

The Delray Democrat

August-September 2017

MESSAGE FROM JACKIE SINATRA, PRESIDENT DCDB

As summer comes to a close, we are quickly getting laser-focused on the job ahead. The Delray Beach Democratic Club is back in high gear with a motivated board of directors, committee chairs and lots of new and former hard-working, committed volunteers. We have exciting, informative and educational programs planned through year's end, and have a new meeting place and day. Thank you to the folks at Pompey Park, at 1101 NW 2nd Street for offering us a beautiful space the second Tuesday of each month. If you haven't been to Pompey Park, it is a large recreation center, for people of all ages and backgrounds. I even heard a senior Pickle Ball team plays there! There is plenty of parking and you don't have to deal with east Atlantic Avenue to attend a meeting!

Our kickoff meeting is on September 26th and will be on Florida's Voter Restoration Amendment. If you are not familiar with this issue, the Florida Constitution **permanently** disenfranchises anyone who has been convicted of a felony, regardless of the severity or nature of the crime. The only way to recover one's right to vote is by individually applying to the state Office of Executive Clemency. Florida is one of only three states with this draconian policy, and it has the highest disenfranchisement rate in the country. If the constitutional amendment passes, felons (with the exception of murderers or sexual offenders) will have their voting rights restored after they have completed their sentences (including probation and parole). We will have a learned panel discussing the issue and the program will be interactive, so bring your questions! The event starts at 7:00, but come at 6:30 to meet your neighbors and enjoy an array of delicious food.

We are also getting started on our campaign to Flip the State! Our goal is to flip red seats to blue, most especially the governor's seat! If you're concerned, angry and feeling helpless, join us! We need volunteers, members, and especially precinct captains. Would you like to be an integral part of making sure folks get out to vote? Ask us about becoming a precinct captain. It is easy, fun, social, and extremely rewarding. Currently Democrats outnumber Republicans in voter registration, but only slightly, so it's critical that we have a high turnout in the 2018 midterms. And that means we need to get started now!

We are also embarking on our 2018 membership drive. If you aren't yet a member, join now before membership rates increase in January from \$15 to \$20 (and from \$25 to \$30 for a family membership). And if you are currently a member, renew before January and get your 2018 membership for the same \$15 (or \$25 for a family)! Spread the word and let's add as many new members as possible to our amazing club!

Upcoming events include a discussion about sober homes and human trafficking on October 10th at 7:00 and a program on ending Citizen's United (American Promise) at 7:00 on November 14th. All meetings and programs will be at Pompey Park. Watch for our holiday party in December! Spread the word and bring everyone you know!

Lastly, I want to thank our board and especially past DCDB volunteers and founders who started our vital and important club and who fought through difficult times to keep it strong! We can only get bigger and better!

“People Get Ready, There's a Train (Wreck) A Coming”

Michael K. Cantwell

While the media is focused on Trump's multiple daily outrages against humanity, Betsy Devos is hard at work wrecking (as a prelude to ransacking) our public education system, Scott Pruitt is committing crimes against nature and the planet, and Mitch (McConnell) and the Miscreants are quietly working on yet another massive transfer of wealth from ordinary Americans to the already obscenely wealthy.

(Continued on back cover)

On the Corners of Delray Beach

Shirley Johnson, City Commissioner and Deputy Vice-Mayor

This column will attempt to inform and educate anyone interested in the City of Delray Beach (from a governance perspective). Welcome to the first installment.

It has been an active five months since the new members were sworn onto the City Commission. We have addressed the issue of whether the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) should remain independent or whether the commissioners should assume those) We decided to keep it independent, replaced three of the CRA commissioners (due to term limits/or non-reappointments), retained one, and appointed a new Chair. The CRA has a great deal of work to do in the NW/SW/SE. The planned extension of the Downtown from I-95 to AIA is creating both excitement and opportunity! The alleys are being cleaned in those communities and one of the newest Avenues to be beautified is NW 12th Avenue. It is beautiful. Take a drive through to see it.

