

“Democracy is not a spectator sport.”

Critical Times

Fostering
Community Dialogue
and Participation

Volume 3

Sarasota, Florida July - September 2017

FREE

Ban Fracking In Florida

BY JORGE AGUILAR

jaguilar@fwwatch.org

The fight to ban fracking in Florida is more than just an effort to preserve the especially vulnerable environment in the state. Florida's economy thrives because of a robust tourism industry that is largely dependent on outdoor activities, most of them involving our precious

To date, 90 counties and cities have passed ordinances or resolutions in opposition to fracking in the state (communities representing almost 75% of Florida residents). After three years of beating back pro-fracking legislation, this legislative session became the first where a bill to ban fracking was introduced with bipartisan support. By the end of session, over



water. Florida's gorgeous beaches, its vacation destinations (like Orlando's theme parks), and the extensive springs networks across Northern Florida are all now threatened by water-damaging industries like offshore drilling and fracking.

Food & Water Watch and the Floridians Against Fracking have been fighting against fracking and the oil industry alongside local activists and local groups that form the anti-fracking coalition. In 2013, after the discovery of unpermitted unconventional fracking operations by a Texas-based oil company in Collier County, the battle for a fracking ban lit up across the state. Since then, the anti-fracking movement has successfully mobilized four years' worth of massive resistance against new fracking operations in the Everglades and the panhandle.

150 businesses had also come forward in support of the ban.

Although the bill did not pass this year, it had almost 50 cosponsors, including powerful Republican leaders from both chambers. Half the state senate members supported the ban bill until it stalled in the state house. But the end of session brought another victory for the anti-fracking movement with the defeat of an environmentally harmful, corporate giveaway of a bill. Not only did that bill call for investing in fracking in Oklahoma, it also allowed energy utility companies to charge Florida customers for speculative out-of-state investments like the Oklahoma venture. But Anti-fracking advocates

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Bayfront 20:20

BY MARIELI A. DE JESUS



In late 2013 community leaders started a dialogue to create a roadmap for the future of the land that encompasses the 42 acres from Boulevard of the Arts to Payne Terminal surrounding the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. A vision statement was created to allow

for broad community support and input: “We support the creation of a long-term master plan for the Sarasota bayfront area that will establish a cultural and economic legacy for the region while ensuring open, public access to the bayfront.”

Much like San Francisco did 50 years ago, Bayfront 20:20 wants to take advantage of the opportunity that presents itself today and leave the city of Sarasota a legacy to celebrate for years to come through a well-designed waterfront. No other planning opportunities for a metro-downtown waterfront location of this large a scale exist anywhere else in Florida at this time.

During the 2017 ArchiFest hosted by the Herald Tribune, one of the many aspects discussed was the possibility of taking over the space that now houses the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall due to the Hall's “outdated” architecture. Of those present, approximately 70% supported saving the Van Wezel. Stakeholders from the Bayfront 20:20 group say they will strive to give the community a space that connects the adjacent

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The Clean Energy Revolution is Here

BY LYNN NILSSEN

Glaciers continue to melt in the Arctic and Antarctica. Based on the latest NOAA projections our area likely will see sea level rise of a half foot by 2040. With the decision by Trump to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement and the inaction of Congress to do much of anything to address the threats we face from climate change you might just want to give up.

I'd like to give you two good reason not to:

1) The economics are on the side of clean energy: The argument that renewables are too expensive is no longer valid. According to EnergySage, “Today, energy companies are developing solar PV projects that can deliver energy at half the cost of coal”. The amount of solar power coming online has nearly doubled from 2015 to 2016, enough to power 2 million homes.

Jobs in the renewable energy sector outnumber jobs in the coal and gas industry by a margin of 5 to 1 according to Department of Energy jobs data. The solar industry already employs over 260,000 people in the US. And has added \$84 billion to the US GDP in 2016.



The clean disruption of the energy and transportation sectors is happening. The technology around renewable energy and transportation has advanced so quickly that we have reached the tipping point of where the

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Personal Reflections on the People's Summit

BY DEEANNA DOWDLE

Are you powerless? Am I powerless? I thought I was powerless until I went to "The People's Summit" in Chicago on June 9th -11th. But as progressive leaders like Bernie Sanders and Naomi Klein (author of the environmental best seller "This Changes Everything") spoke, I found my power. While listening to the over 20 speeches and breakout sessions I heard the same message repeated; Change in our government will not come from the top, but from the grassroots (grassroots means you and me). Water, Jobs and Justice; From Knowledge to Action: Big Organizing beyond Bernie; Empowering Locals and The Power of Perseverance; these were some of the sessions I attended.

Local activists Deanie Bergbreiter, Arlene Sweeting and I attended these empowering talks from nationally-known leaders and local leaders who reported their surprising successes of changing local and state wide government for the better. Better equals government that provides services to the citizens and responds to the citizen's voices and needs. For 40 years our government has incrementally been taken

over by the money supplied to the campaigns of our officials by billionaires and corporations. We need to organize into a local force for good and we need you to help. A good start is to visit ProgressiveSarasota.org or CriticalTimes.org and come to a meeting to learn more. If you think you can't afford to devote any time to getting our democracy back, I say you can't afford not to. Start with an hour a week because your contribution of time is what building a network of citizens is about. You and I are the only ones that can bring about positive changes to our government. So join me, now!



Progressive Sarasota Members Deanie Bergbreiter, DeeAnna Dowdle, and Arlene Sweeting, attended the 2017 People's Summit in Chicago.

CONTINUED CLEAN ENERGY PAGE 1

application of clean energy makes more economic sense than the old dirty fossil fuel model. The clear indication of this in the U.S. is the recent urging by several large multinational corporations, like Apple and Exxon Mobile, for the president to stay in the Paris Climate Agreement.

We are living in exciting times. Tony Seba, Silicon Valley entrepreneur projects that by 2030 "all new energy will be provided by solar or wind and all new mass-market vehicles will be electric" and some experts say this will happen even sooner. Think of the car replacing the horse and buggy, computers replacing well just about everything we once did manually or mentally.

2) Grassroots Movement: The refusal of Washington D.C. to deal with the biggest threat to our planet has angered and motivated citizens, non-profits, businesses and local and state governments to take matters into their own hands. Across the United States they are committing to, or are already using, 100% renewable energy to power their homes, businesses, organizations, cities and states.

