



Make your voice heard with 5 Calls

Have you ever wanted to contact your elected officials but weren't sure who to call or what to say? *5 Calls* is a free, easy-to-use civic engagement tool that makes speaking up on important issues simple. Whether you are a seasoned advocate or making your very first call to a legislator, *5 Calls* provides the information and confidence you need to have your voice heard.

You can use *5 Calls* either by downloading the free app on your smartphone or by signing up for the free email newsletter at 5calls.org. Both options keep you informed about important legislative issues as they arise and make it easy to take action. The app offers the convenience of having everything at your fingertips, while the email newsletter delivers timely alerts directly to your inbox with links to the same resources available in the app.

Getting started takes only a minute. Simply enter your home address or ZIP code the first time you use the service. *5 Calls* automatically identifies your U.S. representative and U.S. senators and, in many areas, your state legislators as well. Once your information is saved, you won't need to enter it again unless you move.

Each issue on *5 Calls* includes a brief, easy-to-understand summary explaining why the issue matters and what action is currently being considered. The site also provides the phone number for the appropriate legislator and a short sug-

gested script that you can read or adapt in your own words. If you prefer, you can personalize your message by sharing how the issue affects you or your community.

After completing your call, simply click or tap "I Called" to keep track of your outreach. If more than one elected official should hear from you, *5 Calls* will guide you through contacting each of them.

Why phone calls? Congressional and state legislative offices regularly count and record calls from constituents on pending legislation. Staff members report these call totals to lawmakers, making a phone call one of the most direct and effective ways to communicate your views. A call usually takes less than five minutes but can make a meaningful difference, especially when many constituents contact their representatives about the same issue.

Democracy works best when citizens participate. Whether you choose the app or the email newsletter, *5 Calls* removes the guesswork and makes civic engagement easy. By spending just a few minutes making a call, you can stay informed, influence public policy, and ensure your elected officials know what matters most to the people they represent.



**[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP FOR THE
FREE 5 CALLS NEWSLETTER](#)**

President's Corner

IT'S TIME TO VOTE—IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY. Democracy is important because it gives people a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Instead of power being held by one person or a small group, democracy allows citizens to choose leaders, shape laws, and hold the government accountable.

Voting is one of the most direct ways to participate in democracy. Each vote helps decide who represents the community, what priorities the government focuses on, and how public resources are used. Even local and primary elections matter because they often determine the candidates, policies, and leaders that will shape everyday issues like schools, roads, safety, housing, and healthcare.

In short, democracy works best when people take part. Voting is not just a right—it is a responsibility that helps protect freedom, fairness, and representation for everyone.

It's time to vote in Florida. Many of us have our primary mail-in ballot in hand, and in a few weeks, we will know the winners of the primary election. Early voting is August 8-15 with many polling locations. (see VoteManatee.gov/early-voting). Primary election day is August 18 at your specified polling location. Please encourage everyone to vote in the primary election where we can vote for the best possible candidate to defeat the opposition. We can then look forward to a big Blue Wave in November!

Lori Rogge,

President Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County



Lori Rogge

Women's Equality Day

Women's Equality Day, celebrated every August 26, commemorates the passage of women's suffrage in the U.S. and reminds us of the hurdles overcome by the heroic women who faced violence and discrimination to propel the women's movement forward.

In the early 19th century, American women, who generally couldn't inherit property and made half of a man's wages in any available jobs, began organizing to demand political rights and representation.

By the early 1900s, several countries including Finland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom had legalized voting for women as the movement continued to sweep across the world. In the U.S., the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was first introduced in 1878, but it failed to gain traction. It wasn't until women's involvement in the World War I effort made their contributions painfully obvious that women's suffrage finally gained enough support. Women's

rights groups pointed out the hypocrisy of fighting for democracy in Europe while denying it to half of the American citizens at home.

Because a Constitutional amendment requires approval from two-thirds of the states, 36 of them had to ratify the 19th Amendment before its passage. The deciding vote in the Tennessee legislature came from Harry T. Burn, a young

state representative whose mother's plea to support the amendment became a deciding factor in his vote (which he switched at the last minute).

Women aren't done fighting for equal rights. Today, the wage gap between men and women still impacts women's economic power, and gender-based discrimination still plagues workplaces and business transactions.

To remind us of the struggles of the past, present, and future, Congress designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day in 1971.

Source: *National Today*



One photo of Donald Trump just won “Excellence In Journalism”



The rescheduled White House Correspondents' Dinner was held on July 24, 2026.