There will be a NEW KID IN TOWN soon. The old library site will be replaced with an IPIC Movie Theatre! Look it up and stay tuned. No more need to travel to Boca or Boynton or West Atlantic to see a newly released MOVIE. Can't wait. Getting my popcorn ready.

There will soon be growth movement on Swinton and West Atlantic of some type or another. Also the South of Atlantic district (SofA) is growing by leaps and bounds. Check it out.

There is progress on our Parking Management Plan. Voice your opinions. Meters on all of Atlantic from [AIA](#) west to Swinton? Also talk of a Resident Park-

ing Plan. No final decisions yet. Contact your Commissioners if you have thoughts to share.

Do you feel that your Community is being heard at your City government discussions? If not, what do you plan to do about it?

We are in the midst of submitting our budget for finalization by September 30th. The millage rate was decreased by one point. Did you receive your proposed tax bill in the mail yet?

The non-partisan City Commission election is already starting to HEAT UP. Two candidates have announced their decisions. Commissioner Mitch Katz is running to retain his Seat #3 and Commissioner Shelly Petrolia (presently in Seat #1) is running for Seat #5 – the Mayor's position. The election for Seats #1, #3 and #5 is scheduled for March 13, 2018. I encourage everyone to participate in the most basic level of our government – the City.

Ending on an exciting note – DELRAY BEACH WAS AWARDED ITS THIRD "All America City Award" for our civic engagement to help more young children from low-income families achieve grade-level reading proficiency and early school success. Research has long shown that when children read at proficient levels by third grade they are more likely to complete high school prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. We are the only Florida city to have been awarded THREE of these awards. Another Delray Beach exclusive. Congratulations to everyone who was a part of this winning this achievement!

The Delray Democrat is the official publication of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach.

The views and opinions expressed in the articles herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach or the Democratic Party.

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‘Welcoming Cities’ Proposal for the City of Delray Beach

Arlene R. Ustin

On behalf of the PBC Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the League of Women Voters and several other organizations, Barbara Eriv, Candy Herrera, Jill Hanson and I have proposed a Welcoming Cities ordinance for the City of Delray Beach to the Commissioners. On August 15 at the Delray Commission Regular Meeting, we announced our effort to the public. The support from the dais and the audience was humbling. So many expressed strong support, and we are now moving to meet with city officials and fine-tune the necessary points for an ordinance so that the commission can decide if Delray Beach will join the more than 550 municipalities who have already signed on in the United States.

Here is the background and the principles underlying our effort:

There are about 67,000 undocumented immigrants living in Palm Beach County. More than half are from Mexico and Guatemala, with a large Haitian population in Delray Beach. Most are upstanding people living in our community, bolstering our local economy and raising their children. Unfortunately, due to new federal regulations this community now lives in fear of unwarranted deportations. They should not have to live this way, and we believe Delray Beach can do something to help them by refusing to partner with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”). In several respects, the federal regulations are both unconstitutional and harmful to the values of our city.

The regulations are not constitutional because we believe the Tenth Amendment prevents the federal government from threatening to withhold federal funding as a means of coercing local jurisdictions to cooperate with ICE. We also believe the Fourth Amendment is

violated each time someone is detained without probable cause.

The federal regulations also negatively affect both public safety and the local economy. For example, fear of arrest or deportation can deter immigrant victims from reporting a crime. Moreover, our regional and local economies, such as the agricultural, hospitality, and restaurant industries, are harmed when undocumented immigrant workers are prohibited from or fear taking jobs that citizens refuse to fill.

Back in March 2017 the City of West Palm Beach unanimously passed a Welcoming Cities resolution that provides protection to all members of its communities. In April, the Palm Beach County School Board signed a similar resolution to provide safe harbor from ICE raids on school property.

