

DWC

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

WWW.DWCManatee.com

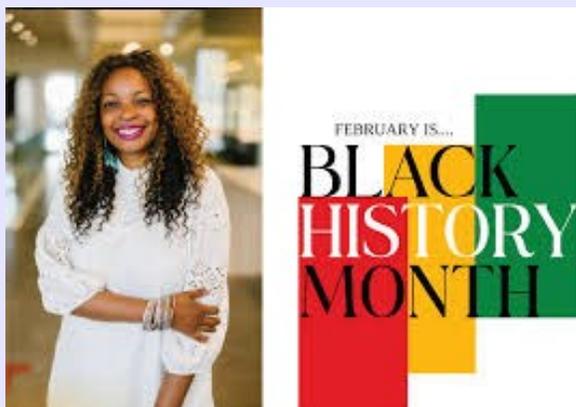
Hope Family Services Inc. is a long-standing nonprofit organization serving Manatee County that supports individuals and families impacted by domestic violence. Founded in 1979, the agency is state-certified and provides free, confidential services focused on safety, healing, and long-term stability. Its programs include emergency shelter for survivors and their children, counseling and support groups, legal and court advocacy, safety planning, and specialized services for children affected by domestic violence. Hope Family Services also offers prevention education and community outreach aimed at breaking cycles of abuse and promoting healthy, non-violent relationships. Through these comprehensive efforts, the organization helps thousands of local survivors each year rebuild their lives with dignity, strength, and hope.



**Guest Speaker
Dawn Bryant**

Dawn Bryant is a domestic violence advocate and has appeared in a domestic violence documentary entitled "A Way Out," which premiered in October 2015 in conjunction with the Sarasota Film Festival. Dawn has worked at Hope Family Services in Bradenton, FL, for almost twenty-six years in various capacities, including frontline advocate, outreach advocacy director, shelter director, and, currently, chief operating officer. In 2012, Dawn was the recipient of the Sylvia Tucker Award. This award honors a Woman of Color who strives for the highest levels of dedication to the many facets of the battered women's movement.

Dawn will be speaking on the services Hope Family Services provides to our local community and how we as individuals can help make a difference.



DWC Luncheon Is February 12, 2026

11:30 AM

Peridia Golf & Country Club

4950 Peridia Blvd E, Bradenton, FL 34203

**Cut off date for your reservations
and meal choice must be made by**

February 8, 3:00 p.m.

**Reservation Information and
Meal Choices Are On The Next Page**

Cost is \$20

President's Corner

As February begins, many of us are feeling a deep sense of despair over the ongoing chaos President Trump continues to create at home and abroad. His posture toward Venezuela and his alarming insistence on “taking over” Greenland — despite clear objections from Greenland’s people and from Denmark—underscore a troubling disregard for international norms and basic respect for sovereign nations.



Lori Rogge

Equally distressing are the escalating ICE actions across the country, with Minnesota standing out as a heartbreaking example. Reports of citizens shot and killed by ICE agents, along with residents being pulled from their homes in frigid temperatures—half dressed, handcuffed, and detained — have shaken communities to their core. No one should be subjected to such treatment.

Many are asking how President Trump can be reined in? The tools remain the same: congressional oversight, the courts, state leadership, investigative journalism, and sustained civic engagement. Ultimately, the most powerful check on presidential overreach is an informed and mobilized electorate.

In these difficult times, our strength lies in solidarity. Let’s continue to support one another, stay engaged, and stand firmly for human dignity and democratic values. The Manatee Democratic Party, including the DWC, is always looking for volunteers to help get our messages out. Please sign up to volunteer today! Let me know if I can help get you started.

Lori Rogge

President of the Democrat Women’s Club of Manatee County

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION AND MEAL CHOICE FOR THE FEBRUARY 12 DWC MEETING

**Email, call, or text Marilyn Baiz for reservations
durf1211@gmail.com
or 734-776-6023**

Deadline to register is Sunday, February 8, 3:00 p.m.

