

DWC

JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

WWW.DWCManatee.com

A great summer opportunity: learn more about government and elections

While the Democratic Women's Club is on summer break during the months of July and August, this can be an excellent opportunity to explore valuable resources like *USA.gov* and *Ballotpedia* and strengthen our understanding of how government works and how citizens can stay involved. These websites provide reliable, easy-to-access information that can help individuals become more informed and engaged members of their communities.



USA.gov serves as a central resource for finding official government information, services, and programs. It helps users navigate important topics such as government benefits, public services, voting information, contacting elected officials, and connecting with federal, state, and local agencies. By learning how to use *USA.gov*, people can better understand where to find accurate information and how to access resources that may impact their daily lives.

Ballotpedia offers another valuable tool for civic education by providing information about elections, candidates, elected officials, ballot measures, and government issues at all levels. It allows users to research upcoming elections, better understand the choices on their ballots, and learn more about the people and policies that shape their communities.

Using the summer months to become familiar with these resources can help members stay informed, continue learning, and remain connected to important civic issues even while the club is on break. Exploring *USA.gov* and *Ballotpedia* is a practical way to prepare for future discussions, elections, and community involvement, helping each person participate more confidently in the democratic process when the club resumes its activities.

**[CLICK HERE TO EXPLORE
USA.GOV](https://www.usa.gov)**

**[CLICK HERE TO EXPLORE
BALLOTPEdia](https://www.ballotpedia.org)**



President's Corner

As we celebrate America's 250-year anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we should also reflect. America was founded on powerful ideals—liberty, equality, representative government, and the belief that people have the right to shape their own future. But in 1776, those ideals were not extended to everyone. Women were not equal participants. Enslaved people were denied freedom. Indigenous communities were displaced. Many people were left outside the promise of "We the People."



Lori Rogge

And yet, the story of America is also the story of people who refused to give up on that promise. Generation after generation, ordinary citizens organized, marched, taught, voted, served, and stood up. They expanded democracy and pushed this country closer to its own founding principles.

That is why this anniversary matters so deeply to a Democratic women's club. We know progress has never been automatic. Women won the right to vote because women organized. Civil rights advanced because communities demanded justice. Every expansion of freedom required courage, persistence, and participation.

Our celebration should be patriotic, honest, and hopeful. We can honor the courage of the founders while also honoring those who challenged America to become more democratic, more inclusive, and more just.

At a time when many people feel divided or discouraged, our message must be clear: Democracy still belongs to us. Our vote matters. Our voices matter. Our organizing matters. Our presence in the room matters.

So, as we celebrate 250 years, let us ask what kind of country we want to help build for the next 250 years: a country where every eligible voter can cast a ballot freely and fairly, where women's rights are respected, where truth is valued, and where every child can grow up with opportunity and dignity.

Lori Rogge, President

Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County

He has never been poor': Ex-Trump voter says life in second term is like the 'Great Depression'

An interview with a former Donald Trump voter from Rolla, Missouri, has gone viral on social media. The woman spoke about how hard life is for poor people today. The interview aired on the news channel *MS NOW*. *The reporter was speaking with residents about their views ahead of the midterm elections.*

The woman said she believes the president's policies are harming financially struggling families.

"I'm not into politics, but I know what's right and wrong," she said.

The reporter then asked her what was wrong with the country right now. She explained that the president does not understand what it is like to be poor.

"The way Trump is treating us. Treating us poor people. I mean, it's just bad because he has never been poor. He has always had that gold spoon in his

mouth," she said.

The reporter asked what she would say to the president if she could. The woman gave a sharp, sarcastic answer: "Go take a hike with someone else at the jail."

The ex-Trump voter revealed that she is currently living in an extended-stay motel. She said she fears losing assistance programs such as SNAP benefits and Medicaid coverage. She added that she has no idea how she will get by if she loses that help.

"Living during Trump's second term is like living in the Great Depression," she said.