We know that Delray Beach works hard to “promote the health, safety, and welfare of its residents.” In the case of immigrants, it is our strong belief that the best way to do this is to pass something similar to the Welcoming Cities ordinance that was implemented in Chicago. The ordinance states that unless there is a legitimate law enforcement reason, the City will not:

- Ask or give out immigration status;
- Use immigration status as an excuse to withhold City services and opportunities;
- Deny the use of Consular IDs as a form of identification; or
- Detain a person without due process or probable cause.

I’ll keep you posted on our progress.

Gerrymandering Hurts – We Have to Fight Back

Mariane Kulick

There are more registered Democrats than Republicans in Florida, but the Legislature is two-thirds Republican and only one-third Democrat. It is imperative that we pay attention to the candidates and that we vote. It is our

personal responsibility that we get every Democratic and every Non-Party registrant to vote, but they have to know who to vote for.

To that end, we will, in the next issue present to you the Democratic candidates for governor who will run in the August primary. We will update further information as the months go by.

Mineral Riches Behind Trump's Backtracking on Afghanistan?

Mariane Kulick

President Trump's decision to continue, actually increase, the number of Americans fighting in Afghanistan, goes against everything he said in his campaign. He is going to do what presidents before him have done, and that is to send more troops to produce the same sad results.

It was in the late 1970s that we armed the Mujahedeen 'freedom fighters' to fight the Russians in Afghanistan. Afghanistan became Russia's "Vietnam" and they finally left. The freedom fighters became Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, fighting with Soviet and U.S. weapons. This is a short and simplified history of how we got there in the first place.

The people of Afghanistan are caught between the Taliban and the warlords and have not had a moment of peace in all these years. The U.S. military at its highest had over 100,000 troops fighting on Afghan soil, supposedly teaching the Afghan troops to fight for their country and institute a stable government. If 100,000 could not do it, what makes it reasonable to expect that 4,000 more can succeed. In recent years, we have dropped tons of bombs, making a wasteland and killing Afghans, and yet that elusive, stable government is not in sight.

So what changed Trump's mind? Repeating the same mistakes gets the same results – the devastation of a poor war-torn country. What would Trump consider important enough to send more troops to a hopeless cause? Possibly the only thing that would move him is the major interest in his life – business opportunities. Afghanistan has extensive mineral sources (as pointed out by the New York Times), and he is, above all, according to his own estimate, the consummate businessman, and there is a lot under those rocks. In fact, the headline of the article in the New York Times reads "Trump Finds Reason for the U.S. to Remain in Afghanistan: Minerals" written by Mark Lander and James Risen on July 25th. The President has already had advisors looking into it.

For the sake of the Afghan people and the welfare of our own people, we should stop wasting money and lives trying to prop up a corrupted government, and an army not willing to fight for that government. We should leave them to solve the problem as best they can. The money that goes into the armaments can be better spent on our infrastructure, building bridges and roads and creating more jobs in the process.

Across the Street

Carol Gevirtz

Our city's ongoing commitment to education was a big factor in its receipt of the prestigious All American City award (for the third time!). A new program called "Out of School" offers 5- to 12- year-old students structured and supervised after school activities, including recreational, computer labs, educational programs and homework assistance. Parents/guardians can call 561-243-7250 to register and make arrangements for transportation to and from activity sites.

All our residents should be afforded the rights and respect that we believe in, as Americans. Delray has been asked to become a "Welcome City." Our club member Arlene Ustin, representing several groups, is meeting with the mayor and city commissioners to advance this initiative. Please see her article, on p. 3.

Our city government has taken several important steps to address the problems resulting from addiction and sober homes: Police Chief Jeff Goldman has appointed Ariana Ciancio as Police Community Advocate; the city commissioners have voted to pursue legislation against manufacturers of opioids; and the city commissioners have also passed an ordinance establishing new standards for sober homes:

- There must be at least 660 feet between the group homes, if they are new.
- New sober homes will have to be certified by the Florida Association of Recovery Residences (FARR).
- Existing sober homes will have until April 1, 2018 to become certified.
- Group homes must obey neighborhood parking regulations.

