

The Delray Democrat*

July 2019

Democracy, Who Needs It?

Michael Cantwell

We do, of course, as do all Democrats and anyone who believes in government of, by, and for the people.

Republicans? Not so much. They believe in government of, by, and for the obscenely rich. And yet however much they pollute our politics with their money, oligarchs like the Koch brothers still get one vote apiece, just like you and me.

One person, one vote. That really grates on the Republican party. That's why they devote so much time devising ways to prevent the "wrong people" from voting.

Actually, I can relate to that – there are plenty of people I'd prefer didn't get to vote, starting with those who routinely vote against their economic interests (and possibly their lives) because

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Is It Education or Economic Inequality?

David Kulick

Republicans have always believed that government is bad and that it's up to free enterprise capitalism to run everything and make a profit. This explains their hatred of public education; for them it's up to each parent to decide whether and how to educate their children. They can band together freely and establish a school and teach what they want taught, but that's up to them, not the evil government.

Democrats believe otherwise; we believe it's important that children learn basic facts and understand basic ideas. We also believe that some things are too important to leave to corporations whose sole purpose is to make a profit, and education is one of them. If you find that you believe this, then congratulations, you're one of those

dreaded Socialists.

Which brings us to an interesting article by Billionaire Nick Hanauer that was published in the July issue of The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/07/education-isnt-enough/590611/> I've long believed that the few decent billionaires like Bill Gates and George Soros, who fund various education initiatives were likely motivated by a real desire to help, but I take an instinctive dislike to anything that threatens our public school system.

Nick Hanauer explains that, like many of his friend

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***"1. An advocate of democracy. 2. a person who believes in the political or social equality of all people."**

Our Racist-in-Chief

Sylvia Gruber

It's very difficult to respond with civility to the rants of the xenophobic misfit who occupies the White House five days a week.

His current chant to those who take issue with his policies is "If you hate this country so much, go back where you came from." He equates intense dissatisfaction with a state of affairs in one's country to hatred of the country itself.

He cannot understand that if enough people in our nation had not been intensely dissatisfied with slavery, lynchings, voteless women, child labor, to name a few of the more egregious events in our nation's history, we might still have them.

The concept of free speech except for his own hateful speech is totally alien to him. One of the basic tenets of this nation's founding is that you may hate the opinions that words convey but you may not silence speech unless it is libelous, obscene, or is an incitement to imminent violence. That concept is totally unfathomable to him. That's not how he operates.

He is himself the child of immigrants. If this nation's Constitution is so distasteful to him, perhaps it is he who should pack his bags and go back to where they came from. If that nation would have him.

They Say Cut Back, We Say **Fight Back**

\$1.9 trillion - [estimated increase](#) in deficit from Republican tax "cut"

\$1.9 trillion - [proposed cuts](#) to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security in Trump's budget

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Call to Action: Seeking a Candidate for the Delray Beach City Commission

Bob Averack

The late, great, Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill of Massachusetts, the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives is closely associated with an old political proverb: “All politics is local.” This sage guidance is as true today as it was when it was first spoken. It is right here at home that politics have the greatest impact on our daily lives, and it is local governance that is manifested through local politics. With this in mind, let’s take a look at the Delray Beach City Commission.

The City Commission is the governing body of the City of Delray Beach. It is the body that hires and oversees the actions of the City Manager, through which all municipal operations occur. The commission determines ordinances, approves operating budgets, and levies taxes that fund the operations. Our commissioners also establish the Comprehensive Plan that informs development of our various neighborhoods and guides our partnerships with local businesses. The commission also oversees 21 boards and committees that focus on various aspects of life in the community. Finally, as of 2018, the commissioners also occupy 5 of the 7 seats on the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, that directs public investment in the modernization and revitalization of certain neighborhoods. In short, the City Commission has a high impact on the quality of life in our Little City by the Sea.

