

DWC

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

WWW.DWCManatee.com

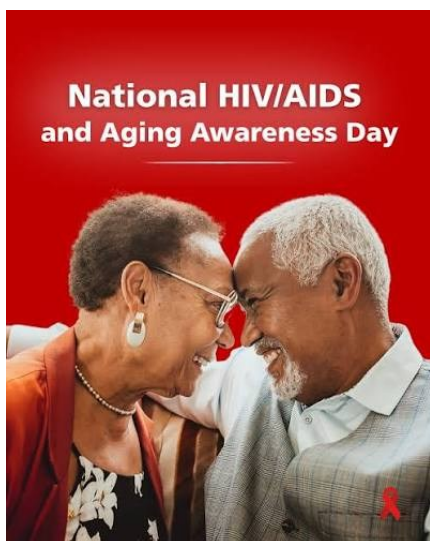
Terri Kondos retired from the U.S. Department of Defense in 2022 after a 38-year career in intelligence and national security. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Russian Language and Literature, a master's in General Administration, and a master's in National Security Strategy from the National War College (2008 graduate). She is a 2016 Distinguished Executive Presidential Rank Award recipient. Ms. Kondos and her husband were deployed for a year to Iraq where she served as a Senior Intelligence Community Representative to Commander, Multinational Forces-Iraq and to the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, 2008-09. She had three-year assignments in England, Australia, and Germany, and has served as the Director of National Intelligence's Representative to Commander USAFRICOM and to Commander Joint Special Operations Command, also directly supporting Commander USINDOPACOM for many years. Ms. Kondos played a leadership role in the Department of Defense and Intelligence Community flagship programs in Election Security in 2018 and 2020. After living most of their lives in the Washington, D.C. area, Ms. Kondos and her husband now live in Bradenton, FL where they enjoy boating, Pickle ball, and spending time with their mothers and their friends.



Guest Speaker
Terri Kondos

Ms. Kondos joined the League of Women Voters (LWV) after she retired and currently serves as the Vice President of LWV Manatee and Secretary of LWV Florida. She completed the LWVFL League Leadership Program in 2024 and was later named to the LWVFL Board. She is particularly concerned about the negative impacts of gerrymandering, National Popular Vote and Ranked Choice Voting as well as other methods to reduce extremism in elected bodies.

Terri will be speaking on the League of Women Voters perspective and recommendations on the Florida 2026 Ballot amendments.



DWC Luncheon is September 10, 2026

11:30 AM

Doors Open at 11, Arrive Early

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

September 6, 3:00 p.m

Peridia Golf & Country Club

4950 Peridia Blvd E, Bradenton, FL 34203

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

Cost is \$25

No shows will be billed

President's Corner

NOW WE UNITE, ORGANIZE, AND WIN IN NOVEMBER

The primary is over, and now our work becomes clear. We may have supported different candidates, volunteered for different campaigns, or made different cases to friends and neighbors. That is democracy. But now we move forward together with one shared purpose: electing Democrats in November.

Every candidate who stepped forward strengthened our party. Every volunteer who made calls, knocked on doors, wrote postcards, hosted events, donated, or talked with voters helped build the foundation for the general election. Now we honor that work by coming together behind our nominees and carrying that energy through Election Day.



Lori Rogge

Primaries can be spirited because people care deeply about the direction of their communities, our state, and our country. The debates, conversations, and organizing during a primary help sharpen our message and remind voters what is at stake.

But once voters have spoken, our task changes. The question is no longer which Democrat we supported in the primary. The question is how we can help elect Democratic nominees who will defend our freedoms, protect public education, expand opportunity, respect working families, safeguard voting rights, and put people ahead of political chaos. November will not be won by hope alone. It will take organization, turnout, persistence, and unity. We must make sure Democratic voters know who is on the ballot, understand what is at stake, and have a plan to vote.

WHAT WE DO NEXT

There is a role for everyone this campaign season. Some will knock on doors, make phone calls, or send texts. Others will write postcards, staff campaign tables, drive voters to the polls, recruit volunteers, or donate what they can. Every action matters because close elections are often decided by people who choose to do one more thing.

IMPORTANT 2026 ELECTION DATES

October 5 — Voter registration deadline

October 22 — Vote-by-mail request deadline

October 24–31 — Mandatory early voting period

November 3 — General Election Day

These dates are more than calendar reminders. They are organizing milestones. Every conversation we have before these deadlines can help another voter participate. **ONE PARTY. ONE PURPOSE.**

Our nominees cannot win alone. They need all of us—longtime activists and first-time volunteers, neighborhood leaders, young voters, retirees, students, parents, veterans, and every Democrat who believes our future is worth fighting for.

