

# The Delray Democrat

June 2023 (# 58)

## Biden Bucks Are Powering Florida Forward

*State Sen. Lori Berman*

We often hear Governor DeSantis bragging about Florida's robust budget. For years, he's toured the state announcing funding for new infrastructure and water projects, first responder bonuses, raises in teacher salaries, and other necessary investments.

"There'll be a lot of good stuff [in the budget] that we'll be highlighting based off what we've been able to do working with the Legislature," DeSantis quipped last month.

But how many of these investments are attributable to President Biden and the federal government, rather than the Florida Legislature? It turns out to be quite a substantial sum – something you'll never hear DeSantis admit.

For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Florida's budget includes a whopping \$41 billion in federal trust fund dollars. That makes up 35% of the state's \$117 billion budget. And over the next five years, Florida is expected to receive \$32.5 billion thanks to President Biden's Infrastructure Law – \$8.6 billion of which has already been announced for more than 213 investment projects across the state. Here's the breakdown of those funds:

- Roads and Bridges: \$5.2 billion
- Public Transit: \$529.4 million
- Airports: \$301.2 million
- Clean and Safe Water: \$764.7 million
- Ports and Waterways: \$143.6 million
- Internet and High-speed Broadband: \$5 million
- Clean Buses and EV Charging Stations: \$125.2 million
- Clean Energy and Power: \$151.6 million

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## Upcoming Meetings

*July 20: Daniel Lishansky, The National Popular Vote Initiative*  
*September 21: Dave Aronberg, PBC State Attorney*

## How to Re-enroll in Vote by Mail

Phone: (561) 656-6208  
Fax: (561) 656-6230  
Or by scan the QR code



## DeSantis Legislates His Vision of Florida: White, Native, and Christian

*June Sandra Neal*

### Unsafe Public Safety

#### SB 214. Sales of Firearms and Ammunition. Forget Responsible Capitalism

Republicans hypocritically rail against any interference with businesses...except when it irks the NRA. As of July 1, 2023, Florida banks and other financial institutions can no longer refuse to do business with customers who are legal gun owners, manufacturers, or dealers. But remember how the

GOP squawked over President Obama's 2013 "Operation Chokepoint" which asked financial institutions not to do business with gun and ammunition suppliers? Many companies have established their own codes of ethics, such as protecting the environment or promoting gun safety. For example, after the 2018 Parkland school shooting, [Bank of America](#) and [Citibank](#) announced they wouldn't do business with anyone who makes

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By every measure, President Biden and Congressional Democrats are investing in the people of Florida and our future. Meanwhile, Ron DeSantis has invested his time and resources into culture war politics, dividing Floridians, attacking the LGBTQ community, and lavishing the insurance industry with favors at the expense of cash-strapped Floridians. He's done little to nothing to address the cost-of-living crisis that is throttling the state, and everything he can to breathe life into his fledgling presidential campaign. It's sad, if not pathetic, so let's instead take a closer look at what Democrats have delivered for Florida.

prescription drug prices for working families are going down.

Over 4,388,000 Florida residents with Medicare will now benefit from the \$2,000 yearly cap on out-of-pocket prescription drug costs, a \$35 monthly cap per insulin prescription, and free vaccines. More than 3,225,000 individuals signed up for health insurance through the ACA Marketplaces during the Open Enrollment Period for 2023 and will benefit from up to thousands of dollars per year in savings from lower health care premiums. The average homeowner will save 11.7% on their utility bills if state and local government use new grant opportunities to adopt the latest building energy codes. Florida residents will also be eligible for a

***“For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Florida’s budget includes a whopping \$41 billion in federal trust fund dollars. That makes up 35% of the state’s \$117 billion budget.”***

They've unleashed private investment in the state. For example, Cenntro Automotive recently announced \$25 million to build its first American electric vehicle manufacturing facility in Jacksonville. They're rebuilding Florida's ecological infrastructure, investing over \$1.1 billion in Everglades restoration activities that will reconnect the Northern Everglades with the southern and central habitats.

