

# The Delray Democrat

March 2025 (# 77)

## A Shameful and Sickening Spectacle

*Michael K. Cantwell*

If America's Founders could see Trump and Vance berate and bully Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, they would never stop throwing up. Such a sickening spectacle is more at home in a banana republic than the world's oldest democracy.

The European media began referring to Trump as "Putin's Poodle" after he claimed Zelensky "started the war" that began when Russia invaded Ukraine. Trump later walked back that brazen lie, as well as the claim that Zelensky was a "dictator." For those keeping score, Zelensky was democratically elected while the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague [issued a warrant](#) against Putin for war crimes in connection with the war.

Prior to Trump's assumption of power, the United States and the European Union provided aid to Ukraine without any strings attached or demands for groveling displays of gratitude, demands that are especially dishonest since President Zelensky has repeatedly thanked the United States for its aid..

Now Donald Trump is demanding Ukraine pay the United States in mineral wealth and J.D. Vance is castigating Zelensky for failing to thank them for being the victim of a highway robbery. While The U.S. media is too timid to call Trump "Putin's poodle" but they're already referring to the smarmy J.D. Vance as Trump's attack dog.

The EU has provided more aid to Ukraine than the United States, and done so without demanding anything in return. Moreover, most of the aid we have provided comes in the form of weapons manufactured by our military industrial complex. It is as much about diverting taxpayer money to prop up American companies as it is to aiding Ukraine.

Trump pretends that he is putting "America First," but as always he is only looking out for himself.

He needs a distraction from his plummeting poll numbers. The share of Americans who [disapprove](#) of his job performance swelled from 41% to 51% in a month and the share of Americans who think the economy is on the wrong track similarly spiked, from 43% to 53% over the same January to February period. His rating in the most recent poll was -11% (42% approving, 53% disapproving).

One way he looks out for himself is by looking out for Vladimir Putin. The impact of international sanctions on Russia is finally beginning to [bite](#): The ruble has lost half its value against the dollar and the euro, inflation is rising, and labor shortages are causing the economy to constrict. At least one [observer](#) believes that the Russian economy is "on the verge of collapse." Putin needs a way out of a losing war and Trump is helping.

## West Palm Beach and Delray Dems at National Economic Boycott Day

*June Sandra Neal*

The Western Communities of West Palm Beach Democratic Club and the Democratic Club of Delray Beach turned out for the National Economic Boycott rally and sign waving on February 28 in front of Target on Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach. Target is one of the major corporations that eliminated its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program, cowardly following Donald Trump's cutting such programs from all federal agencies. The rally drew area activists urging consumers to join the one-day boycott and buy nothing from corporations.

The movement began as a protest against those greedy companies that have raised prices, laid off workers and attacked unions. But the idea took on a new objective this month when major corporations caved to Donald Trump's racist policy and his threat to punish companies by withholding government contracts from companies that don't cut their own DEI initiatives. The list includes Target, McDonalds, Walmart, Meta, X, Harley-Davidson, John Deere Lowes, Google, General Motors, Pepsico, Disney, Philip Morris, Ford, Molson

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Coors, Tractor Supply, Brown-Forman (Jack Daniel's parent company), Citigroup (Citibank), Morgan Stanley, Deloitte, Public Broadcasting System, General Electric, Nestle, Intel, PayPal, Chipotle, Comcast, Accenture, Amtrak, The Smithsonian Institution, Boeing, Ford.

Here's the schedule for upcoming protests. Please consider joining us.

- March 21-28 Nestle
- March 28, National Economic Blackout #2
- April 7-14 Walmart
- April 18, National Economic Blackout #3
- April 21-28 General Mills



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

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# Why Workers Are Angry

David Kulick

As the election shows, people are angry. They voted to tear down the “establishment” because they’re angry. Part of their anger was motivated by racism, sexism, and transism, but part involved things about which they have a right to be angry.

