



PORTAGE COUNTY DEMOCRAT

February 2024 Newsletter

VOTE FEBRUARY 20, 7am-8pm

Help advance Democrat and Progressive candidates to the April 2nd Spring Election!

For **School Board** we urge you to vote for **Meg Erler, Will Scheder, and Judy Rannow.**

For City of Stevens Point, **District 2 Alder**, we urge you to vote for **Jacqui Guthrie.**

For City of Stevens Point, **District 6 Alder**, we urge you to vote for **Dale Steinmetz.**

For Portage County **District 17 Supervisor** we urge you to vote for **Suzanne Oehlke.**

To see what is on your ballot go to myvote.wi.gov and choose **What's On My Ballot.** **If you are unable to vote in person on February 20th, you can apply for an absentee ballot on the website, however you must do this before February 15th.** You can also vote in person early absentee in the City Conference Room starting on Tuesday, February 6 and ending on Friday, February 16.



In March we invite you to become more involved in our local campaign efforts by attending free Spring Open Houses we have planned:

- Sunday, March 10th, 4-6pm at Sunset Point Winery in downtown Stevens Point
- Monday, March 11th, 7-9pm at O'So Brewery in Plover
- Wednesday, March 13th, 7-9pm Portage County Dems Headquarters, 2220 Division St., Stevens Point

Each Open House will feature progressive candidates who are running in the April 2nd Spring Election. We will have yard signs and candidate information you can share with your family, friends, and neighbors. This will be an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates and to show your support. Yard signs and candidate information will also be available at PCDP Headquarters in early March. You can call us at 715-544-6323 or email at pcdemupdates@gmail.com.

General Meeting February 13, 2024, 6:30pm

at HQ. Our guest speaker will be **Maxwell Johnson, Central Organizer for**

Wisconsin Conservation Voters. He is based here in Stevens Point and his job is to empower community members, volunteers, activists, and partner organizations to advocate for climate solutions, protect drinking water, and expand the freedom to vote at all levels of government—now and for the future. He is from Rural, Wisconsin, and is a graduate of UWSP with majors in Philosophy and Political Science with an emphasis in Environmental Ethics and Environmental Policy. He had an opportunity, as a student, to lobby for climate legislation in Washington DC. After graduation he served as an AmeriCorps member at MREA and organized the Clean Transportation Show and EV Charging Stations for the Energy Fair. **He joined Wisconsin Conservation Voters in summer 2022. He will be giving us an update on their activities, and will discuss the tax credits available under the IRA (Inflation Reduction Act)** Come join us and bring friends. Learn about this important organization. Bring questions! Be an informed voter 😊



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Republicans make wild claims about the dangers of immigration. Here's the truth, according to Robert Reich, Former US Secretary of Labor and current professor of public policy at UC Berkley as published recently in the GUARDIAN:

Trumpist Republicans are using the surge of illegal immigration at the southern border of the US, as well as a surge of migrants seeking legal asylum, to threaten a government shutdown and no added funds for Ukraine. **They're using 5 lies to make their case:**

1. They claim Biden doesn't want to stem illegal immigration and has created an "open border".

Rubbish. Since he took office, Biden has consistently asked for additional funding for border control.

Republicans have just as consistently refused. They're voting to cut Customs and Border Protection funding in spending bills and [blocking passage](#) of Biden's [\\$106bn](#) national security supplemental bill that [includes border funding](#).

Related: [Is the fever of Trumpism starting to break? | Robert Reich](#)

2. They blame the drug crisis on illegal immigration.

Last Wednesday, at the southern border in Texas, the Republican House speaker, Mike Johnson, claimed that "America is at a breaking point with record levels of illegal immigration. We have lethal drugs that are pouring into our country at record levels."

Rubbish. While large amounts of fentanyl and other deadly drugs have been flowing into the United States from Mexico, 90% arrives through official [ports of entry](#), *not* via immigrants illegally crossing the border. In fact, research by the Cato Institute found that more than 86% of the people [convicted of trafficking fentanyl](#) across the border in 2021 were US citizens.

