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Yes She Can: Kamala Harris

Michael K. Cantwell

At the close of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin was asked, “Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” His iconic response, “a republic, if you can keep it.”

Joe Biden’s remarkable act of putting his country, party, and planet ahead of his ambition further cements his legacy as one of this country’s most extraordinary presidents. See Thank Joe Biden. It very likely will allow us to keep our Republic.

After trailing Trump for much of the year, Biden’s anemic performance in his first (and as it happened, only) debate with Trump dramatically increased calls on him to “pass the torch.” The failed attempt on Trump’s life further increased the pressure on the most effective president of my lifetime as Republicans began the process of deifying a dangerous lunatic.

The media began contrasting the Republican “unity convention” with Democratic disarray and despair. Actually, “Nuremberg Rally” more accurately describes the Republican gathering; all that was missing were goose-stepping Brownshirts and Wagnerian overtures, but Republicans compensated with grinning, ear-bandage-wearing idiots and dumbed-down or stolen music.

President Biden resists standing down because he believes he has a better chance of defeating Trump than Vice President Harris. And the polls supported that assessment . . . until they didn’t.

That was small solace as she too was trailing Trump, and that was before the twin scourges of sexism and racism would have time to kick in. Democrats panicked and Trump celebrated.

The media wasn’t thrilled about Trump 2.0, but, as later-disgraced CBS head Les Moonves said of Trump’s candidacy in 2016, “It may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS. The money is rolling in.” And back then, only a few of us thought Trump could win.

People began calling for an “open convention” to select a new nominee if Biden steps down. They say it will be “exciting, and “democratic,” but it would have been chaotic and returned Trump to the White House, hammering the final nail into the coffin of our democracy.

James Clyburn, the man who saved Biden’s candidacy in 2020, made his views clear, not once, but repeatedly: “If not Biden, then Harris.”

Did we really want to spit on African American women, our most faithful supporters?

Hollywood Ending

As it happened, there was plenty of drama for the media in a Hollywood ending. Nancy Pelosi, the greatest Speaker of the modern era, painfully showed the data to her friend of 50 years. Even if he managed to win, he would be a drag down ballot. Within days, Biden announces he is stepping down and endorses Harris.

Trump cannot control himself (has he ever?) as he realizes it is an entirely new race. He is widely mocked for complaining how unfair that is. He accuses Nancy Pelosi of engineering a coup and then fantasizes that Biden will storm back and reclaim the nomination at the convention.

Weeks later, he’s still whining, accusing Harris of having engineered a “vicious, violent overthrow of a president” (but I’m getting ahead of myself). With Harris’s surge in the polls, his campaign is starting to circle the toilet, and he denounces the “coronation.”

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All in the Family

Other than Trump and scattered Democrats who are too clever by half or who have forgotten what happens when we unleash the circular firing squads, denunciations of a coronation get little traction. Kamala has secured the nomination and the media has moved on to the VP pick – there’s plenty of clickbait there.

Kamala clears that hurdle beautifully, and Minnesota Gov Tim Walz is a perfect partner. Some question her decision to bypass Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, but Walz and Shapiro immediately quash the attempt to start a food fight—at a joint appearance with Kamala, the two “rivals” fall over themselves praising one another to the skies.

And when Trump tries to stir it up by claiming Shapiro was the victim of anti-Semitism, Shapiro smacks him right down: “He is the least credible person when it comes to standing up against hatred and bigotry.”

The Democratic convention is a stark contrast to the Republican one held the prior month without a single former leader of their Party. George W. Bush, Mitt Romney, Mike Pence, Dick Cheney, and Dan Quayle declined to come and kiss Trump’s ring. Adam Kinzinger chooses to come to Chicago, where he entreats both independents and Republicans to vote for Harris-Walz.

The talent, humanity, and sincerity on display in Chicago is breathtaking, diverse, and inspiring. Can anyone imagine Trump and his wife speaking about each other the way Doug Emhoff and Kamala did? Or the way Michelle and Barack did? These are menschen, real people, not toads and toadies.

Hillary delivers the speech of her life, as do Kamala and Tim Walz. AOC and Bernie are fabulous, as always, and what about Josh Shapiro and Florida’s own Maxwell Frost!

No one thinks it will be easy or underestimates the power of the Republican slime machine, but yes she can win, and yes we can keep our Republic if we stick together and work like never before.

“These Lies Are Like Their Father that Begets Them, Gross as a Mountain, Open, Palpable”

Michael K. Cantwell

Henry IV, Part 1, Act 2, Scene 4

For years, and dozens of times, Donald Trump has bragged that he presided over “the greatest economy in history.” This is actually a double lie. The economy about which Trump bragged was never his to begin with. It was the one he inherited from Barack Obama, after Obama rebuilt the economy from the ashes left by George W. Bush. And Biden’s economy has been even better.

This lie accounts for only a tiny percentage of the tens of thousands of lies that have been documented, but it’s proven potent. Below are the facts.

	Obama Final 36 months	Trump First 36 months	Biden To date (40 months)
Job growth total	7,847,000	6,146,000	15,621,000
Average monthly job increase	224,200	175,600	390,525
Unemployment drop	-2%	-1.2%	-1.9%
GDP growth	11.0%	11.7%	22.9%

Data from [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) and [St. Louis Fred](#).

Rick Scott Governed in the Shadow of Serious Conflicts of Interest

June S. Neal

“No decision should ever be made without asking the question is this for the common good?”

Michael Moore

This is what democracy demands of its leaders. This is what voters are entitled to expect from those who've accepted the sacred trust of governance.

So, when officials like Rick Scott support public projects that have the real possibility of increasing their personal investments, the people have not only the right, but the duty, to demand transparency.

When Scott became governor of Florida in 2011, he was a very wealthy man because of his severance package from his HCA hospitals' \$1.7 billion fraud scandal. No sin to be rich. The problem was that he and his wife, Ann, held portfolios which presented so many conflicts of interest with Florida's business. Propelled by loud criticism, Scott claimed to resolve the issue by transferring \$73.8 million dollars of investments into a “blind trust.”