Right here in Sarasota our Sarasota Ready for 100 team has already made a lot of progress in bringing together local stakeholders to move the city of Sarasota to a 100% clean renewable energy future. On June 19th the Sarasota City Commission passed a 100% clean energy resolution calling for municipal buildings to be powered by 100% clean renewable energy by 2030 and the rest of the city to be powered by 100% clean renewable energy by 2045.

It may sound ironic but I have never felt more optimistic that our efforts actually will make a measurable difference to help slow global warming. The grassroots effort and the clean disruption of the energy sector will together reduce greenhouse gas emissions with the results leaving a habitable planet for future generations.

We do indeed live in very exciting times. To learn more about the Ready for 100 campaign and get involved please contact me at lynnsierra@nilssen.us.

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and good government watchdog organizations successfully all united to oppose this special interest bill and won.

Although House Speaker Richard Corcoran stood up to the energy special interests by killing the egregious pro-fracking bill, he failed to support the Florida fracking ban in his chamber. We need to change that. With another six months until next session, we expect Speaker Corcoran to help pass the fracking bill in his chamber. While the concept of a bipartisan group of legislators leading the way towards a fracking ban in a southern state like Florida may sound like a pie in the sky dream, it's become abundantly clear now that a ban is possible.

In fact, all eyes are on fracking right now, especially as an opposition to the offshore drilling in Florida steadily increases and joins

forces with our movement. We know we need to coordinate our efforts to block a new federal plan to open up the Florida coast to drilling as well as the two pending drilling permits in Calhoun and Collier Counties that could easily turn into fracking operations.

But let's remember the most crucial part: Florida's groundwater is the drinking water source for 90 percent of Florida residents and a key part of our tourism and agricultural-based economy. Potable aquifers lie under over 85% of the state and Floridians pump over 3 billion gallons per day from our aquifers.

Our fight for a fracking ban is only more important and more urgent than ever. We're coming back next session with a stronger and larger anti-fracking movement and we will pass a ban on fracking in Florida!



Critical Times is a publication of the Peace Education and Action Center.

MISSION:

The Peace Education and Action Center connects and empowers people to build a socially just, non-violent and sustainable community and world.

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Artspace Sarasota?

BY MARIELI A. DE JESUS

In a city with so many universities, art programs, galleries, private art schools and more, Sarasota is starving for studio space. Enter ArtSpace, a nonprofit based in Minneapolis, MI, that was created around 30 years ago with the intent to create affordable housing and workspaces for artists around the United States.

Almost 20 years ago in Sarasota, many artists reunited at Towles Court in studios that were not all that developed. Eventually, the area attracted many restaurants and businesses that boosted the economy, making it too expensive for the artists to afford. With time, the artists were run out of the space they themselves cultivated. This phenomenon, not exclusive to Sarasota, fueled ArtSpace to create a nonprofit that provides artists with affordable live/work spaces around the United States, cultivates community, and focuses on the areas of the city that need redeveloping.

The Sarasota Arts and Cultural Alliance in partnership with The North Trail Redevelopment Corp. and with the strong hand of Veronica Morgan (mixed media artist and historic preservationist), reached out to ArtSpace to make it happen here in Sarasota. Morgan told the Herald Tribune in 2014: "It seemed to be a no-brainer for Sarasota. There are so many artists here. And there is zero housing."



Artspace Tannery Lofts, affordable live/work space in Santa Cruz, CA - www.artspace.org.

In 2014 staff from ArtSpace visited Sarasota and held six meetings to pinpoint what had to be achieved to jumpstart the project and what the community needed. After the meeting, ArtSpace determined that Sarasota was an adequate candidate and that a mixed-use arts project could serve as a catalyst for redevelopment on the North Trail. With the support of the City of Sarasota, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Historical Society, supporters started fundraising but came up short. The money raised was saved in an account until recently, when two interested citizens organized fundraising parties that eventually helped achieve the goal.

The next step is an 'arts market survey' that will determine the needs of our local artist community. The survey will go live in late September/early October of this year and it will be up for approximately 60 days. Once the survey is complete, the data will be analyzed and turned into a report for the community to decide whether to go forward with the development or not.

The organizations behind this project have a clear mindset of including every type of art when it comes to defining an artist. Poets, writers, performers, illustrators, dancers and more are welcomed to be a part of the survey and provide input into the development of this project.

Aqua by the Bay Continues to Hit Roadblocks

BY DENNIS MALEY
The Bradenton Times

Politically-connected developer Carlos Beruff is developing the last major portion of vacant coastal land on Sarasota Bay in Manatee County. Once called Long Bar Pointe, the controversial development is now being planned

The developer also wants to dredge a large body of deep water behind the mangrove shoreline, which would provide access from the coastal property of homeowners to the waters of the bay, including docks. This feature violates the county's rule on having a 50-foot wetland buffer. Mangroves that do not abut the mainland are not as secure and are less likely to survive.

Beruff lost another battle last month when the Army Corps of Engineers shot down his request to use a wetland mitigation bank to offset the ones he'd be destroying. Developers use mitigation banks in order to achieve credits for wetlands they will damage or destroy during construction by having other disturbed wetlands restored and enhanced and then purchasing the resulting credits, but Beruff's planned bank didn't meet the qualifications. There are additional concerns over the amount of traffic that will be added to already strained roadways and hurricane evacuation routes in the immediate area. The application is currently scheduled to go back to the planning commission next month and then before the BOCC at a future date. Stay tuned.



under the name Aqua by the Bay. Understand, the development will be built, but how many rules he's allowed to break and how much environmentally-sensitive land he gets to destroy remains to be seen.

Beruff originally wanted to include a hotel and a marina on the property, but public opposition made it difficult for the county commission to bend enough rules to allow that incarnation to permit the required dredging of critically-important waters where vital sea grass serves as an incubator for some of the most important feeder fish in local estuaries. This time around, there's no marina in the plans so far and the hotel has been scrapped, but Beruff wants to build a wall of high rises that would violate the county's rules on height, while also drastically altering the vistas of the shoreline.

The water body itself would be very different from something like a retention pond that is totally housed on the mainland. Fisherman are concerned that it would invite predator fish into a key marine ecosystem in which many of the most crucial feeder fish currently reside, creating a ripple effect throughout the food chain that will be felt all the way out to the gulf. When county commissioners realized that staff had misunderstood the application and that as many as two dozen large condo towers could be in the offing, they sent it back to the planning commission for an updated recommendation, instructing Beruff to update the information in the meantime. He still hasn't made those intentions clear, and staff recently warned him that unless he was more specific on the high-rises, it would go back with a negative recommendation from staff.

