

# The Delray Democrat

May 2023 (# 57)

## Hypocrites, Blackmailers, and Political Terrorists

Michael K. Cantwell

There are three things to know about the debt ceiling “crisis”:

- (1) every penny of the \$31.4 trillion of debt we will exceed on June 5 was authorized by prior Congresses in legislation signed by prior presidents; raising the debt ceiling is thus not a subject for negotiation but rather a question of whether Republicans will welch on our country’s debts;
- (2) before Newt Gingrich became Speaker in 1995, the ceiling was raised more than 100 times, always without attendant drama; and
- (3) since then, it has morphed into a crisis every time a Democrat occupied the Oval Office and never when a Republican was president.

In 1995-96 and in 2013, Republicans’ phony hysteria about the debt caused government shutdowns. In 2011, it caused S&P to downgrade the U.S. credit rating for the first time in history because the ceiling wasn't raised until days before the government defaulted. This time Moody’s, Fitch, and Scopes Ratings may join in a downgrade, costing the United States Treasury hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Republicans recover from their deficit hysteria whenever a Republican is in the White House, and Democrats have always acted responsibly and without pre-conditions to protect the government from a default. That’s why the debt ceiling was raised without dramatics or demands when Reagan, the two Bushes, and Trump was president, even when Democrats controlled Congress wholly or in part. For example, Democrats joined with Republicans to raise the debt ceiling without controversy or pre-conditions:

- 18 times when Ronald Reagan was president (even as he was tripling the federal debt);
- 9 times while George W. Bush was doubling it (despite having inherited three straight annual budget surpluses from Bill Clinton, the first surpluses since 1969); and
- 3 times while Donald Trump was adding almost as much debt in four years (\$8.2 trillion) as Obama added in eight (\$8.3 trillion), even though Obama inherited the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and bequeathed Trump the longest expansion since World War II.

No serious person could believe that Republicans are actually concerned with the federal debt, nor can anyone doubt that Republicans are once again putting the full faith and credit of the United States in jeopardy in order to achieve what they could never have achieved through normal legislative channels. The polite word for that is “blackmail.”

A less polite characterization is “political terrorism.” Republicans, with a slim and fractured majority in a single House of Congress, are demanding steep spending cuts and a rollback of some of President Joe Biden’s legislative accomplishments, just as they did when Obama was president.

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### Upcoming Meetings

*June 15: Mark Schneider, The Rise of Disinformation, June 15*

*July 20: Daniel Lishansky, The National Popular Vote Initiative*

*September 21: Dave Aronberg, PBC State Attorney*

### Have you Re-enrolled in Vote by Mail?

You can do this in many ways:

By Phone: (561) 656-6208

By Fax: (561) 656-6230

In person: click [here](#) for locations of SOE.

Or online by scanning the QR code below



(Continued from page 1)

If Biden refuses to pay the ransom, Republicans are prepared to create the first government default in U.S. history. The immediate impact would be a downgrading of the U.S. credit rating, the loss of one million jobs, and a recession. A continued refusal by Congress to raise the debt ceiling would result in the loss of 7 million jobs and a 2008-style financial crisis.

The Republican debt reduction plan, which passed by a mere two votes, contains two principal measures. The first would cause a recession and further afflict the most vulnerable among us. The second would further accelerate our reckless march into a climate catastrophe.

The bill, which includes tax credits designed to boost production and consumption of green energy, is estimated to have created 142,000 new fair-wage, clean energy jobs already and is projected to create a total of at least 1.3 million jobs by 2030. That's good for the economy and the planet but not so good for the filthy fuel industry.

The Act also includes \$80 billion in IRS funding designed to help recover taxes owed but not paid by the wealthiest Americans and multinational corporations. Although it will have negligible impact on most Americans, it increases the likelihood that the Republicans true constituency (the top 0.01%) will begin to contribute their fair share.

