

January 2018



MANATEE MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

*New Year, New
Hopes, New
Democratic
Grassroots Work!*



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Wow, What a Year!

Year 2017 brought a blue wave of progress to the Manatee County Democratic Party. We started in January with a planning workshop where 120 people came to brainstorm voter outreach, precinct development, issues, candidates, events and fundraising.

Since we are an all-volunteer organization with no financial support from the state or national Democratic Party, all the ideas from the workshop needed dedicated volunteers to make them happen. A surge of grassroots effort helped us achieve many of our goals. Here are a few highlights of 2017:

We relocated our headquarters to a larger, multi-functional space that is centrally located within the county with plenty of parking.

The new headquarters are open from 10 AM to 2 PM every weekday with a team of energized volunteers ready to assist. The space is well-used with our monthly meeting open to all and by Democratic clubs, caucuses and committees.

Precinct development activity has become more organized and focused, and poised to reach most Democratic voters in the county in 2018.

We developed a new website and monthly newsletter, and reinvigorated our Facebook, Twitter and direct email system – all dynamic ways to keep Manatee Democrats informed and reach out to voters.

We continued to reach out to voters with the “Traveling Dems” booth and voter registration at public events around the county.

Fundraising almost doubled with our biggest, most successful annual gala, featuring three Democratic Florida gubernatorial candidates, a first-class silent auction and exciting live auction. Other fundraising throughout the year included cookbook sales and much needed donations.

Our November 6 headquarters event to launch one-year-out to the 2018 General Election brought candidates, over 200 attendees and plenty of enthusiasm.

Thank you to everyone who generously gave their time, energy and financial support to make 2017 successful for the Manatee County Democratic Party. We are energized to make 2018 even better.

A Blue Wave in 2018

A Blue Wave in 2018? Results of recent special elections have given dispirited Democrats around the country reason to hope. Democrats won the governorship in New Jersey and in Virginia swept the top three state offices, governor, lt. governor, and attorney general. Virginia Dems also flipped 15 seats in the state's General Assembly, including electing the first openly transgender Delegate. In a particularly satisfying show of irony, the first transgender candidate beat the long-time Republican incumbent who had sponsored a "bathroom bill." As of this writing, Republicans still hold an advantage in the House of Delegates, 50-49. However, one race is still being disputed, and the results could lead to a 50-50 tie, not seen in Virginia since 1999.

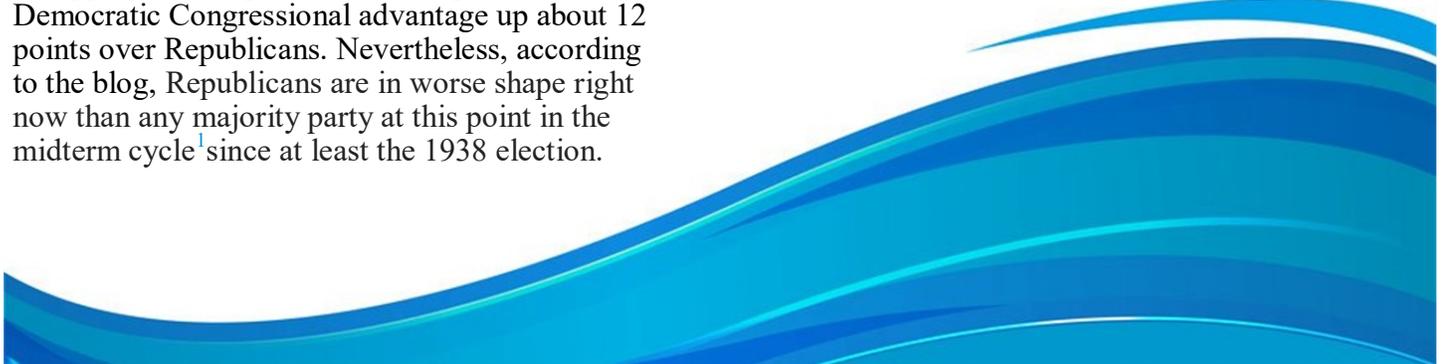
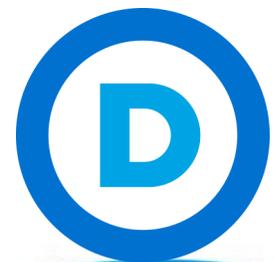


Surveys also show more white college-educated voters are developing a distaste for Trump and Republicans, a trend playing out in other elections around the country. A CNN survey released right before Christmas showed Democrats leading Republicans 56-38 on a generic Congressional ballot, an 18% lead among registered voters. The FiveThirtyEight blog is a little more conservative: Its aggregation of polls shows the generic Democratic Congressional advantage up about 12 points over Republicans. Nevertheless, according to the blog, Republicans are in worse shape right now than any majority party at this point in the midterm cycle¹ since at least the 1938 election.

As of December 1, 2017, prior to the Virginia results, Ballotpedia reports that Democrats in state legislature races had picked up 11 seats for the year. However, throughout the country Republicans currently control 56.2 percent of all seats, while Democrats hold 42.3 percent. All told, Republicans control 67 state chambers, while Democrats are the majority in 32 chambers. The Republicans' more than 2-to-1 advantage is often propped up by gerrymandering and therefore is particularly difficult to erode.

