

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

# Between THE Lines™

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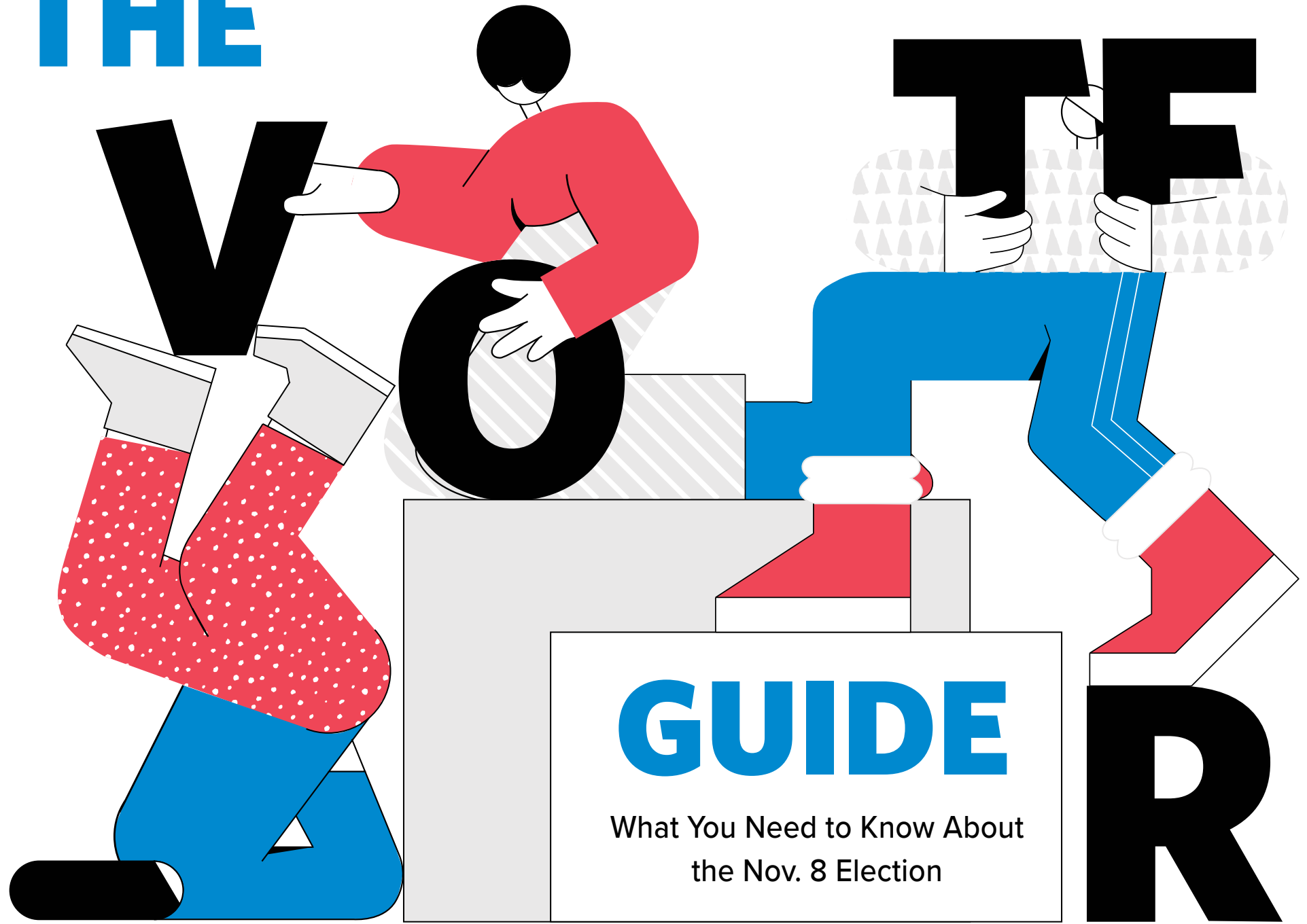
**GILCHRIST, GALVANIZED**

The Lt. Gov. On How His  
Late Gay Uncle Inspired  
His Allyship

**MEET THE CANDIDATES**

Learn More About Those  
Running in Michigan Races  
That Matter

THE



## IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

(bik-TAR-vee)

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- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

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- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that may have been hidden in your body. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.FDA.gov/medwatch](http://www.FDA.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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### HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

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- ▶ Go to [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) for program information.



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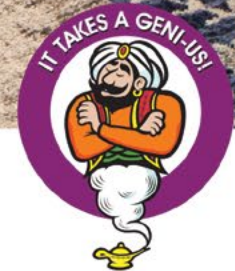
Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).



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Illustration by Sarah Chung

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# 5 **Queer** Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

As we near the end of a year that has already been chock-full of horror thanks to the general state of, well, nearly everything, lean in to the abject terror of our shared existence and really throttle that jack-o'-lantern for all it's worth this Halloween season. So whether you're in the mood for some costumed debauchery at a sexy dance party, some innocent childlike fun at a glow-in-the-dark street party or just envision a night streaming something great with some cider and a friend, this Halloween list is sure to deliver just the right treat (or trick—we don't judge).

## Attend a Halloween-Themed Show Featuring Boylesque

ypsiGLOW is back after a pandemic hiatus. Join up with other members of the public to take part in a luminary procession, view "GLOWing" artist installations, and enjoy roaming street performers and a dance party at this annual event. Ypsilanti's famous drag troupe, Boylesque, will also be on hand at the event. Boylesque founder Jadein Black invites the community to help the performance troupe raise money for local non-profits at three other Halloween events:

- Halloween Drag Show: Saturday, Oct. 29, 10 p.m. at Tap Room for Safe House
- Family Friendly Drag Brunch: Sunday, Oct. 30, noon at Sidetrack
- Drag Bingo & Show: Monday, Oct. 31, 7 p.m. at Stick's (with Michigan's "RuPaul's Drag Race Superstar" Orion Story)

"Making a positive difference in our community is what we love to do," Black said.

*ypsiGLOW takes place 7-10 p.m. Friday, Oct. 28. Get the full Boylesque Halloween schedule at [jadeinblack.com/events](https://jadeinblack.com/events).*



## Take Over the Eagle, Spooky Style

Thots & Prayers' "Spooky Thots" promises to deliver all the sexy, costumed debauchery one Halloween party could possibly deliver. Guest DJs Mohammad and Joshua Ruiz will join up with Eagle resident DJ Jace M to provide a soundtrack that will take guests on a spooktacular journey through the wee hours of the night. DJ Jace promises a "spooky, slutty, sexy time." When asked if he wanted to elaborate, he added with a laugh, "It's the Eagle. I think it's best to leave those devilish thots... to the thots." Slutty costumes highly encouraged.

*Spooky Thots runs from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 29 at the Eagle inside Menjo's at 928 W. McNichols Road in Detroit.*



## Enjoy a Scary Stage Performance

The Ringwald Theatre is getting in on the scary October entertainment with its production of Stephen King's "Misery." The book-turned-film-turned-play is about a famous writer, Paul Sheldon, who winds up in a serious car accident in a remote area and the fan, Annie, obsessed with him. After Annie "rescues" him, she becomes enraged learning that her favorite character by the novelist, Misery, has been killed off in Paul's next book. Director Brandy Joe Plambeck says audiences can expect a "fun little twist" during the show, Ringwald-style, adding that while it's "a straightforward version of the Stephen King story you may know and love, we infuse a bit of gender-reversal with one of the characters, and it adds a new layer to the production that we hope you thoroughly enjoy!"

*"Misery" runs through Oct. 31. Masks required. Learn more and buy tickets at [theringwald.com/productions/misery](https://theringwald.com/productions/misery).*





## Stream a Scream

Shudder's new docu-series, "Queer for Fear," is about to enter heavy rotation on a screen near you. Executive produced by Bryan Fuller ("Hannibal," "Pushing Daisies") and Steak House ("Launchpad," "The Mustang"), the series explores the role of queer people in the horror genre, from early influences like authors Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker and Oscar Wilde all the way through to '80s, AIDS-obsessed vampire films. A news release about the series says "Queer for Fear" re-examines "genre stories through a queer lens, seeing them not as violent, murderous narratives, but as tales of survival that resonate thematically with queer audiences everywhere."

Catch "Queer for Fear" on the Shudder streaming channel at [shudder.com](https://shudder.com) or as part of the AMC+ bundle.





## Attend This Lesbian Halloween Party

Litty Committee's first official lesbian Halloween party, "Boos and Baddies," will feature DJ Three Thirteen, live body painting, strolling Halloween entertainers, fun drink specials and a cozy fall festival atmosphere at Bosco Lounge, an indoor/outdoor venue, in Ferndale. Costumes are recommended and event organizers expect this ticketed event to sell out, so buy tickets now.

"Boos and Baddies" runs from 8-11 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30 at Bosco Lounge in Ferndale. Get tickets at [eventbrite.com](https://eventbrite.com) by searching for "Boos and Baddies."

Please check event pages for the most up-to-date scheduling information.





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Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist with constituents. Courtesy photo

# Garlin Gilchrist's Gay Uncle Glen: The Catalyst for His Allyship

## Lt. Gov. on How Having a Guncle Informs His Leadership Today

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist's LGBTQ+ allyship began when he was just a kid because of, he says, "someone I had a great deal of love for." That person was his Uncle Glen.

Gilchrist's father's youngest brother, a fashion designer, lived in Los Angeles. But Gilchrist said Uncle Glen received "a hero's welcome" whenever he came home to Detroit.

"He'd design men's and women's clothes," Gilchrist shared with BTL, "and I remember begging him to

design me a pair of MC Hammer pants. He did that and gave them to me. And it was magical, as a child."

At one point, Uncle Glen passed on a suit he wore often in high school, an outfit Gilchrist loved wearing. Sadly, Glen Gilchrist died of complications from HIV in the late '90s.

So, did the the lieutenant governor have a guncle?

"It's true," he said. "I absolutely did. It was great."

"I certainly knew and loved him as a baby and always admired him," Gilchrist added.

As to whether allies are made or

born, clearly, Gilchrist was born and raised that way. He reflected on what he considers his good fortune to have queer family.

"I think what's important is to recognize that we need to love and care about one another, period, as human beings," Gilchrist began, "and your gender identity, your expression, your sexual identity or orientation should not define how lovable you are and how lovable you can be by your parents, by your friends and by your community."

"Being exposed to members of your family who may be LGBTQ+

is a way to gain an understanding of that at an early age," he added. "And I was very blessed to have that experience in different parts of my family, whether it's distant relatives or immediate family members. And so I think that I certainly have become better because of that, and I hope that everyone can be blessed with that experience."

For Gilchrist, allyship doesn't stop with the family in which he was raised. He's also setting an example. He says as a public official, it's important to serve all Michiganders and to have his family with him. "I

held the title of being the highest-ranking public official to ever attend Ferndale Pride for maybe six or seven months. And then both the Governor and the Attorney General jumped me like six months later — but that's all good," he said, laughing.