The woman said that she voted for Trump back in 2016. However, she did not vote for him in 2024 because she did not have a car or any way to get to the polls.

By: *Morning Honey*



Fourth of July: five myths debunked

The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4

Independence Day is celebrated two days too late. The Second Continental Congress voted for a Declaration of Independence on July second, prompting John Adams to write his wife, "I am apt to believe that [July 2, 1776], will be celebrated, by succeeding generations, as the Great Anniversary Festival."

Adams correctly foresaw shows, games, sports, buns, bells, and bonfires—but he got the date wrong. The written document wasn't edited and approved until the Fourth of July, and that was the date printers affixed to "broadside" announcements sent out across the land. July second was soon forgotten.

In fact, no one actually signed the Declaration of Independence at any time during July 1776. Signing began on August second, with John Hancock's famously bold scribble, and wasn't completed until late November.

Paul Revere rode solo

Patriot Paul Revere really did hit the road on the night of April 18, 1775, to alert the countryside that British troops were on the move. But the image of an inspired, lone rider isn't accurate. Revere was part of a low-tech—but highly effective—early-warning system.

The system did include lanterns at Boston's Old North Church, from whose steeple the church sexton, Robert Newman, held two lanterns as a signal that the British were coming. However, Revere wasn't watching for them that night.

Revere and fellow rider William Dawes, who was sent by a different route, successfully reached Lexington, Massachusetts, to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock that they'd likely be arrested. But Revere and Dawes were captured by the British with third rider Samuel Prescott soon afterward.

The liberties later taken with the Revere legend weren't mistakes but deliberate mythmaking by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who intended his famous 19th-century poem to stoke patriotism on the eve of the Civil War. The ride's real story is told at Paul Revere House, the Boston museum where Revere

once lived and from which he left on that fateful night.

America united against the British

The Revolutionary War also pitted Americans against Americans in large numbers. Perhaps 15 to 20 percent of all Americans were loyalists who supported the crown, according to the U.K. National Army Museum. Many others tried to stay out of the fight altogether.

Records from the period are sketchy at best, but an estimated 50,000 Americans served as British soldiers or militia at one time or another during the conflict, a significant force pitted against a Continental Army that may have included a hundred thousand regular soldiers over the course of the war.

Betsy Ross made the first American flag

There is no proof that Betsy Ross played any part in designing or sewing the American flag that made its debut in 1777. In fact, the story of the famous seamstress didn't circulate until it was raised by her grandson nearly a century after the fact, and the only evidence is testimony to this family tradition.

To be fair, there's also no conclusive evidence that Ross didn't sew the flag, and there are several reasons why she just might have done so. The Betsy Ross House on Philadelphia's Arch Street (where Ross may or may not have actually lived) tells the whole tale and leaves visitors to draw their own conclusions.

The Declaration of Independence holds secret messages

Some revolutionary myths are of modern origin. There's no invisible message or map on the back of the Declaration of Independence, as depicted in the film *National Treasure*. But the National Archives admits there *is* something written on the back of the priceless document.

A line on the bottom of the parchment reads "Original Declaration of Independence dated 4th July 1776." Why? The large document would have been rolled for travel and storage during the 18th century, so the reverse-side writing likely acted as a label to identify the document while it was rolled up.

Source: *National Geographic*



Florida Rep. Luna proposes resolution declaring Trump's first impeachment invalid

U.S. Florida Republican Rep. Anna Paulina Luna said she plans to introduce a resolution seeking to void President Donald Trump's first impeachment, arguing newly declassified intelligence documents undermine the basis for the 2019 proceedings.

"I will be putting forward a resolution to void the fraudulent impeachment of President Trump during his first term in office," Luna wrote. "History should reflect what actually transpired."

Earlier this year, former Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, released documents allegedly proving that intelligence officials improperly advanced a whistleblower complaint that ultimately helped spark Trump's impeachment.

Luna cited these documents, saying they undermine the basis for Trump's first impeachment and support longstanding claims by Trump allies that intelligence officials improperly targeted the president.