The primary gave us choices. November gives us a responsibility. Let's bring our passion, discipline, and unity to the work ahead. Let's lift up our candidates, reach every voter we can, and make sure Democrats turn out where it matters most: at the ballot box.

The primary is over. The general election has begun. Now is the time to unite, organize, and win!

Lori Rogge,

President Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION AND MEAL CHOICE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 10 DWC MEETING



Email, call, or text Marylin Bais for reservations

durf1211@gmail.com

or

734.776.6023



Deadline to register is Sunday, September 6, 3:00 p.m.

1. Summer Salad
Choice grilled Chicken or Shrimp

2. Beef & Cheddar Sandwich
w/ pub chips

3. Portabella Mushroom Stack

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

No-shows will be billed

**Cost
\$25**

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP

**DEADLINE:
Sept. 6
3:00 p.m.**

Tracking measles cases in the United States

Recent outbreaks of measles in the United States are driving up case counts and threatening the country's elimination status, especially as vaccination rates among children lag.

Cases have now broken a record for two years in a row. Just over halfway through 2026, the country has recorded more cases than in any other year since the disease was declared eliminated in the US a quarter-century ago. It's the worst year for measles cases since 1991.

Three people died in 2025, the first reported measles deaths in the United States since 2015. In 2026 there were three more deaths.

Measles is preventable, thanks to a highly effective vaccine. Experts recommend that children get the measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, vaccine in two doses: the first between 12 months and 15 months of age, and a second between 4 and 6 years old. One dose is about 93%

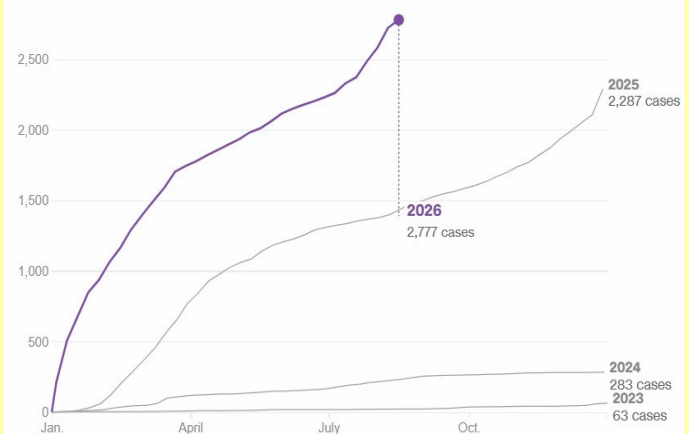
effective at preventing measles infection; two doses are about 97% effective.

The vast majority of measles cases in the US are among unvaccinated people.

By Deidre McPhillips, *CNN Health*

Cumulative US measles cases

As of August 24, there have been **2,309** more cases than the average annual total for the past decade.



Note: Data updated on August 24, 2026, at 4 p.m. ET.

Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Honoring National HIV/AIDS Aging Day

On September 18, we recognize National HIV/AIDS Aging Awareness Day. This observance honors the history of activism and medical progress that has enabled people with HIV to live longer, fuller lives, while also drawing attention to the continued need for support and advocacy for older adults living with HIV.

Aging with HIV is a relatively new phenomenon. Today's generation of Medicare beneficiaries with HIV lived through an era when a diagnosis almost always meant severe illness and premature death. Many remember peers and mentors who were killed by the virus as the political and medical establishments dragged their feet.

Thanks to advances in antiretroviral therapy, the outlook for people with HIV has improved dramatically. More than half of people living with HIV in the United States are now aged 50 and older, and a 2020 study found that 28% of people with HIV in the United States were Medicare beneficiaries. These demographic trends make clear that HIV prevention and treatment are increasingly a Medicare issue and responsibility, and Medicare must rise to its needs.

Medicare Part B covers annual HIV screenings for everyone between the ages of 15 and 65, and for those outside that age range who are at higher risk. Pregnant Medicare beneficiaries are eligible for up to three voluntary HIV screenings during pregnancy.

