

June 2018



MANATEE MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY



**Manatee County Democratic
Executive Committee**

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*For events calendar,
Democratic candidate and vot-
ing information:*

ManateeCountyDemocrats.com



Democratic Precinct Development and Voter Registration Heat Up in May

In libraries, community centers and private homes across the county Manatee Democrats are welcoming new volunteers and introducing them to our local candidates. Precinct leaders have arranged dozens of Democratic get-togethers with more events to come this summer. They are getting the word out with door knocking, door hangers, postcard invitations, phone calling and electronic media. The overall mission is to bring Democrats together, increase awareness of the Manatee County Democratic Party (MCDP), provide an opportunity for voters to meet the candidates and recruit volunteers to help expand voter outreach. The events have ranged from small meetings over coffee, to large parties, to well-attended candidate forums.



One candidate forum, hosted by Deborah Van Brunt and Precinct 513, was held at University Park Country Club and featured Democratic candidates Jan Schneider, David Shapiro, Liv Coleman, Melony Howard and Reverend James Golden. Attendees included over 160 Democrats, some unaffiliated with either party and even a handful of Republicans.

The following day, the Sarasota Herald carried an analysis of the Shapiro-Schneider race reflected in the forum. : <http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180502/shapiro-is-gunning-for-buchanan-but-first-must-get-past-schneider>

MCDP also continues voter registration drives, along with the Democratic Women's Club (DWC) and the Sarasota-Manatee Democratic Black Caucus.

Led by Pat Benson, DWC has a long history of voter registration drives. They have developed a system for identifying where non-registered voters may reside and conduct organized door-knocking. They also use the opportunity to promote Vote-By Mail. Benson says the DWC has substantially upped its goal this year for new registered Democratic voters and, as a result, is seeking more volunteers and financial contributions. She quoted Hillary Clinton, saying, "It takes a village."



Candidates' Corner—Tracy Pratt, Florida House District 71

Accountability. That's what Tracy Pratt wants to bring to the voters of state House District 71. She is challenging Republican Will Robinson, a Bradenton attorney, to serve in the Florida House of Representatives. The incumbent, Republican Rep. Jim Boyd, cannot run because of term limits.

"I'm getting out every day to meet the voters and hear what they think," Pratt said. "I'm running on a platform that the government in Tallahassee should be responsive to the people. I'm asking people what is the most important issue to them, and I'm finding over and over again that we have shared values. Even Republicans have signed my petition to be on the ballot."



Pratt was the first person in her family to go to college. She is a constitutional lawyer with a practice in Bradenton and previously worked for Legal Aid Manatee County, which provides pro bono legal services, and the Innocence Project, which exonerates the wrongly convicted through DNA testing. Her husband is a physician and a 5th generation Floridian from Bradenton. They have two daughters, ages 10 and 12.

Pratt has a reputation for being a fighter. "I've fought for environmental protection, fought for underprivileged children, and provided free legal services after Katrina in Louisiana and the BP oil spill," she said.

"I decided to run," Pratt explained, "because I believe special interests have taken over our state legislature." She rattled off three specific examples: "Take gun control. Most Americans support common sense gun control measures – but the school safety bill in response to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting didn't go far enough. Environmental protections. Most people support environmental protections, but we're seeing a lot of developers having their way. Education. People want strong public schools. But we're seeing our education system privatized under the name of 'school choice.' It's undermining our public schools."

Pratt isn't a stranger to hard work. She put herself through college waiting tables and working various low-wage jobs. "I know the struggles people face, the lack of opportunity. I think we need to fix that. We need to be sure we have affordable transportation, affordable educational opportunities, and affordable housing," she stressed.

Pratt admitted her greatest campaign challenge is the fact Republican voters outnumber Democrats in the district, which covers western Manatee County and a portion of northern Sarasota County. She laughed, "Being in Florida, we need flip flops on the ground – canvassing, registering voters, making phone calls. Seriously, we need every Democrat to give a little and do what they can to bring about a victory in November."

To learn more about Tracy Pratt and donate to her campaign, visit www.votetracypratt.com.

You can follow her on Twitter at [@TracyPratt4Florida](https://twitter.com/TracyPratt4Florida) and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TracyPratt4Florida>.



