

THE BRAY

The latest news and updates from the Greenville County Democratic Party



Signs like this one taken in Greenville are popping up all over the country as we find ways to thank the health care workers and first responders for their selfless commitment and personal heroism. **Photo courtesy of iOnGreenville.net**

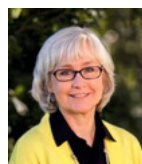
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All hands needed on deck to fight for expansion of mail-in voting

BY KATE FRANCH

CHAIR, GREENVILLE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY



I was wrong last month. Due to the delay of the county convention and shift to a mail-in ballot, I have one more chair's message to share after all. I want to use it to focus attention on an issue that must get critical, timely attention over the next couple of months: Ensuring safe and inclusive access to the ballot box in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic. That access must include expanded options for mail-in voting as well as in-person voting for both the June 9 primary and the November 3 general elections.

Continued on page 2

Chair message (continued from Page 1)

Changes to South Carolina election law and procedures that would be implemented at the county level will come from the state legislature. Discussions about readily executable solutions are underway. In addition, several members of Congress are working to address this issue at the federal level. For instance, Senator Kamala Harris has introduced the VoteSafe Act aimed at providing baseline standards for safety and accessibility at polling sites, safe and secure alternatives to in-person voting, and funding to help states implement equitable, inclusive voting options.

We'll look to our elected leaders to let us know which measures to rally behind. When we have those answers, please commit to calling and emailing your legislators to demand passage of the necessary legislative mandates. We will need measures in place by June. **See the League of Women Voters talking points on Page 4.**

The GCDP will probably also have to take action to inform and assist voters and protect turnout. We should heed key lessons from the activity of the local and state Democratic parties in Wisconsin during their recent presidential primary. The governor's attempts to delay the primary and provide mail-in ballots to all voters due to health concerns associated with the coronavirus were thwarted by the state legislature, state Supreme Court, and ultimately the US Supreme Court. But Democrats organized to connect with voters directly and helped many to navigate the process of applying for and returning absentee ballots, including using video calls to provide one-on-one assistance. Absentee ballots accounted for approximately 80% of the votes cast.

Wisconsin also experienced significant polling site closures due to concerned poll workers dropping out. As a result, thousands of voters stood for hours in lines that often wound around city blocks, risking exposure that could jeopardize their lives. The determination of Democrats to thwart suppressive actions is inspiring. One crucial outcome of the resulting overall turnout was the victory of liberal judge Jill Karofsky, who ousted an incumbent conservative State Supreme Court justice (only the second time an incumbent justice has been defeated since 1967).

So, we will likely need all hands on deck as the 2020 election days approach. Voter education and engagement efforts will be essential, and probably require new, creative approaches. Having adequately staffed polling sites throughout the county will minimize the amount of time that voters wait in line to exercise their right to vote, thereby protecting turnout. Please consider being a Greenville County Election Commission poll manager (worker). Training is provided and you will be paid. [Download the poll worker application and additional information.](#)

I'd like to end with a slightly updated version of remarks that I had prepared for a presidential campaign rally with Senator Cory Booker last year. The program had to be adjusted at the last minute, so several other guests and I didn't speak after all, but the remarks seemed still relevant today.

As Democrats, we believe that anyone, and everyone, from any walk of life should have a shot at the American Dream.

That means we must work to create fairer, more just, more equitable communities.

And, that starts with electing Democrats up and down the ballot - to County Council and the State House, to Congress and the White House.

No matter how committed each of us might be to the work required, however, we all need and appreciate moments of inspiration that help to keep us focused and motivated.

Continued on Page 3

Chair message (continued from Page 2)

Let me share a moment not too long ago that was personally inspiring. Last February, I had the honor of hearing the extraordinary Mr. Anthony Ray Hinton at Furman University. Because of racism, Mr. Hinton had been falsely accused, wrongly convicted, and sentenced to death row in Alabama in 1985. After a long, arduous life in prison, he was exonerated and the US Supreme Court ultimately overturned his conviction. What we saw on the evening of his visit to Greenville – what makes him so extraordinary – was a man of grace, compassion, wisdom, and true benevolence; even though he has every right to be bitter, angry, and demanding of retribution.

When asked his thoughts about how we could address the travesty of systemic racism that pervades for so many that which is our criminal justice system, do you know his answer? V-O-T-E . . . Vote.

“Vote” was his answer to almost every question that night.

I left recommitted to the work that lay ahead and have not lost sight of Mr. Hinton’s charge.

Voting is our right, our privilege, our power, our voice. We cannot afford to abdicate it. Never again should 43% of eligible voters (approximately 100 million Americans) not vote in a presidential election. Never again should only 15%, or less as is sometimes the case, of residents vote in a local election.

So let’s pledge here today that we will make sure that everyone eligible to vote is registered and current, that they know how to exercise their right to the franchise and are informed about our candidates, and that they then use that power – their voice – at the ballot box to create a Greenville, a South Carolina, an America that treats everyone with dignity, respect, fairness, and justice.

