

Brian Fillette, president — President@SolivitaDemocrats.org

Ellis Moose, editor — Beacon@SolivitaDemocrats.org

President's Letter

Farmer's Market volunteer coordinator needed



Pres. Brian Fillette

We're currently seeking a new coordinator to organize volunteers for our Club's table and tent at the Farmer's Market. Our presence there every Monday morning has been so important to promote Democratic initiatives and build our membership! If you can help please contact our Membership Chair Kate Kohout via Email: KateKohout@yahoo.com or Phone/Text: (570) 236-0443 to offer your assistance. We're planning to take the months of July and August off (too hot!) but want to pick back up again in September.

Fall "Funraiser" event - Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

The SDC is excited to announce we will be hosting the Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre "Death of a Gangster - A 1920's Mafia Marriage Murder Mystery" with professional actors on Thursday, October 26 in the Ballroom from 6pm - 9pm. We hope you will join us for a fun-filled evening!

Planning for this event is underway and your help is needed! Please contact our Ways & Means Chair Valerie Williams via Email: vpowell65@aol.com or Phone/Text: (631) 455-4036 to join the Planning Committee. More details on tickets, food, prices, etc. coming soon.

Petitions

We continue to encourage your participation with these two important 2024 Florida ballot initiatives.

1. Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion.

From the ballot summary: No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's health-care provider.

Download the petition from:
<https://floridiansprotectingfreedom.com/petition/>

Brian Fillette, continued on next page

**WEDNESDAY
 JULY 12th
 MEMBERSHIP
 MEETING**

In the BALLROOM
 And on ZOOM

Doors Open at 6:30PM
 Meeting at 7:00PM

Featuring Speaker
PAUL RITZ
 President of
**PAINBOW RIDGE
 LGBTQA
 Democratic Caucus
 of Polk County**

**RAINBOW RIDGE
 LGBTQA
 Democratic Caucus
 of Polk County**

(See page 2 for details.)

**NO SDC MEETING
 IN AUGUST!**

REPRESENTATIVES

Our elected representatives need your input

Let them know your positions on issues!

Sen. Rick Scott (R)
United States Senate
Phone: 202-224-5274

Sen. Marco Rubio (R)
United States Senate
Phone: 202-224-3041

Rep. Darren Soto (D)
US District 9 Office
804 Bryan Street
Kissimmee, FL 34741
Phone: 202-225-9889

Gov. Ron DeSantis (R)
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001
Website: www.flgov.com

State Rep. Sam Killebrew (R)
FL House District 48 Office:
Phone: 850-717-5041
Email: sam.killebrew@myfloridahouse.gov

State Sen. Colleen Burton (R)
District 12 Office
100 South Kentucky Avenue
Suite 260
Lakeland, FL 33801
Email: Colleen.Burton.web@flsenate.gov

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Brian Fillette, continued from previous page

2. Right to Clean and Healthy Waters

From the ballot summary: This amendment creates a fundamental right to clean and healthy waters. The amendment may be used to sue State executive agencies for harm or threatened harm to Florida's waters, which include aquatic ecosystems.

Download the petition from:
<https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>

Note: the petition forms must be completed individually and returned via US Mail to the address indicated on the forms. Nearly 900,000 signatures are needed by end of 2023 to qualify for the Florida ballot in 2024.

Thanks for all that you do, and most of all, thank you for being who you are.

Brian Fillette, President, Solivita Democratic Club
president@solivitademocrats.org

Visit our Website <https://solivitademocrats.org/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/solivitademocraticclub>
Nextdoor <https://nextdoor.com/g/qikq82ag>

ANNOUNCEMENT!

Meet Our July Speaker

PAUL RITZ

Paul Ritz is President of the Rainbow Ridge LGBTQA Democratic Caucus of Polk County and has been a Caucus member for five years.

Mr. Ritz has been devoted to the cause of LGBT rights for over sixteen years, including belonging to PFLAG in NJ in the past.

He is a tax attorney in full-time practice in NJ, working remotely from his home in Winter Haven, where he has resided for the past ten years. He is a graduate of Bucknell University, William & Mary Law School, and NYU Law School.

He will be speaking to our club on Wednesday, July 12, about the recent legislation passed in Florida affecting the LGBTQ community and its likely impact on LGBTQ residents of Florida and others.



