



ELECTION 2020

Presidential Preference

Primary:

MARCH 17

(Deadline to register: Feb. 18)

Primary Election:

AUGUST 18

(Deadline to register: July 20)

General Election:

NOVEMBER 3

(Deadline to register: Oct 5)

**Manatee County Democratic
Executive Committee**

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Letter from the Chair

As the holidays fade into 2019 memories, we are faced with the hopes and challenges of 2020. Truly, four years ago, most of us could not imagine the political landscape we are facing today. Democrats are the people who will protect the future for our children, grandchildren and humanity.



My goal with this message, and for 2020, is to motivate our Party with hope for the future, not with fear. What we do today will ensure victory. We will join the global chorus working to protect our planet from the climate crisis. In 2020 we will ensure that our elections are safe from foreign interference; we will fight to protect our Democracy from all threats, foreign and domestic. Together we can ensure reproductive rights and equality, we can transform an unjust criminal justice system and we can prevent the privatization of our public school system. In 2020 the Manatee Democratic Party will be on the right side of history.

Sometimes the challenges are daunting, but there are signs that the battle is shifting in our favor. Feeling defeated is not as productive as Hope, Faith, and Determination. Young people have changed the conversation about life on this planet. Together, in 2018, we achieved a Democratic majority in our House of Representatives with the most diverse, most female Congress we have ever seen. Taking back the House resulted in the impeachment of the worst President of our lifetime - a man who uses the office of the Presidency for his own personal gain. My friends, the Senate and White House are next.

I am often buoyed by the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the committed citizens working to change the world, to provide a better future.

It is your commitment to 2020 that makes that change. To find out what more you can do please contact our office or come to our event *Vision 2020: A Roadmap to Electing Democrats* on January 25. - Tracy Pratt

Want to Help? Here's What You Can Do

Collect Voter Registrations

Our key mission is to ensure a high Democratic voter turnout by collecting voter registrations and Vote By Mail forms throughout the county at tables and door-to-door in Democratic "hot blocks." New volunteers are paired with experienced buddies. Training is available every Saturday morning. Sign up at mobilize.us/manateecountydec/event/177273

#1



#2

Give Your Time and Talents

Manatee Democrats rely on dedicated volunteers to maintain a strong organization and structure. Helping hands and expertise are needed in office staffing, communications, fundraising, precinct development, voter protection and more. The January 25 *Vision 2020* will highlight volunteer opportunities. Email hqmanateedems@gmail.com.

Donate

The Manatee County Democratic Party operates on 100% volunteer power with no outside financial support. Generous donors keep the organization strong. January is a great time to donate as there is a \$5,000 gift matching challenge. Donate online or get mailing instructions at manateecountydemocrats.com/donate.

#3



#4

Join a Club or Caucus

Democratic clubs and caucuses do great work and have engrossing programs. Manatee County Democratic Black Caucus, Environmental Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, LGBTQA Caucus and Progressive Caucus; Anna Maria Island/Western Manatee, Lakewood Ranch, Longboat Key, Manatee and North River Democratic Clubs; Manasota Young Democrats and Democratic Women's Club all welcome new members. Check manateecountydemocrats.com/clubs-caucuses for contact info.

Vision 2020: A Roadmap for Electing Democrats

Saturday, January 25 - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Manatee Performing Arts Center, 502 3rd Ave. W, Bradenton

An opportunity to find out about our DEC Leadership Teams, Clubs, Caucuses & Candidates. We'll also have concurrent, interactive "how to" sessions on a variety of timely topics: voter registration, what to expect when you're out in the field, election monitoring, on the phone, social media and precinct possibilities. Sign up at mobilize.us/manateecountydec/event/187969/



Vision 2020:

A Road Map for Electing Democrats

Saturday
January 25



Vote By Mail: A True Convenience

Election Day may find you unable to get to the polls for one reason or another. Unforeseeable problems are just that – unforeseeable. With the convenience of Vote By Mail eligible voters can forget about finding the time to drive to the polls and having to wait in line. Request your Vote By Mail ballot and it will be mailed to you approximately 30 days in advance of Election Day.



Another convenience is being able to track the processing of your ballot on the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections (SOE) office web site. If your signature doesn't match or if you've signed your ballot in the wrong place, you have the opportunity to correct the problem. So it's important to mail early and carefully follow instructions.