CONTINUED BAYFRONT PAGE 1

neighborhoods, reflects Sarasota's cultural legacy, welcomes its diversity and encourages aquatic and onshore recreational programming as well as education and sustainability.

Many community and stakeholder meetings have brought the project to where it stands now, looking for a prospective company to take on the master planning and considering ways to activate the space with events and gatherings while the planning continues. **In July**, the Bayfront 20:20 stakeholders group plans to release an invitation to planning firms across the country to bid on the project. By **October 1**, they hope to have a firm selected that will then present a blueprint for what the 42 acres could look like by **June 30, 2018**.

The community can stay informed about this project through their official website, SarasotaBayfront2020.com, where all upcoming meetings, historical documents and contact methods can be found. Upcoming Board meetings take place from **3-5pm on July 18, August 1 and August 15** at the Blue Pagoda at 665 N. Tamiami Trail.



Book Review

Hegemony How-To

BY SEAN SELLERS

Following the 2016 electoral disaster, Jonathan Smucker's provocative new book, *Hegemony How-to: A Roadmap for Radicals* (AK Press, 2017) has generated considerable buzz among students of social change. Now in his late thirties, Smucker hails from – and has since returned to – the small town of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. After graduating high school, Smucker left home and became deeply enmeshed in the global justice, antiwar and Occupy movements of the past fifteen years. His book is an attempt to grapple with lessons learned along the way in the hope of shaping more effective left political practices.

The central premise of Smucker's book is that the larger social world must always be the starting place for those striving for social change. In practice, this means combating the ever-present tendency for insularity and self-marginalization and instead committing to truly building collective

power. For example, Smucker bristles at the term "activist," arguing that that contesting power isn't a hobby or subculture but rather a collective project pervading all aspects of our lives.

This book is more fun than it may sound. Smucker's main case study is Occupy Wall Street, which he became involved in reluctantly. While the example feels a bit dated, this movement, more than perhaps any other of the past two decades, underscores Smucker's thesis that the left is fundamentally ambivalent about building political power. Occupy, he points out, was an incredibly effective symbolic intervention that revolutionized our discourse around inequality with its unifying frame of the 99% percent. However, the movement was ultimately unwilling to even attempt to transform its symbolic power into political power. Therefore, after catapulting to astonishing heights, it unraveled having only changed our language and not our policies. Smucker provides many supporting examples, and while readers may have a quibble here or there, it is difficult to dispute the underlying diagnosis. Of course, as November underscored, this ambivalence to political power comes with a very heavy price tag.

Hegemony How-to deserves praise for two other reasons. First, it is commendable for introducing useful social theory to the reader in digestible and unpretentious language. Don't be put off if "hegemony" is not a part of your daily parlance; Smucker walks the reader through the concepts

and explains how and why they are helpful analytic tools. Second, while the book is worth reading for its critiques alone, Smucker is an organizer at heart. As such, the last third of the book is chock full of practical advice for building effective social change organizations and movements. From campaign messaging to volunteer management, Smucker delves into the details, which is particularly helpful given the withering of our collective civic muscles over the last half-century.

While the book is heavy on how-to, it is noticeably light on what. In the final chapter, Smucker, discussing the Sanders primary campaign, writes, "The signs are all around us that a progressive populist alignment is coming into being." But frankly, many questions remain about what, exactly, will bring this alignment into being. The Sanders campaign's difficulty in attracting significant numbers of voters of colors serves as a cautionary tale that an economics-first message is not a magical panacea for social unification. While Smucker does not set out to write a manifesto or political platform, a brief overview of some promising, on-the-ground organizing efforts that have been effective at bridging race and class divides would perhaps help ground the book's conclusion back in the realm of the practical. Nevertheless, *Hegemony How-to* is a critical, timely read as we find ourselves staring down the barrel of extremist right-wing power from DC to Tallahassee. We must rebuild from the ground up.

Join us at The People's Congress of Resistance!

BY JULIANA MUSHEYEV

On September 16-17, resisters from communities all across the country will come together in Washington D.C. at Howard University for the People's Congress of Resistance. The local chapter of the ANSWER

Coalition, ANSWER Suncoast, is asking local organizations in Florida to endorse the Congress and send delegates to join us.

The corrupt U.S. Congress represents and serves only the wealthy and is regularly paid off by the 15,000 lobbyists who constitute a shadow government in Washington.

It is not and cannot be the voice of the people. It is dominated by two corrupt political parties – neither of which is truly representative of the people.

The People's Congress of Resistance will be the voice of the people – an expression of direct democracy of those who are left out and kept out of the Congress of plutocrats. It will chart a path of nationwide grassroots resistance and mobilization to defeat Trump's reactionary program of unrestrained capitalism. This path will draw on the experiences of the grassroots, amplifying the voices and spreading the tactics of those who are already fighting back to defend their communities.

The Congress is being convened by a broad coalition of leaders on the left, including Dennis Banks, Co-founder and National Director of the American Indian Movement, Juan Jose Gutierrez of the Full Rights for Immigrants Coalition, Mahdi Drat of the American Muslim Alliance, Dr. Margaret Flowers of Popular Resistance, and many more. So far over 100 local



organizations across the country have endorsed the Congress and have agreed to send delegates.

One the conveners, Eugene Puryear of the Stop Police Terror Project in Washington D.C., explained the inspiration for the Congress, "We are taking our inspiration to some degree from the struggle of the people of South Africa against apartheid, when they set up the freedom charter," said Puryear, "They came together and set up a common agenda of what it meant to be liberated...they built a huge movement based on people power that took on the most powerful forces in the world and won."

"The goal of the People's Congress is not to change the Congress of the United States, it is an institution of repression and oppression." Says Brian Becker, National Coordinator of the ANSWER Coalition, and another convener of the Congress, "Change, if you think about it, never comes from the oppressor. Change only comes from the people."

Becker explains that the Congress will be an instrument of struggle and education that shows people that we do have the power to change society, "If we feel that the billionaires, millionaires and politicians should have the power and we beg them for crumbs, then they will have the power. But if we feel that we have the power, and we know that we have the power, and we educate our class in the idea that we can be the power, we will be the power."

