



Manatee Matters NEWSLETTER

ManateeCountyDemocrats.com

FROM THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Corrections for January 2024

Eagle-eyed readers of Manatee County Democratic Party's (MCDP) monthly newsletter, *Manatee Matters*, found two errors in the Jan. 2024 edition published on Jan. 8.

In the story titled, *'Shadow Office' Works to Further Anti-Woke Efforts*, Marie Masferrar's workplace was misidentified. She is a library media specialist in the Hillsborough County School District. Previously, she was with a Bradenton school.

In the story titled, *Candidate Shoemaker Schedules Lunch Appearances*, the president of the Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County should be listed as Joanie LeBaron.

This email will be appended to the PDF on the website soon. See the entire January *Manatee Matters* newsletter, visit:

[MCDP website](#)



The Manatee County Democratic Party is a **100% volunteer organization**. All contributions of any size are appreciated.

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FROM THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

January 2024



Manatee Dems Oppose Book Banning **'Shadow Office' Works to Further Anti-Woke Efforts**

By Diana Hines

There is a shadow movement gathering support within our very own Florida Department of Education (FLDOE). It is the FLDOE's "[Office of Academically Successful & Resilient Districts](#)" or what *Orlando Sentinel* reporter Leslie Postal has dubbed the "New Office of 'Anti-Woke.'" The inception of this new office appears to extend the reach of conservative 'parental rights' groups such as Moms for Liberty and No Left Turn in Education. Such groups have undertaken a full-scale effort to spread Governor Ron DeSantis's anti-woke agenda, expunging school rooms and libraries of any content involving African-American history, sex or LGBTQ, among other issues.

[Read the Full Story Here!](#)

Manatee Dems to March in MLK Parade

We love a parade and to

commemorate the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, Manatee County Democratic Party (MCDP) volunteers will be marching Saturday, Jan. 13, in Palmetto's MLK Parade, noon to 2 p.m.

MLK parade!



Saturday, January 13

Dems will march in front and behind a Democratic-decorated pickup truck. Riders in the truck will toss candy and beads to children along the parade route. Marchers will also distribute MCDP cards with voting information. Democratic candidates for office have been invited to march with the Manatee Dems.

Due to limited parking, Manatee Dem organizers will provide a shuttle or carpooling for volunteers from a Palmetto or Bradenton location to the parade starting point. For more information, contact Bev Pannee at beverlypannee@gmail.com, 443-629-1001.

**Sign Up
Here!**

Volunteers Needed for Dems' Manatee Fair Booth

Manatee Dems are looking for volunteers to staff a booth at the Manatee County Fair, Jan. 11 to 21, at the county fairgrounds, 1303 17th St. W, Palmetto, across from Palmetto High School.

The theme of the fair is Fun is in the Air, and the Manatee Dems are looking for at least two people for two-hour shifts each day.

For more information and to volunteer, contact Randi Sathan, booth staffing coordinator, at rmsmanateedems@gmail.com, 732-690-7655, or Randy Miller, Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus vice president, at eco.manateedems@gmail.com.

Once the booth staffing schedule is complete it will be forwarded to all volunteers along with additional information. Entry passes will be available for volunteers. 1303 17th St. W

Volunteers Needed to Assist with Multicultural Festival



A recent report in *The Florida Bulldog* online newsletter indicated that more than a million Florida residents are no longer registered to vote. The loss of registered voters can be partially attributed to a thorough "cleansing" of voter rolls due to changes in election laws by the state legislature.

To help reregister Manatee County voters, the Manatee County Democratic Party (MCDP) will staff a table at the Multicultural Festival, Saturday, Jan. 13, 2 to 7 p.m. at Sutton Park in Palmetto. The festival follows Palmetto's Martin Luther King Day parade.

MCDP needs volunteers to assist with registering people to vote as well as helping to enroll voters in the Vote-by-Mail program during the festival. Training will be provided.

For more information, call 941-723-4988 or sign up:

[Here](#)

Manatee Petitions Carry Abortion Amendment Over First Hurdle

By Nancy Hughes

The campaign to put abortion on the ballot has passed an essential milestone due to the tireless work of volunteers from the Manatee County Democratic Party and other local organizations.

The [Florida Division of Elections \(DOE\)](#) announced that as of Jan. 5 it had 910,946

verified petitions in support of letting the voters decide on a constitutional amendment to limit government interference with abortion. That was 19,376 signatures above the required 891,523 valid petitions.

In addition to a statewide requirement, 14 of the 28 congressional districts in Florida also had to collect a set number of petition signatures based on the number of local voters in the last general election. The goal for the 16th Congressional District, made up of all of Manatee County and part of Hillsborough County, was 32,935 valid signatures. As of Jan. 5, the DOE reported 35,618 valid petitions came from the 16th District. Seventeen congressional districts across the state had met their assigned goal.

“The Manatee County Democratic Party was an essential player in the local campaign,” said MCDP Chair Chris Wetherington. “We were on the ground from the beginning, serving as a regional hub for collecting petitions, and we’ll continue the fight through the November election. This amendment is key to securing every woman’s right to reproductive healthcare freedom.”

While the news is positive, the campaign to get the amendment on the November ballot still faces potential roadblocks. The Florida Supreme Court must rule on the ballot amendment language. Oral arguments are scheduled for Feb. 7. Furthermore, Attorney General Ashley Moody has vowed to fight the amendment from appearing on the ballot.

If the Supreme Court approves the initiative, the hardest battle will be next November. Sixty percent of Florida voters must approve the amendment for it to become law.

To learn more about the initiative and how to support the campaign, visit:

FloridiansProtectingFreedom.com

Manatee Dems Active During Days of Service



By Wil Clapper

A dedicated group of Manatee Dems helped with two projects at the Food Bank of Manatee during the December Days of Service. The team bagged about 450 packages of produce that were distributed to First Baptist Church of Ellenton, Visible Men Academy and a distribution center in Samoset through the Food Bank’s Mobile Produce Pantry program.

[Read the Full Story Here!](#)

Candidate Shoemaker Schedules Lunch Appearance

Longtime Bradenton resident Diana Shoemaker has a passion for social justice and leadership. She believes local government needs to cater to the interests of local residents, not special interests. That is why she is running for the District 3 position on the Manatee County Commission.

Shoemaker is scheduled to speak in January. "My plan is to share my thoughts on some key issues that I'd like to focus on as county commissioner for District 3," Shoemaker said. "I also want to talk about ways members can help volunteer and support my campaign."

She is speaking at the Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County luncheon, Thursday, Jan 11, 11:30 a.m., at the Peridia Golf and Country Club. Contact club president Fay Murphy at faymurphy@aol.com or Brian Heavrin at bhl3011@gmail.com for more information.

Shoemaker has more than 25 years of experience in community and educational program development and services. She served as president and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Manatee from 2009 to 2021. She understands that our wetlands need to be protected, that traffic flow needs to be improved and issues of pedestrian safety need to be addressed. She wants to increase the availability of affordable housing.

You can support her campaign by visiting her website below.

<https://www.electshoemaker.com/>

Help School Board Candidate Felton

Heather Felton is a candidate for the Manatee County District 1 School Board. She is running to ensure that our schools continue to be places of both welcome and safety where learning and growth are the focus. She believes students must be embraced for who they are and they need to grow not only in academics but as their own authentic selves.



But she needs your help. "I am looking for some local Democrats who might want to help me with a launch fundraiser at the end of January," said Felton. "I have been doing a soft petition push with local folks and I am looking for volunteers to help me start door-knocking in January."

You can sign a petition to put Heather on the ballot by going to the Candidate Petition button at the bottom right corner of her campaign website below.

<https://heatherformanatee.com/>

Advisory Board and Planning Commission Openings

Democrats can affect change in Manatee County government, schools and services by volunteering for openings on advisory boards. Residents who volunteer for these boards bring knowledge, expertise, a fresh point of view and help balance representation of the boards.

To learn more about each of the county's advisory boards and qualifications for applicants, call 941-745-3700 or email advisoryboards@mymanatee.org or go to:

[Visit Their Website](#)

Currently, three advisory boards have openings:

County Seeking Applications for Planning Commission

Manatee County is accepting applications for two seats on the Planning Commission, a citizen's advisory committee that makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on land use items.

In Manatee County, Planning Commission positions are often used as a stepping stone to elective office. Both seats are vacant, one expiring October 2025 and the other expiring in October 2026. Applications are due Friday, Jan. 19, and may be found [online](#).

Manatee Asking for Citizens Oversight Applicants

Manatee County is looking for four citizens to be a part of the advisory committee on Infrastructure Sales Tax. The committee, which makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, meets periodically and prepares an annual report reviewing spending of the half-cent infrastructure sales tax approved by voters in 2016.

Committee applicants must reside in unincorporated areas of Manatee County. The term is for two years. All meetings will be publicly noticed. Applications are due Feb. 9 and can be found online at mymanatee.org/applyforboard. For more information, call 941-745-3778 or email jessica.pollard@mymanatee.org.

Children's Services Advisory Board (CSAB)

Manatee County is accepting applications for a seat on the Children's Services Advisory Board (CSAB), which makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners about priorities and expenditures for children's services. The vacant position is a remainder of a three-year term that will end Sept. 30, 2025. To qualify

for consideration, visit [Application Questionnaire](#). For more information, call 941 748-4501, ext. 3485, or email Kristi.Hagen@mymanatee.org.

For board or committee vacancies in Manatee County cities, go to their respective web pages for more information:

City of Bradenton

<https://cityofbradenton.com/boards>

City of Palmetto

<https://www.palmettofl.org/>

City of Anna Maria

https://www.cityofannamaria.com/government/boards_and_committees/index.php

City of Holmes Beach

holmesbeachfl.org

City of Bradenton Beach

<https://www.cityofbradentonbeach.com/191/Advisory-Boards>

Town of Longboat Key

<https://www.longboatkey.org/town-government/boards-and-committees>



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