Just showing up goes a long way. But Gilchrist has gone above and beyond, bringing his kids to Ferndale Pride and keynoting the Affirmations Big Bash this September. As someone who had a career as an activist before entering politics — most notably as

See **Gilchrist**, page 26





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State Rep Ryan Berman. Photo: Michigan House of Representatives

# This Michigan Legislator Dreams of Putting Parents of Trans Kids in Prison for Life

## Proposed House Bill Would Make Gender-Affirming Care For Minors a Felony

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

A new bill introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives would make it illegal for parents and guardians to get gender-affirming care for minors. HB 6454 would make obtaining such care a felony, punishable by up to life in prison, under the category of first-degree child abuse. The bill was introduced by Republican State Rep Ryan Berman (R-Commerce Twp.), who had the audacity to bring it forward on Tuesday, Oct. 11 – National Coming Out Day.

“Gender affirming care is medically necessary and life-saving care for transgender youth,” said Equality Michigan Executive Director Erin Knott in an action alert sent out in response to the proposed bill. “Medical decisions belong to trans youth, their parents, and their doctors.”

Berman, the same state rep who seeks to ban drag shows from Michigan schools — not that there has ever been one — was joined by co-sponsors and fellow state reps Steve

Carra (R-Three Rivers), Beau LaFave (R-Iron Mountain), Steve Marino (R-Harrison Twp.) and Luke Meerman (R-Coopersville).

“People are abusing these children,” LaFave falsely said to The Hill. “The idea that we would be making potentially life-altering changes to 11-, 12-, 13-, 14-, 15-year-old kids when it is illegal for them to have sex is insane. I mean, they’re not responsible enough to smoke a cigarette until they’re 21.”

If this horribly misguided bill were to pass the house (where Republicans have a 3-person majority) and state senate (where Republicans are in charge 22-16), it would make Michigan the second state (after Alabama, where puberty blockers and hormone therapy for trans youth is outlawed) to classify providing gender-affirming care as a felony. Arkansas has banned some gender-affirming care, and a recent Arizona law bans minors from receiving gender-affirming surgeries, something that is rarely done.

See **Anti-Trans Bill**, page 32

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Laws Protecting LGBTQ+ Students Guide Mental Health Providers, But Support Is Key

As mental health providers who practice in both clinical and school-based settings, we wanted to further elaborate on a recent op-ed relating to outing students to parents on October 5, 2022 (Op-Ed: Not Outing Kids to Their Parents Is in the Best Interest of LGBTQ+ Students). As was shared, ideally, educators and mental health providers would work alongside families and educators in supporting LGBTQ+ youth to meet students needs on a case-by-case basis. It was also acknowledged in that article that not all family and/or home environments are physically or psychologically safe for youth to come out.

To supplement that op-ed, we would like to share guidance of ethical and legal obligations that uphold LGBTQ+ youth rights within school and community settings. Ethical requirements (i.e. beneficence, respecting the rights and dignity of others, and nonmaleficence, do no harm) and legal mandates for health providers (inclusive of mental health) highlight the importance of ensuring physical and psychological safety and security for youth. For instance, educators, health and mental health providers are mandated reporters and have a “duty to warn.” This means that such professionals have an obligation to report any instances of self-harm, harm toward others, and child abuse or neglect.

However, with respect to limits of confidentiality and privacy guidelines, professionals across settings are encouraged to only share essential information and are limited in the amount and types of information they are allowed to share with others. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2022), “It’s against the law for school officials to disclose a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity to parents or other school staff, even if the student is open about their sexual orientation or gender identity with friends at school. School officials may think they’re doing the right thing, but revealing a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity to their parents not only violates the student’s

privacy rights, but can open an LGBTQ child to hostility, rejection, and even violence from their parents.”

In addition to the above guidelines, there are additional laws that protect the rights of LGBTQ+ students. Please find a summary below:

**Title IX:** Requires all schools that receive public funding to proactively enact policies and procedures that prevent discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation.

**The Equal Access Act:** Prohibits discrimination against students who want to participate in and form extracurricular clubs.

**The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act:** Protects personal information about students in school records — including sexual orientation and gender identity — and in most circumstances prohibits release of this information without consent.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects the right of students to free speech and freedom of expression, including expression of one’s gender identity or sexual orientation. The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that no state will “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

While we are guided by these legal and ethical tenets in protecting our LGBTQ+ youth, what’s most important is that we continue showing up professionally and personally in spaces to support our youth the best we can.

Thank you so much for your time and dedication to such a vital matter.

Sincerely,

*Lauren Mangus, PhD, LP, NCSP and Sarah Kiperman, PhD, LP, NCSP*





## About the Study

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# Gov. Whitmer, Please Break Your Silence on Rising Anti-LGBTQ+ Hate in Michigan

## Love, the Pride Source Editorial Board

Silence leaves much to interpretation.

The cavern between full-throated support for Michigan's LGBTQ+ community from a few, mostly queer candidates running for state and national offices, and hostile, angry anti-queer tirades coming out of places like Dearborn is marked by the kind of eerie silence usually reserved for the latest Jordan Peele jump-scare thriller.

In a different election cycle — one not dominated by candidates like Tudor Dixon, who unashamedly links queer parents and the parents of queer kids to “groomers,” pedophiles and perverts — we have to wonder if we might have heard from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who has acknowledged many times over the years how valuable support from our community is to her success and our state's prosperity. Surely in a 2014 or even a 2019 election, Big Gretch would have had a thing or two to say about hundreds of anti-queer protestors making national headlines for putting their hate on full display in Dearborn last month. Maybe 2019 Whitmer would have reached out to young Sam Smalley, who was shamelessly berated by grown men (many who are community leaders) hurling epithets like “faggot” at him,



in broad daylight, on camera, in one of our state's most prominent cities. Surely, she might have remarked on how scenes like this cut deeply into Michigan's cherished heritage in auto manufacturing and as a beacon of what success looks like when diversity is prioritized.

But in the silence, we're left wondering. And wanting.

Silence might be the wiser political choice. No doubt some very smart campaign team is hedging the bet — who else will LGBTQ+ people vote for than the Democratic candidate? We'll thank them in the acceptance

speech, but best to steer clear of this whole minefield. It makes sense, on paper, politically.

But over here in the real world, silence can feel ominous.

Without the full-throated support of state leaders, queer people in Michigan are feeling a renewed sense of vulnerability. Whitmer may not be cosigning hate, but social norms thrive in silence. That's one reason we've seen such enthusiastic, vocal leadership on violence impacting trans Michiganders coming out of Detroit at both the Mayor's office and the City of Detroit Police Department under the guidance of Corporal Danielle Woods. The governor's administration as a body with statewide authority and prominence could do well to take a cue from initiatives that focus on trans representation and outreach in Southeast Michigan.

But if no one's really going to

say much, maybe it's just fine for homophobes to start casually calling their LGBTQ+ neighbors slurs or demanding their school boards remove trusted teachers based on who they love. Will it soon become the norm that we just gloss right over Michigan parents being called “groomers” because drag performers read stories in public to their kids? Will the upcoming legislature enact State Sen. Ryan Berman's hateful bill that seeks to imprison parents if they provide affirming care for their own child?

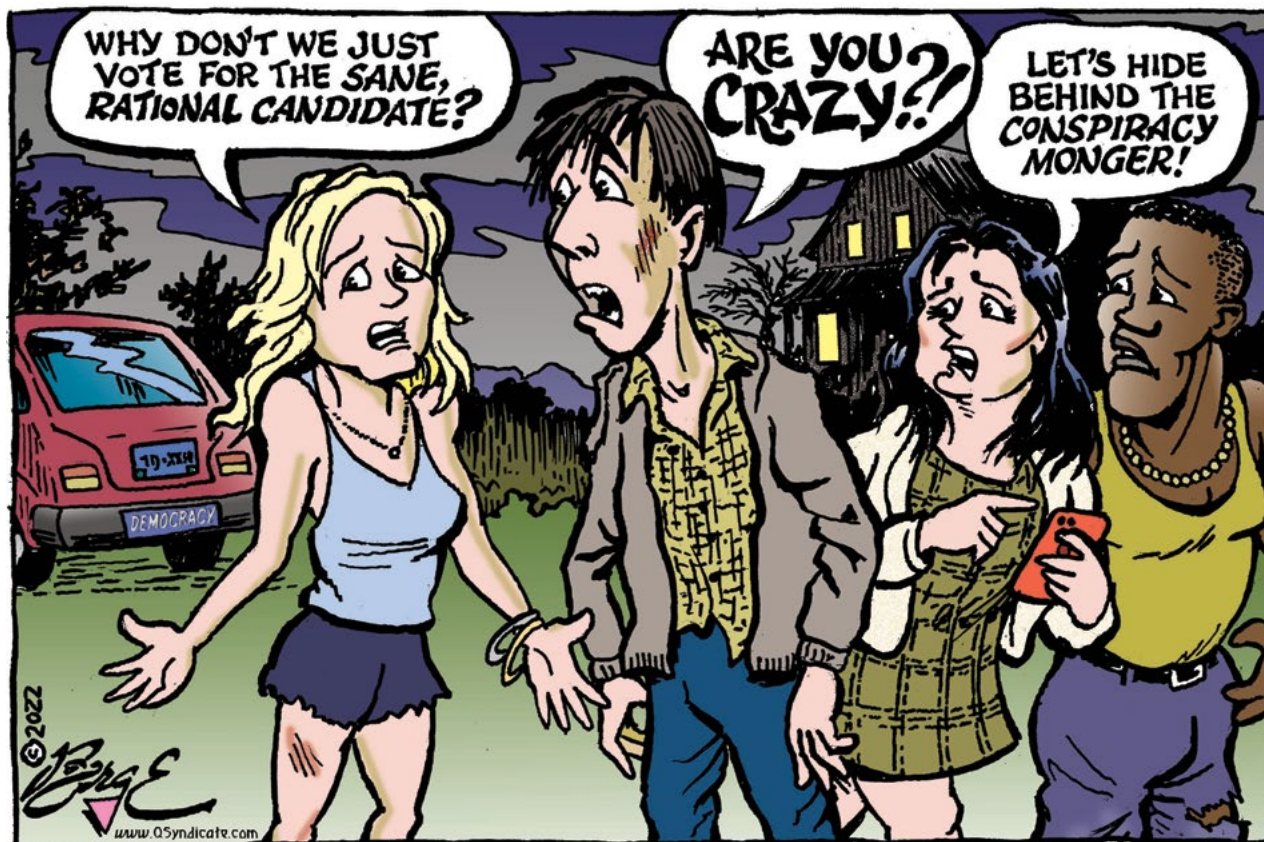
When will we hear the politicians we've so fervently and steadfastly supported for decades come out against the completely unfounded insinuation that queer people are more likely to be pedophiles and desperately want the upcoming generation to become the queerest yet?

“

*Without the full-throated support of state leaders, queer people in Michigan are feeling a renewed sense of vulnerability. Whitmer may not be cosigning hate, but social norms thrive in silence.*

See **Staff Editorial Letter**, next page





IF YOU'RE IN A RIGHT-WING MEDIA BUBBLE, YOU MAKE POOR DECISIONS.  
IT'S WHAT YOU DO.

