

JANUARY 2023 REVIEW

WHAT WE SEE

# Freedom is Our Default



# **United by a love of liberty, the people of Ottawa County brought a wave of accountability to elected officials with their vote, replacing 8 of 11 County Commissioners.**



## **TO RESTORE**

The constitutional rights of the people as a first priority of the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners.

## **TO DEFEND**

Their piece of America.

## **TO PROTECT**

Their individual freedoms, parental rights, and freedom of religion and conscience.

## OUR STORY



**Like so many in our community, we were not engaged with county government until 2020, when Ottawa County took decisive action against the citizens and broke the public trust.**

**A watershed moment** was when the county attorney informed the commissioners they had earned the [praise of the offices of Governor Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel](#) for their harsh handling of a local Christian school, being aware of their “political constituency” and the “characteristics and the nature of the Ottawa County community.”

**The convictions of their “political constituency”** were expressed in the [Ottawa Declaration](#), signed by Representative Luke Meerman and Senator Roger Victory in February of 2021.


**On May 25, 2021, parents outlined the mounting government overreach and effects of Covid-19 measures on students**, and requested the Commissioners sign the [Resolution to End Enforcement of Covid-19 Orders and](#)

[Restore Constitutional Freedoms to Ottawa County](#). Senator Roger Victory, Representative Luke Meerman, and Commissioner Kyle Terpstra signed the Resolution, along with 2750 citizens.

**After a summer of advocating with the County, on August 20, 2021, nearly 300 parents and children gathered at the Ottawa County Health Department for a Health Freedom Rally.** On the same day, the health department ordered children in grades Pre K-6 to wear masks in school.

**By the time 1000 parents attended the County Commissioners’ meeting on August 24, 2021, the commissioners had been thoroughly informed**—over a period of months, of the importance of individual freedoms and the constitutional parental right to make health decisions for their own children.

## FREEDOM IS OUR DEFAULT



**Moms and dads throughout the county joined together with principled, courageous candidates to protect freedom and American values.**

**A combination of fresh and innovative strategy, messaging, technology, and hard work produced groundbreaking results.**


The People brought a wave of accountability to elected officials, restoring trust with their new elected representatives.

**Each new leader brought unique strengths, talents, and abilities.** They were united by a shared love of liberty and American values, a demonstrated commitment to hard work, and a promise to restore and protect our county as outlined in the Contract with Ottawa.

**New county commissioners are highly skilled and compassionate,** such as nurses Gretchen Cosby and Lucy Ebel, nature-based preschool teacher Allison Miedema, who resigned as masking children violated her conscience, and Roger Belknap, who left his career due to his concern and desire to be a voice for others. We are excited to see the thought leadership they bring to our County.

**Leading up to and following the 2022 election, it became clear existing county leadership was not aligned with protecting the constitutional rights and freedoms of The People, and continuation—even for a short time, would jeopardize the freedoms of The People long-term.**


Post-election, two candidates vetted by Ottawa Impact joined the other commissioners on the board in advocating to keep the status quo and administration responsible for it, for a period of time or possibly permanently. They advocated to keep pieces of the system in place which were responsible for [masking children](#), shutting down schools, protecting the divisive [DE&I Department](#), etc.



**Conservative leaders must take the default position of protecting freedom and Constitutional rights, not flawed or harmful systems.**

*“There are no easy answers, but there are simple answers. We must have the courage to do what we know is morally right.”*

— President Ronald Reagan,  
“Time for Choosing” speech, 1964



**As we openly professed during our campaigns, we are committed to course correcting Ottawa County, returning local government back to its protection of constitutional rights and freedoms, while fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of county government to The People.**

**Conservative leaders must accept responsibility, reject passivity, and act decisively.** Business-as-usual politics of compromise and trying to please the progressive left will not protect The People from those who care little for individual freedoms.

**On January 3, a majority of the newly seated board took proactive, decisive action in defense of the citizens,** aligning the leadership of Ottawa County with the priorities and protection of the people. New leaders were put in place in the Administrator and Corporate Counsel roles to courageously champion the protection of constitutional freedoms. A new Public Health Officer was appointed pending MDHHS approval who is committed to the protection of individual freedoms, parental rights, and data-driven science.

**The divisive DE&I office—built on the tenants of Critical Race Theory, was closed,** and a Resolution was passed to change the county motto to “Where Freedom Rings.” We believe “Where Freedom Rings,” ALL people belong. We would love for you to read the [Resolution in its entirety](#), which embraces both freedom, and a love for all people.

## THE CONTRACT WITH OTTAWA




**Candidates who sign the Contract with Ottawa are asking to be held accountable to the heart of those who elected them, rather than the bureaucracy or special interests which too often sway individuals post election.**

In our pursuit of excellent candidates, we asked Ottawa Impact candidates to sign the [Contract with Ottawa](#). **The Contract with Ottawa is an ongoing promise to The People of Ottawa, not a contract with an individual or Ottawa Impact.**

**In the spirit of Newt Gingrich’s 1994 [Contract with America](#), the Contract with Ottawa is a promise from those who signed it to The People** of what they will stand for, and an invitation to The People to hold them accountable to specific actions in fulfilling their campaign promises. The candidate’s word is glued to the document as evidence that they are not speaking empty promises.

**The Contract with Ottawa provides a means of accountability during the term of service, prior to the next election cycle.** We ask The People to give encouragement to those who fulfill their promises, and to hold those accountable who do not. Ottawa Impact will make available certain [voting records](#), but The People of Ottawa are ultimately responsible for holding elected individuals accountable.

**Separate from the Contract with Ottawa, endorsement of candidates during an election cycle does not indicate Ottawa Impact’s permanent endorsement of an elected officials’ behavior.** Endorsement status is evaluated on an ongoing basis as vetted candidates serve The People—fulfilling their promises to uphold American values and champion the principles in the Contract with Ottawa.



**Civic engagement, ground up, is critical to preserve a healthy, moral society.**

# Ottawa County is a beautiful county with a bright future.



We are cultivating a county which offers a healthy and vibrant lifestyle.

One which fosters meaningful work, provides opportunity for business growth, honors the faith of its people, respects the family and parental rights, and protects education excellence for children.

President Reagan's "City on a Hill" is possible in Ottawa County. Join us as we build it.



**Joe Moss**  
Co-Founder  
President



**Sylvia Rhodea**  
Co-Founder  
Executive Director