Note: We have a program on Addiction and Home Trafficking, October 10th at Pompey Park. Look for our flyers on upcoming events.

Florida's Voter Restoration Amendment

Michael K. Cantwell

Florida has the most punitive disenfranchisement policy in the nation. Under the Florida Constitution, anyone convicted of a felony is **automatically and permanently** stripped of the right to vote. Enacted in 1868, it was designed to prevent newly freed slaves from voting, and it remains racially discriminatory in purpose and effect.

Three other states (Iowa, Kentucky, and Virginia) automatically and permanently disenfranchise persons convicted of felonies, but Florida is the **only** state that requires them **to wait at least five years** after completing all conditions of their sentence before they can even apply for restoration of their civil rights. As a consequence, more than three times as many people are disenfranchised in Florida (1,686,318) than in the next closest state (Virginia, with 508,680). Nationally Florida accounts for more than one-fourth of the 6.1 million Americans who have been stripped of the right to vote. And half of the 3.1 million Americans who remain disenfranchised **even after serving their time** are Floridians.

We can do something about this continued assault on one of our most fundamental of rights by collecting enough signatures to put Florida's Voter Restoration Amendment on the 2018 ballot and then working for its passage. The Amendment would automatically restore voting rights to persons convicted of a felony once they have completed all conditions of their sentence (including parole or probation), with the exception of those convicted of murder or a felony sexual offense. (Information about the Amendment and a copy of the petition are both available at <https://www.floridiansforafairdemocracy.com/sign-the-petition>.)

Educating the public will be critical both to gathering enough signatures to put the Amendment on the ballot and ensuring its passage. We must anticipate that Republicans will seize on the Amendment as a means of motivating disaffected party members in a mid-term election. And we must be prepared to defuse disinformation campaigns stoking fears of violent criminals (or *those people*) to the polls.

It is critical to understand that a felony is merely a crime that is punishable by more than one year in

prison. Felonies run the gamut from violent crimes like murder and sexual assault down to nonviolent crimes such as possession of marijuana or even passing a bad check to buy food for one's family. The Amendment specifically excludes serious, violent crimes. Moreover, while people of color are overrepresented among the felon population, the overwhelming majority of people denied the right to vote are white.

Moreover, it is important to note that while Florida's automatic disenfranchisement policy has been the law of the state since 1868, it wasn't always as difficult to have one's civil rights restored as it is today. Under revised clemency rules issued by former governor Charlie Crist that share some provisions with those included in Florida's Voter Restoration Amendment, persons convicted of nonviolent felonies had their voting rights restored automatically once they completed all conditions of their sentence (including parole, probation, court fees, and victim restitution requirements).

During Gov. Crist's four years in office, 155,000 former offenders had their rights restored. Even under Jeb Bush a total of 77,000 former offenders had their civil rights reinstated. As soon as Rick Scott was elected, he issued the most profoundly undemocratic rules in America, requiring former offenders to wait at least five years after completing their sentences before they can even apply for clemency. Moreover, while a four-person board (including Scott and three of his Cabinet members) evaluates clemency applications, Scott has the sole power to reject clemency. Scott thus gave himself the sole power to determine who would not be allowed to vote against him in 2014 or for Hillary Clinton in 2016.

As a consequence a paltry 2,487 former offenders have had their rights restored during Rick Scott's nearly seven years in office. It is of course bitterly ironic that if CEOs whose companies pled guilty to defrauding the federal government of hundreds of millions of dollars (and paid \$1.7 billion in fines as a consequence) were treated as severely as poor people who pass a bad check to buy groceries for their families at a Walmart, Gov. Scott might have himself had to apply to have his voting rights restored.

Whose Identity? Whose Politics?

Stephanie Braunstein

Once again, it's time to fight back against the trivialization of the left's traditional concerns over race and gender issues. Calling those concerns "Identity Politics" attempts to put those concerns into a neat little cliché that dismisses them. "Oh, there they go again with their Identity Politics" makes race and gender issues appear to be not worthy of serious contemplation, let alone action.