The Republican proposal includes eliminating most of the green energy tax credits as well the enhanced

***Democrats voted to raise the debt ceiling without pre-conditions 18 times while Ronald Reagan was tripling the federal debt, 9 times while George W. Bush was doubling it, and 3 times when Trump was adding as much debt in 4 years as Obama added in 8.***

The proposal contains no measures to reduce the debt by increasing taxes or by reversing the Trump "tax cuts" that added nearly \$2 trillion to the federal debt. Republicans don't care that a substantial majority of Americans (61% in the most recent poll) favor raising tax rates for households that make more than \$400,000.

Two-thirds of the claimed reduction in spending would be achieved by cuts in discretionary spending (which is divided between defense spending and safety net spending other than Social Security and Medicare). The Republican plan cuts discretionary spending by 9% from the current fiscal year, with subsequent increases of 1% annually. Such cutbacks would almost certainly tip the country into the recession that "experts" have been predicting for months would result from the Fed's ten interest rate increases over the last 14 months. Since Republicans are on record as opposing *any* cuts to the Pentagon budget, and the military accounts for the majority of discretionary spending, it is our most vulnerable populations will bear the brunt of the pain.

The plan also seeks to denude President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, the most consequential governmental response to the climate crisis ever enacted. That's hardly surprising, as the bill targets the Republican Party's principal paymasters—plutocrats and polluters.

IRS funding. It also requires Biden to agree to legislation that would increase domestic production of oil, natural gas and coal, and cut back on permitting restrictions that delay pipelines, refineries, and other filthy fuel projects.

If Biden refuses to accede to these demands, Republicans are ready, willing, and able to precipitate the first government default in American history.

Yet the price of acceding to Republican blackmail would be a continuation of our reckless lurch into a climate disaster from which there would be no recovery. It would also slow the economy and tip the country into the recession that "experts" have been predicting for months.

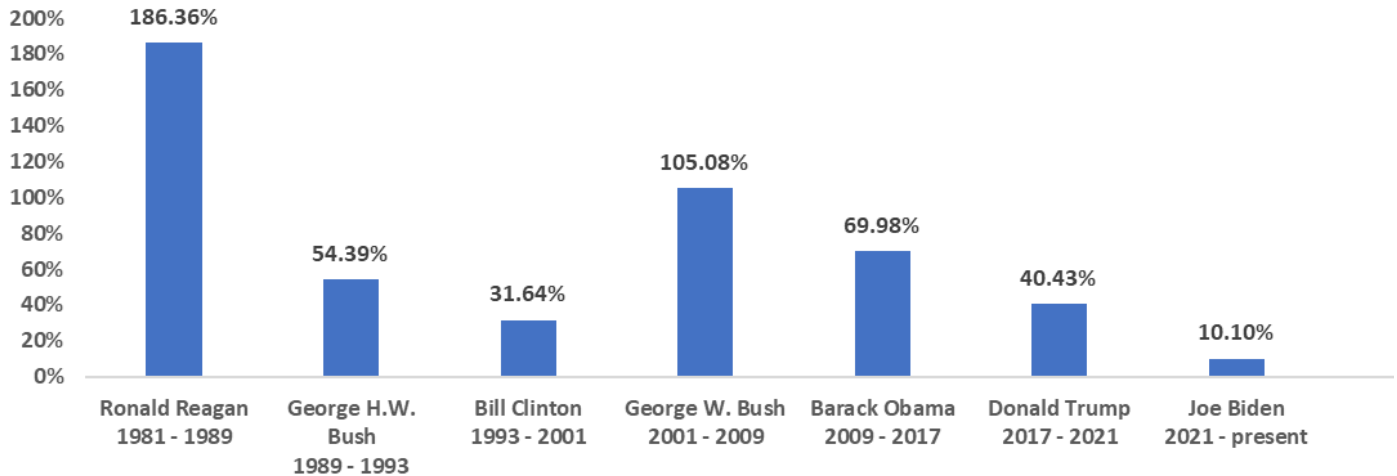
There are reports of a deal that would focus solely on cutting discretionary spending, but it's unlikely the Orwellian-titled Freedom Caucus – whose members make the Tea Party seem like well-mannered guests at a Victorian tea party – will agree to that.

