

# THE BRAY

*The latest news and updates from the Greenville County Democratic Party*



THE 2019 ADVOCACY DAY CLASS PICTURE  
MOMS DEMAND ACTION SOUTH CAROLINA

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## All in for Tina Belge

BY KATE FRANCH



Elections are on the horizon! By the time you read this, we will be within a week of the March 26 special election for SC Senate District 6. What a difference Tina will make simply by helping to balance political power in our state Senate. To get her there, her campaign will need whatever help you can give to get out the vote – please make time to phone bank, canvass, poll watch, drive voters, and/or encourage anyone you know in that district to vote. Every single vote matters! ([Check to see if a polling site has moved for this special election](#)).

## Local elections on the horizon

Election of municipal council seats in Greenville, Fountain Inn, Greer, Mauldin, Simpsonville, and Travelers Rest will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2019. Because Greenville City Council elections are partisan, the process starts earlier than in the other municipalities. Filing runs from 8:30 a.m. on Monday, March 18 through noon on Monday, April 1. The seats on the ballot in 2019 are mayor, District 1, District 3, one at-large District, and one water commissioner. This election will help to determine whether Greenville City equitably reflects and honors the voices of all residents and neighborhoods for decades to come.

In June, Democrats from across the state will gather in Columbia to elect state Democratic Party officers for the 2019-2021 term as well as to conduct other party business. Please mark your calendar with the new dates for the SCDP Dem Weekend: June 21 - 22. All events are open to the public so plan to attend and be part of the excitement leading into the 2020 election cycle. (See [page 3](#) for hotel options for the weekend.) Friday night will kick off with the Blue Palmetto Dinner and Rep. Clyburn's World Famous Fish Fry; the business portion will convene Saturday morning. You can expect many of the presidential candidates will be on the program.

While anyone may attend the state convention, only county party delegates who were elected at county conventions in 2018 are able to vote. County delegates and alternates serve for two years so, if you were elected at last year's GCDP County Convention, you will receive more details about this year's state convention as soon as it is distributed by the SCDP.

From the SCDP Rules, IV. State Party Organization, 1. Officers:

"In each odd numbered year, at the annual State Convention, a Chair and three Vice Chairs shall be elected for a two year period. The First Vice Chair shall be of a gender different from the Chair, the Second Vice Chair shall be of a race different from the Chair, and the Third Vice Chair shall be between the ages of 18 and 36 years of age. At the first meeting of the State Party Executive Committee, the remaining two officers, Secretary and Treasurer, shall be elected. The officers shall be residents and voters in the state of South Carolina. No person who has been convicted of a state or federal crime related to voting or the conduct of an election shall hold office at any level of the South Carolina Democratic Party."

Trav Robertson, chair, Lessie Price, first vice-chair, Anthony Thompson, second vice-chair, and Scott Thorpe, third vice-chair, are all running for re-election. If you are interested in a state party officer position, information about filing will be available soon. In the meantime, for more information you can read the SCDP Rules here: [scdp.org/resources](http://scdp.org/resources).

In addition, we'll continue to welcome national candidates to Greenville County - thank you for showing them our wonderfully friendly and enthusiastic South Carolina hospitality. You're demonstrating how far we've come, and ensuring that they'll come back!

In solidarity,

*Kate*

## Calendar of Events

### March

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>20</b> Town Hall with Tina Belge, 6:30 – 8 PM, Upcountry History Museum, 306 Buncombe St., Greenville, 29601.</p> <p><b>21</b> Tastings on the Town, 6:30 – 9 PM, Endeavor Greenville, 1 N Main St., Greenville, 29601.</p> | <p><b>23</b> GCDP breakfast meeting, 8:30 –10 AM, Upstate Circle of Friends, 29 Ridgeway Dr., Greenville, 29605.<br/>Guest Speaker: Mayor Pete Buttigieg</p> <p><b>23</b> Election Day for SC Senate District 6, 7 AM to 7 PM. Get out and vote for Democrat Tina Belge. <a href="#">Want to help her win?</a></p> |
|---|--|