I’m ready – are you?

*In solidarity,
Kate*

LWV: What we want and how to talk about it

Mail-in voting expansion not optional for upcoming elections

This article was originally published by the League of Women Voters. The post can be found [online](#).

Although large numbers of Americans will vote by mail this year, in-person voting options remain essential for the 2020 elections to be truly fair and accessible. Use these talking points when discussing the League strategy of making voting more flexible and providing options for voters.

1. Stress that expanding vote-by-mail is necessary, but so is preserving and expanding in-person voting options

- As elections officials make decisions to expand vote-by-mail options, they must also look for ways to expand in-person early voting and protect Election Day in-person voting by ensuring it is safe and accessible, especially for communities of color, people with disabilities, Native Americans, and other underrepresented communities.
- Not every voter has a street address. Vote-by-mail presents hurdles for Native American voters living on tribal lands and voters without permanent addresses, given that many do not have equal access to the mail system.
- Voters with language access and literacy challenges may require in-person assistance to cast their ballot. Any vote-by-mail system must include effective language assistance at every stage of the voting process.
- Paper ballots used in a vote-by-mail system are not accessible to some voters with disabilities, including those who are blind or have low vision. Voters with disabilities who are unable to mark paper ballots privately and independently rely on accessible voting stations to cast their ballots, as required by federal law.
- In-person voting is an important option for voters who are new to absentee voting, because it is a system people know and trust. For many voters, it is their preferred option.
- In-person voting is an important backup for times when the mail system fails, such as when their mail ballots don't arrive in time.

2. Highlight the benefits of flexibility and reducing crowds on Election Day by offering multiple voting options

- Expanding no-excuse absentee and early voting cuts down on the crowds and long lines on Election Day and gives voters flexibility in casting their ballot.
- The League of Women Voters supports expansion of early voting because it reduces the administrative burden on Election Day. Officials should expand the number of days and hours polling places are open for early voting leading up to Election Day.
- Election officials should designate COVID-19 as an excuse for absentee voting so that more voters can take advantage of this option. [applies in states that don't have no-excuse absentee voting]



Voters wait in long lines to vote in Wisconsin's primary. The Democratic governor attempted to postpone the election due to COVID-19, but was thwarted by GOP legislators and the state and federal courts.

Continued on Page 5

LWV (continued)

Continued from Page 4

There are four primary things election officials need to account for in order to make vote-by-mail and absentee voting accessible:

- Provide paid postage for voters returning ballots by mail
- Make requesting and dropping off ballots accessible
- Train election workers on signature matching for mail-in ballots
- Connect with the Postal Service now to plan for an increase in mail-in ballots

3. Counter misinformation before it happens by regularly directing voters to trusted information, including VOTE411.org, which has all the accurate, multilingual, and unbiased information voters need.

Check VOTE411 for the most up-to-date changes to your polling place related to COVID-19 in both English and Spanish.

4. Curb public expectations for immediate election results

- In this time of unprecedented circumstances, tallying votes will take more time.
- Voters should not expect all election results to be called or announced on Election Day as in previous elections, and that's okay. A delayed result with an increased number of mailed ballots means the system is working as it should.
- A surge in mailed ballots requires our election officials to adapt their ballot counting practices, and it is important for voters to be patient. An accurate ballot count is more important than a fast ballot count.
- With the increase of absentee voting in 2020, it is essential that every vote is counted and every voter's voice is heard. We should all prepare for many election results to be announced after Election Day.

A coronavirus update from Rep. Chandra Dillard

It's been an interesting few weeks as we manage the Coronavirus. I hope you and your family are safe. I also hope you are staying in your homes, having limited contact with people, and practicing good hygiene (washing hands and covering coughs). We will get through this together.



The SC General Assembly has mainly been staying in place. I have been in Greenville taking calls, attempting to answer your questions, and helping with needs related to COVID-19. I regularly update my Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/officialchandradillard/>) with information and resources that are needed during this time.

My District 23 Sheroes Event will be rescheduled later this year when we are all able to get together and honor five remarkable women who are continuing to work hard in their neighborhoods. Our upmost priority is the health, safety, and well-being of all our residents.

Please feel free to contact me at chandra@chandradillard.com or at 864-915-1276 if there is anything that you need.

Greenville County candidates for office 2020

Filing closed on March 30. Here are our candidates. * denotes incumbent.