And during the event, the award for Excellence in Presidential News Coverage by Visual Journalists was officially presented!



But before we get into the picture that won the award, let's look back at some of the greatest hits!



There's this one with him getting weird with a World Cup medal.



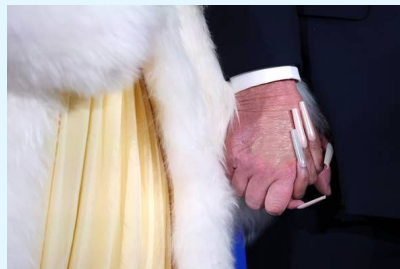
There's this recent classic where he looks like he's trying to join Team Spain.



This surprisingly tender moment shared with Erika Kirk.



Of course, there's an endless collection of whatever is happening with his hands.



This one with Nicki Minaj haunts me, personally.



And I think this series of Trump standing alone at the G7 summit is emblematic of how things are going.

Which brings us to this year's winner captured by Getty Images photographer Andrew Harnik! It's from the moment a guest fainted inside the Oval Office and Trump just kind of stood there staring into the distance.



By: Matt Stopera, *Buzz Feed*

Florida disaster fund spent more on immigration than all 2025 missions combined

The DeSantis administration spent nearly two-thirds of Florida's emergency fund last fiscal year on fighting illegal immigration, dwarfing spending for severe weather, international rescues, and other emergency missions for which the fund was created.

State records show that the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the agency in charge of the so-called "Alligator Alcatraz" and "Deportation Depot" lockups, shelled out \$890 million in taxpayer dollars between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

Of that, \$564 million — about 63% — went to immigration enforcement, meaning emergency managers spent more on immigration than all emergency missions combined last year.

The rest paid for assistance to counties and other states, costs associated with rescuing Americans from Israel after the Oct. 7, 2023 attack, and severe weather — including snow in the Panhandle, storms in northwest Florida, and heavy October rainfall.

The spending represents a significant shift in the purpose of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund, a trust created in 2022 to allow Gov. Ron DeSantis to quickly pay for disasters like hurricanes, floods, and more without legislative approval.

But in 2023, the trust became a financing vehicle for one of DeSantis' top priorities: immigration. Gearing up for a presidential run and enjoying an iron grip over the GOP Legislature, DeSantis declared a state of emergency on immigration — one that he's renewed at least 20 times since.

This opened the fund's dollars to immigration enforcement, allowing FDEM to spend \$573 million out of it since 2023 — 98% of which was paid for in the past year. This is largely because of the so-called "Alligator Alcatraz" and "Deportation

Depot," facilities, state-run detention centers erected last summer, lauded by President Trump, and mirrored by Republican states nationwide.



But these costs represent just a fraction of the total to be spent on immigration. As the *Phoenix* previously reported, immigration contracts signed by FDEM are valued at roughly \$1.01 billion. This doesn't include isolated immigration costs like food, supplies, or travel.

FDEM still owes the vendors that built and ran the facilities at least another half a billion dollars.

Despite those outstanding costs, the fund has under \$7 million left. Lawmakers approved another \$250 million for the trust in June, but FDEM hasn't asked for the money yet.

The agency also missed the deadline for a new quarterly report detailing the fund's health and cash projections, a requirement lawmakers added this year. Representatives of the Senate president and House speaker told the *Phoenix* they had not received the report, which was due five days ago. FDEM did not respond to questions about when it would submit the information.

Immigration spending from the fund last fiscal year exceeded the individual costs of several past emergency responses, including Hurricane Idalia, Hurricane Debby, Hurricane Nicole, and evacuation flights for Americans from Israel and Haiti.

The estimated \$1.01 billion in immigration-related contracts, meanwhile, would rank as the third-largest use of the trust since its creation, behind only Hurricane Ian (\$2.5 billion) and Hurricane Milton (\$1.5 billion).

By: Liv Caputo, *Florida Phoenix*

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

AUGUST 26, 2026

Florida Democrats vote to oppose Amendment 3, warning it would cut local services and threaten public safety

The Florida Democratic Party State Executive Committee voted to formally oppose Amendment 3, the property tax measure headed to voters on the November 3 ballot.

Party members adopted the position over concerns that the amendment would strip billions of dollars from the local budgets that fund police, fire rescue, EMTs, and other essential services Floridians depend on every day.

Statement from Florida Democratic Party Chair Nikki Fried:

“Florida Democrats are focused on improving the lives of working families and seniors across the state. We need real affordability relief, but Amendment 3 would hurt our local communities and cut local services while giving huge tax breaks to billionaires and corporations.