There was much rejoicing when Democrat Doug Jones beat Republican Roy Moore in the special election to fill Jeff Sessions' Senate seat. However, the margin was only 21,000 votes, and the vast majority of white voters voted for Moore, an accused pedophile. Let that sink in. An extraordinary GOTV (Get Out the Vote) effort among African American voters gets credited for the win.

So there is reason for hope but not for complacency. Smoldering anti-Trump sentiment alone is not going to win elections. We've got to show up. When Democrats turn out, we win. GOTV may be the most important thing we do in 2018.



Candidates' Corner - David Shapiro, 16th Congressional District

It was a beautiful morning at the Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando. The Florida Democratic Party conference was underway with optimistic enthusiasm. David Shapiro, newly announced Democratic candidate for the 16th District Congressional seat, took time out from his busy schedule to meet with us.

Shapiro's demeanor is one of an engaging, calm, confident and knowledgeable statesman. He knows who he is and what he stands for. His personal motto was adopted from his father, "Treat everyone with respect, pay your debts and keep your promises."



When asked why he has chosen to run for the 16th District Congressional seat during these turbulent times, he responded from the heart, "I have to, I just have to. There has been a sea-change that has and is trying to knock everything down. We need to rebuild." Shapiro, who has been politically active all his life, said we have learned the damage that divisiveness can cause and we need to reach across the aisle. Yet he also defined his ideology by saying that Republicans speak in headlines and Democrats speak in fine print. He went on to say that issues are complex and if we have learned anything over the last few years it is to read the fine print. "If you want to be truthful to voters, you can't do it in headlines," he asserted.

Shapiro is passionate about individuals reaching their full potential. As a father of three, he understands the need for visionary education and helping people get ahead of the curve to be prepared for job placement. His passions do not stop there. We asked which committees he would be compelled to work on in Washington. He immediately said the environment, and after working as an attorney for more than 25 years, health insurance. Shapiro looks forward to working in a bipartisan manner to heal the divide and find a solution for healthcare.

Born the last year to claim baby boomer status, David Shapiro is happily married, a proud father and has built a thriving law practice. We asked him for a few fun personal facts and learned he is an avid reader and photographer, and enjoys traveling. He listens to Billy Joel, Luther Vandross and Kenny Loggins, and likes fish from the Suncoast waters. He loves the 16th Congressional District and believes that everyone should have the opportunity to achieve the American dream.



To contribute to David Shapiro's campaign, visit <https://www.voteshapiro2018.com>

Florida's 16th District for the US House of Representatives includes northern Sarasota County, all of Manatee County and southern Hillsborough County. The next election for this district is November 6, 2018, and the current Representative is Vern Buchanan. Other Democratic candidates for District 16 are Jan Schneider and Calen Cristiani.

Look for more candidate interviews in future issues of Manatee Matters.

We Have a New Chair of the Florida Democratic Party



In December Terrie Rizzo was elected chair of the Florida Democratic Party with overwhelming support. Terrie is the three-term chair of the Palm Beach County Democratic Party, the “Chair of Chairs” of the Florida Democratic County Chairs Association (DCCA), and one of Florida’s 10 elected members of the Democratic National Committee.

As the FDP chair, Terrie will now lead a team that has committed to **#FlipFloridaBlue** in 2018 and to help retake the White House in 2020!

To learn more about the Florida Democratic Party, go to <http://www.floridadems.org>

FL DEMS
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In Case You Missed It....

Sheryl Wilson, Chair of the Manatee County Democratic Party, has appeared on numerous local TV political discussions. On December 15th she joined a political panel discussion with WWSB My Suncoast’s Alan Cohn on “ABC 7 at 7” news. As always, Sheryl nailed the issues and made Democrats proud.

The following link is for the news program in its entirety. Panel discussions take place at the 15:00 and 28:00 time markers in the recording. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkANqAq8fVU>



Flip the Florida Legislature

Margaret Good won the December Democratic primary for the state House District 72 race in Sarasota. Now she needs the help of neighboring Manatee County Democrats to take her across the finish line in a special election on February 13, 2018.

“We know that voters in House District 72 are ready to send a Democrat to Tallahassee to fight for fully funded public education, robust protection of our environment, and building an economy that works for us,” said Good. But to make that happen she needs the support of Democrats both in and outside of Sarasota County.

“It will take all hands on deck in order for us to be successful and get Democrats elected. We must **all** come together and work as a team to get our Democratic candidate elected in District 72,” said JoAnne Devries, chair of the Sarasota County Democratic Party. “There is no doubt that we have an enormous amount of work to do. However, with all of your support we can work together, flip this House seat, and send a Democrat to Tallahassee.”



To learn about Good’s priorities for the state: <https://margaretgood.com/#priorities>

To make a contribution to Good’s campaign: <https://margaretgood.com/>

To get involved and help with outreach: <https://margaretgood.com/#voldesktop>

To sign-up and phone bank for Good: <https://www.volunteersignup.org/T9PYR>