

# Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

May 2024

Volume 3, Issue 5

## 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 Us

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## Notice of Our May Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, May 16, 2024**, 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 April Meeting

Chair Deb Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 18. Twenty members and one guest were in attendance. Vice-chair Alex Kirsch gave us a run-down of current events, including Trump's hush money trial, the Supreme Court's decision on the right to protest, recent actions of House Republicans, Arizona's enforcement of an 1864 law that bans nearly all abortions, Iran's attack on Israel, and the plight of Palestinians in Gaza. Lynn Adams gave us an update on the Enbridge Line 5 issue and called on us to sign a petition to shut it down. Chair Deb Parker announced the opening of our 2024 campaign office on June 1. She also called for volunteers to help pick up trash on M-81 on May 11 and called on members to sign Clinton St. Mosely's nominating petition. Mark Putnam told us about his experience thus far as a candidate for state representative. The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

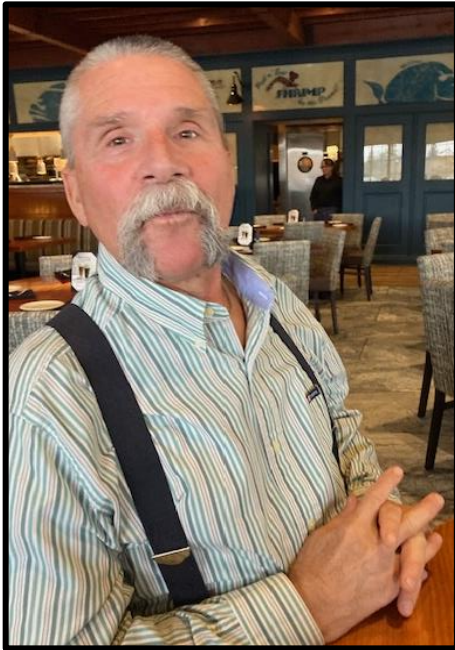
## Tuscola Dems Welcome Your Donations



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!

## Jack Adams for County Commissioner



Jack Adams has filed as a Democratic candidate for Tuscola County Commissioner in District 3, which includes Dayton, Fremont, Kingston, Koylton, Novesta, and Wells Townships.

Jack lives in Deford with his wife, Lynn, and has two grown sons and four grandchildren. He earned a teaching degree from Western Michigan University and a master's degree in elementary education from Central Michigan University. He taught in Bad Axe Public Schools for 33 years, coached football, basketball, track, and Little League baseball and served as a Cub Scout leader. He has served as Bad Axe city council member and president of the Bad Axe Jaycees. He has volunteered at Bayshore Camp, the Christian Appalachian Project, and Forgotten Man Ministries in the Bad Axe jail. Jack says that if elected, he will work for the rights of all citizens of Tuscola County to have a safe community, a healthy environment, and job creation that aligns with environmental sustainability.

## Summit in the Thumb

On May 5, Tuscola County Dems attended the second *Summit in the Thumb*, a meeting of Democrats from the five counties in Michigan's Thumb. The meeting was organized by Mona DeQuis of the Michigan Democratic Party and held in Imlay City at the home of Deb Stallings. Mona and other speakers told us how to come up with an effective message for the upcoming election and get it out to voters. We were inspired, we learned a lot, and the donuts were good. Thank you, Mona. Thank you, Deb Stallings.

Here we are at the meeting. From left to right - Mike Furgerson, Chuck Stockwell, Alex Kirsch.



## What's Happening in Lansing?

### Democrats Regain Control of the Michigan House

On March 16, two Democratic candidates won special elections in their Michigan House districts. Mai Xiong, a Macomb County commissioner, defeated Republican Ronald Singer, 65% to 34%, in Michigan's 13<sup>th</sup> House District, which includes parts of Macomb and Wayne counties. Peter Herzberg, a Westland City council member, defeated Republican Josh Powell, 60% to 38%, in Michigan's 25<sup>th</sup> House District, which includes part of Wayne County.

These special elections were held because in 2022, the representatives of those two districts, Lori Stone and Kevin Coleman, both Democrats, won mayoral seats in their hometowns and were therefore required to resign their house seats. As a result, the Michigan House was split equally at 54-54 between Democrats and Republicans and became deadlocked. Democrats now again have a voting majority in the House.

