



# MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Fall 2022



AUSTIN BLAIR  
 WAR GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN  
 1861, 1862, 1866, 1864.

HE GAVE THE BEST YEARS OF HIS LIFE TO MICHIGAN AND HIS FAME IS INSEPARABLY LINKED WITH THE GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS OF HER CITIZEN SOLDIERS.

**CAP**

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM



# 2022 ELECTIONS

Michigan’s August primary elections saw many victories for the UAW’s endorsed candidates. Michiganders voted for governor, secretary of state, attorney general, all 13 U.S. House races, and a number of state races. State elections director Jonathan Brater said around 2.1 million voters participated in the election, which is almost as high as the 2018 election year and “slightly over half” voted absentee.

While some of the UAW-endorsed candidates were running unopposed in their primary elections, many were not. We had victories in 6 U.S. congressional races, 19 Michigan State Senate races, 37 Michigan State House races, and numerous local races.

The Michigan Democratic Party Nominating Convention was held August 20-21, 2022. Running unopposed, on Saturday candidates were nominated for State Board of Education, University of Michigan Board of Regents, Michigan State Board of Trustees, and Wayne State Board of Governors. Running unopposed, on Sunday candidates were nominated for Michigan Supreme Court, Michigan Secretary of State, Michigan Attorney General, Lt. Governor, and Governor. All of our endorsed candidates won their nominations.

The November election will decide the next Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and

a number of state and federal congressional seats, in addition to major ballot issues including one that would add abortion rights to the state's constitution. We need to make sure we get ourselves to the polls, as well as our friends, family, and co-workers.

In fewer than 60 days, Michigan voters officially choose the next leaders of the state. The top of the ticket this year will include:



**GRETCHEN WHITMER**

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR



**DANA NESSEL**

MICHIGAN ATTORNEY GENERAL



**JOCELYN BENSON**

MICHIGAN SECRETARY OF STATE

You can find all of the UAW’s endorsed candidates at [uawendorsements.org](https://uawendorsements.org), this site is continuously updated, so be sure to check it regularly.



## OFFICIAL UAW ENDORSEMENTS

Enter your address to determine your UAW endorsed candidates and learn more on how to vote in your state.

Search for:

Search



*Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer*

## **Governor Whitmer Fighting for Working Families and Retirees**

As inflation soars and greedy corporations continue to hike prices, Governor Whitmer has been working tirelessly to put money back in the pockets of working families and our retirees. In May, Governor Whitmer proposed the “MI Tax Rebate Right Now” plan which would return \$500 to working families right away. The governor’s plan takes advantage of the state’s budget surplus to provide additional revenue to put money back in people’s pockets and deliver relief right now.

The additional money from the budget surplus comes from Governor Whitmer’s great fiscal management and Michigan’s growing economy, which has helped Michigan have the best economic recovery in history. Last year, Michigan added 220,000 jobs and the Governor took Michigan from a projected \$3 billion deficit at the beginning of the pandemic to a \$7 billion budget surplus. She leveraged these funds to make investments into Michigan’s economy and infrastructure and cut costs for working Michiganders. Her proposed balanced budget would triple the Earned Income

Tax Credit to deliver a combined \$3,000 refund for 730,000 working families and eliminate the retirement tax for seniors, putting an average \$1,000 back into the pockets of 500,000 retirees.

In 2011, Governor Rick Snyder passed the pension tax on Michiganders putting a retirement tax on hundreds of thousands of retirees. At that time, Governor Whitmer was still working in the legislature trying to fight against the new tax. After working a lifetime, we should be able to retire and keep our hard-earned dollars. Now that she is in the Governor’s office, she has proposed a repeal of this tax. By the end of 2024, Governor Whitmer’s proposal would again exempt public pensions and restore deductions for private retirement income, including private-sector pensions, withdrawals from individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and the portion of a 401(k) account that is subject to an employer match. That is hundreds of dollars for prescriptions, rent, utilities, car payments, or gifts for grandkids.



## **Attorney General Nessel Taking a Stand**

This year we are going to see some tough elections. We need to ensure that we keep the right people in office, those that have continuously demonstrated that they have labor and workers as their top priorities. At the top of the ticket, we are going to have our Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General needing our support to allow them to stay in office for another four years. In their first term in office, all three have proven that they will fight for what our Union stands for: workers' rights, health and safety, pensions and retirement, civil and human rights, voting rights, and so much more.