- 1. Mignonettes of Pork Tenderloin with an apple cider reduction
Served w/ chef’s choice starch & vegetable**
- 2. Spinach Alfredo w/ garlic bread (Can add chicken)**
- 3. Gluten Free Lasagna**

All meals come with rolls, butter, a non-alcoholic drink, and dessert.

No-shows will be billed

2026 marks the 100th anniversary of Black History Month — a brief history

Happy 100th Birthday!

2026 marks a milestone of both progress and persistence in the United States, the 100th anniversary of federal recognition for black Americans. What began as a singular week of learning and recognition called Negro History Week in 1926 has grown into an overall cultural observance of black history throughout the month of February.

The architect of this movement was Dr. Carter G. Woodson. A historian and educator, he also holds the distinction of being the second African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. As the son of formerly enslaved parents, Dr. Woodson understood that denying people of their history denies them of their humanity. “Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history,” he wrote.

To combat that, he launched Negro History Week (NHW) to coincide with the February birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, the two figures whom he felt were symbolically tied to African American freedom.

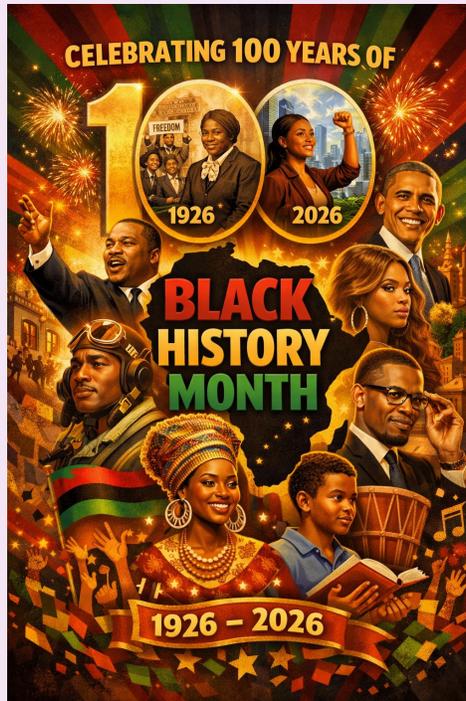
His goal was simple but ambitious: to integrate black history into the educational curriculum, public libraries, local churches, and communities at large across the nation. He did not design the week to be a symbolic gesture; instead, it was meant to be a permanent shift in how America viewed and understood itself.

For 40 years, educators embraced it, churches amplified it, and civic groups built programming

around it. In the 1960s, as the civil rights movement emerged, NHW became more reflective of the urgency of a nation grappling with its conscience.

By 1976, the United States formally expanded the week-long recognition into Black History Month with the essence of Woodson’s vision remaining unchanged: black history is not a sidebar to American history — it is part of it.

The 100-year anniversary prompts reflection not only on what has been accomplished, but also on why this work continues to matter.



Black History Month is often associated with familiar icons — Martin Luther King, Jr, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Harriet Tubman — yet the deeper intention is about uncovering thousands of stories once ignored: scientists, entrepreneurs, artists, academics, inventors, policy leaders, soldiers, and everyday citizens who shaped the nation.

For students, leaders, and global citizens, engaging with black history is not only about honoring resilience — it is about building cultural competency, learning from systemic injustice, and

developing the leadership skills required in an increasingly diverse world. Woodson warned: “If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition... it stands in danger of being exterminated.”

This Black History Month is not simply a date on the calendar; it is a powerful reminder to recognize the generations who fought for inclusion in the historical record, even when the nation resisted acknowledging their humanity.

And as the world pauses in 2026 to honor a century of commemoration, the message remains as clear — and necessary — as ever:

Black history is American history. And remembering it strengthens us all.

By: Dougc Melville, *Forbes*

Trump hit by humiliating poll showing just how much he's failing

Donald Trump is losing the support of Americans on every major hot-button issue, and a majority now say the president's second term has been a disaster in a damning new poll.

The CNN/SSRS poll found Trump's approval rating underwater across the board, with 58 percent of adult respondents saying they view his return to office as a "failure."

The poll also showed that Americans do not believe Trump is addressing their top concern of the economy and the cost-of-living crisis, and instead think his policies are making their financial hardships worse.

