

The Delray Democrat

Handicapping a Perfect Hurricane¹

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In a rational and civil society in which citizens paid attention and had access to facts, Kamala Harris would have succeeded Hillary Clinton to become our second woman president. Instead, a man who is unfit to run a local dog pound was elected to our nation's highest office for a second time.

How did that happen? As in 2016, there are a multiplicity of reasons. That makes it tempting, if feckless and counterproductive, for Democrats to point fingers at other Democrats.

Massachusetts Congressman Seth Moulton got in one of the first shots, accusing the Democratic Party of failing “to listen to Americans and actually understand them at a cultural level.” He was referring to a single aspect of Democrats’ support for transgender rights, namely, allowing transgender athletes to compete on the basis of their preferred gender as opposed to their gender assigned at birth.

Regurgitating a Republican trope and throwing a marginalized community under the bus earned him widespread [media attention](#) and [approval](#). And he completely ignored the fact that – on most other issues involving transgender rights – [polls show](#) that a majority of Americans support policies that expand rights and protections for transgender people and oppose policies that restrict their rights and protections.

Moulton also ignored the fact that public opinion can shift quickly (witness rapid turnaround in support for gay rights). Just as Democrats were on the right side of history then, our support for transgender rights will be on the right history when Americans culturally evolve past bigotry, ignorance, and fear.

Others blame DEI, but a recent [Pew Research](#) poll found that twice as many American workers favored expanding (52%) as did eliminating (26%) DEI in the workplace. The problem is not the issue but the messaging. As is true of virtually every other issue, Republican messaging on DEI crushed Democratic messaging. That is something we have known about and have been trying to fix for years.

However, the most significant reasons Harris lost defy easy and quick fixes.

Systemic Rather than Political Issues

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), February 2025, page 4.

Racism and sexism have been systemic in America since its founding.

Sexism played a significant part in Trump's victory in 2016, and Trump's gains among Black and Hispanic males suggests it was a greater motivator than racism in 2024..

Also systemic are the rise of disinformation and the degradation of the media. We are no longer in an environment in which three television networks deliver the nightly news as a public service that is devoid of deliberate lies and egregious distortions.

The corporate media has been circling the drain since an Australian media baron emigrated from England and showed the corporations that acquired previously independent broadcasters just how much money is to be made, turning the nightly news from a public service into a profit center.

Finally, there is the role of the Supreme Court, which ensured that Trump would not be tried for his role in the January 6 insurrection or his illegal possession and retention of classified documents for a full 1½ years after he left office. Would the public exposure to a daily drumbeat of damning evidence have made a difference? We'll never know.

Mixed and Fixable Issues

The Economy. According to the polls, the economy was the principal concern of voters. It performed at historically high levels on all measures throughout Biden's tenure, with the glaring exception of one critical measure, namely, inflation.

A media more interested in reporting facts than chasing eyeballs and profits would have spent as much time reporting the good news (most jobs created in the first years of an administration, lowest unemployment in over half a century, etc.) as the bad (highest inflation in four decades).

They might have even spent *more* time since there was far more good than bad news. They would have made clear that legislation signed by President Biden was responsible for the strength of the economy while Covid was principally responsible for the inflation.

They would have emphasized the fact that Biden's unequalled job creation was how inflation was essentially cured in half the time as it took back in the 1980s – and without a recession. See here for how that would have looked.

But it's fair to say that it's been a long time since the So-Called Liberal Media saw the unmasking of lies as their remit. NBC's Chuck Todd once infamously [claimed](#) that it wasn't the media's job to debunk the disinformation surrounding the Affordable Care Act: "What I always love is, people say, 'Well, it's you folks' fault in the media.' No, it's the president of the United States' fault for not selling it."

That shameful but frank admission by a member of the Fourth Estate accurately describes the media environment in which we exist. Had Trump created the economic engine that was Bidenomics, he would not have shut up about it. The media let him take credit for the largest post-War expansion instead of pointing out it was something he'd inherited from Obama. And after the

economy collapsed they let him blame Covid when the actual cause was his colossal incompetence in responding to Covid.

Immigration

Trump exploited fears that immigrants were taking American jobs and represented a public safety threat. It didn't matter that few Americans were actually willing to take the jobs filled by immigrants or that undocumented immigrants committed far fewer crimes. than natural-born citizens.

What mattered was Trump's relentless repetition of the Big Lie, coupled with the fact that so many Americans needed someone to blame for the fact that they had been losing ground for decades as economic inequality reached levels not experienced since the Gilded Age. And immigrants have always been a convenient scapegoat, especially when they are of a different skin color.

Immigration was an emotionally laden issue, perhaps more than any other in the campaign, and Trump had the upper hand once he scuttled the bipartisan immigration deal that had been largely drafted by conservative Republicans.

Biden and the Democrats brought only facts to the table. Some argue that by failing to impose stricter restrictions on immigration earlier they had handed Trump a winning issue. Once again, however, Democrats conceded the messaging war. Had the positions been reversed Trump would have never stopped Democrats for scuttling a bipartisan solution.

Getting Beat and Neutralized on "Our" Issues

Women dying because of lack of medical care, the planet choking on fossil fuels, a democracy and a Constitution destroyed. These dangers were clear and present, unlike the bogeymen peddled by Trump. They were written into the pages of Project 2025. They motivated voters in 2022, but in 2024, we failed to use them and Trump managed to defuse them.

Trump simply lied his way through it all, credulous fools believed his lies, and the So-Called Liberal Media only timidly corrected him.

When he claimed that Democrats supported abortion in the eighth and ninth months and were killing babies after they were born, [NPR](#) and [NBC](#) referred to these brazen lies as "false claims."

He claimed he knew nothing about Project 2025 even though members of his first administration were intimately involved in its creation and even though he had previously advanced one of the Project 2025's principal goals by reclassifying tens of thousands of federal civil servants, a first step to firing and then replacing them with apparatchiks. That Executive Order was rescinded by President Biden and [reinstated](#) by Trump on the first day of his second administration.

Democrats chose not to exploit the coming climate dystopia by copying LBJ's classic depiction of the nuclear holocaust that would result if Goldwater became president. Would it have mattered? According to polls, Americans viewed an existential threat as among the least important issues

facing the country. *“This is how the world ends/Not with a bang but a whimper.”*