A recent essay by Suzanna Danuta Walters published in the feminist journal *Signs*, rebuts the criticism against so-called Identity Politics with a depth and clarity that cannot be improved upon by this writer, so much of the article you are now reading will restate her ideas. Primary among those ideas is the point made in the following:

For these critics, identity politics are issues "we" (women, blacks, queers, etc.) spend too much time on, issues that ostensibly push away that white male voter (who doesn't have an "identity" presumably). Under the cover of this so-called concern, critics can attack abortion rights, gay rights, civil rights. As long as these rights are the property of certain identities, they can be denied as distractions by many on the Left and as narrow "special rights" by most conservatives.

In other words, trivial and unworthy of significant political discourse.

In another section of Walters' essay, she emphasizes that many of the anti-identity crowd complain that

Identity Politics is too restrictive. Her rejoinder to that involves two interconnected aspects: the general and the specific. For the former, she states, "Let's be clear: most social change and political activism happens in and through identity politics—whether it is the righteous rage of Black Lives Matter, the fight for Indian autonomy and water rights at Standing Rock, the immigrant rights movement, or indeed the recent Women's March in DC and around the world." For the latter she emphasizes those post-election Women's Marches, stating that the marches were very broad-based and that women were able to successfully rally millions of people of both sexes to show their solidarity in protesting all forms of repression, not just sexism.

Where does all of this anti-Identity Politics rhetoric leave us now? In light of the recent events concerning the Charlottesville march and the presidential pardon of a sheriff who actively condoned racial profiling, those who are shouting anti-Identity Politics rhetoric seem to be winning—for now. However, we cannot let them distort the dialogue until it is too late and the advances made by those who have supported civil and human rights are reversed. Walters uses the following quote to begin her argument—a fitting commentary with which to end this article:

Identity politics is ... what we used to call civil rights.—Samantha Bee, Full Frontal

Walters' essay is available at <http://signsjournal.org/currents-identity-politics/walters/>

Climate Change and Our Lives

Mariane Kulick

Our president does not believe in climate change. Neither does the head of the Environmental Department he put in power.

But we believe in it. Eight days of no power after Hurricane Irma made us believers. Did the people of Louisiana and Texas gain any understanding after being battered by their own hurricane? How about the people of Puerto Rico where there are rivers instead of streets? How about the people living in the northwest who struggle with massive fires?

Weather analysts reporting during Irma referred to the warm ocean waters as adding power to the hurricane. Well, why are the waters getting warmer? Why are icebergs melting in the Arctic?

There may be some things in this world we can't do anything about, but this we can. We should be leading the world in this endeavor instead of a president who walks out of the Paris Agreement, who has decided that the wealth of the fossil fuel corporations is more important than our health.

We in Florida live on a little peninsula with warming waters on both sides. We have a big stake in this and we had better deal with it.

Rights and Regulations

David Kulick

There have always been two views of America; the first is the lone explorer heading off into the wilderness, and the second is villagers helping neighbors raise their roofs. Living in a society always means surrendering some individual freedom for the good of the whole. No, you can't go out and shoot someone, but they aren't allowed to shoot you either.

In an economic sense, Republicans believe that government is a necessary evil that should have very limited authority and everything else is up to the individual. Democrats believe that government, which is ideally all of us working together, should play a greater role in structuring society.

So, for a very real example such as healthcare, the true conservative believes that healthcare is up to the individual, and if someone can't afford to pay the bills or have insurance in our capitalist system, then they should suffer and die. That's harsh, but very Darwinian. Liberals believe that government should help subsidize the cost of healthcare for those unable to afford it. We believe that a society that can't pro-

vide decent healthcare to all its citizens is a society that is failing badly.

