

THE BRAY

the voice of the GCDP GREENVILLE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The latest news and updates from the Greenville County Democratic Party



Activists gather in the One Plaza, Greenville, for Wear Orange Weekend rally on June 2.

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Big gains in primary voters is a good start...

BY KATE FRANCH



Fellow Democrats,

Are you amped up for Democratic victories in November?

The promising results of the June 12 primary election give us reason to be more optimistic than we have been in a while. Locally, the blue wave in Greenville County doesn't have to be a complete bomb ("massive" in surfer-ese) to make a significant difference to the statewide races and we have a significant opportunity to tip the scale for progressive change in Congress, in the State House, and on Greenville County Council.

Chair's message (continued)

To create epic results, the GCDP needs to build on the voter turnout momentum we saw on June 12. If we can motivate more of our neighbors and fellow constituents to vote their interests on November 6, then we'll fuel the juice of the wave and allow our candidates to pop up and ride to victory.

Thank you to everyone who voted on June 12 to select our nominees for the November slate of Democratic candidates. You've set a firm foundation from which to start. The 19,792 Democratic ballots cast then represent a 45 percent increase over the number of ballots cast in the 2010 primary (the most similar recent election in which a primary for the governor's seat was held) and an 82 percent increase over the number cast in 2014. We jumped to 28 percent of the total ballots cast in Greenville County this year versus 16.6 percent in 2010.

But this number represents only 5.9 percent of registered voters in our community (only 20% of registered voters voted at all). There is no doubt that many more voters than that will vote a Democratic ticket, especially with Donald Trump's, Henry McMaster's, and the Republican held state legislature's agendas on the line. Those voters are the build-up of the wave that we need. We must convince them that their opinions and values will resonate and that the effort involved in voting does indeed reap benefits by impacting outcome. We share a common goal of wanting leaders who will champion progressive policy designed to create equal access and opportunity. The decision to not vote is, in reality, a vote for those opposed to inclusive, fair, efficient, and effective solutions for all.

In addition, there are many Republicans who are appalled by the current administrations and looking for viable options. They can play a part in restoring the promise of democracy by voting for Democrats. We will probably have to initiate the invitation, though. And that will require that we first assess our own willingness to express pride in being a Democrat and share the vision we have for our county, state, and nation. Talking one-to-one is still the best means for influencing personal belief systems.

Once the June 26 runoff election has solidified the 2018 Democratic slate, then our work revs up in earnest. How can you help? More specifics will be shared as campaigns coalesce into a coalition for November, but commit to any, or all, of the following strategies as first steps:

- Engage in the campaign processes of voter motivation and persuasion by volunteering your time and talents to the GCDP or a candidate. Can you give an hour a week or four hours a month to phone bank, canvass, or work on general duties in campaign headquarters? Contact headquarters@greenvilledemocrats.com or 864-232-5531 to sign up.
- Make a donation to the GCDP and help to fund a strong and vibrant two-party system here in the Upstate. You will support our efforts to identify and train candidates, inform the electorate about issues and legislation, provide the necessary background processes to support candidates, develop and maintain an infrastructure that enables data-driven action to fight injustices, and build local political units like precincts to motivate and activate Democrats. Your financial commitment is essential to these efforts. www.greenvilledemocrats.com/contribute.
- Talk about local issues and electoral options with your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. If we want success at the ballot box, we must be willing to discuss what's holding our community back and challenge the default political viewpoint. Attend any of the many opportunities to learn more about issues and community needs (GCDP breakfasts, Democratic Women luncheon/dinner, Coffee meet-ups, County Council meetings, etc.) – check the GCDP web calendar or Facebook page for events (greenvilledemocrats.com/events) and candidates' websites for platforms (greenvilledemocrats.com/links-and-resources/democratic-candidates-for-2018/).
- Attend forums, meet and greets, fundraisers, etc. to support our candidates on the campaign trail. Each is a photo opportunity to show the commitment of local Democrats to participating in the electoral process and a chance for you to let the candidates and others in attendance know about your concerns.

Chair's message (continued)

Don't forget to vote in the Democratic Primary on **Tuesday June 26** to choose between Brandon Brown and Lee Turner as nominee for the US House District 4 seat:

- The runoff is a continuation of the primary. If you voted in a party's primary, you can vote only in the runoff of the same party.
- If you didn't vote in either party's primary on June 12, you may vote in either party's runoff on the 26th.
- Vote at the same location as June 12. Eleven polling places were changed for the primary. One additional polling place has been moved for June 26 – Greenville 07 will vote at West End Community Center, 404 Vardry Street, Greenville 29601. (greenvillecounty.org/VoterRegistration/pdf/PrimaryPollSitechgs18)
- Polling places will be open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. So long as you are in line by 7:00 p.m., you will be allowed to vote.
- In-person absentee voting for the runoff is tentatively scheduled to begin Tuesday, June 19 in Conference Room H at County Square (follow the signs). Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and extended hours on Friday, June 22 until 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday, June 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- If you or someone you know needs a ride, please call the GCDP office to arrange – 864-232-5531.