### April

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>03</b> Young Democrats of Greenville County, 6:30 PM, monthly meeting.</p> <p><b>06</b> Simpsonville Democratic Women’s Coffee, 9 AM, Panera Bread, 708 Fairview Road.</p> <p><b>08</b> Democratic Women of Greenville County monthly meeting 12:15 PM, West End Community Center, 404 Vardry Street, Greenville, 29601.</p> | <p><b>08</b> Greenville County Legislative Delegation Quarterly Meeting, 5:30 PM, Council Chambers, Greenville County Square, 301 University Ridge, Greenville 29601.</p> <p><b>13</b> Greenville Democratic Women’s Coffee, 9 AM, West End Coffee, 1021 S. Main Street.</p> <p><b>27</b> Greenville County Democratic Party monthly breakfast meeting, 8:30 AM, Circle of Friends, Greenville 29605.</p> |
|--|---|

For more details on these events and updated listings, please check the [GCDP calendar](#).

## SAVE THE DATE

**June  
21-22**

### SCDP State Convention- Columbia, SC

Columbia, SC-- Open to the public / state delegates and alternates serve two-year terms, so those elected in 2018 will be called to the 2019 state convention.

<https://www.apnews.com/879cb0e085d942da867a7fd24c90c725>

The Blue Palmetto Dinner will be the evening of June 21st, and the convention will be held on June 22nd. Here’s a list of nearby hotels. The SCDP encourages bookings as soon as possible!

Hampton Inn- 822 Gervais St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 231-2000

Sheraton Hotel- 1400 Main St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 988-1400

Marriott Hotel- 1200 Hampton St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 771-7000

Springhill Suites- 511 Lady St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 978-2333

Aloft Hotel- 823 Lady St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 445-1900

Hotel Trundle- 1224 Taylor St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 722-5000

Staybridge Suites- 1913 Huger St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 451-5900

Holiday Inn Express- 501 Taylor St, Columbia, SC 29201 (803) 744-4000



## Whitney Wright: Politics is about service

*This is another in our continuing series of Q&As with members of the Executive Committee of the GCDP. Whitney Wright is the 2nd vice chair and the leader of the GCDP Huddle. We asked her about the importance of working in the community and being the physical representation of Democratic values.*



### **Q. Let's start with some background: Hometown, education, current employment, family and personal interests - i.e. who IS Whitney.**

I am from Seneca, SC, and my parents still live there for now, but the grandchildren are calling...Growing up there I came to love all things Clemson, of course. And I attended Seneca public schools in the School District of Oconee County, then earned my Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Southern Wesleyan University in Central, SC. After graduation, I returned to Seneca and taught K5 and first grade for 4 years before moving to Greenville and completing my Master's Degree in Human Resources Management. I currently work full-time in HR and part-time as a project manager. I have two (much) older brothers, a younger sister, two nieces, two nephews, and a niece or nephew on the way. I love to read (when I have time); wouldn't say that I enjoy working out, but recognize that it is a necessary evil; like to work on remodeling my house; love my Gamma Phi Delta Sorors; and love my pastor (Rev. Speed!) and church family at Allen Temple AME. Anybody who knows me knows that I'm always on the go.

### **Q. How did you get involved with the Democratic Party and what are the drivers that have led you to run for - and win - a leadership position.**

I was 'recruited' and groomed to get involved with the Greenville County Democratic Party, shortly after I moved to Greenville, by the amazing Eric Graben. If it weren't for him, I may not have become connected when I did. Eric encouraged me and 'showed me the ropes,' which is definitely what's necessary to garner the interests of young people, and retain them. After working with Eric and the rest of the party as a volunteer, then serving as treasurer for the Young Democrats of Greenville County, I decided to run for third vice chair. When I aged-out of that role, I ran for second vice chair and am still serving in that role, along with that of Huddle coordinator. I think it's imperative for young women, and namely young women of color, to serve in leadership roles that allow them to build relationships with their communities at-large, provide a portrayal of themselves that maybe some would not expect, and share their unique perspectives. These perspectives can certainly contribute to improving conditions for all, and not just some.

### **Q. You describe the GCDP Huddle as the "in-person representatives of the vision, values and priorities of the Greenville County Democratic Party come to life in our neighborhoods and community." Why is that an important thing for a political party to do?**

It is important for the wants and needs of our neighborhoods and communities to be heard, because we elect our officials so that they can serve. We refer to the volunteer efforts of the Greenville County Democratic Party Huddle as 'Democrats Care' projects, because Democrats do care. Democrats want to see appropriate and affordable access to healthcare in their communities; we want public education (which serves the majority of school-aged children here in Greenville County) to be provided at no cost, but still retain its quality. Democrats recognize teachers' earnest work and caring, and realize that they should be receiving higher pay. We are the boots on the ground that felt tax reform in our pockets. Some of us are the brown and black people who didn't vote for tRump, not because we're "too stupid," but because we can see that he does not value us as people. Since the Huddle is comprised of these kinds of people, and people who know these kinds of people, we are trying to give these wants and needs a voice.