However, “He transferred many assets to his wife and neither “blinded” nor disclosed them,” said [The New York Times](#). “And their investments have included corporations, partnerships and funds that stood to benefit from his administration's actions. Their equity investments largely mirrored each other, meaning that Mr. Scott could, if he wanted, track his own holdings by following his wife's.”

Now he wants a second term as Florida's senator, yet his financial conflicts remain. And his protestations about a “blind trust” are meaningless, since he can see what's in his wife's parallel investment accounts. He and his prototype, Donald Trump, are examples of why we must not allow elected officials to enjoy unjust enrichment from public policies that increase their personal investments.

(Note: in the examples below, federal law allows for wide ranges in reporting assets.)

Drug Testing and Medicaid

Despite the HCA scandal, Scott foresaw big profits in private medical care and cofounded **Solantic**, a chain of Florida walk-in clinics. In 2011, now-Governor Scott signed an executive order requiring all state employees to undergo drug testing, at “at a maximum cost of \$3.5 million to the state,” according to the [Miami Herald](#). He later signed a

bill requiring welfare recipients to undergo drug tests at their own expense. Guess who could provide that testing?

Fortunately, Scott was smacked down by the courts. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals held that requiring welfare recipients to undergo drug testing was [unconstitutional](#). It was also a huge waste: “Only 108 out of 4,086 people tested — 2.6 percent — were found to have been using [narcotics](#).”

State employees also sued the state, and in 2015 the state settled. According to the [Tallahassee Democrat](#), the state agreed not to test employees in about 1,133 of about 1,400 job classifications.

The [Miami Herald](#) reported Scott supported a bill that would benefit Solantic by moving “nearly 3 million Medicaid recipients into private managed care plans.” Although Solantic accepted traditional Medicaid at only one location, it had “contracts chainwide with several private Medicaid plans.” In June 2013, “the [federal government](#) approved the state's request to move nearly all Medicaid beneficiaries and services into managed care, starting in 2014 on a phased-in schedule.”

Moreover, Solantic stood to benefit if access to other sources of health care were blocked. And they were, reported the [Miami Herald](#): “Scott's budget slashes funding to public health departments, which handle checkups, immunizations and travel shots for many people who don't have private physicians. Solantic, which charges \$50 for a basic physical and recently started catering to international travelers, could pick up some of this business.”

Hepatitis

In 2017, the [Florida Justice Institute](#) filed a lawsuit charging that as many as 40,000 Florida inmates could have some form of hepatitis C and accused Scott's administration of failure to provide the necessary medication. So, Scott signed off on a legislative proposal to spend \$21.7 million for drugs made by **Gilead Sciences**.

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The problem, as [Politico](#) said, was that “Ann Scott has an investment of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in Gilead and claimed income from dividends and capital gains of between \$150,000 and \$1.1 million from the company last year. Scott’s investment in the company is between \$15,000 and \$50,000, and he reported dividends and capital gains income between \$100,000 and \$1 million.”

Chris Hartline, the Scott campaign spokesman, told Politico that the issue is moot because “Governor Scott has never made a single decision as governor with any thought or consideration of his personal finances.” Maybe he just got lucky?

Venezuela

When human rights violations in Venezuela became egregious under President Nicolás Maduro, Governor Scott declared that Florida would boycott any companies doing business with that country. “Floridians stand with the people of Venezuela as they fight for their freedom, and as a state, we must not provide any support for Maduro and his [thugs](#).” A declaration of conscience? Nah. Just playing tough guy to impress Florida’s Venezuelan population.

The tough-guy stance didn’t last long. Turns out that the powerful **Goldman Sachs Asset Management** wasn’t happy, to say the least, about Scott’s proposal. Goldman had purchased \$2.8 billion in bonds in Venezuela’s state-run oil company and oversaw \$500 million in Florida’s investment fund.

Further, Politico [reported](#) that Scott and his wife had “Between \$50,000 and \$100,000 of investments in Goldman, and from which she earned income of at least \$60,000 in the last two and a half years. Scott’s blind trust had between \$15,000 and \$50,000 invested with the company, from which he earned income of at least \$30,000.”

So, Scott pulled back his original call for a boycott and as [reported](#) by the *Miami Herald*, he asked the Florida Cabinet to “prohibit the state’s investment managers from doing something *they already do not do*: invest in companies or securities owned or controlled by the Venezuelan government.” Goldman could send its lobbyists home.

Natural Gas Pipeline

In 2016, construction of the Sabal Trail Pipeline, snaking through 12 Florida counties, brought protests from the Sierra Club and hundreds of individuals who picketed construction sites, handcuffed themselves to machinery, and participated in sit-ins along the line’s route. They worried about the danger of explosion from the flammable gas under high pressure, the damage to wetlands and the pollution of drinking water from leakage of diesel fuel.

Governor Scott supported the project. Back in 2013, he’d signed two bills that pushed along the approval process for the controversial gas line. And why not?

[Politico](#) reported, “Scott’s 2014 disclosure form shows that on the day he opened his blind trust, he had a \$53,430 investment in Spectra Energy Corp., which owns the remainder of the pipeline.”

In 2014, [Florida Bulldog](#) broke the story. “The governor owned a stake in one of the pipeline partners, **Spectra Energy**, and that he apparently still owns shares in the company through a blind trust. Florida ethics rules generally ban government officials from owning stock in companies subject to their regulation, or in companies that do business with state agencies. Scott also has holdings in other pipeline companies that produce or transport natural gas, some with Florida operations.”

Fossil Fuels

While Florida was grappling with the human misery and the billions of dollars of losses from climate change, Rick Scott and his wife were profiting from the very fossil fuels that contributed to the catastrophe. According to [reports](#), the two “owned between \$12.5 million and \$29 million worth of stock in fossil fuel companies and investment funds at the end of 2017, earning them as much as \$5 million in profits that year.”

His antagonism toward environmental protections is so great that the [Natural Resources Defense Council said](#), “Governor Scott has regularly put the wishes of corporate polluters above the needs of Florida’s environment and families. He’s sided with a fringe movement of climate change deniers, defunded popular and bipartisan conservation programs, and undermined the enforcement of air,

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We're Not Going Back



Si Ella Puede—Yes She Can!



