

Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

March 2025

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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.

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Notice of Our March Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, March 20, 2025**, 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 February Meeting

Vice Chair Alex Kirsch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on February 20, 2025, at the Brentwood. Seventeen members were in attendance. Lisa Bertsch reviewed Robert's Rules of Order. Alex Kirsch gave us a rundown of current events, including a summary of recent actions by Trump and Musk, information on the upcoming Michigan Democratic State Convention, and an update regarding the recent formation of the Michigan Chapter of the Progressive Democrats of America. Sherene McCloy and Lisa Bertsch gave us a rundown of the activities of the Party Building Committee, including success in funding the David Sierocki Skilled Trades Scholarship and the outcome of mailing more than 240 letters to inactive Tuscola Dems. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 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 wish.

Thank you!

Michigan Democratic State Convention



The 2025 Spring State Convention of the Michigan Democratic Party was held at the Detroit Marriott in the Renaissance Center on Saturday, February 22, 2025. A number of Tuscola County Dems attended, including Alex Kirsch, Bob DeCoe, Mike Furgerson, Mark Putnam, Jack Bader, and Dakotah Jaques.



Former state Senator Curtis Hertel Jr. of East Lansing was elected MDP Chair. He is part of a Michigan political dynasty. His father — Curtis Hertel Sr. — served as Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives. His uncles also served in the Michigan Legislature, and one of them — Dennis Hertel — served six terms in the US House of Representatives. His wife — Elizabeth Hertel — is Director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. His younger brother is state Senator Kevin Hertel of St. Clair Shores.

Joining Hertel in leadership posts are Portia Roberson as First Vice Chair and Dr. Shahin Nazmul Hassan as Second Vice Chair. The 9th Congressional District Committee (our district) elected Jeanette Bradshaw as Chair and Clint St. Mosley as Vice Chair.

OMG!

Trump won, but not by much. He didn't receive a mandate. America has 245 million eligible voters, and 155 million of them cast their votes last November. Trump received seventy-seven million of those votes, Harris received seventy-five million, and other candidates received three million. That means that more people voted against Trump than voted for him. And sadly, ninety million Americans who were eligible to vote, didn't bother.

Trump is now president and he's doing exactly what he said he would do, but since inauguration day, he and his unelected pal, Elon Musk, have experienced a polling collapse. Trump's approval rating among Americans is now underwater in every recent poll (45 approval vs 53 percent disapproval in the *Post/Ipsos* poll; 47 percent approval vs 52 percent disapproval in the *CNN* poll; 45 percent approval vs. 49 percent disapproval in the *Quinnipiac* poll). Musk is doing even worse (34 approval vs 49 percent disapproval in the *Post/Ipsos* poll). And a majority of Americans say Trump has given Musk too much power. The *Post/Ipsos* poll also found

that Americans disapprove by a 2-to-1 margin of Musk's shutting down federal agencies that he decides are unnecessary, and 63 percent are worried about his gang of 20-year-olds pawing through their tax returns, health information, and bank accounts.

Americans especially dislike Trump's attempts to end USAID, his on-again, off-again tariffs on goods from Mexico and Canada, and his firing of large numbers of government workers. Even Trump's signature issue of deporting undocumented immigrants receives 51 percent approval only if respondents think those deported are "criminals." Fifty-seven percent opposed deporting those who are not accused of crimes, 70 percent oppose deporting those brought to the U.S. as children, and 66 percent oppose deporting those who have children who are US citizens. Eighty-three percent oppose Trump's pardon of the violent offenders convicted for their behavior during the attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. A broad majority feel the president isn't doing enough to address the high prices of everyday goods, and 52 percent say he's gone too far in using his presidential power.

Many of Trump's actions have been blocked by the courts:

1. Trump authorized immigration raids in houses of worship, withheld federal funds from so-called sanctuary cities, and made it harder for refugees to claim asylum in the US. These orders were blocked by federal courts.
2. Trump ordered an end to birthright citizenship for children born to unauthorized immigrants and people who are in the country on temporary work, student, or tourist visas. The Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution clearly says that if you are born in the US, you are a US citizen. Trump's order was blocked by federal courts.
3. Trump appointed Elon Musk as head of the "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE). The Appointments Clause of Article II of the Constitution sets forth two types of presidential appointees. First, there are "principal officers," who report directly to the president. They are nominated by the president but must be confirmed by Senate. Second, there are "inferior officers," who report to someone other than the president. They are appointed by the president and do not require Senate confirmation. Elon Musk reports directly to the president, so under the Constitution he is a "principal officer" subject to Senate confirmation. Multiple lawsuits have been filed challenging Trump's authority to appoint Musk as head of DOGE.
3. Trump froze federal funds appropriated by Congress. We all know that Congress has "the power of the purse," but what if the president doesn't want to spend the money Congress allocates? Can he refuse to spend it? The answer is simple: he can't. Attempting to do so is called impoundment, and it's prohibited by the 1974 Impoundment Control Act. Trump's effort to gut the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is on hold after the Supreme Court ordered funding restored to the agency. His order to slash "overhead" at research labs funded through the National Institutes of Health was similarly blocked by a district judge. At least for now, the spending authorized by Congress has been restored.