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*The Board of Directors meets the
 first Tuesday of each month via
 ZOOM.*

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**Could Be You (2 Female, 2 Male),
 Pct. 412**
**Solivita Bella Viana, Venezia
 and portions of Poinciana**

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DeSantis antics alienating migrant workers (and employers)

By Orlando Sentinel columnist, Scott Maxwell
smaxwell@orlandosentinel.com

GOP legislators are begging undocumented workers to keep working in Florida.

As Gov. Ron DeSantis spent more Florida tax dollars flying migrants out of Texas, Republican lawmakers back home were begging migrant workers to stay in their jobs here in Florida.

In a remarkable video that surfaced Monday, GOP legislators Rick Roth and Alina Garcia begged migrant workers in South Florida to ignore the new immigration crackdown law that both of them supported, promising it was more tough talk than serious action.

Roth said the immigration law he supported “is more of a political bill than it is policy.” “This bill is 100% supposed to scare you,” he said. Garcia agreed, swearing the new law “really doesn’t have any teeth.”

The two hoped Hispanic faith leaders would urge their followers to keep working in Florida so that the state’s tourism, agriculture and construction industries won’t collapse.

It was a bizarre scene. And it got even more bizarre when Roth, a farmer himself, said farmers were “mad as hell” about the law. “I’m a farmer, and the farmers are mad as hell,” he said. “We are losing employees. They’re already moving to Georgia and other states.”

None were angrier about this bill than those who voted for it.

The odd exchange underscored an ugly hypocrisy about Florida Republicans’ immigration rants: They want their base to believe they’re furious at undocumented workers, but also want to keep those workers on Florida job sites.

The fact that DeSantis keeps running his multi-million-dollar migrant flight operation out of Texas — and not the state he actually runs — is more evidence of that.

Think about it. Conservative estimates suggest there are more than 700,000 undocumented immigrants in Florida. The American Farm Bureau says more than half its industry’s workers — as many as 70% — are undocumented.

DeSantis corporate donors here in Florida — the ones who rely on illegal labor to maintain their profit margins — are certainly appreciative. Just as they are about the fact that DeSantis’ new immigration law largely gives a free pass to Florida companies that hire undocumented workers.

EDITORIAL

SOUTH CAROLINA TO CALIFORNIA: A 2,985-MILE BICYCLE ODESSEY

By Joe Tobin, SDC Member and Beacon Contributor



For a summer break, I invited my friend, Ed from Charleston, to share some of his thoughts and observations of the bicycle trip he and three of his buddies made earlier this year. Ed is 76 and his first love is hiking followed by biking. He was also an army medic in Vietnam. Enjoy! Joe Tobin

Physically, mentally and logistically prepared, my friend and I left Charleston on March 1 and biked to Georgia where a third cyclist joined us. The fourth team member joined us in Florida. Since we could not use the major inter-state highways, we had to cycle on the older and less-used routes through cities and towns and lots of farmland. I nicknamed these southern roadways the “BBQ roads” as southerners certainly like their barbeques across their states.

Cycling through Mississippi and Louisiana was a definite eye-opener -- economic extremes from literally dirt poor to immense wealth. The roads themselves ranged from good to very poor. Crossing the Mississippi on the John James Audubon bridge, between the two states, was a magnificent and breathtaking experience – especially on a bike. The river itself is so much a part of American history.

The big ride was still ahead of us -- Texas. Most people consider Texas a state, but to me it is a continent. We spent twenty-one days crossing Texas. In some respects, it is two states – the hill country in the eastern portion (which is really the South) and the flatlands and mountains of the west (the beginnings of the West). In Texas we were also introduced to the immigration issue and the presence of the border patrol -- evident for the remainder of the trip.

The southern routes across New Mexico, Arizona and California were the most scenic: majestic mountains to sand dunes and barren desert to lush agriculture. The weather patterns included a flow of west winds and temperatures that ranged from very hot to very cold. But we survived them.



Joe Tobin, continued on next page.

Joe Tobin, continued from previous page.

A 2,985-MILE BICYCLE ODESSEY, continued

Despite the media talk about divisions in America, the people we met along the way were very supportive of us, especially if we needed help with flat tires (of which there were many), broken chains or emergency transportation. When the local folks were around us, we felt safe and comfortable.