Even if they do, and as noted above, it will be the most vulnerable Americans who bear the brunt. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

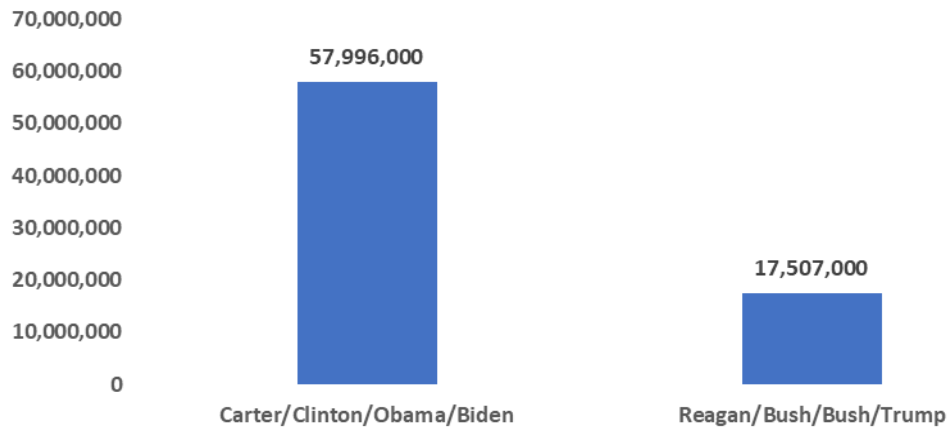
# Republicans Can't Create Jobs but They Sure Can Create Debt

The debt chart is based on data provided by the [U.S. Treasury](#), and the jobs charts are based on data provided by the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). The links are active. MKC

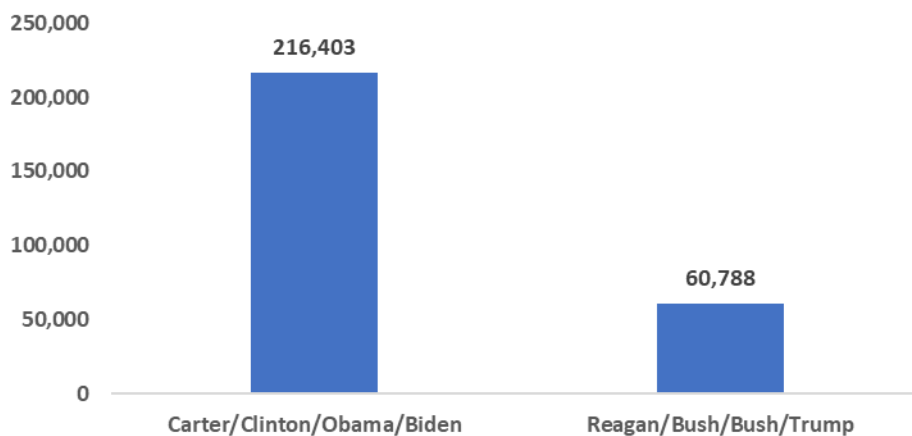
### Percentage Increase in Debt By President (1981 - 2023)



### Democrats Created Over Triple the Number of Jobs As Republicans in 20 Fewer Months



### Democrats' Average Monthly Job Gains Are 3.6x the Republicans' Average



## Worth Reading

The Editorial Board, [Are Republicans Willing to Raise the Debt Ceiling?](#) *The New York Times*: “. . . The question is whether Republicans are serious about avoiding a crisis. The party’s leaders so far have offered up only a mix of outlandish demands and reckless threats.”

[How Ron DeSantis Sold Out Florida Homeowners](#): “Floridians are suffering. The Sunshine State’s homeowner insurance rates are nearly triple the national average, and rapid increases have forced homeowners to forego insurance at almost twice the national rate. Home insurance is particularly critical in Florida, where communities vulnerable to climate change face increasingly frequent and severe hurricanes and other weather events, like the recent storms that flooded some Fort Lauderdale neighborhoods for more than a week.”