I hope you're feeling a renewed sense of optimism that we will elect more Democrats this fall. I know that sometimes two roadblocks seem to replace the one we're able to overcome at each turn on the path to change, but the momentum is real. Let's steadily and steadfastly keep our focus clear and our motivation high, welcome others to the quest, and continue to have fun together. We can do this!

In solidarity,

Kate

Calendar of Events

June

23

GCDP Monthly Meeting
29 Ridgeway Drive, Greenville 29605
8:30- 10 AM
Carlos Phillips- CEO/President
Greenville County Chamber of Commerce

26

Runoff Election Day
Congressional District 4
7 AM – 7 PM

July

07

Democratic Women Meeting
West End Community Center
404 Vardry St, Greenville 29601
5:30 PM- RSVP @ 232-5531

09

Democratic Women Meeting
West End Community Center
404 Vardry St, Greenville 29601
5:30 PM- RSVP @ 232-5531

09

Greenville County Legislative Delegation
public meeting
County Council Chambers, County Square
5:30 PM

14

DWGC Coffee Meet-up
1021 S. Main St., Greenville 29601
9- 10:30 AM

28

GCDP Monthly Meeting
29 Ridgeway Drive, Greenville 29605
8:30- 10 AM

August

13

Dem Women Monthly Meeting
West End Community Center
404 Vardry St., Greenville 29601

18

Dem Women Coffee Meet up
West End Coffee Shop
8:30- 10 AM

25

GCDP Monthly Meeting
29 Ridgeway Dr. Greenville 29605
8:30-10 AM

Precincts to collaborate in cluster structure

BY CASS TYSON

Working with 151 individual precincts in Greenville County has always been unwieldy for the GCDP management team. With the recent surge of interest in politics resulting in an overall increase in precinct officers – including a significant number who are brand new to the process – that problem only got worse.

In order to better support the more than 200 Greenville County precinct officers, and to help us grow that number in the months and years to come, the Precinct Development Committee recommended, and the GCDP agreed, the creation of a precinct cluster structure. Following a model used in Buncombe County, NC, and other large counties nationwide, the county's 151 precincts will work together in 12 clusters.

Each precinct cluster has:

- Between 10 and 15 (mostly contiguous) precincts;
- Anywhere from 15 to 35 precinct officers, some with lots of experience, some with very little; and,
- A few precincts with no leadership, and a few more with only one or two officers.

For each cluster we have recruited one highly-experienced and active precinct officer to serve as a "cluster lead." Cluster leads will:

- Act as liaison between party management and the precinct officers within their cluster;
- Foster communication among their precincts, so, for example, novice officers can work with and learn from those with more experience;
- Help plan and manage multi-precinct meetings, pot-luck dinners, meet-and-greets, and other events;
- Help their precincts with volunteer enlistment, including identifying and recruiting new precinct officers in the precincts that need them; and,
- Help candidates and their campaigns find volunteers for canvassing, phone banking, and so on, when requested.

We believe having precinct clusters, with active Cluster Leads, will help us streamline the process of recruiting, training, and supporting all precinct officers around the county. If you haven't heard from your cluster lead yet, you probably will soon -- there's a LOT to be done between now and November!

We still have a large number of unfilled precinct leadership positions. And we need leadership to organize the precincts for a powerful result in November. If you are interested in learning more about precinct leadership, contact Cass Tyson at casstyson@gmail.com.

Meet Jalen Elrod

Jalen Elrod is first vice chair of the GCDP. This is the second in a series of Q&As to help Democrats get to know the leadership team in more depth.

Q. You seem to be the most non political person possible, by which I mean, there seems to be no wiggle-room in your words. You are uncompromising. A working strategy or a work in progress?

A. I wouldn't define it as a working strategy or a work in progress. I try to tell things how they are. Some people are bothered by that because they have a superficial concern about the injustices of the world. What is happening in our community and country and how that afflicts the powerless isn't ambiguous so I see no reason to pretend it is. People deserve better than the status quo. That includes the Democratic Party and how in Greenville there is a neglect of communities of color by the party as opposed to how predominately white "Resistance" that has arisen from Trump has been helped.



Elrod at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL

Q. You recently tweeted that people who got active after Trump should ask themselves if they would have been as motivated if Trump had lost. Everyone has their own reasons for activism and awareness. Does it matter what the driver was?

