



Manatee County
Democratic Party

Manatee Matters

June 20, 2022 Newsletter

Manatee Matters now publishes twice a month, on the first and third Mondays.

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Newsletters

August 23 Election Voter Registration Deadline Is Monday, July 25

**FREEDOM
STARTS HERE!**

Democrats take note! Your votes matter in ALL elections and the upcoming Aug. 23 primary and school board election in Manatee County is no exception. EVERY ELECTION IS IMPORTANT. Here is a guide to assist you. Please VOTE!!!

Important Dates

- **Monday, July 25** – Last day to register for Aug. 23 elections,
- **Last week of July** – Ballots mailed to voters enrolled in Vote By Mail,
- **Aug. 13** – Deadline to request a Vote By Mail ballot,
- **Saturday, Aug. 13 to Saturday, Aug. 20** – Early voting,
- **Tuesday, Aug. 23** – ELECTION DAY!

Stand Up for Public Education: Join Regional Caucus

By Donna Hartman - Public education — a pillar of American democracy — is under attack in Manatee and Sarasota counties, throughout Florida as well as the entire nation.

The recently formed Democratic Public Education Caucus of Manasota (DPECM) is calling on all

Democrats to join the caucus to stand up for:

- Truth in learning and truth in teaching
- High-quality, equitable education for all public school students
- Keeping politics out of education
- Well-funded public schools

The caucus represents Manatee and Sarasota counties and is one of four local chapters of the Democratic Public Education of Caucus of Florida (DPECF).

The DPECM's mission is to:

- Support public education, which is under attack
- Support and elect Democratic school board candidates
- Stay on top of education legislation in Tallahassee and work with our Democratic legislators
- Collaborate with our school board members on important local and state education issues



- Help with educational issue messaging for our campaigns
- Support teachers and teacher unions in their fight for adequate funding, better pay, basic labor rights and academic freedom to teach the truth
- Engage parents to support pro-public education positions
- Collaborate with and support the DPECF

The Manasota caucus meets the third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. The next meeting is June 20.

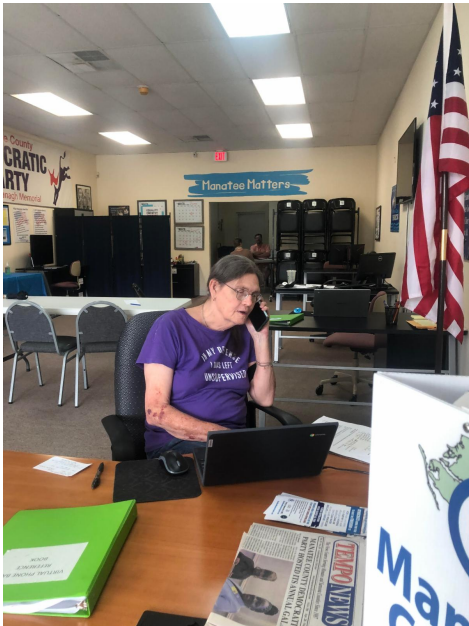
For more information on DPECM and how to attend meetings, go to www.manateecountydemocrats.com and click on the link provided under Democratic Public Education Caucus of Manasota. Or contact Robin Taub Williams, president, at (609) 771-1755, robinftaubw@gmail.com. You can also join the Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/505003724473507>

DPEC chapters are organizing in response to actions by Gov. Ron DeSantis, extremist Republicans in Tallahassee and some members of local school boards aimed at dismantling public education and advancing their agenda under the guise of “parental rights.”

They use tactics such as:

- Legislative hate bills, including a bill that prohibits teaching facts that could make students uncomfortable or supposedly feel guilty for historical wrongs based on their race, gender or national origin.
- Funneling public dollars to private schools and charter schools operated by private corporations.
- Undermining teachers with anti-union actions and attacking teachers’ academic freedom to teach the truth.
- Encouraging book banning in public school classrooms and libraries.

Phone Banking – It’s a Calling!



By Donna Hartman – When asked what inspired phone bankers Kathern Groulx (photo at left) and Chris Fletcher to pick up their phones and start calling Democratic voters, each gave a very specific answer.

For phone banking newcomer Groulx, it was one word, “Buffalo,” referring to the May 14 mass shooting in Buffalo, N.Y. “That was the straw that broke the camel’s back,” she said. “I just showed up at the Manatee County Democratic Party office out of the blue.” The staff put her to work right away. A lifelong Democrat, Groulx of Palmetto, does phone banking, canvasses door-to-door and works a Friday shift at the MCDP office.