If you are interested in finding out more about the People's Congress of Resistance, visit congressofresistance.org or like the Facebook Page: [facebook.com/CongressOfResistance](https://www.facebook.com/CongressOfResistance)

COMING UP @FOGARTYVILLE WWW.WSLR.ORG

SUNDAY JULY 30TH AT 7PM

Old Souls \$20
former members Jazz Juvenocracy



8pm Saturday September 23rd

\$15 in adv. \$18 at door

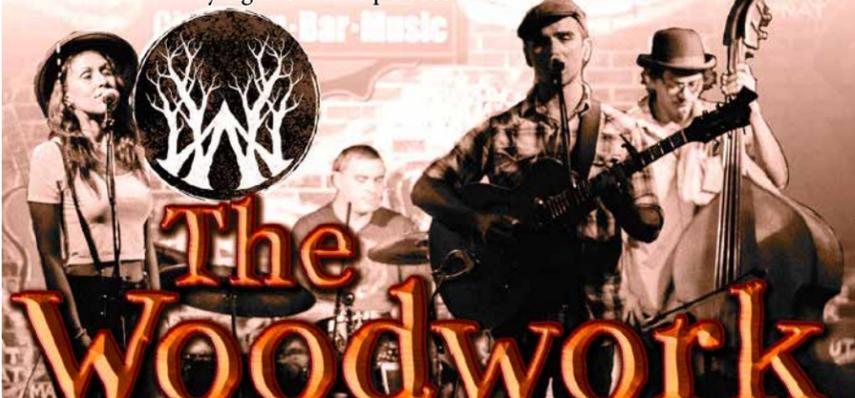
ANTSY McCLAIN

His Uncle Fred says: "Antsy is a creative force whose roots lie in songwriters like John Prine, Kris Kristofferson & Guy Clark," *The Houston Chronicle* says "a happier, funnier Bob Dylan." We love him and are happy to have him back. Fred is right. That guy can write a good song.

8PM FRIDAY OCTOBER 20TH

\$10 in adv. \$12 at door

From the ashes of the **Wholtones** arises a new folk/jazz infused indie sound, composed of his + her harmonies, finger-style guitar, classical & Latin bass punctuated by right-on-time percussion.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THURSDAY JULY 6, 10:00am to 12:00pm: Nation Group monthly meeting at the Sarasota Selby Library, 1st Street. Contact: nationtalk@gmail.com

SATURDAY JULY 8, 12:30pm to 2:00pm: Citizens' Climate Lobby Monthly Meeting at the North Sarasota Library, 2801 Newtown Blvd, Sarasota.

MONDAY JULY 10, 3:00 to 5:00: League of Women Voters Board Meeting at the Gulf Gate Library, 7112 Curtis Ave - Sarasota

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 7pm. Revolutionary Pedagogy and the Struggle for Education. Fogartyville. 525 Kumquat Ct.

THURSDAY JULY 13, 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Club General Meeting at the Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Blvd of the Arts, Sarasota.

FRIDAY JULY 14, 8:45 am-10:00 am: League of Women Voters: Sarasota's Schools – What's New? At Brookdale Sarasota Central, 4540 Bee Ridge Rd - Sarasota

SUNDAY JULY 16, 3:00pm to 5:00pm: Good Cause EcoSangha Monthly Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 3975 Fruitville Rd, Sarasota. Visit their website for further details. <http://goodcausesangha.weebly.com/>

THURSDAY JULY 20, 10:00am to 12:00pm: Nation Group Planning Meeting at the North Sarasota Library, 2801 Newtown Blvd. Sarasota.

THURSDAY JULY 20, 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Florida Veterans for Common Sense General Meeting at the Waldemere Firehouse Community Room, 2070 Waldemere Street.

MONDAY, JULY 24, 11:30 am-1:00 pm: League of Women Voters: Florida Legislative Update at Community Foundation of Sarasota County, 2635 Fruitville Road. \$15 members, \$20 nonmembers, RSVP by July 18 by email events@lwvsrq.org(pay at door)

THURSDAY AUGUST 3 10:00am - 12:00pm: Nation Group monthly meeting at the Sarasota Selby Library, 1st Street, Sarasota. Contact: nationtalk@gmail.com

MONDAY AUGUST 7, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm: League of Women Voters: League Board Meeting at Gulf Gate Library 7112 Curtis Ave.

THURSDAY AUGUST 10, 7:00pm - 9:00pm: Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Club General Meeting at the Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Blvd of the Arts, Sarasota.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 7pm: Film Screening: Dream, Girl. Fogartyville, 525 Kumquat Ct.

FRIDAY AUGUST 11, 8:45 am-10:00 am: League of Women Voters: Sarasota's Opioid Epidemic at Brookdale Sarasota Central 4540 Bee Ridge Rd, \$5 RSVP by August 7 by email events@lwvsrq.org

SATURDAY AUGUST 12, 12:30pm to 3:00pm: Citizens' Climate Lobby Monthly Meeting at the North Sarasota Library, 2801 Newtown Blvd, Sarasota.

THURSDAY AUGUST 17, 10:00am to 12:00pm: Nation Group planning meeting at the North Sarasota Library, 2801 Newtown Blvd. Sarasota.

THURSDAY AUGUST 17, 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Florida Veterans for Common Sense General Meeting at the Waldemere Firehouse Community Room, 2070 Waldemere Street.

SUNDAY AUGUST 20, 3:00pm to 5:00pm: Good Cause EcoSangha Monthly Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church Library, 3975 Fruitville Rd, Sarasota.

MONDAY AUGUST 28, 11:30 am-1:00 pm: League of Women Voters: U.S. Government in Turmoil at Community Foundation of Sarasota County 2635 Fruitville Road. \$15 members, \$20 nonmembers RSVP by August 22 by email events@lwvsrq.org(pay at door)

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm: League of Women Voters: League Board

Meeting at Gulf Gate Library 7112 Curtis Ave.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 7, 10:00am to 12:00pm: Nation Group monthly meeting at the Sarasota Selby Library, 1st Street, Sarasota. Contact: nationtalk@gmail.com

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 8:45 am-10:00 am: League of Women Voters: Gun Violence – Political or Public Safety Issue? At Brookdale Sarasota Central 4540 Bee Ridge Rd \$5 RSVP by September 4 to lwvsrq@gmail.com (pay at the door)

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 9, 12:30pm to 3:00pm: Citizens' Climate Lobby Monthly Meeting at the North Sarasota Library, 2801 Newtown Blvd, Sarasota.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 7pm. The Nation Group hosts Activist Tuesday at Fogartyville. Check the website for details: www.fogartyville.org.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Club General Meeting at the Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Blvd of the Arts, Sarasota.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 7pm. Action Together Suncoast hosts Activist Tuesday at Fogartyville. Check the website for details: www.fogartyville.org.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 10:00am to 12:00pm: Nation Group planning meeting at the North Sarasota Library, 2801 Newtown Blvd, Sarasota.