4. Trump summarily fired or put on leave tens of thousands of federal employees. One example is the case involving Gwynne Wilcox, a Black woman and the first member of the National Labor Relations Board to be removed since the board was established in 1935. By law, members of the Board can only be removed for negligence or misconduct, but Trump fired her without either of those. District Judge Beryl Howell has ruled that Trump lacked the ability to fire Wilcox and that she should be immediately reinstated. Of course, Trump appealed, saying that her firing, along with others he has made, was justified because “these were far-left appointees with radical records of upending longstanding labor law, and they have no place as senior appointees in the Trump administration.” That sort of political rationale falls squarely within the type of excuse the Supreme Court has previously ruled as impermissible. An open question is whether the Roberts Court will sign on to Trump’s view.
5. Trump announced he would introduce tariffs on imports from Canada, Mexico, and China, even though the US Constitution grants the power to impose tariffs to Congress, not the president. To get around this, Trump has declared a “national emergency,” claiming that those three countries posed an “extraordinary threat” to the US by “allowing the entry into the US of illegal aliens and deadly drugs.” His declaration of a national emergency allowed Trump to invoke the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), a 1977 statute that provides the president with extensive powers to deal with national emergencies. However, there are two problems. First, it’s not at all clear that the tariffs are an appropriate response to “allowing the entry of illegal aliens and deadly drugs.” Second, the IEEPA empowers a president to embargo imports and impose sanctions but does not explicitly empower him to impose tariffs. Since the IEEPA was enacted 48 years ago, not once has a president ever used that law to impose a tariff. For now, Trump has backed off from tariffs at least on goods from Canada and Mexico, but if he chooses to go forward, no doubt there will be legal challenges.
6. The Associated Press sued the Trump administration for blocking AP journalists from presidential events because the AP continues to use the traditional name “Gulf of Mexico” for the gulf that Trump is trying to rename. The AP is suing over the freedom of speech protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution.
7. Trump has tried to scrap many liberal policies of the federal government. Several lawsuits challenge Trump’s efforts to bar transgender people from the military and prevent them from stating their gender identity on US passports. His move to freeze federal funding to hospitals that provide gender treatment to minors was blocked in Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, and Colorado. A judge also blocked his attempt to place transgender women who are federal prisoners into men’s prisons. A federal court also granted a nationwide injunction against other Trump’s executive orders attacking diversity, equity, and inclusion on the grounds that they violate the First and Fifth Amendments to the Constitution.

Many of Trump’s actions — nominating unqualified cabinet members, granting pardons to the violent mob that attacked the US Capital on January 6, 2021, rounding up undocumented immigrants, and throwing Ukraine under the bus — have left many Americans aghast, but it seems they’re within presidential power.

The cavalry isn't coming. Democrats are out of power, the Supreme Court has lost its way, Congress is keeping its head down, the wealthiest man in the world is wielding a chain saw, and a president has run amok. But there's hope. Americans around the country are finally turning out to protest and speak up. Town halls for congressional Republicans from Georgia to Wisconsin to Oregon have grown testy as voters have shown up to vent their fury over the firing of federal workers and the DOGE's access to sensitive data. Ordinary Americans are beginning to face off against Republicans, who seem utterly unprepared for the blowback. They're getting an earful and a few of them are beginning to flinch. House Speaker Mike Johnson has recently encouraged Republican lawmakers to skip in-person town halls. Our representative, Lisa McClain, has announced that her town halls will now be conducted by phone.

What Now?

One thing is clear: Trump backs down when confronted by public outrage. We saw it when he pulled Matt Gaetz's nomination to be attorney general and again when he backed off from tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico. It turns out that calling our members of Congress and protesting has an impact, but for it to be effective, we need as many Democrats as possible to pick up the phone.



On March 4th, our own Senator Elissa Slotkin delivered a simple message as the Democrats' official response to Trump's long-winded address to Congress. She struck a calm and upbeat tone in her brief remarks, appealing not only to Democrats but to Republicans as well by noting that she served three tours in Iraq working for the CIA under Republican and Democratic presidents. "I've seen democracies flicker out," she said. "I've seen what life is like when a government is rigged. You can't open a business without paying off a corrupt official. You can't criticize the guys in charge without getting a knock on the door in the middle of the night."

Senator Slotkin has a three-part message for demoralized Democrats:

1. Don't tune out. It's easy to be exhausted, but America needs you now more than ever.
2. Hold your elected officials (including me) accountable. Watch how they're voting. Go to town halls and speak up.
3. Organize. Pick just one issue you're passionate about and join a group. If there's no group, start one.

Let's get to work.

Make Tuscola County
a better place
to live.



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