Fletcher, of Bradenton, started phone banking in 2018. Her outrage that former Republican President Donald Trump was running for re-election turned to action. “I went the MCDP office and asked, ‘What can I do? The country is going in the wrong direction,’ ” she said.

The current phone banking goal is Vote by Mail (VBM). Phone bankers are calling thousands of Democrats whose VBM has expired with the county Supervisor of Elections (SOE). Many voters are unaware of the expiration. Phone bankers encourage them to re-enroll with SOE at (941) 741-3823 or online at www.VoteManatee.gov.

This massive undertaking aims at getting voters to sign up for Vote by Mail for the Aug. 23 primary election and school board election. Groulx makes calls one hour a day (except Sundays and some Saturdays when she’s canvassing). Fletcher’s daily goal is 45 minutes of calling or making 30 calls.

In an era when nearly everyone has a cell phone (and doesn’t always answer), Groulx and Fletcher often get voicemails. So, they leave a message and send a text. When they do reach people, it’s usually an exhilarating experience. There are people who hang up or use an occasional expletive. But the positive reactions outweigh the negative ones.

"Lots of people are thrilled to be called. Some are upset about their VBM expiring and are glad to hear about re-enrollment. It gives them hope that Democrats are doing something," Groulx said.

Like many people new to phone banking, Groulx and Fletcher have overcome hurdles.

"I talk fast. I learned to slow down and enunciate my words," Fletcher said. Groulx experiences a touch of anxiety before making that first call each day. Once she starts, though, she's off and running.

Want to be a phone banker? Contact Manatee Democrats Volunteer Coordinator Tina Shope at anntinashope@gmail.com. You can make calls from your home or at the Democrat's office. You will be trained, meet like-minded people and make a difference!

Register Voters with MCDBC

The Manatee County Democratic Black Caucus (MCDBC) is having great success registering voters. They invite you to join them every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for voter registration. To volunteer to help, contact the MCDBC second vice-president Florence Shelton-Clark at msdbcoutreach@gmail.com.



Florence Shelton-Clark, MCDBC second vice-president, leads voter registration efforts.



MCDBC first vice-president Glenn Pearson with Florence and past president, Susie Copeland



The MCDBC is having great success with voter registration.

State Dems Urge You to Check Your Voter Registration



The Florida Democratic Party is asking residents to check their voter registration status and party affiliation in response to reports that some voters had their party designation switched from Democrat to Republican.

Florida Dems said there is evidence that Republican-affiliated canvassers targeted elderly and non-English-speaking Democrats in public housing complexes in Cuban- and Haitian-American areas of Miami-Dade County. No reports of party switching have surfaced in Manatee County.

Manatee Democrats conduct voter registration and Vote By Mail enrollment at Democratic Headquarters, 435 Cortez Road, the Orange Blossom Shopping Center, Bradenton, (941) 301-4336. Registration efforts are scheduled in selected neighborhoods, as well as at community events.

Contact the Supervisor of Elections office, (941) 741-3820; info@votemanatee.gov; www.votemanatee.com/ to check on your registration status. If you need help checking your registration or know of an incident of voter suppression, call the state Voter Protection Hotline at (833) 868-3352.

Democratic Groups Schedule Events

As we move closer to the August elections, Manatee Democratic clubs, caucuses and affiliated groups schedule events of interest to Democrats throughout the county. Here is a sampling:

Wednesday, June 22, 1 to 3 p.m.: **Anna Maria Island and West Manatee Democratic Club** is hosting an informal Summer Chat Series at the Island Branch Library, 5701 Marina Dr, Holmes Beach. The planned topic – What are your most pressing issues that need to be addressed by those running for office in August and November? Contact: Barbara Ehren, barbara.ehren@gmail.com.

Thursday, June 23, noon to 1:30 p.m.: **Longboat Key Democratic Club** will offer an online discussion, *Challenging Florida's "Don't Say Gay" Bill*. [Sign up for Zoom Link](#)

Wednesday, July 20, 6 to 7 p.m.: **Manatee Democratic LGBTQ+ Caucus** monthly meeting features speakers Todd Delmay (Hollywood, Florida LGBTQ activist and candidate for Florida House District 101) and Harold Byrd (Bradenton School Board candidate, District 2). Contact Kent Noel, at ManateeLGBTADems@gmail.com for a meeting invitation or more information.

Wednesday, July 20, 1 to 3 p.m.: **Anna Maria Island and West Manatee Democratic Club** will discuss, *How do we craft sound bites around the key issues?* Contact: Barbara Ehren, Barbara.Ehren@gmail.com for more information.



Get involved! Check out the many area Democratic Clubs and Caucuses. Meet like-



*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*

minded people at fun events!

[Click for Events List](#)

Democrats in the 2022 elections.

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