



Manatee County
Democratic Party

Manatee Matters

October 3, 2022 Newsletter

Manatee Matters now publishes twice a month, on the first and third Mondays.

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Newsletters

Donuts and Door Knocking Energize Democrats



By Wil Clapper – Fueled by donuts and inspired by Manatee County's incumbent County Commissioner, Reggie Bellamy, enthusiastic volunteers are poised to walk through selected neighborhoods Saturday, October 8, bringing voter information to various communities.

Donuts and Door Knocking is a joint effort of The Manatee County Democratic Party and the Blue Wave Coalition. Both organizations are working with the Bellamy campaign to urge Democrats throughout the county to support Bellamy and the local Democratic candidates. Sign up for Donuts and Door

Knocking [HERE](#).

The day starts at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and donuts at Democratic Headquarters, 435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton, and with Bellamy discussing his vision for the county with volunteers. Other local Democratic candidates are invited to join the event.

At 12:30 p.m., Bellamy and his staff will team up with Democratic volunteers and go to selected neighborhoods that have historically low voter turnout. They will knock on doors with the hope of engaging fellow Democrats. The neighborhood canvassers are expected to help register voters and supply them with important information they will need when they fill out their ballots.

Instead of knocking on doors, some volunteers will prefer to drop off bags of literature at designated homes.

"Together we have the power to make a difference," said Karen Curlin of Indivisible Manatee, one of the event organizers. "This is our last chance to register voters before the October 11th deadline."

Landefeld to Participate in LWV Candidate Forum

Democratic candidate for the Bradenton City Council Ward 4 seat, Kurt Landefeld, will participate in an online candidate forum, Saturday, October 8, 9 a.m. The forum is sponsored by the non-partisan League of Women Voters of Manatee County. [To register for this event click here.](#)

Joining Landefeld on the candidate forum are Lisa Gonzalez Moore and incumbent Bill Sanders. You may submit questions for the candidates

and have your concerns addressed. To submit questions email:
info@lwvmanatee.org.



Ways to Ensure a Blue Wave in November



There are a number of ways to become engaged in efforts to get local Democratic candidates elected to office. Here are a few behind the scenes activities that have an impact on the election.

Literature drops in your neighborhood: Leave bags or packets of voting and election materials on neighbors' doorsteps. No door knocking. No interaction with others. Sign up [HERE](#).

Voter Protection Team: Voter Protection positions (poll watchers, canvassing board observers and boiler room workers) require training by the Florida Democratic Party (FDP) and, in the case of poll watchers, credentialing by the County Supervisor of Elections (SOE). If interested, sign up now to allow sufficient time for training. <https://floridadems.typeform.com/to/eB1DoQhN>

Ballot Cure: FDP is currently calling voters whose primary ballot was rejected due to a mismatched signature. Signatures can be updated by filing a new Voter Registration form. Sign up [HERE](#) for training and to participate in a phone bank.

Meet and Greet Get to know the Democrats in your neighborhood. Share what the Party is doing, motivate volunteers, introduce local candidates or facilitate requests for financial support. Meet and Greets can be at your home, a local spot, or Party Headquarters. Manatee Dems will help you set up and provide speakers. Contact: Karen at karendcurlin@gmail.com. Type "Meet & Greet" in the subject line of your email.

Are You Ready For Your Ballot?

Preparation is the key to success. And if you prepare to vote, you will succeed in casting your ballot correctly.

Go to the county Supervisor of Elections website, www.votemanatee.gov and click on the "What is My Registration Status?" button if you are on your cell phone, or the "Am I Registered?" tab, if you are on your computer. Confirm that you are registered to vote in Manatee County.

Scroll down to see your address on record, polling location and whether you are scheduled to receive a Vote By Mail ballot. If you are not enrolled for Vote By Mail, click on the Vote by Mail tab.

If enrolled, check where you want your ballot mailed. Ballot will NOT be forwarded. Call the SOE, 941-741-3823, if you want your ballot mailed to an alternate location.



Do's and Don'ts with your mail ballot:

DO read all the instructions – including the ways to return your ballot.
DO fill in the circle for the candidate of your choice with black or dark blue ink.

DON'T use an X or check mark when making your selections.

DON'T fill in more than one choice per race - it's okay to skip a race or issue.

DO sign and date the outside of the envelope in the box marked.

DO sign your name the way the ballot was addressed to you.

DON'T sign someone else's envelope or use someone else's ballot.

DON'T submit a ballot for an address you moved out of after the ballot was mailed to you. Call the SOE and ask for a new ballot. Otherwise, vote in person at the correct polling location.

DO surrender your Vote-By-Mail ballot at your polling place on Election Day if you have not mailed it or dropped it off during the early voting period.

Ballots Include Constitutional Questions and a County Referendum



By Donna Hartman – When you fill out your ballot for the General Election, don't be surprised to find three state Constitutional questions and a Manatee County referendum on the two-sided ballot. The amendments and the referendum could impact your rights and your pocketbook.

The Republican-controlled state legislature originated the three amendments while the Manatee County Commission initiated the referendum. If approved by voters, all would take effect January 1, 2023.