Many asked us why we were undertaking this ride. In turn, we had lots of questions for them and about their lives in these small towns and cities. Was surprised to learn how many people we spoke to never traveled beyond their county lines.

There were two elements that were common to almost every geographical area: (i) the disparity of wealth versus poverty; and (ii) everybody had cell phones (wonderful to have on a cross-country trip).

Once we started approaching the Gulf of Mexico waters, we could see in the distance the oil rigs standing tall in the Gulf waters and then dotting the corporate oil fields. There were also wind and solar tracts dedicated to the production of energy. Texas and Louisiana are so important to the production of energy for the American public.

When I hit Dog Beach in California I was exhausted in all ways. When asked how I felt nearing completion, my response was “like mile 20 of a marathon, you are reaching inside for the juice to finish”! When asked how I felt when I braked and jumped off the bike, I could only say “relief and elation”!

Looking back, I was glad I took on the challenge (as did my buddies). What strangely amazed me the most was something very simple: the struggle of flora and fauna to survive in such extreme harsh conditions, whether it was a weed growing in a pavement crack or an immigrant fleeing across the border in search of a better life. After all, part of life is meeting challenges head on.

Thank you for this opportunity to tell my and my buddy's story. — Ed & Joe

As we age...

“You know you're getting old when the candles cost more than the cake.”

—Bob Hope

“You know you're getting old when you get that one candle on the cake. It's like, ‘See if you can blow this out.’”

—Jerry Seinfeld

“As you get older, the pickings get slimmer, but the people sure don't.”

—Carrie Fisher

“By the time a man is wise enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere.”

—Billy Crystal



**“Your doctor can only do so much.
The rest is up to you. Stop getting older.”**

NATIONAL 'TICS

Fact-checking the FACTS!

As Donald Trump headed toward his classified documents indictment in Miami this week, his Republican supporters came to his defense, comparing Democrats' handling of classified, or would-be classified, materials with Trump's. They argued that Trump was punished when Democrats weren't. But experts told PolitiFact the cases aren't parallel and have important differences. Here are three examples.

1. Hillary Clinton's emails. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., referred to an investigation into Trump's 2016 Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton and her handling of classified information. "Most Republicans believe we live in a country where Hillary Clinton did very similar things and nothing happened to her," Graham said. The FBI investigated Clinton for using a private email server as secretary of state. Then-FBI Director James Comey said of the 30,000 emails the FBI investigated, 113 were determined to have contained classified information when they were sent. The FBI didn't charge Clinton; Comey said she handled classified information carelessly, but there was no evidence she intended to break the law. The federal indictment against Trump, by contrast, shows he knew he had classified documents stored at Mar-a-Lago, his Florida estate. The Trump indictment lays out how Trump stymied the federal government's efforts to recover them. [Read more.](#)



2. Joe Biden's classified documents.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said Trump was indicted by a special counsel for having classified documents while President Joe Biden hadn't been. Cruz tweeted, "Joe Biden did the exact same thing, and the DOJ doesn't care!" CBS News reported that lawyers in November 2022 discovered documents, some with classification markings, in a locked closet in Biden's post-vice presidential office at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement in Washington, D.C. The Justice Department appointed a special counsel to investigate Biden's handling of classified documents, just as the department did for Trump. Experts told PolitiFact the Trump case sets a high bar for seriousness and has a number of extraordinary circumstances the Biden case so far lacks — particularly a failure to return the documents once they were discovered. [Read more.](#)

3. Bill Clinton's sock drawer. Trump told a Columbus, GA, crowd, that government officials don't mention the lawsuit brought against Bill Clinton...the famous socks case that says he can keep his documents. When Clinton was president, historian Taylor Branch interviewed him to create an oral history of his presidency; news outlets wrote that Clinton kept interview audiotapes in his sock drawer. *Judicial Watch*, a conservative group, sued the National Archives and Records Administration back in 2010, asking the court to declare the tapes presidential records. But U.S. District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson dismissed the case, saying the law distinguished the tapes as "personal records," distinct from "official" records. The records Trump took to Mar-a-Lago, by contrast, "appear to overwhelmingly contain records pertaining to the official business of the White House." [Read more.](#)

