



Democratic Women's Club of Upper Pinellas

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1940

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Membership Meeting

Monday, April 24, 2023 at 12pm

St Petersburg College, Clearwater Campus, Room 127
2465 Drew St., 12 pm
Snacks Available

Guest Speaker:
Amy Weintraub

Reproductive Rights Program Director



Amy Weintraub is a seasoned, award-winning organizer, who has worked most of her adult life identifying, educating, and activating citizens toward social justice. She is heavily involved with the League of Women Voters St. Petersburg, Pinellas NOW, Florida NOW, and the statewide Floridians for Reproductive Freedom coalition. Amy was a key leader of Women's March St. Pete 2017, which saw more than 20,000 people gather to advance women's issues — the largest public protest in St. Pete history and is organizing the current 2023 protests against restrictive legislation.

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DWCF, Inc.

DWCF.org

Nation Federation of Democratic Women

www.nfdw.com

Florida Democratic Party

Fladems.com

Pinellas County Democratic Executive Committee

Pinellasdemocrats.com

Prior to moving to Florida in 2015, Amy lived in her home state of West Virginia where she led efforts within organizations such as WV FREE (West Virginia Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality), Covenant House of WV, and Planned Parenthood. Amy lives in St. Petersburg with her husband and three felines. They have two children in college.

March DWCUP Meeting Recap

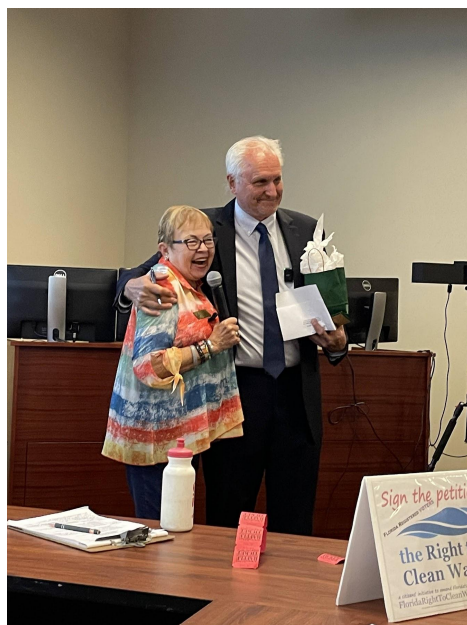
3/27/23

First, a special presentation was made to a “Godmother” of our club, Lee Callaghan. She was awarded Lifetime Membership for her contribution to the DWCUP over the last two decades.

The meeting featured Rob Lorei, moderator of “Florida This Week” on WEDU (PBS). He spoke about the oppressive legislation coming out of Tallahassee, what being “Woke” means, the firing of Andrew Warren in Hillsborough County, the tyranny of the insurance industry in FL, and much more. Our state has become a one-party state due to gerrymandering!

For a taste of the meeting, we have a short clip of it on YouTube. Use this link to view it: <https://youtu.be/sFpN1hf74I8>.

In addition, Donna spoke about attending the opening of the FL legislative session in Tallahassee earlier this month. Please read the President’s Report for her comments on the experience.



Donna Dennis presenting a Lifetime Achievement Award to Lee Callaghan



President's Report



DWCF TALLY DAYS, March 6-8, 2023

As I was in Tallahassee the week of March 6th, one of our members asked, "So what's it like being in the belly of the beast?" The short answer is that it's demoralizing and enraging as each bad piece of legislation is introduced and heard in committee hearings. But our time in Tally was about so much more than that.

The first evening we arrived we attended the Florida Democratic Legislator Appreciation Event. The

venue where the event was held was called Eve on Adams, a rooftop bar, which provided the best view of all of Tallahassee! In addition, we were able to hear from new Florida Democratic Party Chair, Nikki Fried. She's strong, positive and already hard at work on the job.

We were also fortunate to meet with her as a caucus at the FDP office the next morning. Region VIII representatives from Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties, were joined by Region XI reps from Palm Beach County, DWCF President Monica Readus, 1st VP Deborah Baker-Rian, DWCF Legislative Chair Jean Siebenaler, as well as Chair Fried. She spent an hour with us and discussed many aspects of rebuilding the Democratic Party in this state. First, the message needs to be the economy: Floridians can't afford their housing, insurance increases, health care costs, etc. The culture wars do not address those issues and do nothing to help improve the lives of Floridians. In fact, with the changes being made in the culture wars and reproductive rights, young women are not enrolling in Florida colleges. Professors in higher ed aren't moving here. Corporations, many of which value diversity and inclusion, won't relocate here. It's a net brain drain.