They’re angry because they can’t get ahead, because they work hard and have trouble affording basic things like housing, food, and healthcare. As always, the ruling class uses divide and conquer techniques to drive people to be angry at the people below them economically rather than those above them. The problem is immigrants, or money going to trans medical care.

Ronald Reagan started the assault on workers with his union busting strategy. Democrats did not respond strongly enough and Global Capitalism, starting with NAFTA, decimated American workers. Ross Perot was right about the great sucking sound as jobs left the US. And NAFTA was Clinton mostly, with Republican votes to pass it.

Democrats own NAFTA and many workers haven’t forgotten that. The tradeoff, with NAFTA and subsequent international agreements, was that we’d lose good paying jobs but imported stuff would be cheaper. There was supposed to be retraining funds for workers losing their jobs, but if there are no jobs that pay as well, then there are no jobs that pay as well.

Capitalism is all about profit, and corporations don’t care about their workers, their city, their country, or their world, only profit. Of course some corporations are more socially responsible, but the big capitalists moved profitable factories offshore because they could make more money over there. It didn’t matter that American workers lost their jobs.

Profit is essentially the difference between what workers produce for the corporation and what they

get paid. I can’t find statistics on the percentage of profit that a company pays shareholders compared to worker pay over the years, but we do know that CEOs used to get around 30 times the pay of the average worker and now it’s hundreds of times. The bottom line is that American workers are not getting paid enough to keep up with the costs of living, even with Chinese imports made cheap by slave labor.

We need a strong government and regulations to rein in the grossest behavior of corporations, which is why the right wing funds the mantra that big government and regulations are bad (for business). Even while our government is mostly controlled by business interests, it is all we have to regulate corporations. Of course, being global, without a world government they just have to move operations to a more “business” friendly country. Thus the need for the right wing to hate the UN.

Can we fight this when we need the money of big Capitalism to compete for votes? Can we fight this when I don’t know if people will agree that the simplest solution to struggling workers is to mandate that corporations pay a certain percentage of their profit to their workers instead of shareholders? Can we fight to get back unions that give workers some leverage at the bargaining table? Would the right-wing Supreme Court even allow laws that mandate limits on shareholder profit?

Democrats once had the backs of workers and unions, and many workers now lament that Democrats are just Republican lite. The only way to get back the support of workers is to support the workers. We’ll have a chance. If the Supreme Court doesn’t just hand the kingship to Trump, Democrats can hardly lose in the 2026 midterms. But the Democrats better have a plan to make things better.

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



## Letters to the Editors —Outgoing, That Is

Writing to local papers can influence NPAs and gives aid, comfort, and information to Democrats. Here is the latest crop. If you've been published and would like us to republish your letter, please send it to [editor@thedelraydemocratic.com](mailto:editor@thedelraydemocratic.com).

Re: Andres Oppenheimer's Jan. 31 opinion, "Trump betrayed Venezuelan exiles by revoking TPS and engaging Maduro." Why are Venezuelan exiles surprised by President Trump's betrayal and his interest in Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro? They can't say they didn't know this malignant narcissist would promise anything to anyone to secure their votes. He demonstrated his pathological lying almost daily during his first term in office and in the preceding and subsequent years.

Indeed, his false accusations about Venezuelans echoes nearly word for word what he said about Mexicans. Recall his demagoguery in Hialeah in November 2023, where he plied his divisive politics against South American immigrants — to a crowd of applauding Cubans. Sadly, the Venezuelan community did what too many others did in the last election: believe a wannabe dictator while trying to protect themselves from a sitting dictator.

**June S. Neal, *Miami Herald*, February 11, 2025**

Congratulations on your thorough investigation of this frightening shift of public funds to private schools ("Vouchers for All," Feb. 16). It is an anti-democratic attempt to debilitate our public schools in favor of religious education, exactly what the Constitution prohibits.

Of course, the parents accepting the vouchers are happy to get the financial support. But what's the real

price for our kids? Public education is the only institution in America that brings together people of every race, ethnicity and religion and teaches them how to be an American.