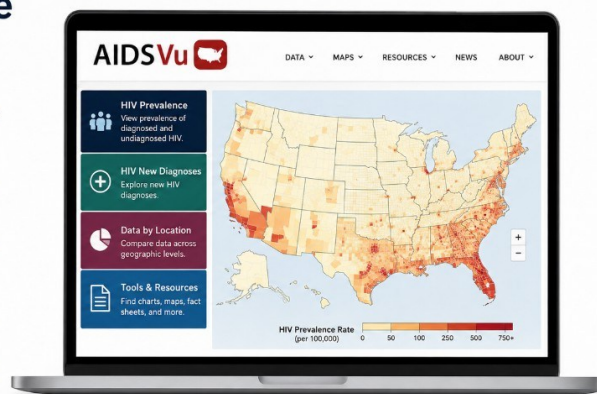
Following a significant rule change in 2024, Part B also covers FDA-approved pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a preventive antiretroviral regimen that prevents HIV infection in people at risk of contracting the virus. For those already living with HIV, Medicare Part D requires prescription drug plans to cover all approved antiretroviral medications.

Older adults with HIV face unique medical and social challenges. Diagnosis is often delayed, as early symptoms may be mistaken for normal

Want to learn more about HIV/AIDS?

Visit **AIDSvu**, a comprehensive resource for the latest information and data on HIV in the United States.

-  **News and Updates** – Stay informed with the latest HIV news and announcements.
-  **Compare Data** – Compare HIV prevalence and new diagnoses across counties, states, regions, and the nation.
-  **Tools and Resources** – Access data tools, reports, fact sheets, and more.
-  **Interactive Map** – Explore an interactive map and zoom in on individual counties in every state to view local statistics.



signs of aging and overlooked during diagnostic testing. As a result, older people who have HIV are more likely to be diagnosed when the illness is more advanced, meaning that treatment may be less effective or carry a risk of greater side effects.

They are also at higher risk of developing co-occurring conditions, such as cardiovascular disease and neurocognitive decline. Long-term treatment can complicate matters further, as interactions between antiretrovirals and medications for other conditions may cause harmful side effects.

Social stigma compounds these medical challenges. Older adults with HIV often face discrimination not only due to their diagnosis, but also because of homophobia, ableism, or prejudice against those suffering from addiction. This layered stigma can isolate people from their communities and cause them to delay needed care, which deteriorates both their mental and physical health.

Advocates stress that combating the spread and stigma of HIV, especially for older adults, must be an intersectional effort grounded in both health care and social support. This includes comprehensive medical care, social services, educational workshops, inclusive housing, and a continuously evolving infrastructure of community care. By centering dignity, inclusion, and community, we can better support older adults living with HIV and honor both the progress made and the challenges that remain.

Source: *Medicare Rights*

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT AIDSvu](https://aidsvu.org)

'Nobody cares about Joe Biden'; Laura Loomer's attack on cancer stricken Biden sparks backlash

After Jill Biden recently shared the challenges her husband Joe Biden faces while suffering from stage 4 prostate cancer, Laura Loomer addressed the issue. Jill Biden recently appeared on Kelly Ripa's podcast, where she opened up about how the former president will live the rest of his life with cancer.

Her stepson, Hunter Biden, also opened up about his father's deteriorating health and shared images of the two of them enjoying National Ice Cream Day. Following such repeated conversations surrounding Joe Biden, Loomer eventually addressed the issue and said, "Nobody cares about" the Bidens.

After Jill and Hunter Biden shared updates on Joe Biden's health, Loomer responded by sharing a post on X suggesting that Americans don't care about Biden.



"I hate to say it, but his cancer could have been better treated had he been honest about having cancer all four years of his stolen administration instead of having doctors lie to the American people," Loomer wrote.

She further accused the former president's staff of using "an autopen and Photoshop to do his job." Loomer also said, "We were lied to as doctors fabricated records."

The commentator made an unverified statement, claiming doctors tried making "a man with Alzheimer's and cancer look healthy on paper." That's why she believes no one should have sympathy for Biden or his family. "Why would anyone have sympathy for the Biden family after the 4 years of

nonstop decline they put our country through?" she wrote. Loomer then went on to attack Hunter Biden.

"You'll need to cry to someone else, Hunter Biden. If you wanted sympathy, you should have been honorable and told your father to resign when he received his diagnosis," she wrote. Loomer added, "Your family committed elder abuse so you could enrich yourselves and your degenerate criminal drug addicted family. I speak for millions when I say: We do not care. Your family is trash."

She concluded her post with, "Your family ruined the lives of millions of Americans. So you'll have to forgive me when I say I couldn't give a [expletive] less about your father."