Nikki Fried is asking for our ideas on growing the party. She may be reached at nikki@floridadems.org. For example,

- Use our local Democratic offices to provide services.
- Have a social media rapid response team.
- Start a youth council with high school, college and young Dems.
- Flood all the local media markets with our messages.
- Register new voters and stick with them from registration through actually casting their vote.
- Voter education for minority communities as Republicans have scared some minorities out of voting.
- Offer training in the best practices.
- Make Democrats COOL again!

Chair Fried stated that her top three priorities are to improve our communications, finances, rules and bylaws. She plans to have a weekly Zoom Town Hall and a monthly meeting with DEC chairs. The goal is to streamline communication so that it moves freely through all levels of the Democratic party.

That afternoon was spent in legislative committee hearings. The first was the Criminal Justice Subcommittee. Among the bills heard were HB269 about Jewish harassment. HB197 was the penalty for refusal of a breathalyzer. The one our group was most concerned with was

HB555, which would allow the death penalty with only 8 of 12 jurors recommending it. Most of those who spoke were against it, and our group members registered in opposition to it. However, the committee reported favorably by a vote of 13-5 (all Dems against) even tho' Florida has a very high number of death penalty sentences and over 30 exonerations of those sentenced to death.

In the Senate Judiciary hearing right after that, we heard Sen Laurie Berman speak on SB130, known as Greyson's Law. This would make it such that a judge could use evidence of domestic violence, not just a conviction of the abusive partner, to provide protection in the courts for victims and their minor children. We supported this bill. It was reported out favorably. The testimony was especially gripping, including the rape and sodomy of a woman by her partner to cause miscarriages.

The final hearing we attended was Governmental Oversight and Accountability which was hearing SB256, Employee Organizations Representing Public Employees, which is a union-busting bill. We registered in opposition to this bill and listened to countless articulate speakers opposed to this bill. I have to add, the sponsor of this bill, Sen Blaise Ingoglia of Spring Hill, is one of the most notable trolls I've ever seen in action. He is targeting the public school teachers of Florida, along with other public sector unions EXCEPT for police and fire unions. It eliminates dues payment through payroll deduction and raises the requirement for a union to 60% from 50%, among other components. As the other R bills being introduced, this bill does nothing to increase school safety or funding. It fits in with the voucher bill as it's part of the plan to destroy public schools in FL.

While we were in Tally, the Abortion ban bill dropped (6-week ban). Democrats hope to be able to temper the bill, with language including exceptions due to rape, incest or life of the mother and perhaps, extend it to a 12-week ban instead. The bad news is that there's very little the Dems will be able to accomplish this session due to the supermajority.

The best part of the time there was meeting with Democratic legislators. We met with Rep Lindsey Cross, who is working on introducing a bill to remedy the blue-green algae problem. She was very interested in our report on Red Tide on Pinellas beaches.

We also met with Rep Anna Eskamani of Orlando, Rep Susan Valdes of Hillsborough Co., and I had a brief encounter with Rep Michele

Rayner-Goolsby. They were all so appreciative of our visit! They're very lonely in Tallahassee these days!

Also, one of our Club members, Polly Kraus, stayed an extra day to work with Moms Demand Action on the permitless carry gun bill. They also lobbied legislators and attended hearings. Their efforts to demonstrate were thwarted as were those of the League of Women Voters. One of DeSantis' other efforts is to stifle public demonstrations and protests of his policies. It's downright frightening.

We must work harder than ever before. The system is rigged against us, but we will continue our efforts. As legislative alerts come before you, make those calls and texts and give what you can to the effort to revitalize the Florida Democratic Party and build a Blue bench. Go to Tallahassee during the session and attend hearings. Visit our legislators, D and R, when they're home in the district and let them know how you feel. Our democracy is at stake!