Attorney General Dana Nessel has proven she will fight for us through many investigations and settlements. She helped bring the largest settlement in the State of Michigan's history. The State and other defendants have agreed to contribute \$641.2 million to settle the litigation that was filed after the city of Flint switched its public water supply to the Flint River in 2014. The Attorney General's office in January filed suit against several major manufacturers of the "forever chemicals" PFAS. In late 2019, Attorney General Nessel filed suit against Cardinal Health Inc., McKesson Corp., AmerisourceBergen Drug Corp., and Walgreen

Co. for their roles in distributing huge amounts of opioids in Michigan.

Prior to the 2020 election, Attorney General Nessel sued the U.S. Postal Service and Postmaster General to make sure mail-in ballots were being properly processed and delivered after changes established by the USPS could have resulted in a significant number of mail-in ballots not being counted. In defense of the procedures undertaken by Secretary Benson and election officials, Attorney General Nessel's office helped defend against the many unverified and unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud. While some cases are ongoing, an overwhelming majority have been dismissed or failed in the courts. While there were a number of attempts to prevent the will of the people, the Attorney General's office was ready to defend democracy at every turn. One case involved a series of robocalls that targeted Detroit-area voters attempting to intimidate them from mail-in ballots. The Attorney General has also taken action to investigate the few credible reports of fraud received and prosecute those found to have occurred, while also working to investigate threats made to election officials.

## Secretary of State Benson Defends MI Voters

Fighting right alongside with the Attorney General is Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. Since being elected as Secretary of State, Jocelyn has offered new customer service initiatives designed to reduce wait times in branch offices and has been overseeing two of the 2018 voter-approved ballot proposals: Proposal 2 that established an independent citizens redistricting commission to eliminate gerrymandering in legislative and congressional districts; and Proposal 3 that established constitutional guarantees to increase voter access to the ballot through, among other things, no-reason absentee voting. She also received a John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for her administration of the 2020 presidential election. The award, which was announced by a grandson of the former president, comes from the JFK Presidential Library Foundation and cites Benson for her actions in December 2020, when armed protesters rallied around her home in Detroit to protest certification of the election.

After the 2020 elections, Benson was at the forefront fighting to protect voter rights, defending against misinformation while making sure our elections were safe and fair. The record voter turnout and absentee voting numbers demonstrated that misinformation attempts failed, all ballots were securely counted within 24-hours of polls closing, and how people stepped up to protect the integrity of the process. At the 2021 Detroit Policy Conference, Jocelyn said “Democracy prevailed in 2020, not just because so many people participated in it, but because so many people worked together to protect it as well. From the moment in March when we knew the pandemic was going to change how people wanted to vote, to give people certainty and clarity that they could vote, that Democracy would go forward, to give citizens the knowledge of how to receive and return their ballots remotely – that was the work of thousands of election workers, 1,600 clerks, and our staff all around the state leading up to election day. But the numbers reflect that our work was successful.”

There were many factors that have caused issues since the 2020 election, two of the main problems were the efforts to deceive voters and the attempts to enact legislation that was in response to misinformation. Jocelyn has been fighting to ensure that these issues do not impede Michiganders’ voting rights in the upcoming elections. Michigan has done hundreds of audits led by sworn election officials on both sides of the aisle in a way that was transparent and followed secure protocols with the intent to build faith and improve processes. She has emphasized that voter identification requirements are already in place for all voters to protect the integrity of the voting process.

“We have to ensure that every eligible citizen has access to their fundamental right to vote. We can do both if we follow facts and data and not allow partisan efforts to undermine that work.” - Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson.



## Proposal 3

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. As a result, a 1931 Michigan law could go back into effect, making abortion illegal and threatening doctors who provide abortion services with prison for up to 15 years. The Michigan Right to Reproductive Freedom Initiative may appear on the ballot in Michigan as an initiated constitutional amendment on November 8, 2022. This amendment would make sure no one goes to prison for providing safe medical care as well as ensure access to a broad range of reproductive health care, including abortion. Protecting reproductive freedom in the Michigan Constitution will preserve this right for all Michiganders in our state.