President Biden and Congressional Democrats put Florida back to work and supported vital small businesses through a once-in-a-century pandemic by providing nearly \$488 million in small business loans and relief. Florida's unemployment rate dropped to 2.6% with 1,000,000 jobs created since President Biden took office. They've combatted the climate crisis and ignited a clean-energy revolution by expanding electric vehicle opportunities and discounts, protecting the state against extreme weather events through resiliency grants, and supporting rural communities by investing in climate-smart agriculture practices.

But perhaps most important, this Administration promised to lower rising costs for Florida's families – and delivered. Thanks to the President's Inflation Reduction Act, health care costs, energy costs, and

30% discount on solar panels, battery storage devices, heating and cooling upgrades, and weatherization, helping them cut energy costs and pocket more of their hard-earned cash.

What President Biden was able to accomplish in his first two years with a slim Democratic majority is nothing short of a miracle. Even today with a GOP House, he continues to impress after coming out on top of debt limit negotiations. He's a consensus builder, something Ron DeSantis has no experience or interest in doing.

The fundamental difference between their leadership styles lays with priorities and vision. President Biden's priority is to the American people, and his vision for America is a middle-class revival. Ron DeSantis' priority is to whomever can help him gain power, and his vision for America is, well, pretty un-American. Book banning, a national crusade against queer Americans, a federal ban on DEI topics, and a total abortion ban are all at the top of his agenda – and none of that actually improves lives. DeSantis remains a dark figure on the political landscape. Because of this, he'll never be able to deliver for the American people on the level President Biden has.

Thanks for the Biden Bucks, Mr. President!

**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, Jack Goldstein, Charlie Holbrook, June Neal, and Janet Zweibach, Directors; Sandra Elaiszen-Cantwell, Director Emerita; and John Ramos and Robert Resnick, Directors Emeritus.

# Biden Smacks Another Home Run

Michael K. Cantwell

Nothing better illustrates Joe Biden's experience than his handling of the so-called debt crisis.

Republicans demanded ruinous, recession-creating spending cuts as a condition to raising the debt ceiling. It looked like a win-win for them. Biden could agree to the recession or bear the consequences of a government default that would unleash a worldwide economic catastrophe. Either way his reelection bid would be doomed.

Of course, he could have declared the debt limit to be unconstitutional because it prevented him from his constitutional responsibility to faithfully execute the laws. As the debt at issue had been authorized by prior Congresses, he could have directed Secretary Janet Yellin to continue assuming debt beyond the limit or mint a trillion-dollar coin.

Once the Republicans actually managed to come up with a plan, he would have been excoriated by the media if he had acted unilaterally. Moreover, he was facing negotiations over the 2024 budget in a matter of months anyway.

As demonstrated by the table below, Biden clearly outmaneuvered McCarthy. No one could have done a better job negotiating.

Instead of having to face yet another phony debt-ceiling crisis next March, in the runup to the 2024 elections, Biden secured funding through January 2025. That is huge.

So too was shifting the baseline for calculating cuts from 2022 to 2023 spending and limiting the mandatory 1% cap on spending to only an additional year (rather than eight years).

And emerging virtually untouched was Biden's signature legislation, the Inflation Reduction Act. The greatest investment in green energy in American history, it has already created 142,000 new fair-wage jobs and is projected to create at least 1.3 million such jobs by 2030.

Unlike Kevin McCarthy, Biden resisted the impulse to [brag](#). He understood that would only inflame the wingnuts in the Freedom Caucus and jeopardize the likelihood of passage in the House.

And perhaps he just didn't feel like bragging when he'd been unable to protect *all* the vulnerable people targeted by Republicans and unable to raise taxes on the plutocrats who haven't paid their fair share for decades. Only Republicans celebrate when the vulnerable are hurt and the powerful are protected.