--donna dennis

DWCF reps meeting with the new FL Dem Chair, Nikki Fried



Legislative Liaison Report

Jean Greenawalt

3/27/23

Important links:

These links can be used to review the bills and analyses and see what is on the calendar.

flsenate.gov

myfloridahouse.gov

You can view sessions live or recorded. They also have a summary video every night which is very informative.

thefloridachannel.org

Useful information can be found on Democratic Women's Club of Florida site.

dwcf.org

Legislative Update:

Jean Siebanaler is the DWCF legislative chair. She sends a bill tracker spreadsheet every week and holds a zoom meeting most every Tuesday. She is also in charge of sending the DWCF legislative Alerts. These alerts have talking points and identifies which representatives or senators to send emails to. She sends us a bill tracking spreadsheet before each weekly meeting and identifies which bills are of particular interest. She has a brief description of each bill and its status. She indicates whether or not we support, oppose, or are neutral - this entry might change during the zoom meeting for a bill as we discuss them. The bills are organized into categories. Lead people for each category research the bills and talk about them. Highlights:

Civ_Human Rights & Immigration:

Urging US Congress to remove "woke" from the military Punish businesses, individuals, and local governments that help immigrants Deny transgender rights - affirming care for minors and adults, bathroom ban, etc.

Criminal Justice_Legal:

Ban drag shows Tort reform 8 out of 12 jurors recommending death sentences instead of unanimous Defamation - making it easier to sue the media and prohibiting anonymous sources.

Economy_Infrastructure:

Ban environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors from investment decisions Tax exempt diapers and incontinence products (we support this).

Education:

Expanded public funding of private education Expanded state control over education - sex-ed, no long acknowledge LGBTQ, book banning "Union busting" changes in teacher's unions Ban on diversity, equality, inclusion Whitewashing history, no gender, race courses Expansion of "Don't Say Gay".

Environment:

Make it easier for big utilities to pass costs to consumers Use unsafe phosphate mining byproduct in road beds Expand trail network for access to wildlife corridor (support) Various environmental protection measures and studies (support).

Gun Safety:

Permitless carry - concealed carry requiring no background checks or training Prohibit merchant entities from assigning merchant codes to gun stores Reduce minimum age for long gun sales from 21 back down to 18.

Health & Safety:

Near-total abortion ban Kratom consumer protection (support).

State Preemption Bills:

Allow business owners to sue local governments when ordinances cause them to lose money Prevent local governments from restricting usages (i.e. gas stoves) Allow homeowners to fly "combined" flags (i.e. blue line) regardless of HOA restrictions Various bills that pretty much move local control to state (big government overreach).

Voting and Elections:

Term limits, partisan elections for school boards; allow candidate to move to area when elected Increase percentage of elector votes for state constitution amendment/revision from 60 to 66.7 .

Women, Children, & Family:

Allow employers to buy paid leave insurance instead of providing leave Many domestic violence, elder abuse, child custody support (support) Alerts Each alert had talking points and the list of people to email. You can now sign up to receive these alerts so that you can contact senators and representatives when bills are coming up at meetings to be voted on. email Jean Greenawalt at jeanegreenawalt@gmail.com .

