52.7 billion for American semiconductor research, development, manufacturing, and workforce development, including \$39 billion for manufacturing incentives, \$2 billion for the chips used in automobiles and defense systems, \$13.2 billion for R&D and workforce development, \$500 million for international information communications technology security and semiconductor supply chain activities, and a 25 percent investment tax credit for capital expenses for manufacturing of semiconductors and related equipment.

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Biden signed the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022. It will expand medical coverage for veterans exposed to burn pits during their service. This law is named for an Ohio Army National Guardsman who was diagnosed with a rare cancer after his service during which he was exposed to toxic substances in the burn pits. Sergeant Robinson died in 2020, leaving behind his wife and 8-year-old daughter. This law is personal for President Biden. His son Beau also came home from military service that had exposed him to toxic burn pits in Iraq, and he, too, died of cancer at the age of 46.

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, The U.S. Congress passed a climate, health care, and tax package called the Inflation Reduction Act. This bill will cost taxpayers about \$490 billion. Most of the money will be spent on energy and climate programs, including cash incentives for electric vehicle purchase and tax breaks to speed up the transition to renewable energy sources. Much of the remaining money will be used to extend healthcare subsidies under the Affordable Care Act, saving the average enrollee about \$800 per year, and to make sure that Medicare recipients pay no more than \$2,000 out-of-pocket per year for prescription drugs and no more than \$35 per month for insulin. The bill will generate about \$764 billion in new tax revenue and cost savings. Most of the new revenue will come from a 15% minimum tax on corporations with

profits of more than \$1 billion per year, a 1% tax on stock buybacks, and beefing up the IRS's ability to go after wealthy tax cheats. Most of the cost savings will come from allowing Medicare to bargain down prescription drug prices with drugmakers and place limits on drug price increases. Over the next decade, the Inflation Reduction Act will generate about \$764 billion and cost about \$490 billion—a surplus of nearly \$300 billion, which will be used to reduce the deficit. It will not add a single penny in new taxes for families or small businesses making less than \$400,000 per year.

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Biden announced that the Department of Education will cancel up to \$20,000 of student debt for Pell Grant recipients with loans held by the federal government and up to \$10,000 for other borrowers. Pell Grants are targeted at low-income students. Individuals who make less than \$125,000 a year or couples who make less than \$250,000 a year are eligible. Also, the current pause on federal student loan repayment will be extended, and the Education Department will try to negotiate a cap on repayments of 5% of a borrower's discretionary income, down from the current 10%. The Department of Education estimates that nearly 90% of the relief in the measure will go to those earning less than \$75,000 a year and about 43 million borrowers will benefit from the plan.

President Biden's biggest problem, inflation, is one he can do least about. But the gods have at last begun to smile on him. The most recent economic reports showed faster-than-expected job growth and lower-than-expected inflation. The Department of Labor released a report showing zero inflation in July, which means that dropping prices, primarily for gasoline, canceled out higher prices for other things. Lower inflation numbers together with the report of 315,000 new jobs last month and 3.7% unemployment—the lowest in decades—is good news.

Here's more good news:

Honda and LG Energy Solution recently announced they would spend over \$4 billion to construct a new battery plant in the U.S. General Motors is building new battery plants in Ohio, Michigan, and Tennessee. Ford is building new battery plants in Kentucky and Tennessee. Toyota is building one in North Carolina. Stellantis is building one in Indiana. These plants are part of the switch to electric vehicles. Governor Andy Beshear recently announced that Kentucky has secured more than \$8 billion to make electric vehicle batteries, which should produce more than 8,000 new jobs.

First Solar, the largest solar panel maker in the U.S., recently announced that it would spend up to \$1 billion to construct a new solar panel plant somewhere in the southeastern U.S. It credited the Inflation Reduction Act with making solar panel construction attractive enough in the U.S. to build here rather than elsewhere. First Solar also said it will spend \$185 million to upgrade and expand an existing plant in Ohio.

Corning recently announced a new manufacturing plant near Phoenix to build fiber-optic cable to supply the \$43 billion high-speed internet infrastructure investment made possible by the Infrastructure and Jobs Act. AT&T will also build a new fiber internet network in Arizona.

Micron recently announced a \$40 billion investment in chip production in the U.S. over the next eight years, producing up to 40,000 new jobs. Qualcomm has committed to investing \$4 billion in chips from the New York facility of GlobalFoundries. Qualcomm says it intends to increase chip production in the U.S. by 50% over the next five years. Intel announced it would invest at least \$20 billion, and possibly as much as \$100 billion, in a chip plant in Ohio.

## **Ballot Proposals in Limbo**

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, the four-member Michigan Board of State Canvassers deadlocked along partisan lines over certification of two ballot proposals, **Promote the Vote 2022** and **Reproductive Freedom for All**. The two Democratic members, Mary Ellen Gurewitz and Jeanette Bradshaw, voted to certify the two measures, and the two Republican members, Tony Daunt and Richard Houskamp, voted against certification. Since certification requires “yes” votes from at least three Board members, neither of these two ballot initiatives will proceed to the November 8<sup>th</sup> ballot.

Republicans on the Board said they voted to deny certification of the Promote the Vote 2022 proposal because it did not list all the sections of the Constitution that would be altered or abrogated by the proposal. They said they voted to deny certification of the Reproductive Freedom for All proposal because spaces between certain words were omitted and the text was unreadable.

Proponents of the two proposals strongly disagreed with Republican objections and have filed appeals to the Michigan Supreme Court to overturn the Board’s decision. The high court faces a tight turnaround to decide the cases. Final ballot language for Michigan’s November 8<sup>th</sup> election must be in place by September 9<sup>th</sup>, so absentee ballots can be printed and made available to registered voters on September 29<sup>th</sup>.