October 2025



Letter from Chair

Member Contributions

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Calendar

Community Spotlight

Other Interesting Facts

#### Protecting the First Amendment; How Kimmel's Cancellation Uncovered the Truth

In truth, Kimmel's recent cancellation was spearheaded not only by the **Trump administration and the FCC**, but also by **major media conglomerates** that donate and bond with certain politicians. This alliance helps the conglomerate ensure tax cuts, deregulations, and government contracts to meet their business goals. Their "rise in the ranks" in Washington can be linked to lobbying (i.e. paying money to politicians in exchange for passing bills) which has created a symbiotic system of "play-to-play" or, moreover, a **structural problem**. On top of heavy lobbying, only six media conglomerates own most of the media we consume including the 24-hour news stations, newspapers, publishing houses, Internet utilities, and video game developers (Webfx). These six companies include **Comcast** (NBC), **Walt Disney** (ABC), **Warner Bros**. (CNN), **Paramount** (CBS), **Sony**, and **Amazon**. Like any monopoly, the continued concentration of power leaves less room for diverse interests, and shape public discourse that can directly influence election outcomes with tailored political content (Stanford Business).

The latest censorship attempt involved **Disney's ABC network**, that gave into pressure from the Trump administration and Brendan Carr, the Trump appointed Chairman of the FCC and **Project 2025** contributor, to pull **Jimmy Kimmel Live!** indefinitely off the air (The Guardian). In the process, Disney's market value plummeted as they quickly lost subscribers and received nationwide criticism for their decision. Disney eventually allowed Kimmel to return, but certain ABC assets **Sinclair Network** and **Nexstar Media** refused, saying it "served the sensibilities of their local communities and protected the public airwaves" (USA Today). The boycott lasted until Sep. 26, 2025. The **Sinclair Network**, owners and operators of approx. 200 local television stations across the United States, have been the center of other media controversies as well, including election interference in 2004. This network ran a "documentary" bashing Democratic nominee John Kerry at the time, securing the nomination of George W. Bush (Yahoo News)

Along with Jimmy Kimmel, **Stephen Colbert** has also been a target of cancellation and censorship, although Paramount (CBS) denies these claims and cites their decision as purely financial (PBS News). Unlike *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, Colbert's **The Late Show** will end production next year after a nearly 33-year run. Many speculate that Colbert's cancellation allowed CBS to **gain favor with the Trump administration**, and **granted them FCC approval** for a major merger with Skydance Media they were seeking. Colbert had also recently criticized CBS after they agreed to settle a \$16 million lawsuit with Trump over an alleged edited interview during the 2024 presidential campaign. Backlash has ensued with Colbert supporters as it did with Kimmel, but Kimmel had a potential advantage - due to Disney's market value and the growing concerns over free speech.

What we can do now is continue to be aware of these major conglomerates, their lobbying and political ties, and to boycott or unsubscribe when these companies threaten our First Amendment Protections in the name of business or financial interests. **Our reporters, journalists, protesters, scientists, and students deserve to be protected as well,** even if their views don't align with our current administration. Our freedoms are worth more than a bargaining chip.

By: Christina Cusumano

Take a breath, America. We are a nation built on debate, not destruction. We fight at the ballot box, through policy, and with our voices not with violence. The deaths of Rep. Melissa Hortman and Charlie Kirk are not just tragedies they are warnings. No one deserves to die for speaking their truth. This is hatred. This is wrong. And it must stop. We are Americans. We believe in freedom, not fear. We are not judge, jury, and executioner. We are a nation of laws, of compassion, of courage.

Political disagreements will always exist. That's democracy. But violence is never the answer. It only deepens division, fuels fear, and spreads hate. Let's remember who we are. Let's protect every voice even when we disagree. That's what makes America strong. That's what makes us free. That's what makes us human.





### Don't Think of "Traffic"

### Think of Silencing Workers

by Dr. Denise Brooks

Issue: 8

Michigan's House Bill 4664 isn't about keeping roads clear. It's about clearing the way for corporations to silence unions. Introduced by Rep. Alicia St. Germaine (R–Harrison Township), this bill would turn peaceful protest into a crime. Right now, blocking traffic during a protest is a civil infraction ticket. But if this bill becomes law, it would be a misdemeanor, with up to 93 days in jail and \$5,000 in fines.

