



Monroe County

DEMOCRATIC PARTY NEWSLETTER

July
2025



• Letter from Chair • Member Contributions • Local & State • Calendar • Community Spotlight • Other Interesting Facts



REGGIE MILLER FUNDRAISER

On July 12, 2025, MCDP Chair **Rick Kull** and wife **Jean Kull** hosted a fundraising event for District 31 State Representative, **Reggie Miller**. This event served as a great opportunity to support Rep. Miller as she continues to fight for fair, democratic policies in a largely right-wing, conservative landscape. During her Q&A, Rep. Miller gave the following statement on the power of using our collective voice: *"We can't be quiet and we can't be subdued because when we do, we send a silent message that we're going along with [harmful policy]. We have to fight and [advocate] online...and when you see a negative post or a lie, do the research and contradict it... All of you being here shows how strong we are and we're gonna have to fight with everything we got because honestly, we are in a war...and I'm not backing down."*



Representative Miller answering questions on local issues during July's fundraiser

DONATE ❤️

Click to donate to Rep.
Reggie Miller's campaign

AUGUST MEETING @ MCCC

MCCC President Director, Dr. Kojo A. Quartey, invites all MCDP members to a special board meeting on **August 7th at 5:30 in the La-Z-Boy Center**. He is asking for local support to help get MCCC millage on the ballot to ensure the future success of this vital local institution.

LOTS OF STUFF: HAPPENING SOON

Jul 18 - Eli Savit AG Candidate Visit
11:30 am MCDP Office

Jul 27 - Monroe County Fair Parade
1:00 pm Navarre Field

Jul 27-Aug 2 - Monroe County Fair

Every Mon - Postcard Writing
MCDP Office

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



Mobilize
CLICK FOR MORE!



SUNDAYS 6-10 PM



Click to volunteer at our Fair Booth!



Donate to MCDP



Donate to MDP



EVENTS IN JUNE



PRIDE 2025: ST. MARY'S PARK

MCDP attended **Monroe County Pride** on June 28th at St. Mary's Park. Volunteers polled pride attendees on their most pressing political concerns and listed below are the top three. The Monroe County Democrat's urged the public to stay informed, involved, and to stand proud knowing their identities and concerns are always valid!

TOP 3 CONCERNS POLLED

- Protect Women's Right to Choose
- Protect Vulnerable Communities (LGBTQ+, Disabled, Minorities)
- Save Our Planet

Photographs courtesy of Katybeth Davis



Click the icons for full Pride and Juneteenth's Poll Results



JUNETEENTH 2025: MONTAGUE PARK

Monroe's **Juneteenth Celebration** was held at Montague Park on June 19th. MCDP attended Juneteenth to help **honor and celebrate** African American emancipation, liberation, and community on this important day of freedom and resilience.

TOP 3 CONCERNS POLLED

- Protect Women's Right to Choose
- Sensible Gun Control
- More Affordable Housing



Visit Surya's henna booth at the Monroe County Fair!



*The MCDP extends a heartfelt **thank you** to all volunteers that help make Monroe Dem. booths possible!*

Education at a Crossroads

*Reggie Miller's Student-First Vision vs.
Block Grant Politics by State Representatives
Thompson, Desana, Bruck.*

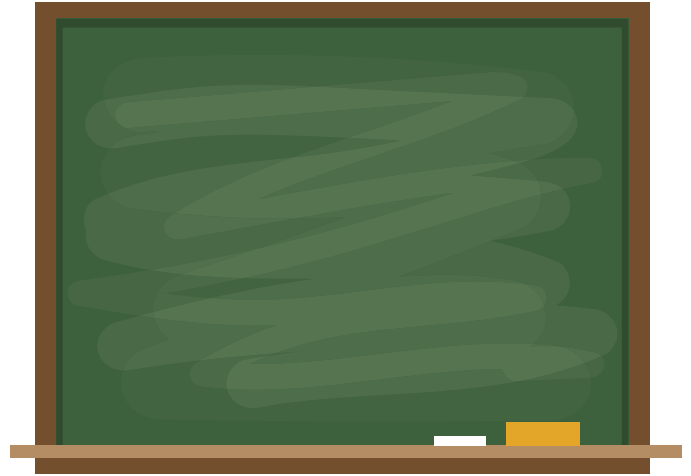
In Lansing, the debate over Michigan's public education funding has revealed a divide between student-centered investment and block grant maneuvering. At the heart of the fight is Rep. Reggie Miller (D–Van Buren Twp.) and House Democrats who have kept pushing back a budget informed by months of community dialogue with parents, teachers, and education experts. Her vision, embedded in the House Democrats' proposed FY 2026 budget, included a \$3.2 billion increase and dedicated support for:

