

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Voting for State Legislators is Important 1
- Mich. Supreme Court Important for HFC 4
- State Board of Education Impacts HFC 6
- Endorsements for Down Ballot Races 8
- University Governing Boards 9

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Health Care 2
- Retirement 2
- Collective Bargaining Rights 3
- Find Your Michigan House District 3
- Supreme Court Candidates 5
- University Board Candidates 9

VOTING FOR STATE LEGISLATORS IS IMPORTANT TO HFC

As public employees, our professional lives and livelihoods are determined by the decisions of elected officials. It is critical that we support candidates for office who support us. All 110 seats in the Michigan House are up for election in 2020. We are just four seats away from having a pro-public education House majority.

Governor Whitmer has acted as a “goalie” since taking office in 2019, blocking the worst anti-teacher and anti-labor bills passed by the Michigan Legislature. **Electing a pro-public education House majority in 2020 would allow the Governor to be a “quarterback,” with a real chance of setting a legislative agenda that will benefit public education, community colleges, and organized labor.**

Funding

Under Republican control, the Legislature has forced community colleges to compete with K-12 schools for necessary revenue. Governor Whitmer stood against these moves when she was in the Legislature, and continues to oppose them as Governor. She should not have to engage in this unnecessary battle every year. **We need legislators in Lansing who will fight for adequate resources for community colleges, without pitting us against our K-12 friends.**

Republican legislators continue to call for severe budget cuts, but no additional revenue, at a time when our schools are starved and roads are crumbling. Under Republican rule in 2011, the Legislature slashed taxes on wealthy corporations, while requiring teachers to pay taxes on their pensions for the first time. They have also eliminated charitable tax credits, and curtailed the State’s Earned Income Tax Credit.

(Funding continued)

Governor Whitmer understands the necessity of fixing our roads and investing in public schools. She deserves a State House that will work with her. **We need to restore an equitable tax structure in Michigan in order to restore funding for schools and other vital State services.**

Health Care

In surveys, HFC teachers have overwhelmingly identified medical benefits as one of their top personal concerns. We continue to face severe pressure from the rising cost of health insurance and prescription coverage.

When they gained full legislative control in 2011, Republicans imposed so-called “Hard Cap” legislation, which has forced Local 1650 members to pay thousands of dollars in additional premiums and co-pays since its enactment.

As industrial unions are forced to bargain away insurance benefits, it has become increasingly difficult for public sector employees to keep them. **We need legislators in Lansing who, in their support of public education, support us in our continuing fight for fair wages and benefits.**

Retirement

The Republican Legislature has largely shifted MPSERS from a defined benefit plan, with guaranteed retirement security, to a defined contribution plan, with retirement benefits conditioned on the gyrations of the stock market. AFT-Michigan-endorsed candidates will fight to protect the sustainability of MPSERS so that it is there when teachers retire.

The Legislature imposed a 3% surcharge for MPSERS healthcare coverage despite the Legislature’s decades long failure to prefund the coverage. While the Michigan Supreme Court struck down the surcharge as **unconstitutional**, Republicans will continue to seek ways to undermine MPSERS benefits if they retain control of the House.

The Legislature enacted a graded premium health care system which requires new employees to work 30 years to achieve full health benefits. **This is detrimental to faculty hired in mid-career, women who interrupt their careers to raise families, and part-time employees.** We need voices in Lansing that will protect our hard-earned benefits and security in retirement.

Collective Bargaining Rights

The Republican-controlled Legislature has sharply curtailed collective bargaining rights in Michigan. The most obvious and egregious example of this was passage of so-called “Right-to-Work” legislation in 2012, which Governor Whitmer aggressively fought as Senate Democratic Leader at the time. **If the State House remains in Republican hands, it will continue to attack public employee collective bargaining rights.**

Under Republican Party control, the Legislature enacted PA 112, which gutted teacher bargaining rights in Michigan. Under the Act, severe fines can be imposed on striking teachers, even if the missed days are made up; the right of support staff to bargain the impact of subcontracting was rescinded; and **the power of Boards of Trustees to impose their last offer in contract bargaining was affirmed.**