### **Q. What do you see as the biggest needs in the Upstate/Greenville County community?**

I think the greatest need in the Upstate/Greenville County communities is enhanced public transportation. It is my understanding that improvement planning is in-process, at least throughout Greenville County, but when someone who does not have access to a personal vehicle can afford a reasonably-scheduled ride that is on-time, the opportunities that become available will increase the overall quality of life. A ride can get a person to and from a job or medical care; a ride can provide children with experiences that they would not have without the ability to venture outside of their neighborhoods; a ride can also be the difference between arrival at the library or tutoring for students. I think back to before I began driving - nothing was happening without a ride because there were no city buses at that time, and there were some weekends when my parents just weren't going for it.

## Whitney Wright: Politics is about service (continued)

**Q. What are the barriers to making inroads in improving those situations, resolving those needs. Is there enough state, federal legislative support to help resolve these issues? If not, what needs to be done to create change in that area?**

The main barrier that I see is funding. Whether funding comes from the city, the county, the state, or federal initiatives, people who don't have problems with getting a ride have to see the importance in releasing and/or re-allocating those funds. I understand that all request processes take time, but we cannot even begin patiently-waiting until the 'powers that be' see the wonderful changes they could make if they support the expansion of public transportation.

**Q. Do you see running for elective office in your future?**

I don't know exactly what the future holds for me, but I know I'll have to let go of at least one job before I can consider doing so.

**Q. What haven't i asked you that you want to make sure Democrats in Greenville County know?**

I am always open to new ideas and conversations about improving Greenville County for its residents. I can be reached for project suggestions and to coordinate collaboration by email at [whitney.wrightsc@gmail.com](mailto:whitney.wrightsc@gmail.com).

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## Legislative Update: Education overhaul moves forward

It's been a busy couple of weeks for the South Carolina legislature; here's a quick update:

After a contentious debate a massive education reform bill H.3759 was approved by the SC House and sent to the Senate. The Senate's version of the education reform bill S.419 has some differences with the House bill and one Democratic senator is already pumping the brakes, threatening to talk the bill to death.

<https://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article227170734.html>

**S.154** which would extend the time required for background checks, an effort to close the so-called Charleston loophole that allowed Dylan Roof to legally purchase the gun used in the Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church shooting, has stalled. Some insiders speculate that South Carolina lawmakers are dragging their feet on this bill, waiting to see if the US Senate will approve HR8 which extends the time for criminal background checks from three to 10 days. The bill will most likely not be approved by the GOP dominated Senate and President Trump has promised to veto it, should it be approved.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/28/house-passes-gun-control-background-check-bill-trump-pledges-to-veto.html>

**H.4157** which would establish a deadline for purchasing new voting machines and establish a panel to evaluate proposals to update South Carolina's outdated system is on a fast track for approval. The bill was introduced March 5, passed without committee March 6 and is already in the Senate Finance Committee.

**H.3355** is picking up more sponsors. This bill deals with banning wireless devices while driving.

April 11 is an important date in the state legislature. That's the deadline for a bill in one chamber to pass into the other chamber in order to be considered in 2019. If the bill doesn't make the deadline, it will stay on the docket for 2020, as this is a two-year legislative session. The current legislative session ends May 9, although work will continue in committees.

If you would like to keep up with proposed legislation, check out the SC legislative app, which notifies you when a specific bill is put on the calendar. You may also set alerts for public hearings which you can stream live. To access the app, go to [www.scstatehouse.gov/mobileapp](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/mobileapp).

## Presidential candidate sightings

Three hopefuls in two weeks? Keep up, people!



Between mid-February and March 1, we had a dizzying array of presidential candidates stumping through Greenville

And we can expect more. As an early primary state in a contest where momentum is everything, SC will get more chances to see these candidates up close and personal.

And we can expect to see most, if not all of them, here in Greenville, which is an important destination, according to our sources, because of our diversity.