A. Of course it matters because Donald Trump, as terrible as he is, is a temporary problem.

There will come a day where he no longer sits in the Oval Office. I posted that tweet because there has been a massive outpouring of "activism" since his election. Many, if not all, of the problems facing historically disenfranchised communities did not start with Trump and won't end with him. Where was this activism when unarmed Black men were getting gunned down in the streets by police? Where was it when Black people were being forced out of the neighborhoods of Greenville to satisfy this city's greed? The list goes on and on.

Trump and what he represents isn't really anything new in America. Those who came in because of him must ask themselves if they're now in this fight for the long haul or if it's just a Trump fad that will sap them of their motivation after he is gone. Because people will still suffer. Just as they did before he came to power.

Q. Greenville is a beautiful city but with deeply systemic problems with poverty and race. Community policing, lack of affordable housing, and a grossly underfunded public transportation system. How do we get people focused on these local issues?

A. What is happening locally in Greenville is arguably more unjustifiable and immoral than what is happening in Washington. But, as I alluded to earlier, local politics lacks the theatricality of national politics. You get people to focus on local elections by letting them know those who are less fortunate and down-trodden suffer due to apathy of the comfortable and the affluent and they have a moral responsibility to.

Q. What experience most shaped you – socially, politically?

A. Seeing the community my family and people who look like me have lived in (the city) for generations be exiled for the renaissance of Greenville while those in power sit back and live their best lives because this injustice doesn't affect them or their power.

Meet Jalen (continued)

Q. Why don't young people vote and what do we need to do to change it?

A. Young people don't vote, or more broadly don't engage in the political process, for a myriad of reasons. Some don't because of cynicism about politics. Others, it's just apathy.

Q. Do you see your future as a front-man (elected official) or background (political/community operative)?

A. Everyone will find out in the next year or two.

Q. What do you want people to know about you that I haven't asked?

A. Some people have asked me why the Young Democrats under my tenure seem to have events in the same neighborhoods. The answer is that I have long felt the Democratic Party neglects and, frankly, takes advantage of predominantly minority communities by only interacting with them during election season and never go into those communities when those communities need the party to stand with them. That still persists. Our Young Democrats chapter has been determined to give back to those underserved communities that have been left behind by the party. I haven't been prouder of anything in my life than how much we've been able to do for the community.

Wear Orange Weekend

The battle over making America safe again continues to be fought in state houses, town halls, and community squares around the country. Advocates of gun violence prevention through sensible regulations gathered across the country on Wear Orange Weekend (June 1-3), including about 100 who rallied in the One Plaza in Greenville on June 2. Why orange, you ask? It's the color of protection.



Hunters wear orange to ensure their safety; protesters wear orange to advocate for the safety of all students, concertgoers, movie patrons, and citizens just living their lives.

You can support organizations like Moms Demand Action (<https://momsdemandaction.org/>), which advocates for gun violence prevention legislation while fighting expansion of gun rights bills in every state in the country, including a statewide SC chapter and an Upstate chapter.

Podmetto Politics Podcast Focuses on SC

Can't get enough politics? Looking for more local news? A new podcast helmed by former Congressional candidate Chris Fedalei and former GCDP Communications Coordinator Jarrod Wiggins is on the air. Available from iTunes, Stitcher, and all the usual podcasting apps, Podmetto Politics has six episodes live including interviews with the Democratic nominee for governor, James Smith, and his running mate, Mandy Powers Norrell. Stay tuned in for what's new on Facebook (www.facebook.com/Podmetto/).



Be bold and proclaim: I am a Democrat

BY LAURA HAIGHT

I grew up in New Jersey, went to college, and worked in New York City. Most of my life I'd been in areas that were both more liberal and accepting of political differences. I thought I'd come to the South when I moved to take a job in Northern Virginia. Then I came to Greenville.

I know a lot of Democrats are, as I was, reluctant to declare their political allegiance. There just wasn't a community – or so we thought – to feel safe in.



Today that changes. We are building that community and inviting you and all your under-the-radar Democratic friends to grab a hammer and help us by declaring: I am a Democrat.

It's a public coming out party that, we hope, will show Democrats that there are a lot of us out there, you aren't alone, and we need you.

This year, we need every Democrat to stand up and be counted. Not for the Democratic Party. That's just a name. But for the values it represents.

Here's what we want you to do:

Using your social media, post a brief selfie video stating your name and declaring "I Am A Democrat". You can add more information if you wish, but we encourage you to keep your videos to no more than 20 seconds. With your post add the hashtag #IAMADemocrat, so we can find you all (we'll need to do that for the coming out party!). Post this video on all your social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

Encourage five friends to come out as well. You can tag them in your posts or just privately text them, and ask them to do the same (think the Ice Bucket Challenge).

