



Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
6:30PM to 8:00 PM  
Via Zoom

## Monthly Meeting Summary

**Board Members:** Bentonne Snay, Jane Moscovitz, Arun Ravindran, Richard Thurer, Janet Nostro, Pat Thaller, Elizabeth Newman, Carolina Camps, Thomas “Mac” Hooton and Patricia Pino

**Speakers:** Wayne Brody, Norman Moscovitz, Daniel Uhlfelder and Lisa Askowitz

**Members:** Beatriz Portela, Marjorie Wilkoff, Louise Silverstein, Andrea England, Ruth Balestra, Linda Fernandez, Vivian San Juan, Marti Wakshlag, JoAnne Bander, Amelia Toural, Barbara Zwick, Kerry Gruson, Susan Scholz-Rubin, Joseph Fadel, Myra Silverstein, Lisabeth Bustin, Diana Cardenas Hooton and Laura Green

**Non-Members/Guests:** Rob Piper, Julie Becker, Silvia Wilhelm, Karen Paul, Jennifer Levin, Vicky Ruiz, Jane Torres, Jacqueline Pineda, Bryan Hernandez, Maria Solaris and Ulrich Merten,

### I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

- President Bentonne Snay called the meeting to order at 6:30, starting with an explanation of Zoom meeting rules, procedures for asking questions and use of the chat function.
- Bentonne posted a poll regarding who has received COVID vaccines: 86% of respondents already had 2 of 2 vaccines; 7% had 1 of 1; 7% had 1 of 2 vaccines.

### II. 2021 Florida Legislative Session Bills and Other Topics

- VP and Speakers Committee Chair Jane Moscovitz briefly introduced each of the four speakers who addressed the meeting.
- **Wayne Brody**, *Miami-Dade Dems Voter Protection Team Chair*: SB 90 and Other Voter Suppression Bills:
  - o Wayne Brody spoke about four bills Republicans have introduced in the legislature this year which are part of a national movement to suppress the vote. He advised that, problematically, because Republicans control the House, Senate, and governorship, they can pass anything they want. From an election integrity standpoint 2020 was a good election - there were very few irregularities in Florida. The Republicans focus on voting is a recognition that their current win margins are very slim (Ron DeSantis’ margin was only 12,000 votes) and that Democrats have a significant advantage of 900,000 more vote by mail (“VBM”) registrations. “Voter integrity” legislation is voter suppression so Republicans can maintain power.
  - o Senate Bill 90 was the worst of the legislation, but it failed the morning of the meeting. It would have wiped out all existing VBM registrations, eliminated many VBM drop boxes, and limited proxy drop offs.

- HB 7041, sponsored by Rep. Blaise Ingoglia, replaced SB90. It does not strike all existing VBM requests but shortens the current validity period from two election cycles to one election cycle. As a result, if enacted, Counties will pay approximately \$20M in associated costs. Also problematic, it limits VBM drop boxes, significantly narrows drop off proxy to just the voter, criminalizes giving anything to voters standing in line (including water) which could be deemed “influence,” and prohibits the use of foundation money for voter education. The Bill also establishes so called “super voting” sites, which though they sound good, are harmful because they enable the removal/closing of some or all current polling places.
- Wayne also briefly mentioned a compendium Senate bill which also included voter suppression tactics but ran out of time. His bottom line was the Democrats should be contacting Republicans in Congress to tell them to oppose HB7041 and whatever the Senate version turns out to be.
- **Norman Moscowitz, Attorney & Coral Gables Democrats Member: Anti-protest and Social Media Restriction Bills**
  - Norman said that the centerpiece of DeSantis’s legislative agenda is HB1 which is labeled as “combatting public disorder.” The bill is a reaction to the BLM protests and defund the police sloganeering. The Bill has three principal parts. The first is the least significant and criminalizes damage to confederate monuments. This is redundant with existing criminal mischief statutes. The second part concerns local allocation of police budgets. It provides that if a local police agency’s budget is reduced, a local commission can appeal to a state executive panel. The last part concerns political protests. It basically establishes more severe penalties for alleged criminal activity that emerges from a political demonstration. Because the statute is narrow in its scope, Norman believes any constitutional challenges will be viable “as applied” e.g., it is unfairly imposed.
  - Questions from the floor included (i) the present state of court challenges (none yet because it needs to be passed first), and (ii) the viability of constitutional challenges (unlikely apart from an “as applied” challenge because the thrust of the bill is a sentencing enhancement provision).
- **Daniel Uhlfelder, Attorney and “Remove Ron” PAC Founder: Plans and Activities to Replace DeSantis in 2022**
  - Dan Uhlfelder, the activist/attorney who garnered national publicity by dressing as the grim reaper to protest DeSantis’s reopening the beaches at the height of the pandemic, addressed the group regarding his PAC, Remove Ron. He first played a slide show highlighting his traditional and non-traditional tactics and emphasized that the purpose is to go on the offensive in advance of the 2022 election.
  - Questions from the floor regarded (i) beating DeSantis in 2022 and (ii) Dan’s thoughts about the fallout from the *60 Minutes* story on DeSantis’ pay for play political maneuvers (particularly the



