



## Portage County Democratic Party News and Notes - January 2021

Dear %firstname%,

We've already learned a few times this month what a difference a week can make.

On January 6th, an armed mob fomented by Donald Trump led an armed insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, imperiling all who serve there and our very democracy. One week later, the U.S. House passed an article of impeachment against Trump for inciting that violence, making him the first U.S. President to be impeached twice. And one week after that, in a heavily fortified Washington, D.C., Joe Biden became President of the United States and Kamala Harris became our first Black, Asian-American, and female Vice President.

What a difference.

Now, one week into the Biden Administration, [we see much progress happening already](#): to address this terrible pandemic, to fight climate change, to address racial inequality, and so much more. We know much remains to be done - and that we must come together to make our community, country, and world better.

Below, you will find some updates on our Party's work in early 2021 to set the stage for successful efforts this year and beyond. If you have additional items you would like us to share, please let us know by [emailing 2nd Vice Chair Brad Cromes](#).

In the meantime, we invite you to learn what's happening in our community and to consider how you might be part of bringing positive change to Portage County. Think what difference we can make together in the weeks ahead.

Forward,



Dean DePerro, Chairman

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## Upcoming Events

*Central Committee Meeting - 2/25/21 - 6pm - 7:30pm - Zoom*

Our Central Committee will meet via Zoom this Thursday to review our annual audit, discuss our budget, and to conduct other regular business of the Party. Members will receive instructions and a Zoom link one week prior to the meeting. Others wishing to participate should [contact Secretary Cindy Greene](#) ASAP.

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## Board of Elections Updates

*Poll workers needed.*

The Board of Elections is looking for poll workers for the May 4, 2021 Primary Election. Applications are available [here](#).

*Request your absentee ballot!*

It's not too early to request an absentee ballot for May. Unlike 2020, voters will not be automatically sent an absentee ballot application, and must mail a request. You can print yours [here](#).

*Voter registration deadline.*

The voter registration deadline for May is April 5th. You can [register online here](#).

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## ICYMI - News and Notes

[\*The Atlantic - How a spreadsheet could change the criminal justice system - 12/14/20\*](#)

Ohio Supreme Court Justice Michael P. Donnelly: "A lack of data collection and analysis is a nationwide problem. Many states, including Ohio, where we serve,

do not have reliable statewide numbers on the criminal sentences they impose...Collecting and utilizing sentencing data will help build a better, more equitable justice system."

[Columbus Dispatch - With six seeking to replace Pepper, Ohio Dems delay Chair vote - 12/16/20](#)

"Ohio Democrats began to chart a new course for their party Tuesday night, but it will take a little longer than originally expected. The party's executive committee voted to delay a vote for a new chair from Dec. 29 to Jan. 14."

[ProPublica - The family court Judge who threatened a mother with contempt of court for getting her child a COVID-19 test - 12/18/20](#)

"Ohio juvenile court Judge Timothy Grendell (who shares responsibility for the Portage-Geauga JDC and whose wife represents northern Portage County in Columbus) thought coronavirus precautions were overblown, and made sure people knew it. In one case he forbade a mother from getting her children tested for COVID-19. Then, one of them had to go to the emergency room."

[Record-Courier - Ohio Governor signs Clites' rare disease bill - 12/23/20](#)

"State Rep. Randi Clites of Ravenna announced the passage of bipartisan legislation she sponsored, that will create the Ohio Rare Disease Advisory Council."

[Record-Courier - Portage court created to help people with mental illness is certified - 12/25/20](#)

"The Portage County Municipal Court's Successful Treatment And Recovery (STAR) Court Docket received final certification from the Ohio Supreme Court. Judge Kevin Poland has led the effort."

[Cincinnati Enquirer - The Ohio Democrat who won by 10 points in a year when Trump won by 8: meet Supreme Court Justice Jennifer Brunner - 12/30/20](#)

"While name recognition likely played a role for the former Ohio secretary of state, she said it was also the relationships she's cultivated around the state that helped her win. When Brunner takes the oath of office Jan. 2, she'll be one of three Democrats on the seven-person court. Just two years ago, the court was 7-0 Republican."

[\*The Portager - Portage County reacts to D.C. insurrection with shock, sorrow and conspiracy theories - 1/8/21\*](#)

"While newly elected County Commissioner Tony Badalamenti said yesterday's insurrection was 'uncalled for,' he added that he has 'a problem blaming the marchers for all the violence that was there.' Repeating a baseless rumor, he said there's a 'great possibility' that provocateurs dressed as Trump supporters instigated the violence, claiming he heard this from a friend who was present during the riot."

[\*The Portager \(Opinion\) - The shamelessness in our own backyard - 1/10/21\*](#)

"I awoke this morning to news that newly elected Portage County Commissioner Tony Badalamenti blamed Democrats and Antifa protesters for the assault on the U.S. Capitol, and that other non-Trump supporters instigated the violence...Badalamenti is not alone. Many others in the Republican party are unable to resist the urge to obfuscate and dissemble, blaming Democrats - Democrats who had the audacity to investigate Trump - for the anger of those marching on the U.S. Capitol, seeking to overturn the election and subvert American democracy."

[\*The Hill - Sen. Brown puts housing, eviction protections at the top of Senate banking panel agenda - 1/12/21\*](#)

"Sen. Sherrod Brown said Tuesday that he will prioritize protecting cash-strapped Americans from homelessness when he takes control of a key Senate committee this month."

[\*Record-Courier - 2020 was third worst year for overdoses in Portage County - 1/17/21\*](#)

"Overdose deaths increased in 2020 after a drop the previous two years, but help is available for those struggling with addiction."

[\*WKSU - New Democratic Party Chair plans grassroots organizing - 1/19/21\*](#)

"Democrats have long dominated politics in Summit County. Now a prominent Summit County Democrat has been tapped to lead the party statewide. Liz Walters plans to help the party rebound from an election cycle that did not go in its favor."

[Record-Courier - Portage leaders hopeful, look to Biden's pledge of unity - 1/21/21](#)

"President Joe Biden pledged unity and healing and Portage County officials, current and past, hope he holds to that promise."

[Record-Courier - Many Portage County offices have reopened to the public - 1/25/21](#)

"After nearly a year of closing its doors to the public because of COVID-19, county residents were finally able to access the administration building in person...Some county departments have found a way to interact with the public during the closure, while others still have not opened their doors. County Treasurer Brad Cromes said his office will continue to remain closed to the public...'One of the things we need to do as elected officials is lead by example, and keep our people safe,' he said."

[The Portager - New Sheriff gifts big raises to command staff and a big truck for himself - 1/25/21](#)

"Within his first weeks in office, Portage County Sheriff Bruce Zuchowski raised command staff salaries by more than \$152,000 per yer in total and purchased a new Ford F-250 for himself, to the dismay of at least two county commissioners."

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For more news and notes on the activities of Democrats from around Ohio, sign up for the Ohio Democratic Party Daily Update [here](#).

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