There are 5 seats on the City Commission. One of these seats, Seat 5, is also recognized as the Chair of the Commission and the Mayor of Delray Beach. All commission seats are elected for a 3-year term, with the election occurring on the third Tuesday in March of the expiring year. Seats 2 and 4 are up for reelection on March 17, 2020, the same day as the Presidential Preference Primary. Seats 1, 3 and 5 will be reelected in March, 2021. And while all City Commission seats are elected in a Non-Partisan Election

(whereby the candidate’s party of registration does not appear on the ballot), it is important to note that it is through these offices that we establish our “bench” of candidates for possible, future runs for higher office, be they county, state or national offices. For example, Florida State Representative Al Jacquet was, at one time, a Delray Beach City Commissioner.

As stated earlier, Seats 2 and 4 will be up for reelection on 3/17/2020. Seat 2 is currently occupied by Deputy Vice Mayor William Bathurst, who is a registered Republican. Seat 4 is held by Vice Mayor Shirley Johnson, who is a registered Democrat. Commissioner Bathurst won his seat in March, 2018 to fill a 2-year vacancy created by then Commissioner Jim Chard’s decision to run for Mayor. And he won his seat BY DEFAULT, because no Democrat filed to run for that seat. We cannot let that happen again!

There is every reason to believe that both Commissioners Bathurst and Johnson will seek reelection in March. Therefore, the Democratic Club of Delray Beach is seeking a registered Democrat who lives in Delray Beach, seeks a great opportunity for public service, and is willing to take up the mantle of leadership and represent our party as a candidate for Seat 2 on the Delray Beach City Commission. The Club will do its utmost to support your candidacy, only bound by the rules of the Florida Democratic Party, and we will ensure that you get as much community exposure as possible in your efforts to get elected. We can also ensure that many Democrats will be voting on 3/17/2020, as they will be at the polls to vote for their candidate of choice in the Presidential Preference Primary. In short, this is a great time to run!

If you wish to discuss your interest in running for Seat 2, please contact Bob Averack at Bob.Averack@gmail.com or (203) 980-3558. Thank you for your interest. Go Dems!

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billionaires, he believed that poverty and inequality

ever before, but despite that, and despite nearly record-low unemployment, most American workers—at all levels of educational attainment—

“American workers are struggling in large part because they are underpaid—and they are underpaid because 40 years of trickle-down policies have rigged the economy in favor of wealthy people like me. Americans are more highly educated than ever before, but despite that, and despite nearly record-low unemployment, most American workers—at all levels of educational attainment—have seen little if any wage growth since 2000. “

were a result of a failing public education system. He felt that “if we modernized our curricula and our teaching methods, substantially increased school funding, rooted out bad teachers, and opened enough charter schools—American children, especially those in low-income and working-class communities, would start learning again. Graduation rates and wages would increase, poverty and inequality would decrease, and public commitment to democracy would be restored.”

Mr. Hanauer has now come to a different conclusion: “American workers are struggling in large part because they are underpaid—and they are underpaid because 40 years of trickle-down policies have rigged the economy in favor of wealthy people like me. Americans are more highly educated than

have seen little if any wage growth since 2000.”

He goes on to cite many of the statistics that we’ve written about before in *The Delray Democrat*. The top 0.1% are doing great. Everyone else is at best staying even, and most are doing worse. I’m okay right now, I’m retired with stocks that are nearing their peaks, and why wouldn’t they be? The Republicans are gutting environmental regulations so corporations can pollute, they’ve devastated unions so pay is falling, and they’ve rewritten the tax laws so huge profits are untaxed and go to shareholders rather than workers. Hey, what’s not to like? Unless, of course, like half of Americans, you don’t own any stock. Then you’re not doing very well.

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they're racists or ignoramuses or both (there's a fair amount of overlap and there's no other reason). But that's not how democracy works, and unfortunately there is no more equitable or sensible form of government. To paraphrase Winston Churchill's famous quip, "democracy is the worst form of government . . . except for all the others."