Marc Elias, [We Cannot Out-Organize Voter Suppression](#), Democracy Docket: “Persuading voters to support a candidate is vital, but it won’t make hours long voting lines shorter. Registering voters is foundational, but it alone cannot overcome voter purges and voter challenges that kick hundreds of thousands off the rolls or burdensome strict registration requirements that hinder voters from getting started in the first place. Voter education is critical, but it won’t stop mail in ballots from being rejected based on manufactured technicalities or human error. In short, on-the-ground organizing and campaigning are essential, but we cannot expect to simply out-organize systematic voter suppression . . . Sadly, suggesting that citizens can use organizing to defeat voter suppression also fuels a false narrative too many are inclined to adopt. It turns voter suppression and the fight against it into a question of campaign tactics rather than the illegal and immoral deprivation of constitutional rights.

Jonathan Weisman, [The Durham Report Offered Few Conclusions. The Right Drew Its Own.](#) *The New York Times*: “A report by the special counsel John H. Durham on the origins of the F.B.I.’s investigation into the Trump campaign’s work with Russia recommended no further prosecutions, produced no startling revelations and declined to suggest any “wholesale changes” to F.B.I. rules for politically sensitive investigations.”

Michelle Goldberg, [This P.T.A. Mom Is Suing Her School District for Banning Books](#), *The New York Times*: “Before Smith left, he offered some parting words to the board. ‘There’s something bad that exists here,’ he said. ‘There’s something toxic that exists here.’ And it doesn’t exist only in Escambia, which is why this lawsuit matters.”

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## Worth Quoting

“To anger a Democrat, you tell them a lie. To anger a Republican, you tell them the truth.”

Wanting a child born is pro-birth life. Wanting a child fed, a child housed, a child insured, a child educated, with a parent that earns a living wage in one job, is PRO-LIFE. [HarleyTheAtheist](#)

### **Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors**

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Editorial Board: Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Sandra Elaisse-Cantwell, David Kulick, Char Lane, June Neal, and Rob Resnick.

# Get Behind Biden and Kindly STFU

*Michael K. Cantwell*

A recent poll reported that only 25% of Democrats want Joe Biden to run for reelection. Nearly half (44%) would have preferred a different nominee and the remainder had no preference.

This means that 75% of the Democrats polled either don't want or don't know if they want Biden to run. That's damaging and idiotic.

It's damaging because such tepid support for President Biden is exactly what the media that commissioned the polls want to publish. It attracts eyeballs and sets up the poisonous, self-reinforcing message that Biden is just too old (it's a retread of 2016, when the media found Hillary too entitled, and 2000, when it labeled Gore as too boring). It helped turn what should have been a Democratic landslide into a Republican victory.

It's idiotic because it ignores reality: Biden IS running. Get over it. Expressing doubts about Biden's age simply increases the likelihood of a repeat of 1980, 2000, and 2016.

*Those elections allowed Republicans to appoint 10 of the last 15 Supreme Court justices, who in turn*

- gutted the Civil Rights Act, opening the floodgates to a decade of voter suppression bills;
- declared that corporations have the same rights as real people, polluting our elections with billions of dollars of dark money;
- Intentionally and egregiously misread the text of the Second Amendment to conjure up an *individual* right to bear arms out of thin air; and
- ignored a half century of precedent to deny women the right to control their own bodies, returning them to back-alley abortionists.

It's idiotic because even as respondents were expressing disappointment with Biden's decision to seek a second term, they were effectively conceding that there is no viable alternative. Asked who they would support if Biden stepped aside, less than half (49%) could even name an alternative, and only Kamala Harris (13%) reached double digits. Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg were next (tied at 6%), followed by Elizabeth Warren (4%).

Perhaps, they – or Biden himself – recognized that the search for an alternative would throw away the advantages of incumbency while widening intraparty fissures. James Clyburn, the man who rescued Biden's campaign in 2020 by delivering South Carolina, has already made *his* opinion perfectly clear: "if not Biden, then Harris."

