

Welcoming Remarks
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Making Waves for Democracy Feb. 1, 2026

It is with heavy hearts that we meet today, as we hold space for the devastating losses in Minneapolis and across the country. Since September 2025, 12 people have been killed or injured by ICE agents during immigration enforcement operations. Among them are **Alex Pretti** and **Renee Nicole Good**, both killed in Minneapolis within weeks of each other, and **Keith Porter Jr** killed here in LA. Most recently, Alex Pretti was killed on January 24th while protecting women who had been pepper-sprayed by ICE agents. He died standing between vulnerable people and institutional violence.

Let's all pause for a MOMENT OF SILENCE as we honor them.

We are so glad you are part of our team as 2026 begins. This new year has brought increasingly distressing news from our corrupt, incompetent, vengeful, and heartless government. We know how deeply each you feel the pain and distress of this moment.

However, ALSO our hearts full of **HOPE**. The people of our country are turning against this terrible regime - NOW is the time for us to help build a compassionate, functioning government that truly serves the people. As part of **Making Waves for Democracy**, each one of us will have a role in bringing about the change that is so needed.

As a group, we will continue to focus on being part of the resistance movement. This year, we turn our focus to the midterm elections. By gaining control of Congress, we can rein in the horrors of this current regime.

Derek Tran, Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives from California's 45th District (elected 2025, Orange County) will join our meeting today. We must work to secure this Democratic seat. He is an excellent candidate – as you will see, he stands for our values. His campaign manager, **Jin Suh**, will give us a picture of District 45, to help us get acquainted with the voters we will be talking to.

Our good friend, George Whitesides will also join us as he strongly supports our focusing on protecting Derek Tran's seat in Orange County.

What else can give us all hope today? Breaking news!!

A Texas Democrat, Christian Menafee will go to Congress and replace a Republican as a result of this week's special election!

Texas Democrat Taylor Rehmet flipped a State Senate seat in a district that Trump won by 17 points!

AND for all of us who have been painfully following this story – 5-year-old Liam Ramos and his father were just released from ICE detention in Texas! On his flight home, the crew made a fuss over him. He and his dad are now at home in Minnesota with Liam's mom. THANK YOU, Rep Joaquin Castro!

Other good news:

Tens of thousands of Minnesotans **marched in Minneapolis and otherwise participated in an economic blackout** to protest against the ICE surge in the state. There were solidarity events **all across the country** and huge numbers showed up all over LA.

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce **released a letter** on behalf of more than 60 CEOs of Minnesota-based companies—including Target!—calling for ICE to de-escalate. It's not enough but it's a start.

National Nurses United, the US's largest union for registered nurses, **has released a statement** calling for ICE to be abolished immediately.

Jack Smith gave **brave and damning public testimony** that he had the evidence to prosecute and convict Trump on criminal charges.

The people of Minneapolis have demonstrated incredible courage and solidarity, closing businesses, protesting in subzero temperatures,

organizing food and supply deliveries for their friends and neighbors, and initiating the first general strike in the United States in 80 years. **This is courage, community, and hope in action.**

Maybe you saw the video of Alex Pretti giving a veteran a final salute at his bedside. In it, he said:

“Today, we remember that freedom is not free. We have to work at it, nurture it, protect it and even sacrifice for it. May we never forget and always remember our brothers and sisters who have served, so that we may enjoy the gift of freedom. So in this moment, we remember and give thanks for their dedication and selfless service to our nation in the cause of freedom. In this solemn hour, we render our honor and our gratitude.” And I will add, honor and gratitude for all of you and for peaceful protesters showing up all over the US.

Let's chat with one another - Please write in the chat: ***What is one thing that helped you get through the past week?***