Given the demographics, and the fact that you can't fool all the people all the time, Republicans have learned that preventing the "wrong people" from voting is not always enough. For example, George Bush won Florida twice because of massive voter suppression, but Barrack Obama won it twice despite such voter suppression.

its courts, or that the fines are used to fund the courts but are almost never collected. It should escape no one's notice that a disproportionate percentage of the former felons unable to pay this fine will be people of color. Until it is struck down by the courts as a thinly veiled "poll tax," the bill has restored the racist stain that Amendment 4 had removed.

Not surprisingly the bill passed on nearly strict party lines, although in the House one Democratic representative (Elizabeth Fetterhoff) voted for the bill and four others (Irv Slosberg, Clovis Watson, Kristin Jacobs and Kim Daniels) abstained. <https://legiscan.com/FL/rollcall/S7066/id/858547>; <https://legiscan.com/FL/rollcall/S7066/id/857885>

So what's the takeaway? If we want a democracy, we

Until it is struck down by the courts as a thinly veiled "poll tax," the bill has restored the racist stain that Amendment 4 had removed.

So the second front in the Republican war on democracy is to sabotage it when the voters deliver the "wrong result." The longest playing and most odious example is their crusade to strip health insurance from the 20 million Americans newly insured under the Affordable Care Act.

The most recent "wrong result" occurred last November when 65% of Floridians voted in favor of Amendment 4, which amended the Florida Constitution to restore the franchise to all former felons who had completed "all terms of their sentence including parole or probation." In a blatant and constitutionally suspect denial of the will of the voters, and notwithstanding the clear language of the Amendment, Republicans passed a bill that would prevent former felons from voting until they had paid court-ordered fines.

I'm certain that most voters (I among them) never interpreted the wording of Amendment 4 in that manner or had any idea that Florida assesses fines to criminal defendants for the privilege of being tried in

need to work for it. And that's what Democrat State Attorneys, including our own Dave Aronberg, are doing. According to a recent story in [The Intercept](#), Dave is exploring "a way to allow people with felony records to pay off their obligations to the court through community service."

Miami-Dade County State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle has developed a plan to help people who are unable to pay their fines but otherwise eligible. And State Attorney Andrew Warren has plans to set up a "rocket docket" to modify the sentences en masse.

I proposed at a recent DEC meeting that George Soros be approached to pay fines for all those unable to do so themselves. It was suggested in response that Soros is constantly being asked for funding, but it seems to me that there could be no better use for his money. Last, but far from least, the ACLU has filed a lawsuit claiming that the Republican law is an unconstitutional poll tax.

Republicans' Reckless Indifference Is Killing Thousands of Floridians

Michael K. Cantwell

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to understand that lack of health insurance increases your likelihood of dying prematurely and unnecessarily. You cannot afford regular check-ups and you defer seeking medical attention, often until it is too late.

One study estimated that the uninsured have a 25%-40% higher risk of dying prematurely and unnecessarily. Another study, undertaken before the Affordable Care Act became law, at a time when 45 million Americans lacked health insurance, estimated that 45,000 people were dying every year as a conse-

not force the states to accept the money and expand Medicaid.

As a consequence, 17 states – most in the South and all controlled by Republicans – have rejected the funds and refused to expand Medicare. Their arguments are without substance. For example, they claim that they can't count on the federal government to continue to provide 90% of the funding, despite the fact that the ACA specifically provides that federal funding will never fall below 90%.

There are 840,000 at-risk Floridians whose lives could be saved at little cost to Florida taxpayers, but who are being abandoned by our Republican governor and Republican-dominated legislature.

quence, a ratio of one death for every 1000 uninsured.

There are 840,000 Floridians who are too poor to afford insurance but too "rich" to qualify for Medicaid (because their income is as "high" as 38% above the federal poverty rate). Their lives are under threat and without doubt some have already died or are dying as a result of the willful refusal to act by the Republicans who control the State House and the legislature.

How? Under the Affordable Care Act as originally passed, states were required to expand Medicaid to cover people whose income was 38% above the federal poverty rate. Even though the federal government provided 100% of the cost for the first few years, and 90% thereafter, the Supreme Court (in its infinite lack of wisdom) ruled that Congress could

Next they claim that even paying 10% will result in a huge increase in state spending. False again! Studies show that it actually reduces state spending because it [pays for costs states were already bearing](#) in other state programs.