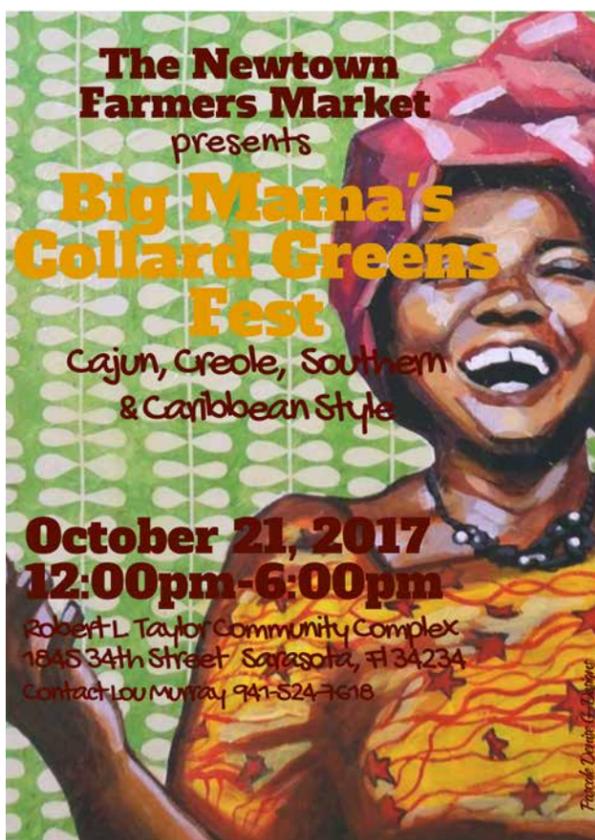
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Florida Veterans for Common Sense General Meeting at the Waldemere Firehouse Community Room, 2070 Waldemere Street.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 11:30 am-1:00 pm: League of Women Voters: Gun Violence – Political or Public Safety Issue? \$5 RSVP by August 22 to lwvsrq@gmail.com (pay at the door). Venue to be confirmed.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 7pm. All of Us hosts Activist Tuesday at Fogartyville. Check the website for details. www.fogartyville.org.

Collard Greens Fest Returns In October

BY ADAR PITTS



Calling all chefs, big mammas, and food lovers, get ready for Newtown Nation's 2nd Annual Big Mama's Collard Green Fest. The festival will be on **October 21, 2017 from 12 PM to 6 PM** at the Robert Taylor Community Complex. Admission is free.

The festival will highlight collard greens recipes of Southern, Cajun, Creole, and Caribbean origin; these recipes have been passed down from generation to generation. There will also be vendors with delicious seafood, barbecue, and good, old southern cooking.

If you feel that you have the best greens in town, come and join the contest.

"This is not for the faint of heart," warned Lou Murray, festival coordinator. "If you just cook greens and throw them in a pot and go down there, you're going to be embarrassed."

There will be legendary cooks participating from the Newtown, Bradenton, Palmetto, and Rubonia area.

"If you've got a reputation – if you go and cook greens for your church and people talk

about your greens, you might want to come in and take a shot at it. The competition is pretty stiff," said Murray.

For more information about the festival contact Lou Murray at (941) 524-7618 or Valerie Buchand at (941) 544-3262.



The Newtown Farmers Market operates the 1st and 3rd Friday and Saturday of every month. 1-6pm on Friday; 9:30am-1pm on Saturday.

A Voice for North Port – WKDW-LP 97.5

BY RJ MALLOY
Station Manager

“Building community through open communication” - that's what Brian Heron, grandson of the 1916 Irish Rebellion leader James Connolly, scrawled across the back of our bar bill at the Celtic Ray over 6 years ago. Communication, he insisted, was meaningless and useless unless it encompassed everything and everyone. Community, he said, could only form and hold together if that communication was open and available. And Brian should know, as he was the founder of the Irish Arts Center in New York and the Celtic Art Center in Hollywood, CA.

Surprisingly his evaluation of those centers of Irish community was that they were limited at best because they only included Irish thought. There was much more to be done in the realm of community organization and he was perplexed. How do we get beyond our own echo chambers of like-minded friends and get to some real conversation and change? Larry Maurer, longtime friend and techno-geek joined the discussion with the fateful statement, “we should do internet radio and broadcast to the world”.

We have found that open communication is the essential ingredient to compromise and mediation. But in order to find the true middle

ground, we have to examine and understand the extreme sides. That required a solid commitment to respectful free speech. The overriding concept is that while I personally may not like what you have to say, I will defend your right to say it respectfully. And by allowing you to say it, I also need to be committed to truly hearing what you have said. In return, you need to allow me to do the same. It turns out that this is not that difficult a process.

And so here we are today. I am writing this in my office in North Port and looking out my window I can see the 100' tower and dual antennae pushing out 24/7 news, talk, local music, and everything else we can convert to audio on WKDW 97.5 FM. A custom server is sitting in Pheonix, Arizona, connected directly to the fiber optic backbone and providing unlimited bandwidth for internet listeners on kdwradio.com. On my desk there's a letter from an MP in Belfast, Ireland

thanking us for our Irish World Radio project (irishworldradio.com) where we broadband all of the music and commentary that is banned from broadcast in Northern Ireland.

Which brings us back to radio, both internet and FM. It is both a powerful tool to build community and a terrible weapon that can be used to destroy it. So, the quest becomes sacred in nature, do we build or destroy. It is a labor of love and we choose to build. Join us and check out WKDW 97.5 – the voice of the North Port Community, kdwradio.com.



Volunteers work to make WKDW a reality.

Stand Up for Democracy PAC Started

BY JEFFREY R. ORENSTEIN, PH.D.