Republican Proposal	Bill that Passed
Extend debt ceiling to March 31, 2024.	Extend debt ceiling to January 1, 2025
Cap 2024 discretionary spending at its 2022 level, which would represent a 9% drop from 2023 levels, and then cap it a 1% annually thereafter.	Cap 2024 discretionary spending at more favorable 2023 levels, with 1% increase in 2025 and suggested but not required targets thereafter.
Repeal most tax credits designed to boost production and consumption of green energy.	Tax credits untouched.
Repeal student loan forgiveness.	Student loan forgiveness untouched
Repeal \$80 billion in additional funding provided to the IRS to help them recover taxes from plutocrats and multinationals who failed to pay their fair share.	Remove \$10 billion of the \$80 billion but use it to maintain funding for some nonmilitary discretionary programs. Because the \$80 billion was front-loaded, and the IRS has leeway as to how and when to spend it, the claw-back might not have an impact for years.
Impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients aged 50-55.	Work requirements maintained to age 55 but veterans, the homeless and people who were children in foster care are exempted, so that number receiving aid is the same or greater.
Claw back \$30 billion in COVID money.	Claw back \$30 billion in COVID money but repurpose some of it to boost nondefense discretionary spending

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or sells “assault weapons” or “high-capacity” magazines. Sorry, guys.

### **HB 543. Concealed Carry Weapons. Just Lock and Load, Folks**

No permit, no training, no background check? No problem! If you're over 21, just take your favorite concealed-carry weapon with you. The National Rifle Association was very [happy](#) with this Bill. A [public opinion poll](#) said 67% of Floridians were not. But hey....

A major study by the [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#) found a “Significant Increase in Firearm Assaults in States that Relaxed Conceal Carry Permit Restrictions.” It noted that states with permitless concealed carry rights *that failed to maintain the very safety precautions that DeSantis eliminated* such as background checks, or the states’ discretion to deny a permit to people with histories of violence or mental instability, “had an average increase of 10.26 gun assaults per 100,000 population annually (a 21.6 percent increase) and an additional 1.44 per 100,000 of gun homicides (34.9 percent increase) per year compared to their forecasted trends. For states that did not require live-firearm training, the average rate of gun assaults increased to 8.28 per 100,000 people (18.3 percent increase).”

### **Immigration**

#### **SB 1718. Expelling Undocumented Workers. And the \$20 Tomato.**

Although Florida needs undocumented workers for its construction, agriculture and other industries, many of them may be exiting the State, fearful of this very confusing law. Businesses with 25 or more employees who fail to use the E-Verify federal database to confirm legal residence may be fined \$1,000 a day and have their licenses suspended, even though the E-Verify system hasn't been successful. Workers who use a false ID for employment will face felony charges.

The law is expansive. Landlords are subject to increased fines if they rent to the undocumented. Local sheriffs are required to take DNA samples after arrests and report to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Immigrants need IDs for almost everything, yet now their out-of-state drivers' licenses

are invalid in Florida and local governments can't issue them ID cards. And the law designates another \$12 million for DeSantis to continue abusing asylum seekers by dumping them out of state, as he did in Martha's Vineyard and Sacramento.

[The Farm Worker Association of Florida, Inc.](#) warned: “Who will continue providing roofing work, cleaning services, food service in restaurants, landscaping, home and commercial construction, nursing care in our hospitals and nursing homes... who will harvest the crops we eat every day and that we depend upon for our sustenance?” [According to the Migration Policy Institute](#), there are roughly 772,000 “unauthorized” immigrants living in Florida who work in construction, food services and agriculture, most of whom work at jobs citizens don't want to do. Their labor is essential to Florida's economy. It is not yet known how many are leaving the state because of DeSantis' crackdown. If there are insufficient replacements, Florida consumers will be forced to buy more imported, higher-priced produce. How about a \$20 tomato?