Backlash to Trump's erratic second term—whose overall approval rating in the poll stands at a dire 39 percent—could spell broader trouble for Republicans heading into November's midterm elections, where the GOP already faces an uphill battle to retain control of the House and potentially the Senate.

The CNN/SSRS poll of 1,209 adults found that a majority disapprove of Trump's handling of every major issue facing voters, including those traditionally seen as his strengths. These include health care policy (63 percent disapprove), immigration (58 percent), and foreign affairs (60 percent).

On the economy—the most important issue for voters in virtually every election—only 39 percent of Americans approve of Trump's handling.

More than half of Americans (55 percent) also believe Trump's policies have "worsened" eco-

conomic conditions in the country, while 62 percent disapprove of the president's flagship tariffs.



Elsewhere, the poll found that 65 percent of Americans do not believe Trump is a president they can be "proud" of. More than two-thirds (68 percent) said the billionaire president is out of touch with the problems facing ordinary people.

"Even if he is doing some good in areas, he comes across very self-seeking and [shows] a lack of caring about the common good of our citizens," wrote one independent respondent from Oklahoma.

More Americans also believe Trump has failed to follow through on many of the pledges he made at his January 2025 inauguration—and has instead actively made things worse.

That includes his promises to "restore safety to the U.S." (39 percent say he made things worse), bring law and order back to American cities (42 percent), be a peacemaker and unifier (47 percent), and stop the "weaponization" of the Department of Justice (41 percent).

A majority of Americans (58 percent) also say Trump has gone too far in using the power of the presidency and the executive branch, as well as in reshaping cultural institutions such as the now MAGA-fied Kennedy Center (62 percent) and gutting federal programs (57 percent).

By: Ewan Palmer, *Daily Beast*

Jerome Powells Response to Trump's criminal investigation by the Justice Department

"This new threat is not about my testimony last June or about the renovation of the Federal Reserve buildings. ... Those are pretexts. The threat of criminal charges is a consequence of the Federal Reserve setting interest rates based on our best assessment of what will serve the public, rather than following the preferences of the President," he said.

"This is about whether the Fed will be able to continue to set interest rates based on evidence and economic conditions—or whether instead monetary policy will be directed by political pressure or intimidation."



— Jerome Powell, Chair of the Federal Reserve

DeSantis doubles down on plans to transfer USF Sarasota-Manatee to New College

Gov. Ron DeSantis is doubling down on his plans to transfer USF's Sarasota-Manatee campus to New College.

DeSantis said at an event in Seminole Wednesday the chairs of the board of trustees at both schools are onboard with the transfer.

In December, USF board chair Will Weatherford gave no indication that USF would fight it, saying "it's not something we dictate or control, and we won't be necessarily opining on every day as it ebbs and flows over the coming weeks and months."

"I think USF, the sky's the limit," DeSantis said Wednesday. "I think they really, really got great momentum.

But like that momentum is really in the Tampa Bay, right? It's Tampa. And that's



what I think that they want to focus on. So I think you're going to see that there's going to be pretty strong agreement on that."

The governor's proposed state budget would force USF to hand over its buildings to New College by the summer of 2026. About 2,000 students and 300 faculty and staff are based at USF Sarasota-Manatee.

The deal would give New College 32 acres of land, new dormitories, classrooms, office space, and a STEM lab USFSM just broke ground on in November.

New College is a public liberal arts university headed by President Richard Corcoran. It's been a major part of DeSantis' effort to overhaul higher ed and eliminate "woke" teaching on Florida campuses.

DeSantis said the transfer jibes with his ongoing plans to transform the school into a more conservative-leaning place of higher education.