- ✓ School safety and mental health services
- ✓ Universal school meals
- ✓ Great Start Readiness early education
- ✓ Smaller class sizes
- ✓ Special education and literacy learning grants
- ✓ Career and Technical Education Pathways

Miller's approach prioritized clear, categorical funding, ensuring that critical programs for vulnerable students weren't lumped into generalized accounts or lost in administrative red tape.



Rep. Reggie Miller continues to fight for equitable education in MI despite push-backs



Instead of adopting this Democratic plan, the Michigan House passed a Republican backed proposal that, while increasing the per-pupil base to \$10,025, cut dedicated funding streams by rolling essential programs into block grants. Lawmakers like Jamie Thompson (R–Brownstown) and Jim DeSana (R–Carleton) voted for this budget despite warnings from educators and advocates. Their support effective:

- ✗ Removed guaranteed funding for Universal School Meals, Special Education, Literacy Coaches
- ✗ Slashed At-Risk student support
- ✗ Defunded rural transportation, summer school, and health screenings
- ✗ Introduced a 20% per-pupil penalty if districts do not follow new bureaucratic conditions.

While some Republican sponsors have promoted the plan as offering \$12,000 per student, this figure is misleading. It includes conditional penalties and strips out earmarked protections, forcing already underfunded districts to choose between core academic programming and basic well-being support.

Educators warn that block grants shift accountability away from student outcomes and into compliance management, increasing paperwork and limiting flexibility for schools that need targeted help.

NOT YOUR DUMPING GROUND

Reggie Miller or State Representatives Thompson, DeSana, Will Bruck, and Senator Bellino campaign checks, corporate excuses, and a betrayal of the communities they claim to stand for. In 2025, Rep. Reggie Miller (D–Van Buren Twp..) drew a line in the toxic soil of Monroe County: our communities are not your dumping ground. With HB 5923, she moved to ban radioactive waste disposal statewide. With HB 4393, she proposed raising landfill fees to stop out-of-state toxic imports. She didn't just speak, she stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Romulus, Van Buren, and Canton leaders to protect families, farms, and drinking water from Manhattan Project waste and corporate disregard. Reps. Jamie Thompson, James DeSana, William Bruck, and Sen. Joe Bellino did something else entirely.

All four received endorsements from the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, a business lobby that openly opposes hazardous waste reform. Bellino and Bruck accepted PAC money from DTE and CMS Energy, whose deregulation agendas prioritize profit over public health. Thompson and DeSana publicly criticized environmental oversight panels, echoed opposition to landfill reforms, and voted against hazardous waste fee increases (SBs 246–247, HB 4393) bills that could fund cleanup, infrastructure upgrades, and mobile home park protections. Their alignment with the Michigan Chemistry Council, Michigan Waste & Recycling Association, and other lobbyists reveals a common theme: delay, deflect, deregulation. Miller's stance is leadership that says NO to polluters.

The Republican Jamie Thompson, Will Bruck, Jim DeSana Senator Joe Bellino are bought. The Republican House Speaker Matt Hall has not scheduled hearings or votes on these bills, despite growing public pressure and support from Rep. Reggie Miller and Sen. Darrin Camilleri. Matt Hall, too, is aligned with the Michigan Chemistry Council and Michigan Waste & Recycling Association; they are his donor base and legislative allies. He's blocking for his interest, using procedural control and public dismissal to protect industry interests over community safety. Help promote people to vote, give the facts, and stop corporate greed. We need more State Representatives like Reggie Miller's.

FREE SPEECH VS. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

BY SHAWNA FARLEY

Under the First Amendment, elected officials, including township trustees, do have broad free speech protection, even when their statements are insensitive, offensive, or cruel. Legally, they can say a lot. But ethical responsibility is a different conversation. Ethical Expectations of Trustees (Townships & School Boards) Trustees take an oath to serve all residents with integrity, fairness, and dignity. If a trustee:

- Mocks a survivor of sexual abuse.
- Dismisses or trivializes a felony conviction (like a teacher abusing a student)
- Blame victims or promote stigma.