### **No More Corporate Activism... But More Anti-Woke!**

#### **HB 3/SB302. Banking Restrictions. Polluters, Yes. The Environment, not so much.**

And of course, more anti-Woke! State and local retirement funds can no longer be invested in banks that, in turn, invest in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policies. (While the seas rise dangerously around Florida's coasts.) In addition, banks can't refuse to do business with companies because of their political beliefs [guess which ones] or because of their *involvement in the firearms* or fossil fuel industries. “This bill could cost as much as \$361 million in higher interest rates for municipal bonds. It could severely affect millions of people invested in the state's \$180 million retirement fund for state [employees.](#)” **say the Florida Keys Democrats.**

#### **And SB 214.**

Last year, President Biden proposed adopting a new global merchants' code for gun and ammunition sellers. The idea was to help credit card companies flag suspicious transactions to prevent gun violence. However, Florida won't allow it. And DeSantis said this Bill protects Floridians from “*woke corporate monitoring.*” *Huh?*

# Biden’s Not Just “Better than the Alternative” He’s Better than Most of His Predecessors

*Michael K. Cantwell*

When Joe Biden says, “Don’t Compare Me to the Almighty, Compare Me to the Alternative,” he is selling himself short, as does much of America.

Joe Biden is not just better than any Republican who might run against him – he’s better than most of his predecessors in the Oval Office.

For starters, his jobs record is unparalleled. In less than 2½ years he’s added ten times as many jobs as George W. Bush added in 8 years and nearly as many jobs as Reagan added in 8 years.

His legislative achievements would be impressive even if he had the Congressional majorities enjoyed by FDR, LBJ, and (in his first two years) Obama. With a 5-vote margin in the House and a dead tie in the Senate, these were passed without a single Republican vote:

- The American Rescue Plan Act jump-started his jobs engine, reduced childhood poverty by 35%, and provided \$360 billion to local governments to keep front-line workers on the job.
- The Inflation Reduction Act is the largest investment in Green Energy in the history of the country; Credit Suisse [estimates](#) that it will generate **\$1.7 trillion** in new investment within a decade. The IRA also eliminates the Bush-era prohibition on Medicare negotiating with drug companies to lower drug costs, caps insulin cost at \$35/month, and extends Affordable Care Act

subsidies, providing a path to health insurance for millions more Americans.

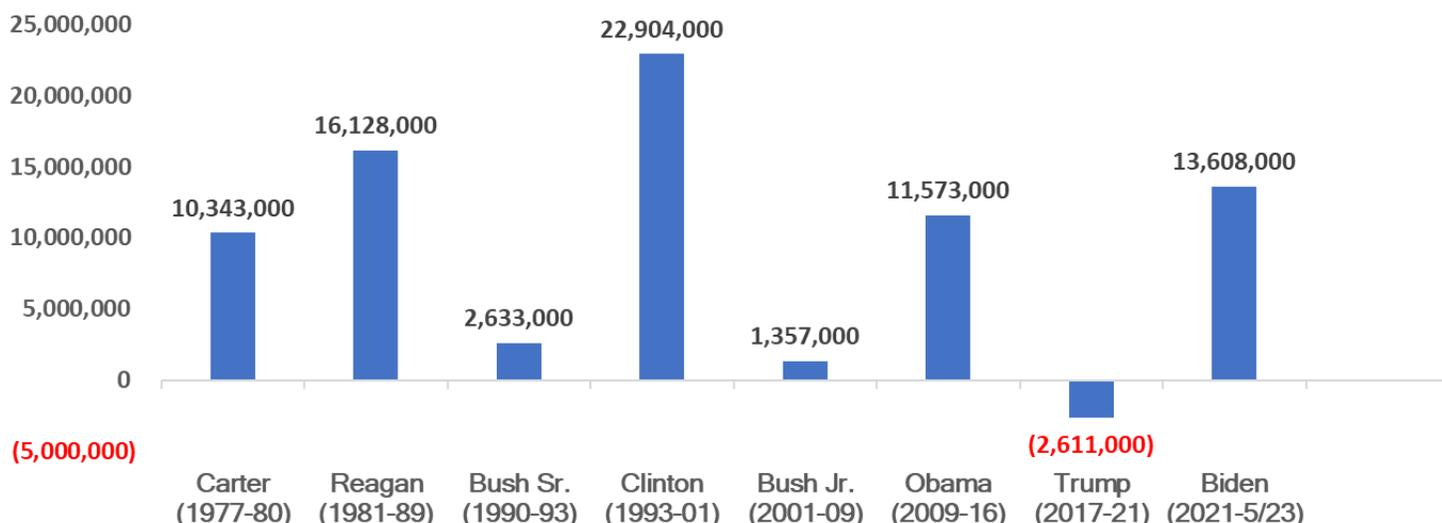
Biden also made good on his promise to enact bipartisan legislation.

- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is the largest long-term investment in infrastructure and the economy in American history.
- 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 and provides medical care for veterans exposed to toxic chemicals.
- 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.

Americans, including far too many Democrats, underrate Biden because negative news and scary news attract more eyeballs than good news.

Stop obsessing on Biden’s age and start focusing on what he can accomplish in a second term and how we can help reelect him. And if anyone expresses doubts about Kamala, ask them to compare her not only to the alternative but *her* predecessors.

**Total Jobs Added Over Presidency**



## Letters by Our Members

California Gov. Gavin Newsom was right to call Gov. Ron DeSantis a “small, pathetic man.”

Only someone so bloated with blind ambition could trick desperate asylum seekers with promises of jobs, then dump them in a blue state to score political points.

DeSantis continues to bring shame to Florida, abetted by the sycophants in the Legislature and Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio. In 2014, Scott signed a law giving in-state tuition to undocumented students. Rubio has used his own family’s immigrant story for political advantage for years.

Where’s their compassion now for legal asylum-seekers? It’s more important that they stay in office.

DeSantis spent \$1.56 million of our tax dollars to fly asylum seekers to Martha’s Vineyard. Rubio called it “a miniscule” event compared to the larger failures in federal immigration policy. Senator, whatever

policy is in place is independent of how elected officials treat desperate human beings once they are on U.S. soil.

Rubio’s failure to stand up for what’s morally right is one more reason why he should resign.

June S. Neal, Sun-Sentinel, June 7, 2023

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How ironic that a text that included an unapologetic racist’s epiphany as to our common humanity was one of the causes for his firing.

The trigger was Tucker Carlson’s comment that “it’s not how white men fight,” but his acknowledgment and repudiation of his own lust for the Trump mob to kill the “Antifa kid” showed an honesty and reflection absent among his fellow TV personalities on Fox.

Michael K. Cantwell, New York Times, May 5, 2023

## Worth Reading

Jamelle Bouie, [Republicans Keep Failing the Same Test](#), *The New York Times*: “We see a pattern of presidential criminality and contempt for the Constitution, backed in each instance by most Republican officeholders and politicians. For Nixon, it was Watergate. For Ronald Reagan it was Iran-contra. For George W. Bush, it was the sordid effort to fight a war in Iraq, and the disgraceful use of torture against detainees. For Donald Trump, it was practically his entire presidency.”

John Nichols, [Harry Belafonte Never Betrayed His Revolutionary Spirit](#), *The Nation*, “Belafonte had many opportunities to cover his tracks and distance himself from Robeson and the radical politics of his youth. He never did. Instead, he championed Robeson until the great man died in 1976, and across the ensuing five decades. More than that, though, he maintained his revolutionary spirit in a way that Robeson would have admired, embedding himself deeply in the civil rights movement, working to liberate South Africa from apartheid, opposing imperialism, and supporting human rights struggles around the world. Having beaten the blacklist and what he described as “the villainy of the witch hunt,” Harry Belafonte lived a radical life that never denied and never forgot the lessons he learned while standing at the side of Paul Robeson.”