The real reason they recklessly and heartlessly condemn their constituents to preventable death? A government that actually saved lives would be fundamentally at odds with the credo and world view of the modern Republican party, namely, "Government Is Bad (and Greed Is Good)." Even worse, those whose lives were saved would have Democrats to thank.

And that, in a nutshell, is why first Scott and now DeSantis are allowing thousands of Floridians to die needlessly every year. Nothing can wash this blood off their hands.

Come Together, Right Now!

Among the many elements that created the perfect storm that blew Trump into the White House was his ability to sow division and depress voter turnout.

Our Democratic field is large and diverse. Every one of our candidates towers above Trump, a man who is morally, temperamentally, psychologically, and intellectually unfit for any office, much less our highest. And while they propose different solutions for dealing with the most important problems facing us today, every one of them is proposing a more humane, just, and equitable society.

It is thus critical not only that we stand behind whoever prevails, but that we avoid demonizing any candidate and keep the debate on the issues on which they are divided. We don't want to see Republican ads next year that feature Democrats bashing one another.

Toward that end, we ask our members, our colleagues, our friends, and our candidates to take the [Indivisible Pledge](#):

- *Make the primary constructive. We'll make the primary election about our hopes for the future, and a robust debate of values, vision and the contest of ideas. We'll remain grounded in our shared values, even if we support different candidates.*
- *Rally behind the winner. We'll support the ultimate Democratic nominee, whoever it is—period. No Monday morning quarterbacking. No third-party threats.*
- *Do the work to beat Trump. We're the grassroots army that's going to power the nominee to victory, and we'll show up to make calls, knock doors, and do whatever it takes.*

Add your exclamation point to the dream of the late, much lamented John Lennon and “Come Together, Right Now!”

Take the (Indivisible) Pledge

THE 2020 CANDIDATE PLEDGE.

We must defeat Donald Trump. The first step is a primary contest that produces a strong Democratic nominee. The second step is winning the general election. We will not accept anything less. To ensure this outcome, I pledge to:

Make the primary constructive. I'll respect the other candidates and make the primary election about inspiring voters with my vision for the future.

Rally behind the winner. I'll support the ultimate Democratic nominee, whoever it is — period. No Monday morning quarterbacking. No third-party threats. Immediately after there's a nominee, I'll endorse.

Do the work to beat Trump. I will do everything in my power to make the Democratic Nominee the next President of the United States. As soon as there is a nominee, I will put myself at the disposal of the campaign.

“IF YOU DON’T VOTE, YOU DON’T COUNT”

“If you don’t vote, you don’t count” was both the creed and the epitaph of Vernon Ferdinand Dahmer, Sr., president of the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, NAACP, who was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan on January 10, 1966.

Democrats outnumber Republicans both locally and nationally, but we lose elections we should be winning easily because Republicans turn out in greater numbers. This is especially true in midterm elections.

If you don’t vote, you dishonor the graves of the thousands who have died fighting for the franchise. Get registered if you’re not already, make sure your friends are registered, and get out and get them out to vote.

Low turnout from Democrats last year gave Republicans the White House, but high turnout in Virginia gave Democrats the Governor’s Mansion. And high turnout in Alabama prevented the election of Roy Moore in Alabama, a man as vile and bigoted as Donald Trump.

If we don’t vote, we don’t count, and when we don’t get the vote out, we lose. But when we get the vote out, we win. It’s as simple as that.

Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2019 Membership Application

Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name/names of household members _____

Address _____

Community/Condo Name _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone number _____

(E-mail addresses are shared with the Palm Beach County Democratic Party so our members will be kept abreast of the latest County Democratic Activity. If you do not wish to receive this information, please initial here ___ and we will not share your E-mail address.)

Preferred method of contact: E-mail _____ Mail _____ Phone _____

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

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

Payment: Individual \$20 _____ Household \$30 _____ Donation _____

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