

## Michigan's Presidential Primary to be Held March 10, 2020

On March 10, 2020, Michigan voters will go to the polls to vote in the Presidential Primary Election. There is no political party pre-registration requirement for the presidential primary in Michigan election law. Any registered Michigan voter can participate in the primary for the political party of their choice.

Michigan election law requires only that voters indicate which party's ballot they wish to vote in writing by completing the Application to Vote/ballot Section Form on election day or on the Absent Voter Ballot Application form if voting absentee ballot. This requirement applies only to presidential elections.

Voters will not be required to select a political party at other types of elections. Voters will be given a ballot with a column listing each qualified party's candidates. Voters then decide which party primary they wish to participate in by voting only in the column of their party's choice. By law a public list must be made available that includes the presidential primary ballot type chosen

by each voter in the presidential primary election. Ballot selection information is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

The public list of voters' presidential primary ballots must be destroyed after the 22-month retention period expires. Only the political party ballot selection will be made public; *the candidate you vote for will not be made public.*

Some presidential candidates may suspend their campaigns or already have dropped out of the race nationally. But they are still on the ballot because state law required that the candidates listing be finalized in December. To have their names removed from the ballot, candidates must have submitted a formal request to withdraw their name by December 13, 2019.

Voters will have the option of voting uncommitted or choosing to write in a candidate. Each party ballot has a vote position for uncommitted. Uncommitted indicates the voter is exercising a vote for that political party but is not committed to any of the candidates listed on the ballot. If enough voters cast uncommitted votes, the party may send delegates to the national nominating convention who are not committed to a specific candidate.

Communities may hold special elections in conjunction with the presidential primary. Voters who do not wish to cast a vote in the presidential primary but want to vote in the special election have the option of selecting a ballot containing only the local contests.

If you have voted and returned your ballot, and a candidate you voted for drops out of the race, you may request a replacement ballot from your city or township election clerk.

### In this Issue

1	Michigan Presidential Primary to be Held March 10, 2020
2	List of Presidential Primary Candidates
3	MiARA Newsletter Highlights in 2019
4	Gov. Whitmer Tapped to Respond to State of the Union Address
5	MiARA Activist Spotlight – Earl Colbert
6	Opinion: It's Time for Equal Justice in America
7	Trump Seeks to Cut Medicare

## List of Candidates for Michigan Presidential Primary Election March 10, 2020

### Democratic Candidates

Michael Bennet  
Joe Biden  
Michael R. Bloomberg  
Cory Booker\*  
Pete Buttigieg  
Julian Castro\*  
John Delaney  
Tulsi Gabbard  
Amy Klobuchard  
Bernie Sanders  
Joe Sestak\*  
Tom Steyer  
Elizabeth Warren  
Marianne Williamson\*  
Andrew Yang

### Republican Candidates

Mark Sanford\*  
Donald J. Trump  
Joe Walsh  
Bill Weld

\*Candidates who have announced that they have suspended their campaigns but are still appearing on the ballot because of the timing of their withdrawal.

*Important reminder: if you have already voted your absentee ballot, and a candidate you voted for drops out of the race, you may request a replacement ballot from your city or township election clerk.*

## MiARA Newsletter Headlines in 2019 Highlight an Up and Down Ride

2019 was truly a rollercoaster to finished out the decade. The lows included President Trump pushing anti-union legislation, his attempt to cut the health care of millions, including seniors; and, bringing us to the brink of war, before finally being impeached for corruption and contempt of Congress. High points included the election of strong leaders in Michigan who support retirees and unions in mid-term elections and the successful resolution of the GM strike. The following is a look back at *MiARA Newsletter Headlines from 2019*.

**January:** MiARA Supported Candidates are Sworn into Office

**February:** Fraud Alert-Beware of Real Estate Frauds; RIP John Dingell

**March:** Dems Introduce Bills to Strengthen Social Security

**April:** Data Shows Many Seniors Forgo Retirement Because They Cannot Afford to Quit Working

**May:** Trump proposes Cuts in Medicare and Medicaid; RIP Judge Damon Keith

**June:** Butch Lewis Act Moves Forward

**July:** MiARA Supports Amazon Strikers

**August:** Day of Healing and Reconciliation Mark Arrival of First African Slaves in America

**September:** MiARA President Long Speaks on the UAW-General Motors Strike

**October:** Congress Introduces Social Security Bills to Aid Seniors

**November:** FedEx Ends Pensions for New Hires

**December:** Say No to Post Office Privatization

## **Michigan Gov. Whitmer to Deliver Response to Trump State of the Union Address**

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) have tapped Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to deliver the Democratic Response to President Trump's State of the Union address on Tuesday, February 4, 2020. Congresswoman Veronica Escobar of Texas will deliver the Spanish language response to the speech.