## Staff Editorial Letter

Continued from previous page

If it was really about the kids, surely we'd see politicians proposing plans to rid our institutions of true pedophiles — literally *thousands* of Michiganders have been assaulted, as children, by clergy members, scout leaders, evangelical leaders and family members, the vast majority of whom were straight. Instead, state leaders seem content to let those insinuations marinate in the silence. And it might work, politically, until someone violent, angry and gullible enough believes the lie that queer people inherently want to hurt children and decides to turn that hate on real people who have real families in the real world. It might work until too many of these types are elected into representing us at local, state, and federal levels — reversing years of progress.

It seems so easy to stand up against the circus of inanity in this election cycle that we're frankly shocked it's not happening. What we are hearing is a deafening silence that serves no one. Please do better.

Queer kids, queer families and queer Michiganders need you to break the silence because we all deserve to feel safe in the communities where we contribute, collaborate and work together with our neighbors to constantly improve the state we love.

Signed,

The Pride Source Editorial Board

See our endorsements, Gov. Whitmer being among them, on page 21.

## CREEP OF THE WEEK

### Hate Democracy and Yourself? Vote Republican.



By D'Anne Witkowski

If you've been driving around Michigan lately you might have seen some crazy billboards and signs claiming that kids are going to get gender reassignment surgery without parental consent if Proposal 3 passes. It's a lie, but it's one that is gaining traction across the country.

Proposal 3 codifies Roe in Michigan. Meaning the reproductive rights taken away by the U.S. Supreme Court when it overturned Roe v Wade would become state law. It is not "too confusing and too extreme" as the opposition would like you to believe. What's both confusing AND extreme is telling a woman who has a dead baby inside of her that she has to travel across several states to try to get an abortion before she ends up with sepsis and dies.

It's also confusing and extreme to use transgender people as a scare tactic to get folks to vote against their own best interests. It's frankly reprehensible and no one who does

so should be taken seriously. Alas, we live in the United States, which managed to elect disgraced former president Donald Trump. Voter behavior is weird. Fear is a very good motivator.

But are transgender people an actual threat? Should the average voter choose their fear of the completely fake "the left want to make all of your kids trans" over the completely real "Republicans can't fucking wait to throw women in prison for having abortions and banning birth control is next" scenarios?

Prop 3 is common sense stuff. The decision about when and if and how to start a family or carry a pregnancy should be a personal decision made between a person and their doctor. Period. The passage of Prop 3 in Michigan will ensure that that is the case.

So why are opponents of Prop 3 — and, indeed, Republicans across the country up and down the ticket — screaming from the rooftops that we should all be scared of an already vulnerable and marginalized group of people who are just trying to live their lives?

Because Republicans have no plan to do anything for you. Nothing. Nada. At all. They

have to invent fake things to fear because they're not doing shit about scary things that are very real. And guess what? Child sexual abuse is a very real scary thing that absolutely happens. But for some reason Republicans don't seem to be very concerned with protecting actual children from actual abuse. Or gun violence. Or suicide. Or climate change. Or poverty. Or homelessness.

To address these things, Republicans would first have to acknowledge that the government has a role to play in protecting us from harm. Which would require them to acknowledge that government can actually work to benefit people. That's very off brand for Republicans. For them, the only purpose of government is tax breaks for the rich and to punish minorities and women.

Republicans aren't even doing anything about the things they claim are the biggest problems facing this country, like inflation and crime. Inflation is a worldwide issue and oil companies are making BANK right now. It's a complex problem with no easy solution, and Republicans are lying to you when they say otherwise.

As for crime, crime rates are actually down across the country. Is crime a problem? Sure. But are you really going to take the assurances of a party that tried to overturn a legal election that they're the real crime stoppers?

You want to see what lawlessness looks like? It's an armed mob attacking the Capitol

at the behest of a morally bankrupt con man and an entire political party pretending the whole thing was no big deal.

I don't think most people realize how high the stakes are in this election. When I hear reports that Republicans have a good chance of taking the U.S. House and/or Senate, I feel sick.

Voting for Republicans is reckless and stupid. And yet millions of people will go ahead and do it. Some because they really do want bad things to happen, and others because they really don't know what bad things will happen but they do know that gas prices suck.

Fascism is a hell of a price to pay for savings at the pump. And, spoiler alert, it won't even work.

The 2016 election made it very clear how much this country hates women. A country that respects and values women doesn't elect a man who is credibly accused of sexual assault by multiple women and who is openly and gleefully sexist and misogynistic.

Will the overturning of Roe v. Wade be the galvanizing force for voters in 2022? I sure hope so. Whether or not you can get pregnant, LGBTQ+ rights are closely tied to reproductive rights. Voting has consequences. It would be nice if that consequence was a wave of Republicans losing their jobs across the country





Megan Cottington-Heath. Courtesy photo

# ***For the Record, Megan Cottington-Heath Does Not Hate Men***

## Saginaw County Circuit Court Judge Candidate Aims to Challenge Business as Usual — for Everyone

**BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW**

Megan Cottington-Heath, an attorney who owns a family law practice, calls it the worst divorce she's ever seen. The candidate for an open seat on the Saginaw County Circuit Court made that assessment after reading the huge, decades-old file detailing her parents' breakup that began formally when Cottington-Heath was 9 but didn't end until she was 12.

"It was just very, very nasty," recalled Cottington-Heath, who is 38 and married to a Saginaw firefighter. The couple have three children. "They fought over just ridiculous things. And I feel like my parents did the best they could — they were young — but I also feel like the system kind of pits parents against each other right away. And that automatically makes things adversarial."

It wasn't just her parents' fighting that affected her in that courtroom.

"I knew that I had an experience where I actually spoke with the judge and he didn't hear me," she told BTL. "I feel like I wasn't listened to. And it happened more than once. And so when I was a kid, I thought, well, I want to be a family law judge."

Cottington-Heath explained how divorce is a trauma that is experienced in the body as such. Knowing that, it's her job as an attorney not to add fuel to the fire, as she has witnessed in court all too often. She acknowledged there's a lot of good that can come of a divorce — especially in the case of an abusive relationship.

"I wish we didn't say 'divorce,'" she said. "I wish we said 'decoupling.' And I wish we didn't do 'plaintiff versus defendant.' I wish we did something like, in the matter of this family, how do we separate this family in a way that we can have peace for them going forward?"

As a married lesbian who practices family law, and whose wife was not a legal parent to their two oldest children until they were more than a year old, Cottington-Heath believes she has a unique view of family law. Simply put, she has experience working with all different kinds of families — including her own.

"I mean, we're in the 21st century," said Cottington-Heath, who earned an undergraduate degree from Central Michigan University and a juris doctorate from Michigan State University. "We've got moms and dads raising kids, but we also have moms single by choice and dads single by choice or moms single, dads single. We have grandparents; we have aunts and uncles; we have foster parents there; we have guardians; there are all sorts of different families nowadays. And frankly, the court systems don't even try to understand



anything other than a heteronormative family type of situation.”

In terms of being inclusive, the court has an issue with pronouns, too. Referring to individuals in the courtroom by their personal pronouns has been an uphill battle, noted Cottingham-Heath. And she would make this a priority, if elected.

With the tagline “Fair, Impartial, Kind,” Cottingham-Heath is making her name known in the Saginaw community, particularly after the headline in a local publication reported she’d be the first openly LGBTQ+ circuit court judge in the county. While some in the general population find the existence of lesbians triggering, it should be stated, for those who didn’t get the memo, that Cottingham-Heath does not hate men. Unfortunately, she’s been faced with challenging this homophobic

(In response, Dicken told BTL, “This statement is completely false and lacks any factual basis. The presumptions made on the basis of this statement are also inaccurate.”)

Cottingham-Heath believes that everyone, regardless of income, should have access to fair justice. In recognition of that commitment, Cottingham-Heath won the Holli Wallace Pro Bono attorney of the year award in 2019.

Some would consider this judgeship a stepping stone. But she isn’t looking toward the next big opportunity. She’s had her eyes on the prize since age 12 (you may ask her family, she says) and only wishes to sit in that seat, helping families find amicable solutions, until she is no longer elected or no longer relevant. By relevant, Cottingham-Heath notes the roughly 30-year difference between the current judges’ ages and the ages of the average couple seeking



Cottingham-Heath at a campaign event. Courtesy photo

stereotype on a regular basis.

Cottingham-Heath represents change, and for some that’s uncomfortable. “From day one, I have said I will be there Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00. And I don’t know why that makes people so angry,” she said, laughing. “But it does.”

To drive home the point, Cottingham-Heath’s website states she will not be found on the golf course during business hours. So-called “cattle calls” in which she has observed 76 hearings in one day will come to an end if she is elected. And until now, it’s been the upper echelon, or the “haves,” in Saginaw County who call the shots. She calls her opponent, Brittany Dicken, one of the haves.

The viewpoint of a working-class person is what’s missing from the court right now, Cottingham-Heath said, whose opponent comes from an affluent family — much like the other judges currently on the court.

“The day after the primary election, she got on a private jet and flew to Traverse City,” Cottingham-Heath said of her opponent. “If I had billions of dollars, I would not fly to Traverse City. It’s a two-hour drive from Saginaw. But that’s the kind of disconnect.”

a divorce. When it’s time to retire, she’ll do so.

An avid rock hound who enjoys performing stand-up comedy, Cottingham-Heath believes some voters neglect to educate themselves on their entire ballot, the judicial candidates in particular. “I don’t know how many people will say, ‘Well, I’ve never actually looked into it,’” she said about conversations that occur while canvassing. “I’m so glad you came to my door because I didn’t even know; I never even really think about the judges. I just kind of guess.”

“We’ve found out recently the hard way what happens when judges make decisions that change history,” she added. “They don’t just pop out of nowhere. All the judges on our U.S. Supreme Court didn’t just pop up out of nowhere. They started somewhere. They started at this level that I’m at.”

*Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 8. Early voting began Sept. 29. Visit [pridesource.com/election-2022](https://pridesource.com/election-2022) to learn more about candidates and ballot proposals.*

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Kyra Harris Bolden. Courtesy photo

# The Importance of Representation

## According to This Michigan Supreme Court Candidate

### Incoming Court Will Likely Tackle Key LGBTQ+ Issues at the Direction of U.S. Supreme Court

BY JON KING

Kyra Harris Bolden knows the Michigan Supreme Court (MSC) will be critical in deciding issues impacting the LGBTQ+ community.

The two-term Democratic state representative from Southfield is seeking a seat on the state's highest court and tells BTL the MSC's importance was most obvious in July when it ruled that the state's anti-discrimination act must include protections for sexual orientation.

However, she knows the fight is not over.

"We would be kidding ourselves if we thought that was going to be the last issue that we see, especially with the current climate," said Bolden.

Bolden, who ran the first half of

her MSC campaign while pregnant with her daughter, is running with incumbent Justice Richard Bernstein as one of two candidates endorsed by the Michigan Democratic Party.

She recently agreed to an interview with BTL on what her candidacy would mean to the LGBTQ+ community.

**Have you sensed an urgency amongst the LGBTQ+ community for this election?**

You know, I think that everyone has a heightened attention to the Michigan Supreme Court, because the United States Supreme Court has been signaling some issues that are going to be left up to the states, right? I think there were

comments by one of our Supreme Court justices about a few cases that should be reevaluated or looked at, and so I think a lot of people are on edge about what those may be, if that will come to fruition, and knowing that some of those decisions will ultimately be up to state law and state interpretation. And so, absolutely, I think people are really engaged in what's going on and what it means for them and their personal lives.