As the current vice-president, Harris would have the strongest claim to replace Biden if he stepped aside. To reject our first Black, Asian, female vice president would not only anger Clyburn but once again tell our most faithful voters that they are taken for granted. And Harris's poll ratings are even lower than Biden's, due in large part to the sexism and racism that is so pervasive in America.

So we come back to Biden, who not only won in 2020 because he was the consensus candidate but whose achievements in office, managed with a razor-thin majority, are unmatched since the days of LBJ. He remains the best able to wield the wooden stake that will remove the MAGA Republican Party from our body politic forever.

Only two things that can stop him: (1) our failure to fall in line behind him; and (2) the So-Called Liberal Media. We need to focus on what Biden is at 80, and ignore the SCLM obsession with what he may be at 86. Biden at 80 is mentally sharper than Reagan at 70 and healthier than FDR at 60.

We need to stick together and come out as we did in even greater numbers than we did in Florida in 2020. We must never forget and never stop reminding people that Biden has had the best first two years of any president since FDR:

In just over two *years*, he's added nearly as many jobs as Reagan and more than Obama during two *terms* and unemployment is at a 54-year low. He signed the greatest investment in green energy in American history, the first gun safety legislation in three decades, the biggest expansion of veterans' benefits in over three decades, and an investment in microchip production that is creating more jobs.

As for the SCLM, we need to call them out if they reprise their craven and clueless performance from 2016. The threat to our freedoms, our democracy, and planet from the MAGA Republican Party is even greater than it was in 2020.

# Look at His Record, Not His Age

*Jack Goldstein*

I hear people talk about Biden’s age and ignore his enormous accomplishments as president. He has brought civility, experience, and respect to the executive branch, and once again is the United States looked upon with respect and admiration by the free world. Ignore President Biden’s age and focus on his achievements and goals for the future.

One of my favorite ballplayers as a boy was Nellie Fox. He began his major league career with the Philadelphia Athletics, was traded to the Chicago White Sox, and finished with the Houston Astros. He was a gifted second baseman, short in stature, but greatly talented.

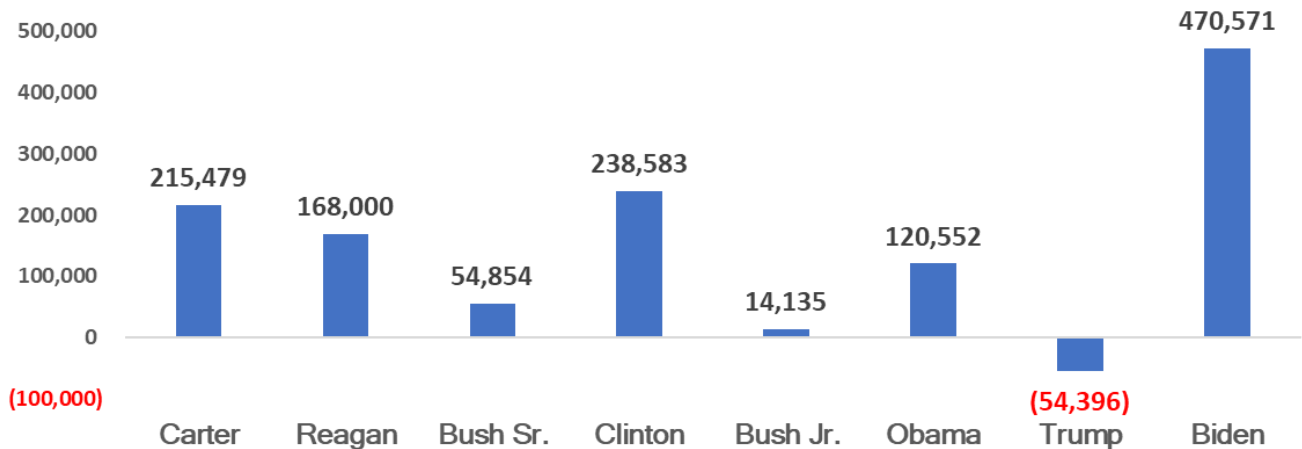
He was inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame in 1997. I recall his hitting talents but he was also a terrific fielder. Late in his career he lost his quickness, but was still a marvelous fielder. He just knew how to position himself with each batter. EXPERIENCE.