They may not be violating the law, but they are violating community trust and their duty of care. In many codes of ethics (including township and school board bylaws), behavior that undermines public confidence, nurtures discrimination, or perpetuates harm can be grounds for:

- Censure (formal public condemnation by fellow board members)
- Petition for removal (depending on the township's charter or state recall laws)
- Civil liability if their statements create a hostile environment or retaliate against protected reporting.

Unionization

By Dr. Denise Brooks

The Detroit News reported recently that the United Auto Workers (UAW), announced that a majority of workers at Chrysler parent Stellantis NV's electric vehicle battery joint venture in Kokomo, Indiana, signed authorization cards to join the UAW union. StarPlus Energy, the partnership between Stellantis and Korean battery maker Samsung SDI, has agreed to recognize the union with 420 workers at the site. The recognition began with the 2023 contract between the union and Stellantis following a 44-day targeted strike. StarPlus began production in Kokomo earlier this year. Stellantis announced plans in 2022 for a first battery plant in the city where it already has powertrain and transmission production. It was expected to spend at least \$2.5 billion on the 33-gigawatt hour plant and create 1,400 jobs. In 2023, it said it would build a second \$3.2 billion, 34-gigawatt hour plant set to open in 2027 there with 1,400 jobs.

All workers deserve job security, fair wages, workplace protection and dignity. A plus for the workers was that the company remained neutral and did not use intimidation or other anti-union tactics to stop the card check process. The card check procedure, or card check neutrality, allows a union to be recognized by an employer without a secret ballot election if a majority of employees signs authorization cards. This is a process that can potentially bypass the typical election process and lead to faster recognition and negotiations. Signing union authorization cards indicates that the person wants to be represented by the union.

Once a majority (50% plus 1) of cards are signed, the union can request recognition from the employer. The employer can either voluntarily recognize the union based on card check or file a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to contest the card check process. If the employer recognizes the union, negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement can begin. Many organizing drives do not happen as easily as StarPlus Energy. The UAW tried to organize EV battery workers at BlueOval SK in Glendale, Kentucky.

Ford Motor Co. did not agree to a card check system at BlueOval SK Battery Park, which encompasses two battery plants jointly owned with Korean battery maker SK On Co. Ltd. In January, the UAW requested a National Labor Relations Board vote at the site after a "supermajority" of employees there signed authorization cards in November. A vote, however, still has not been held with the union accusing the company of dragging out the process and intimidating workers, some of whom have accused the company of hazardous working conditions.



No Union = No Rights: You are an "employee at will." Your employer can discipline or fire you at any time for any reason; you have no recourse if you do not belong to a union.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Congrats to the following
2025 John D. Dingell

Memorial Scholarship Recipients!

RACHEL INGELS & WILLIAM S. INGELS

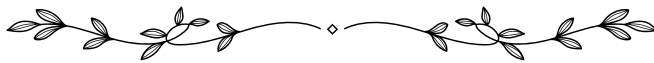
Dear Todd C. Brunning, *Bedford Township Board of Trustees,* *Who Calls It “Consensual”*,

You may think you’re defending someone. You may believe you’re being rational, impartial, or fair. But when you call a relationship between a teacher and student “consensual,” you are doing something deeply damaging. You’re telling a young person that power doesn’t matter. Those boundaries don’t matter. That trust is broken. Even if, in your opinion, the “no” is not loud enough. You’re telling a survivor they’re partly to blame even when it was never a fair fight. A student cannot consent to a relationship with someone who holds power over their future. It doesn’t matter if the student is legally an adult. It doesn’t matter if they “seemed mature” or “went along with it.” What matters is the imbalance: one person with grades, influence, and authority, the other with everything to lose.

When you dismiss that by calling it consensual, you:

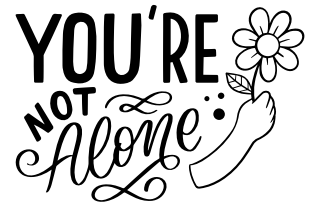
- Silence survivors who are scared to speak
- Excuse people who betray professional and moral obligations
- Perpetuate a culture that makes young people question their pain!

