

March 2018



MANATEE MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Build the Blue Wave in 2018



Manatee County Democratic
Executive Committee

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CALENDAR

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We welcome your comments
and contributions to this news-
letter. Please email:

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The perfect wave for a surfer is based in part on three things: speed, duration, and geography. The Manatee County Democratic Party (MCDP) initiative to Build the Blue Wave in 2018 will take all of these elements and more.

On February 17, County Chair Sheryl Wilson and 160 Democratic Party members gathered at the IMG Golf Club for a daylong workshop to develop specific, goal-oriented action plans that will ensure a strong Democratic turnout for this year's election cycle.

The attendees discussed how the county party could move quickly and more effectively to engage registered Democrats; they strategized on ways to maintain the momentum for the next nine months, recognizing the need for new volunteers and the importance of voter registration; and they discussed openly and respectfully the issues facing the county, the state and the nation at large.

After a rousing presentation covering the MCDP's 2017 accomplishments, Wilson brought to the podium volunteer leaders to discuss the focus of the party in 2018, in particular improvements at the headquarters office, enhanced communications outreach, stronger fundraising efforts, aggressive voter registration outreach, and strategic precinct operations.

The attendees broke out into the five districts in the county to better understand how local communities can help implement the party's strategy. Some individuals also met with their precinct members to discuss more specific plans, such as hosting get-togethers for newly registered Democrats, reaching out to identified Democrats in their neighborhood, and brainstorming ways to support Democratic candidates on the local, state, and national levels. Just as a perfect wave for a surfer breaks in one direction and moves as a collective body, so too has the MCDP set itself to be a unified, strategic, and energetic force for 2018.

If you missed the February workshop and want to be part of the solution, visit our headquarters office between 10 am and 2 pm weekdays, or email HQManateeDems@gmail.com.

To view a video of the workshop:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kwFUA51up4



What Manatee Democrats Care About

The mission of the Manatee County Democratic Party is to help Democratic candidates win elections in our county. As a local extension of the Florida Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee, we work to increase Democratic voter registration and election turnout. We actively support diversity, and we are a party that is greatly concerned about students, families, seniors, health care, the environment, civil rights, labor and main street businesses, including common sense gun law reform.

Effective Florida Gun Law Reform Is Vital

A majority of Floridians support gun law reform, including a ban on assault weapons, according to a poll conducted shortly after the Parkland shootings by the Florida Senate Republicans.

Florida has strict "preemption laws" on firearms, which means that gun legislation can be written only in Tallahassee. Local mayors and city commissions are prohibited from implementing any reforms that might be stricter than state law. If a city commission should pass an ordinance regarding guns or ammunition, there are serious financial penalties for the city, and officials can be removed from office.

In 2014 the city of Tallahassee was sued by two gun rights organizations over local ordinances that banned firing guns in a public park. The laws had not been enforced in decades, but their existence was enough to get the attention of the well-financed gun rights groups. All of this means that if Floridians want to make access to military weapons, like the AR-15, more difficult anywhere in the state, they will have to put new legislators in office who make that pledge.



For more about Florida's "super preemption" law from the *Miami Herald*, click on this link:

[Florida mayors can be fined if they enact stricter local rules on gun control](#)

Bills in-process in the Florida Legislature offer some common sense gun law reform, such as raising the age to 21 to purchase a long gun (rifle), adding a wait period, and creating "red flag" laws to confiscate weapons from unstable individuals. But it is not enough. There has been no serious consideration about universal background checks, banning semiautomatic rifles, or banning high capacity magazines. Even worse, many Republicans want to allow teachers to carry firearms.

The Florida Democratic Party issued the following statement on February 26:

"Today, House Republicans had an opportunity to show they stand with Parkland Students, instead of the gun lobby. But, once again, they have decided that protecting our children isn't their number one priority. Speaker Corcoran and Governor Rick Scott have refused to take meaningful action to keep Floridians safe from gun violence for years, and they continue to show these same self-serving politics as this gun proposal continues through the legislative process. Scott, Corcoran, and Tallahassee Republicans are refusing to listen to the voices of the Parkland students and gun safety advocates who have said loud and clear that this legislation, as it stands, does not go far enough without an assault rifles ban. At a time when we need action and leadership, Richard Corcoran and Rick Scott are nowhere to be found."

Bi-partisan March for Our Lives events will take place on Saturday, March 24, from 10 am to noon in Sarasota in front of Marina Jack's: www.facebook.com/events/200981433970238 and at Bradenton Riverwalk from 12 pm to 2 pm: www.facebook.com/events/191303268299789.