**In your role as a lawmaker, is it a fair statement to say that the atmosphere towards the LGBTQ+ community in the Republican-led legislature has become more tense and is there an expectation that it will only get worse?**

There has certainly been a lot more legislation targeted towards the LGBTQIA community coming up in the legislature. The Senate adopted a Pride Month resolution a few years ago, but then turned around and decided to not adopt it unless there was certain language in it that says "everyone's a child of God" and things like that.

And so it's been really interesting to see what has been introduced lately, and then specifically with the Pride resolution, how language was adopted and made a resolution, and then just a couple years after that, that same language was rejected unless some other language was included. And the leadership hadn't changed in that time period, either. So it's just been really interesting to

see the shift that is happening with issues surrounding the LGBTQIA community.

**I want to ask you about making the move from the legislative branch to the judicial branch. You've been very outspoken as a lawmaker, very forceful in your beliefs. Moving into a judicial role would require a different mindset. How do you go about thinking about that in terms of, instead of making law, interpreting the law?**

That is a really good question. So let's not kid ourselves. Just because you haven't been outspoken about your beliefs doesn't mean you don't have them, right? And so every



judge that's elected has personal beliefs, but it is their ability to set their personal emotions aside or their personal feelings or their personal views and look at the law as written. And what many people don't know is I was actually trained as a neutral staff attorney to the honorable Judge John A. Murphy in the Wayne County Third Circuit Court. I learned to look at the law through the lens of a judge as a neutral. I think as a lawmaker, I understand more than maybe anyone the separation of powers and how important it is for everyone to stay in their lane. And so for me, it may sound like a huge leap or a shift in mindset, but it's just a different role in our judicial system, and I understand that role and it's a very important role that I am taking on.

**Representation is obviously a big issue for the LGBTQ+ community. And with the LGBTQ+ caucus expected to grow this year, do you feel that there is hope that representation will also make its way to the Michigan Supreme Court?**

I hope so. I truly believe that the Michigan Supreme Court should be reflective of the diversity, background and experiences of the State of Michigan and of those that live in Michigan. It's not meant to be a monolith. There's

a reason why there are seven Michigan Supreme Court justices and not just one. There's meant to be different people from different backgrounds on that court, and just in our courts generally as well. We need more representation for those that are hearing the cases that have a certain lived experience that's important to bring to the table. There is a woman named Amanda Shelton that is on her way to being the first LGBTQIA woman on the Oakland County Circuit Court and we've been around the campaign trail together, especially when I'm in Oakland County, and I'm extremely happy for her.

**How would you respond to someone from the LGBTQ+ community if they were to ask, "Why should I vote for you — what difference can you make?"**

My background and experience. I think it's important to have people that have the lived experience of an everyday Michigander. I don't come from money. I don't come from a name and I think that's important representation to be on the highest court of the State of Michigan. I also think it's important to have a diversity of background, experiences and perspective on that court.

And I do mean diversity. So that means we need more people of different races, different faiths, members of the LGBTQIA community. It's so important to be representative of the State of Michigan. But as I said before, I practiced as a judicial law clerk. I was a litigator before I was elected to be a state representative for my hometown of Southfield. I know what it is to represent people in making laws. And that's an important perspective that I think I bring to the Michigan Supreme Court because a large part of the job of a Michigan Supreme Court justice is statutory interpretation. I know how the sausage is made, so to speak. And so I'm excited to be able to share that perspective of how lawmakers actually think about the law. And so I think with my background and experiences in the law, and then just also because representation is so important, I would be honored to earn your vote.



Democratic State Sen. Jeremy Moss and Kyra Harris Bolden. Courtesy photo

**Is there anything else that you think is important on this topic that you'd like to add?**

I always like to add, and you touched on it a little bit, I am a state representative and so I have a public record that I'm personally proud of. I would just ask that people follow me on social media as well so you can really get to know me personally and see the things that I've done and the work that I've done in the community. I think that's very important for anyone running for judge, because oftentimes we have judges and justices that simply, you know, do their jobs and go home. But I believe in a holistic community approach. I believe that you should be in your community educating the community about the importance of your job or about the decisions that you've made. So I really encourage people to get to know me personally and my background and experiences.

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

*Election Day is Nov. 8 and early voting is happening now. Visit [pridesource.com/election-2022](https://pridesource.com/election-2022).*

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- Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline at [helplinegmc@alz.org](mailto:helplinegmc@alz.org) or 800-272-3900



**alzheimer's association**



# Michigan Voters, Take Note: These Three State Ballot Issues Have Significant LGBTQ+ Implications

## Before You Head to the Ballot Box, Read Up on Proposals 1, 2 and 3

BY JON KING

There are three statewide proposals on the Nov. 8 ballot in Michigan, and while not explicitly about the LGBTQ+ community, each of them has a connection worth considering.

### Proposal 22-1: Voters for Transparency and Term Limits

Proposal 1, otherwise known as Voters for Transparency and Term Limits, is a constitutional amendment that seeks to alter the current term limit laws for state legislators elected after 2022, placing a 12-year total limit on state representatives and state senators. Currently, legislators can serve up to six years in the Michigan House and an additional eight years in the Michigan Senate.

The proposal would also require legislators, the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state and attorney general to file annual public financial disclosure reports. Those reports, which would begin in 2024, would have to detail all spending on assets, liabilities, income sources, future employment agreements, gifts, travel reimbursements and positions held in organizations except religious, social and political organizations.

The proposal was placed on the ballot in May after the Michigan Legislature voted for a watered-down version that didn't require thousands of petition signatures.

Of the three proposals, this one has the least obvious impact on the LGBTQ+ community. However, a closer look reveals a fundamental connection.

Michigan's term limits have resulted in a revolving door legislature in which lobbyists have increased their influence exponentially while the institutional memory of most lawmakers extends less than a decade.

Eric Lupher, president of the Citizens Research Council, told MLive earlier this year that partisanship in Lansing has been one of the primary results of term limits.

Lupher pointed to "the ability to understand the perspectives of people not like you and work to solutions through conversation and negotiation. If there aren't relationships, that process becomes more and more challenged."

The outcome has been an indulgence of



extreme positions without consequence, whether it be legislation that would bar transgender students from being able to participate in high school sports or rejecting a simple resolution in favor of Pride Month.

While allowing Michigan House members to serve a maximum of six terms instead of three and Senators three terms instead of two is a modest improvement, it is progress nonetheless at breaking up the revolving door of far-right partisans with limited incentive for consensus building.

### Proposal 22-2: Promote the Vote 2022

Known as Promote the Vote 2022, Proposal 2 would implement a series of reforms designed to increase voter access, including mandating nine days of early in-person voting; giving voters a single application to cast their absentee ballot; establishing state-funded absentee ballot drop boxes with postage for absentee ballots; allowing overseas ballots (including from members of the military) to be counted if they are postmarked the day of the election; continuing to allow registered voters without a state ID to sign an affidavit attesting to their identity; ensuring election officials can perform post-election audits; allowing public sources and charities to transparently fund elections; and mandating canvassing boards certify election results based solely on official records of votes cast.

The proposal was placed on the ballot following a ruling in September by the Michigan Supreme Court (MSC) that ordered the Board of State Canvassers to approve it after Republican members of that panel exceeded their statutory authority and voted against it.

It's no secret that allowing for more people to vote, and making it easier for them to do so, will likely benefit Democratic candidates and causes, which include support for the LGBTQ+ community.

In fact, Michigan's LGBTQ+ legislative caucus is expected to grow to seven members after Nov. 8, the largest it's ever been. Increasing voting access will only grow that trend.

### Proposal 22-3: Reproductive Freedom for All

Proposal 3, aka Reproductive Freedom for All, would amend the state constitution to make reproductive freedom a right, permanently repealing a 1931 law that makes abortion a felony in Michigan.

That law would have taken effect after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* in June, overturning the federal right to abortion access that had been the law of the land for almost 50 years. However, a Michigan judge issued a permanent injunction, blocking the state law from being enforced. Regardless, it remains on the books and could be implemented by a higher court unless it is removed.

This was also ordered onto the ballot by the MSC after challengers argued the lack of spacing in the initiative language made it invalid. Supporters successfully argued that the law makes no mention of spacing issues and Republican canvassers had no statutory authority to reject it as such.

It's also worth noting that the proposal received 753,759 petition signatures, the most in state history.

Of all three statewide proposals, this one has the clearest impact on the LGBTQ+ community because it ostensibly deals with bodily autonomy, a major issue in a time when transphobia is being used as a battering ram by the GOP.

In fact, opponents of Proposal 3 have gone out of their way to try to connect abortion care to "secret treatment of gender confused children that results in hormonal sterilization."

But specifically as it pertains to abortion, studies have shown that transgender men with a uterus are at a similar risk of unplanned pregnancy as cis women and would similarly benefit from abortion services. This proposal would make that right fundamental to all, regardless of gender identity.

*For complete information about issues and candidates that will appear on the Nov. 8 ballot go to the Michigan Voter Information Center at [mivic.sos.state.mi.us/PublicBallot/Index](https://mivic.sos.state.mi.us/PublicBallot/Index). Early voting is happening now.*



# Pride Source's 2022 Endorsements

Pride Source and Between The Lines endorses the following candidates running for office. Candidates have been evaluated and endorsed based on this criteria: perfect score on our survey questionnaire, the endorsements of other pro-LGBTQ+ organizations, how competitive their race is, and their voting record if they have held office before. Visit [pridesource.com/election-2022](https://pridesource.com/election-2022) to learn more about candidates and issues.