This isn’t about punishing relationships. It’s about protecting integrity. About making schools safe. About reminding adults: *“Love never hides behind secrecy, imbalance, or manipulation.”* If your instinct is to defend the adult, ask why. If you feel tempted to blame the student, pause and consider whose voice gets centered and whose gets erased. We don’t need more silence, victim blaming. We need responsibility. And we need you to be brave enough to say: *“That wasn’t love. That was wrong. And they deserved better.”*



A Letter to Survivors

From: Shawna Farley



Maybe no one’s said this before, but I want to. None of what happened to you was your fault. If you’re reading this, maybe you’re feeling alone. Maybe you’re confused. Maybe someone did something they shouldn’t have. Someone older, someone who said they cared about you, someone who made you feel special. If Someone in Power Hurt you. Sometimes people with authority, like teachers, coaches, pastors, or older family members, use their position to get close to kids in ways that are not okay. They might give you gifts or attention. They might make you feel like you’re the only one who understands them. Even if they tell you, it was “just love.” But that’s not love. That’s control. That’s manipulation. That’s a violation of your trust. Maybe part of you still miss the attention or feel bad for speaking up. That’s normal. Trauma isn’t always loud and screaming; sometimes it’s quiet, confusing, and wrapped in guilt. Getting Help Is Brave, Not Betrayal. Telling someone you trust, a school counselor, a teacher, a parent, a hotline, takes courage. If that first person doesn’t believe you, tell another. And another. Keep telling them until someone listens. Because someone will. You deserve healing, not silence. You deserve adults who protect you, not hide what happened. You deserve a future that isn’t shaped by someone else’s harm.

What I Want You to Remember

You are lovable and good. You didn’t cause this. You’re allowed to feel angry, sad, numb or all of it. You’re allowed to ask for help.

You deserve to feel safe in your body and your life. You are not alone.

With love, an adult who believes in you. Always.

Sexual Assault Hotline
855-VOICES4
24/7. Free. Confidential.

Text 866-238-1454

Visit [Michigan.gov/](https://www.michigan.gov/)

DIVISION
VICTIM SERVICES 

Click image for more resources

The Erosion of American Ideals

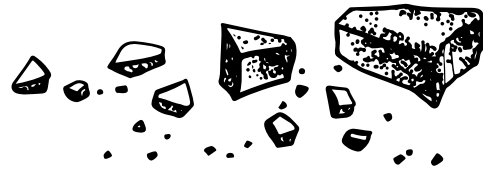
By Christina Cusumano



Book Nook New & Used Books marquee in Monroe, MI. [Check out their website here.](#)

The *Book Nook New & Used Books* in downtown Monroe, MI has been making displays that are catching people's eyes. Recently, their marquee stated the following message: **TODAY'S WORD: EROSION. READ DEEPLY.**

Contemplating the word **erosion** next to a symbol of the American flag, one cannot help but consider the erosion of so many American ideals, freedoms, and rights we are facing today. From abortion bans, birthright citizenship challenges, ICE raids, violence, and deportations without due process, cruel conditions in deportation centers, LGBTQ+ banning and erasure, cuts on NOAA leading to unnecessary death tolls (most recently in Texas), Alligator Alcatraz, and passing the **Big, Beautiful Bill** (218-214) that stipulates multi-million dollar cuts in Food Assistance (SNAP), Medicare, and Medicaid, while providing \$1 trillion in tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy... it is no surprise that we see more despair, desperation, and overall erosion of American ideals right before our eyes.



Another place that demands great structure that's facing erosion is **education**. According to the Michigan Department of Education, there has been a freeze of **\$160 million** in MI by the U.S. Department of Education - money that's usually allotted by congress to support vulnerable student populations, English learners, after school programs, and adult literacy programs (Detroit Free Press). The funding freeze made it impossible for MI state lawmakers to meet their deadline on **July 1st** for passing a school aid budget.

The Trump administration said the freeze ensures that spending aligns with **the President's priorities**. Such priorities will no doubt lead to worse education for all, such as prioritizing private health insurance inevitably leads to closing rural hospitals, increased insurance rates for everyone, and greater illness and death due to barriers of access across the county.

One poignant literary quote comes to mind as I reflect on the word **erosion**, from the novella *Animal Farm* (1945) by George Orwell. The corrupt government proclaims: **"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."** Due to this honest look at corruption and deceit, *Animal Farm* has previously fallen on banned, challenged, and censored books - books that often increase awareness and create empathy for another person's story. You can help challenge erosion today by supporting your local bookstore - one story at a time. *Free your mind, the rest will follow!*



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE ENTIRE NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION TEAM!

Dr. Denise Brooks | Christina Cusumano | Surya Patel | James Dombrowski | Sean Farley | Shawna Farley