3. They claim that undocumented immigrants are terrorists.

Johnson also charged that "312 suspects on the terrorist watch list that have been apprehended – we have no idea how many terrorists have come into the country and set up terrorism cells across the nation."

Baloney. America's southern border has not been an entry point for terrorists. For [almost a half century](#), no American has been killed or injured in a terrorist attack in the United States that involved someone who crossed the border illegally.

Johnson's number comes from government [data](#) showing that from October 2020 to November 2023, 312 migrants – *out of more than 6.2 million* who crossed the southern border during these years – matched names on the terrorist watch list.

It's unclear how many were actual matches and whether the FBI considered them national security threats (the watch list includes family relations of terrorist suspects, many of whom are not considered to be involved in terrorist activity).

4. They say undocumented immigrants are stealing American jobs.

Nonsense. Evidence shows immigrants are not taking jobs that American workers want.

And the surge across the border is not increasing unemployment. Far from it: unemployment has been below 4% for roughly two years, far lower than the long-term average rate of 5.71%. It's now at 3.7%.

5. They claim undocumented immigrants are responsible for more crime in the US.

More baloney. In fact, a 2020 study by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, cited by the [Department of Justice](#), showed that undocumented immigrants have "substantially" *lower* crime rates than native-born citizens and legal immigrants.

Similarly, a recently published study in the [American Economic Journal](#) – analyzing official data from 2008 to 2017 on immigration, homicide and victimization surveys – found "null effects" on crime from immigration.

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Notwithstanding the recent surge in illegal immigration, the US homicide rate has [fallen nearly 13%](#) since 2022 – the largest decrease on record. Local law enforcement agencies are also reporting drops in violent crime.

Who's really behind these lies?

Since he entered politics, Donald Trump has fanned anti-immigrant fears and bigotry.

He's now moving into full-throated neofascism, using the actual rhetoric of Hitler to attack immigrants – charging that undocumented immigrants are "poisoning the blood of our country" and saying they're "like a military invasion. Drugs, criminals, gang members and terrorists are pouring into our country at record levels. We've never seen anything like it. They're taking over our cities."

He promises to use the US military to round up undocumented immigrants and put them into "camps". That demagoguery is being echoed by Trump lackeys to generate fear and put Biden on the defensive.

Does the US need to address the border situation? Yes – which Biden is trying to do. But we need to do so in a way that treats migrants as humans, not political pawns.

Trump and his enablers want Americans to forget that almost all of us are the descendants of immigrants who fled persecution, or were brought to the US under duress, or simply sought better lives for themselves and their descendants.

The above article was written by Robert Reich, the author of [Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few](#) and [The Common Good](#). His newest book, [The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It](#), is out now. He is a Guardian US columnist. His newsletter is at [robertreich.substack.com](#)

**2024 PCDP
EXECUTIVE
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PCDP HQ Phone

715-544-6323

ADDRESS

**2220 Division St
Stevens Point, WI**

PCDP IS "HIRING"

It's true, organizations don't exist without active members, and it's also true that the Portage County Democratic Party needs active involved members now more than at any time in the past. We are a pivotal organization in the state party. We got there because of the hard work of our active members in the past. With the issues that are present in our political field today we cannot let down our efforts. This next election will be a test of our democracy and the fight begins at the local level. Get involved! **We're "hiring"! Find a committee or task where you want to help and get involved!**

Co-Treasurers: We are looking for two people that like a challenge and enjoy working with numbers, forms, and other people. The board has determined that the position of Treasurer is time consuming enough that two people are needed to share the duties. One individual will be responsible for the receipts, disbursements, check writing, and data entry. The second person will be will responsible for monthly reporting to the Executive Board, semiannual reports to the state, and the preparation of annual budgets. These two people will work together and assist each other when needed. The opening is immediate. Pay is commensurate with other volunteer organizations (\$0 😊), but the benefits are innumerable. Work at home at your own pace on a computer, meet new people, and enjoy good food at meetings and events. Some knowledge of Excel and computer spreadsheets is helpful. Training will be provided.