Candidates Corner - Liv Coleman, Florida House District 73

Liv Coleman, Professor of Political Science at the University of Tampa, is running for Florida State Legislature Representative from District 73. “Many citizens are angry that government seems to be working for big donors and special interests and not for them,” she says. “I am running because I want to restore trust in government and to put the citizens of Manatee and Sarasota Counties first.”

“I have also been so touched by the students from Parkland, Florida who experienced the horrific tragedy of gun violence in their high school,” she adds, “and I want to carry forward their movement for common-sense gun safety reforms.”

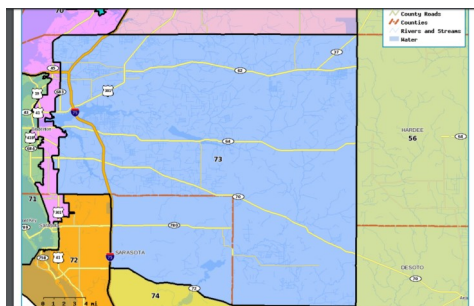
Originally from Minnesota, Coleman spent summers during college working at the Minneapolis Mayor’s office where she got practical experience and training in how government works. She received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and came to the University of Tampa a decade ago. She loves working with students and has won a teaching award from her university. Her husband Matt teaches computer science at New College of Florida in Sarasota.

“As a professor of political science, I have a longstanding interest in good government,” she says. “I am worried about the crisis of democracy I see today. I want to make sure the Florida State Legislature is responsive to what people want in critical areas such as health care, education, and the environment.”

The incumbent for this seat is Joe Gruters, chair of the Sarasota Republican party and state chair of Trump’s 2016 campaign.

Coleman cites the late U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone as a particular inspiration, especially since he was a professor of political science who also held public office. She shares his motto: “Education and democracy have the same goal: the fullest possible development of human capabilities.”

“Wellstone knew -- and I know -- that the real force for change in our country doesn’t come from lawmakers in Washington, D.C. or Tallahassee,” she says. It comes when citizens recognize they have a voice and feel empowered to use it and speak up and advocate for themselves. “It comes from the bottom-up when everyday people take time out of their lives to make their community a better place to live, and when they put pressure on our elected representatives for change. As your representative in Tallahassee, I vow to listen to your voices.”



Florida’s 73rd District for the Florida House of Representatives includes a large portion of eastern Manatee County (blue in map on left). For a more detailed map of District 73, see the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections website at www.votemanatee.com.

*Florida State Representatives serve two-year terms.
All 120 Florida House seats are up for re-election in 2018.*

Reserve Now for Our April 20 Democratic Dinner

Mark your calendars for the annual Manatee County Democratic Dinner on Friday, April 20, at 6 pm, at the Polo Grill, Lakewood Ranch. This is our major fundraising event of the year, which supports our office and outreach activities. Last year's event was sold out. We've added more space, but because of the high level of activism among Democrats, we're expecting a record-breaking crowd, so reserve early.

Reservations can be made by sending a check for \$90 per person to:

Manatee County Democratic Party
PO Box 110596
Bradenton, FL 34211

Please note your occupation and seating preference.

Reservations also can be made online for \$93 per person at <https://manateecountydemocrats.com/demdinner>.

Tables of 10 are available for \$850 cash/check or \$880 online credit card.

In addition to compelling speakers, we will have both live and silent auctions and lots of opportunities to mingle with your fellow Democrats.

We are looking for silent and live auction items. If you or a business you know would like to donate items, please contact Peggieward, peggiewardphd@gmail.com, or Mary Jo Kline, mjkline@visi.com.

We are also seeking advertisers for our dinner program book. Attendees often take this book home and refer to it when seeking businesses that support our Democratic values. If you or a business you know would like to advertise, please contact Barbara Hyde, bhyde@bhyde.net, for additional information.



A crowd of 375 heard from three Florida gubernatorial candidates at the 2017 dinner

We are in need of a volunteer graphic artist to help assemble the Annual Dinner program book.

***Please contact Barbara Hyde
bhyde@bhyde.net***



Election News

Our next election in Manatee County is the Manatee County School Board Referendum – Ad Valorem Millage Election. Election Date: Tuesday, March 20, 2018. Early voting starts on Saturday, March 10, 2018 and ends on Sunday March 17, 2018. Registration for this special election closed in February.

If you're interested in learning more about the referendum please read the pros and cons review in the Bradenton Herald at www.bradenton.com/news/local/education/article200370644.html and the Manatee School Board's position in the One Mill 4 Manatee flyer at <http://bit.ly/2t2yzNX>.