*El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido
The People United Will Never Be Defeated*

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water, and climate protections.” (The NRDC report offers a comprehensive list of Scott’s anti-environment actions.)

High-Speed Rail

The [Miami Herald](#) was blunt: **“Rick Scott killed a high-speed rail plan. Then All Aboard rolled up and he bought it.”**

In 2011, Governor Scott denied Florida a whopping \$2.4 billion in federal funds for a high-speed “bullet” train between Tampa and Orlando. It was a thumb in the eye to President Barack Obama, whose infrastructure program emphasized high-speed rail. Jump to 2018, and Scott flips and supports the idea—but *built with private money*. In 2017, he and his wife had invested at least \$3 million in a credit fund for All Aboard Florida’s parent company, Fortress Investment Group, the parent company of Florida East Coast Industries which owns All Aboard Florida. All Aboard is now Brightline.

Private Prisons

Florida has seven major prisons operated by private corporations. Their business model is minimizing investments and maximizing profits for shareholders. This means keeping operating costs down, including the pay for guards. Things in Florida’s private prisons are so bad that, following a report by the Bureau of Private Prison Monitoring, “a group of bipartisan lawmakers threatened [contracts](#).”

Remember when Trump separated immigrant children from their families and detained them in cages? In response, Bank of America and other financial institutions announced they would no longer do business with private prisons benefiting from these inhumane practices.

One of those facilities was the Boca Raton-based [GEO Group](#), which operates five facilities in Florida on behalf of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). GEO donated a total of

[\\$414,000](#) to various Scott campaign accounts. In 2018, [Open Secrets](#) reported that, “Since October 2016, GEO Group and its subsidiaries had received “\$560 million from contracts awarded by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and oversee a number of ICE detention facilities.” Scott approved the deal.

As usual, Scott was on the wrong side of public service. “No candidate benefited more from the largess of private prisons last year (2019) than Florida’s Rick Scott,” accused the [Tampa Bay Times](#). “Rick Scott stands up for the private prisons that bankrolled his Senate campaign. Bank of America stopped lending to companies that assist President Trump’s immigration policies, like GEO Group.”

In response, Scott [tweeted](#), “A few yrs ago, [@BankofAmerica](#) got a \$20 billion bailout. Now their CEO says they disagree with federal immigration policy and want to cut ties. If you don’t support the policies of the federal government, you shouldn’t benefit from doing business with the federal government.” He failed to say that BOA repaid the loan with interest. He also failed to acknowledge that corporations have a duty to disengage with businesses whose practices they consider immoral.

Fortunately, the mess was more than some other politicians would tolerate. [OpenSecrets.org](#) reported that “10 members of Congress, eight of them Democrats, have recently rejected GEO’s campaign contributions.” Not Scott. And today, guess who is the number one Senate race recipient from for-profit prisons? Yep, according to [Open Secrets](#), it’s Rick Scott with \$64,900. (Donald Trump is the top recipient out of all candidates with \$66,131.)

In a scathing report, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) said: “Private prisons are inherently corrupt enterprises that have no place in a fair and well-managed criminal justice [system](#).”

And compromised politicians have no place in a fair and well-managed government.

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Florida is in play, but we must act now¹

Thomas Witkop, Candidate for Congressional District 21

How do we know Project 2025 isn't an idle threat? Look to Florida, which many have called the 'lab rat' for the Heritage Foundation's guidebook of extremist policies. Ron DeSantis and his Republican supermajority have had several years to implement these policies, and I've seen it firsthand living in North Palm Beach, just 15 minutes from Mar-a-Lago. In fact, these disastrous policies pushed me to run for Congress. My opponent is Brian Mast, a once moderate Republican turned Trump loyalist (Does that sound familiar?). But Mast is a symptom of the larger problem we are all fighting against, so let me rephrase my position: My name is Thomas Witkop and I'm running against Project 2025. At 25 years old I'm the youngest Congressional nominee in the country. I have a real shot to win, and the reasons why my race is winnable show us why Florida is now in play.

exceptional: In the midst of a 6-week abortion ban, Florida has put the right to abortion on the ballot in November.

This mobilizes those who care about women's rights, and we're seeing organizations like Planned Parenthood spend millions to promote this initiative in my district. Legalizing marijuana is on the ballot, mobilizing those who believe in the right to use marijuana medically or recreationally.

With these ballot measures in place, we had hope. Then, Kamala Harris stepped into the Presidential race. A tidal wave of momentum has followed, rapidly erasing Trump's lead in several swing states. I doubt any state has felt her momentum quite like Florida, where Democrats are now brimming with excitement following years of demoralization.

"As Maxwell Frost said, 'Florida isn't a red state, it's an under-organized blue state.'"

After college I worked in a refugee community in the Canary Islands, then moved to Florida to work at a non-profit helping immigrants integrate into our community. I helped newly arrived immigrants find work. When I saw how our students are underserved, I founded an after-school club to help struggling students improve their English and catch up on classes. But when Florida+ took away a woman's right to choose, what was I to do? With the looming threat of losing social security and Medicaid, how could I help in my role as a community organizer?

I decided I must directly challenge those in power for the sake of education, healthcare, women's rights and beyond. We must uphold our civil liberties and stop book bannings. We must support working families and crack down on the corporations that have ravaged our environment. We must get big money and special interests out of politics. But to achieve any of this, we must have the courage to run bold campaigns against those entrenched in power.

Many have told me not to run. They tell me I'm not old enough, to which I say that my age has been an asset because people are tired of establishment politicians. They say my opponent can't be beat, so I ask if they've forgotten that a Democrat recently held this seat. We have the voters we need, and we'll win if we mobilize them. Florida Democrats haven't mobilized in the last few cycles, but this year is

Democrats are coming out to volunteer in record numbers, and my campaign now has over 400 combined staff and volunteers. This is the year Florida takes back a woman's right to choose and legalizes marijuana. It's the year Rick Scott will be ousted from the Senate by Debbie Mucarsel-Powell. It's the year to flip Congressional seats and defeat Project 2025. If Harris and Florida Democrats keep our momentum going, it's the year Florida flips blue.

When Jamie Raskin endorsed me recently, he was brimming with excitement. Hearing his unbounded optimism reassured me that Florida is making a comeback. As Maxwell Frost said, "Florida isn't a red state, it's an under-organized blue state." I am organizing my district so that on November 5th we'll see its true colors, but I need your support to do it. Our campaign depends on small individual donations, and even \$25 can make a real difference. My role in the fight against Project 2025 is to take on Brian Mast. If you believe in my cause, I ask that you support me if you can. Above all, I ask that you make sure you play a role in our shared fight against Project 2025.

Share this article if you believe in my campaign, and please donate by clicking [here](#) or scanning the QR code to the right if you can:

¹ Originally published in [Daily Kos](#).

Deus Ex Machina Donald Trump Meets the Greek Gods (Again)

Michael K. Cantwell

Deus ex machina (“the god from the machine”) is a plot device by which classical Greek tragedies resolved seemingly intractable problems. An actor portraying a Greek god would emerge onstage from the “machine,” either a crane that lowered him or a riser that lifted him through a trapdoor.

Resolution in hand, the tragedy would come to a satisfying conclusion, creating “a feeling of wonder and astonishment” and adding “to the moral effect of the drama.”

America faced a seemingly unsolvable problem in early 2020, namely, how to prevent Trump from being reelected and hammering the final nail into the coffin of our Republic and what remained of our democracy. The ancient Greeks invented democracy; how would Aeschylus have resolved the problem?

Pathological liar that he is, Trump bragged that “his” economy was the greatest in history, adding a double lie to the tens of thousands previously documented. It was not Trump’s economy; it was Obama’s, built from the wreckage left him by George W. Bush, and it was not the best in history. The economy had performed better during Obama’s final three years than during Trump’s first three.

But few Americans were paying attention, and Trump was cruising to a second term when the first reports of COVID hit. Early indications were that Trump was incapable of responding to a crisis of this proportion, any more than he’d been able to keep his casinos out of bankruptcy courts. At the time, I suggested COVID might morph into [Trump’s Katrina](#) and like a god from the machine, end the tragedy of the Trump presidency.

COVID did offer Trump the opportunity to be a hero but he remained a [buffoon](#), and a deadly one at that. He ignored repeated warnings stretching back years that America lacked adequate medical supplies and equipment to deal with a pandemic. Then he bungled their production and distribution.

He denied the threat as the death toll mounted from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, and he blamed everyone and everything except himself and his own colossal incompetence. He demonstrated that he cared only about his re-election, becoming increasingly unhinged as it slowly slipped away.

We mourned those who died because of Trump’s failure—the respected British medical journal *The Lancet* [estimated](#) that nearly 40% of the 470,000 deaths that occurred during Trump’s tenure could have been averted.

COVID was not a god emerging from a machine to dispense justice. COVID was a virus transmitted in droplets, and it killed randomly. It helped, however, remove a rough beast from an office he had no business occupying. And that produced a “feeling of wonder and astonishment” in the audience, which added the “moral effect of the drama.”

Freddy’s Back; So Is the God from the Machine

It is a testament to the gutlessness of the Republicans that within four years Trump is back, like Freddy. Let’s call the sequel *The Sociopath Strikes Back* and watch as the Greek gods work their magic.

Act 1 opens with Biden trailing Trump in the polls. Inflation has been cooling for over a year and is approaching the Fed’s goal, but the public still blames Biden for the result of a perfect storm for which he bears only limited responsibility.

They forget 200 million Americans vaccinated in 100 days, three major bipartisan bills on critical issues that had languished for decades, the greatest investment in green energy in American history, and far more jobs created in a first term than ever before. In a display of mass psychosis they think Trump did a better job with the economy.

In Scene Two, the media develops a new obsession – Biden’s age and health. Trump again gets a pass, and Americans, by significant margins, rate Trump as physically and mentally healthier than Biden. More mass psychosis? Or an illustration of Bill Clinton’s aphorism that Americans, when uncertain, prefer someone who is strong and wrong to someone who is weak and right?

Scene Three opens with Biden’s debate performance and the consequent fallout. The media reports Trump’s blizzard of lies, but the public doesn’t care: the media’s concerns about Biden’s capacity to serve four more years appear validated.

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The way forward for Democrats is murky. Increasing numbers of Democrats demand that Biden step down. James Clyburn, the man who stopped Biden's bleeding in the 2020 primaries and set him on the road to the White House, has the last word: "If not Biden, then Harris."

Act 2 opens with the failed assassination attempt. Trump proclaims that he was saved by God so that he could save the world.

Some wag wanders on stage and counters that all that was proven is that God was a bad shot. That is another way of looking at it.

Americans begin to realize that the Republic is under attack by people trying to re-fight the Civil War and turn the country into a White Christian autocracy.

But the Greek chorus has "second sight" and they explain that everything is going according to plan. The play will not end until the Fat Lady sings, and she will not sing until the god has emerged from the machine.

And so it unfolds. Republican lunatics attending the Convention (but I repeat myself) slap on fake ear bandages in solidarity with the man rated by historians as the worst president ever. Donald Trump's idiot son pushes his father to select J.D. Vance for vice-president, and Trump makes the worst VP pick since Thomas Eagleton.

The media contrasts the lovefest at the convention with Democrats in disarray. Republicans experience the summit of schadenfreude while Democrats begin tearing their hair out from the roots.

Offstage the god approaches the machine.

Act 3 opens with a Greek chorus prophesying the disasters that would accompany Trump's return to the Oval Office.

But the chorus reminds the audience of the dangers of hubris, "the pride that comes before the fall." And the Republicans begin to demonstrate how that works.

A second term seems a certainty. Why stop there? The American Conservative publishes [Trump 2028](#), breezily dismissing the Twenty-Second Amendment "as an arbitrary restraint on presidents who serve nonconsecutive terms—and on democracy itself."

Of course, all signs point to Trump 2.0 being far worse than Trump 1.0. Project 2025 provided the roadmap two years earlier, but now people are paying attention: first fire the tens of thousands of dedicated, non-partisan, civil servants that make government work for the American people and who are protected by existing law and tradition. Then replace them with barking-mad revanchists who do not worry about such niceties as the U.S. Constitution and are ready to do Trump's bidding.

In Scene Two, we meet the man behind Project 2025. Kevin Roberts is the president of The Heritage Foundation, which has mutated under his leadership from a respected conservative thinktank into an organization hellbent on an unholy crusade.

Their language is menacing and martial:

- "We are in the process of the second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be," Roberts [threatens](#).
- Project 2025 Director Paul Dans [brags](#), "We are not tinkering at the edges. We are writing a battle plan, and we are marshaling our forces."

Americans begin to realize that the Republic is under attack by people trying to re-fight the Civil War and turn the country into a White Christian autocracy.

In a flashback from the runup to the midterms, Biden tentatively calls Trumpism a form of "[semi-fascism](#)." That meme played a major role in turning the projected "Red Tsunami" into a trickle (everywhere except in Flori-duh).

But Biden had been "vague about the specifics of what he identified as half-baked American fascism" in 2022. Now, Project 2025's sinister aims have been spelled out in detail in a 920-page manifesto.

It turns out that Roberts has further expounded on his battle plan in a book originally [titled](#) "*Dawn's Early Light: Burning Down Washington to Save America*." In the event anyone misses the violent overthrow they are advocating, the cover includes the image of a burning match over the word "Washington."

The god steps into the machine.

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As Scene Three opens, Project 2025 is going over like a screaming baby in church. It won't attract new voters and might drive away existing supporters.

Trump tries to distance himself from Project 2025 but that's complicated by the fact that Paul Dans worked in his administration, as did [another](#) "140 people who had a hand in the project." Dans resigns from Project 2025 but it doesn't stop the bleeding.

Vance's close association with Roberts just won't go away. He not only wrote the foreword to Roberts's upcoming book but had previously [advocated](#) that Trump "fire every single midlevel bureaucrat, every civil servant in the administrative state, replace them with our people." It does not escape the audience that this is a central goal of Project 2025.

Indeed, Vance went even further: if the courts try to stop him, Vance bumptiously urged Trump to "stand before the country like Andrew Jackson did, and say, 'The chief justice has made his ruling. Now let him enforce it.'" The clownish Vance continues to be the VP pick that keeps giving.

"The play will not end until the Fat Lady sings, and she will not sing until the god has emerged from the machine."

In an attempt at damage control, the publication date of Roberts's book is moved until after the election, the subtitle is changed to "Taking Back Washington to Save America," and the match is removed from the cover image. Roberts defends the delay, [explaining](#), "There's a time for writing, reading, and book tours — and a time to put down the books and go fight like hell to take back our country."

But wait! Isn't that what Trump told the insurrectionists to do on January 6, 2021?

Act 4 opens with increasing calls for Biden to step down. He believes he can beat Trump but the greatest Speaker of the modern era, Nancy Pelosi, enters stage left and shows him data that he'll hurt down-ticket Democrats.

Her anguish at hurting her friend of 50 years is palpable. David Axelrod [sums it up](#) beautifully:

I also think in her heart she knows she did the right thing for the party and the country. He did the right thing, and she did the right thing by urging him to do the right thing."

The Act ends with Biden endorsing Harris. Offstage a voice sounds, "If not Biden, then Harris." It is not funereal now. It is soaring and triumphant.

Act 5 begins with Harris's joyous performance at Biden campaign HQ. She praises Joe and the crowd eats it up. The god is watching. Are we headed for a Hollywood ending?

The enthusiasm is reminiscent of Obama's first campaign. Kamala nails her VP pick and Tim Walz nails his first soliloquy. "Weird" becomes a meme and goes viral. Efforts to pit him against Josh Shapiro fail, as they sing each other's praises.

Trump loses it. In Trump's primitive brain, THAT'S NOT FAIR! It had been in the bag! It's exactly how a puling infant reacts to having his rattle removed.

Like Kevin Kline in *A Fish Called Wanda*, he's DISAPPOINTED! All his beautiful plans have melted away with Joe Biden's withdrawal.

Worse still, now he is the old guy in the race. And the media is paying increasing attention to his increasingly erratic behavior. It seems that poetic justice will precede real justice.

Exodus. The country has been spared the tragedy of a second Trump term. He has been found guilty by his peers.

The god emerges. Like an ancient Greek audience, we are overcome with "wonder and astonishment" at his appearance, "adding to the moral effect of the drama." He speaks: *Nómōi peithou* ("Obey the law").

Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors

Michael Cantwell, President; Char Lane, Vice-President; Mary Fader, Secretary; David Kulick, Treasurer; Robert Averack, Parliamentarian; Peter Camacho, June Neal, and Martie Wrock, Directors; Sandra Elaisson-Cantwell, Director Emerita; and John Ramos, Director Emeritus.

Our Mailbox

Scott Maxwell did an excellent job serving up the Moms for Liberty as the hypocrites they are (“Moms for Liberty: Are they hiding in school board races this year?”). Even if their popularity is waning (and that may be only until the next well-known title is kidnapped), their campaign for a religious-based, anti-democratic public education is still viral.

Right now, Florida students are learning distorted versions of African American history and civics and studying literature devoid of many of our greatest authors.

As a writer, editor and former teacher, I have made the fight against censorship a big part of my life’s work. Contrary to beliefs within the MFL crowd, I do not advocate assigning books for classroom

discussion that are sexually explicit for the sake of being so. Any mandatory reading must be literature first, not a test case for cultural debate. Many students will tell you such specificity makes them uncomfortable. At the same time, this is why we must not ban Shakespeare, Toni Morrison and other authors whose inclusion of sexuality is a necessary part of the literary narrative.

However, all books should be available to students in the school libraries where they have the freedom to read what they choose.

Until we end this assault on education, we are graduating students with honors in propaganda.

June S. Neal, *Orlando Sentinel*, August 15, 2024

Florida’s junior U.S. senator, Rick Scott, must be getting worried.

Scott’s three consecutive razor-thin wins have all come in off years (2010, 2014 and 2018), and this is not only a presidential election year, but Kamala Harris is closing in on Donald Trump in Florida.

Scott has also never run against anybody like Democratic former U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, which is why he’s trotted out the socialist bogeyman. Sorry, Rick, it won’t work this time.

It’s also why he recently introduced his “Homeowners Premium Tax Reduction Act.” Scott claims it “will provide direct relief for families in Florida and across the nation with a deduction of up to \$10,000 in homeowners insurance premiums paid

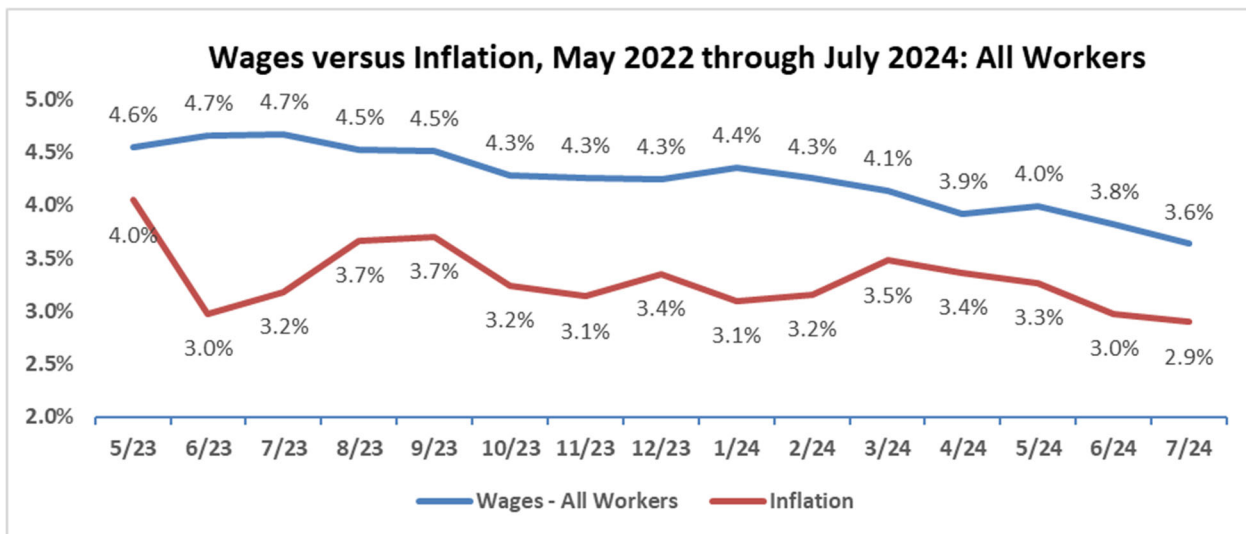
on their primary residence.”

That’s nonsense. He may be too ensconced in the top .01% of the ultra-rich to realize it, but the vast majority of Americans will reap no benefit from the bill. That’s because, to take advantage of the deduction, you have to itemize your returns, something that only 10% of Americans do.

Those who itemize tax deductions generally are among the wealthiest Americans (like Scott, the wealthiest member of Congress).

They are the principal beneficiaries of Scott’s bill. That sounds a lot like socialism — for the rich.

Michael K. Cantwell, *Sun-Sentinel*, August 22, 2024



Hoist With His Own Petard, or Who's Crazy Now?

Michael K. Cantwell

For years Donald Trump has been claiming that President Biden was senile. In light of Biden's accomplishments to date (including presiding over the most consequential legislative agenda since FDR), the charge is ludicrous.

Yet, like every Big Lie, there's a kernel of truth. The presidency takes a lot out of a person, Biden is the oldest to hold the office, and it is clear that the last four years have tired him. But Biden is no more senile than Trump is "a very stable genius."

Trump counted on a weakened Biden remaining in the race, but the lie has legs, the dog catches the car, and Biden stands down. Now there is only one "old guy" in the race and now perhaps *his* sanity (or lack thereof) will get the attention it deserves.

He's long gotten away with behavior that would cause someone to question his sanity. There are rambling disquisitions on wind; bizarre warnings about the dangers of electric boats; and the lunatic suggestions that injecting household bleach might be a way of treating Covid.

Moreover, there's his father's long descent into Alzheimer's, now coupled with his nephew's recent claim that Trump is not only starting to act similarly but that Alzheimer's runs in the Trump family.

Trump is not pleased by the sudden turn in the race. Like a petulant child (or someone entering a second childhood), Trump whines that it's unfair he has to run against Kamala Harris when his whole campaign

was based on running against Biden. Poor baby.

He resorts to magical thinking, fantasizing Biden will storm the convention and seize back the nomination. It doesn't happen.

Angered by the size of the crowds Harris is attracting, he claims they are "AI created," a charge George Conway correctly labels "delusional." The same can be said about his suggestion that Harris became black only recently.

His narcissistic personality disorder rears its ugly head: "I'm much better looking than her," he says, responding to a suggestion that Harris's beauty will be an asset in the race.

Angered by the rapid memeification of Tim Walz's suggestion that Trump and J.D. Vance are "just plain weird," he calls Walz a "whack job" at an event where he is supposed to be focusing on the economy. It's the equivalent of a child stomping his feet and yelling, "No, you"!

He then assures the audience, "we're extremely normal people." When you have to tell people you're extremely normal, you've already lost. Finally, he begins referring to himself in the third person: "Everyone was better off when you had a gentleman named President Donald J. Trump at the helm." There is muted applause, as even his cultists wonder what the hell is happening.

He's losing it, folks, and it's being noticed.

***The Delray Democrat* is the official publication of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach.** The views and opinions expressed in the articles herein are their authors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach or the Democratic Party, nor is this publication authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

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

Worth Quoting

“He has completely lost it. This post is, beyond question, delusional. But is (*sic*) was also inevitable because he realizes ... he’s not just running for the presidency, he’s running for his freedom,” [George Conway](#), reacting to Trump’s claim that videos of crowds at Harris’s events were “AI created.”

“A Mount Rushmore kind of president of the United States. You have Teddy Roosevelt up there. And he’s wonderful. I don’t say take him down. But you can add Biden. [Nancy Pelosi](#), speaking to Lesley Stahl.

“In the presidential election of 2024 there is only one political party and one candidate for the presidency that can claim the mantle of defender and protector of America’s Democracy, the Constitution, and the Rule of Law. As a result, I will unhesitatingly vote for the Democratic Party’s candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris . . . In voting for Vice President Harris, I assume that her public policy views are vastly different from my own, but I am indifferent in this election as to her policy views on any issues other than America’s Democracy, the Constitution, and the Rule of Law, as I believe all Americans should be.” Retired appellate court judge, [J. Michael Luttig](#), who will be voting for a Democrat for the first time in his life.

“Donald Trump is the least credible person to listen to when it comes to hate and bigotry and certainly anti-Semitism. I mean, remember, this was the guy after Charlottesville — when folks were walking around with tiki torches saying, ‘Jews will not replace us’ — who literally said, ‘There are good people on both sides.’ Donald Trump is completely full of it; and he’s trying to use me, and he’s trying to use other Jews to divide Americans further. We have seen this with Donald Trump over and over and over again. He is the least credible person when it comes to standing up against hatred and bigotry. [Josh Shapiro](#), reacting to Trump’s claim anti-Semitism prevented him from being selected as Harris’s running mate.

“Bro, we broke up with you for a reason.” Cory Booker, speaking at the Democratic National Convention.

“You ever seen a document that could kill a small animal and democracy at the same time?” Kenan Thompson, holding Project 2025, The Heritage Foundation’s 920-page blueprint to end democracy.

What We’re Reading

Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling, [Trump Insists He’s “Extremely Normal” During Incredibly Weird Speech](#), *The New Republic*: “‘You know, he said we’re weird,’ Trump told a small crowd in York, Pennsylvania, on Monday during an event that was supposed to focus on the economy. ‘That J.D. and I are weird. I think we’re extremely normal people. We’re like you, we’re exactly like you,’ the [Epstein-socializing](#), [family-separating](#), [woman-hating](#), millionaire former reality TV star and convicted felon said about himself and his vice presidential pick, J.D. Vance, who became the target of an online joke that he had screwed a couch.

Noah Weiland and Rebecca Robbins, [U.S. Unveils Price Limits for 10 Costly or Common Medications](#), *The New York Times*: “The 10 drugs subject to negotiations include widely used blood thinners and arthritis medications. Had the new prices been in effect last year, administration officials said, Medicare would have saved \$6 billion, which would have reduced its spending on those drugs by 22 percent.”

Jennifer Rubin, [Trump’s decline: His interviews and lies get worse](#), *Washington Post*: “Where does this leave Republicans? The MAGA party is caught in a gloom-and-doom loop, forced to run away from the radical Project 2025 plan, defend an increasingly irrational candidate and make excuses for its unlikable, inept nominee for vice president. One wonders when we will hear and see reports about ‘Republican panic!’ or ‘Could Republicans dump Trump?’ Let’s get real: That sort of coverage is reserved for Democrats. Alas, whatever horserace contest the media continues to present bears little resemblance to the jaw-dropping reality before our eyes.”

Patrick Svitek and Dan Lamothe, [Trump draws intense criticism for calling civilian medal ‘much better’ than military award](#), *The Washington Post*: “{The Presidential Medal of Freedom is} actually much better because everyone gets the Congressional Medal of Honor. They’re soldiers. They’re either in very bad shape because they’ve been hit so many times by bullets or they’re dead. [Adelson] gets it, and she’s a healthy, beautiful woman. They’re rated equal, but she got the Presidential Medal of Freedom and she got it through committees and everything else.” Actually, she got it after she planned to [donate up to \\$100 million](#) to a PAC supporting Trump.

Thank Joe Biden

The American Rescue Plan Act begins the recovery from the Trump Depression:

- Local governments given \$360 billion to keep front line public workers on the job and paid.
- Expanded and extended unemployment checks to help workers until the economy reopens.
- Over 200 million Americans are vaccinated against COVID in first 100 days, thanks to \$160 billion funding for supplies and vaccines.
- Investments in Affordable Care Act allowed more than 18 million Americans to obtain health insurance, savings tens of thousands from premature, preventable deaths.
- Increased and expanded Child Tax Credit cut child poverty by 35% in 2021.
- Helped create more jobs (6.7 million) during the first year of any presidency.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passes with 17 Republican senators voting in favor. Florida's senators vote against the bill, although they and our governor are happy to take credit for the money and services it provides.

- The largest investment in infrastructure in over a decade.
- The largest investment in clean drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in U.S. history.
- The largest investment in clean energy transmission and EV infrastructure in U.S. history.
- The largest investment in public transit in nearly six decades.
- The largest investment in bridges since the construction of the interstate highway system.
- More than 40,000 projects already off the ground.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is the first gun safety legislation in nearly three decades.

The PACT Act is the biggest expansion of veterans' benefits in over three decades. The Act has already sparked \$200 billion in private investments in the United States.

The Inflation Reduction Act is the greatest investment in green energy in U.S. history. It reduces the deficit by authorizing Medicare to negotiate with drug companies, closing tax loopholes, and providing \$80 billion to the IRS for additional tax enforcement.

The CHIPS Act invests in microchip production to make America more competitive with China and reduce our reliance on foreign sources for a vital component used by the defense industry. The Act has already sparked \$200 billion in private investments in the United States.

The July 17, 2024, **Executive Order** will allow an estimated 500,000 undocumented spouses of American citizens and their children to remain in the United States while obtaining legal status.

Thank a Democrat

1964 Civil Rights Act
1965 Voting Rights Act
Affordable Care Act
AmeriCorps
CDC
Family and Medical Leave Act

Food Stamp Act
Freedom of Information Act
GI Bill of Rights
Medicare and Medicaid
Minimum Wage Act
National Labor Relations Act

National Science Foundation Act
National Voter Registration Act
(a.k.a. Motor Voter Act)
Social Security Act
Unemployment Compensation Act
Workers Compensation Act

A Century of Republican Incompetence and Racism A Century of Democratic Competence and Inclusion

Michael K. Cantwell

Republicans Cause the Great Depression Democrats Create the Safety Net

1929-1932: Republicans control both Congress and the White House in 1929 as the country careens into the Great Depression. The government does nothing to alleviate suffering as unemployment reaches 25% and millions become homeless: "Hoover feared that providing direct aid to people in need would cause them to lose their incentive to work hard."

The next two times Republicans will control both Congress and the White House will be in the runup to George W. Bush's Great Recession and after the election of Donald Trump.

1933-1944: FDR announces a "New Deal" that includes a massive public works program, a "safety net" for desperate Americans, and regulation of the economic titans that caused the Great Depression. In his final State of the Union, FDR explains "that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence" and proposes a [Second Bill of Rights](#).

"We cannot be content, no matter how high that general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people—whether it be one-third or one-fifth or one-tenth—is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure." The dream dies with FDR's death 2 months later.

Democrats Expand the Safety Net Republicans Resort to Red-Baiting and Racism

1964: Democrats pass Medicare and Medicaid. Ronald Reagan, shilling for the AMA, warns that if Medicare passes, "you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children, and our children's children, what it once was like in America when men were free."

1964-1965: Democrats pass the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. LBJ warns "we have lost the South for a generation." It is a gross underestimate.

1968: Dick Nixon launches his "Southern Strategy," using racist dog whistles to capture the presidency.

1981-1992: Reagan opens his campaign with an appeal to "States Rights" in the same Mississippi county where the Klan murdered Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney. He promotes racist tropes: "welfare queens driving Cadillacs" and "strapping young bucks buying T-bone steaks with Food Stamps." Bush follows suit with Willie Horton. The Solid South flips, the Raw Deal replaces the New Deal, and the federal debt quadruples

1993-2001: Bill Clinton raises taxes and creates 23 million jobs during his tenure. The annual budget shows a surplus for his last three years in office.

Democrats Continue to Clean up Republican Messes

2001-2008: George W. Bush ignores CIA warnings regarding Osama bin Laden. He invades Afghanistan and comers but loses bin Laden in the mountains. He launches a \$3-trillion war against Iraq based on lies and in violation of international law. He spies on Americans unlawfully. He doubles the federal debt.

He signs two tax cuts benefitting the wealthiest Americans. He tries but fails to privatize Social Security. He bungles the response to Katrina. He lets banksters run wild and they cause the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, Four million Americans lose their jobs and 10 million (disproportionately POC) lose their homes.

2009-2016: Republicans monolithically oppose Barack Obama's efforts to repair the economy. Only three Republican vote for The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. It averts a second Great Depression, but another 4 million jobs are lost before the economy begins to recover. The U.S. credit rating is downgraded and the government shut down in phony debt ceiling crises engineered by Republicans. Still, 11 million jobs added by Obama

Democrats pass the Affordable Care Act, insuring 20 million previously uninsured Americans and saving tens of thousands of lives. Bin Laden is killed.

2016-2020, Behold the Beast: Dismissed as a joke by a craven, clueless corporate media, Donald Trump presides over the most ruinous presidency in American history. His single legislative achievement is a tax cut for plutocrats and multinationals. Inheriting the greatest postwar expansion, he adds nearly as much debt in 4 years as Obama added in 8. His incompetent response to COVID exacerbates the death toll and plunges the country into a Second Great Depression. He loses 9.3 million jobs in his final year, becoming the first president to preside over a net job loss during his tenure.

2021-24: Democrats pass the American Recovery Plan and Inflation Reduction Act. Biden signs the largest infrastructure bill in decades, the first gun safety legislation in nearly three decades; the biggest expansion of veterans' benefits in over three decades, and an investment in microchip production to make America more competitive with China.

Biden adds over 15 million jobs in 40 months and reduces unemployment to lowest rate in 54 years, and Black unemployment to its lowest level ever. Inflation spikes, as economy reopens after Covid but returns to pre-pandemic levels as Biden's job-creation machine allows economy to withstand 11 Fed rate increases.

2024 Membership

Char Lane

It's August 2024 and the General Election is fast approaching. It's time for some serious work We need to elect Kamala Harris and Tim Walz if we are to save our democracy from Trump and his Project 2025 allies. We also need to elect Democrats up and down the ballot, especially Debbie Mucarsel-Powell.

If you've not already done so, it's time to renew your DCDB membership for 2024. Membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as The Delray Democrat, our meetings, other operational supplies, and signage for our sign waving events. Meetings are at 7 PM on the third Thursday of each month. From now through the General Election the Harris-Walz campaign will be working at the Palm Beach County Democratic Party office and our meetings will be held via zoom. Meeting notices are sent out in the weeks before the meetings, and include Zoom links to register for and/or join the meetings 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. With all that's been going on we'll have to work exceptionally hard to help keep our democracy intact and protect it from being decimated by Trump and his cohorts.

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

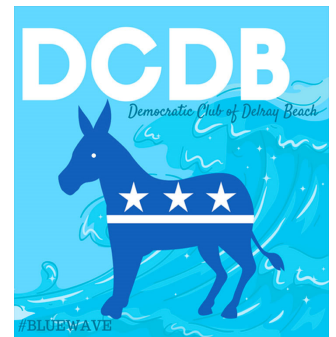
If you're a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach and haven't already done so, please renew your membership for 2024. If you're not a member of the Club, please consider joining.

Visit us at www.demclubofdelray.org . Read our monthly publication *The Delray Democrat* at www.thedelraydemocrat.com. Join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620>.

Become a member of the DCDB: complete and mail the Membership application or click on the QR code below. You can also give me your membership application/renewal at our meetings.



Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2024 Membership Application and Renewal



Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name/names of household members _____

Address _____

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.