According to the documents, the whistleblower acknowledged having no direct knowledge of the call and relied on information obtained from other government officials. The records also indicate

the whistleblower later informed investigators that he or she had spoken with congressional staff before filing the complaint.

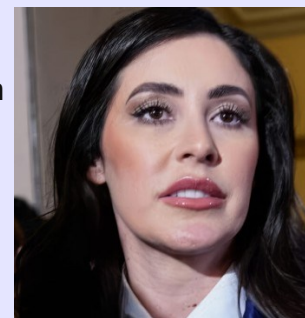
Luna argued the newly released documents support longstanding claims by Trump and his allies that the impeachment was based on flawed or politically motivated allegations.

Luna linked the impeachment to broader allegations regarding investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 election, writing that "Russia collusion never happened" and accusing intelligence agencies under former President Barack Obama of helping create a false narrative that damaged the country.

While the resolution would have no legal effect on Trump's impeachment, which cannot be undone by a later Congress, Luna and other supporters view the effort as a way to formally condemn the proceedings and establish a congressional record that the impeachment was based on false or misleading allegations.

Luna has not yet formally introduced the resolution.

By: Kennedy Owens, *Florida's Voice*



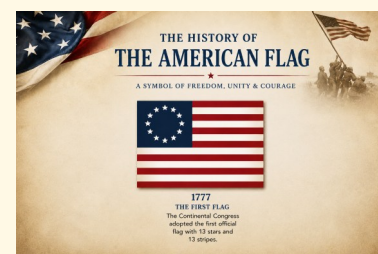
THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed an act establishing an official flag for the new nation. The resolution stated: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." On Aug. 3, 1949, President Harry S. Truman officially declared June 14 as Flag Day.

The history of our flag is as fascinating as that of the American Republic itself. It has survived battles, inspired songs and evolved in response to the growth of the country it represents. The following is a collection of interesting facts and customs about the American flag and how it is to be displayed:

The origin of the first American flag is unknown.

Some historians believe it was designed by New Jersey Congressman Francis Hopkinson and sewn by Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross.



The name Old Glory was given to a large, 10-by-17-foot flag by its owner, William Driver, a sea captain from Massachusetts. Inspiring the common nickname for all American flags, Driver's flag is said to have survived multiple attempts to deface it during the Civil War. Driver was able to fly the flag over the Tennessee Statehouse once the war ended. The flag is a primary artifact at the National Museum of American History and was last displayed in Tennessee by permission of the Smithsonian at an exhibition in 2006.

Source: *Boeing*

Nominee for DOJ watchdog says violence on January 6 wasn't an 'attack' on the Capitol

President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the Justice Department's internal watchdog office repeatedly refused in his confirmation hearing to use the word "attack" to describe the violence on January 6, 2021, that disrupted Congress' election certification vote.

"I don't know if I would use the term 'attack,'" Don Berthiaume, the nominee to be the DOJ inspector general, told senators on Wednesday. "I mean, we had activity outside the Capitol — protests and such — and there was violence on the Capitol grounds."

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat, had asked Berthiaume if the Capitol was attacked on January 6, and he grilled the nomi-



nee on why he would not agree to characterize the events of that day as an attack.

"There was protest activity, people went to the Capitol grounds. People entered the Capitol building, which is contrary — as far as I know — to law," Berthiaume said, while stressing that he didn't "agree" with the term attack even as he acknowledged the "physical violence" outside the Capitol that day.

"The term attack — to me — seems to imply that there was a coordinated effort to attack specific things," the nominee added.

The position of inspector general was created by Congress, among a host of post-Watergate reforms in the 1970s, to investigate waste, fraud and abuse within executive branch agencies.

By: Tierney Sneed, *CNN Politics*

Undocumented students could soon lose access to public higher education in Florida

The Florida Board of Governors will take up a proposal on Wednesday that would bar undocumented students from enrolling in state universities that don't accept all "academically qualified" students.