This is a scam that would either raise other taxes on working families or rob their communities of essential services like public hospitals, EMTs, fire rescue, disaster preparedness, road maintenance, children services, libraries, and parks.

Amendment 3 is bad for our cities and towns,

bad for our rural counties, and just plain bad for Florida.”

Background: Local officials warn this amendment is a power grab. By draining the local revenue that pays for these services, Amendment 3 would put Tallahassee Republicans in charge of decisions that belong to Florida’s cities, counties, and the residents who elect their own local leaders, leaving communities to answer for cuts they never chose.



Amendment 3 would sharply expand the homestead exemption for non-school property taxes and set the state on a path toward eliminating those taxes entirely. State economists estimate the measure would cost local governments roughly \$12 billion a year, the revenue cities and counties rely on to keep first

responders staffed, hospitals open, and neighborhoods safe.

This loss would force an impossible choice on local communities: raise other taxes on working families or gut the services that keep them safe. Police departments, fire rescue crews, and EMTs are funded overwhelmingly through local property taxes. When that revenue disappears, the first cuts land on emergency response, disaster preparedness, and the everyday functions that hold a community together.

Source: Florida Democratic Party

The Cost of a Presidential Legacy

President Donald Trump has proposed or supported several high-profile projects that could cost taxpayers hundreds of millions — or even billions — of dollars. They include a \$400 million White House ballroom, a \$200 million Kennedy Center renovation, a \$100 million Independence Arch, and \$15 million in upgrades to the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. Converting a donated Boeing 747 into Air Force One is also expected to cost about \$400 million for security and communications

systems. Supporters call these worthwhile investments in America, while critics argue the money would be better spent on priorities such as infrastructure, education, health care, or reducing the federal deficit.

Source: Chatgpt

Price Tag of Major Trump Projects

- White House Ballroom: \$400–600 million
- Security upgrades for ballroom complex (proposed): \$1 billion
- Kennedy Center renovation: \$200 million
- Independence Arch: \$100 million
- Air Force One jet conversion: \$400 million
- Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool renovation: \$15 million

Florida sees 440,000 drop in ACA enrollees after subsidies expire

Florida saw the nation's largest drop in Affordable Care Act (ACA) enrollment this year after enhanced subsidies expired, according to new data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Why it matters: Without the subsidies, premiums soared. Floridians who could afford it settled for less coverage at a higher cost; more than 440,000 left the ACA marketplace altogether.

Between the lines: The pandemic-era enhanced subsidies that Democrats passed in 2021 have overwhelmingly benefited red states, like Florida, that haven't expanded Medicaid, according to analysts.

Many residents who would qualify for Medicaid in other states remain ineligible in Florida.

That's pushed people to enroll in ACA plans, which, until recently, offered expanded coverage options for

those above the federal poverty level.

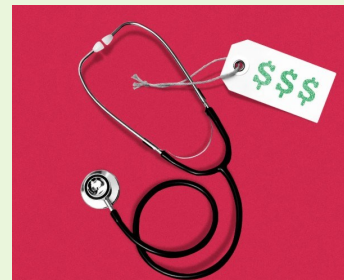
Yes, but: Even with the drop, Florida still leads the nation in ACA marketplace enrollment, at nearly 4 million.

Zoom out: Nationally, ACA enrollment fell by about 3 million since last year, or about 13%, according to a separate federal report from the Department of Health and Human Services last month.

That report attributed the drop-off to improper or fraudulent sign-ups by "phantom enrollees."

But health policy experts have pointed to large numbers of people not paying their first ACA premiums following the expiration of subsidies.

By: Yacob Reyes, and David Nather, *Axios*



Florida retirement haven unravels as seniors face ruin under Trump economy

The cost of living continues to explode under President Donald Trump, and now, a new CNN report on Florida seniors has exposed the reality of this economic ruin.

CNN News Central featured a segment from chief domestic correspondent Phil Mattingly, examining the economic struggle of senior citizens in Florida. As host Dana Bash explained as she introduced the segment, Florida's particular characteristics have made it an ideal place to measure the impact of rising costs on some of the country's most vulnerable residents.



"Florida has long been a top retirement destination thanks to its climate, tax benefits and massive senior communities, Bash explained. That also makes Florida a magnifying glass on the impact of rising costs on Americans with the least cushion to absorb the blow. One example: healthcare. As ObamaCare subsidies expire, premiums are expected to double for nearly 5 million people in Florida. Some are being left to choose: my house or my health."