However, despite her lengthy post asserting that Americans don't care about the Biden family, some social media users pushed back against Laura Loomer's claim. Taking to the comments section of her post, users pushed back against Loomer's remarks

and called her disrespectful.

"We, the American people, care a lot about Joe Biden. We pray his pain lessens and he is comfortable for the rest of his life," one user clapped back. Another invoked religion, saying, "You people keep saying you're Christians but this isn't how Christians are supposed to act."

A third user chimed, "You better hope there is no God or no Heaven because you ain't getting in girl." Another user wrote, "Low class of you, Laura. The only appropriate response to learning someone is suffering from cancer, is to say you hope they feel better soon. Cancer and human suffering have no political parties."

By: Morning Honey Staff



How about we treat every young man who wants to buy a gun like every woman who wants to get an abortion. Mandatory 48-hour waiting period, parental permission, a note from his doctor providing he knows what he's about to do, and a video he has to watch

about the effects of gun violence. Let's close down all but one gun shop in every state and make him travel hundreds of miles, take time off work, and stay overnight in a strange town to get a gun. Make him walk through a gauntlet of people holding photos of loved ones who were shot to death, people who call him a murderer, and beg him not to buy a gun.

— Gloria Steinem

Fired scientists revive the climate website Trump shutdown

A small team of laid-off United States government scientists has rebuilt a climate information website that the Trump administration took offline last year, recruiting 80 volunteer researchers and re-linking more than a thousand reports and datasets.

“Trusted climate information should not disappear when politics change,” Rebecca Lindsey, managing director of the website, *climate.us*, and former program director for the U.S. government website, *climate.gov*, said in a release.

Former employees of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) revived climate science information—including reports and other documents—that had previously been posted on the government URL. The new site required tedious work to catalogue information and make it accessible to the public once again, reports *The New York Times*.

“This information is too important,” Lindsey told U.S. National Public Radio (NPR). “It should remain in a protected place.”

According to the release, one-third of the funding backing *climate.us* was crowdsourced from about 2,500 small donations that amounted to about US \$250,000. The effort

also relied on volunteer work by more than 80 scientists acting as expert reviewers.

German government-funded newsroom *Deutsche Welle* writes that the website’s re-launch is part of “a wider fightback” to resist the Trump administration’s cuts to public science funding, while the website’s release says it “reflects strong public demand for reliable climate information.”

Climate.gov was shut down after the Trump administration laid off hundreds of NOAA employees, including Lindsey, as part of a larger push to slash the federal work force. The cuts have undermined public research into climate impacts, research that is essential for maintaining community health and well-being, *Deutsche Welle* says.

“They’re really helping people connect what’s happening at the global scale to how it matters to their lives,” Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist at Texas Tech University, told NPR.

By: Chris Bonasia, *Energy Mix*



[CLICK HERE TO VISIT CLIMATE.US](#)



“It’s a big threat to our nation, actually, because it’s not socialism, it’s really communism. They use the word ‘Social Democrat’ because it sounds so nice, but it’s really communism you’re talking about. I think it’s the biggest threat to our nation there is, maybe since our founding. That includes World War I, World War II, September 11. It includes the Pearl Harbor attack.”

—Donald Trump

Why it’s strange: That’s an extraordinary comparison—particularly because he was applying it to the political success of progressive and democratic-socialist candidates.

By mid-August: *The Financial Times* reported that Trump had invoked “communism” 94 times since late June, according to a *Times* analysis.

Todd Blanche declines to pledge independence from White House

US attorney general Todd Blanche declined to assure that the federal justice department he helms would always act independently of the White House and Donald Trump.

“No, I’m not going to pledge that,” he said when asked about the topic by NBC’s Meet the Press host, Kristen Welker. “And no attorney general should ever pledge that.”

Blanche also claimed Trump would never ask him to do something that crosses an ethical or legal line — after the president dismissed his predecessor, Pam Bondi, having become frustrated over insufficient action from the justice department against Trump’s political foes.

“The president will never ask me to do something unethical or legal or illegal,” Blanche told Welker. “He never has. He never will. And no, I have sworn to the constitution of the United States, like every cabinet secretary has done, and like every attorney general before me has done.

“And so, this narrative that’s mostly pushed by the left and pushed by the media that the president’s going to pull me aside and ask me to do something illegal is completely a false narrative, not true, will not happen and hasn’t happened.”