Given the enormity of the task, it has been very successful. Except in Florida, thanks to Gov. Ron DeSantis and his 19th century-thinking colleagues. One national magazine that touted Florida's schools as ranking No. 1 proved to be so inaccurate that dozens of colleges have withdrawn from cooperation. Here are the facts. "In the past seven years, Florida's average SAT score has dropped by nearly 70 points, and Florida students currently have the 47th lowest average SAT score in the nation," according to a Florida Education Association report. And despite good reading levels in fourth grade, by the time our students get to 8th grade, things are dim. The National Assessment of Educational Progress reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. In 2024, the score for Florida's eighth-graders was only 253, lower than 2022 and lower than 22 other states. And their average math score was 267, lower than the national average of 272.

It is unconscionable to siphon off any more money from our public schools.

**June S. Neal Delray Beach, *Orlando Sentinel*, February 20, 2025** (June S. Neal is the president of Read Banned Books).

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## Worth Quoting

"Tyranny requires your fear and your silence and your compliance. Democracy requires your courage. So gather your justice and humanity, Illinois, and do not let the 'tragic spirit of despair' overcome us when our country needs us the most." [Governor J.B. Pritzker](#)

"Maine may be one of the first states to undergo an investigation by his Administration, but we won't be the last. Today, the President of the United States has targeted one particular group on one particular issue which Maine law has addressed. But you must ask yourself: who and what will he target next, and what will he do? Will it be you? Will it be because of your race or your religion? Will it be because you look different or think differently? Where does it end? In America, the President is neither a King nor a dictator, as much as this one tries to act like it—and it is the rule of law that prevents him from being so." [Governor Janet Mills](#)

"I mean you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that something's wrong with Trump. It's like if someone in British football broke their leg and the bone was sticking out, you don't have to be an orthopaedic surgeon to know that there's a broken bone." [Anthony Scaramucci](#), speaking to *The Irish Times*.

## President Biden

*Michael K. Cantwell*

The data are now complete on the most effective presidency in the modern era. Trump is preparing to turn it into another train wreck:

President Trump inherited an economy that was, by most conventional measures, firing on all cylinders . . . Just weeks into Mr. Trump’s term, the outlook is gloomier.” [Trump’s Policies Have Shaken a Once-Solid Economic Outlook](#),” *The New York Times*

With an evenly split Senate and a 5-vote House majority in his first Congress, Joe Biden signed American Rescue Plan Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as significant bipartisan bills on gun safety, veterans’ benefits, and infrastructure, critical issues that had languished for decades under predecessors from both [parties](#). He was on his way to reversing a half-century-long assault on American workers when inflation reared its ugly head and an even uglier eyeball-chasing media destroyed his presidency by choosing profits over our Republic.

It’s been said that Democrats need to develop a message going forward, that demonizing Donald Trump is not the way out of the wilderness. That’s part of the answer, but it leaves far too much on the table. *The message is not simply what we will do but rather what [Democrats](#) and [Joe Biden](#) have done.*

On the economic front, more than 16 million jobs were added during Biden’s four years, more than Ronald Reagan added in eight. Biden’s is the first

presidency in which jobs [increased](#) every single month. [Unemployment](#) fell from 6.4% to 4.1% during his tenure despite 11 interest-rate increases that many economists predicted would cause a recession. Prior to those increases, unemployment was at a level not seen since Richard Nixon was president. Finally, the annual increase in GDP [averaged](#) 3.2% (versus 2.3% under Trump’s first term). It was the highest rate of increase since Bill Clinton was president.

Failing to celebrate these achievements is to reinforce Republican’s brazen lies about his presidency. Many Democrats are intimidated by the inflation bogeyman, but there’s a simple answer to that. Just compare the “Biden” inflation with the upcoming “Trump” inflation – it will be upon us in months.