“Voters with mail ballots actually vote,” says Terrie Rizzo, Chair of the Florida Democratic Party. “Somehow, those who have a ballot on their dining room table are more likely to fill it out than folks who wait for Early Voting or Election Day.” Rizzo emphasizes that voters must understand and follow the rules of Vote By Mail to ensure that each ballot mailed in is valid and counted. The rules make sense and they are relatively easy to follow:

1) Request your Vote By Mail ballot; 2) mark your choices by filling in the box next to your chosen candidates' names, in blue or black ink and as directed in the instructions; 3) fold and seal the ballot as directed; **4) sign the ballot on the correct line outside the envelope;** 5) affix postage; 6) mail before the deadline so that your ballot reaches the SOE office no later than 7 pm Election Day.



The deadline is important to keep in mind: If you happen to wait until Election Day itself, you must take your ballot to the SOE Office at 600 301 Blvd. W., Suite 108, Bradenton, FL 34205 **before 7 pm**. You **cannot** mail the ballot on Election Day nor can you deliver it in person to your polling place. You can, however, drop it off at Early Voting locations during the early voting time period.

There are three ways to request your Vote By Mail ballot: by phone (941) 741-3823, online at votemanatee.com or in person at the SOE office. If you have an existing request and did not receive your ballot, you may request a replacement ballot any time prior to the election. Please note that signatures can change over time due to age or injury. If you think your signature has changed from your original signature on file, you can update your signature by filling out a voter registration application.

It's easy to see why studies have concluded that voting by mail increases voter participation even more than early voting. “Vote By Mail will help us develop strong voting habits in the Democratic electorate,” Rizzo says. “It's good to know you can fulfill your civic duty from the comfort of home.” - *B.E. Melendez*



The Numbers: Cause for Both Hope and Urgency

In Florida Republicans have never been in the majority based on total numbers of voters. Yet Republicans continue to win elections and have held a trifecta (House, Senate and Governorship) since 2011. To reverse course, the Florida Democratic Party announced a sweeping voter registration program, in which Manatee County Democrats have been actively participating. The numbers give Democrats hope, but also give reason for urgency in voter registration initiatives.



Active registered voters in Manatee County as of January 2020 are roughly 77,000 Democrats, 109,000 Republicans and 65,000 No Party Affiliation (NPA).

New registrations continue to come in for all affiliations, but voters also drop off from the rolls, resulting in a constantly changing net increase. In 2019 from April to December, Manatee County Democrats, probably for the first time in many years, led the net increase – Democrats: 1,558 increase in net registrations, Republicans: 1,370 and NPAs: 1,087. Manatee Dem volunteers were directly responsible for collecting 554 new Democratic registrations during that time period, thanks to the Black Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, other clubs and caucuses, as well as volunteers who simply showed up. Republicans are not standing idle, though and are mobilizing paid canvassers in specific areas of the county. To continue to outpace them, Manatee County Democrats need to increase volunteer participation several fold.

The other side of a winning strategy is to ensure those who are registered actually vote. In the 2018 Manatee County General Election 69% of registered Democrats voted, compared to a 75% turnout by Republicans. Democratic turnout varied greatly by voting precinct, ranging from a low of 48% to a high of 85%. Statewide it is widely recognized that Vote By Mail (VBM) is key to higher turnout, much more so than encouraging voters to go to Early Voting. In 2018, Manatee County had an overall 85% turnout for those who received VBM ballots.

The numbers lead to Manatee County Democratic Party's voter registration strategy in a nutshell: 1) in highly Democratic neighborhoods, knock on all doors, 2) always ask Democrats to enroll in VBM, 3) set up tables throughout the county, 4) recruit, train, encourage and value an army of dedicated Democratic volunteers, 5) prove that Manatee matters.

Welcome, Terrie Rizzo!



Manatee County Democrats welcomed Terrie Rizzo, Florida Democratic Party Chair, as she thanked volunteers for their participation. Her primary message: FDP is re-energized with a winning strategy, including a permanent location, new and talented staff, and a sweeping program for new voter registrations. Manatee County Democratic volunteers are a key part of Florida's success.

Rizzo then joined a reception for members of the Manatee Society, those who have given significant financial support. Manatee County Democrats need and value ALL contributions. The Manatee Society ensures we can keep the doors open with strong programs for the 2020 Election as well as for years to come. Contact Robin Sathan at ManateeDemPrecinct521@gmail.com for more information.