

September 2025 News

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MCDEC Elects New Leadership

Summer 2025 brought fresh leadership to the MCDEC. On August 5, 2025, **Christine Kennedy Meier** was unanimously elected to replace the outgoing chair. Christine previously held the position of DEC 2nd Vice Chair of Communications and has more than 17 years of executive experience with an international professional association. She is a graduate of Harvard University (Extension), holding a master's degree in digital media and a graduate certificate in nonprofit management. A resident of Manatee County (Precinct 201) for more than 20 years, Christine and her husband are local business owners.

Joanne Harless was appointed as acting DEC Secretary and will be officially elected by the full membership at the September DEC meeting. Joanne serves as Precinct 325 chair and has served on the Data Team and as volunteer coordinator. Ken Handelman (Precinct 323) has kindly resumed the role of volunteer coordinator.

Joanne and Christine join **Randi Sathan** (Precinct 117), DEC Vice Chair and **Randy Cooper** (Precinct 315), Treasurer to complete the DEC 2025-2026 leadership team.

Alicia Wartenburg (at-large member) has been nominated by the new chair as the DEC Compliance Officer, charged with ensuring that the DEC and its members are fully in compliance with the bylaws and Florida statutes. Alicia previously served on the communications team.

Lewis Wasserman, has agreed to be the DEC Parliamentarian. Lewis is a State Committee Representative and the Precinct 521 chair. He also serves on the board of the LWR Democrats Club.

Message from the Chair

Hello Fellow Democrats.

With the first month of my tenure as Chair under my belt, I have what might be a shocking admission.

This is the best job, by far, that I've ever had.

There's an energy of positivity coupled with absolute determination among the voters, DEC Members and volunteers that is contagious. It's a joy to roll up my sleeves and work side by side with them and you.

Do we face challenges ahead? Absolutely! Is the climb to victory steep? No question about it! Do we have a lot of work ahead of us? You bet we do!

Are Manatee County Democrats up to the task? I have no doubts about it!

Our ultimate goal is to deliver votes at the ballot box and everything we do will be in service to that goal. I'd like to invite you to engage with me and all the DEC members at [our upcoming events and fundraisers](#). I am eager to hear your thoughts about the issues, the 2026 election and life in Manatee County in general. I especially encourage you to attend our Blue Denim, Boots and Bling fundraiser on October 26.

Together, in the first month, our DEC members and volunteers have pulled together to achieve so much. Now, I'm not going to give any spoilers – you'll need to read this newsletter to hear about our accomplishments.

– Christine Kennedy Meier



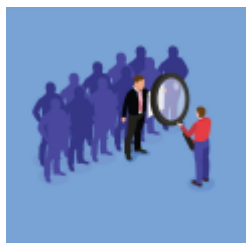
Manatee County Phone Bank Operations Earn Top Spot in July

The MCDP Phone Banking team earned a special shout out from FDP chair Nikki Fried on August 25 for being one of the Top 10 performing phone bank teams in the state.

Phone Banking is an essential tool for reaching voters and our Phone Banking Leads, Laurie Cusick and Barb Stubbers are knocking it out of the park. Every week their team of volunteers reaches hundreds of voters. It's a great way to get involved in the Manatee DEC.

Volunteer for the phone bank team

Local Candidate Recruitment Efforts in Full Swing



The Recruitment Committee, helmed by DEC member and local political expert, Dr. Liv Coleman, is actively recruiting candidates for the 2026 local races. The committee's goal is to have at least one candidate in each race by early 2026.

2026 Races:

- Congressional District 16
(2 declared DEM candidates)
- State House District 71
(1 declared DEM candidate)
- Manatee County School District 5
(1 declared DEM candidate)
- Manatee County School District 2
- Manatee County School District 4
- Bradenton City Council Ward 2
- Bradenton City Council Ward 3
- Bradenton City Council Ward 4
- Palmetto City Commission races
- Manatee County Commission District 2
- Manatee County Commission District 4
- Manatee County Commission District 6, county-wide
- State House District 70
- State Senate District 20
- State Senate District 22

Candidates must currently be a registered Democrat, as the one-year deadline has passed for candidates to change parties.

The committee is also recruiting people to fill key campaign positions. Every Campaign, big or small, needs a campaign manager and treasurer. Having volunteers in place to fill these positions makes it easier to attract candidates. Training is available through the DEC's resources for volunteers willing to step up and help Democratic candidates win in 2026. To find out how you can help email

Chair@manateecountydemocrats.com

It's a Party with a Purpose! Blue Denim, Boots & Bling!

An Evening to Celebrate Being a Democrat

Join the MCDP on Oct. 26th for live music, dancing & BBQ!



**Click
for
your
seat
now!**

Pair your denim with your flashiest bling and get ready for an incredible night with a live performance by Country Artist, Trey Taylor. Have fun with like-minded Democrats and learn about our most ambitious election strategy yet.