- At worst, Joe Biden bore limited responsibility for the 2022-23 inflation, which resulted from a “[perfect storm](#).” And Biden responded effectively, with inflation dropping by two-thirds within a year of its peak and remaining near the Fed’s preferred target for the subsequent one and a half years.
- Donald Trump is resurrecting inflation with his tariffs and will further exacerbate it with his mass deportations of low-wage workers. And we’ve already seen how Trump responds to a crisis – with arm waving, finger pointing, and doubling down on his colossal incompetence.

	<b>Trump</b>	<b>Biden</b>
<b>Jobs (millions)</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>16.1</b>
<b>Unemployment (decrease)</b>	<b>+1.7%</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>
<b>GDP (annualized)</b>	<b>1.42%</b>	<b>3.43%</b>
<b>Inflation (annualized)</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Increase in Wages All Workers</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Increase in Wages Low-Paid Workers</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>

*Letters (Continued from page 4)*

Re: the Feb. 27 Miami Herald online story, “‘Give us back our sons’: A look at the Venezuelan migrants Trump sent to Guantanamo.” Thank you for reporting that what the Trump administration characterizes as the “worst of the worst” being held at Guantanamo Bay actually includes many

Venezuelan immigrants accused of petty crimes or no crimes at all. One could be shocked — shocked! — at the administration’s dissembling. Actually, unrepentant, repetitive, brazen lying is more like it.

**Michael K. Cantwell, *Miami Herald*, March 4, 2025**

# Questions and Memes

*Michael K. Cantwell*

## Feeling Confident?

Then you're increasingly alone. [The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index](#) just reported "the largest monthly decline since August 2021."

The University of Michigan Consumer Confidence Index fell for the third month in March, dropping 10.5% from February and 27.1% from the prior March (when, for those of us who remember him fondly, Joe Biden was president).

*This is all on Trump*, who, as *The New York Times* [reminds](#) us: "took office last month at a time of stable economic growth and easing inflation."

The stock market is tanking because businesses do not know how to respond to the economic chaos Trump is causing. [According](#) to Moody's chief economist, Mark Zandi:

Business leaders, CEOs and COOs are nervous, bordering on unnerved, by the policies that are being implemented, how they're being implemented and what the fallout is.

If you're not worried as Trump doubles down on his unhinged economic policies, you are increasingly alone.

It's time to [Get Ready](#), there's a train wreck coming.

## Stagflation, Anyone?

It's been a half century since a combination of high inflation and unemployment, coupled with stagnant consumer demand, roiled the country. It was "cured" only by [raising interest rates so high](#) they created the worst recession since The Great Depression.

Many economists [predicted](#) that the 11 Fed rate increases in 2022 and 2023 would similarly crash the economy, but President Biden's unmatched job-creation machine allowed the economy to continue expanding while the rate increases were helping to lower inflation to manageable levels.

Inflation is again rearing its ugly head as the Trump administration pushes reckless tariffs and illegal deportations of low-wage workers. Moreover, mass firings of federal workers and refusals to spend Congressionally appropriated funds on job-creation programs will inevitably create another Republican-spawned recession. Together, that spells stagflation.

## Got Eggs?

Well, maybe not. The price of eggs [increased](#) nearly 20 percent in a single month – from \$4.15 a dozen in December 2024 to \$4.95 in January 2025.

Donald Trump has a plan to deal with the soaring prices – [fire](#) the workers who had been involved in the government's response to the bird flu that caused the slaughter of more than 160 million birds and is behind the runaway price increases.

*"There you go again."*

Ronald Reagan (or his debate coaches) created that meme, but it is the Republican Party that still hasn't realized that tax cuts benefitting the wealthiest Americans do little more than explode the deficit.

