

2024 Elections: A Pivotal Moment for Our Future

Monday, January 22nd 2024 – 201 Café and Wine Bar

A small, but engaged, group braved the icy roads to hear Tamara Bates speak on the 2024 Elections: A Pivotal Moment for Our Future. The throughline was that each of us can make a difference in 2024 – be it large or small.

Tamara Bates is the Director of Community Engagement for the Tennessee Democratic Party. Her wealth of experience on the groundbreaking Senate elections for Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossof, as well as her significant involvement with Hillary Clinton’s campaign was obvious. Tamara understands the issues and people here as she grew up in rural middle Tennessee.



The key takeaways were:

Many people are in survivor mode. They’re not thinking about lofty aspirations or societal change – they’re thinking about paying rent and putting food on the table. For people to be able to listen to why democracy or equity or injustice is important they must be in a place where they are not scared about their immediate future. And in small cities and rural counties the issues are magnified. As Democrats we should make it a daily habit to befriend someone, especially someone who is not already in our social circles. We need to get in the habit of learning what people are concerned about and listening to those answers. Her favorite



questions, to ask just one person a day, are “what do you see for yourself in the future?” and “what would you like more of and what would you like to keep the same?”. Really listening to what the checkout person, or the mail carrier, or the garage mechanic, or the receptionist is concerned about is very powerful.

With youth it’s important to let them know that voting does make a difference and democracy is important. We won’t reach the youth with the same methods we use with adults. With youth, they are motivated by activities and events that are not political – issues are appealing but politics is not. However, once we can engage their attention they will listen to a political message. Tamara refers to this type of outreach as “party with a purpose.”

We also need to do a good job with our homework. People pull misinformation from many sources, and if we can give them the right information, in a non-judgmental way, we are doing a huge service. Tamara recommended a DNC sponsored smartphone app “Reach” as a source for reliable information and talking points. Information gives us armor to be fierce and not back down to the bullies.

We also need more people running for office, and more people supporting those running. Tamara encouraged us to step up and get in the ring – and to remember that “if you always do what you’ve always done, you always get what you’ve always gotten.” (Jessie Potter)