#### That's not safety. That's intimidation.

Unions have always used peaceful roadway protests during strikes. Nurses, teachers, and auto workers fighting for fair pay and safe conditions. This bill would make those actions illegal, even if they're nonviolent. It's a direct attack on the tools workers use to demand justice.

State Representative Reggie Miller saw through it. She stood firm, saying...

"I voted no on this bill because we already have laws in place here. This bill is not protection for protestors, it's a toolbox handed to people who already know how to swing a hammer," Miller said. "If this is passed, the Republicans will weaponize it."

#### And we've seen this playbook before.

Back in 2007, State Senator Randy Richardville (R–Monroe) told Local 223 Union magazine that Right to Work would never pass "Not on my watch!" He said the GOP wouldn't even bring it to the floor. But when the time came, Richardville voted for it. That broken promise gutted union protections across Michigan.

This bill is no different. It's part of a bigger pattern anti-union votes, corporate donors, and laws that help the powerful stay in control.

Senator Bellino's Senate Bill 440: A Direct Hit to Michigan's Working Class
Senator Joe Bellino has introduced Senate Bill 440, a proposal that would repeal prevailing wage
requirements for alternative energy projects across Michigan. While Bellino claims the bill will "make Michigan
more attractive to businesses," labor advocates and community leaders see it for what it is as a calculated
attack on worker protections and union strength. Prevailing wage laws ensure that workers, especially skilled
tradespeople, are paid fair, regionally competitive wages on publicly funded projects. These standards have
long-upheld job quality, safety, and economic dignity for Michigan's workforce. Bellino's bill would strip those
protections from wind, solar, and other renewable energy projects, allowing contractors to pay workers
significantly less for the same skilled labor. Lower wages mean families struggle to make ends meet.
Reduced job quality leads to unsafe working conditions, less training, and higher turnover. And without
prevailing wage, union leverage erodes, making it harder to keep wage floors, benefits, and protections across
the industry.

Bellino's bill **invites out-of-state contractors** to undercut local workers, weakening the trades that have powered Michigan's economy for generations. It's a gift to corporate developers and anti-union lobbyists, those who profit from cheap labor and deregulation at the expense of the very people who build our infrastructure. Community organizers warn that this legislation is part of a broader trend: **dismantling labor rights under the guise of "economic growth."** But growth that comes from exploitation isn't progress; it's regression. Senate Bill 440 doesn't uplift Michigan. It undermines it. Michigan's renewable future should be built by well-paid, well-trained local workers, not sacrificed to corporate interests. The fight for fair wages is a fight for dignity, safety, and the soul of Michigan's labor legacy.

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE REGGIE MILLER CONTINUES THE ROCK VS. SCISSORS GAME



Issue: 8

Michigan schools are facing real threats from violence, trauma, and stress. Families are asking for help, while students need safe and supportive places to learn. State Representative Reggie Miller introduced House Bill 4872 that would allocate funding for mental health, safety, and help in high-stress areas. The bill, introduced in 2025, clarifies "membership" using Section 6 of the State School Aid Act of 1979, so schools get fair funding based on student needs.

House Bill 4872 is part of the Education Vision Budget

- Mental Health Support
- Safety Improvements
- Help for High-stress Areas

### Bellino Confronted Over Budget Cuts and Dundee Data Center By Tara Mckenzie

#### Sen Bellino held local office hours on Friday,

September 26 at the Dundee Library where approximately 25-30 people attended. He provided a brief update on the status of the State budget. There has been an agreement to a framework of a budget, although the details have not been worked out yet. It still needs to go to subcommittees and be voted on. People were especially pressing him on the details of budget that affect schools. Dundee Community Schools Superintendent attended and made the case for universal school lunches (Bellino is against universal free breakfast and lunches) and for more funds for teachers. Tara McKenzie argued against all the expected cuts to dedicated programs such as special education, rural transportation, at-risk supports, etc. People also asked him for assistance in fighting against the proposed Dundee data center. He said he doesn't know much about it. People expressed their concerns about the project and he did agree to write a letter for the community against the project.

### Senator Mallory McMorrow's Silver Alert Bill Expansion

Every day, families across Michigan face the terrifying reality of a loved one with dementia or cognitive impairment going missing. 60% of older adults with dementia will wander and without fast public alerts, the outcome can be tragic.

Michigan has the technology. We have the framework. We've seen it work in other states.

Now it's time to act.

Senator Mallory McMorrow's Silver Alert bill would expand our emergency alert system to include vulnerable adults giving law enforcement the tools to notify the public within six critical hours. That window can mean the difference between a safe return and a devastating loss.