A half century of empirical data proves that tax cuts are the least efficient way of creating jobs. Just look at any of the [reports](#) issued by the Congressional Budget Office that track the impact of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

They assessed the stimulant effect of eight different economic stimulators. Dead last was "Tax Cuts for Higher-Income People," and even "Tax Cuts for Lower and Middle-Income People" lies in the middle of the pack. But you don't need government studies to demonstrate that "building from the bottom up and the middle out" is more effective than giving money to people who have more than they can spend and waiting for it to "trickle down."

## Rinse and Repeat

So why do Republicans enact deficit busting tax cuts that reward the wealthiest Americans? Don't they hate deficits and don't they know that these tax cuts do little to stimulate the economy?

Maybe they do but, to quote Melania, they "really don't care." The cuts accomplish their *raison d'être*—rewarding the plutocrats who comprise their real constituents. And when they blow up the economy and are voted out of power, they kneecap Democratic efforts to fix things, accuse Democrats of causing the deficit, and eventually dupe enough voters into returning them to power.

*Rinse and repeat.*



# Social Security Is Not a Ponzi Scheme\*

Michael K. Cantwell

*"If, as our Constitution tells us, our Federal Government was established . . . 'to promote the general welfare,' it is our plain duty to provide for that security upon which welfare depends." Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

Donald Trump and Elon Musk are spreading lies about Social Security as a prelude to destroying the most successful government program ever enacted.

Social Security is not a Ponzi scheme, nor is it an "entitlement." It is a constitutional imperative.

It is a contract working Americans have made with our government. While we are working we contribute a portion of our paychecks to fund the program and the government uses that money to pay benefits to current retirees. Our retirement is funded by current workers. That contract has been honored for nearly a century.

Social Security is not "going broke." It currently has a [\\$2.5 trillion surplus](#), enough to pay full benefits until [2037](#). Even after the surplus is exhausted, contributions from workers will be sufficient to pay nearly 80% of future retirees' benefits.

And there's a simple way to address that shortfall – raise or, better, eliminate the payroll tax cap.

This would also address the deeply regressive nature of the payroll tax. Anyone earning less than the \$176,100 cap has the full 6.20% payroll tax deducted from his or her paycheck. Higher-income individuals are taxed at increasingly lower (and eventually vanishing) rates as their wages grow beyond the cap. Someone earning \$1,761,000 pays only 0.62% while someone earning \$17,610,000 pays only 0.062%. Eliminating the payroll tax cap will ensure that everyone is contributing the same percentage of their income to Social Security.

Democrats created Social Security and we will not allow it to be destroyed so that the Banana Republican Party can fund more tax breaks for plutocrats and multinational corporations.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt signing the Social Security Act, August 14, 1935, with inter alia, Robert Wagner, John Dingell Sr., and Frances Perkins, the greatest Secretary of Labor in American history.

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\*Originally published (without epigraph) in The Sun-Sentinel, March 15, 2025.

# What Are Your Rights at a Protest?

By June Sandra Neal

Now that wannabe dictator Donald Trump is extralegally dismantling the federal government, ignoring congressional decisions, and allowing an unelected billionaire egomaniac to destroy programs essential to the American people, Democrats must fight back using the tools that have proven successful, particularly non-violent protests.

In recent years, citizens weren't afraid to gather in protest of an immoral or illegal policy because, in most cases, their Constitutional rights were protected. Now, many are intimidated. They see their government trampling on laws and established policies and fear the consequences of lawful rallies. According to the ACLU, "Knowing your rights ahead of time—especially when it comes to interacting with law enforcement—can help keep you safe."

Quoted below is the [ACLU](#)'s summary of your rights to protest.

- Your rights are strongest in what are known as "traditional public forums," such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. You also likely have the right to speak out on other public property, like plazas in front of government buildings, as long as you are not blocking access to the government building or interfering with other purposes the property was designed for.
- Private property owners can set rules for speech on their property. The government may not restrict your speech if it is taking place on your own property or with the consent of the property owner.
- Counterprotesters also have free speech rights. Police must treat protesters and counterprotesters equally. Police are permitted to keep antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within sight and sound of one another.
- When you are lawfully present in any public space, you have the right to photograph anything in plain view, including federal buildings and the police. On private property, the owner may set rules related to photography or video.
- You don't need a permit to march in the streets or on sidewalks, as long as marchers don't obstruct car or pedestrian traffic. If you don't have a permit, police officers can ask you to

move to the side of a street or sidewalk to let others pass or for safety reasons.