"Since day one, Governor Whitmer has rolled up her sleeves to get things done for the people of Michigan," said Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "During her time in public service, she has led the charge to expand health care to hundreds of thousands of people, expand protections for hard-working middle-class families and ensure clean drinking water in our communities. Her decades of hard work on behalf of the people should serve as a model for our nation. She's a forward-looking leader who is laser-focused on solving problems for everyday Michiganders and is uniquely qualified to deliver Democrats' message of progress for all Americans."

"Governor Whitmer's dedication to Michiganders is a model for public servants everywhere. Thanks to her tireless efforts, thousands more families across the state have access to quality health care, safer drinking water and the opportunity for a good-paying job," said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer. "Whether it's pledging to 'Fix the Damn Roads' or investing in climate solutions, Governor Whitmer's vision for the future is exactly what this country needs, and I'm thrilled she is giving the Democratic response."

"Across the country, Democrats are staying focused on building a stronger, more sustainable country for future generations" said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. "As leaders, it's our responsibility to ensure a safe, healthy future for our children and families, and that's exactly what

we're working toward in Michigan. That means protecting our environment from the harmful effects of climate change, ensuring a great public education that gets our kids on a path to a good job that they can raise a family on, and keeping them healthy by expanding access to quality, affordable health care and protecting those with pre-existing conditions. This response is an exciting opportunity to show the American people that not only are Democrats getting things done for them, but also for future generations to come."

## **MiARA Activist Spotlight Earl Colbert**

This month's Spotlight shines on Earl Colbert who was nominated by MiARA Vice- President Henry Lykes, who lauded Earl as a longtime union supporter during his working years for both the UAW and AFSCME and who has continued to work for economic justice in his retirement.

Earl came to Detroit from Louisville, Kentucky as a young man thinking he would find his calling as a fireman. As fate would have it his plans changed and instead, he was hired at Ford Motor Company's Wayne Assembly Plant where he was a member of the UAW.

In 1974, fate intervened again, and Earl left his employment with Ford to begin a long career as an employee in forestry and landscape with the city of Detroit. Along with his city employment came membership in AFSCME, a membership he has proudly held now for more than 45 years.

As a Forestry and Landscape employee, Earl became a member of AFSCME Chapter 542. Then, after a promotion within Forestry & Landscape, he joined AFSCME Forman Union Chapter 1206. Soon thereafter Earl was elected to serve as president of the local.

Earl retired in 2004 from the City of Detroit as a Supervisor of Grounds Maintenance and he joined AFSCME Retiree's Union Sub Chapter 98. He

*Continued on Page 4*

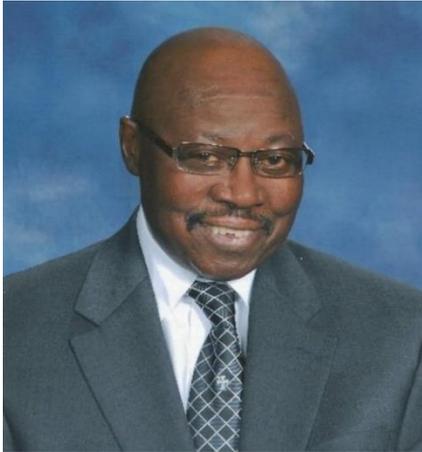
## **MiARA Activist Spotlight**

### **Earl Colbert *Continued***

is currently a member of their executive board. Earl is also a leader of the newly formed AFSCME Michigan Retirees Union Chapter 255 where Earl is tasked with raising awareness of the union and its benefits to potential members.

Earl says that he enjoys retirement because he can spend more time with his wife and three children. He was an avid golfer until a shoulder injury interfered with his game.

Earl is proud of his union work and is looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead in this year's Presidential Election.



*AFSCME retiree Earl Colbert is educating potential members on the power of belonging to the union.*

## **Opinion: It's Time for Equal Justice in America**

*Information for this article was supplied by Kathy Silver, the Religious Education Director at New Hope Unitarian Universalist Congregation in New Hudson, Michigan.*

America has millions of people not able to earn a living wage, not able to pay their rent or utility

bills, having to choose between buying medicine and buying food. How is that, when unemployment is at its lowest point in 50 years, we still have such low wages for so many people, yet we have more billionaires than ever before?

Economic inequality is defined as the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups of people in a society.

Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz describes it as “unfair or uneven treatment of people or the unequal sharing of resources, money and education. When some people control much more wealth, influence and opportunity than others they accrue the benefits of power, cultural prestige and political favoritism.”

A lack of economic equality limits the opportunities for social mobility, and overall it hinders our national growth. The result is wage stagnation and a pervasive feeling that people just cannot get ahead, no matter how hard they work, or how many jobs they have.

Last year in America almost 12 percent of the citizens lived below the federal poverty line, which is \$25,465 for a family of four. These 38.1 million poor people are often members of minority groups or live in single female-headed households. Twenty-one percent of all children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty line.

Since the great depression in 2008, there has been slow improvement in salaries, especially over the past four years, but economist Elise Gould notes that the median household income level is still slightly below where it was two decades ago.