Unregulated free-market capitalism results in tremendous inequities of wealth. It is a great system for sociopaths who only care about themselves. Regulations are necessary to prevent the destruction of our planet in the endless pursuit of profit. When you hear someone complaining about too much regulation, maybe they're right, but I'd like to know which regulations they consider too much. No regulation springs into existence other than as a response to an existing abuse.

Many essays have been written on the rights of individuals in a society, and I'm unlikely to tread on any ground that hasn't already been trampled to death. However, to a very real extent, the difference between Democrats and Republicans is how we view the rights of individuals against the needs of a society. Once we agree that we need someone to tell us what side of the road to drive on, the rest is just determining the balance of rights and responsibilities.

Butchers

Michael K. Cantwell

The New York Times recently reported on a lunch meeting for Republican Senators held at a Chick-Fil-A during which Colorado Senator Cory Gardner warned that the Senate's failure to repeal the ACA was drastically affecting campaign fundraising.

Nebraska Senator Charles E. Grassley, who has been deeply involved in healthcare policy, told reporters at home that "he could count 10 reasons the new health proposal should not reach the floor, but that Republicans needed to press ahead regardless." Why? Because they'd promised for years to repeal the ACA and, as Senator Pat Roberts admitted, "If we do nothing, it has a tremendous impact on the 2018 elections, and whether or not Republicans still maintain control and we have the gavel."

Think about that. Graham-Cassidy is another crap bill that will deprive millions of Americans of health insurance, effectively condemning tens of thousands of them to untimely deaths every year, and Republicans know it. And yet Republicans must get behind the bill because their donors want some action. No action, no money. No money, no majority.

What do you call someone who would sacrifice tens of thousands of innocent lives simply to stay in power? A thug? A butcher? A Republican? I don't know, but it's worth asking our own Little Marco what he thinks. I try to either speak to his office or leave messages daily (202-224-3041; 305-418-8553; 561-775-3360), but I've yet to receive a satisfactory answer.

“There’s A Train Wreck A Coming” *(continued from front cover)*

We need to be ready to fight back, and fight back hard, against a grossly inequitable tax cut that will explode the deficit. We succeeded in stopping Republican efforts to repeal Obamacare, and we can succeed here.

Here are the facts. According to an analysis by the nonpartisan Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, this is your typical Republican tax cut. First, it is grossly regressive—the more you have, the more you get (and the more you need, the less you get):

- Nearly 40 percent of the reduction would flow to households in the top 1 percent of the income distribution, reducing their tax rate by 17.8 percent and their annual taxes by \$270,000.
- Over 20 percent of the reduction would flow to households in the top 0.1 percent of the income distribution, reducing their tax rate by 19.9 percent and their annual taxes by \$1,408,800.
- Only 8.5 percent of the reduction would flow to households in the middle quintile, reducing their tax rate by a mere 3.3 percent and their annual taxes by \$1,920.
- Indeed, the bottom 80 percent of households collectively get only 10.4 percent of the reduction, barely half of what the top 1 percent receive and a quarter half of what the top 0.1 percent get.

Second, the proposed Republican tax plan would explode the deficit, proving (once again) that Republicans don’t give a rap about deficits unless a Democrat is in the White House:

- Federal revenue would be reduced by \$7.8 trillion over the next decade and by another \$13.1 trillion over the following decade. Unless there were offsetting tax increases, that’s how much the “fiscally prudent” Republicans intend to burden our children and grandchildren in order to further enrich fat cat donors.
- Even incorporating “possible” (but if history is a guide, highly unlikely) tax increases, the deficit would balloon by \$3.5 trillion over the next decade and by another \$5.7 trillion over the following one.

Democrats have been cleaning up Republican train wrecks since 1933. Lets stop this one before it happens.

Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2017 Membership Application

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 _____

Send newsletter by: E-mail _____ U.S. Mail _____

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

Payment: Individual \$15 _____ Household \$25 _____ Donation _____

Please make checks payable to Democratic Club of Delray Beach and mail to 15127 Jog Road, Suite 101, Delray Beach, FL 33446-1251. Thank you and Welcome to our Club.