## What to do if you believe your rights have been violated

- When you can, write down everything you remember, including the officers' badge and patrol car numbers and the agency they work for.
- Get contact information for witnesses.
- Take photographs of any injuries.
- Once you have all of this information, you can file a written complaint with the agency's internal affairs division or civilian complaint board.

What happens if the police issue an order to disperse the protest?

- Shutting down a protest through a dispersal order must be law enforcement's last resort. Police may not break up a gathering unless there is a clear and present danger of riot, disorder, interference with traffic, or other immediate threat to public safety.
- If officers issue a dispersal order, they must provide a reasonable opportunity to comply, including sufficient time and a clear, unobstructed exit path.
- Individuals must receive clear and detailed notice of a dispersal order, including how much time they have to disperse, the consequences of failing to disperse, and what clear exit route they can follow, before they may be arrested or charged with any crime.



1963 March on Washington. Front row: Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, A. Philip Randolph, Walter Reuther, and Arnold Aronson.



# How Tyrants Fall—and the Need for Civil Resistance

June S. Neal

Tyrants “are fundamentally broken people. Anyone who would seek to get themselves made a dictator, or who eliminates democratic constraints to become one, is, by definition, someone with extreme and destructive personality traits. And the act of being a dictator requires extreme cruelty that only abusive, power-hungry megalomaniacs are capable of carrying out.” Brian Klass, Associate Professor of Global Politics at University College, London

Donald Trump checks all the boxes. That’s why many of us thought it would never happen, that America would never knowingly elect a sociopathic wannabe dictator to be president a second time. After all, he clearly demonstrated his malignant narcissism during his first term and in the succeeding years. But the nightmare has come true.

This time, he’s carrying out his most dangerous threats, many extrajudicially, while he serves up Ukraine to Russia, setting the stage for another world war while mirroring Vladimir Putin’s absurd claim that President Zelinsky would be responsible.

We live in an age of global authoritarianism vs. democracy. As of 2024, there are 66 countries

history’s most notorious dictators and how they came to ruin. He reveals their common denominators. 1. They are rational, despite their monstrous acts. 2. They are addicted to power, and they succeed by keeping a small group of followers loyal through gifts of money and/or promotions to positions of power. 3. They all live in constant fear of being deposed.

“Dirsus rightly points out that there is a widespread myth that dictatorships are bastions of stability, that despots easily maintain an iron grip on power. The opposite is true,” says political scientist Brian Klass in his review of the book. “Dictators live precarious lives, constantly needing to look over their shoulders, relentlessly crushing their enemies and

*It doesn’t take a huge number of resisters. Chenoweth and Stephan reported that only a “small critical mass” is needed to overthrow authoritarian governments: “Movements that were able to mobilize at least 3.5 percent of the population were uniformly successful.”*

considered dictatorships, autocracies or some form of authoritarian [government](#). Out of 195 nations, that’s nearly 34%. And that’s not counting the United States (our membership is too new for the 2024 statistics). So, we’ve got a band of despots, many with nuclear bombs, controlling the lives of 5.4 billion people or 70% of the world population.

Hopefully, we’ve learned some tough lessons. More than half the country are low information voters. And a nation of laws remains so only when its leaders obey them. We don’t know if Trump’s fiats will stand. It feels like we’re living in a house of cards.

What to do? First, we need to understand who dictators are. And second, we need to learn what strategies have succeeded to bring them down.

*How Tyrants Fall: And How Nations Survive* by political scientist Marcel Dirsus is a new profile of

any would-be usurpers.”