FLORIDA 'TICS

**A Special Letter from the
Polk County Democratic Executive Committee (DEC)**

THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMING

Dear Polk County Democrats,

Religion (in particularly Christianity) has been used for centuries to bend individuals and groups to a particular set of beliefs and dogma. War, murder, rape, arson, and too many other atrocities to list have been committed in the name of Christianity. Yesterday's decision by the Supreme Court reinforces the push by Republicans and their nefarious fringe groups to turn America into a White Christian Nationalist nation. In "protecting" a Colorado woman's right to discriminate against same sex couples because of her personal religious beliefs, the Court will embolden others who seek to marginalize and eventually eliminate individuals and groups who are not representative of the preferred race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, intellectual ability, etc. The decision yesterday is not an aberration, a coincidence, or an isolated event. Left unchecked, this movement (which is built on hate, fear, discrimination, ignorance and evilness) will continue unabated and result in the obliteration of our diverse and inclusive society.

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I am exhausted with having to justify my existence and my right to the same opportunities and life as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. This same exhaustion is shared throughout the Black community, the Hispanic community, the Asian and Pacific Islander community, the Native American community, the Jewish community, the Muslim community, by women of all races and ethnicities, and by the disability community. The laws being enacted by state legislatures across our country seek to promote and protect the rights of white, heterosexual, cisgender, Christian Americans and the Supreme Court showed up today and said "we support this 100%" (at least Justices Roberts, Thomas, Alito, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh and Barrett). Shame on them for being racist, discriminatory bigots. (And if you question this, read the other decisions released this term and in previous terms). To be clear, I am not arguing against this particular individual's right to her belief system. But, she wants to engage in a public business that will not serve or do business with individuals who are not in the same accord with her personal religious beliefs. The door opened by this decision speeds up the demise of our great American experiment.

How do we fight against this hate? VOTE!!!! It is no longer "Vote like your life depends on it", because your life DOES depend on it. Your child's life depends on it. Your neighbor's life depends on it. Not voting is not an option. And for those who think these decisions don't affect their daily life and they don't need to be concerned, here is your reality check. If the White Christian Nationalist Republican Party succeeds in eliminating my community (the LGBTQIA+ community), you and your community could be next. They exist by always having an "enemy" and the list has already been created. If you are reading my words, I feel certain you will find yourself somewhere on that list. I hope there are people left to support and defend you if that comes to pass.

John Hill

Vice Chair, Polk County Democratic Party

To sign up to Volunteer, become a DEC Member or Donate go to www.polkdemocrats.org

Investing in America

In June, the White House launched [Invest.gov](https://www.invest.gov), a new website showing the historic public and private sector investments President Biden's *Investing in America* agenda is creating. The website features an interactive map showing infrastructure projects underway that are funded by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as well as private sector investments mobilized by President Biden's agenda, including the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the American Rescue Plan.

President Biden's successes have been overshadowed by all of the GOP-manufactured social "crises" and the terrible SCOTUS decisions of late. We need to tell our friends, families and neighbors of the real work his administration has accomplished to make our country better.

The website will be updated regularly to reflect recent investments, projects, and announcements. Check it out! [Invest.gov](https://www.invest.gov)

AMERICAN ECONOMICS 101

- 10 of the last 11 recessions began under Republican presidents.
- GDP growth averages just 2.5% under Republican presidents, and 4.3% under Democratic presidents.
- The only presidents to lower the annual deficit in the last 50 years were Clinton, Obama, and Biden, all Democrats.
- Of the 7 presidents with the highest job creation rates since 1945, 6 were Democrats.
- 8 of the 10 poorest states in America are controlled by Republicans.

DEMOCRATS ARE BETTER FOR YOUR WALLET!



Dear Democrats,

I want to start this newsletter by saying thank you to all of you who continue to put in the work to make a difference in our state. As I travel the state, I am encouraged by everyone I meet about what they are doing to make a difference.

This past week, I have been on the road a meeting with elected officials, donors, and party leaders. I am inspired by the energy we are experiencing across the state. Look no farther than our Leadership Blue weekend - this year's Leadership Blue Gala is sold out! There is still time to join us for our biggest night of the year, as we'll be hosting a watch party during dinner leading into our official after party! See more details on watch party tickets below.

This week, we are looking forward to welcoming FDP Executive Director Phillip Jerez back to Florida! Phillip's first day is tomorrow, and the entire team could not be more excited.

Forward, Forward,



Nikki Fried
Chair, FDP

**NO SDC MEETING
IN AUGUST!**