To keep track, we've set up a web page to hold photos, videos, and articles and other info from these presidential visits.

Check it out! [greenvilledemocrats.com/presidential-candidates](http://greenvilledemocrats.com/presidential-candidates)



## Senator Allen Honored with Chamber Award

The Greenville Chamber held its 130th Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 21, 2019 at the Greenville Convention Center. An array of local businesses and individuals were singled out for special recognition. Senator Karl Allen was the joint recipient of the The 2018 F. Ben Haskew Collaboration Award, sponsored by Furman University. This award recognizes Upstate leaders who display progressive visions and a partnership approach to responsible growth in the Upstate.

In presenting the award, the chamber said: "The 2018 award was presented to Senator Karl Allen and Representative Bruce Bannister for the vision and collaboration they displayed in leading a bipartisan coalition in the passage of House Bill 3209, the expungement expansion legislation, in 2018.



BEN HASKEW AWARD WINNERS SEN. KARL ALLEN, LEFT, AND REP. BRUCE BANNISTER, RIGHT, FLANK PRESENTER GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCILWOMAN LIZ SEMAN AFTER RECEIVING THEIR AWARD FOR COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP.

With passage of the bill uncertain in the final weeks, Senator Allen helped craft a crucial compromise in the Senate, and Representative Bannister ushered the amended bill through the House as the final minutes ticked down last May.

The vision and collaboration they demonstrated will allow tens of thousands of South Carolina citizens who have been convicted of low-level, nonviolent felony offenses to have their records cleared, thus removing a key barrier to securing gainful employment for those who want to be productive and contributing citizens.

Through their work on this legislation, Senator Allen and Representative Bannister displayed the great work that can be done when our leaders display a willingness to reach across the aisle to do what is right."

## Activists bring gun violence prevention message to Columbia

BY LAURA HAIGHT



PART OF THE UPSTATE CONTINGENT OF MOMS DEMAND ACTION.

In 2003, Alaska became the first state to pass permitless carry legislation. Since then, aggravated assaults with a firearm have increased by 82 percent.

Similar impacts have been recorded in other states, according to data provided by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense. Arizona has seen a 39 percent increase in gun assaults since enacting similar legislation in 2010. In Missouri, aggravated assaults with guns in St. Louis alone went up a full 25 percent in the first year following the passage of a statewide permitless carry bill.

Amid that backdrop, more than 125 activist members of South Carolina's eight chapters of Moms Demand Action went to the State House on March 5 to advocate against permitless carry and for legislation to close the "Charleston Loophole."

## Gun Advocacy (continued)

Armed with clipboards, signs and personal stories of loss and survivorship, the red-shirted advocates fanned out to meet with their respective representatives and senators in pursuit of a safer South Carolina.

Although many of the Upstate Republican legislators were not accessible, some did take the time to talk including Bruce Bannister (R-24), suitemate of permitless carry sponsor Bobby Cox (R-21).

Permitless carry legislation failed to become law in the last legislative session and, Bannister concedes, may face the same fate this time. Perhaps stats provided by Moms Demand Action are influencing that:

- Seventy-four percent of SC voters are less likely to vote for a candidate who supports permitless carry.
- Seventy-six percent of SC voters oppose permitless carry.
- Ninety percent of voters oppose open carry.
- Two of the state's biggest police departments have spoken out against open carry (a more restrictive version of the permitless carry bill now being proposed). The Charleston Police Department and the chief of police in Columbia have both indicated their objections.

The Charleston Loophole legislation would extend the number of days for a background check to be completed from three to five. Ninety percent of background checks are completed in minutes. It is only those records that are red-flagged that take more time to complete, roughly 10 percent of applicants. These are often people with criminal records or who appear on watch lists. Congress is currently tackling this same legislation with HR 8, which was approved in March and would extend the waiting period to 10 days. The state might wait to see if the federal bill will pass before taking it up.

Advocacy Day was an empowering experience for attendees and it crystalizes the bedrock idea behind Moms Demand Action's success: Show up.

If gun prevention is an issue that matters to you, read our profile of Moms Demand Action in the Upstate and find out how you can get involved. (<https://greenvilledemocrats.com/moms-demand-action/>).



Jean Fontaine, lead Upstate organizer, gives the Upstaters their marching orders.



Part of the Upstate contingent of Moms Demand Action.