A newly-formed grassroots progressive political action committee, Stand Up 4 Democracy PAC, held its first general meeting on June 28th. The PAC's initial focus will be finding and supporting progressive and highly-qualified candidates for local, state and federal offices in the greater Sarasota-Manatee community, including the Tampa Bay region. It is, or will soon be, registered with appropriate federal and state authorities as required and be transparent in its donors and endorsements.

Stand Up 4 Democracy PAC has elected five officers (President Jeffrey R. Orenstein, Ph.D., V.P Trent Miller, Treasurer Susan Grundy, CPA, Secretary Bettye Andreos and Legal Officer Maureen Chiofalo, Esq.) and four at-large board members, Lesa Miller, Virginia Orenstein, Eric Belmont and Veronica Belmont for initial terms

ending in December 2018.

PAC President Jeffrey R. Orenstein, Ph.D., a retired political science professor and author of books on public policy said, “Instead of merely complaining about unfairly-drawn Congressional and state legislative districts and politicians who vote to protect the special interests and ignore the rest of us, we're going to take action and take back our political system. We intend to recruit and vet good candidates, help them become effective campaigners and provide them with money and volunteers. We're also going to stand up for sound democratic government and oppose efforts to subvert democracy by any means.”

Board member Eric Belmont, a retired automobile executive, said, “We are not affiliated with any political party or candidate committee, although our board of directors are all progressive Democrats. Forming an independent PAC gives

us many advantages such as being able to support like-minded candidates early in the electoral cycle, work within entire districts and regions crossing many city and county boundaries, and to have a permanent presence in the entire region.”

“Parties cannot do the job alone. Federal campaign contribution limits have not been adjusted for inflation in more than 40 years. The maximum individual contribution limit of \$1,000 set in 1974 is worth less than \$300 in current dollars. We will do our part to help candidates we select to become viable contenders,” Orenstein said.

The PAC's committees are already meeting and a website domain (SU4DPAC.org) has been reserved and a website is currently being designed. Citizens wishing to help can apply for PAC membership by agreeing to the PAC's stated principles and paying dues of \$20.20.

Yes to Second Chances

BY ADAR PITTS



SCLO's colorful headquarters is easy to find on MLK Avenue

“We want to remind the individuals that walk through these doors that they don't have to settle. They can live a better life and they can get a good job, but it's up to them – how they want their story to start and how they want their story to end,” said April Glasco, founder and CEO of Second Chance – Last Opportunity (SCLO).

Second Chance - Last Opportunity is a non-profit organization that offers life management

skills to at-risk teens and low-income/homeless families. The organization's mission is to empower individuals in crisis by providing them with essential skills and tools so they can manage their lives more productively. The organization began in 1992.

“I started with a house. I put homeless women with children in there to help them get a new start in life. I taught life skills,” said Glasco.” They were young ladies that had no direction at all.”

The organization has expanded and now offers programs such as, life-management skills training, parenting skills training, counseling, mentoring, HIV-AIDS education and counseling, summer and after-school youth programs, food, clothing and shelter referrals, and holiday meals and food distribution.

“Life skills is the focus and the core of what Second Chance does. And it is so important that we gain our skills to be effective at what we do,” said Glasco. “When we teach these skills, we want these individuals to get it so they can teach it to their children so we can have a community

that is whole again.”

SCLO's also offers a year-around “Out of the Box” youth program available to teens ages 12-18. The program is designed to help the participants gain the confidence and courage to be the best that he/she can be.

The program includes mentoring, discussion, role-play, activities, and field trips on subjects such as coping skills, conflict avoidance and resolution, communication skills, anger management, and family relationships. Out of the Box is held on Thursdays and Fridays with a field trip on Saturdays once a month.

Second Chance- Last Opportunity will be hosting its Share the Light Luncheon on October 19 at Michael's on East. “We share our accomplishments for a whole year of what we have done to help people in the community and how we collaborate with many agencies,” said Glasco.

For more information on the SCLO programs and events, call 941-360-8660 or visit www.secondchancelastopportunity.org

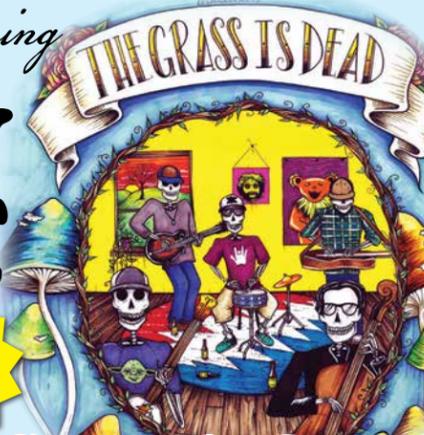
MISSION

WSLR is an innovative, listener-supported nonprofit, noncommercial FM radio station dedicated to serving the Sarasota community. WSLR features locally produced programming and events that present cultural, artistic and political perspectives currently underrepresented in the media. Our goal is to inform and empower listeners to play an active role in WSLR and in their community. WSLR promotes equality, peace, sustainability, democracy, health, and social and economic justice.

Our 9th Annual

doors **4 PM** featuring music at 5p

SUNDAY AUGUST 6th



Rain or Shine All Ages Show!

The Grass is Dead

The Dead, grassed-up and ready to rip!

Plus! Tie Dye! Food & Drinks NO coolers please

Rock with the Soul of Jerry **Michael Miller Band**

Finish the night with Sarasota's premier jamming family band... **The Schmitz Bros.**

Sixties pricing \$15 GA - Students half price- 12yrs and younger free w/adult

wslr 96.5 lpfm

WEEKLY PROGRAM GUIDE

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- WBPV 100.1 FM Bradenton

listen online

- WSLR.org (desktop)
- WSLR App at wslr.org (mobile)

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archive.wslr.org Music shows are archived for two weeks. News and public affairs are available for download, and expire later.