### Criminal Charges Filed Against Former Michigan House Speaker

On March 16, Attorney General Dana Nessel charged former Republican House Speaker Lee Chatfield and his wife, Stepanie Chatfield, with embezzlement, conspiracy, and larceny. The charges allege that Chatfield and his wife used various political nonprofit funds, including his Peninsula Fund, to pay for a family vacation to Universal Studios, a trip to the Bahamas, an apartment, and \$132,000 in charges on Speaker Chatfield's personal credit card.

### Democrats Introduce B.R.I.T.E. Act

Michigan is one of only two states in the nation whose legislature and governor's office are exempt from record requests. (The other state is Idaho.) Michigan law does not require political action committees (PACs) or social welfare organizations to register with the Secretary of State and disclose contributions received or the elected officials or candidates who control them.

On March 14, House Democrats introduced the *Bringing Reforms in Integrity, Transparency, and Ethics (B.R.I.T.E.) Act*, a package of seven bills that would require elected officials to file annual disclosures of items purchased for them by an organization or association. The proposed legislation would also impose a one-year ban on legislators going into lobbying after leaving office, increase reporting standards for lobbyist gifts, allow the Secretary of State to petition for an injunction on suspicious fundraising, and force politically connected nonprofits to disclose their relationships with candidates and elected officials.

## Some Facts About Abortion Rights

Before 1973, there was no federal law regarding a woman's right to terminate pregnancy, and each state addressed the issue in its own way. The first state to make abortion a criminal offense was Massachusetts in 1821. Thereafter most other states followed suit, and by the early 1960s, Pennsylvania had prohibited all abortions and forty-four other states allowed abortion only when the pregnant woman had been raped or her health was endangered.

## ***Roe v. Wade***

In 1969, Norma McCorvey sought to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. She lived in Dallas County, Texas, where the law prohibited abortion except when necessary to save the woman's life. After trying unsuccessfully to get an abortion illegally, McCorvey contacted Linda Coffee and Sarah Weddington, two Texas attorneys who wanted to challenge Texas' abortion law. They filed a suit on her behalf in federal court under the pseudonym, Jane Roe, and named Henry Wade, the district attorney of Dallas County, as defendant. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1971.

In 1973, Justice Harry Blackmun delivered the opinion for the 7-2 majority of the Court. It said that the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protects the right to privacy, that a woman's right to choose to have an abortion falls within that right, and that any state law that prohibits abortion violates that right. The Court never said that a woman's right to have an abortion is absolute, but rather that right must be balanced against the fetus' right to life and protection of the mother's health. To that end, the justices formulated a timetable: (1) during the first trimester of pregnancy, the state shall not intervene in a woman's decision to have an abortion, (2) during the second trimester, the state may regulate abortion rights to protect the mother's health but cannot prohibit abortions altogether, and (3) at the beginning of the third trimester (which the Court identified as the starting point of "viability," that is, the ability of the fetus to survive outside the womb), a state may regulate abortions or prohibit them entirely, so long as its laws contain exceptions for cases when abortion is necessary to protect the health of the mother.

## ***Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization***

In 2018, Mississippi passed a law that prohibits abortions (except in cases of medical emergency or severe fetal abnormality) after 15 weeks of pregnancy, which is about two months before a fetus is generally regarded as viable. Jackson Women's Health Organization, the only licensed abortion facility in Mississippi, filed a lawsuit challenging the law and named Thomas Dobbs, the physician in charge of the Mississippi State Health Department, as defendant.

In 2022, the case went to the U. S. Supreme Court. In that same year, Justice Samuel Alito delivered the opinion for the 6-3 majority of the Court, and it was a shocker. It said the Court's judgement in *Roe v. Wade* was erroneous. The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is protected by any constitutional provision, including the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Although the Due Process Clause does guarantee certain rights not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, any such right must be "deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition," and the right to abortion does not fall within this category. The *Dobbs* ruling means there is no longer any federal law regulating abortion and each state is free to define abortion rights in its own way.