Manatee County's Three Districts for Florida House of Representatives

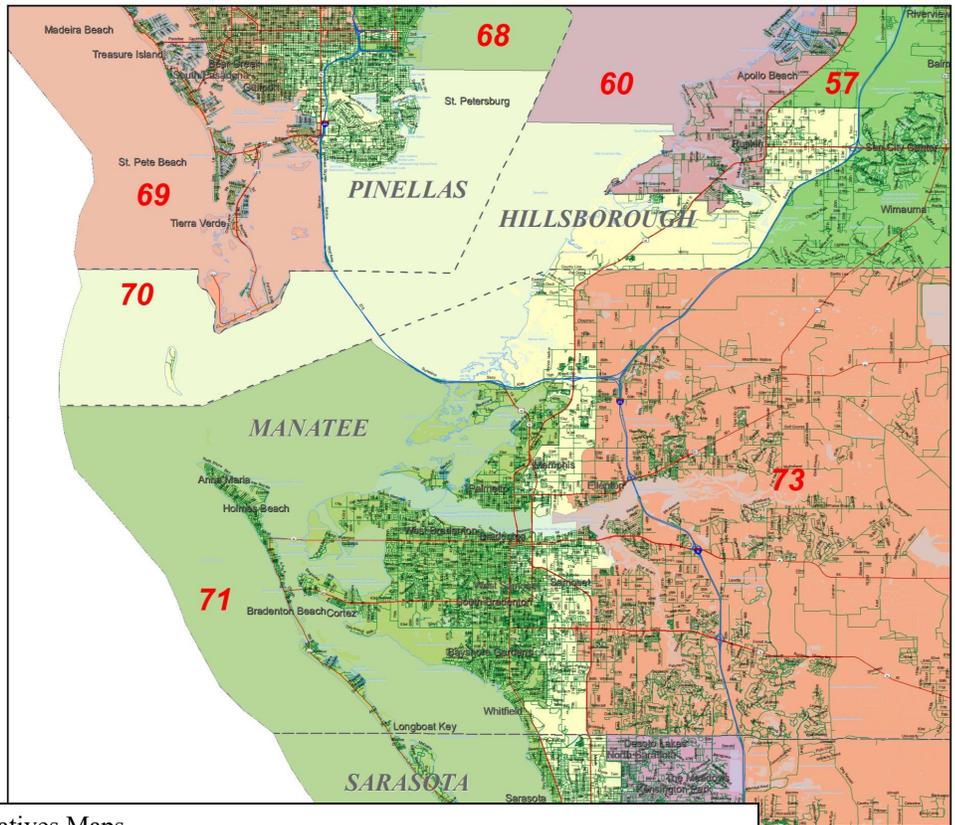
Voters in Manatee County will elect Representatives to the Florida House in Districts 70, 71 and 73. All three districts extend into neighboring counties.

Democratic candidates for this year's primary and general elections are:

District 70: Wengay Newton (incumbent), Vito Sheeley and Keisha Bell

District 71: Tracy Pratt

District 73: Liv Coleman



From Florida House of Representatives Maps
http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/contentViewer.aspx?Category=PublicGuide&File=About_The_Representatives_--_House_Districts_Maps.html

Summer Kickoff Action Day

The Florida Democratic Party kicked off the summer on May 26th with an action day across the state of voter registration drives and canvassing for Vote By Mail. Manatee County Chair Sheryl Wilson says these initiatives will continue in our county all summer and confirms, “Yes, the hazy, crazy days of summer are approaching, but we must not allow “lazy” to be added to their description! We are now well within the 100-day mark to the August 28th Primary Election, so we must be in full election 2018 mode.”

You can volunteer for voter registration or Vote By Mail canvassing on our website at <https://manateecountydemocrats.com/volunteer2018>.



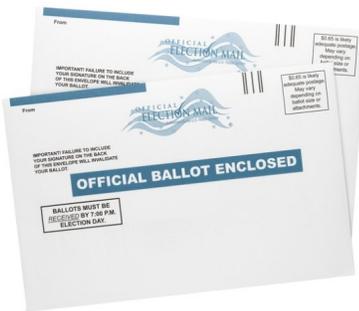
Vote By Mail Request Deadline Nearing

With a deadline of July 14th, time is growing short to request or renew Vote By Mail for the Primary Election. The Manatee County Supervisor of Elections (SOE) Office provides instructions on how to Vote By Mail, including the following ways in which registered voters may request a ballot:

1. Complete the online request form at www.votemanatee.com/Vote-By-Mail-Early-Voting/Vote-By-Mail-Ballot-Request-Online.
2. Access the Vote By Mail Ballot Request form at www.votemanatee.com, select Vote By Mail Request Form (PDF). Follow the instructions to complete the form, and then return it by mail, email or fax.
3. Make your request in person at the SOE Office, [600 301 Blvd. W., Suite 108, Bradenton, FL 34205](#).
4. Call the SOE Office at [\(941\) 741-3823](tel:9417413823) and ask to sign up for Vote By Mail. A voter may make the request for a spouse or other immediate family member.

All registered voters are eligible. However, you must be able to receive mail at the address you have given in your ballot request. **Requests are not permanent.** If you have used a Vote By Mail ballot for two regularly scheduled elections, it is probably time to renew. If in doubt, contact the SOE Office to confirm and renew the request if needed. **Vote By Mail ballots are neither held nor forwarded by the US Postal Service.** However, you may request that a ballot be sent to where you are visiting. If that address is different

than the one already on your voter record, the first use of the different address must be requested in writing with your signature. **Completed Vote By Mail ballots are not accepted at the polls on Election Day.** They must be received by the SOE Office by mail or in person no later than 7:00 pm on Election Day. If you wish to vote in person instead, you may surrender your Vote By Mail ballot (although this is not required) at the polls and receive a fresh ballot to complete and turn in while there.



Florida 2018 Election Dates and Deadlines

- July 14:** *Deadline to request Vote By Mail ballot for Primary Election*
- July 30:** *Voter registration ends for Primary Election*
- August 28:** *Primary Election*
- October 2:** *Deadline to request Vote By Mail ballot*
- October 9:** *Voter registration ends for General Election*
- October 27:** *Early voting begins*
- November 3:** *Early voting ends*
- November 6:** *General Election*