Action Alert Date	Bill Number	Bill Title	Action Alert Targeted Recipient(s)	Subject Area	Oppose or Support
12/15/22	2A	Property Insurance	Gov. DeSantis, local legislators	Economy & Infrastructure	Oppose
1/20/23	HB 1	School Choice	House Choice & Innovation Subcte.	Education	Oppose
1/30/23	SB 170	Local Ordinances	Senate Community Affairs	State Preemption	Oppose
2/1/23	HB 543	Concealed Carry of Weapons and Firearms Withou	Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law & Govern	Guns	Oppose
2/9/23	HB 97	Domestic Violence	Civil Justice Subcommittee	Women/Children/Family	Support
2/13/23	SB 170	Local Ordinances	Senate Rules and local legislators	State Preemption	Oppose
2/16/23	HB 225	Interscholastic and Intrasccholastic Activities	House Education & Employment and local	Education	Oppose
2/17/23	HB 543	Concealed Carry of Weapons and Firearms Withou	House Judiciary Cte	Guns	Oppose
2/17/23	SB 150	Public Safety	Senate Criminal Justice Cte	Guns	Oppose
2/20/23	HB 1	School Choice	House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcte.	Education	Oppose
3/2/23	SB 450	Jury Recommendations in Death Penalty Cases	Senate Criminal Justice Cte	Criminal Justice	Oppose
3/3/23	SB 256	Employee Organizations Representing Public Empl	Senate Governmental Oversight and Accou	Education	Oppose
3/10/23	SB 254	Treatments for Sex Reassignment	Senate Health Policy	Civil/Human Rights	Oppose
3/10/23	HB 999	Public Postsecondary Educational Institutions	House Postsecondary Education & Workfor	Education	Oppose
3/10/23	Many	Many bills ready for House and Senate floor votes	Individual legislators	Many	Support/ Oppose
3/12/23	HB 991	Defamation, False Light, and Unauthorized Publica	House Civil Justice Cte	Criminal Justice/ Legal	Oppose
3/12/23	HB 7	Pregnancy and Parenting Support -- aka Near Total	House Healthcare Regulations	Health & Public Safety	Oppose
3/13/23	SB 1718	Immigration	Senate Rules	Civil/Human Rights	Oppose
3/15/23	HB 837/ SB 236	Civil Remedies	Individual legislators	Criminal Justice/ Legal	Oppose
3/16/23	SB 300	Near Total Abortion Ban	Senate Health Policy	Public Health & Safety	Oppose
3/16/23	SB 1320	Don't Say LGBTQ Expansion	Senate Pre-K - 12 Education	Education	Oppose
3/18/23	Many	Many bills ready for House and Senate floor votes	Individual legislators	Many	Support/ Oppose
3/22/23	HB 543	Public Safety	Individual Representatives	Guns	Oppose (open carry amendment and bill)
3/24/23	SB 300	Pregnancy and Parenting Support -- aka Near Total	Senate Fiscal Policy	Health & Public Safety	Oppose
3/24/23	HB 1421	Gender Clinical Interventions -- aka the "Trans Ban	House Health & Human Services Committe	Civil/Human Rights	Oppose

Words of Encouragement

Democratic Women's Club of Upper Pinellas Words of Inspiration for March 2023

The March salute of Women's History was launched by President Jimmy Carter by Presidential Proclamation in 1980 and recognized by Congress seven years later. Looking back to those days, many did not expect that the ERA would be so long delayed nor that dark times for American women might arise again. We will fight today's darkness, strengthened by the words of women leaders and writers who inspire us as we press for equality :

Elizabeth Cady Stanton: "The best protection any woman can have... is courage."

Mary McLeod Bethune: "I refuse] to be discouraged, for neither God nor man can use a discouraged person."

Maya Angelou: "You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. ***know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it."

Nora Ephron: "Above all, be the heroine of your life, not the victim." Yes, Democratic women, we are committed to securing our equal place in America and its Constitution every day of the year. We will be strong, we will persist, and we will prevail.

Diane Lebedeff
DWCUP Recording Secretary

Democratic Women's Club of Upper Pinellas Words of Inspiration for April 2023

April is marked by Earth Day, an annual event which first took place on April 22, 1970.

Here in Florida, we have our feminist environmentalist to honor – Marjory Stoneman Douglas (1890-1998), who began her lifelong vocation of writing and activism at the Miami Herald in 1915, penning articles on feminism, racial justice, and conservation. In 1947, her book *The Everglades: River of Grass* was published, the same year Everglades National Park was established. She continued to advocate for the Everglades, becoming known as the “Guardian of the Glades” and the “Mother of the Everglades.” At 103 years of age in 1993, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

She was a pungent wordsmith and truth teller, observing:

“Politicians in Washington and Tallahassee are still undermining efforts to fix the dysfunctional ecosystem, even as they blivate about its beauty and majesty and irreplaceability.”

“Be a nuisance when it counts *** Do your part to inform and stimulate the public to join your action. Be *** disappointed at failure and the disheartening effects of ignorance, greed, corruption and bad politics — but never give up.”

“I would be very sad if I had not fought. I'd have a guilty conscience if I had been here and watched all this happen to the environment and not been on the right side.”

And she delivered some great one-liners:

“Pigheaded covers a multitude of virtues - as well as sins.”

“You can't conserve what you haven't got.”

“There is always the need to carry on.”

So, Democratic women, let us be a nuisance, let us not give up, and let us carry on. We will be strong, we will persist, and we will prevail.