According to Gould, “It’s a step in the right direction, but most families barely made up the ground lost with the recession.” Even with low unemployment, wages remain stubbornly low for those at the bottom of the scale. In 2018 the

*Continued on Page 5*

## **Opinion: It's Time for Equal Justice in America**

### ***Continued***

Supplemental Poverty Measure found that Social Security benefits kept more than 27 million people out of poverty last year and that refundable tax credits did the same for almost eight million people. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP) known as food stamps, also kept an estimated three million people from being hungry and becoming poor.

The irony here is that President Trump wants to eliminate 700,000 people from the SNAP benefits. Many states, including Michigan, are instituting work requirements for Medicaid recipients, which will mean that women with young children will be forced to work to maintain health care for their families. Considering the lack of affordable day care, these families can be left without their medical benefits and maybe also their food stamps.

Even with anti-poverty measures and better educations, 42% of children born in poverty will not be able to get out of it. The gap between rich and poor in America has increased over the past few decades. Four hundred Americans own more than 50% of our total wealth.

The wealth gap is exacerbated by companies like McDonalds and Walmart, who do not pay a living wage to some of their workers. Those workers receive about \$6.2 billion in federal subsidies in the form of food stamps, rent assistance and public welfare. The Walton family, founders of Walmart, also owns a bank called Arvest, which has about \$15 billion in assets, yet our taxes are subsidizing the basic needs of some of their workers.

These facts border on the obscene. For one family to control so much wealth, and then refuse to share just a bit with all the folks who worked hard to make their success possible, seems criminal.

It is no wonder that some of our politicians are talking about doubling the minimum wage and providing Medicare and preschool for all.

Equity forms the core values of western democratic traditions, yet here in America we seem to believe that sharing the wealth is anti-capitalist or socialism. In the developed world, the United States has one of the highest poverty rates and one of the lowest standards of health care. We are doing something wrong.

There is a strong connection between economic inequality and political inequality. Lobbyists and special interest groups tend to play an important role in gaining favors for those with higher incomes and wealth. This unequal access empowers rich people to have a stronger voice in politics, and greater in political decision-making.

These are privileges that people with low incomes rarely gain, unless they gather together in large displays of solidarity and protest. There are numerous social movements that play a part in trying to improve the plight of the poor and underprivileged in the United States, but basically the poor keep getting poorer while the rich are getting richer.

Anti-poverty groups note the importance of government safety-net programs in helping to keep millions of people from falling into poverty. In recent years, the Census Bureau has released a supplemental poverty measure along with the official one. This shows the impact of a range of benefits, including Social Security and tax breaks.

Working for a just society is central to union beliefs. As Unions and their members must seek an economically just society in which government and private institutions promote the common economic good – and are held accountable; where all people have equal opportunity to care for themselves and their families and individuals take responsibility for effects of their actions on their own and others' lives.

*Continued on Page 6*

## **Opinion: It's Time for Equal Justice in America**

### ***Continued***

These are difficult and unsettling economic times for many retired union members. Under the official poverty measure, 4.7 million adults ages 65 and older lived in poverty in 2017 (9.2%), but that number increases to 7.2 million (14.1%) based on the Supplemental Poverty Measure

We are all economic beings, inextricably bound with one another in this global economy. We need to learn to talk more about money, and how it affects our lives and the lives of others in our community, so that we can better work together to find ways to make our world a fairer and more equitable place.

## **Trump Seeks to Cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid if Reelected**

*The following article was taken from the National Alliance Retired Americans January 24, 2020 Friday Alert.*

In a reversal from his 2016 campaign promises, President Trump said on CNBC that he would look to cut "entitlements" if re-elected.

The president, under a cloud of impeachment, revealed that cuts to earned Medicare and Social Security benefits will be on the table as soon as the end of this year, after a day of hobnobbing with billionaires in Davos, Switzerland.

"The cruel irony of this scene cannot be overstated," said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. "While Davos billionaires may not understand the importance of Social Security and Medicare, millions of Americans who rely on the health and retirement benefits they have earned through a lifetime of

hard work need help, not a slap in the face," Fiesta added. "We should be working to expand Social Security and increasing benefits for current and future retirees. This can be accomplished by making the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share by lifting the arbitrary payroll tax cap."

Social Security and Medicare are vital for a secure retirement. With Americans paying the highest prescription drug prices in the world, cuts to these programs would make it much harder for retirees to pay for basic necessities. Social Security is the only source of income for 4 in 10 older Americans. For even more retirees, Social Security provides 90% of their income. These modest earned retirement benefits average just \$1,461 per month for a retired worker.

The Alliance supports strengthening and expanding Medicare by finally reining in high drug prices, which are the biggest driver of Medicare costs. H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act passed by the House of Representatives last year, would save taxpayers billions of dollars, cap out of pocket drug spending at \$2,000 per year for retirees and add hearing, dental and vision benefits to Medicare.

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### **MiARA Executive Board**

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**New sletter E ditor: Jack Schneider**  
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