allegation that a Democrat Director of the Department of Health may have been involved in the decision to make Publix an authorized distributor).

- **Lisa Askowitz, Miami-Dade Dems Voter Registration Co-chair and District 27 State Committeewoman:** The Importance of Precinct Captains in Getting out the Vote
  - o Lisa Askowitz explained that District 27 encompasses Pinecrest and some parts of Coral Gables and Unincorporated Miami-Dade County. The Miami-Dade Democrats will provide voter education training for precinct captains. The goal is to have a dedicated person spearhead voter engagement in each precinct (ideally where the captain lives) throughout the election cycle by conducting and organizing phone and text banking, door knocking, and get out the vote initiatives.
  - o Volunteers are needed for the following precincts in District 27: 617, 618, 625, 635 and 646
  - o The next training is **April 27 at 6:00 p.m.**; email Lisa - [lisa.askowitz@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.askowitz@gmail.com) to register or for more information, or Pat Thaller, Volunteer Outreach Chairperson, [patthaller66@gmail.com](mailto:patthaller66@gmail.com) for information about how to become more involved with either voter registration or the Precinct Captain program
- **Rick Ibarria, Rise Up Florida Outreach Chair & Coral Gables Democrats Member:** Enlisting Florida Corporations to Fight Voter Suppression Bills
  - o Jane Moscowitz presented on behalf of Rick Ibarria who could not make it to the meeting. Jane gave an overview of a project which entails assembling a spreadsheet of contacts at Florida corporations for rapid response and mobilization on issues which matter to Democrats. The initial thought was to use this list to marshal corporate support against SB 90 (which failed earlier that morning). The strategy was based on successful efforts in Georgia where large corporations publicly opposed voter suppression bills (e.g., Delta and Major League Baseball). There is value in this project going forward as corporations are becoming more willing to take positions on political issues and Republicans do not want to lose their financial support.

### III. CG Dems Business

- **The Treasurer's Report, Membership Committee Update, and other Club business were tabled to allow for more substantial dialogue between the attendees and speakers. These tabled items will be discussed at the next monthly meeting.**
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee**  
Board Members **Carolina Camps** and **Patricia Pino** gave the meeting an introduction to the new Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee.



- Patricia explained that the purpose of the Committee is for the Club to become more diversified and to attract underrepresented voters to the Club, all with the aim of getting more Democrats elected.
- Carolina explained that to that end, one of her projects will be to develop a survey to determine NPA attitudes among Hispanic voters so we can shape our messaging and persuade these people to become Democrats or at least vote for Dems.
- Lastly, Carolina and Patricia identified collaboration with the Blue Wave Coalition Hispanic Outreach Committee and the Cuban American Democratic Club as focal points for the DEI Committee's efforts. They also identified recruitment of African American Democrats as a goal.

#### **IV. Adjourn**

Bentonne gave an update on the Coral Gables Municipal elections (**Pat Keon** and **Jose Valdes-Fauli** (these two candidates endorsed by Miami Dade Dems Party and CG Dems were trailing, with most of the results in). The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Meeting Summary completed by Secretary Arun Ravindran with approval and edits by President Bentonne Snay.