Matthew Desmond, [The High Cost of Being Poor](#), *The New York Review of Books*, “Why did we so readily embrace a story that blamed high unemployment on government aid when so many other explanations were available to us? Why didn’t we figure people weren’t returning to work because they didn’t want to get sick and die? Or because their jobs were lousy to begin with? Or because their children’s schools had closed, and they lacked reliable childcare? When asked why many Americans weren’t returning to work as fast as some people would have liked, why was our answer *Because they are getting \$300 extra each week?*”

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

## Thank a Democrat

1964 Civil Rights Act	Food Stamp Act	National Science Foundation Act
1965 Voting Rights Act	Freedom of Information Act	National Voter Registration Act (a.k.a) Motor Voter Act
Affordable Care Act	GI Bill of Rights	Social Security Act
AmeriCorps	Medicare and Medicaid	Unemployment Compensation Act
CDC	Minimum Wage Act	Workers Compensation Act
Family and Medical Leave Act	National Labor Relations Act	

## Thank Joe Biden

### **American Rescue Plan Act, Signed March 11, 2021**

- Provided \$1,400 to every taxpayer and each of his or her dependents
- Expanded coverage and reduced premiums under the Affordable Care Act for 9 million Americans.
- Expanded and extended unemployment benefits.
- Increased SNAP benefits
- Increased and expanded Child Tax Credit, representing the largest investment in child care assistance since World War II
- Increased the Earned Income Tax Credit for frontline workers who helped their communities through the COVID crisis
- Invested \$160 billion to provide supplies and vaccines to combat COVID's heavy toll
- Distributed \$360 billion in emergency funding for local governments to help keep front line public workers on the job and paid
- Provided emergency grants and loans to hard-hit small businesses
- Established a special sign-up period for the Affordable Care Act, adding 800,000 previously uninsured to the ranks of the insured.

### **Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Signed November 15, 2021**

- The largest federal investment in public transit
- The largest federal investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak
- The single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system
- The largest investment in clean drinking water and waste water infrastructure in American history, delivering clean water to millions of families
- Ensures every American has access to reliable high-speed internet
- Helps us tackle the climate crisis by making the largest investment in clean energy transmission and EV infrastructure in history; electrifying thousands of school and transit buses across the country; and creating a new Grid Deployment Authority to build a resilient, clean, 21st century electric grid

### **Inflation Reduction Act, Signed August 16, 2022**

- Invests \$369 billion in energy security and fighting climate change
- Invests \$64 billion to extend Affordable Care Act subsidies
- Authorizes Medicare to negotiate with drug companies
- Provides an additional \$80 billion to the IRS for tax modernization and enforcement, which is estimated to reduce the deficit by recovering as much as \$203.7 billion from tax cheats
- Closes tax loopholes by imposing a 15% minimum tax payment on companies with over \$1 billion of income and a 1% excise tax on stock buybacks
- Expands Medicare benefits: provides free vaccines (2023), caps insulin costs at \$35/month (2023) and caps out-of-pocket drug costs to an estimated \$4,000 or less in 2024, settling at \$2,000 in 2025
- Provides \$4 billion for drought resiliency in western states

# 2023 Membership

Char Lane

Membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, our meetings, other working supplies and signage for our sign waving events. **Meetings are at 7 PM on the third Thursday of each month at the Palm Beach County Democratic Party office, located in the Congress Office Park, 220 Congress Park Drive, Suite 140, in Delray Beach.** Our meetings are hybrid so you can also join via zoom. Meeting notices include zoom links to register for or join the meeting 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. We'll have to work hard to help keep our democracy intact and protect it from the manifesting lunacy.

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

If you're a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach and haven't yet renewed, please do so. If you're not a member of the Club, please consider joining.

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

Become a member of the DCDB by completing and mailing the below application or going to <https://www.demclubofdelray.org/membership> or scanning the QR code below. You can also give me your membership application/renewal at our meetings.



## Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2023 Membership Application and Renewal

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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