So it is with Joe Biden. He knows the system, he understands the needs of the nation, and he has made tremendous gains undoing what was done by his predecessor, an incompetent, sick man trying to look like a leader. Look at Biden’s record. Not his age. His age is far less important than his experience and knowledge of the system, as reflected in that record.

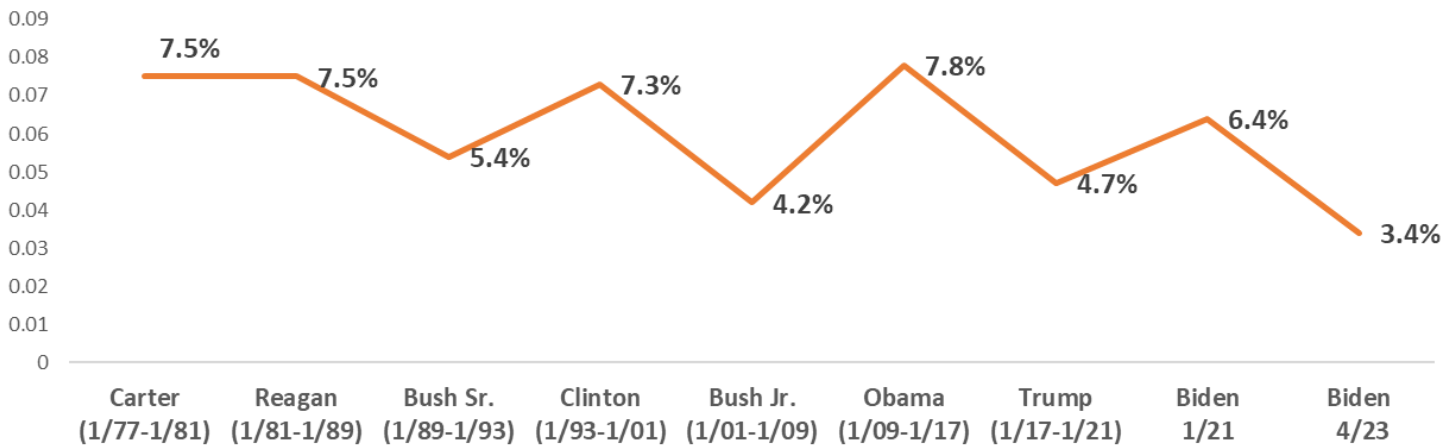
## Biden’s Economic Engine that Could

Notwithstanding ten interest rate increases over 14 months, the economy is still producing jobs. This is no doubt a source of irritation to Republicans, who are plotting to cause a worldwide recession by refusing to raise the debt ceiling (even though they created the bulk of the debt). See pages 1 and 5. The jobs charts is based on employment data provided by the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), and the unemployment chart is based on unemployment data provided by the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Both links are active. MKC

Monthly Average Job Gain by President



Unemployment Rate at Beginning and End of Term



## Thank a Democrat

1964 Civil Rights Act	Food Stamp Act	National Science Foundation Act
1965 Voting Rights Act	Freedom of Information Act	National Voter Registration Act (a.k.a) Motor Voter Act
Affordable Care Act	GI Bill of Rights	Social Security Act
AmeriCorps	Medicare and Medicaid	Unemployment Compensation Act
CDC	Minimum Wage Act	Workers Compensation Act
Family and Medical Leave Act	National Labor Relations Act	

### **American Rescue Plan Act, Signed March 11, 2021**

- Provided \$1400 to every taxpayer and each of his or her dependents
- Expanded coverage and reduced premiums under the Affordable Care Act for 9 million Americans.
- Expanded and extended unemployment benefits.
- Increased SNAP benefits
- Increased and expanded Child Tax Credit
- Made largest investment in child care assistance since World War II
- Increased the Earned Income Tax Credit for frontline workers who helped their communities through the COVID crisis
- Invested \$160 billion to provide supplies and vaccines to combat COVID's heavy toll
- Distributed \$360 billion in emergency funding for local governments to help keep front line public workers on the job and paid
- Provided emergency grants and loans to hard-hit small businesses
- Established a special sign-up period for the Affordable Care Act, adding 800,000 previously uninsured to the ranks of the insured.

