

Voters at polls in Michigan speak out against campaign silence on major issues in the elections

Andrea Lobo, James Langley
6 November 2024

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to workers at the polls in Detroit on Election Day about their thoughts on the candidates and the social chasm that separates the presidential campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris and the main issues facing the working class.

Saresa Smith, a software engineer, told WSWs reporters:

I'll openly admit that none of the issues that are important to me, none of the candidates are really discussing. This is a three-ring circus here, talking about things they have no control over, they are pandering groups, at least the two main parties. Like education, mental health, healthcare system, a lot of insurance issues, the way money is getting spent, social security, like war—the Pentagon losing millions of dollars every year. Things that should be discussed nobody is talking about.

We are making money off war, the people who lobby for them because that is legal in this country—bribing is legal in this country. They are two different wings of the same bird, they are fighting but are playing for the same team. They are making money for the same people. We are the ones suffering.

The things that are weighing on me are the war, the way we are spending social security. I just literally received my last notice that said that by 2036 they are going to be paying 76 cents on the dollar, which is funny because they take money from my check every two weeks.

Asked about her thoughts on socialism, “From what I understand, very broadly it is that you put in the effort and get the benefits from it. That would be very nice, the ideal situation. I know capitalism isn't working.”

Andre Price, a computer science student said:

I was really concerned about the state of the economy. Right now I'm very worried about the high inflation, the wars that are happening around the world. I want these wars to end. We have to stop funding lots of military weapons being sent to these countries being used to kill other people and right now I think we need to worry about what is happening at home. With the high inflation, families are being harmed, they are not able to feed their children. They are living paycheck to paycheck.

Kenny Moss, a worker at a Forge Industrial Staffing plant, said:

Trump shouldn't make it through. He is more for the rich. There is something wrong with it. I have kids. I don't have a mom. I don't have a dad. I'm raising two little brothers and a little sister and I am the oldest. My little sister and her baby. He is on drugs, so everything is left on me. That is stupid to me. I work everyday. I work seven days a week. I just took two days just for this, to make sure I voted for sure. I know I don't want him [Trump] there, I can tell you that much. He ain't got any respect for Detroit and for a lot of people.

When interviewers pointed to the massive sums that Harris has received from billionaires, Moss said:

That is what I don't get. Kamala makes me mad sometimes because she should be for all people, besides of a certain race. We are all humans. Even Kamala has got a lot wrong on her too. I don't blame nobody. I feel that they are both doing dumb stuff. They are just BS-ing around.

Asked about the agitation against immigrants and foreign workers by both capitalist parties, he said angrily:

The billionaires are the ones taking all the money. That is just crazy. No matter if you are black, white, Puerto Rican, I don't care what color you are, everybody goes through it. You probably go through it. It don't matter what color, what race you are, stay high, keep your head high. We are all gonna' make it one day.

Andre Boyd, a machine press operator at Yanfeng and military veteran, said,

Me being prior military, I've been a little more worldly, but the abortion thing was the killer for me, basically taking women's rights away, no matter what Trump could offer it still couldn't trump that at all. I wouldn't want the government to tell me what I can and can't do, that is going to straight dictatorship, you are

peeing on people's rights.

Regarding issues that were not addressed by the main campaigns, he said:

We are barely scratching the bottom of the barrel as it is now and now you are talking about taking overtime away. At Yanfeng we still have overtime and they are following their contract, but the winds could blow a different way. The thing is that I also used to work at the casinos ... and we had a lot of bad contracts at the casinos. I mean, we were getting screwed.

Lynette Cleveland, a former tax preparer for 48 years and disability recipient, said her main concern was "to lose my medical, to lose my social security is sad." When asked about the spending of so much money on war, she said, "I don't like it at all. I'm hungry. I'm a US citizen and been here for 64 years, and I can't get nothing, while they are getting all these billions. I can't get no help. These seniors who worked all their lives to the bone and they are getting \$10-12 worth of food stamps. That is an insult.

"People asked me who I wanted to vote for, and if you want me to be honest, I did not want to vote for neither one of them but I got to vote for somebody. I started to put my own name down there. I really did."