The House has already passed a similar bill. Let's make sure the Senate follows through with urgency and funding.

Support the Silver Alert System.
Protect our seniors and give
families the tools they need to
bring loved ones home.

SB 456

#### October 1st is Older Persons Day

A special time to honor older adults not just with respect, but with real care and protection. It's a reminder that growing older should be met with dignity, not difficulty.

Every senior deserves to feel safe, supported, and valued.

Let's celebrate their wisdom, protect their rights, and build a world where aging is something to be proud of, not something to fear.



# O LATEST MCDP EVENTS

**Labor Day** September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025



Union Leader Jerry McKart stands next to MCDP's Labor Union Banner

The MCDP attended Monroe's **Labor** Day **Festival** at Loranger Square on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Hosting the event was the Monroe/Lenawee AFL-CIO, bringing together many labor, working class, and union supporters in recognition, celebration, and solidarity. The AFL-CIO shared the following statement in regard to this national holiday: "At hundreds of events across the nation, we're standing up for the freedom, fairness, and security American workers deserve." MCDP proudly supports this message.









# LABOR DAY TOP THREE CONCERNS POLLED

- Universal Healthcare
- Sensible Gun Control
- Fully Funded Social Safety Nets

Reported by: Christina Cusumano



### DATA CENTERS TURBUTEN WATER, CLEAN ENERGY, AND COMMUNITY WEALTH!

Andrea Pierce, Policy Director for the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition and citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, is sounding the alarm about the environmental risks posed by large scale data centers in Michigan. While marketed as tech progress, these facilities often strain water supplies, increase pollution, and undermine clean energy goals.

Pierce has been outspoken about the University of Michigan's proposed \$1.2 billion data center in Ypsilanti Township, which would rely heavily on water from nearby lakes to cool servers. "The plan is to use the water from the lake, and they use it to cool down their servers and their machines," she said. "From what I've been reading, they put it back in the lake a lot of times, not as much because it burns off from the heat. But it's not clean all the time."

As a Native activist, Pierce's mission is rooted in protecting water and honoring tribal treaty rights. She has said, "My village of Pellston has beautiful artesian spring water that we cannot drink" due to PFAS contamination. Her work with Idle No More Michigan and the Anishinaabek Caucus centers Indigenous leadership in environmental justice fights across the state.

Pierce's warning is especially relevant now, as Dundee, Michigan, is being eyed for a massive data center project. While details are still emerging, similar proposals in Howell Township have sparked public backlash over water usage, pollution, and energy strain. If built, the Dundee facility could mirror these concerns placing pressure on local water systems and increasing reliance on fossil fuels to power server farms.

Andrea Pierce's message is clear: without strong regulation and community input, data centers risk becoming another tool of environmental harm. Her advocacy urges Michigan residents to stay vigilant, protect water, and demand transparency from developers and lawmakers.

"Michigan occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, much of the state resides on land ceded in treaties such as the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw and the 1807 Treaty of Detroit. We recognize Michigan's 12 federally recognized Native Nations, historic Indigenous communities, and Indigenous individuals who live here now, as well as those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty, history, and ongoing presence." Andrea Pierce, Policy Director for the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition and citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

A massive data center is proposed for Dundee, sparking concern over water use, energy strain, noise, and lack of transparency. Residents fear environmental harm and corporate overreach. With few public details and high stakes, the debate centers on accountability, land use, and protecting community resources before it's too late.



Andrea Pierce with Michigan State Attorney General, Dana Nessel



Andrea Pierce with Michigan State Representative (47), Carrie Rheingans





The American people deserve the truth.

Survivors deserve justice, and every day this list stays sealed is another day of complicity.

275 days and counting. We're watching. We're waiting. And we won't back down.

Release-The FIES WE ARE NOT DISTRACTED

Issue: 8

#### Indigenous Peoples Day October 5, 2025 Michigan Land Acknowledgement

"Michigan occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, much of the state resides on land ceded in treaties such as the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw and the 1807 Treaty of Detroit. We recognize Michigan's 12 federally recognized Native Nations, historic Indigenous communities, and Indigenous individuals who live here now, as well as those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty, history, and ongoing presence."