## Endorsed Ballot Initiatives

**Proposal 1: YES**  
Voters for Transparency & Term Limits

**Proposal 2: YES**  
Promote the Vote 2022

**Proposal 3: YES**  
Reproductive Freedom for All

## Michigan State Senate Candidates

**SENATE DISTRICT 1**  
Erika Geiss

**SENATE DISTRICT 2**  
Stephanie Chang

**SENATE DISTRICT 3**  
Darrin Camilleri

**SENATE DISTRICT 4**  
Dayna Polehanki

**SENATE DISTRICT 6**  
Mary Cavanagh

**SENATE DISTRICT 7**  
Jeremy Moss

**SENATE DISTRICT 8**  
Mallory McMorrow

**SENATE DISTRICT 9**  
Padma Kuppa

**SENATE DISTRICT 11**  
Veronica Klinefelt

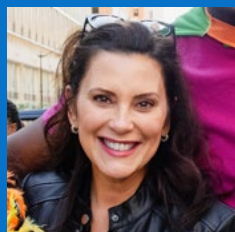
**SENATE DISTRICT 13**  
Rosemary Bayer

**SENATE DISTRICT 14**  
Sue Shink

**SENATE DISTRICT 16**  
Katybeth Davis

**SENATE DISTRICT 19**  
Sean McCann

### GOVERNOR



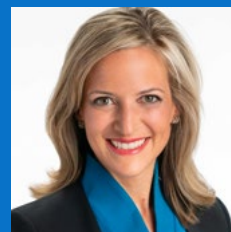
Gretchen Whitmer

### ATTORNEY GENERAL



Dana Nessel

### SECRETARY OF STATE



Jocelyn Benson

**SENATE DISTRICT 20**  
Kim Jorgensen Gane

**SENATE DISTRICT 27**  
John Cherry

**SENATE DISTRICT 28**  
Sam Singh

**SENATE DISTRICT 29**  
Winnie Brinks

**SENATE DISTRICT 30**  
David LaGrand

**SENATE DISTRICT 31**  
Kim Nagy

**SENATE DISTRICT 33**  
Mark Bignell

**SENATE DISTRICT 35**  
Kristen McDonald Rivet

## Michigan House of Representatives Candidates

**HOUSE DISTRICT 5**  
Natalie Price

**HOUSE DISTRICT 6**  
Regina Weiss

**HOUSE DISTRICT 8**  
Mike McFall

**HOUSE DISTRICT 9**  
Abraham Aiyash

**HOUSE DISTRICT 11**  
Veronica Paiz

**HOUSE DISTRICT 13**  
Lori Stone

**HOUSE DISTRICT 15**  
Erin Byrnes

**HOUSE DISTRICT 17**  
Laurie Pohutsky

**HOUSE DISTRICT 18**  
Jason Hoskins

**HOUSE DISTRICT 19**  
Samantha Steckloff

**HOUSE DISTRICT 21**  
Kelly Breen

**HOUSE DISTRICT 22**  
Matt Koleszar

**HOUSE DISTRICT 23**  
Jason Morgan

**HOUSE DISTRICT 28**  
Rob Kull

**HOUSE DISTRICT 29**  
Alex Garza

**HOUSE DISTRICT 31**  
Reggie Miller

**HOUSE DISTRICT 32**  
Jimmie Wilson Jr.

**HOUSE DISTRICT 38**  
Joey Andrews

**HOUSE DISTRICT 40**  
Christine Morse

**HOUSE DISTRICT 41**  
Julie Rogers

**HOUSE DISTRICT 42**  
Justin Mendoza

**HOUSE DISTRICT 44**  
Jim Haadsma

**HOUSE DISTRICT 46**  
Maurice Imhoff

**HOUSE DISTRICT 47**  
Carrie Rheingans

**HOUSE DISTRICT 48**  
Jennifer Conlin

**HOUSE DISTRICT 49**  
Christina Kafkakis

**HOUSE DISTRICT 50**  
Glen Miller

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# CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ABOUT SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN



Joey Andrews. Courtesy photo

## State House Candidate on the Surprising Diversity of This Overlooked Corner of the State

**BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW**

38th State House District candidate Joey Andrews is on a mission to get the word out about Southwest Michigan. Despite a general sentiment he sees coming out of Lansing, the area is not strictly an “ultra-rural farming area,” he said. “There’s a lot of diversity here; there’s a lot of different communities here, and they need their voices heard.”

Andrews, who lives in St. Joseph and is a fifth-generation southwest Michigan native, may just be what the region needs to get more attention in the legislature. Mark LaChey, the openly gay first vice chair of the Michigan Democratic Party (MDP),

met the candidate when Andrews was assisting the MDP in the redistricting process. “I was impressed by his command of a myriad of facts, his intellect and his passion for fairness,” said LaChey, who lives in Saugatuck, a municipality in the new district.

While only a few miles wide, each of the municipalities in the new 38th touch the Lake Michigan shore. From Saugatuck/Douglas in the north down to about New Buffalo in the south on the Indiana border, “each of these small towns deals with a lot of the same issues around shoreline erosion, water quality, impermanent vacation-based economies — all sorts of things that are very unique to these communities that if you go

a few miles inland is not the case so much anymore,” Andrews said. “So, a little strange-looking, but I think very sensible once you recognize what all these communities are like and how closely tied they are.”

With the Lake Michigan shoreline and the campaign trail one and the same, it seems natural that Andrews is billed as a “Lakeshore Democrat.”

“Obviously, water quality issues is a huge thing here,” Andrews said. “All these communities are very tourist-centric, but the tourism exists because of how beautiful the beaches and the dunes and this coastal environment is. But with that tourist economy comes an impermanence in the local economy. It’s a very feast or famine

situation between the on-season and the off-season.” He listed other common lakeshore issues like the vacation rental industry driving up the cost of housing and the lack of good-paying, year-round jobs.

Andrews is also concerned that not all constituents in his district have had their voices heard in Lansing. He pointed to Benton Harbor and Benton Harbor Township, areas with large African American populations that he says have long been neglected. At the same time, Andrews believes Saugatuck/Douglas, with a large LGBTQ+ population, often goes

See **Joey Andrews**, page 28

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An architectural drawing of REC's Clairmount Center. Courtesy photo.

# New Ruth Ellis Clairmount Center Tackles LGBTQ+ Housing Insecurity

Piety Hill Facility Offers 43 Permanent Housing Units, Community Resources and an Abundance of Hope

BY JASON A. MICHAEL  
& SARAH BRICKER HUNT

The Ruth Ellis Clairmount Center, a brand new facility in Detroit's Piety Hill neighborhood, is giving LGBTQ+ youth facing homelessness in Southeast Michigan new hope just before the winter cold sets in.

According to the Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP), LGBTQ-identifying youth make up around 5-10% of the overall youth population, but 40% of the clientele served by youth service agencies. Young LGBTQ+ adults face a 120% higher risk of becoming homeless

versus their heterosexual and cisgender peers. This disparity is at the heart of why Ruth Ellis Center (REC) executives embarked on the \$16 million project. REC interim co-executive director Mark Erwin wrote in a joint statement with the Detroit Mayor's office that the official opening on the center is a significant milestone for the non-profit and "an example of how we must respond to the disproportionate number of LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness nationwide."

The building, officially opened Oct. 7, fills 44,000 square feet of mixed-used space centered on supporting

LGBTQ+ youth experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, including 43 long-term housing units, a health and wellness center staffed by Henry Ford physicians and mental healthcare providers, a fitness center, a technology center, an onsite cafe and multiple community spaces. Residents can receive gender-affirming hormone therapy, sexual health services, HIV care, primary care and mental health treatments onsite.

Erwin walked BTL through the development and construction of the Center, which started more than seven years ago when REC began studying which housing model would

be most beneficial to the community. Ultimately, REC concluded that a permanent supportive housing model would be most effective and the organization broke ground in late 2000.

Like most other construction projects over the past few years, Clairmount Center had to tackle COVID-19 and supply chain delays. Staying on schedule was impossible, though project plans remained mostly intact despite the complications, Erwin said.

Erwin noted that Clairmount Center's location in Piety Hill was chosen as the result of careful decision

making that took community input into account. Queer youth led the way, indicating that the neighborhood was a popular location for the community. "This was a neighborhood that they knew well," he said. "[It] had access to public transportation, employment opportunities, and still within close distance to our Highland Park facilities."

Visitors to the Center are sure to notice one of the final design touches as they approach the new building: a larger-than-life mural depicting Ellis herself. The artwork, created by Detroit artist Ijania Cortez, stretches four stories high. "It was great to be



a part of something that reaches and touches the community,” Cortez said in a news release about the work. “Everything I do comes from my heart, and to be able to make this contribution to honor and celebrate Ruth Ellis’ life in this piece is a blessing to me.”

Funding the new expansion was a collaborative effort across a long list of government and private resources. In addition to individual donations and funds sourced by prominent figures like U.S. Rep Rashida Tlaib and Michigan Sen. Adam Hollier and partnerships with sources like the city of Detroit, Bank of America, the Michigan Department of Health, the McGregor Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the National Equity Fund, the Corporation for Supportive

depression, anxiety, suicide risk and substance abuse.”

“This is an exciting time for Ruth Ellis Center,” Erwin continued. “We are very much looking forward to bringing each of these initiatives to the community we serve.”

In many ways, the Center is a continuation of the work REC has been doing for more than 20 years. Named after famed Detroit activist Ruth Ellis, known for many years prior to her death in 2001 as the nation’s oldest living out Black lesbian and the subject of the 1999 documentary “Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100,” the center continues Ellis’s legacy. It’s a far cry from REC’s first space, a tiny one-room drop-in center on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Six Mile Road

above the adult bookstore and next to the strip club that opened just months before Ellis’s death in 2000.

Response to the new REC expansion has been exuberant.

Jey’nce Mizrahi Poindexter, a caseworker with REC, said in an Instagram post that working on the new building was “a labor of love” as well as an attempt to eradicate homeless in metro Detroit “particularly for #blackandbrown young people that identify as LGBTQ.”

Kofi Adoma, a longtime friend of Ellis and one of REC’s first co-board chairs, said she is excited as well. Adoma suggested the center’s name at the first planning committee meeting in June of 1999. “I am beyond elated about the permanent supportive housing building (PSH),” she said. “Certainly, it was a long time coming. And

I’m also thankful for the housing services that REC had put into place all along, including the transitional living program.”

Adoma said seeing the PSH portion of REC’s vision come to fruition brings her “joy” because “this is just what the founders envisioned. ... My head is still spinning at how much the agency has grown.”

“I’m certain that Miss Ruth’s heavenly heart is warmed, that she’s cheering and dancing up a storm,” Adoma said, pointing out that when Ellis cut the ribbon at the very first drop-in center in 2000, at age 101, she was given reassurance that such a facility as this would one day become a reality.


“I have no doubt that her spirit lives in each and every room with the satisfaction that residents have a place they can call home.”

**LGBTQ+**  
young people  
continue to  
experience  
higher rates of  
depression,  
anxiety,  
suicide  
risk and  
substance  
abuse.


Housing and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Clairmount Center will benefit from state funds through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, which will supplement most of the rent for 34 of the units. An additional eight will go to residents earning less than half of the median Detroit household income (\$16,500).

Currently, 32 young people reside at the Clairmount. Erwin said additional applications are in process.


Looking ahead, Erwin noted that REC is expanding beyond the Clairmount project, including an initiative to provide training and consultation for child welfare professionals nationwide; developing a new education and employment program called Thriving Futures, which will be launched in late 2023, and expanding the center’s behavioral health services because, Erwin said, “LGBTQ+ young people continue to experience higher rates of



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Garlin Gilchrist at Motor City Pride. Photo: Andrew Potter

## ◀ Gilchrist

Continued from page 8

national campaign director for MoveOn — Gilchrist doesn't just show up; he speaks out, too.

In response to a homophobic social media post by an NAACP official, Gilchrist delivered an address on Black gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin at the organization's Flint fundraiser in 2019. He said Rustin, as one of the first civil rights leaders he studied in his training as a community organizer, has motivated his leadership.

"I learned about him in the context of being a person who maybe a lot of people may not have heard of," Gilchrist said, "but who was a very skilled and influential organizer who was also a gay Black man. And so for me, I wanted to share this story in that particular set of remarks to let folks know that LGBTQ people are here and are present and are having an impact in all areas and aspects of life. And that is a good thing."

Gilchrist said the civil rights movement was stronger because of Rustin. He said he wanted to bring attention to his role as a leader and as "a Black gay man standing up and fighting for all of our civil rights. And that certainly, we all need to make sure that there is space and opportunity for us to respect and uplift and learn from people and figures like him in our past."

Gilchrist told BTL that, actually, every gay person he's related to is Black.

