

June 2022 Newsletter



President's Message

Enough is enough! The phrase that has become synonymous with gun violence.

Once again, the citizens of this country are left feeling helpless, sad, angry, disgusted, and scared. All due to an endless stream of mass shootings across the country that dominate the headlines. The saddest part is that the carnage likely will not stop. Before this day ends, and every day thereafter, an average 110 people will die and 200-300 will be injured due to gun violence. This is the product of legislators who have continuously offered little more than thoughts and prayers.

We now must wait, again, to see if the United States Senate will do something... anything....to show they care, even just a smidge, about the lives and memories of 19 Uvalde elementary school students and their 2 teachers. I'll admit, I don't have a lot of faith that they will. I've seen this movie before. I watched several of these same Senators do absolutely nothing in the wake of 20 elementary students killed at Sandy Hook in 2012. So, please forgive me for not being my usual glass-half-full self. I've seen the ambivalence and heard the phony talking points. I've watched them blame gun violence on everything except the instrument, all the while kicking the can down the road.

It doesn't have to be this way. Three weeks after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, then Governor Rick Scott and the Florida Republican Congress raised the age to buy a gun from 18 to 21. They instituted Red Flag Laws and a 3-day waiting period on the purchase of a gun. They outlawed "bump stocks." They even funded schools for improved safety and security. Again, all this legislation happened just 3 weeks after the Parkland tragedy. Please keep in mind that IF Texas had similar laws in place, the Uvalde shooter **WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN** able to purchase the weapon and ammunition to allegedly commit this heinous act. This proves that gun laws can be effective and not infringe on rights.

But, oh what a difference a governor makes. Texas Governor Abbot completely sold out to the NRA and gun manufacturers when he made it easier this year for killers to acquire and carry their weapon of choice. Ron DeSantis, seemingly not wanting to be left behind, proudly said he will sign legislation like that of Texas allowing for concealed carry without any training or licensing. DeSantis has said nothing, by the way, about the Uvalde mass shooting. Instead, he's gone his usual route, legislation by culture war. By vetoing \$35 million for a Tampa MLB team facility from the state budget, he punished the Tampa Bay Rays for making the statement you see in this image, shared from their Twitter account in the wake of the Uvalde shootings.



Tampa Bay Rays  @RaysBaseball · May 26

We all deserve to be safe - in schools, grocery stores, places of worship, our neighborhoods, houses and America. The most recent mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde have shaken us to the core. The Tampa Bay Rays are mourning these heartbreaking tragedies that took the lives of innocent children and adults.

This cannot become normal. We cannot become numb. We cannot look the other way. We all know, if nothing changes, nothing changes.

The Rays organization stands committed to actionable change and has made a \$50,000 commitment to Everytown for Gun Safety's Support Fund. Everytown is the largest gun violence prevention organization in America. Rather than our usual game coverage on social media tonight, we've partnered with Everytown to amplify facts about gun violence in America.

We understand that no single organization can solve this crisis alone, but working together, we can make an impact. We invite you to join us and do what you can, when you can, where you can - because our lives depend on it.



Our Florida Senators are an embarrassment in this moment as well. Marco Rubio has maintained his belief that “there’s nothing we can do” about these shootings. A now sheepish Rick Scott seemingly wants to run and hide from the legislation he previously crafted and that he knows works. Profiles in courage these men are not.

These three gentlemen, DeSantis, Scott, and Rubio will likely do nothing meaningful to reduce gun violence. They may do something symbolic. I pray that DeSantis doesn’t follow through on legislation that would make gun violence more likely, like signing permit-less carry legislation. However, none of this really matters. They all need to go. They have proven over and over that they are either incapable or unwilling to serve the people and will only serve the special interests who fund them.

Reducing gun violence, done correctly, is a winning issue for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. That’s why I am offering to host several Town Hall discussions on the messaging around reducing gun violence. Please look

for more details to come from this Club.

Write to us at northpinellasdems@gmail.com. Thank you for your support of the NPCDC and Let's Go Blue!

**Tom Topping,
President, NPCDC**



Don't miss the next Club meeting on Thursday, June 16

Social time begins at 6:30pm, business meeting from 7:00 - 8:30pm. We meet **in person** at the Scottish Cultural Center, 917 Loudon Ave. in Dunedin. Given the recent rise in COVID numbers it is recommended you wear a mask.

This month we're excited to welcome several speakers:



- **Lacy Hollings**, Campaign Chair with the Pinellas County Democrats leadership team, will speak with us about election efforts in our area
- **Amy Weintraub**, Reproductive Rights Program Director with Progress Florida will provide an update
- **Allison Miller**, candidate for State Attorney for the 6th Judicial district, which covers Pinellas and Pasco Counties
- **Carl Zimmerman**, candidate for the Pinellas County School Board

Can't be there in person? We'll send Zoom details via email on Wednesday June 15. Make sure we have your up to date email info, write to us at northpinellasdems@gmail.com.