Why it matters: It is the latest effort by the state to make higher education inaccessible to undocumented immigrants, many of whom were brought to Florida as children through no choice of their own.



An estimated 8,000 undocumented students graduate from the state's high schools each year, per the Higher Ed Immigration Portal.

The proposal would take effect in the 2027-28 academic year and would affect universities that, for the past two years, have not admitted all eligible and qualified applicants.

Among those schools is the University of South

Florida, which, on its admissions page, describes itself as "very competitive" and acknowledges that even those who meet its criteria may be denied admission.

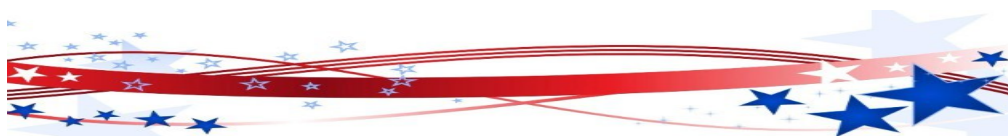
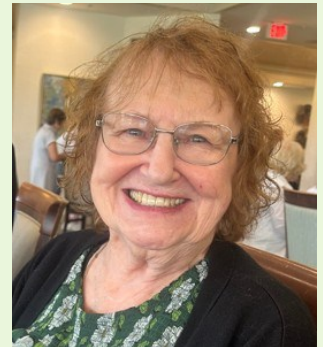
The proposal comes just a week before the state Board of Education is set to consider a new rule that would prohibit undocumented immigrants from attending public colleges in Florida.

DeSantis signed a bill last year eliminating in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants, closing off a key path to higher education for students who cannot receive federal financial aid or legally work.

Since then, USF has raised out-of-state tuition twice, meaning undocumented students

would now have to pay at least \$8,000 per semester, a 317% increase from what they had been paying.

Now, even those able to afford the higher cost may soon be barred from admission. And should the state Board of Education follow, Hillsborough College and St. Petersburg College would also be off-limits.



Liberal arts college seized by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis to be expanded as part of 'anti woke' agenda

A Florida liberal arts college that was previously taken over by Gov. Ron DeSantis as part of his “anti-woke” education agenda is now set for a major expansion through the planned acquisition of a nearby university campus.

New College of Florida, a small public honors college in Sarasota, is expected to take control of the University of South Florida’s Sarasota-Manatee campus in a transfer scheduled for next month, according to state higher education officials and recent legislative actions.

The 32-acre site serves about 2,000 students and includes a recently built six-story residence hall and a student center valued at \$44 million, according to *The Guardian*.

The move would more than double the physical footprint of New College and significantly increase its capacity beyond the roughly 900 students it currently enrolls, while also shifting more than \$50 million in associated campus debt to the school.

The expansion comes three years after DeSantis installed a slate of conservative allies on New College’s board of trustees, transforming the institution into a test case for his broader efforts to reshape public higher education along conservative lines.

In 2023, the governor appointed six new trustees, including conservative activist Christopher Rufo, who quickly helped oust the sitting president and bring in former state House Speaker Richard Corcoran as interim leader.

DeSantis and his supporters have argued that New College had embraced progressive ideology and needed to be remade as a more traditionally oriented institution that rejects what they describe as “woke” practices, *CNN* reported.

The New College overhaul has unfolded along-

side a series of statewide policies that DeSantis has promoted under the banner of fighting “woke” ideology, including measures targeting diversity, equity and inclusion programs at public universities.

Legislation such as HB 999 and the Stop Woke Act sought to restrict spending on DEI initiatives, limit certain instruction on race and identity, and ban majors and minors in areas like critical race theory and gender studies at Florida’s public colleges and universities.

Supporters say these steps are intended to increase ideological balance and limit what they describe as political indoctrination on campus, while critics warn they undermine academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Students, faculty and civil rights advocates have closely watched New College as the most visible higher education

example of Florida’s “anti-woke” push.

