

The Delray Democrat

We Don't Vote, We Lose¹

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I have often ridiculed White working-class Republicans for voting against their economic interests.

But what about Democrats who vote against their economic interests by “not voting”? A recent [article](#) reported that Democratic turnout was only 49%; that is, more than 2.6 million registered Democrats did not cast ballots last November.

Some of them may have thought that they were sending a message to the Democratic leadership by “not voting,” but they were effectively voting for DeSantis, Rubio, and the rest of wolf pack known as the modern Republican Party. As David Foster Wallace, pithily put in, “you either vote by voting, or you vote by staying home and tacitly doubling the value of some Diehard’s vote.”

If but half of the registered Democrats who failed to cast ballots had voted for Val Demings, she would have beaten Marco Rubio by some 100,000 votes. And if 1.6 million of the 2.6 million Democrats who stayed home had gone to the polls or voted by mail, Charlie Crist would have been our “once and future” governor. And rest assured, there would be no supermajority of Banana Republicans in Tallahassee passing unconstitutional and hateful laws while ignoring the insurance, housing, and healthcare crises plaguing the state.

In addition to self-styled progressives who flat-out refused to vote for Charlie Crist because he had been a Republican a decade earlier, only 42% of Black Democrats and 35% of Latinx Democrats cast ballots. I am a self-styled progressive, a member of what the late Paul Wellstone referred to as “the Democratic Wing of the Democratic Party,” but I learned from 1980, 2000, and 2016. “Some babies,” as Bob Dylan once sang, “never learn.”

What progressives could have learned from each of those elections is the utter folly of staying home because you are disaffected with the Democratic candidate. Ronald Reagan replaced the New Deal with his Raw Deal and appointed Antonin Scalia, Sandra Day O’Connor, and Anthony Kennedy to the Supreme Court, three of the five “justices” who selected George W. Bush in 2000. Bush launched illegal wars, violated international human rights laws, doubled the deficit, and appointed the odious Sam Alito and the villainous hypocrite John Roberts to the Court, maintaining the 5-4 conservative majority (instead of a 6-3 liberal majority had Gore been in the White House).

Obama spent 8 years undoing only part of the damage done by Bush. I spent the 2016 election arguing with people like the imbecile who called Hillary a “psychopathic fascist.” By refusing to vote for Clinton, they gave the real fascists the opportunity to seat trust-fund baby Neil Gorsuch, alleged rapist Brett Kavanaugh, and handmaiden Amy Coney Barrett. Let us hope that the answer to the refrain, “When will they ever learn,” will be 2024.

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), April 2023, page 8.

As to the poor turnout around the other portion of the Democratic base, there is some truth to the claim that apathy and cynicism in minority communities is fueled by Democrats coming around every two years and asking for their vote without explaining why. But the fault lies on both sides.

One person interviewed in the Post article said she was “motivated to see Donald Trump not get reelected” in 2020 but she didn’t feel as hostile toward DeSantis because “her main news sources — CNN, NPR, Reuters and Vox — didn’t cover DeSantis daily.” Had she picked up a copy of the *Palm Beach Post* or the *Sun-Sentinel* even occasionally, she would have learned enough about Mao DeSantis and his Cultural Devolution and De-Education Camps to never stop throwing up. That failure is on her, but the failure of the Democratic Party to educate her is on us.

Similarly incredible is the justification of the Gen Z voter who cast ballots in 2018 and 2020 but not in 2022 because, “The poll numbers showed that Florida was going to be decisively Republican in the presidential, governor and Senate elections so I didn't feel like it was worth taking time away from work.” Here is someone who apparently never learned about voting by mail.

So how do we reach these voters, and what do we tell them?

First, it’s obvious that we need to get out more, but for those who cannot, there are phone banks. It’s mindboggling that there are Democrats unaware that he could have voted without missing work if he voted by mail. And it’s likely that hundreds of thousands of Democrats who voted by mail in 2022 do not know that their VBM requests expired last December and they must reapply.

Second, we tell them what Democrats have done for the American people, dating back to the New Deal. We bring and leave [Thank a Democrat](#) flyers whenever and wherever we canvass.

Third, we engage our neighbors, and people we meet shopping. I have a variety of t-shirts that promotes dialogue, such as “There is no Planet B” and “We Vote, We Win” and “The Delay Democrat” and “Keep the Immigrants, Deport the Racists.”

I’ve had nothing but positive experiences, which I attribute in part to the fact that Republicans are slow readers, although that last comes with a note of caution. With the permitless carry law having been passed by DeSantis’s minions, it’s worth adding that “past performance in no guarantee of future results.”

On the other hand, that threat itself is a reason that every rational person needs to cast a ballot in 2024. It just might be that last time to get to vote.