Early on in the segment, Mattingly spoke to senior Ellen Trocino, a nurse he met at a volunteer health clinic she was attending as a patient. Trocino said she had been living in her car for about a week, and gave herself low odds of managing to get housing anytime

soon, given the steep cost of a down payment or a security deposit.

"Roughly a million Florida seniors depend on state-funded insurance, and that lifeline is fraying, Mattingly explained. Florida turned down federal dollars to expand coverage to residents just above the poverty line... And cuts under the One Big Beautiful Bill act could strip coverage from more than a million additional Floridians by 2034. Medical expenses and rent. These are just some of the costs bearing down hardest on those with the least cushion left."

Mattingly also spoke to healthcare advocate Scott Darius about the misconceptions many have about how helpful Medicaid can be for Florida residents.

"What people assume about Medicaid is that it's there for all low-income people, right? Darius said. But in Florida, if I'm a single parent with two kids, the most I can make in a year and still qualify for Medicaid is \$8,000, for the year. But what we've seen in expansion states is that once you do that, the cost of private insurance actually goes down for everyone else."

Another struggling senior, Phoebe White, told Mattingly about the hardships she has experienced trying to pay bills that keep going up, while her Social Security payments remain static.

By: Thomas Kika, *AlterNet*

In 'death knell for America's wildlife,' Trump Administration guts habitat protections for endangered species

President Donald Trump's administration paved the way for letting U.S. corporations destroy the habitats of endangered species by rescinding a longtime interpretation of the Endangered Species Act.

As reported by *The New York Times*, the Interior Department and the Commerce Department announced that they were narrowing the law's definition of what constitutes harming endangered species.

Whereas the law has for decades been interpreted as protecting endangered animals' habitats from significant "modification or degradation," the administration said that offenders would have to directly injure or kill an endangered animal to be considered in violation of the law.

"The change could open the door for fossil fuel companies, agricultural interests, land developers, and others," wrote the *Times*, "to disturb or even destroy the habitats of vulnerable species."

The Endangered Species Act has been interpreted as protecting animals' habitats for decades, and that interpretation upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1995.

Environmental advocates expressed horror in response to the rule change, which they said would put endangered species at unprecedented risk.

Kristen Boyles, attorney for Earthjustice, vowed that the administration would face legal challenges for its rule change, which she said would jeopardize endangered animals' ability to "raise their young, or search for food."

"Let's be clear: There is no support for the Trump Administration's rule — no scientific support, no legal support, no public support," Boyles said. "We will see the Trump Administration in court."

Ben Greuel, wildlife campaign manager at the Sierra Club, called the rule change "a direct attack on the foundation of the Endangered Species Act" that, if kept in place, would put species "on a path to extinction."

"This rule ignores that reality in an unlawful attempt to open the door for corporate polluters to degrade vitally important habitats, wildlife be damned," Greuel emphasized. The Endangered Species Act is a bedrock law that must be followed."

Tara Zuardo, a senior campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity, pointed out that "habitat destruction is the number one threat to endangered species," while calling the Trump administration's new policy "a death knell for America's wildlife."



"If animals don't have a place to live, they can't live," Zuardo said. "Spotted owls, Atlantic salmon, Florida panthers, and thousands of other species need."

Andrew Bowman, president and CEO of Defenders of Wildlife, accused the Trump administration of embracing an "erroneous and nonsensical interpretation" of the Endangered Species Act that he vowed to challenge in court.

"We intend to fight back with the full force of the law," said Bowman, "to defeat this attack and innumerable others by the administration on the statutes and regulations that protect America's cherished wildlife."

By: Brad Reed, *Common Dreams*

America Has No King



Each U.S. person produces on average 4.9 pounds of trash every day! That is nearly 1,800 pounds a year per person! Broken and outdated items become trash, packaging of foods and purchased items becomes trash. What can we do? Compost kitchen scraps, use cloth kitchen towels and napkins instead of paper. Millions of trees are destroyed yearly for our disposable paper products. Buy items with less packaging. Buy used items instead of new when possible; there are great values at resell and thrift stores (often run by not for profits), Craigslist, Marketplace and community sales. Consume less, do you really NEED that new item of clothing or gimmick? Fix what you own, which has become a lost art. Donate items instead of disposing as trash whenever possible. Just be mindful, we never throw things AWAY; we just re-locate items to landfills.