Some New College students and staff previously protested the leadership changes and policy shifts, and former faculty helped launch an online project called “Alt New College” after leaving the school in response to the takeover, as per *The Independent*.

By: Danielle, *University Herald*

Comedian and political satirist John Oliver devoted an entire segment of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* to the dramatic transformation of New College of Florida in Sarasota. Using his signature blend of humor and investigative commentary, Oliver examines the state’s overhaul of the college, arguing that it became a high-profile target in Governor Ron DeSantis’s campaign against what he describes as “woke” education. While the segment is often hilarious, it also raises serious questions about academic freedom, political influence in higher education, and the future of one of Florida’s most distinctive public colleges. **Viewer discretion:** The video contains strong language and profanity.

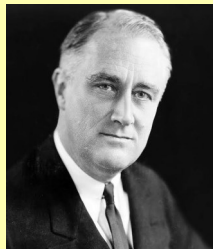
[CLICK HERE TO WATCH JOHN OLIVER’S SEGMENT ON NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA](#)





The Manatee County Comprehensive Plan is being updated, and will come before the Manatee County Commissioners on August 6th, which has provided a 60-day public review beginning June 6th. This review time was extended to allow public review and comment. County Commission Democratic candidate, District 1, Sari Lindros-Valimaki is reading through this and providing insight on her Substack. Additionally, Mitch Maley, with *The Bradenton Times*, has written about the public review of the updated Comprehensive Plan. There have been some brief local news reports as well. We as citizens need to be aware of how this plan addresses zoning, development and our quality of life. The local environment will be affected by what is and is not allowed in the Manatee County Comprehensive Plan. All residents should be aware how the revised Manatee County Comprehensive Plan could affect the environment and quality of life for years to come.

Ruth Lawler, Environmental Chair



We must be especially beware of that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their own nest.

Franklin D. Roosevelt 1941

Brevard County once again leads Florida in manatee deaths

Florida's manatee mortality count surpassed 600 deaths in 2025, with Brevard County recording the most, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Preliminary data show 628 manatee deaths in the state through Dec. 26, up from 565 in 2024, though still fewer than the 1,100 killed in 2021 alone, when manatees suffered starvation from a lack of seagrass, particularly in the Indian River Lago. Brevard County saw 118 manatee deaths, with the majority involving young manatees. Fifty were listed in the "perinatal" category, which means they died within a year of birth. Twenty-one were not necropsied to determine a cause of death. Thirteen died from cold

stress and another 13 died from natural causes.

Lee County in southwest Florida saw 113 manatee deaths through Dec. 26.

Statewide, the number of manatees that died within the first year of birth dropped slightly, from 155 deaths to 135 deaths. The number of manatee deaths that were not necropsied rose from 178 in 2024 to 232 in 2025.

The number of cold-stressed manatee deaths rose from 13 in 2024 to 33 in 2025, while the number of manatee deaths from natural causes rose from 57 deaths in 2024 to 63 deaths.

By: Christie Zizo, *Orlando News Six*



July is America's birthday, and even though our country is divided politically, the Fourth of July is a celebration for all people. Whether, you are Democrat or Republican, this is a day of celebration. Bruise Wintersteen performs the song "We ARE AMERICA," an independent Heartland Rock anthem dedicated to the United States 250th Anniversary. While external and internal forces try to divide the Heartland, this song is an audit of the common-sense unity that keeps our country standing. Amid ongoing debates over the war with Iran and other national controversies, Jordan Klepper of *The Daily Show* visited a Trump USA event in Phoenix to see whether the MAGA movement's supporters remain firmly behind the "Trump train." His interviews capture the strong opinions, loyalty, and some unexpectedly humorous moments from those attending.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH
WE ARE AMERICA](#)

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH
JORDAN KLEPPER](#)



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[Manatee County Democratic Website](#)
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Corresponding Secretary	Open
Bylaws Chair	Open

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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

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