Michael, a teacher in Dearborn, said his main concern was "whether or not our planet is going to survive my lifetime or my people's lifetime." He added, "On specific issues, I am basically a socialist, but I am pragmatic. I typically vote for the Democratic Party because it is closer to what I can tolerate, but in this elections I voted for Harris. I would have voted for my dog as opposed to Trump, who is a very frightening man, strange and dangerous. ... But the issues that upset me with this election, even though there are clear differences between the two—I was just reading in my car that the Defense Minister of Israel, Gallant, was fired. The truth of the matter is that regardless of which candidate wins, devastation of our planet continues in specific areas and in general. The issues of Harris and her ability to make or speak of a change in US policy toward Israel I find so abominable that it really bothers me.

"The endgame of capitalism drifts toward fascism in capitalist society. I see that with our culture here. I have been teaching for a long time in high school, in mental hospitals and at University of Dearborn. High school students in public schools are taught that there is no choice but capitalism. These other systems are inherently evil. Capitalism is being put on a pillar."

Asked about the threats by the Republican Party to threaten poll workers and prepare another coup attempt, Michael said, "The electoral system is not democratic. The people in there [election officials] work hard. The fighting has grown progressively worse. I have friends who were officials in Cobo Hall in 2020, when Trump supporters were there. The windows were close to breaking and them coming in. What would happen if they broke in and destroyed the ballots? This time around they are much more prepared. ... People on the short end of the stick will pay for this.

Detroit Police reported Monday that it had received a threat to shoot up a polling location in the 21600 block of West Seven Mile Road, on Detroit's northwest side

Daniel Baxter, Detroit's chief operating officer for absentee voting and special projects, told Reuters, "We plan for a riot." This includes protecting the election headquarters in the city with armed guards and bullet-proof glass, while counting of mail-in ballots was moved to a convention hall downtown.

Reuters reported that Morgan Ray, the Republican National

Committee's director of election integrity for Michigan, said to volunteers that Detroit could not be trusted given its large Democratic vote in this swing state. "If I could get away with ... you know, burning it to the ground, I would try," she told those who would be deployed to "oversee" the elections.

The WSWs also visited a voting place in north Dearborn, where many said they voted for a third party, stressing the massive opposition to the genocide in this predominantly Arab suburb of Detroit.

Ali, a 16-year-old student who accompanied his family, recounted the multiple walkouts over the war that have taken place where he studies, at Fordson High School.

"I play football, and I have been talking to my friends and they tell me every day: 'My mom died yesterday, my aunt died yesterday, my uncle died yesterday, my cousins died yesterday.'

"One of my friends came from Lebanon. His cousins are all being killed, the cousins he grew up with. He grew up here. This is an American kid, a good kid, who would have been dead if he had stayed in his country, but his mom decided to move. We had to do something. Everybody's family is dying, so we organized a walkout."

Reporters also talked to **Hussein Dekmak**, a hospital laboratory scientist:

"If you kill one innocent life, it's like killing the whole nation. I was watching a video yesterday of European delegates, and there was a journalist asking them: 'Do the Palestinian lives matter more than Ukrainian lives?' None of them answered and just kept walking.

"Every life matters, whether it's Lebanese, Palestinian, all lives matter. We are talking about human beings. I donated stem cells, a serious, costly procedure, and they were sent to Germany. It was matched to one out of a million or so people across the world. This is how we should view life. I saved a single life, but Palestinians are being murdered in the thousands. It doesn't matter your belief, your religion, we are all equal and our lives matter."

When asked about the election, he responded:

"I voted last time for Biden and I regret it. ... My daughter has \$130,000 [in] student loans from Wayne State University, yet we have hundreds of billions of dollars to support war and to kill people overseas. We don't have money to support a student going to school, to take care of homeless people, for infrastructure or education.

"Healthcare and education should be free. Wayne State is a public school, but my son's tuition is \$10,000, it's ridiculous."

Yamili, an elderly woman originally from Lebanon whose main concern is how to stop the expanding war in the Middle East, responded with a question, "What do you think? Tell me what I should do, and I'll do it. I don't care. I want to stop the fight. I like peace everywhere."



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact