



## Manatee Matters

January 2022 Newsletter



*Check our website for  
event updates, current issues,  
how to get involved and  
how to donate.*

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website

### Legislators Poised to Stoke Culture Wars

*By Nancy Hughes (Jan. 11, 2022)* – The Florida legislature is back in session, and with Republicans in charge many of the 3,000-plus bills are designed to stoke the culture wars rather than address issues affecting the day-to-day lives of people in Manatee County.



This session, **Republicans** want to:

- Allow businesses to pay workers a “training wage” that is less than the state minimum wage approved by voters in 2020. (SJR 382)
- Take away the right of local school boards to approve applications for charter schools and give that responsibility to a state body. (HB 865/SB 758)
- Require members of a district school board to be elected in a partisan election. School Board elections are currently nonpartisan. (HJR 35/SJR 244)
- Give the legislature the authority to recall county officers and commissioners, including the sheriff, supervisor of elections, and clerk of the circuit court. (HJR 663/SJR 1004)
- Establish a Texas-style bounty system to enforce state abortion laws and institute significant new restrictions on access to reproductive health care. (HB167)
- Remove a license requirement to carry a concealed firearm. (HB 103)

**Full story here**

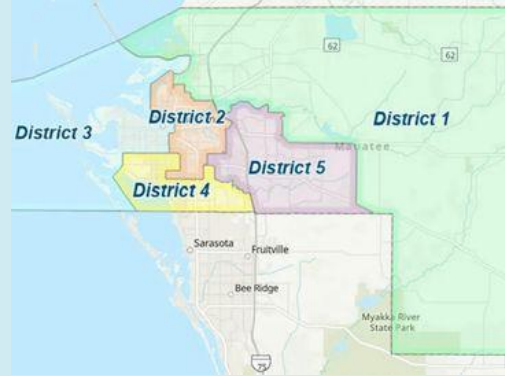
*The Manatee County Democratic Party will track as many of the bills as we can during this session. Follow along on the MCDP Facebook page (@manateedems), Twitter account (@DemocratManatee) and Instagram page (@manateedems).*

### Redistricting Dilutes Minority Vote in District 2

*By William Clapper (Jan. 6, 2022)* – Manatee County’s District 2 suffered the most from the blatantly gerrymandered district map the Manatee County Commissioners approved last month.

The new District 2, as well as other redrawn districts,

clearly favor personal and political agendas of four current commissioners. Redistricting criteria includes keeping social and economic similarities intact, factors that were not considered with the redrawn map. The district map was approved by a 4-3 vote with Commissioners Reggie Bellamy, Misty Servia and Carol Whitmore opposed.



“I think this [newly drawn district map] was a very, very sophisticated strategy to dilute the minority vote,”

Bellamy said in media reports after the county commissioners approved a hastily prepared map that was not scrutinized by staff, or the county’s legal office.

**[Full story here](#)**

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## Piney Point Injection Well Construction Begins



**By Mary Moretto** (Jan. 06, 2022) – The decades long saga of the abandoned Piney Point phosphate plant entered a new phase on Dec. 3 when drilling of the deep water injection well began at the site. Manatee County commissioners hope to have the well operational by the end of the summer or fall of 2022.

Environmental groups, local residents and farmers oppose the plan due to concerns about the long-term environmental impact, well failures and contaminated water seeping into the Florida aquifer.

Environmentalists announced plans to sue Manatee County over the project, alleging that the use of an injection well for wastewater disposal violates the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act through unlawful “open dumping”.

**[Full story here](#)**

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## Leaks Discovered at Piney Point Gypsum Stack

**By William Clapper** (Jan. 15, 2022) – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) reported earlier this month that one of the gypsum stacks at Piney Point is leaking but at a rate of less than three gallons of water per minute.

FDEP announced, “... there is no indication of any concern with the integrity or stability of the stack system, and there will be no offsite discharges at this time.” Further, FDEP’s report stated, “Seepage volume remains low and is completely contained within the on-site lined stormwater management system.”

If the situation gets worse, leaked wastewater will be pumped back into the pond on top of the gypsum stack, according to FDEP. The agency posts updates on a Piney Point web page:

<https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/PineyPointUpdate>.

In March, 2021 toxic water gushed from the phosphogypsum waste stacks at Piney Point, causing a mass evacuation of the area. At the time, FDEP approved dumping 215 million gallons of contaminated water into Tampa Bay to prevent flooding of homes and businesses in case the stack collapsed.

The nitrogen and phosphorus rich stew flowed into Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay, activating a bloom of the toxic red tide algae that caused fish kills and respiratory irritation.

## Conference Inspires State Democratic Leaders



*By Florence Shelton-Clark, Manatee County Democratic State Committeewoman (Jan. 10, 2022) - Voting rights, fundraising, Democratic messaging, unifying – were the watchwords of the two-day Leadership Blue Conference held in early December. Happily, it all took place face-to-face for the first time since I was elected State Committeewoman nearly a year ago. It felt great!*

COVID-19 kept us apart but the vaccine, wearing masks and social distancing made it possible for us to see each other in person as a group, thanks to the work of President Joe Biden and the Democratic Party.