Diane Lebedeff
DWCUP Recording Secretary

LAST CALL!

Anyone interested in attending the DWCF State Convention at the Rosen Center in Orlando on April 27-30th, contact Donna Dennis asap. Registration is paid by the club but must be received by next week.

EVENTS

★ **DWCUP Membership Meeting**

- **April 24, 2023**
- St Petersburg College, Clearwater Campus, Room 127
- Zoom
- 12 pm
- **May 22, 2023**

★ **Democratic Women's Club of Florida, 67th Convention**

- April 27-30, 2023
- The Rosen Center, Orlando, FL

★ **MORE EVENTS:**

- **Click Here:** <https://www.mobilize.us/>

DWCUP TUESDAYS

@ North Pinellas Democratic Outreach Center
Sign Up to Join Us @
1402 North MLK Ave. Clearwater
Come in and volunteer!
Open Mon-Fri

Toiletries: DWCUP collects unused toiletries at each in person meeting for local charities. Please look for the PINK basket to drop off your donations.

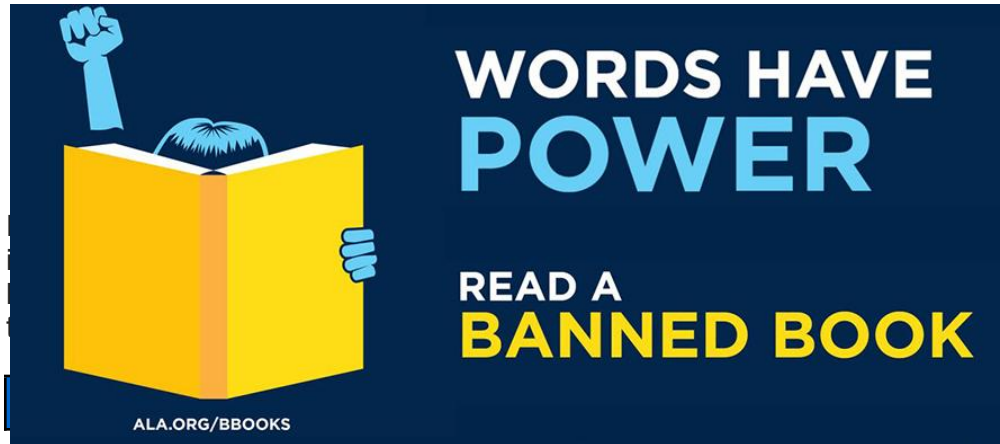
12-4pm
Sat
10am-12pm.
Info:
Office@pinellasdemocrats.com
727-327-2796

Household Batteries:

DWCUP's Jessie Forcan takes household batteries (not rechargeable) to recycle in Pasco County.

Banned Book of the Month

The Banned Book of the Month. This month I'm recommending *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. It's gripping, terrifying and with the draconian measures taken by the DeSantis administration, it's getting frighteningly realistic. Gilead=Florida. And if you don't want to read the book, go to your local library and check out the TV series.



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PERKS!

All members of the DWCUP are also members of the DWCF (Democratic Women's Club of Florida). Please go to the website, www.dwcf.org, and get registered, create a password and take a look at all the features of the organization. There is a special members section as well. Get an idea of what's going on with other clubs in the state, the Florida Democratic Party, and so much more!

**DWCUP Annual Membership Dues:
\$25.00**

Get the best deals here:

TIERED MEMBERSHIPS:

- PLATINUM Member:**
3 years for \$70.00 ✓
- SILVER Member:**
5 years for \$100.00 ✓
- GOLD Member:**
**Member for Life
\$250.00 ✓**

Make your dues payment here:

<https://dwcup.com/donate>

**Your new or updated membership will be valid through
January 31, 2024.**



Next Meeting

**St Petersburg College, Clearwater Campus, room 127
Speaker: Amy Weintraub
12pm-1:30pm**

**Meeting after Next:
May 22, 2023**

**St Petersburg College, Clearwater Campus, room 127
12pm-1:30pm**



Democratic Women
EDUCATE
LEAD
PERSIST

**SAVE THE
DATE**

**The DWCF 67th Annual
Convention and
PerSisters Rally**

April 27-30, 2023

**Rosen Centre Hotel Orlando
Florida**