"I don't know that I would accept that there is this forced separation," Gilchrist said. "Now with that said, there have been some people who've tried to drive that kind of rhetorical divide, and I think there we must always find every opportunity to ally our movements for justice, for inclusion, for representation, for progress and prosperity, for better health and education outcomes. I think that our struggles are inextricably linked in our culture, and we need to always work together to defeat them."

As an experienced activist, Gilchrist was well-suited to success in politics. And as Gov. Whitmer's second in command, it naturally follows that Gilchrist would advocate on behalf of the queer community. But he resisted singling out an equality-related initiative of which he's most proud as part of this administration. He first mentioned his attendance at the signing of the executive order banning discrimination against LGBTQ+ state employees, as well as the signing at the Ruth Ellis Center to ban state funding for conversion therapy.

"I'm very proud of those actions taken alongside Governor Whitmer," Gilchrist said. "But I think I'm most eager [for] the opportunity that we will have hopefully in the next legislative session to codify LGBTQ+ civil rights protections in the state's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, something that now currently exists via a court decision, but it will be stronger via legislation."

Gilchrist said he stands beside Michigan's LGBTQ+ state legislators who have introduced changes to ELCRA session after session, only to be rebuffed by GOP leadership. "We have an opportunity to do something about that in the next legislative session, as we fight towards democratic majorities," he said.

Michiganders have a stark choice at the top of the ticket next month. To ensure hate won't win at the ballot box, Gilchrist said that can happen "by voting against homophobia and by voting for humanity. I think the choice could not be more clear this year."

He said he hopes that LGBTQ+ people as well as allies register and vote. "The state is ready to go forward, and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and I want to continue to do that, leading that way," he said.

*Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 8. Visit [pridesource.com/election-2022](https://pridesource.com/election-2022).*





Leslie Jordan. Photo: Fox

## Dead at 67: Beloved Gay Icon Leslie Jordan Wanted to Be Remembered as a 'Good Guy'

### 'Will & Grace' Actor Talked to BTL in 2021 About His Legacy

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Veteran film, television actor and viral sensation Leslie Jordan has died after suffering an apparent medical attack and crashing his car into a building in Hollywood Monday morning. Tributes from around the world about the beloved actor are already pouring in across social media, many focused on Jordan's own entertaining social media posts during the height of the pandemic.

"The world is definitely a much darker place today without the love and light of Leslie Jordan. Not only was he a mega talent and joy to work with, but he provided an emotional sanctuary to the nation at one of its most difficult times," a representative for Jordan said in a statement. "Knowing that he has left the world at the height of both his professional and personal life is the only solace one can have today."

Jordan's work on shows like "Will & Grace,"

"Hearts Afire," "The Cool Kids," "Call Me Kat" and "American Horror Story" was well regarded and, often, groundbreaking. Consider that "Will & Grace" star Sean Hayes played a gay character on the show from the start, but didn't come out in real life for another decade. It was an iconic moment when Jordan's character on the show, Beverley, came out to Karen. The whole world fell in love with Jordan during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the actor entertained social media followers with his hilarious takes on everyday, "bored as shit" life during a time when we were all stuck at home. The comedian rose to the occasion with his trademark self-deprecation front and center.

BTL connected with Jordan twice over the past two years — once in February 2021 and again in February of this year.

See [Leslie Jordan Tribute](#), page 32

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**Queer Herstory**  
Puzzle on page 37



Joey Andrews. Courtesy photo

### ◀ Joey Andrews

Continued from page 22

“unnoticed and underrepresented.” Previously, the area was drawn into a district that was much more rural and conservative.

“I’ve found even talking to other Democrats in the legislature, that they’re not even aware of Saugatuck’s status as a major LGBTQ hub,” Andrews said.

Andrews often talks about equity. He said it’s something he became more aware of following the riots in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson. Andrews remembers being glued to the TV at 1 a.m.

“In a lot of ways, I think it broke down the perceptions that I had about race and equity in America, and reframed that for me in a pretty serious way,” Andrews said. “And it really opened my eyes to a lot of the inequality in my own community.”

But well before Ferguson, Andrews experienced inequality in his own family. For years, his godmother couldn’t legally marry her girlfriend. For that reason, he said his family has always felt a connection to the LGBTQ+ community. He said it was wonderful finally seeing the wedding come to fruition.

Perhaps with this election, west Michigan will turn a bit bluer. LaChey sounded confident that it’s possible and said that Andrews is the right ally for the job.

“Joey Andrews is exactly the type of pro-equality candidate who will demonstrate that Democrats can win anywhere in our state on our values and issues,” LaChey said.

Andrews’ commitment to fairness is reflected in his day job, too. As a policy analyst for the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), his work focuses on an initiative to improve life for workers where they live, something he likened to the Human Rights Campaign’s

Municipal Equality Index or the ACLU’s ratings.

“We wanted to have a way to present policy that was labor-friendly, worker-friendly, working families-friendly and inclusive,” said Andrews, “and sort of a way to give municipalities the ability to pass these laws, some sample legislation, sample proposals, and then be able to turn around and tell the state which municipalities are making the most progress on these issues and have a consolidated grading system.”

When he’s not at his day job or campaigning these days, Andrews might be found at home with his fiancé and three litter-trained house bunnies: Ali, Loki and Thor. A (human) baby is on the way.

With a law degree from Wayne State University and undergraduate degrees from Carson-Newman University in history and music, Andrews at one time considered a career as a studio musician. He plays the electric bass and writes music.

“It’s a pretty core part of my identity,” Andrews said. “I think it’s one that always surprises people in the political world when it comes up, because there’s not a whole lot of musicians-to-politicians in the pipeline.”

*The 38th State House District includes the following communities:*

*Berrien County: Benton Harbor, Benton Harbor Township, Bridgman, Chikaming Township, Hagar Township, Lake Charter Township, Lincoln Township, New Buffalo, New Buffalo Township, Saint Joseph, Saint Joseph Township. Van Buren County: Covert Township, South Haven, South Haven Township. Allegan County: Casco Township, Douglas, Ganges Township, Saugatuck, Saugatuck Township.*

*Early voting is happening now. Election Day is Nov. 8.*



# Angela Lansbury's Death Is a Reminder That Our Beloved Gay Icons Live On in Their Legacies

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Dame Angela Lansbury has died. Just days shy of her 97th birthday, the legendary lady of stage, screen and television took her final bow on Oct. 11. The proud gay icon leaves behind a legacy of rich performances that will continue to entertain for decades to come.

News of Lansbury's death took me back to 1992, when I was 20 and living in Miami doing a brief stint as a cast member — that's what they called us employees — at The Disney Store, now basically defunct. They forced us to wear itchy and highly flammable cardigans and hideous polyester pants and, worst of all, subjected us daily to an endless loop of Disney songs playing on a big screen mounted at the back of the store.

The latest Disney film at that time was "Beauty and the Beast," which gave me my introduction to Angela Lansbury. The renowned actress voiced the character of Mrs. Potts, a wise, talking teapot, who sang the title song in the film. By this time, Disney films were about as gay as a picnic basket. I did not know at the time but would soon learn that Lansbury and the gays had been engaged in a love fest for years.

From her debut and Oscar-nominated role as Nancy in 1944's "Gaslight," directed by George Cukor, whose homosexuality was well known in Hollywood circles, Lansbury thrilled gay audiences. She soon racked up another Oscar nomination starring as Sibyl Vane in the film adaption of Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray." Next was a role as Elizabeth Taylor's sister in "National Velvet" and a starring role alongside Judy Garland in "The Harvey Girls." In short, Lansbury quickly established herself as a favorite with queer audiences.

These early roles all took place in the 1940s, but 26 years later, in 1966, Lansbury would take on the role that would solidify her place as a gay icon. She originated the role of Mame Dennis on



Angela Lansbury as Jessica Fletcher in "Murder, She Wrote." Photo: CBS

Broadway. Co-starring was Bea Arthur as Vera Charles. The gays ran to the theater in droves. "Life is a banquet and most poor sons of bitches are starving to death," Mame famously said. And gay men ate it up.

In the 1980s, Lansbury reinvented herself, starring as mystery writer and amateur sleuth Jessica Fletcher in the TV series "Murder, She Wrote." Lansbury, who executive produced the show, would go on to do "Murder" for 12 seasons and four additional television movies. Jessica was not particularly glamorous — quite the opposite — but the gay audience identified with the feisty senior citizen who was so often cast aside and underestimated. The show was a universal hit. (And I'm proud to say that I own the entire series on DVD. Not that I play DVDs anymore. Or even remember how.)

Lansbury was still working up until 2018, when she appeared in a small role in the Disney sequel "Mary Poppins Returns." In 2013, she was awarded an honorary Oscar to go along with the five Tony Awards she had previously won for her stage work. The following year, Lansbury was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth.

In 2015, Lansbury was named No. 5 on Playbill's list of Definitive Divas Who

Are Gay Icons.

"I am very proud of the fact that I am a gay icon," Lansbury, as reported by The Advocate, said in an interview while she was appearing in Blythe Spirit in London. She credited her status in the gay community to her role as Mame. "Everything about Mame coincided with every young man's idea of beauty and glory and it was lovely," she said.

As a man of a certain age (50), I continue to watch as the gay icons I grew up with make their exit one by one. Lansbury certainly had a good run. (May we all live to be 96 and in good health.) She lived a full life and was beloved.

Much like with "The Golden Girls," I still watch "Murder, She Wrote" on occasion. It's like comfort food for the soul. And, again, as with the "Girls," "Murder" still appears on cable television regularly. The two are sort of strangely intertwined with a shared fanbase. Both are still as entertaining as they were when they made their 1980s debuts.

That's the thing about gay icons. They are, in a way, immortal. They live on in celluloid and remain with us throughout the years, taking us back to a simpler place in time every time we watch them.

Dame Lansbury, thank you for your service. Please, rest well. I'll see you soon in Cabot Cove.

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Jaye Marie Carolan. Photo: Tom Wesley

# This Trans Woman Ran a Bear Bar in Detroit For Four Years

## Now She's Ready to Move On

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Yes, Jaye Marie Carolan is the trans woman who owns the bear bar.

She bought the Hayloft Saloon four years ago, knowing exactly what it was — a gay bar for men — and promised that wouldn't change. Now she's selling it.

"I'm not in a hurry to sell it,"

Carolan told BTL. "I don't need to sell it. I'm just trying to get a little bit of my life back."

The bar was sold to Carolan in 2018, but it opened decades before, in 1980. Original owner Leonard Lippert owned the bar for 16 years, opening it upon his retirement from Manufacturer's Bank in Detroit, and sold it in 1996 to Ron Harrington.

Harrington was living in Florida and running the bar remotely by the time he sold it to Carolan.

"I don't know of another bar in Michigan that caters to just men," Carolan said. "They're all alternative. There was no bar left just for the guys, for guys to be guys and go meet guys. And I wanted to keep it that way."

Not that the Hayloft isn't open to

all. "It's a place where men meet men, but everyone who walks through the door is very welcome," she said. "But I do not promote it as anything other than that."

The Hayloft is actually not Carolan's first bar. Originally from Bay City, Carolan would often come to Detroit and become a regular at Gigi's on Saturday nights. Soon after, she discovered Adam's Apple. "I'd go in the afternoons and have a couple of cocktails, and I fell in love with the bar," she said.

When approached about buying Adam's Apple at the start of 2014, Carolan didn't hesitate. "It was the first one that I bought because I love that place," she said.