Help us reach out to every Manatee County Voter with our platform, our candidates and our vision for a better Manatee County (& America). Early Bird pricing ends Sept 28! See you there! [Link to early bird pricing Seats & Sponsorships](#)

Click for your seat now!

About Trey Taylor.

One of the youngest singers on the country tour, Taylor has built relationships with some of country music's most respected figures, including Kenny Rogers, Ronnie Milsap, Wynonna Judd, Vince Gill, & Tanya Tucker. Now, Taylor is gearing up for his most ambitious chapter yet. In 2025-2026, he will release his debut full-length album.

"With a fondness for designer boots, gaudy colors and dazzling gold jewelry from head-to-toe, Trey Taylor could stand toe to toe with any of the Pop, Country or even Rap contemporaries of his generation and give each of them a good run for their money" — The Denver Post



RESISTANCE TAKES RESOURCES

Local Democrats have been generous & we're using their donations wisely.

The MCDP is entirely funded by donations by you our supporters. Our 100% volunteer staff of penny-pinchers makes every cent count. Below are a few examples on how we've used donor funds to advance the democratic ideals in Manatee County recently.

\$8

Text messaging sent to invite over 600 precinct residents to a meet & great, registered democrats regarding the MAGA agenda.

A 1x donation of just \$25 can help reach over 1000 voters.

\$175

Monthly Constant Contact subscription, which helps the MCDP deliver this newsletter.

Sponsor this valuable tool with a recurring monthly donation.

\$60

Keep the lights on by sponsoring the average monthly cost for electricity for our Cortez Rd. Office. Help us keep the lights on.

A donation of \$60/month makes it possible.

Republicans don't want you to vote! But that won't stop us. The Manatee County Democrats announce a plan to foil the Republican led voter suppression Laws.

According to Manatee County Democratic Party Chair, Christine Kennedy Meier, "For more than 15 years, Republicans in Tallahassee have worked to make it harder for us to help Florida's citizens register to vote. They've imposed short deadlines, huge fines up to \$250,0

00 and even threatened voter registration workers with felony jail time for clerical errors."

The chair is referring to Florida's SB 90 and SB 705 passed in 2020 and 2023, respectively. This legislation placed onerous restrictions on third party voter registration organizations, known as 3PVRO's. The bills have effectively stopped all work by these 3PVRO's – they registered just 725 voters in the first seven months of 2025, claims the [ElectionSmith Substack](#).

These laws have made the DMV nearly the only agency registering voters in any quantity. This closed system limits the ability to register to only those Florida citizens who interact with the agency. The young, old or urban dwellers, who may not drive or own a vehicle, are essentially shut off from the easiest way to exercise their fundamental rights.

Manatee County's plan comes from a partnership with the Florida Democratic Party (FDP). The leadership of the FDP created an ambitious program to coordinate and encourage voter registration at the county level. The MCDEC voter registration plan was introduced at their monthly meeting on August 26, 2025. Locally, the first step is for every DEC member, from Precinct Coordinator, Democratic Club and Caucus President; and the other DEC members, to be trained and registered with the FDP in September.

"It's a lot of logistics getting 70-plus people through the voter registration training in about 30 days, but the members are committed." Mrs. Kennedy Meier commented, "but we're just one year out from the 2026 primary and we have no time to waste if we want to turn Manatee County from red to blue."

Next steps include identifying high foot traffic events and locations for pop-up voter registration booths; and recruiting and training citizen volunteers to staff these events. The local Democrats and the FDP will handle the logistics, but these events will be largely staffed by patriotic volunteers. The first volunteer Voter Registration Academy will be in late fall or early winter. It takes about 75 minutes from start to finish to get certified through the state and learn the local procedures.

[To volunteer to help register voters – sign up here.](#)



*"The Florida Legislature intentionally created a barrier to the essential tools of democracy for a significant portion of Florida's citizens. They called it election security but what they meant was voter suppression, particularly targeting traditionally Democratic leaning voters. It's wrong and we won't stand for it anymore."
Christine Kennedy Meier.*

The Whitehouse Wages War on Vote by Mail.



Request Vote By Mail Ballot

On a related note, MAGA knows most Americans hate their policies, and they plan to try to stop you from voting by mail. It's wrong and ANTI-DEMOCRATIC.

In 2026, every single Democratic vote will be crucial in decapitating the Republican majorities strangling our democracy at the local, state and national levels. We need you to send a message to Tallahassee & DC.

We're asking you to engage in an act of micro-resistance. Tell MAGA, "My VOTE is coming by mail." by enrolling or registering for vote by mail. Once you've done it, tell 5 friends, and ask them to do the same. If each of our subscribers did that, we'd send a powerful message -- in just 5 rounds we could reach every single voter in Florida. That's a number even Republicans can't ignore. Your voice and vote matters.

In Florida, after each 2-year election cycle, the republican voter suppression laws kick EVERYONE off the Vote By Mail program. That means if you were signed up for vote by mail for 2024 and you haven't re-enrolled this year you will not get a mail ballot in 2026.