In response to his demurring on the questions of always acting independently of the White House, Barb McQuade, a University of Michigan law professor, wrote on social media that Blanche’s stated position was “an appalling departure” from the justice department’s mission after the Watergate scandal that prompted Richard Nixon to resign from the presidency in 1974.

The justice department, “as we once knew it, is no more,” McQuade wrote. “Blanche has turned it into Trump’s private law firm. What a complete disgrace.”

Blanche’s comments to Welker on Sunday came days after he was only narrowly confirmed by the US Senate in a 50-49 vote to succeed Bondi, with all Democrats voting against him. He previously served as Trump’s criminal defense lawyer when a New York state jury convict-

ed Trump between his two presidencies of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in connection with payments to adult film star Stormy Daniels.

In April, Blanche said he would tell Trump, “I love you, sir,” if the president decided to fire him and nominate someone else to replace Bondi.

Blanche, meanwhile, in December defended moving Ghislaine Maxwell, the convicted child sexual trafficker and Jeffrey Epstein associate, to a minimum-security prison. And Blanche has also continued facing scrutiny over his handling of the so-called Epstein files and his treatment of those victimized by the sex-trafficking network built by Epstein.



While speaking with Welker on Sunday, Blanche also defended Trump’s pardoning of 1,500 supporters who were convicted of attacking the US Capitol toward the end of his first presidency in early 2021.

“I’m not opining or in any way saying what President Trump did was wrong,” Blanche said when asked about the pardons, which included more than 170 people who pleaded guilty to assaulting police officers. “That is the president’s right.”

Blanche declined to say whether any of the pardoned attackers might still receive settlements from the federal government — though the attorney general also claimed a \$1.8 bn “anti-weaponization” fund for allies whom Trump considered to be unfairly prosecuted was dead.

“Well, anybody can file a claim against the federal government, not just anybody associated with [the Capitol attack],” Blanche said. “I’m not going to sit here and say on a news program whether a litigation that may or may not happen will result in money. I can’t do that.”

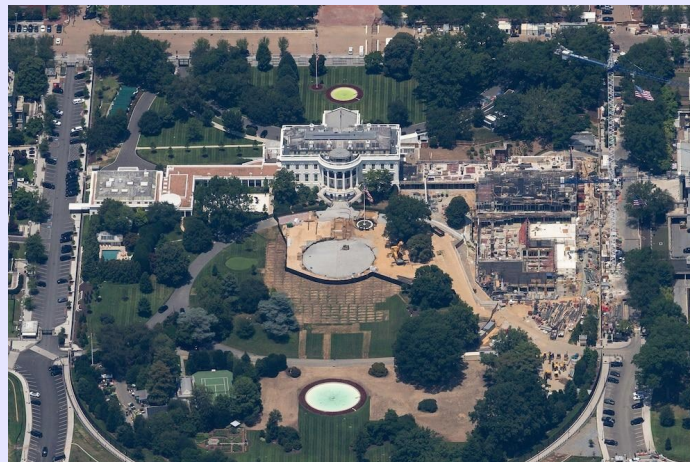
He also affirmed the justice department would not drop “election integrity” efforts despite more than 20 consecutive court defeats connected to efforts to try to force states to turn over voter rolls ahead of the midterm elections in November, when the president’s Republican party is projected to lose seats in Congress and favored to lose the majority in the US House.

By: Max Rego, *The Hill*



Vote YES in November on the Manatee County Environmental Lands referendum! Protect and acquire more Manatee County natural lands with your YES vote. In 2020, a similar Manatee County referendum on the ballot passed by 71% of the vote. This referendum will create a .16 tax millage on real estate, which equates to, on average, about \$36 a year, or \$3 a month...less than the price of a cup of coffee! Such a small price to invest in order to acquire and protect from development environmentally sensitive Manatee County lands, and retain lands in preservation. The acquisition and vetting is through Manatee County's ELMAC (Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Committee). The funds Manatee County invests also qualifies for matching state of Florida funds in many instances.

Ruth Lawler, Environmental Chair



Trump's destruction of the Whitehouse and its grounds



Meet the Democrat winners of the August primary

Manatee Democrats voted for strong, issues-focused candidates in the August 18 primary. Up and down the ballot, voters chose fighters ready to take on high prices, the insurance crisis, over-development, and corruption in Tallahassee and Washington.

