

# Livingston County Democratic Executive Committee

8028 Grand River, Suite 7  
Brighton, MI 48114

810-229-4212

[livcodems@gmail.com](mailto:livcodems@gmail.com)

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Dem Chair Files Complaint Against Jay Drick**

Livingston County Commission Chair Jay Drick violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act by campaigning for re-election while presiding over an official commission meeting, the chair of the Livingston County Democratic Party says in a complaint filed with the state.

The complaint filed by Judy Daubenmier against Jay Drick stems from the commission's July 22 board meeting when he rebutted statements made by the spouse of his opponent.

"Not only should he be familiar with the law as an attorney, but he is also the veteran of multiple campaigns as he stated during the meeting. In addition, his remarks were not off the cuff in the heat of the moment but premeditated and planned. He can be seen reading from a written statement, looking down and turning pages," Daubenmier said.

"He intentionally violated the law and should be called to account."

Drick is being opposed in the Republican primary by Heather Williams, spouse of former county commissioner Steve Williams. Steve Williams spoke during the meeting's call to the public and criticized the county commission for breaking its own rules, taking credit for balancing its budget when it is required by law to do so, and for campaigning while on the job.

After all members of the public had spoken, Drick spoke and rebutted allegations that have been made against him during the campaign. He did so while remaining in his seat as chair

of the county commission and while receiving his salary as a county commission chair, the complaint says.

After the commission conducted its business, Steve Williams again criticized the board, saying, “You’re using public property to advance somebody’s career and holding employees hostage ... forcing them to attend a political rally.” (County employees who are department heads are required to attend commission meetings in case the commissioners have questions about board agenda items.)

Again, Drick responded while remaining in his board chair. He criticized Heather Williams for having lived in the county only four years and lacking the expertise needed to serve on the commission. He said filings in federal bankruptcy court showed she had \$358,000 in unsecured debts that she failed to repay. “That’s 358,000 reasons not to let her anywhere near our county budget or borrowing,” he said.

The statements Drick made while conducting a public meeting as chair constitute campaigning as they amount to a rebuttal of complaints raised by his opponent in campaign mailings and elsewhere, as well as laying out his own experience and qualifications. That is the essence of campaigning, Daubenmier said.

Drick did not state that he was taking personal time to make these statements. He did not step down from his commission seat and go to the Call to the Public table to make his remarks, as another commissioner, Doug Helzerman, did earlier, Daubenmier said. He remained in his position as board chair. By doing so, he lent the color of official information to his remarks against his opponent and used public facilities.

This constitutes a violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act Sec. 57 (f) which prohibits public officials from campaigning while on the job and being paid, Daubenmier's complaint said.

Appendix I of the Michigan Campaign Finance Manual, titled "Use of Public Facilities, Funds, etc. Prohibited," includes the following paragraph:

**"Can a public official campaign while on publicly paid time?** No. At no time can a public official campaign when being paid to work. A public official must use personal time or accrued leave time to campaign during working hours."

The complaint was filed Friday with the Michigan Secretary of State's Bureau of Elections.

The evidence cited was the Zoom recording of the meeting posted on the county's youtube site, available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Vlm2ULRH7g>.

Drick's comments in the first call to the public run from 100:51 to 103:28 and his comments during the second call to the public run from 1:24:19 to 1:26:47.

The maximum penalty is up to a \$1,000 fine and up to a year in jail or both. Drick should face a sizeable penalty, Daubenmier said, because he is an attorney and is familiar with the law, and he did not act in the heat of the moment.

Paid for by Livingston County Democratic Executive Committee, 8028 Grand River, Woodland Plaza Suite 7, Brighton, MI 48114. Labor donated