In short, PA 112 undermines the rights of teachers to bargain for fair and equitable contracts. To overturn PA 112, **we need to elect State legislators who are committed to safeguarding the collective bargaining rights of teachers – and all workers.**

Find Your Michigan House District

It is in our interest to support candidates who are on our side. Below, please find a link to a list of AFT-Michigan-endorsed candidates for the State Legislature who are committed to public education and the rights of public employees to bargain collectively. Some of these endorsed candidates are teachers and members of either AFT-Michigan or the MEA. Working together to elect these candidates, we can tip the balance of legislative power in our favor.

NOTE: Please go to this link for a list of 2020 AFT-Michigan endorsed candidates for the Michigan State House (and other State offices): <https://aftmichigan.org/2020-endorsed-candidates/>

State House District numbers can be found on your voter registration card or by going to the AFT-Michigan website, under the “Take Action” heading:

<https://aftmichigan.org/legislative-advocacy/>

Eric Rader

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT IS IMPORTANT TO HFC

Michigan Supreme Court Justices' terms are eight years, while the terms of legislators and executive officials are only two or four years. Though Michigan voters established some balance in our political system in 2018 by electing a Democratic Governor, the Michigan Supreme Court is still controlled by Republican-nominated Justices who oppose the rights of public employees to collectively bargain their contracts.

There is a real chance in this year's election to shift the balance on the Michigan Supreme Court to a pro-worker/pro-public education majority, since one of the Republican-nominated justices is stepping down, creating a rare open seat on the Court.

Protecting Collective Bargaining Rights

In the last ten years, the Republican Legislature and former Republican Governor enacted numerous laws attacking the rights of public employees to negotiate equitable contracts, most of which were upheld by the Michigan Supreme Court. **Electing a pro-labor majority to the Michigan Supreme Court can begin to dismantle this toxic legacy of the last decade and protect collective bargaining rights in our State.**

A Republican majority on the State Supreme Court voted against the repeal of PA 112, which was voted into law with Republican control of all branches of State government. Under the Act, severe fines can be imposed on striking teachers, even if the missed days are made up; the right of support staff to bargain the impact of subcontracting was rescinded; and the power of Boards of Trustees to impose their last offer in contract bargaining was affirmed. **AFT-Michigan endorses candidates for the State Supreme Court who support collective bargaining rights for all educational employees.**

Protecting Retirement Benefits

The Republican-controlled Supreme Court ruled that retirees' medical benefits under MPSERS are not guaranteed by the State Constitution. **Electing Justices who support the right of State retirees to medical benefits is vital to all Michigan teachers and community college faculty.**

AFT-Michigan successfully challenged legislation imposing a 3% surcharge on public employees for MPSERS health care benefits in a 2017 Michigan Supreme Court case. The role of the Court is critical in protecting the rights of public employees. **It's important to add more pro-public employee justices to the Michigan Supreme Court to ensure that retiree health care benefits are protected.**

(continued on next page)

(Supreme Court continued)

AFT-Michigan's Endorsed Candidates for Michigan Supreme Court

Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack

Bridget Mary McCormack was first elected to the Michigan Supreme Court in 2012, after having served as Associate Dean of the University of Michigan Law School. During her career at U-M, McCormack established several important clinical programs for students to staff, including the Pediatric Health Advocacy Clinic, Domestic Violence Clinic, Juvenile Justice Clinic, and the Michigan Innocence Clinic, which has resulted in the exoneration of 22 women and men who were not guilty of the crimes they were accused of committing. She continues teaching at the Michigan Law School, while serving on the Michigan Supreme Court.

In 2019, McCormack's colleagues on the Court, from both sides of the political aisle, chose her to be **Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court**. In that role, McCormack has opened the judicial process in Michigan to citizens, recognizing the importance of a non-partisan and independent judiciary.

Chief Justice McCormack created the Justice for All Taskforce, to make it easier for Michiganders to access the courts, regardless of income or status. She co-chaired the Governor's Taskforce on Jail and Pretrial Reform, and has championed special drug and alcohol courts and veterans' treatment courts, to connect people with the social services they need to address significant life challenges.

Chief Justice McCormack is married to Steven Croley. They have four adult children, all of whom attended the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

Elizabeth Welch

Attorney Elizabeth Welch from Grand Rapids is running for an open seat on the Michigan Supreme Court. If she wins the seat, and Chief Justice McCormack holds her own seat, there will be a **pro-labor majority on the Supreme Court for the first time in decades**. Her election to the Court would also create the first female majority in the history of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Welch has worked for over 25 years as an attorney, representing individuals, non-profits, and small businesses. She has also worked to help municipalities recover costs associated with the opioid epidemic.

(continued on next page)

(Supreme Court continued)

Welch was a longtime member of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education, serving as its vice-president. She is a current Trustee of the Grand Valley State University Foundation. Welch also served as the President of the Michigan League of Conservation Voters & MLCV Education Fund.

Among her numerous awards and honors, Welch has won the East Grand Rapids School Foundation's Community Leader Award and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters' Community Leadership Award. She has also been PTO Member of the Year for the East Grand Rapids Schools, and won the Women Lawyers' Association of Michigan Regional Award in 2017.

Welch is married to Brian, and has four children.

Eric Rader

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IMPACTS HFC

The **State Board of Education (SBE)** does not only have oversight over K-12 education. The Michigan Constitution gives the Board “Leadership and general supervision over all public education, including... instructional programs in state institutions...” The Board is also constitutionally designated to “serve as the general planning and coordinating body for all public education, including higher education...” **and to advise the Legislature regarding the financial needs for education.**

HFC is covered by the Public School Code as well as the Community College Act. One never knows which will be found to apply to HFC when an issue is raised by someone with an agenda. A large number of **HFC students are part of the dual-enrollment program, Collegiate Academy, and Early College,** making the SBE even more important to our work. With this in mind, Local 1650 urges you to support the AFT Michigan endorsed candidates.

Two years ago, the SBE considered controversial changes to Social Studies standards for Michigan high schools. **Ultra-conservative Republicans in the Legislature** proposed the **deletion of the word “democratic”** from the “Core Democratic Values” standard. The only thing stopping full implementation of these misguided and unsound standards was the SBE. In the 2018 election, Michigan voters gave the majority on the SBE to Democrats, effectively nullifying academically harmful changes. It's important to ensure that the SBE remains on the side of academic rigor and science.

(continued on next page)

(State Board of Education continued)

The SBE's chief responsibility is to choose a **Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State**. Given the importance of the State Superintendent position, it is critical that the SBE be made up of members who **value the professional standing of teachers in public education in Michigan**, and who will select a Superintendent who feels the same.

The last two **State Superintendents**—Brian Whiston (formerly the Dearborn Superintendent, now deceased) and **Michael Rice (the incumbent)** have been strong friends of public educators, including community college faculty. Superintendent Rice spoke at an AFT Michigan co-sponsored “Red for Ed” rally in 2019. He supports increased funding for public education and values the professional role of faculty in deciding academic standards. The candidates endorsed by AFT-Michigan support public educators in our State, and understand the critical professional role they play in educating students.

Ellen Cogen Lipton – State Board of Education

Ellen Cogen Lipton is running for her first term on the Michigan State Board of Education. She is a patent attorney who earned her law degree from Harvard University. Lipton is president of Michigan Ambassadors for the Weizmann Institute, a medical research institute.

From 2009-2015, Lipton served in the **Michigan House of Representatives**, representing the 27th House District (Oakland County). During her last term, she was the **Vice Chair of the Education Committee in the State House**. She has had strong relationships with both AFT Michigan and the MEA during her career and had a **strong record of support for public education** during her three terms.

Lipton is married to Marc, and they have two children.

Jason Strayhorn – State Board of Education

Jason Strayhorn is a Novi realtor who was captain of the Michigan State University football team, where he earned his undergraduate degree. **Education has been important to him** and his family since his youth. **Strayhorn has seen firsthand how disparities in resources can affect the educational chances for kids**. He wants every child to have the ability to succeed in Michigan's public schools. Strayhorn has stated that Michigan's success as a State depends on the educational success of our children. Strayhorn is married with three children.

Eric Rader

ENDORSEMENTS FOR DOWN BALLOT RACES

Various **countywide offices** are up for election this year, including Oakland County Executive and other **countywide offices in Oakland County, and the County Commissions in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties**. AFT-Michigan will sometimes make endorsements in these races. However, it does not always do so in elections at the local level or for lower level court judges.

Candidates for **countywide offices in Metro Detroit** run on the partisan side of the ballot (Democrat or Republican). **Judicial candidates** do NOT run with party labels, but do run with an incumbent designation if they currently hold the seat. Local political parties do endorse judicial candidates in their communities. Local labor councils, like the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO, will often endorse in local judicial races.

You can also determine a **judicial candidate's philosophy and ideology** by looking at factors beyond endorsements. Governors appoint individuals to fill judicial vacancies that occur during their tenure. If a judge in your community was appointed by a Governor (rather than elected), look to see who appointed the judge. All judges appointed since 2019 have been chosen by Governor Whitmer. A judge who was selected between 2011-2018 was chosen by former Republican Governor Rick Snyder.

Some communities are electing School Boards this year, and the Governing Boards for HFC, Wayne County Community College, Oakland Community College, Macomb Community College, and Schoolcraft College. **Local 1650 faculty live in all of these districts**. Most of these schools have faculty who are represented by AFT-MI Local Unions or the MEA. Look to see if the AFT-MI or MEA Locals at these schools have endorsed Trustee candidates, and support those endorsed candidates.

Several local communities have school and community college millages on the ballot in 2020.

Finally, other labor unions and pro-labor groups will endorse candidates for judge or other local offices.

See the following links for endorsement updates:

AFT Michigan: <https://aftmichigan.org/political-action/>

Michigan AFL-CIO: <https://miaflcio.org/endorsements/>

Metro Detroit AFL-CIO: <https://unionhall.aflcio.org/detroit>

Huron Valley Central Labor Federation: <https://huronvalleyalf.org/>

Michigan Education Association Endorsements: <https://mea.org/politicalaction/>

United Auto Workers: <https://uawendorsements.org/map/michigan/>

Eric Rader

UNIVERSITY GOVERNING BOARDS

Republican legislators have tried in the past to make State University Board positions gubernatorial appointees. Electing University Board members who are likely to oppose such a takeover will protect the democratic process in higher education.

Successful organizing drives that increase the number of faculty unions across the State are in the interest of HFC faculty. Republican backed candidates have historically been very hostile to union organizing drives, whether by faculty, graduate employees, or support staff. The larger the number of unionized faculty in Michigan means the stronger the impact of faculty in Lansing, where the fate of higher education funding, faculty bargaining rights, and pensions is determined.

AFT Locals currently represent faculty and graduate students at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, and graduate students at Michigan State University. We want to elect Board members at U of M, MSU, and WSU who will negotiate equitable contracts for our AFT Michigan colleagues at these institutions.

Board members at the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University play a significant role in setting the tone for faculty contract negotiations statewide. In determining faculty salaries and benefits at their own institutions, **these Board members create guidelines that can influence faculty compensation and working conditions at other institutions of higher education in Michigan, including HFC**

The sexual abuse scandal at MSU reveals that Governing Boards at universities and colleges must stand up for both students and faculty, to ensure that such a scandal never occurs again. **AFT-Michigan carefully considered the MSU scandal in making endorsements, not only at MSU, but also U of M and WSU.**

The following AFT-Michigan endorsed candidates value academic freedom and the essential role of faculty in recommending sound academic policies as part of a robust system of shared governance.

University of Michigan Board of Regents

Mark Bernstein is running for his second term on the University of Michigan Board of Regents. He earned his A.B., J.D., and MBA degrees from U of M. Bernstein is President and Managing Partner of The Sam Bernstein Law Firm. He served as Director of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's Transition Team in 2018.