She had long run a family business that she told us she didn't care to discuss and said she cashed in an

insurance policy and used the funds to buy the bar. "I've always lived pretty well, but I've never been wealthy by any stretch," she said. "I had the insurance policy to take care of my family in case anything happened to me."

But by this point, Carolan was divorced and her kids all grown. "I had all this cash, and I didn't know what to do with it. So, I thought, 'Here's something that can be an investment and I'll have some control over it. What the heck? I'll buy the bar.'"

Buying Adam's Apple was a decision she's never regretted. "I really enjoy being a bar owner," she said. "I like the people. I have a lot of fun with it. If I could go back and change it, I wouldn't change a thing. I'd do it all over again."

With the Hayloft, however, she could not have known that COVID-19 was on the horizon and would hit just two years later — or that she'd have to close down for months.

Despite various pandemic-related challenges, Carolan persevered, pouring money and time into renovating the space.

But today, Carolan, at age 68, said she is ready to sell. The Hayloft, located at 8070 Greenfield Road, is 2,200 square feet and was built in 1951. The bar, including the business, liquor license and real estate, is being sold

for just over a half million dollars.

"It's probably a bad time for me to want to sell it, because I've put so much money into it," said Carolan. "I've got all the major stuff done now, and it's really in a position where it could make some money."

It's not all about the money, however. She's just ready to not work quite as tirelessly. "I'm still very involved in the family business. And with the two bars on top of that, I have no life anymore. Something had to go — and I'm not going to give up the Adam's Apple, because that's my heart."



Hayloft Saloon. Photo: Jason A. Michael



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## ◀ Anti-Trans Bill

Continued from page 10

Even if passed by both chambers of the Michigan legislature, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer would undoubtedly veto the medically unsound bill. However, if queer-phobic Tudor Dixon were to somehow win in a couple weeks, the bill would certainly be signed into law. Dixon and other Republican candidates across the state have been actively campaigning on an anti-LGBTQ+ agenda, attempting to rally their culturally antiquated conservative base.

These efforts are clear attempts to distract from the fact that Republicans are behind in the polls on issues such as a woman's right to choose, a topic sure to play a large role in next month's election. Playing on such fears has long been a successful way for Republicans to raise funds from the radical right.

Matthew DePerno, who is running to replace Attorney General Dana Nessel, a lesbian, called her "Michigan's Groomer General" on Twitter in a weak attempt to play on outdated and disproven stereotypes that queer people are predators.

Nadine Hubbs, a professor in the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Michigan and the director of the institution's Lesbian-Gay-Queer Research Initiative, commented on the ploy for a story on mlive.com.

"We LGBTQ people ... we have a long history of being framed as sexual suspects," said Hubbs. "It's easy, then, to rouse that aura of suspicion around an LGBTQ politician or public figure because you just splash water on all the old myths and stereotypes."

The American Medical Association came out in support of trans youth in an open letter the group issued last year urging legislators to leave medical decisions to doctors.

"Such decisions must be sensitive to the child's clinical situation, nurture the child's short and long-term development, and balance the need to preserve the child's opportunity to make important life choices autonomously in the future," read the letter in part. "We believe it is inappropriate and harmful for any state to legislatively dictate that certain transition-related services are never appropriate and limit the range of options physicians and families may consider when making decisions for pediatric patients."

Knott is calling on progressive Michiganders to contact their state rep and urge them not to support this horrible bill.

"The Michigan House of Representatives are trying to come between youth and the care they need," Knott wrote in the Equality Michigan action alert. "House Bill 6454 is a reckless bill that, if passed, will have dangerous effects on transgender youth."



Leslie Jordan. Courtesy photo

## ◀ Leslie Jordan Tribute

Continued from page 27

Reflecting on his casting in the sitcom "Call Me Kat" this past February, Jordan told editorial director Chris Azzopardi that he wanted the show to "go for a while."

"I'm at an age," he said, laughing. "I'm 66. I was thinking if it went as long as 'Big Bang Theory,' I'd be like almost 80 when it's over. I'll be ready to retire. I'd be so rich."

Jordan may not have reached that goal, but he leaves behind a legacy of laughter and pure-hearted joy that will impact generations to come. "I have achieved everything I came to Hollywood to achieve," he told Azzopardi. "I've done Broadway, I've done film, I've done a lot of television. ... 'Call Me Kat' looks like it's pulling some numbers. It may stay around for a little while, which is a wonderful thing to know as an actor. I have a job!"

During the 2021 interview, Jordan reflected on his iconic voice, which became part of his



Leslie Jordan and Megan Mullally in "Will & Grace." Photo: NBC

**At the time of the February 2022 interview, Jordan was 66 and said he'd reached a point where he was "comfortable with myself — who I am and what I am. And that's a wonderful place to be. So, everything from here on out is just gravy. It really is just living one day at a time and having a really good time."**

signature persona over the years. "I got to Hollywood, and there was a casting director that told me, 'You're such a character actor already, and if you could lose your Southern accent...' And I tried, and I couldn't," he said. "The day that I decided, 'Well, this is just a marketable

package here' was the day that I started working. But I worried more, I think, because of my internal homophobia about my gay accent. I

would listen to myself and think, 'Oh girl, you've gotta calm down a little bit.'"

At the time of the February 2022 interview, Jordan was 66 and said he'd reached a point where he was "comfortable with myself — who I am and what I am. And that's a wonderful place to be. So, everything from here on out is just gravy. It really is just living one day at a time and having a really good time."

Asked how he'd want to be remembered one day, Jordan said he'd want to be remembered like "a Dolly Parton."

"Nobody had a bad word. He was a nice guy. And the fact that I'm fairly talented in this and that, that's OK. But I just want people to know he was good. He was a nice guy. He was a good guy. I think that's most important. And that I was raised right."







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Beth Ditto. Photo: Fox

# Country Goes Queer

## 'Monarch' Star Beth Ditto on Why LGBTQ+ Representation Matters to Kids Everywhere, But Especially in the South

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

All this talk of authentic representation and, finally, we're seeing it. In fact, we're seeing *a lot* of it in the extremely dramatic new Fox soap-esque series "Monarch." Here, Gossip frontwoman Beth Ditto, who is proudly fat and queer (and a musician herself), plays Gigi, one of Dottie and Albie's

three children. If this show was a documentary about country music royalty, you'd know Dottie (Susan Sarandon) and Albie (Trace Adkins) by name — they're the country music superstars behind some of the biggest hits in the genre (the show has fun with this, pretending that they made songs like "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!" famous). All the kids are overshadowed by their famous

parents, but it's Gigi's struggle that is most relatable to queer people who've put their dreams on the shelf because of who they are.

In conversation recently, Ditto spoke about the personal parallels between her and Gigi, the importance of accessible queer representation and what's next for her own music career.

**What about the show jumped out at**

**you immediately when you read the script?**

Well, it was more like the description of the characters that they were looking for. "A fat country singer who was a lesbian" was the description. I think they used the word plus-size, but I would say the word fat. So, "a plus-size, lesbian country singer." I was like,

"What?" And being from Arkansas and growing up where I did and being a Southerner in real life, I was just like, "They're crazy if they don't pick me. Who else is going to do it? They're going to get Brandi Carlile. Good luck. There's not that many of us." I was like, "You have very few choices. And this could be your moment to right the wrongs."



### Is that what you said during your audition?

Yeah. I would say I was always half joking, but I was actually pretty serious. I was like, “You should hire someone gay. So if you don’t hire me, it should be someone [gay].”

### The show is full of country queens, like Tanya Tucker, Shania Twain and Martina McBride. I imagine these are artists that you admired when you were a kid in Arkansas who loved music.

Yes, absolutely. My mom was very much a rock ‘n’ roll, cool mom. But my dad was more into country music and was always surrounded by it. There was this huge crossover where all of a sudden it was as big as rock ‘n’ roll and pop music. So you had Garth Brooks, Lorrie Morgan and Tanya Tucker. You had Reba, who was killing it with “Fancy.”

But the thing was, I had met Tanya Tucker before, and I had met her in Seattle. And because the MoPOP Museum in Seattle was honoring Brandi Carlile. She had asked certain people to perform, and Tanya Tucker was one of them because she had just produced her record that won the Grammy.

When I saw Tanya Tucker, I didn’t realize that I was going to have the response that I did, but I was weepy. My mother grew up on “Delta Dawn,” but I grew up with “Your last teardrop, my last teardrop” [lyrics from Tucker’s song “Down to My Last Teardrop”]. I was really moved to meet her the first time. So when she was on “Monarch,” it didn’t matter because she did not remember me from shit. I was like, “I met you.” She was like, “Bitch.” She’s like, “You did?”

### I hope she called you bitch.

She’s like, “Who, bitch?” She did not. She’s feisty but really funny and very friendly. I grew up knowing those kinds of women. Those Southern women who smoked; it was a part of their identity, like, “I smoke.”

### Your first scene in the first episode when you get to kiss your wife — it’s such a casual statement. As a queer person who loves country music, which is considered a more conservative genre and culture, what did doing that scene mean to you?

I really was like, “This is going to be a thing that queer kids are going to see. And you don’t have to have cable.” You don’t have to have cable! Does anybody have cable? I still do, I won’t lie. Because that’s the thing, that those people *do* exist. And I don’t think that’s something people think about. When you think about rural towns, really, really rural... the example of this is my nephew who’s with me up here in New York visiting and still lives in Arkansas with all my family that still lives there. He lives in the oldest town in Arkansas. Eighty people. Out in the middle of nowhere. And they just got internet. They just got it. And it’s not even good enough to stream sometimes. So you have to think about that. Those things are real. But we’re not talking about just little kids that need it, but older

people aren’t necessarily streaming. Even though my mom did blow my mind a couple months ago because she was like, “Yeah, I got Redbox.” I was like, “What?” I guess she’s got to get that BBC.

### What kind of response have you been getting from the queer community about your portrayal of Gigi?

I have mostly heard from people I already know that are really excited about it. And a lot of it’s also about size too. A lot of fat girls are like, “Yes, finally.” A lot of it’s been about that, honestly. Because I think both of those things are a big part of the representation.

### Regarding your own music — what’s on the horizon for Gossip?

We started writing a record in 2019, the pandemic happened, and it’s just now finished.

### Is it pandemic-influenced?

No, because it was written before the pandemic. So what we were working on during the pandemic was the production of it, because that took forever because of the pandemic. I want to start writing a new record immediately, just to reflect on what’s going on right now. Even just inside of me and how everything fucking is insane and crazy and frightening. Then just a lot of empowerment and a lot of love and encouragement. And so I really want to write a new record, and I think we’re going to start that as soon as we can. We’ve been talking about it.

### Gigi’s sexuality has affected the way she feels about her musical career. It’s held her back. As a musician yourself, did that part of her story resonate with you?

Yeah. I know exactly how she feels. Down from having a big sister who was this idea of ideal talent-show beauty versus what I was. She was an academic; I was a creative. She was a blonde; I was a dirty blonde. And then being queer in the Bible belt in a dry county. Email was new. It was like, “Oh my god, I can talk to my friend in Boston? That’s crazy.”