Sixty percent of voters must approve a constitutional amendment for it to become effective. The county referendum must be approved by a majority of voters.

Below is a summary of the four ballot questions with commentary by the Manatee County Democratic Party Legislative Action Committee (LAC).

Amendment 1 allows the Legislature to prohibit local governments from factoring in flood resistance improvements when calculating assessed values of residential property. Generally, home improvements increase assessed values, resulting in higher property taxes.

- **Voting yes** means homeowners making flood resistance improvements wouldn't pay higher taxes because of the improvements.
- **Voting no** means flood resistance improvements might result in higher property assessments and higher taxes.

Amendment 2 abolishes the State Constitution Revision Commission (CRC). The CRC is one of six ways a constitutional amendment can get on the ballot. The others are a vote by the Legislature; a citizen petition; from a constitutional convention; and action by the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission.

- **Voting yes** eliminates the CRC.
- **Voting no** preserves the CRC.

Manatee LAC comment: Democratic members of the Florida House and Senate were nearly unanimous in opposing this proposed amendment. They accused Republicans of trying to limit direct democracy and have called for reforming the commission rather than eliminating it.

Amendment 3 authorizes the Legislature to grant an additional homestead tax exemption for non-school levies of up to \$50,000 of the assessed value of property owned by teachers, law enforcement and corrections officers, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, child welfare professionals, and U.S. military and Florida National Guard members.

- **Voting yes** means tax relief for specific workers. It could result in lost revenue to local governments of \$85.9 million in 2023-2024, and \$96 million in 2026-2027.
- **Voting no** means lawmakers cannot grant the exemption.

The Manatee County Economic Development Tax Referendum authorizes the county commission to continue to grant property tax exemptions to qualifying new businesses to relocate to the county and qualifying existing businesses to encourage their expansion in the county. The tax referendum was first approved by Manatee County voters in 2013.

- **Voting yes** allows continuance of granting tax exemptions to businesses.
- **Voting no** ends exemptions.

For more information about amendments and the county referendum check out:

[Manatee County Voters Guide](#)

[Amendments 2022 - League of Women Voters of Florida](#)

NPA's Could Be A Force in Upcoming Election

By Diana Hines— Some candidates running in the November 8 General Election may not represent the interests of a huge portion of Manatee County's voting population.

That's because about 25 percent of voters in Manatee County are registered as NPA—No-Party-Affiliation, which means they did not select a political party when they registered to vote (Democrat, Republican or one of several minor political parties). Under Florida's closed primary system, NPAs cannot vote in local, state or national primary elections.



Manatee currently has about 71,000 registered NPAs, according to the [Florida Division of Elections](#). That compares to 123,000 registered Republicans and 79,000 Democrats in a county with 278,000 registered voters.

Statewide, the percentage of NPAs has tripled since 1995. These numbers bear consequences in a state where the margin of victory is razor thin, and yet Republicans dominate every branch of elected office.

In Manatee County, NPAs tend to split their election choice down the middle, which gives Republican candidates an edge.

Bob McCaa, who compiles voter data for the Manatee County Democratic Party, points to the 16th District congressional in 2020. Democrat Margaret Good received 45 percent of the NPA vote, while Republican incumbent Vern Buchanan got 50 percent and won the election with an overwhelming Republican backing..

But NPA voters made a difference in the 2020 Bradenton City Council race, where Pam Coachman won, thanks to 2,300 NPAs who voted her way vs. maybe 800 for her Republican opponent, according to McCaa.

Who are these NPA voters? There is a close correlation between NPA status and demographic groups, said retired University of South Florida Professor Emeritus Susan McManus, who noted that 35 percent of Generation Y voters and 36 percent of Generation X voters are registered as NPA. Asian and Hispanic voters are also likely to register as NPA.

These demographic groups are generally suspicious of both political parties and alienated by the negative tone of political discourse to such a degree that they may have no interest in learning about the salient differences between a Democrat and a Republican.

"Many NPAs are truly independents, who vote for one candidate or the other depending upon character, policy or propaganda," said McCaa. "Others just don't want to be associated with either party."

In a study of open versus closed primaries, the non-partisan Florida League of Women Voters (LWV) concluded that the state's closed primary election system is indeed a hindrance to voter turnout.

The LWV advocates for an open primary system that would provide a wider slate of candidates and increase voter turnout. Perhaps such a reform would give voice to the silent, but ever-growing, NPA voter.

March for Reproductive Freedom Scheduled

By Nancy Hughes – Bodily autonomy is a basic human right and the Manatee County Democratic Party fights for the right of all people to make decisions over one's own body, life and future.



On Sunday, October 9, Women's Voices of Southwest Florida (WVSWFL), a non-partisan grassroots movement dedicated to defending civil liberties and reproductive freedoms, will hold its second March for Reproductive Freedom. The march will begin at Five Points Park, [1 Central Avenue](#), Sarasota, starting at 6 p.m. For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/835496004459493>.