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE REGGIE MILLER ADDRESSES THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM MONROE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND TRANSPARENCY

#### **Voters Deserve Facts Not Plot Twists**

State Representative Reggie Miller believes in second chances but also in honesty. She introduced an amendment to House Bill 4872 that would require that candidates for Monroe County Commissioner to tell the truth if they have been convicted of a felony even if it happens after they file to run.

Why? Because voters were misled. District 2 candidate Mark Brant pled guilty to a federal crime but didn't

why? Because voters were misled. District 2 candidate Mark Brant pled guilty to a federal crime but didn't tell the County Clerk. He couldn't vote or attend meetings while in jail. That's not fair to Monroe residents. Reggie Miller said, "We can't let ballots become a mystery novel. Voters deserve facts not a plot twist." But Millers amendment and her right to speak was denied.

Meanwhile, Senator Joe Bellino and Commissioner Dawn Asper, close friends of Brant, tried to help him behind the scenes. Bellino used his official letterhead to ask for a lighter sentence. Asper even offered to do Brant's job for him. That's called cronyism when people in power help their friends instead of doing what's right for the public.

Reggie Miller stood up for transparency. Her amendment didn't block anyone from running; it just asked for honesty. Voters should know the truth before they vote.

Oct. 1, the first day of the 2026 fiscal year, with no State budget, but with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer insisting there was no partial state government shutdown, either. (Detroit Free Press 2025.) The federal government shut down at midnight after a deadlocked Congress failed to reach a deal on funding. Republicans and Democrats are at odds over enhanced Obamacare subsidies. Federal workers bear the brunt of government shutdowns, and the White House has said federal workforce layoffs are "imminent." Agencies and activities deemed essential are still open (CNN, 2025)

Line 5 Showdown: Ignored Evidence and Treaty Violations Under Scrutiny

LINE 5 WIN: THE MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT HAS AGREED TO HEAR A CASE CHALLENGING THE TUNNEL PERMIT. THE CASE ARGUES THE MPSC IGNORED CRITICAL EVIDENCE ABOUT SPILL RISKS, FAILED TO RESPECT TREATY RIGHTS, AND NEGLECTED ITS DUTY TO PROTECT OUR WATERS.

https://rankmivote.org/where-do-l-sign/



Issue: 8

#### It's Rage Bait and We're Done With It



#### FROM LAWMAKER TO BLAME-FLAMER?

RACHEL KLEINFELD AND NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA "POLITICAL VIOLENCE CAN BE REDUCED IF LEADERS INSIST ON NONVIOLENCE... AND REFUSE TO TURN VICTIMS INTO POLITICAL MARTYRS."

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION (2025) STATES "IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONSISTENTLY AND LOUDLY DENOUNCE POLITICAL VIOLENCE, REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL AFFILIATION OR IDEOLOGY, TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND SAFETY OF ALL COMMUNITIES."

Senator Joe Bellino recently shared a photo that stunned Monroe County of mannequins hanging from a wooden structure, staged bodies, and a Mexican flag. The image evokes the same violent symbolism used on January 6th against Vice President Mike Pence. But instead of addressing the deeper meaning, Bellino used it to attack "liberals" Let's be clear, free speech isn't the issue.

The issue is what leaders choose to do with it. The gallows on January 6th were a threat to democracy. A threat to our Vice President. A threat to every voter who believes in peaceful transfer of power. Bellino has never condemned that violence. Never offered solutions. The staged scene recently shared was created by a "proud" Mexican citizen in Texas meant to expose the terror his community feels under ICE enforcement. Creating commentary. This is the frame of how rage bait wins votes. Spectacle replaces substance. The research available to Bellino exposes that this kind of political messaging and blame fuels more violence on both sides. In Monroe, Mexican Americans live in fear of racial profiling, ICE raids, and scapegoating. Instead of defending them, Bellino amplifies terror. Instead of leading, he divides. We're tired of the double standard. Tired of selective outrage. Tired of leaders who provoke instead of protecting. We demand accountability. We demand leadership that does its homework. That speaks out against January 6th's violence. That stops feeding the flames. Monroe County Democratic Party Chair Rick Kull phoned the Monroe Republican Party and they agreed on Political violence needs to stop. We need to be solid on it doesn't matter what party.



#### MONROE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY:

## CALLING ALL CANDIDATES

#### WE WANT YOUR TALENT!

Have you ever wondered what it's like to run for local government? Would you like to learn how your skills and talents can make a direct impact to your community? Do you want to learn more about open seats in Monroe County and Michigan? Meet with us to learn about open positions including poll workers, precinct delegates, school board members, city/township/village council boards, county commissioners, state representatives, mayors/supervisors, and more!