Members, potential members and guests are all welcome at our monthly meetings.



[Click here to see Volunteer Opportunities](#)

Act now, get involved in these June Events

- **NEW! Sunday June 12 2-4pm at the Clearwater Countryside Library, District 64/65 Neighborhood Volunteer Training for Democrats in Dunedin, Safety Harbor, Oldsmar, Palm Harbor, East Lake, and Tarpon Springs.** Pinellas is the most important purple/swing county in Florida and the nation. This is your chance to make a difference for the August 23 Primary and November 8 Midterm Elections. [Click here for details.](#)
- Every Monday in June, Postcards in the North Pinellas Outreach Office. [Click here for details.](#)
- Tuesday June 14 in Palm Harbor, Coffee with Dr. Keesha Benson, candidate for Pinellas County School Board. [Click here for details.](#)
- Saturday June 25 in Tarpon Springs, District 57 and District 65 PCT 712 Apartment Voter Registration. [Click here for details.](#)



Polls show that 90% of Americans want universal background checks without loopholes. 83% of gun owners want the same. 72% of Americans support raising the age to 21 to be able to buy a gun. 61% of Americans want a ban on assault rifles, like we had in the US from 1994 to 2004. 53% of Americans think our gun laws should be stricter. (Sources: Harvard Political Review; Reuters; Gallup; Pew Research)

Clearly there is support by the people of this great nation to change our gun laws. We know stricter gun safety laws keep people safer. People are sick and tired of mass shootings in America. What about our rights? Why should we accept that we could be shot and killed by just going to the grocery store, or sending our children to school? I have family in the UK and they wonder how I can live here. Some days I wonder the same. We have an important election in November. There are bills on the Senate floor that are not being voted on because we cannot get 60 Senators to support common sense gun safety legislation. I thought we lived in a democracy. So how can gun laws that are supported by the majority of people in the U.S. not get passed? Marco Rubio needs to go, and so does every Republican Senator who will not support legislation to decrease gun violence. There are 34 Senators up for re-election this November - [you can see them here](#). If we can flip 10 seats we can pass common sense gun legislation without having to deal with the filibuster. We need to work hard for the safety of everyone in this nation.

~ Dawn Burke, NPCDC Board Member

I recently had a great text conversation with a conservative gun owner. I was able to change his mind and allow him to see all the loopholes in the laws that make it easy for criminals to get guns. They have been told over and over (brainwashed) that, "Democrats are coming for their/your guns" and "give liberals an inch on one law and they'll take them all away." So, there is massive hesitancy on the part of average GOP voters.

Here's one thing that we can do by way of messaging. Instead of asking for or demanding "gun control" we can instead ask for specific measures that will "reduce gun violence." "Gun control" for too many people is now

synonymous with "taking away all the guns." Let's be honest with ourselves, this will not happen as long as there is a 2nd Amendment. What can happen is what happened in Florida after Parkland with Rick Scott as Governor and a GOP controlled House and Senate. They voted to make it more difficult for guns to be acquired, especially by those who would seek to do harm. In Florida we

1. Increased the age from 18 to 21 to buy a gun
2. Instituted a 3-day waiting period
3. Instituted "Red Flag Laws"
4. Outlawed "Bump-Stocks" that essentially turn a semiautomatic rifle into an automatic

We need Federal laws that are consistent with State laws because we already know that one state's/city's laws are only as effective as their closest neighbor. Together we can end gun violence.

~ Tom Topping, NPCDC President



On April 29, 2019, the student-led gun violence prevention group **March For Our Lives** released this powerful video titled “**Generation Lockdown.**”

MFOL was created after the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas H.S in Parkland, Florida, which left 17 dead and another 17 injured.

The video depicts an active shooter training session at a workplace. The trainer is introduced as an “expert in the subject matter”: a young girl.

Click the image to watch the video, just as relevant now as it was then.



August 23 Primary: Get The Facts and Get Involved

All eyes are on the August 23 primary election in Florida. Some things to know:

- Florida's primary is closed, by party; we will only vote for our Democratic nominee for offices such as Senate, Representative, Governor.
- The Senate primary is packed with multiple Dems, NPAs, and Reps including Marco Rubio, the incumbent, who won in 2016 by a margin of 7.7%.
- **The non partisan races in the primary are critical.** Everyone votes in these races in August, they are not party-specific. If a candidate wins 50% plus 1 they win the office in August and don't have to wait for November. This includes:
 - 4 out of our 7 Pinellas County school board positions are up for election in August. Any individual who gets over 50% for their seat wins in August. Our School Board needs our leadership and voice now more than ever. Battles over health measures, parental rights, banning of books, public school funding and more are all on the August 23 election agenda.
 - Elections will occur for Circuit Judges in 11 Groups and County Judges in 8 Groups. Realize that every judge has the potential to impact our lives and our culture.