By: Steve Newborn, *NPR*

Exchange of text messages between the president and Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre of Norway

Dear Mr. President, dear Donald – on the contact across the Atlantic – on Greenland, Gaza, Ukraine – and your tariff announcement yesterday. You know our position on these issues. But we believe we all should work to take this down and de-escalate – so much is happening around us where we need to stand together. We are proposing a call with you later today – with both of us or separately – give us a hint of what you prefer! Best – Alex and Jonas

Dear Jonas: Considering your Country decided not to give me the Nobel Peace Prize for having stopped 8 Wars PLUS, I no longer feel an obligation to think purely of Peace, although it will al-

ways be predominant, but can now think about what is good and proper for the United States of America. Denmark cannot protect that land from Russia or China, and why do they have a 'right of ownership' anyway? There are no written documents, it's only that a boat landed there hundreds of years ago, but we had boats landing there, also. I have done more for NATO than any other person since its founding, and now, NATO should do something for the United States. The World is not secure unless we have Complete and Total Control of Greenland. Thank you! President DJT



Source: *The American Presidency Project*

House passes bill expanding Wrongful Death Act to cover fetuses

The House has passed a bill to expand Florida's Wrongful Death Act to cover fetuses at any stage of development.

HB 289 passed with a 76-34 vote and featured a partisan debate on the full House floor.

Democratic Rep. Michele Rayner called the measure "a dumpster fire," "asinine" and "a slap in the faces of women who struggle to find bodily autonomy" amid concerns about the state's continued crackdown on abortion.

Republicans argued the bill is instead necessary to update the law to allow grieving parents to recover damages if their unborn baby dies in a car crash or another tragedy. The bill specifically states that a mother cannot be sued.

"As a 20-year attorney, a day like today makes me proud to stand in this chamber," said Rep. Hillary Cassel, a former Democrat who switched to become Republican. "Because today is a day that we get to close loopholes that many other states have already decided need to be closed. We get to bring justice to people who right now do not have access to the courts."

Cassel, of Dania Beach, argued the bill "was not about abortion" but "recognizes mothers — it recognizes their loss, their pain, and their right to accountability."

But Democrats decried the bill, arguing it targets abortions and would open the door to lawsuits filed against doctors or a woman's loved ones who help her obtain an abortion.

"With this legislation, we're headed down another slippery slope that weakens reproductive freedoms and damages people's confidence in accessing safe medical care," said Rep. Lindsay Cross, a St. Petersburg Democrat. "For medical professionals, the threat of unfettered legal action and its repercussions pose a risk to their ability to practice and to make decisions that affect people's health."

Some Democrats said they feared a family member who drove a woman to get an abortion could be sued, or a grocery store where a woman had a slip and fall and then suffered a miscarriage could face a lawsuit.

The House's passage of HB 289 also follows a state ban on most abortions beyond six weeks. A voter referendum to change the constitution and expand abortion rights failed to pass with at least 60% of the vote in 2024.



"How many more ways are we going to tell women from this chamber that we do not care about them?" asked Rayner. "Y'all have already done everything else. What more can we do?"

On the House floor, the debate over HB 289 was divided over party lines. Democrats tried in vain to pass a flurry of amendments to weaken the bill, but none passed. The debate at times became emotional as lawmakers on both sides shared their personal stories.

Rep. Sam Greco, the bill's sponsor, accused Democrats of bringing up hypotheticals in the debate. He said his bill was meant to help parents get justice in court after a "horrible life-altering worst moment" of losing their unborn child.

"Members, think about those parents. Let's think about those mothers," said Greco, a St. Augustine Republican.

Republican Sen. Erin Grall is sponsoring the Senate companion bill that has cleared one committee stop, with two more left to go before reaching the full Senate floor.

Michelle Grimsley Shindano, Director of Policy & Government Affairs, Planned Parenthood Florida Action, urged the Senate not to pass it.

"This dangerous and far-reaching bill would open the door to redefining fertilized eggs and embryos as 'persons' under Florida law," she said in a statement after the House vote. "Moreover, at a time when Florida is already grappling with a shortage of OB-GYNs, this bill would make it even harder for patients to access needed health care. We call on our state senators to reject this harmful and unnecessary legislation that empowers abusers, while stripping away our freedoms and putting pregnant Floridians, survivors of abuse, and dedicated health care professionals in jeopardy."