Please join us to **Contest Every Race** for 2026!

Contact Linda Gram for more information (734) 243-4485

#### Paperclips and Unity in Monroe County Let's Huddle Up



Issue: 8

Did you know a simple paperclip once stood for something powerful? During World War II, people in Norway wore paperclips on their clothes to show they were united against the Nazis. It was a quiet way to say, "We stick together." The paperclip didn't hurt anyone it just held people together with hope.

Years later, in 1998, middle school students in Whitwell, Tennessee started the Paper Clips Project. They wanted to understand the Holocaust, where 6 million Jewish people were killed. To help others see the size of this tragedy, they collected 6 million paperclips one for each life lost. People from all over the world sent paperclips, and the students built a memorial using a real German railcar filled with over 30 million clips. Their project became a movie in 2004.

So why does this matter in Monroe County?

Because today, we need symbols of unity more than ever. The Monroe County Democratic Party has been heart-filled working to bring people together, protect truth, and stand up for fairness. We've seen division, fear, and confusion. But we've also seen courage, kindness, and people who care deeply about their neighbors.

Let's find our paperclip.

Stronger Together Huddle, Bedford, Dundee, Monroe County Indivisibles & Good Trouble Monroe



a peaceful community gathering to stand united for our democracy and our constitutional republic.

Where: Custer Statue, St. Mary's Park, Monroe, MI
When: Saturday, October 18

Time: 10:30 AM – 12:00 Noon

Bring a non-violent sign to carry, or simply sit and hold your sign in solidarity. Together, we will send a strong, peaceful message about the importance of protecting our democratic values.



### Mark Ferris "Monroe County Deserves Answers'

This idea was presented by

huddle. It inspired our

member Terri so much she wanted to share. Thank you

At the September Monroe County Democratic County meeting Mark Ferris raised alarms about Detroit Edison's broken promises and tax deals. In 2017–2018, Edison reneged on commitments tied to a nuclear plant and coal burner. Despite negotiating a 30% tax cut (down from 60%), Ferris noted this happened before Edison received a 20-year license extension.

"Now, Monroe County stores high-level radioactive waste along Lake Erie's shore. Edison donated \$333,000 to Monroe County Community College, yet the college doesn't benefit from nearby solar energy." Ferris urged leaders to lease adjacent land to solar firms, earning up to \$1,700 per acre.

He also revealed Ford Motor Company left town owing \$5 million in back taxes, with officials afraid to pursue it. Ferris called out state energy policy being negotiated at the township level, and warned of outside interference at local solar meetings.

### CHECK THIS STUFF OUT!



Click for Online Tickets Before It's Too Late!



### General Election Nov. 4th, 2025

MCDP Member **Danielle Hoover** is running for District 2 **Monroe County Commissioner** in MI's upcoming general election. Hoover is a Gold Star Family Member, a passionate Social Worker, and a Member of AFSCME Local 3052. Her top priorities include Veterans, Mental Health, and Labor Union support. For other key dates and details about the upcoming general election click HERE.

### HAPPENING SOON

October 7<sup>th</sup> - Mark Totten AG Candidate Visit. MCDP Office/5:30

October 11th - Unity Dinner/6:00

October 18th - UAW/Bedford Food Bank

October 18<sup>th</sup> - No Kings Day Monroe and Lansing, MI

Every Tues - Food Pantry UMC - 10-11 am 8165 Douglas Rd. Lambertville











SUNDAYS 6-10 PM

**Reggie Miller** 



Click to donate to Rep. Reggie Miller's campaign

**October** 

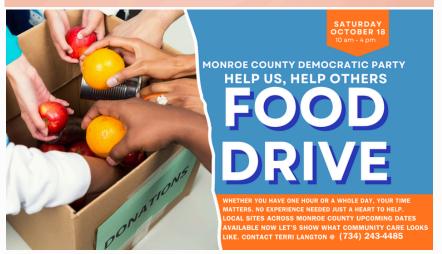


Issue: 8

#### **Book Club With Purpose**



**Join the Monroe County Democratic Party's first** ever book club and meet Mallory McMorrow, **Michigan State Senator** and author of Hate Won't Win.





Our Office Is FIRE Thanks to Our Volunteers!



# **STOP BY OUR OFFICE AND GET** RENEWAL YOUR MILLAGE SIGN