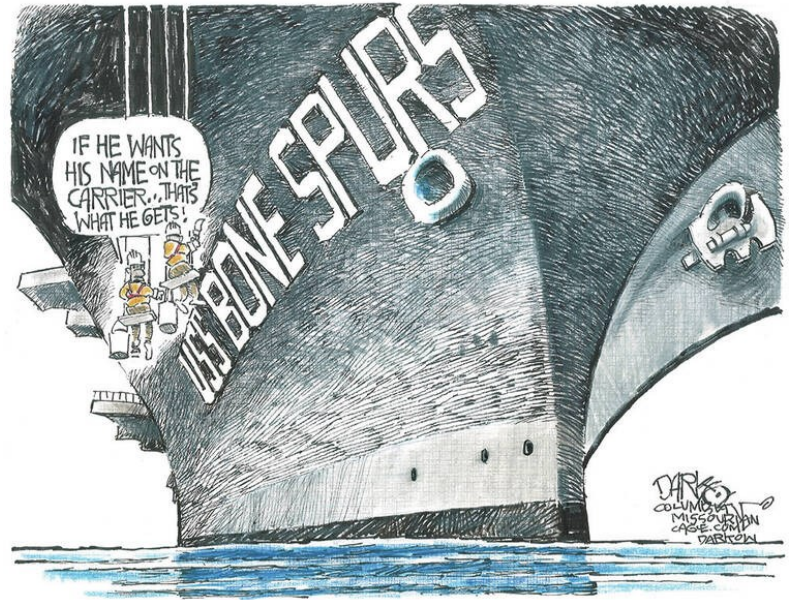
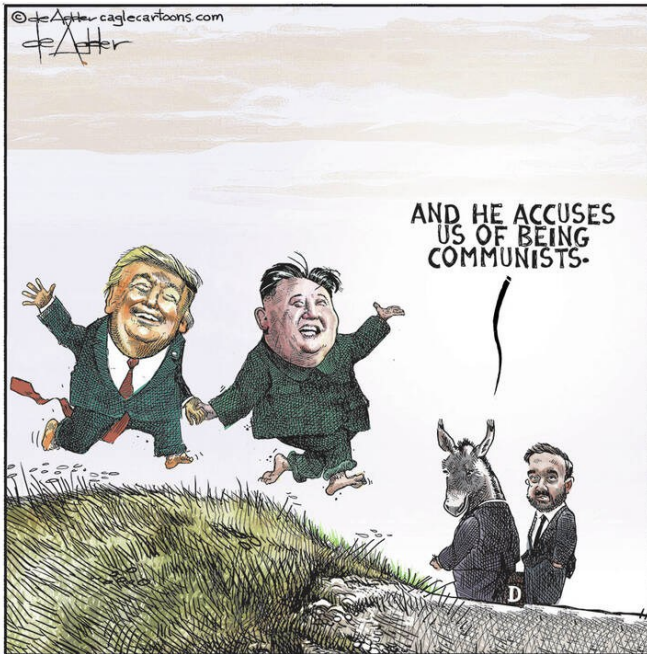
[CLICK HERE TO SEE WHO WILL BE ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT](#)

Here are two political parodies worth watching. First: A takeoff on the classic 1960's television show *The Twilight Zone*. Darline Graham walks through an ordinary South Carolina town where something has gone terribly wrong. Firefighters who can't fight fires. Barbers who can't cut hair. Movers who can't move pianos. And somehow, they all seem to have gotten their jobs for the same reason: being related to the person who held their position before. Welcome to... *THE MAGA ZONE*.

Second: We all remember *The Wizard of Oz*. This parody takes a humorous look at Mitch McConnell's strange, weeks-long disappearance, with an all-star cast: RFKennedy Jr. as the Scarecrow, Stephen Miller as the Tin Man, and Mike Johnson as the Cowardly Lion, titled *The Wizard Of Was*.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE MAGA ZONE](#)

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE WIZARD OF WAS](#)



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

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	
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
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	Open

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

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

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES

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

GOVERNOR

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

OUR FLORIDA SENATORS

Jim Boyd (R-Distr. 20) 941-742-6445
850-487-5020

Boyd.Jim.web@flsenate.gov

Joe Gruters (R-Distr. 22) 941-378-6309
850-487-5022

gruters.joe.web@flsenate.gov

OUR FLORIDA REPRESENTATIVES

Michael Owen (R-Distr. 70) 850 717-5070

MichaelOwen@myfloridahouse.gov

Will Robinson (R-Distr. 71) (941) 744-5097
Will.robinson@myfloridahouse.gov

William "Bill" Conerly (R-Distr. 72) (941) 327-0150
BillConerly@myfloridahouse.gov