### Did you find queer connection through the internet?

You know what, I was really lucky. And I’m not a spiritual person, but fate somehow intervened because I was so lucky to grow up in the town that I did. There were, like, 1,900 people and my good friend was a queer boy. He was a radical feminist. I knew I was gay really young, but I also knew that I couldn’t talk about it. I had conflicted feelings, and that didn’t come from my mother. That’s the thing. That came from outside the house. And the internet came along and, of course, you had more access to stuff. But I got so lucky. I mean we were the weird kids in town, though. My friends got bullied a lot. I kind of

See **Beth Ditto**, page 36



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Photo: Fox

## ◀ Beth Ditto

Continued from page 35

got to escape a little bit because they lived in a bigger town, so their school was a lot bigger. And I went to a really small school where literally I graduated the class with, like, 60 kids. I was probably cousins with five people in my class

But yeah, the internet was great later. Then my little sister, who's 11 years younger than me, when she was coming up, I was always so happy that she had access to things I didn't have. Now it's my little niece. Just knowing that how she identifies as pansexual and she has access to this language and has access to different ideas and meeting different people. And just from her bedroom. It's so empowering.

**Regarding the intersection between queerness and country music: I don't think a character like yours could have existed in a show like this years ago.**

I was surprised that this was a role that they were going to have. And honestly, I'm a little surprised that they actually picked someone like me to do it. And not [just] gay, but somebody who just will say anything. Like, I identify as queer. And I will talk about that.

**And then to boot, you get to sing a Lizzo song.**

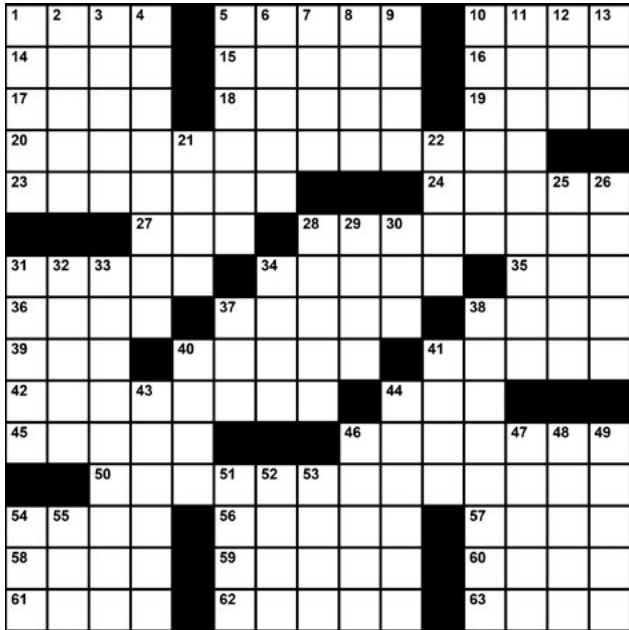
That's so crazy. I'm so happy with this song. Because I really love her. But you want to hear something insane? Her stylist is from Bald Knob, Arkansas, which is literally the town over from where I grew up. It's a white county. So there's this group of gay [people]. This is a connection, too, to the gayness: Her stylist's

boyfriend came to a Gossip show in Chicago in probably 2007 or something. I'm not sure of the time. But he was a lot younger. And he was holding a sign that said, "I'm from Judsonia." And that's where I'm from. I lost my shit. Lost my shit! So we stay connected over social media. He's still in Arkansas. Starts this incredible night. Starts running the house. It's just a group of queer kids in Little Rock living together. [The house] is called the House of Avalon. They started a queer night called Glitter Rock and moved to L.A. together, just like Gossip did. We moved to the Pacific Northwest together from Arkansas. They start House of Avalon out there. They're doing all this shit. I mean, they're killing it. And then one of those kids goes on to become Lizzo's stylist.

**I'm glad you shared that story because, back to your point, I hope some kid in small-town Arkansas reads that story and it inspires them to believe that they too can make something of their life.**

And that's it. People got really comfortable. We had Obama, things were good. We had to fight for the rights and protections of our trans brothers and sisters, all these things. And so we got comfortable, and now we're seeing the backlash of that. You forget how it's still important. Because what Gossip did, as small as a thing as we were, especially in America, that one kid in Bald Knob, Arkansas, in Judsonia, that I didn't know, who's like 10 years younger than me, sees this and then they hold onto that. So just when we get comfortable, when you think you know everything, is when you should start opening your mind even more.





Queer Herstory

Across

- 1 Facial characteristic
- 5 Enjoys the gay bar scenery
- 10 Sink problem
- 14 Took a trolley that goes "Clang, clang, clang," e.g.
- 15 Go on all fours
- 16 Ready to rub you the right way
- 17 Israeli author \_\_\_\_ Oz

Q Puzzle

- 18 Big star's small part
- 19 Hart Crane work
- 20 Lover of Alice B. Toklas
- 23 Provides dirt for Casablanca
- 24 Change the price of, at Barneys
- 27 Like some stares
- 28 Dash for cross-dressers?
- 31 With 34-Across, lover of Josephine Baker
- 34 See 31-Across

Down

- 1 Fayetteville fort
- 2 Leonardo's 1996 title role
- 3 Ban targets
- 4 Like a Broadway story
- 5 Have troops in
- 6 Jodie Foster et al., to Yale
- 7 Liberace fabric
- 8 Meadow moms
- 9 Position to fill

- 35 Ran into
- 36 "M. Butterfly" star John
- 37 Meat stabbers
- 38 Lahr of "The Wizard of Oz"
- 39 Dadaist Jean
- 40 With 41-Across, lover of Mercedes de Acosta
- 41 See 40-Across
- 42 Pick up on
- 44 Colony resident
- 45 Word from Tom Bianchi, perhaps
- 46 Talked like Gomer
- 50 Lover of Vita Sackville-West
- 54 Figure skater Rippon
- 56 Erection supporter
- 57 Madonna, in "Dick Tracy," e.g.
- 58 Salty white stuff from the Greeks
- 59 Tèa of "Spanglish"
- 60 Area east of the Urals
- 61 Bipedal dino
- 62 Endora portrayer
- 63 Kristy McNichol's "Empty \_\_\_\_"
- 10 One that reproduces without sex
- 11 Siegfried or Roy
- 12 Hurrah for Jose
- 13 Muscle Mary's place
- 21 Costa \_\_\_\_
- 22 Proof part
- 25 Like sourballs
- 26 Piss off
- 28 "Divine Comedy" poet
- 29 Perlman of "Cheers"
- 30 Gore and "South Park's" Big Gay
- 31 Labia, e.g.
- 32 "Air Music" composer Ned
- 33 Where a top soldier wants to put it?
- 34 Ukraine capital
- 37 Cycle beginning
- 38 Gay DC figure
- 40 Will of "The Waltons"
- 41 Chew like a mouse
- 43 The big O
- 44 One of the Three Musketeers
- 46 Frasier's lover in Boston
- 47 Like Rita Mae Brown's lips?
- 48 Fashion designer Perry
- 49 Self-contradictory bra size?
- 51 Monster head?
- 52 Mendicant's self-description?
- 53 Brightly-colored
- 54 Toward the rear, to sailors
- 55 James Van \_\_\_\_ Beek

See p. 28 for answers

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Cate Blanchett in "Tár." Photo: Focus Features

# 'Tár' Is a Staggering Lesbian Success Story. But Whose Success Is It?

BY GEORGE ELKIND

In writer-director Todd Field's latest film, "Tár," there's a sense of intoxication in play, an air of fascination in the treatment of his leading character as a kind of monument — albeit one shadowed with foreboding.

The film introduces Cate Blanchett as Lydia Tár, a contemporary classical conductor and composer at a career high, soon to restage Mahler's fifth symphony with the Berlin Philharmonic; given that we encounter her at the absolute top of the heap, it's unclear how much higher her star could rise.

From the artful silhouettes of Lydia's suits to her collection of fine books and records to her marriage to Sharon, her orchestra's first violinist (played by the brilliant German actress Nina Hoss), her life seems to unfold in a kind of walled garden appointed with grand, well-chosen features. Even as the film renders her career achievements as monumental

— so much so that her status as an EGOT is tossed off as an aside — the matter of her lesbianism is framed both in her words and the film's portrayal quite casually, making the question of what being lesbian means to Tár (and to "Tár") as much a mystery as the nature of the dizzying array of works she must have scored.

Blanchett, probably known best to queer audiences for her starring role opposite Rooney Mara in Todd Haynes' 2015 romantic drama "Carol," recently told *Variety* that the character's lesbian status is "not the headline or the issue," adding that she admired the role's matter-of-fact treatment. And Blanchett's right, at least about that casualness: Lydia's life as a lesbian, her position as a prominent woman in a male-dominated field, and her mothering of a daughter, Petra, are all treated as natural facts of her life. Instead of these features serving as primary features of her identity, her

life seems defined by her discipline, privilege and prowess; she expresses skepticism even of her gender having impacted her career, and at one point suggests scuttling the identity-based parameters of a charitable fellowship

the field who surround her — none enjoying anywhere near her level of celebrity — Lydia's way of being provides a tantalizing spectacle, arousing a sense of professional aspiration that becomes bound



Cate Blanchett and Nina Hoss in "Tár." Photo: Focus Features

aimed at supporting female musicians. A girlboss who's transcended making a fuss about it, she luxuriates in a position of power countless women could only dream of.

And they do. For the women in

up in more traditionally charged forms of desire. And as the film progresses, the feeling only grows. For Lydia's assistant Francesca (played with a watchful reticence by Noémie Merlant, just as splendid

as in "Portrait of a Lady on Fire"), Lydia's position — as her boss, a key gatekeeper and a model for her own wants — stands as a defining feature of her life. For Francesca, and for others, and especially queer women, Lydia's power — alongside, surely, her charisma and her craft — are understood to generate both an attractive and a repellent charge.

But it's more than incidental that Lydia knows and plays on this, bringing the movie to a place of meditation, as she barrels into a web of scandals, on what female power means. For Lydia is a kind of womanizer, an egocentric and casual abuser in more than one classic male sense, treating men and women alike who surround her as disposable, and all but the same — even if the nature of her exact misdeeds are something the film is often guarded about.

With its rash of #MeToo-style allegations of professional misconduct eventually ensnaring its protagonist, "Tár" makes itself contemporary through its coy engagement with the histrionic dramas of "cancellation," sure — but especially through its casual treatment of Lydia's lesbian identity. (In this, a German setting surely helps). With Lydia as the film's guiding force and ever-flexing primary subject — as well as the object of its supporting cast's desires and fears — treatment of the character shows her holding power flippantly enough to harbor the easy potential to abuse it. Considering this, Field and Blanchett's work on the character feels like something that wouldn't have been possible even a handful of years ago.

Treating identity not as magical but as a factor which could be either formative or not in one's life, the movie's queer depiction is torn between admiration and fear of its leading character's charisma and accomplishments. But what it's not, to its credit, is congratulatory toward her, knowing her to possess not just a queer identity but to have levels of wealth and white privilege so staggering as to be, for most LGBTQ+ people, beyond imagination. Lydia, by contrast, can't seem to even dream of not having those resources — and appears to believe they're destined to be hers whatever she might do. It'll be something to look forward to, the film seems to say, when a broader range of people can even be imagined to enjoy the same varieties of power and acclaim.





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