Several candidates need to reach voters countywide. **We encourage you to give now to the candidates, and causes, you believe in. The August primary is only 11 weeks away.** Candidates are planning right now for media expenses, doorhangers, direct mail, ads and more. Waiting to give does not help them win.

Resources

- We've prepared a handy summary of key election dates and candidates for each office. [You'll find it here on our Club website.](#)
- [Ballotpedia](#) is a good source of info. By entering your address you can view a [sample ballot](#) for your location.
- For local facts and to request a mail ballot go to [votepinellas.com](#).
- For a current list of qualified candidates (deadline is June 17): <https://dos.elections.myflorida.com/candidates/CanList.asp>



Voting Rights Protect Every Other Right

There are lots of reasons to check your voter registration regularly.

First, verify your current address. This is vital, as it defines your polling location, your district, and determines delivery of your ballot for Vote By Mail. Second, check your name, be sure it is spelled correctly and matches your current identification. Third, if your signature has changed you'll want to update that as well. Finally, be sure you haven't been purged from voter rolls. It happens more often than you think.

1. Go to the website for the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections
<https://www.votepinellas.com/>
2. If you're not already registered to vote you can do so online. Use this same link to check or update your existing voter registration.
<https://registertovoteflorida.gov/home>
3. Finally, take one more very important step and request to Vote by Mail.
<https://www.votepinellas.com/VoteByMail>
 Voting results consistently show that people who Vote By Mail have a much higher participation rate. It just makes sense.

When Democrats vote, Democrats win.



Click here to Become a NPCDC Member



- **We thrilled to announce we currently have 178 Club Members.** Compare this to 94 members at this time last year, and 175 for all of 2021, and you will see how our Club is growing!
- **Did you know that 97% of all Democrats who signed up for Vote By Mail in 2020 actually voted in that Presidential Election?** Compare that to

You might have Democratic values if you believe...

- Proactive steps must be taken to reduce gun violence
- Healthcare is a right
- Diversity is a strength
- The economy should work for everyone
- Facts and truth matter

As we continue to move toward the pivotal 2022 elections we hope you will show your support for the Club by becoming a member today.

We offer three (3) membership types:

- * **Individual Member - \$25** for one (1) year
- * **Household Member - \$15** for

only 51% of Democrats who were NOT signed up for Vote By Mail in 2020 who actually voted in that Presidential Election.

- **4100 postcards** are currently being addressed and mailed by your Club to selected Democrats in the North County area who are not yet signed up for Vote By Mail.

one (1) year. This is a person from the same address who joins at the same time as an Individual Member * **Lifetime Member - \$250** for lifetime membership rights

You must reside in Pinellas County and be registered to vote as a Democrat to join our club.



Who doesn't love a parade! **Join the NPCDC at the Safety Harbor Independence Day Parade on Monday July 4th.** We'll start lining up at 8:30am near the marina. Parade kicks off at 10am and will travel west up Main St. We will have 3 decorated cars, and need participants to walk and hand out candy to the kids along the parade line. Contact Karen Miracle at (813) 503-7777 or e-mail karen-miraclelaw@hotmail.com for details. Look for a signup sheet at the Club meeting on Thursday June 16.

Club Merch

Carry your NPCDC pride, or display our Democratic values on your lawn. Your donations are used for voter outreach, now more important than ever. Yard signs are \$20 and tote bags are \$10. We've made it easy with links from our website.

Mark Your Calendars



NPCDC will be at the Safety Harbor Street Festival on **Friday June 17.** Look for our new tent proudly announcing the North Pinellas County Democratic Club. You'll find

us near the corner of Fifth & Main St.



Check our Club's website for up to date information about all current events.

[Click here for the Club Calendar](#)

[Click here to Buy Totes or Signs](#)






Your Club uses multiple channels to share vital information with you:

- Monthly Club meeting at the Dunedin Scottish Cultural Center
- Club website at NorthPinellasDemocrats.com
- Facebook Group: [NorthPinellasDems](#)
- Twitter: [@NPinellasDems](#)
- Instagram: [NorthPinellasDems](#)
- Email from northpinellasdems@gmail.com
- *And this newsletter!*

[See the Newsletter via PDF](#)

Honoring the LGBTQIA Community as we mark Pride Month



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Our mailing address: NPCDC, PO Box 415, Dunedin, FL 34697

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