### **Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Signed November 15, 2021**

- The largest federal investment in public transit
- Makes the largest federal investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak
- Makes the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system
- Makes the largest investment in clean drinking water and waste water infrastructure in American history, delivering clean water to millions of families
- Ensures every American has access to reliable high-speed internet
- Helps us tackle the climate crisis by making the largest investment in clean energy transmission and EV infrastructure in history; electrifying thousands of school and transit buses across the country; and creating a new Grid Deployment Authority to build a resilient, clean, 21st century electric grid

### **Inflation Reduction Act, Signed August 16, 2022**

- Invests \$369 billion in energy security and fighting climate change
- Invests \$64 billion to extend Affordable Care Act subsidies
- Authorizes Medicare to negotiate with drug companies and expands Medicare benefits, capping costs and out-of-pocket drug expenses
- Provides \$80 billion for tax modernization and enforcement, which is estimated to reduce the deficit by recovering as much as \$203.7 billion from tax cheats
- Closes tax loopholes by imposing a 15% minimum tax payment on companies with over \$1 billion of income and a 1% excise tax on stock buybacks
- Expands Medicare benefits: provides free vaccines (2023), caps insulin costs at \$35/month (2023) and caps out-of-pocket drug costs to an estimated \$4,000 or less in 2024, settling at \$2,000 in 2025
- Provides \$4 billion for drought resiliency in western states

# 2023 Membership

Char Lane

Membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, our meetings, other working supplies and signage for our sign waving events. **Meetings are at 7 PM on the third Thursday of each month at the Palm Beach County Democratic Party office, located in the Congress Office Park, 220 Congress Park Drive, Suite 140, in Delray Beach.** Our meetings are hybrid so you can also join via zoom. Meeting notices include zoom links to register for or join the meeting and links to our various websites.

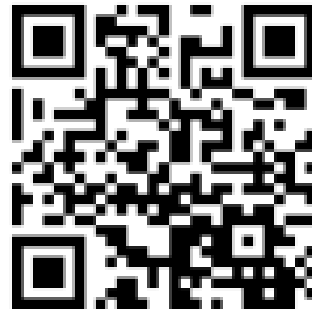
Our goal is to educate people as to the importance of voting, why they should vote Democratic and why they should use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal. We'll have to work hard to help keep our democracy intact and protect it from the manifesting lunacy.

Getting out the vote is our most important mission. You can help by writing postcards, making phone calls, texting, canvassing or becoming a precinct leader. You can register people to vote and help people sign up to vote by mail. You can volunteer for projects to benefit the community. There's so much to do between now and November 2024.

If you're a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach and haven't yet renewed, please do so. If you're not a member of the Club, please consider joining.

Please visit us at [www.demclubofdelray.org](http://www.demclubofdelray.org). Read our monthly publication *The Delray Democrat* at [www.thedelraydemocrat.com](http://www.thedelraydemocrat.com). Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620>.

Become a member of the DCDB by completing and mailing the below application or going to <https://www.demclubofdelray.org/membership> or scanning the QR code below. You can also give me your membership application/renewal at our meetings.



## Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2023 Membership Application and Renewal

Date \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name/names of household members \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Community/Condo Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

(E-mail addresses are shared with the Palm Beach County Democratic Party so our members will be kept abreast of the latest County Democratic Activity. If you do not wish to receive this information, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ and we will not share your E-mail address.)

Preferred method of contact: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Text \_\_\_\_\_

Send newsletter by: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Hand delivery \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I/we are in South Florida from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ each year or are a permanent resident \_\_\_\_\_.

Payment: Individual \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Household \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Democratic Club of Delray Beach and mail to P.O. Box 8224, Delray Beach, FL 33484. Thank you and welcome to our Club.