Distinguished fellow Democrats and candidates attended the conference including Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried, Congressman Charlie Crist, State Senator Annette Taddeo, State Democratic Party Chairman Manny Diaz, and Manatee County Commissioner Reggie Bellamy.

[Full story here](#)



MCDBC Executive Committee Meeting.  
Florence Shelton-Clark (foreground),  
Commissioner Reggie Bellamy at left.



U.S. Congresswoman Val Demings  
with Florence Shelton-Clark at the  
Leadership Blue Conference



Right Reverend Samuel Green, Sr. with  
Florence Shelton-Clark and MCD State  
Committeeman Reverend James  
Golden at the Conference.

## News Briefs

### Manatee Volunteers Invited to Happy Hour Sunday, January 30, 5 p.m. (online)

Wind down your week and wind up for the 2022 elections. Grab your favorite beverage and hear how you can get involved now to ensure Democrats are elected in 2022. The virtual (online) Volunteer Happy Hour is Sunday, Jan. 30, 5 p.m. [Click here to sign up.](#) Contact [Bev Pannee](mailto:beverlypannee@gmail.com), [beverlypannee@gmail.com](mailto:beverlypannee@gmail.com), for more information.







## Running For Office? Check Out This Workshop

Have you ever considered running for office? Or helping with a campaign? Or do you want to find out what it takes to launch a political campaign?

Then the *Running for Local Office Workshop*, presented by the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, is the way to give your campaign a boost and learn all about campaigning.

The workshop is Saturday, Jan. 22, 8:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is a Zoom workshop and free. [Click here to register.](#)

The nonpartisan LWV is offering a half-day workshop that includes information on preparing yourself to be a candidate, working with the press and social media, working with your political party, completing necessary paperwork, and running a successful campaign.

During the workshop you will be able to talk, brainstorm and question those who have been through political campaigns. After registering, you will receive a *How to Run for Local Office* handbook.

Introductions and informal chats begin at 8:40 a.m.; the program starts promptly at 9 a.m. During breaks, Zoom break-out rooms will provide opportunities to meet each other.

Among the local presenters are Scott Farrington, Assistant Supervisor of Elections; David Fairey, CPA; Ryan Callahan, Bradenton Herald reporter; Cesar "CJ" Garcia, owner of Alpha Fortius Consultants, Inc.; County Commissioner Misty Servia; Bradenton Beach Mayor John Chappée; Bradenton City Council member Pam Coachman; Manatee County School Board member Mary Foreman.

***Learn more on the [website](#) for the League of Women Voters of Manatee County.***

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## Voting Rights Activists Rally in Bradenton

***By William Clapper (Jan. 14, 2022)*** - More than 200 people held a candlelight vigil at the Manatee County Historic Courthouse the evening of Jan. 6 to remember the assault on our nation's Capitol in 2021 and to rally for voting rights.



The message to local, state and national politicians is: voters must decide the outcome of elections. The activists further demanded that elected leaders pass urgent legislation including the Freedom to Vote Act, the Protecting Our Democracy Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and DC Statehood.

The Bradenton event was one of more than 175 events that took place throughout the country on Jan. 6.

***[Full story here with photo gallery](#)***

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## Blue Wave Manatee's Voter Outreach Party Sunday, February 20, 3 to 6 p.m.

Blue Wave Manatee is organizing a voter outreach party for Sunday, Feb. 20, 3 to 6 p.m. Participants shall gather at

# INDIVISIBLE MANATEE



Engage, Educate, Empower

Manatee County Democratic Party headquarters, 435 Cortez Road W, Bradenton, and pick up neighborhood assignments.

We face the most crucial mid-term election of our lifetime. If Republicans gain control of Congress, our democracy and the will of the voters will be threatened.

Join us in going to low voter turnout precincts to obtain voter registrations and enroll voters in Vote by Mail (VBM.) A voter enrolled in VBM is four to five times more likely to vote than one who is not enrolled.

You will go in teams of two to designated neighborhoods and meet with carefully selected Democratic voters. Once you have visited your assigned voters, return to headquarters to socialize with other participants. Wine, beer and snacks will be available. **Sign up here.** Contact **BlueWaveManatee@gmail.com** with questions.

## April 24 - Manatee Dems Annual Gala

Do you have time to help plan the biggest fundraising event of the year? The Gala team is juggling a lot of fun things to get ready and could use your help.

Are you good at securing auction items? Have an item to donate? Interested in helping with things in general? Email Gala co-chairs Lucy Lapides at [lucy@lwr Dems.com](mailto:lucy@lwr Dems.com) or Robin Sathan at [MCDPGala@gmail.com](mailto:MCDPGala@gmail.com).

And make SURE that this Gala Spectacular is on your calendar for April 24. Details coming soon.



### How to Get Involved



Meet like-minded people  
at fun events!

Click for Events  
List



The Manatee County Democratic Party is a 100% **volunteer organization**. All contributions of any size are appreciated; \$22/month goes a long way to help elect Democrats in the 2022 elections.

Donate Now

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435 Cortez Road West  
Bradenton, Florida 34207  
(941) 301-4336



Contact  
Us