In Michigan, we trust women. The decision of whether to become pregnant or a parent is too important to leave up to politicians. This proposal will affirm that every Michigander has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, which involves the right to make and carry out decisions without political interference about all matters relating to pregnancy, birth control, abortion, prenatal care, and childbirth.

Specifically, this measure will ensure that all Michiganders have the right to safe and respectful care during birthing, the right to use temporary or permanent birth control, and the right to continue or end a pregnancy pre-viability. This also ensures that no one can be punished for having a miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion.

### **The ballot measure would add Section 28 to Article I, Michigan Constitution**

#### Article 1, Section 28 Right to Reproductive Freedom

- Every individual has a fundamental right to reproductive freedom, which entails the right to make and effectuate decisions about all matters relating to pregnancy, including but not limited to prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, sterilization, abortion care, miscarriage management, and infertility care. An individual's right to reproductive freedom shall not be denied, burdened, nor infringed upon unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means. Notwithstanding the above, the state may regulate the provision of abortion care after fetal viability, provided that in no circumstance shall the state prohibit an abortion that, in the professional judgment of an attending health care professional, is medically indicated to protect the life, physical health, or mental health of the pregnant individual.
- The state shall not discriminate in the protection or enforcement of this fundamental right.
- The state shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against an individual based on their actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes, including but not limited to miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion, nor shall the state penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against someone for aiding or assisting a pregnant individual in exercising their right to reproductive freedom with their voluntary consent.

If voters back the Right to Reproductive Freedom amendment, it would insert permanent protections into Michigan's constitution not only for abortion, but also for other reproductive health services including miscarriage management, birth control, prenatal care and in-vitro fertilization. It would also stop the state's 1931 abortion ban from going back into effect should state courts uphold it in two pending cases. The ban remains blocked by a lower court's preliminary injunction.

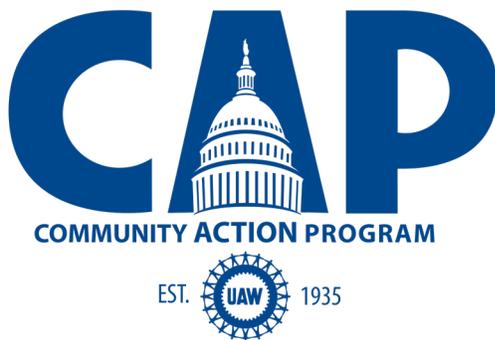
While just over 425,000 signatures of registered Michigan voters are required to qualify for the ballot, Planned Parenthood, ACLU, and the other groups behind the campaign submitted more than 753,759, and say they gathered them from every one of the state's 83 counties.

Renee Chelian, a leader in the ballot initiative campaign, called the signature submission “a major step forward to restore the freedoms and protections of Roe v. Wade.” The measure, she said, would “place the right to make a private decision about pregnancy, and about when to bring new life into the world, back into the hands of pregnant people, not politicians.”

Protecting reproductive freedom in the Michigan Constitution will preserve this right for all Michiganders in our state, no matter what happens in Washington, D.C. Together, Michigan voters can protect reproductive freedom – for ourselves, our families, and our future.

Important medical decisions should be guided by a patient’s health and well-being, not by a politician’s beliefs. For far too long, politicians across the country have been fighting to restrict reproductive health care, and now they are gaining ground.

When people are able to make decisions about their own reproductive health care, including whether and when to have children, they have more control over their health and their economic security.



## Who represents you?

*How to find your State Representative, State Senator, US Senators and US Representatives and how to make sure you are prepared for Election Day.*

In order to be a good citizen, you’ve got to fully participate in your democracy. How? Start by finding out who represents you at the state and national level, and make sure your ability to vote is in order!

You can start here: [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)

Just type in your ZIP code and you’ll get the name of your US Representative in Congress.

Then visit here: [house.michigan.gov](http://house.michigan.gov)

Click the “Representatives” tab at the top, and use the search function to determine your State Representative.

Last, but not least, go to: [senate.michigan.gov](http://senate.michigan.gov)

You can find your State Senator by name, map, or address.

Finally, head over to [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS)

Once there, check out the Michigan Voter Information Center under the “Election” tab, where you can confirm that you are registered to vote and verify your voter information.

You can also download your absentee ballot application, track your absentee ballot, and look over a sample ballot for the upcoming election.

**Vote. It’s your right.**