Want to go a step further? Add the "I Am A Democrat" frame to your Facebook profile picture. From your phone or desktop, go to your profile page, edit your profile picture. Click on **Add Frame**, and then search for keywords **Democrat** or **Greenville** to locate the frame, and click on **Use**. And you've done it.

What do you get for doing this?

Well, first the knowledge that you helped to activate and empower Upstate Democrats to stand together in this critical election year and to build toward exercising even greater influence in the 2020 election.

Second, there's going to be a party. A big Labor Day run up to the November election ramp up to Get Democrats Elected and sent to the Governor's mansion, the State House, County Council and Congress. More details to come.

If you're reading this in "The Bray", you may think 'Hey, everyone who knows me knows I'm a Democrat.' Please join this campaign anyway. What's important is that the entire community see the growing strength, the growing numbers, and the growing power of Democrats in the Upstate.

We're standing up in the Upstate. Please join us by declaring 'I Am A Democrat!'

Having trouble with your selfie or your profile frame? Email us at gcdpcomms@greenvilledemocrats.com.

GCDP Fundraising Report

The GCDP Fundraising Committee is delivering the party's first multi-year fundraising plan aimed at boosting local support. The committee formed in late 2017, hosted a successful "Tastings on the Town" event in February, and is now launching a three-tiered plan to help turn the Upstate a fashionable shade of bluish-purple by 2020.

The plan's aim is to mobilize voters, recruit Democrats to run for local seats, and grow an even more effective network in the Upstate. The committee knows winning takes technology, advertising, and organizing. With no financial support coming from the state or national party, every cent must come from local supporters.

Make your donation really count, make it recurring

We've enhanced our donation engine on our website and are now able to take recurring donations.

All organizations need a steady infusion of funding to keep going. Businesses have sales, nonprofits have donors. Your recurring donation will keep the Democratic Party in Greenville County strong. From identifying and training candidates, informing the electorate about issues and legislation, providing the necessary background processes to support candidates, developing an infrastructure that enables data-driven action to fight injustices and building local political units to motivate and activate Democrats, fulfilling the party's mission requires funding.

We support the foundations of democracy. You can too.
www.greenvilledemocrats.com/contribute.

Our goal is to generate monthly donations totalling \$2200 and raising additional funds for modern tools to support the growth of the party, spreading the message of what Democrats are about, build active and motivated grassroots organization, and help candidates win here at home – where change begins.

In the wake of winning hard-fought municipal races in 2017, the GCDP knows "going all in" starts now. With a robust slate of Democrats running in this election cycle, the fundraising committee is focused on getting voters to the polls in November while simultaneously setting pace for a successful 2020 election cycle.

GCDP Fundraising Committee members include party chair, Kate Franch, GCDP treasurer Anita LeBold, committee chair Corey Urbina, Steve Price, and Regina Waldrep.

Secular Democrats Huddle

Greenville County Secular Democrats Huddle is looking for any Greenville Democrats who want to work with others who are Nonreligious/Atheist/Humanists/Secular.

The huddle will focus on five main areas: Voter registration and outreach, working on secular issues for the county and state platforms, lobbying and campaign activities, a secular community questionnaire for our candidates, and service to the community through one to two service projects a year!



As soon as we can get a few people who are interested, we can plan an informal gathering and begin working together! Please email Shawn Trapp at secularupstate@gmail.com and check out the huddle's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/gcseculardems/>

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May CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to all our GCDP donors in May;

Dorothy Dowe, Mary Margaret Dragoun, Bill and Linda Hardman, Frank and Anne Holleman (in memory of Theron Farmer and Lillian Simpson), Pamela Kaplan, Doris McLallen, Joyce McKenzie, Conyers Norwood (in memory of Ducky Gower), Margaret Paylor, Shawn Trapp, Janet "Jan" Welch.

Please join them in supporting the Greenville County Democratic Party by making your donation today! Contributing to the GCDP has never been easier! Just click on this link

<https://greenvilledemocrats.com/contribute/>

Thank you.

YOU CAN MAKE MUCH-NEEDED DONATIONS IN PERSON, BY VISITING THE OFFICE, MAILING A CHECK, OR DONATING ONLINE 24X7 AT [GREENVILLEDEMOCRATS.COM/CONTRIBUTE](https://greenvilledemocrats.com/contribute/).

Connect with us

GREENVILLE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

1300 E. WASHINGTON ST. #J

(864) 232-5531

[HTTPS://GREENVILLEDEMOCRATS.COM/](https://greenvilledemocrats.com/)



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Know someone who would like to receive The Bray? Call HQ or contact headquarters@greenvilledemocrats.com. Please mail contributions to party headquarters. If your financial contribution to the GCDP is over \$100, please indicate profession or retired (required by SC Ethics Commission). Thank you.