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Proposal would bring sweeping changes

‘Money out of Politics’ measure on the ballot

Arpan Lobo Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

On the nonpartisan section of the ballot this November, Michigan voters will have the choice of enacting sweeping changes to how campaign finance works in the state. • The Michiganders for Money out of Politics (MMOP) ballot proposal – Proposal 2 for voters – would ban Michigan’s utility monopolies and other organizations with annual state contracts of at least \$250,000 from making political contributions in Michigan. Additionally, executives at the companies and their direct family members would also be barred from making political contributions.

The committee behind the proposal has directly cited the influence of major in-state companies like DTE Energy, Consumers Energy and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, when it comes to policymaking in Lansing. Advocates for more reliable and affordable utility service in Michigan argue proposals to hold the state’s major electric providers accountable for prolonged power outages have stalled because DTE and Consumers both contribute to lawmakers’ campaigns.

“It is a moment where the pay-to-play setup of

our state politics has just reached a boiling point and that’s exactly why folks are taking matters into their own hands,” said Christy McGillivray, a co-chair of the Mop Up Michigan executive committee.

Groups supporting Proposal 2’s passage include national organizations like All Hands on Deck Network, the Working Families Organization, Voters Not Politicians, a political action committee tied to

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A stack of “I Voted” stickers rests on a table inside McDonald Elementary School’s polling place during Election Day in Dearborn on Nov. 5, 2024. DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUÑOZ, DETROIT FREE PRESS

Attorney sees parallels in Cornell cases

Emily Barnes
New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Nearly seven years have passed since Cornell University student Antonio Tzialas was found dead in a gorge in Ithaca, New York, but an attorney for his family believes circumstances in that case remain relevant today as a sexual assault investigation grips the Ivy League campus.

Shortly before his death in 2019, Tzialas, an 18-year-old freshman, had attended a fraternity party on campus where alcohol was present. The Cornell University Police Department handled the investigation. Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten declined to pursue any criminal charges, igniting outrage among some in the community who were concerned at the time that more wasn’t done.

These are all elements that David Bianchi, the attorney the Tzialas family hired in the wake of their son’s death, said coincide with the handling of the latest Cornell fraternity-related case, where a recently filed civil lawsuit details an alleged gang rape that took place on the university’s campus in 2024.

“Why isn’t Cornell doing a better job of monitoring what’s going on in these fraternities so that sort of conduct is not taking place?” Bianchi said in a recent exclusive interview with the USA TODAY Network.

“It was taking place seven years ago in the Tzialas case ... and it doesn’t sound like anything’s been done to really curtail it,” he added.

University police, which led the investigation into Tzialas’ death, ruled it

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Restaurant near Onaway State Park burns

Jalen Williams
USA TODAY NETWORK

A fire engulfed a well-known restaurant in northern Michigan on Tuesday, Oct. 7, according to Presque Isle County Sheriff Joseph Brewbaker.

211 Bar and Grill, located 5 miles north of the village, just outside the entrance to Onaway State Park, burned on Tuesday.

No one was hurt, according to the Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, the utility provider serving the area. Brewbaker said the family owned business is a “total loss.” The bar and grill had been operating since 1946.

“That place has been there. It’s a staple of our community,” Brewbaker said

on Wednesday.

Brewbaker said there is no indication of foul play, although the investigation by Michigan State Police fire marshal is ongoing.

Emails and calls seeking comment from the owners were not immediately returned.

Bonz Beach Farms, a neighboring business, has set up a GoFundMe page to support owners, Jeremy and Becky Pasella, their employees, and efforts to rebuild 211.

“For a place that has meant so much to neighbors and visitors alike, this loss is deeply felt close to home. The owners live less than a football field away, and the restaurant itself is only about a quarter mile west of the farm,” Bonz

Beach Farms said in a Facebook post.

The GoFundMe page said they will match the first \$5,000 in donations. As of noon Wednesday, Oct. 7, the fund has more than \$29,000 of a requested \$35,000.

According to the restaurant’s website, the ‘211’ was built in 1946 and was originally a log cabin ice cream parlor.

“Over the years it gradually changed owners and became famous for it’s burgers, pizza and sandwiches as well as serving alcoholic beverages. Further ownership changes brought about name changes and full course dinners and entrees. However, no matter the owner, the menu, or the name, the es-

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