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Blues · Roots · Jazz · R&B · Soul
Electronica · Dubstep · Club · Hip-hop
Freeform · Eclectic
Rock · Punk · Jam · Indie · Pop
News · Public Affairs
World · Spiritual

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12 mid.	Global Village Syndicated	Beats, Rhymes & Life Radio DJ Cellus	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	Coffee and Donuts Ryan "Ryanito" Larranaga & DJ Cellus	New Radio New College Becca, Noah	Open A.I.R. Matt Dakan	
1 a.m.							New Radio New College Becca, Noah, Gerina, Abigail
2 a.m.	MUSIC Automated playlist	Midnight Special Syndicated	Strange Currency Syndicated	Upfront Soul Syndicated	Music Automated playlist		
3 a.m.							
4 a.m.		Union Edge Syndicated	Truthdig Radio Syndicated	A Way With Words Syndicated	Economic Update Richard Wolff	Music Automated playlist	
5 a.m.	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated		MUSIC Automated playlist
6 a.m.							
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.	All Things Rock Gary O.	Soul School Troy Nichols	Blues to Bluegrass John Dickman	Eclectic Blender Dave Pedersen	The Breakfast Bar William Stoner	Celtic Dew Dave Wertman	A Love Supreme John Haupt
9 a.m.			Music with a Purpose Pat Monahan				Wings of the Heart Salima Rael & Carol Rosenbaum
10 a.m.	Rootstock Radio	Stratosphere	Peace & Justice Report Tom Walker & Bob Connors	The Detail (Rebroadcast) Syndicated	Surreal News Lew Lorini & Steve Norris	Juke In the Back Syndicated	Alternative Radio Syndicated
11 a.m.	Music of the World Marco Ciceron	Latin Alternative Syndicated	Vibrational Journeys Perette Cannady	Metropics Carlos Pagan	Complex Waveforms Mark Zampella	Ralph Nader Radio Syndicated	Law and Disorder Syndicated
NOON		Afro Cuban Jazz Frankie Piniero				The Laura Flanders Show	Folk Alley Syndicated
1 p.m.	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman	BreakBeat Max & Jonah	
2 p.m.	Ralph Nader Radio Hour Syndicated	Background Briefing Ian Masters	The Monitor Syndicated	Letters To Washington Syndicated	Economic Update Richard Wolff	De Mush Doctor's Caribbean Rhythms De Mush Doctor	Dadee-O's Collector Corner Dadee-O
3 p.m.	Organic Grooves Ian	Back Alley Blues Steve Arvey & Friends	Music Museum Ed Foster	Play It Again Marshnitz David Smash	Positive Friction John Haupt		
4 p.m.	Second Wind Sean Green	Progressive Palace Phil G		Eclectricity Susan Runyan		Bop & Beyond Bill Ewell	Velvet Hammer Blues Beth Hammer
5 p.m.	From the Mountains & Beyond Tracy Hostettler, Annie	Tuesday Drive Home David Young	Hawaii Bob & Company Hawaii Bob	Ted's Head Ted	Friday Happy Hour Bartender Tommy D.		
6 p.m.	Capitol Update State News	Micro-Macro-Enviro-Radio	Talk Nation	Guns & Butter or Background Briefing	Jumping Mullet Report WSLR News	All Mixed Up Syndicated	Louisiana Gumbo Show Kid Red
7 p.m.	Short Wave Report	Jumping Mullet Report WSLR News	TUC Radio		Counterspin		
8 p.m.	Yesterday's Dead Today Mark Binder	Lost in the Root Cellar Roger & Peter	New & Blue Session Gary Inganamort	Spirit of Punk Jill Hoffman-Kowal	Ripper's Rarities Russ Yodice	Indie-licious Shelia, Vim	Ju Ju Jazz Dr. Nik
9 p.m.		Aerial Boundaries Rich LaPenna		Velvet Radio Elissa Bello			
10 p.m.	Indigenous Sounds White Horse	Alternative Reality Alex & Steph	Another Late Night Katy	Indie Files Joel Jaffe	Music Show in Transition	Music Show in Transition	Common Threads Fred Nowicki
11 p.m.			Music Show in Transition	Music Show in Transition	Music Show in Transition		
12 mid.	Beats, Rhymes & Life Radio DJ Cellus	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	Coffee and Donuts Ryan "Ryanito" Larranaga & DJ Cellus	New Radio New College Becca, Noah	Open A.I.R. Matt Dakan & Jamiel Livingston	New Radio New College Becca, Noah	Global Village Syndicated

Streaming live 24/7/365 at [WSLR.org](http://www.wslr.org) · Studio line 941-954-8636

Editorial: Public Education Under Attack

BY SHIRLEY BROWN

Sarasota County School Board Member

Public education in Florida is under attack by the Legislature, and that was never more evident than in this year's legislative session.

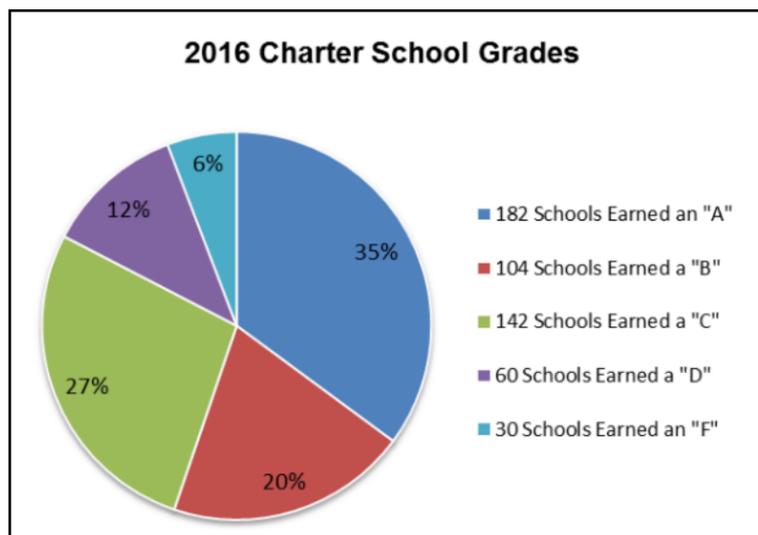
While HB15 increased the amount of per student funding for Corporate Tax Credit vouchers by an average of \$1205/student, the legislature cut the base student funding for public schools by \$27.07/student. In addition, a 274-page amendment filed to HB7069 in the last minutes of session may require as much as \$1380/per student be transferred from Sarasota's locally raised capital fund to Charter Schools annually. Governor Scott called a special session after he vetoed the education budget. However, speculation has it that in exchange for signing the controversial HB7069, a priority for the House Speaker, Scott would get funds for his priority, Enterprise Florida, along with a bump in funding for public schools.

Charter schools started as a way to give parents a choice in their children's education. They were supposed to offer unique alternatives to the public schools and could help relieve the overcrowding in some fast-growing districts. Charter school operations are paid for with state and local taxes at the same rate as public schools, must follow state mandated curriculum standards and hire certified teachers, but they run the day to day functions with their own administration and governing boards.