Be a committee member: The Portage County Democratic Party is in need of members to serve on various committees: **Finance, Membership, Communications, Events, Campaigns.** Do you have an interest in helping plan the picnic, supporting candidates, phone banking, looking for candidates for political office, knocking on doors, or guiding the organization's finances? There is a committee that you can join. **Your talents are needed.** Talk to any Board member to express your interest and we will help you get involved.

Be a Board Member: We still have positions on the Board that need to be filled. Board members are the driving force of our organization. We need people with ideas. Do you want to have a say in the direction of the Democratic Party? This is where it all starts. You don't have to have political aspirations or be an expert in politics. If you have ever said to yourself "I'm just one person, how can I have an impact" – this is where it starts. Don't know if this is where you want to start? Attend a Board meeting and talk to some board members and you will find you're not alone.

In case you missed it,

Dr. Cory Hirsbrunner, Superintendent of SPAPSD, joined us on Zoom for a very informative meeting regarding the upcoming referendum on the April 2nd ballot.

For more information, visit

pointschools.net.

Public Forums are coming up on Feb.7 and March 13 at 6pm at SPASH Auditorium.



**Referendum Question:
April 2, 2024**

Question: Shall the Stevens Point Area Public School District, Portage and Wood Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.01, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$8,750,000 for the 2024-2025 school year, and by an additional \$5,250,000 (for a total of \$14,000,000) for the 2025-26 school year and thereafter, for recurring purposes to pay operating costs for retention of staff, to enhance safety and security, to maintain technology and infrastructure, to maintain academic programs, to address behavior and mental health support, to maintain district facilities, and for other operational expenses?

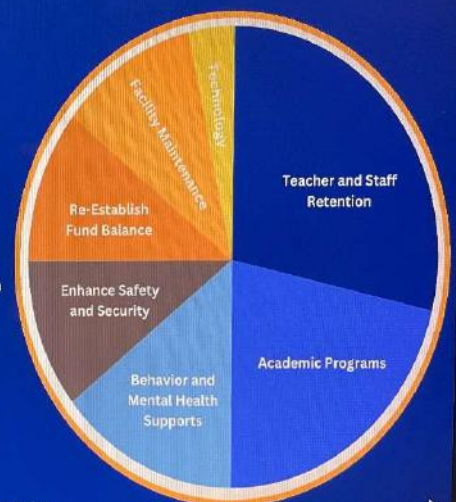
The Plan

Immediate Needs

- Teacher and Staff Retention \$4M
- Academic Programming \$3M
- Behavior and Mental Health Supports \$2M
- Safety and Security \$1.5M
- Re-establish a Healthy Fund Balance \$1.5M
- Fund the 10 Year Facility Maintenance Plan \$1.5M
- Maintain Technology and Infrastructure \$500,000

The Cost of Inaction

- The cost of inaction is significant, affecting not only our students, but the entire fabric of our community. Failing to pass a referendum could lead to increased class sizes, reduced academic programming, and compromised school safety.



**These figures are preliminary, and as we progress, our plans may evolve.*



Portage County Democratic Party
2220 Division St.
Stevens Point, WI 54481

www.portagecountydems.org

Facebook: PortageCountyWIDems

X (Twitter): PortageCoWIDems@portagecountywidems

Instagram: pocowidems



PCDP General Meeting

February 13, 2024, 6:30pm at HQ

Guest Speaker: Maxwell Johnson, Central Organizer
Wisconsin Conservation Voters

Topic: WCV activities and IRA tax credits you can use

VOTE! FEBRUARY 20th, SPRING PRIMARY

Polls open 7am to 8pm

Check myvote.wi.gov for voting information

Paczki/Fat Tuesday February 13

Ash Wednesday February 14

VALENTINES DAY February 14

Fund Raiser/Birthday Party for

->Collin McNamara<-

February 23, 5pm -7pm, District 1 Brewing

Visit Collin McNamara's Facebook page for tickets

Authorized and paid for by Portage County Democratic Party