But they have been vanquished. And a seminal study by Harvard researcher Dr. Erica Chenoweth and Tuft’s Dr. Maria Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, illustrates why non-violent civil resistance is the best course of action. “They collected data about every violent and nonviolent mass action from 1900 to 2006—323 of them in all—and analyzed them in the context of 160 variables. Chenoweth expected that violent movements would be shown to be more successful in overthrowing the regimes they were opposing. The data proved her [wrong](#).”

The authors reveal specific strategies we can chunk down in planning to at least debilitate, if not destroy, the Trump dictatorship and prevent his acolytes from succeeding him.

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The researchers found the essential elements of a successful nonviolent resistance movement include (1) Shifting the loyalty of the dictators' supporters, such as political appointees, corporations, police and the military (in those cases where it has been usurped), (2) using resistance methods beyond mass demonstrations, (3) the discipline to stand up to direct repression without turning to violence, and (4) a large, diverse population that can be sustained over time.

But that diverse population must have collective goals. In the last election, Venezuelans in South Florida learned the hard way the result of prioritizing self-interest over the common good. Applauding Trump while he denigrated other South American migrants (*he's not talking about us*) and believing his promise not to remove the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) of Venezuelan non-citizens, the highly concentrated Venezuelan population in South Florida came out in huge numbers for him. Now he's ordered their TPS removed, effective in April, using the same accusations of criminality he threw at Mexicans.

A dictatorship can be extinguished by either internal or external opposition. Dirus shows that some authoritarians were overthrown by their own people, like Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, who was [slaughtered](#) by rebels. Charles Taylor was given over to the International Court in the Hague by the Liberians he so brutally ruled. He's now serving a 50-year sentence at a men's prison in Great Britain.

On the other hand, although Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, was hanged by his own people for crimes against humanity, including the murder of 148 Shi'ites in Dujail in 1982, it was the invasion of the United [States](#), searching for non-existent weapons of mass destruction, that laid the groundwork for his execution in 2003.

**Either way, the odds for dictators aren't good.** According to [The Guardian](#), "Since the second world war, 23% of the world's rulers have ended up exiled, imprisoned or killed after leaving office. For dictators, though, the figure rises to 69%."

**But this is the United States and we're not going to hang a president. Heck, we couldn't even punish Trump for 34 felony convictions or try him for stealing and defiantly holding classified documents for over a year or unleashing a mob on the Capitol in an effort to steal an election.** During the 2024 campaign, the wheels came off the systems we historically relied on. Much of the media chose profits over facts. Some federal judges demonstrated fealty to the man who appointed them instead of their oaths of office. And a majority of the voting public was more interested in social media's easy lies than getting off their asses to learn about the Biden administration's superb stewardship and Kamala Harris' unparalleled qualifications.

**But here are factors to consider starting now.**

**Sometimes dictators are toppled by those closest to them. Since 1950, about 65% of the world's dictators have been removed by regime [insiders](#).** As Dirus says, "Due to the structure of the regimes they depend on, their biggest threat comes from the people around them – the palace elites, generals and advisors." OK, Melania is unlikely to come through, but just three weeks into Trump's term, some congressional Republicans were already grouching about his eating their lunch. Others who prostituted themselves for appointments in the Trump administration will feel his knife in their backs soon enough; that's his MO. It's important we keep reminding them how history will record their abject failures as stewards of the Constitution.

**Our military has the option of disobeying illegal orders.** Dictators commonly usurp the military, and that specter causes citizens to fear acts of civil disobedience. On July 1, 2024, the president was given unprecedented immunity by the United States Supreme Court in [Trump v. United States](#). Dissenting, Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the Court had made the president "a king above the law." That sparked concern that Trump might order the military to commit unlawful acts against the American people.

But the United States military retains the ability to disobey unlawful orders. "Service members have a

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## Renew Your Vote by Mail Ballot Request

Republicans know that Democrats register to vote by mail in higher numbers than Republican.

