

# Manatee County Democratic Party

435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton, FL 34207



## **Statement on Legislative Priorities to the State Legislative Delegation from the Manatee County Democratic Party November 23, 2021**

Good morning. My name is Wil Clapper. I'm the communications director for the Manatee County Democratic Party and speaking on its behalf.

Manatee Democrats believe you, our legislators, have the responsibility to focus on three core issues – the Economy, the Environment and Education.

### **THE FIRST E – ECONOMY**

Manatee County has recorded more than one-thousand deaths linked to COVID. Misguided state policies contributed to these deaths and impacted our economy resulting in business failures and thousands of jobs lost. It is unconscionable that the legislature let this happen.

We call on you to fix our broken unemployment system.

Residents need affordable housing to live and work in Manatee County.

Parents need affordable childcare, allowing them to work at good paying jobs.

To ensure a healthy workforce, we call for a public health system based in science, not politics. We need affordable health care including reproductive health.

We need a strong, independent and sufficiently funded higher education system to provide talented workers.

The bipartisan infrastructure bill signed into law by President Biden will bring billions of dollars to Florida and create jobs. We urge you to ensure a proportionate amount of that money is spent in Manatee County.

### **THE SECOND E – ENVIRONMENT**

A clean, safe and welcoming environment fuels tourism, which drives our economy. A lack of political will resulted in the Piney Point disaster. We urge you to take swift and significant action to clean up Piney Point but not harm our coastal and underground waters in the process.

We implore you to make the hard decisions on other environmental issues – rising seas, rampant over-development, and reoccurring red tide.

## **THE THIRD E – EDUCATION**

In November, Manatee County voters overwhelmingly agreed to continue a tax levy to boost teacher salaries and enhance student learning. They had to vote YES in a special referendum because the legislature doesn't allocate adequate funds for public schools.

Listen to the voters: Increase funding for our public schools. Give local school boards the authority to use funds in appropriate ways. Limit the ability of the governor to withhold school funding on a political whim.

In closing, be aware that politically motivated policy is:

- bad for our economy,
- bad for our environment,
- bad for our children's education,
- and bad for Manatee County.

Thank you for listening to your constituents' voices.