Sarasota is fortunate to have several good charter schools, run by local boards that do offer something unique. However, while charter schools used to have to gain the approval of the local district, the legislature has loosened the rules so that it is easier for corporate charter school operators to open schools in areas they think would be profitable for them, regardless of the needs of the local school districts. They often come in to an area and build a school and then have the charter school lease it back from them at upwards of twice the average lease rates for the area. I'm sure that is why while public school advocates were asking the governor to veto HB7069, charter school advocates compared the passage of the bill to Christmas. Millions of local dollars which were traditionally used for district growth and maintenance priorities will now go to charter schools, regardless of their needs. In addition, local taxpayers will have no claim to

any assets purchased with these funds.

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program was a program touted as a way to give low income parents an option to their failing neighborhood schools and save the state money. Corporations could get a 100% tax credit for assigning taxes they owe to this program. Students on Free or Reduced lunch programs from failing schools could get a voucher worth 80% of the amount that would have gone to the public school. When more money flowed into the program than applicants who wanted to sign up for these "scholarships," the rules were changed so that the student didn't have to come from a "failing" public school and then to not having to have attended any public school. Income levels were



Source: Florida Department of Education

also raised so that a family at 200% of poverty could obtain a scholarship and a family at 260% of poverty (\$64,000 for a family of 4) could obtain a 50% scholarship. Scholarship amounts were increased this year to 96% of the amount generated for a high school student, 92% for grades 6-8 and 88% for grades K-5.

Hundreds of new schools have sprouted up all over the state. Parents have no way to check on their academic performance or financial status. Schools accepting these scholarships or vouchers can still bill the parents for the balance of their tuition if the voucher doesn't cover their full tuition charges, and they do not have to provide free lunches, transportation, special services or aftercare. Nor do they have to follow the rules for public schools regarding curriculum, certified teachers, testing and other laws. Since the majority of them are religious schools, they don't even have to comply with some laws on discrimination and students with disabilities.

One of the most startling aspects of the law of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarships is found in 1002.395(5)(a) that allows the total amount that corporations can contribute to increase by 25% annually. This means the program more than doubles every 4 years. This year's \$550 million cap on the amount of tax credits available will increase by \$140 million next year and legislators didn't need to vote on it or even discuss it.

My concern about the increase in dollars the state is giving to charter and private school vouchers is the lack of accountability for these funds. If a charter school or private school closes in the state, we lose those tax dollars. In addition, the public schools will have to scramble to accommodate these students with their existing resources. We are also not playing on a level field. If the legislature feels that state mandated standards, tests and teacher evaluations are the way to improve public schools, why aren't all schools that accept public funds held to the same standard? In addition, public schools must be built to last for a 50-year life span and must be used as hurricane shelters. Charter schools need only be built to 25 year standards. Any assets purchased with local capital dollars shared with charter schools are the property of the charter school and/or its parent organization as opposed to reverting to the school districts. Local school districts are limited in the dollars they can spend on building new schools and where they can be placed. Private and charter schools have no such restrictions.

I believe if the legislature truly wants Florida schools to outperform schools from other states, they need to quit funding us at one of lowest rates. If they increase the base student allocation, funding will increase equally for all schools – traditional public and charter schools, as well as private schools that accept vouchers. The way to increase teacher salaries which run \$10,000 below national averages, is not with bonus programs based on their performance on a SAT test taken in high school, but by increasing the base funding for our schools so we have the funds to pay our teachers more. Legislators need to stop calling public schools "government" schools and realize that good schools are only part of the solution to better student performance. Poverty, crime, health, mental health, disabilities, and poor parenting skills also play a role. Public schools shouldn't be expected to overcome all of these issues, but funding should be made available for the ones we can help to overcome and given to other groups that can help with the rest.

Restoring Voting Rights

BY DEANIE BERGBREITER

Nationally, Florida is one of only three states that permanently ban voting rights for ex offenders (Iowa and Kentucky are the others). But Florida ranks as the worst state for voter disenfranchisement in the country, accounting for a staggering 25% of those disenfranchised nationwide.

Florida's felony voter disenfranchisement law has existed since the Reconstruction area and was used to keep black residents from gaining political power. Except for minor changes in 1968, Article VI, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution still provides "No person convicted of a felony... shall be qualified to vote...until restoration of civil rights..."

Over 1.6 million people are disenfranchised due to felony convictions - that's 10% of all Floridians. Although three out of four people who have lost their right to vote in Florida are white, the law disproportionately affects lower income minorities. While black residents make up only 16% of the

population, 25% of voting age black residents in Florida are barred from voting due to felony convictions.

The current clemency process in Florida is notoriously difficult. During his term as governor, Charlie Crist (R) made it easier for former felons to regain their rights, restoring the right to vote to more than 155,000 people. But current Gov. Rick Scott (R) reversed that change in 2011 and mandated a waiting period before felons could even apply for clemency. Just 2,487 people have regained their voting rights since Scott took office in 2010. Shamefully, 77% of Floridians currently denied the right to vote have already completed their sentences.

Desmond Meade, chairman of Floridians for a Fair Democracy, has been spearheading the fight to give formerly incarcerated individuals a chance to vote again. On April 20, 2017 the Voting Restoration Amendment language was approved by the Florida Supreme Court to appear on the 2018 ballot. It's now up to supporters to collect the 753,603 signatures needed (8% of Florida voters) by February of 2018. The amendment restores

voting rights for felons after they complete all terms of a felony conviction, including probation or parole, but excludes people convicted of murder or felony sexual assault. Once placed on the ballot, it must pass with 60% of the vote in order to become law.

With 29 electoral college votes, Florida is one of the largest swing states and restoring voting rights may significantly affect state and national elections. According to a 2016 study, felon disenfranchisement affects election results for both parties, but more so for Democrats. The study showed that based on income and race demographics, if the ban had not existed in 2000, Bush would not have won Florida, and Democrats would have won the White House.

The right to vote is the most fundamental right we can protect in a democracy, and it deserves our attention regardless of politics. Floridians agree: 73% of the population supports restoring voting rights - 83% of Democrats and 63% of Republicans. Contact Progressive Sarasota at ProgressiveSarasota@gmail.com to volunteer or download and sign a copy of the petition at floridiansforairdemocracy.com.