By: Gabrielle Russon, *Florida Politics*





Now is the time to be aware of the environmental challenges that affect our own environment locally and state wide. As Florida's 2026 legislative session is currently underway, let us all become informed of the legislation and proposed rulings that are critical to our environment. One source is Friends of the Everglades, everglades.org, which monitors and makes recommendations on the state proposals and holding lawmakers accountable. 1,000 Friends of Florida, 1000fof.org is another great site. A terrific source of local environmental issues is *The Bradenton Times*. They are currently reporting on the proposed cruise ship port at Terra Ceia and the Skyway bridge, as well as proposed developments throughout Manatee County. These sources are two ways to become aware of current environmental issues. We must contact our local and State elected officials on our objections or support!

Ruth Lawler, Environmental Chair



WE ARE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY



It's time to pay your 2026 membership dues of \$35. You can pay at any of our meetings or you can mail your check payable to Democratic Women's Club to our Treasurer.

Wini Meier-Oakes

3607 AVENIDA MADERA UNIT A

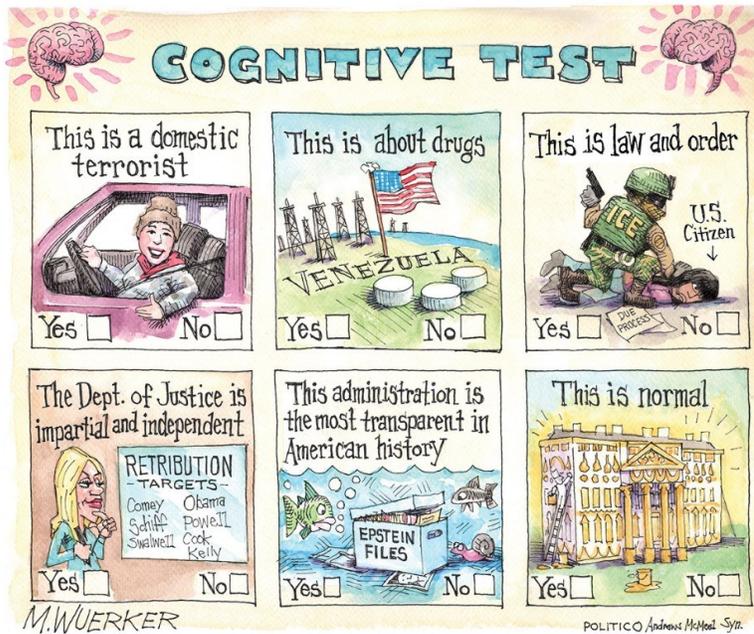
Bradenton, FL 34210

In honor of Black History Month, we highlight two pivotal moments in the fight for racial equality in the United States. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was a defining event in the civil rights movement, uniting hundreds of thousands in a call for justice and opportunity. This short documentary from the History Channel explores its lasting impact.

February 4 is observed as Rosa Parks Day, honoring the civil rights icon whose courageous stand on a Montgomery bus helped spark a national movement. We invite you to enjoy this brief biography celebrating Rosa Parks' enduring legacy and commitment to equal rights.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON](#)

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE ROSA PARKS BIOGRAPHY](#)



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY OFFICERS/LEADERS 2024 - 2025

ELECTED OFFICERS	
President	
Lori Rogge	lori4dems@gmail.com
1st VP (Programs)	
Brian Heavrin	brianhwithdwc@gmail.com
2nd VP (Membership)	
Carol Plant	carolplant@optonline.net
Recording Secretary	
Lori Rogge	lori4dems@gmail.com
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
Hospitality/ Calling	Marilyn Baiz durf1211@gmail.com
Candidate Search	Vicki Waters vwaters@earthlink.net
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	Anne Marie Keane Keaneanne20@gmail.com

Manatee County Democratic Women's Club
6403 Heritage Lane
Bradenton, FL 34209



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)
help@rickscott.senate.gov (202) 224-5274

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

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES

Vern Buchanan (R-Distr. 16) (202) 225-5015
www.Buchanan.house.gov (941) 747-9081

GOVERNOR

Ron DeSantis (R) (850) 717-9337
www.flgov.com/email-the-governor

OUR FLORIDA SENATORS

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William "Bill" Conerly (R-Distr.72) (941) 327-0150
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