Senator Marco Rubio is an original sponsor of the Senate bill to ban abortions across the country after 15 weeks and has publicly stated that he supports abortion restrictions that don't make exceptions for rape and incest.

[See Sen. Rubio's latest statement on abortion.](#)

Governor Ron DeSantis signed the most restrictive bill in Florida's history and proudly proclaims he will work with next year's state legislature to expand pro-life protections.

[See what Democratic candidate Charlie Crist has to say about Gov. DeSantis' pronouncement.](#)

County Accepting Planning Commission Applications

Manatee County is accepting applications for three seats on the Planning Commission — a citizen's advisory committee that makes land use recommendations to the County Commissioners.



The Planning Commission is a powerful player in Manatee County. It's also a way to become involved in the County's political activities. The county prefers people with expertise in environmental sciences to sit on the Planning Commission.

Two of the current Planning Commission members are seeking reappointment. One seat is vacant and expires October 2024. Applications are due Friday, October 21, 2022, and can be [found on the Manatee County Website](#).

For more information, call or email Bobbi Roy, (941) 748-4501 ext. 6878, bobbi.roy@mymanatee.org.

Events Roundup

Sign and Wave Event Scheduled in Lakewood Ranch

Let's support Charlie Crist and Val Demings with enthusiastic Sign and Wave Events to get out the Democratic vote in Lakewood Ranch. This event happens on Thursday mornings from 8-9:00 a.m. at the corner of SR 64 and Lakewood Ranch Boulevard. Signs are provided by the Manatee County Democratic Party.

Sign up [HERE](#) or contact Maureen Dardinski, sparechang1@gmail.com, for more information.



Oct. 6 – Manatee Dem Club Explores Prosecution Issue



The **Manatee Democratic Club** will host a talk, *Should Donald Trump be Prosecuted?* at its October luncheon meeting, Thursday, October 6, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Peridia Golf and Country Club.

Sam Reich, retired assistant federal district attorney of Pennsylvania, is the speaker. He is a MDC member and a club director.

Register by emailing Paul Dain, pauldain73@gmail.com. Cost is \$15 payable at the door by cash or a check.

Oct. 10 – Education Speakers to Address Women’s Club



The **Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County** will meet Thursday, October 13, 11:30 a.m., at the Peridia Golf and Country Club, 4950 Peridia Boulevard East, Bradenton.

Featured speakers are Fran Tulska, co-leader of the Manatee County Public Education Caucus, and Carol Lerner, founder of POPS and a board member of the Manatee County Public Education Caucus. They will address the deplorable state of education in the county and the state.

For reservations, contact Sandy Gander, san.gander@gmail.com, 941-720-6662. Deadline is Monday, October 10. Cost is \$20 per person payable by check or cash at the door.

Oct. 17 – Schneider to Speak at AMI/WM Meeting

Democratic candidate for the US House of Representatives, Jan Schneider, is the main speaker at the **Anna Maria Island and West Manatee Democratic Club** meeting, Monday, October 17, 11:30 a.m.

The meeting will be at the Island Branch Library, 5701 Marina Dr., Holmes Beach. Lunch is on your own. Contact Barbara Beckwith bbeckwith02@gmail.com for more information or to register for the meeting.



In addition to hearing from Schneider, club members will collate flyers and stuff bags to help efforts to deliver election and voting information to households on Anna Maria Island and West Manatee.

Oct. 19 – CFO Candidate to Speak Before LGBTQ+ Caucus

The **Manatee LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus** will feature Adam

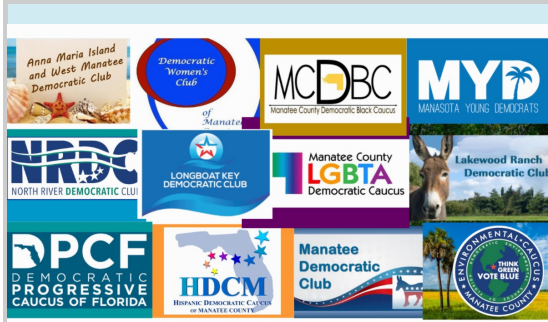


Hattersley, the Democratic Candidate for Chief Financial Officer of the State of Florida, at its meeting, Wednesday, October 19, 6 to 7 p.m.

Hattersley is a champion of the LGBTQ+ community, especially as a legislator in Tallahassee. He is currently focusing on the Republican neglect of Florida's property insurance and affordable housing crises.

The meeting is scheduled for Manatee County Democratic Party Headquarters, 435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton, and online. Meeting agenda and Zoom access information is available from Kent Noel, ManateeLGBTADems@gmail.com.

The LGBTQ+ Caucus meets the third Wednesday of the month and hosts an informal social gathering the first Sunday of each month, 2 to 4 p.m., at Motorworks Brewing, 1014 9th Street West, Bradenton.



Get involved! Check out the many area Democratic Clubs and Caucuses. Meet like-minded people at fun events!

[Click for Events List](#)



*The Manatee County Democratic Party is a 100% **volunteer organization**. All contributions of any size are appreciated; \$22/month goes a long way to help elect Democrats in the 2022 elections.*

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