(continued on next page)

(University Governing Boards continued)

Previously, he served on the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, including a term as its Chair. He serves on multiple Boards, including Detroit Public Television, the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, and the Detroit Jewish News Foundation. Bernstein has advocated for college affordability for students during his time on the Board.

Bernstein and his wife, Rachel Bendit, have two children.

Dr. Shauna Ryder Diggs is running for her second term on the University of Michigan Board of Regents. Ryder Diggs earned her undergraduate and medical degrees from U of M. She is the first physician to serve on Michigan's Board, working as a Board-Certified Dermatologist in Grosse Pointe. Ryder Diggs is a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology and the American Society of Dermatologic Surgeons. She serves on several local Boards, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Zoological Society, and Forgotten Harvest.

Ryder Diggs is Chair of the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities. In her campaign for the Board, she has focused on college affordability, equitable funding across U of M's campuses, and the rights of organized labor.

Ryder Diggs' husband Douglass died in 2019 after 24 years of marriage. She has two adult daughters, one still in college.

Michigan State University Board of Trustees

Dr. Rema Vassar is running for her first term on the Michigan State University Board of Trustees. Vassar holds a Doctorate in Urban Schooling from UCLA. She is an **Assistant Professor in the Eastern Michigan University College of Education**. Previously, Vassar worked in K-12 education as a teacher and has presented at conferences around the world.

In her campaign for the MSU Board, Vassar has spoken out on the need to provide services to marginalized people on campus, particularly Black and transgender students. She does not support raising tuition on students. Vassar supports the decisions of MSU President Samuel Stanley to largely close campus dorms and refund housing costs to students because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She believes in the importance of accountability and transparency for the work of the Board.

Vassar's husband is an MSU alumnus, and her daughter is a current student at MSU.

(continued on next page)

(University Governing Boards continued)

Brian Mosallam is running for his second term on the MSU Board of Trustees. **Mosallam is a Dearborn native and resident.** He earned an Engineering Arts Degree from MSU, and played on the MSU Varsity Football team all four years of his time as a student. Mosallam works as a Financial Advisor with Spartan Wealth Management, which he founded. He serves on a number of Boards, including being the Co-chair of the Detroit-Wayne County Stadium Authority.

As a member of the MSU Board since 2013, he was the first member to speak out on the Larry Nassar scandal. He has been vocal in his support for the victims of Nassar's abuse.

Mosallam is married to Abir, and they have two children.

Wayne State University Board of Governors

Shirley Stancato is running for her first full term on the Wayne State University Board of Governors, having been appointed in 2019 to fill the remainder of vacant term. For nearly 20 years, Stancato was the President and Chief Executive Officer of New Detroit, Inc., a prominent civil rights and equity advocacy organization. She received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Wayne State, and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Michigan.

Stancato serves on several Boards, including those of Fifth/Third Bank, the Detroit Zoological Commission, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. She has won numerous awards including the Champion of Justice Award from the Michigan Delegation of the Congressional Black Caucus, "City Year Detroit's Idealist in Action Award," and the Detroit News' "Michiganiaan of the Year Award."

In her campaign for WSU's Board, **Stancato, herself a first-generation college student**, has spoken about the need to welcome and nurture first-generation college students at Wayne State. She also wants to continue WSU's improvements in graduation rates, particularly for Black students. Stancato points to WSU's Criminal Justice Program as a model for police reform around the country.

Eva Garza Dewaelsche is running for her first term on the WSU Board of Governors. She was born and raised in Southwest Detroit, and earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Wayne State. She was a Fellow in the Michigan State University Political Leadership Program in 1996 and attended the Community Leadership Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 2008. Garza Dewaelsche is CEO

(continued on next page)

(University Governing Boards continued)

and President of SER-Metro Detroit, a community-based organization focusing on education, job training, and job placement programs, along with youth development and education initiatives.

Garza Dewaelsche is focused on solving the problems facing WSU, representing the students of the University, and continuing to make WSU a national educational leader. Her focus is on civic engagement, diversity, and inclusion.

Garza Dewaelsche is married to Robert Dewaelsche.

Eric Rader