Activists muster before fanning out to advocate for common sense gun violence prevention measures.

Have an organization you would like the GCDP to spotlight? Email us at [gcdpcomms@greenvilledemocrats.com](mailto:gcdpcomms@greenvilledemocrats.com)



## Four Upstate Dems named Clyburn 2019 fellows

BY ROXANNE CORDONIER

The South Carolina Democratic Party recently named four Upstate Dems as 2019 Clyburn Fellows.

The James E. Clyburn Fellowship offers leadership, policy and campaign training to young professionals living in South Carolina. The Clyburn Fellowship was created to develop and train the next generation of Democratic leaders.



Jarrod Wiggins

Amanda McDougald Scott, Courtney Thomas and Jarrod Wiggins from Greenville County and Tucker Lawson from Spartanburg County will spend the next year in intensive seminars led by experienced and accomplished national and state facilitators.

What do these leaders hope to gain from the program?

"I'm looking forward to working and learning alongside some of the best and brightest talent in the state over the course of this year," said Jarrod. "I cannot wait to leverage the skills I develop, the relationships I build, and the energy the group possesses to win more elections across Greenville County - at every level of government and with younger candidates."

Amanda wants to spread the Democratic message more effectively. "I really look forward to building relationships with fellow Democratic leaders across the state and sharing resources for a more victorious and progressive Democratic presence in South Carolina."

Courtney Thomas is focused on diversifying the leadership of the Democratic Party, "This program is an amazing opportunity, South Carolina made me who I am and I'm ready to give back," she said. "I am committed to revitalizing the power of black women in Democratic leadership. We have earned our seat at the table twice over so now it's time to make the table bigger. I hope to create more opportunities for black Democratic women with the skills I gain from this fellowship."

The leadership of the GCDP is proud to have these accomplished young professionals on our team and we look forward to sharing in their success.



Courtney Thomas and Amanda McDougald-Scott

## "While I Breathe, I Hope"



Bakari Sellers

"While I Breathe, I Hope" - the documentary which covers the unsuccessful lieutenant governor campaign of state Rep. Bakari Sellers in 2014, the 2015 Emanuel AME church shooting, the Confederate flag debate, + S.C.'s attitudes toward race is now streaming online <https://www.pbs.org/video/while-i-breathe-i-hope-wf0anw/>

You can also catch a broadcast on SCETV at 6 p.m., April 7. (The State)

# SHOPPING FOR THE CAUSE

Want to shop for a cause? Of course, all things being equal you'd probably rather patronize a business run by a fellow Democrat. We're here to help connect you. Businesses can purchase inexpensive ads on our Democratic Marketplace and we'll help them reach our constituents. We've got a new ad this month from Daniel Lopez, owner of Time To Taste Catering. Let's help Dems do business! Check out the marketplace and, if you're in business, consider placing an ad for a three-month, six-month or one-year term.



Time to Taste Catering | No event is the same, no menu should be either! Let our custom menus and no-hassle process give you and your guests an unforgettable experience.

**Contact Daniel ([daniel@timetotastecatering.com](mailto:daniel@timetotastecatering.com)).**

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## January Contributors

**Our thanks to the February contributors to the Greenville County Democratic Party:**

Carol Beard, Allan Jenkins, Kinard Johnson, Jennifer Knox, Anita LeBold, Deb Morrow, Ashley Newton, Kathleen Reynolds, Starla Taylor, Ellie Wilson.

You can help us meet the challenges Democrats face in Greenville County by becoming a 2019 Gold Yellow Dog member (\$1000 pledged in 2019), Silver Yellow Dog member (\$500 pledged in 2019), Bronze Yellow Dog Member (\$250 pledged in 2019) or Yellow Dog member (\$120 pledged in 2019).

Some of our donors choose to make their gifts recurring. Maximize your donation by making it recurring. Go to <https://greenvilledemocrats.com/contribute/>. For more information, contact Anita LeBold, treasurer at 864.325.8540 or [treasurer@greenvilledemocrats.com](mailto:treasurer@greenvilledemocrats.com).

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**Thank you.**

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The Bray is published by the Greenville County Democratic Party, 1300-J E. Washington Street, Greenville, SC 29607, phone 252-5531, Kate Franch, chair; Roxanne Cordonier, editor; Courtney Thomas, production and layout; Ann Funderburk distribution.

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