They also know people who have registered to vote by mail vote in higher percentages than those who haven't registered to vote by mail.

That's why they eliminated the "check box" that allowed voters to automatically extend their vote by mail registration through the following election.

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Go to [www.votePALMBEACH.gov](http://www.votePALMBEACH.gov)

Scan this QR code and follow directions.



*(Continued from page 10)*

legal, enforceable duty to obey only lawful orders from those authorized to give orders (violating them is prosecutable by court-martial under Articles 90 and 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice), and a legal excuse (*and* moral grounds) for disobedience under the limited circumstances of receiving an *unlawful* order. The issue of presidential immunity for the commander in chief—whether absolute or presumed—is absolutely irrelevant to the underlying lawfulness of the order [itself](#).”

**It doesn't take a huge number of resisters.** Chenoweth and Stephan reported that **only a “small critical mass” is needed to overthrow authoritarian governments: “Movements that were able to mobilize at least 3.5 percent of the population were uniformly successful.”**

Of course, there is a huge difference between those dictators who came to power through coups d'état versus a democratic election like ours.

The 25th Amendment allows for the transfer of power from the president to the vice president if he or she is removed from office because of death, resignation or impeachment. But impeachment demands a two-thirds vote of both Houses, and the Republicans have made it clear they are too afraid of Trump's vindictiveness to honor the Constitution. There are no Watergate heroes in the wings.

Where to start? As consumers, we have tremendous influence. We can boycott, wherever feasible, the companies the Trump loyalists own or invest in. When boycotts aren't possible, we can bombard the companies with calls and letters to demand accountability.

It works. [The Ethical Consumer](#) reports: “Twitter/X has lost half its advertising revenue since Elon Musk

bought the company in 2022. 500 advertisers stopping spending on the platform after the coalition ‘Stop Toxic Twitter’, composed of around 60 organisations, wrote an open letter asking Twitter's top 20 advertisers to ‘cease all advertising on Twitter globally,’” because the site failed to monitor the right-wing lies being posted.

Of course, the Right has used this tool successfully. In May 2023, US retailer [Target](#) removed the LGBTQ-themed items it had offered for Pride month after conservatives complained. In response to Trump's war on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, [Target](#) announced in January 2025 it would no longer offer DEI programs. This, from a company that was a pioneer for inclusion.

**We've got to be watchdogs because dictators also use social media for repression.** In his review of Chenoweth's work, [Ralph Renally](#) notes her study of authoritarians' use of the internet. “In one case in Sudan during 2011's Arab Spring, the regime of then-President Omar al-Bashir feared that it might face an uprising, so its security services created a fake event on Facebook designed to look like a protest organized by young activists. As many as 17,000 people responded, and the would-be protesters who showed up were rounded up by security forces. Interrogations and authorities' subsequent access to the protesters' Facebook contacts led to even more arrests.” Trump created Truth Social as a vehicle for his daily propaganda and has used X to lie about anyone he perceives as the opposition.

Despite a lawless president, we're not powerless. The architecture of democracy is still in place. It's time to employ every tool that history has shown can work.



## 2025 Membership

Char Lane

The most consequential General Election of our lifetimes is over and now is time to be resilient and work hard to help keep our democracy intact.

It's time to renew our DCDB 2025 memberships. Our 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 and held at the PBC DEC Office at 220 Congress Park Drive. Meeting notices are sent out in the weeks prior to meetings and include Zoom links to register for and/or join the hybrid 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. **Please remember to reenroll in the Vote-by-Mail Program for 2025-2026 online at [votepalmbeach.gov](http://votepalmbeach.gov) and selecting the Vote-by-Mail tab or calling 561.656.6208 or visiting any of the SoE offices.**

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. The 2026 Mid-term Elections are less than two years away and we have so much work to do.

If you're already a Club member, please renew your membership for 2025. If you are not a member, not, please consider joining.

To 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.



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

### Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2025 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.