Ruth Lawler, Environmental Chair

Thank you notes from our scholarship winners

To the Democratic Women's Club of Manatee, thank you so much for awarding me the DWC Scholarship. I am very grateful. This scholarship will ease many of my financial worries. Since starting college, I have become much more active politically. I have joined the League of Women Voters club at UCF as well as the Orange County chapter. Starting sophomore year I am looking forward to being our club's secretary. In my freshman year I learned more about our political system through taking a Florida Politics class. This has sparked an interest in local government, which will continue to serve me as I grow as a person in this country. I am still studying social work and am excited to continue my education in the upcoming school year!

Thank you again

Samantha Tucker

Thank you for selecting me as one of the winners of this year's DWC Scholarship.

I'm sure it will make a substantial difference in my education. I also appreciate the thoughtful gift of the book and your kind words of encouragement. They mean a lot to me.

Aiden Gritt

To the Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County and all the donors, I want to thank you for my scholarship and inviting me to your luncheon. It was very informative and great to meet new people. This scholarship makes all the difference in my education. I am very grateful to all of you and the work you do in the community.

Warm regards,

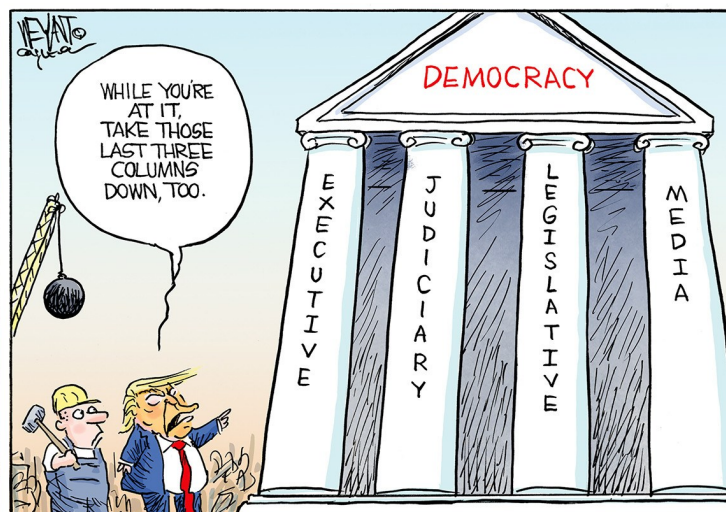
Emilia Rouified.



In celebration of Women's Equity Day, take a few minutes to enjoy a *Reuters* video featuring excerpts from some of the most inspiring speeches on women's rights. Hear powerful words from Hillary Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, Nicole Kidman, and other influential women whose messages continue to encourage equality and opportunity for all. Need a smile? Check out the lighthearted political satire "New Doo-Wop Hit: Todd Blanche." Blanche, who is currently serving as Acting U.S. Attorney General, has been nominated to become Attorney General, who previously served as Donald Trump's personal attorney. The video humorously pokes fun at the close relationship between the two through a catchy doo-wop parody.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH WOMEN'S EQUITY DAY](#)

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH NEW DOO-WOP HIT TODD BLANCHE](#)



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY OFFICERS/LEADERS 2026 - 2027

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President	
Lori Rogge	lori4dems@gmail.com
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Brian Heavrin	brianhwithdwc@gmail.com
2nd VP (Membership)	
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Recording Secretary	
Open	
Treasurer	
Wini Meier Oakes	winimo3@gmail.com
Regional Representative	
Pat Benson	pattybeenutty@gmail.com

Website Links

[DWC of Manatee County Website](#)
[Manatee County Democratic Website](#)
[Democratic Women's Club of Florida](#)

OTHER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Fund-Raising	Pat Benson pattybeenutty@gmail.com
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Parliamentarian	Open
Web Master	Lori Rogge lori4dems@gmail.com
Newsletter and Directory	Brian Heavrin blh3011@gmail.com
Environmental	Ruth Lawler ruthlawler@att.net
Legislative Liaison	Open
Corresponding Secretary	Open
Bylaws Chair	Open

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

The Manatee County Democratic weekday office hours are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.. To check status, times, dates of events and club meetings, please visit our Manatee County Democratic website at www.ManateeDemocrats.com.

Elected Officials

CONTACT OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

PRESIDENT

Donald Trump (switchboard) (202) 456-1111
www.whitehouse.gov

U.S. SENATORS

Rick Scott (R)
rickscott.senate.gov/contact (202) 224-5274

Ashley Moody (R) (202) 224-3041
www.moody.senate.gov

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Vern Buchanan (R-Distr. 16) (202) 225-5015
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GOVERNOR

Ron DeSantis (R) (850) 717-9337
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