Here's the actual text of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment:

*"No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."*

## Aftermath

In the wake of the *Dobbs* ruling, there has been an avalanche of abortion legislation and court rulings in states across the country. The Guttmacher Institute tracks this activity in every state and has classified each state's current abortion laws into one of seven categories, from "most protective" to "most restrictive" of abortion rights. Here's their list:

- Only two states — Vermont and Oregon — currently have abortion laws the Guttmacher Institute considers "most protective" of abortion rights. In both states, abortion is not restricted at all, state Medicaid funds cover abortion, private health insurance plans are required to cover abortion, any qualified health care professional can provide abortions, the state provides protection from harassment and physical harm for anyone entering an abortion clinic, and the state has a shield law to protect abortion providers and others from investigations by other states.
- Six states — New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, Maryland, Minnesota, and California — currently have abortion laws the Guttmacher Institute considers "very protective" of abortion rights. In these states, abortion is either not restricted at all or banned only after fetal viability, and state Medicaid funds cover abortion. In some states, private health insurance plans are also required to cover abortion, any qualified health care professional can provide abortions, a state fund helps patients pay for abortion care, the state provides protection from harassment and physical harm for anyone entering an abortion clinic, and the state has a shield law to protect abortion providers and others from investigations by other states.
- Ten states — Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, **Michigan**, Illinois, Montana, Washington, Colorado, Alaska, and Hawaii — and the District of Columbia currently have abortion laws the Institute considers "protective" of abortion rights. In these states, abortion is either not restricted at all or is banned only after fetal viability. Some of these states also have a shield law to protect abortion providers and others from investigations by other states. In some states, patients are forced to wait 24 hours after counseling to obtain an abortion, state Medicaid coverage of abortion care is banned except in limited circumstances, use of private health insurance for abortion is banned except in limited circumstances, either parental consent or parental notice is required for a minor's abortion, and only physicians can provide abortions.
- Four states — New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Nevada — currently have abortion laws considered by the Institute as providing "some restrictions and some protections" for abortion rights. In these states, abortion is banned only after fetal viability, the state provides protection from harassment and physical harm for anyone entering an abortion clinic, and the state has a shield law to protect abortion providers and others from investigations by other states. In some of these states, only physicians can provide abortions, state Medicaid coverage of abortion care is banned except in limited circumstances, and parental consent is required for a minor's abortion.



- Seven states — Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, and Wyoming — currently have abortion laws the Institute considers “restrictive.” In these states, abortion is banned only after fetal viability, patients are forced to wait 24 hours after counseling to obtain an abortion, state Medicaid coverage of abortion care is banned except in limited circumstances, parental consent is required for a minor's abortion, and only physicians can provide abortions. In some of these states, there is a shield law to protect abortion providers and others from investigations by other states, patients are forced to wait at least 24 hours after in-person counseling to obtain an abortion, patients are forced to get an ultrasound even if medically unnecessary, and medication abortion must be provided in person because the state bans the use of telehealth or requires an in-person visit.
- Five states — North Carolina, Georgia, Nebraska, Utah, and Arizona — have abortion laws the Institute considers “very restrictive.” Abortion is banned after 6 weeks in Georgia, after 12 weeks in North Carolina and Nebraska, after 15 weeks in Arizona, and after 18 weeks in Utah. Patients are forced to wait at least 72 hours after counseling to obtain an abortion, state Medicaid coverage of abortion care is banned except in limited circumstances, use of private health insurance for abortion is banned except in limited circumstances, only physicians can provide abortions, medication abortion must be provided in person because state bans the use of telehealth or requires an in-person visit, and parental consent is required for a minor's abortion. In some of these states, the state provides protection from harassment and physical harm for anyone entering an abortion clinic, and there is a shield law to protect abortion providers and others from investigations by other states. In Arizona, mailing abortion pills to patients is banned.
- Sixteen states — Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Florida, and South Carolina — have abortion laws the Institute considers “most restrictive.” In these states, abortion is banned from the moment of conception, with limited exceptions, except in South Carolina and Florida, where abortion is banned six weeks after conception, also with limited exceptions. The Alabama Supreme Court has ruled that the state's abortion ban applies to frozen embryos. Patients are forced to wait 24 hours after counseling to obtain an abortion, state Medicaid coverage of abortion care is banned except in limited circumstances, use of private health insurance for abortion is banned except in limited circumstances, parental consent is required for a minor's abortion, and only physicians can provide abortions. In some of these states, medication abortion must be provided in person because the state bans the use of telehealth or requires an in-person visit, and mailing abortion pills to patients is banned.

Make  
Tuscola County  
a better place  
to live.



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