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| US Senate | State House of Representatives | |
| Jaime Harrison | Dist. 18 | Dist. 35 |
| | Benjamin Smith | Helen Pendarvis |
| US House | | |
| CD-3 | Dist. 19 | Greenville |
| Mark D. Welch | Jevarus Howard | County Council |
| Hosea Cleveland | | Dist. 20 |
| | Dist. 20 | Farris Steele Johnson |
| CD-4 | Stephen Dreyfus | |
| Kim Nelson | | Dist. 22 |
| | Dist. 22 | Samantha Wallace |
| State Senate | B.K. Brown | |
| Dist. 5 | | Dist. 24 |
| Michael McCord | Dist. 23 | Amanda McDougald Scott |
| | Chandra Dillard* | |
| Dist. 6 | | Dist. 25 |
| Hao Wu | Dist. 25 | Ennis Fant* |
| | Leola Robinson Simpson* | |
| Dist. 7 | Adriene Atkinson | Dist. 27 |
| Karl B. Allen* | Bruce Wilson | Will Morin |
| Fletcher Smith | | |
| | Dist. 28 | Greenville County Sheriff |
| Dist. 12 | Ty Washington | Paul Guy |
| Dawn Bingham | | |

Calendar of Events

Most events have been cancelled or decisions are pending. Please check our calendar at greenvilledemocrats.com/events for current information as quickly as we learn it.

May

25

The GCDP monthly breakfast will be held virtually. We hope to have all of our local candidates for office online with us to talk about their campaigns and goals. Join with video online: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/gcdpcomms> or call in for audio only at 701-802-5487 Access code: 3541880#.

30

The scheduled date for the SCDP annual convention. There's been no news yet about changes or about registration. Stay tuned.

THE VIRUS: What can we do?

Maybe the worst part of this virus is how helpless we feel. We can't hug our family and friends, can't sit with someone suffering in the hospital. But there are some ways we can help – in a socially distanced way. Here are a few.

Help those who need us

Donate food and cleaning/disinfecting supplies to help those in our community who are in need. (**See details in flyer on Page 6**).

**

Meals on Wheels is also in need of volunteers to deliver food to seniors in Greenville County. Contact Leslie LaRue (llarue@mowgvl.org) for information.

**

Mill Village Farms is selling discounted food to families suffering hardship. A fresh food box packed with \$35 worth of food and a recipe card is available for just \$5. Order online @ <http://www.millvillagefarms.org/foodshare>



Sew. Some. Good. Greenville.

That's the name and the mission of a new Facebook group that brings people together to sew face masks from their homes for distribution to hospitals, nursing homes, healthcare facilities, and first responders. The group has only been around a few weeks, but already has 700+ members. Find out all you need to know to help with this important work at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/217835396000055/>



Give Blood

There is a growing shortage of blood. That's a dangerous situation during this pandemic and late last month the Surgeon General said it was considered "essential" for people to leave their homes to give blood. Find a blood drive near you and donate. If you have recovered from the virus, find out about the [Red Cross Convalescent Plasma](#) program to help those currently ill.

[Red Cross Blood Drives](#)

[Blood Connection Blood Drives](#)



**HELP FAMILIES
IMPACTED BY COVID-19**

FOOD & SUPPLIES DONATION DRIVE

Please bring new, unexpired, wrapped non-perishable foods and beverages, as well as toiletries and cleaning supplies.

- Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Allen Temple AME Church Saturday Soup Kitchens: 104 Green Avenue, 29601
- Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Project HOST Soup Kitchens: 525 Academy Street, 29601
- Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Relentless Church: 635 Haywood Road, 29607
- Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Harvest Hope Food Bank: 2818 White Horse Road, 29611

Sponsored by the Greenville County Democratic Party, the Democratic Black Caucus of SC, Greenville Chapter, Jeverus Howard for State House District 19, and Kim Nelson for CD-4.



The retailers and service providers below are Democrats who are supporting the work of the party with these ads. We encourage you to explore these companies. Want to see your business's ad here? [Complete the order form at www.greenvilledemocrats.com/marketplace-order](http://www.greenvilledemocrats.com/marketplace-order). The deadline for the submissions for the next Bray is: **May 5**.



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For When Your Case Is The Only One That Matters. Visit us at www.soniacol.com



Supercuts | Find a Supercuts salon near you at Supercuts.com and check in for your next visit. Supercuts offers consistent quality haircuts, color services and facial waxing.



The Robby Brady Team, Allen Tate Realtors | If you are looking for a realtor to help buy or sell a home, there is no better choice than the Robby Brady Team. Call 864-270-5955.



G.A. Thompson Insurance | We are a provider of homeowners, auto, motorcycle, rental and landlord insurance. Our goal is to develop loyal relationships with our customers. Call Ann at 864-269-1061.



Style Matters | We are a personal wardrobe styling business. Our mission is to offer you the tools you need to look and feel fabulous. www.stylemattersgreenville.com, 864-715-9727

CALL YOUR REPS

More stimulus legislation will be debated in the House and Senate, including an important push to include funds for development of a national Vote-by-Mail program.

Sen. Lindsey Graham

202-224-5972 (DC)
864-250-1417 (Upstate)



Sen. Tim Scott

(202) 224-6121 (DC)
(864) 233-5366 (Upstate)



Rep. Jeff Duncan (SC-3)

(202) 225-5301 (DC)
(864) 224-7401 (Anderson)



Rep. Wm. Timmons (SC-4)

(202) 225-6030 (DC)
(864) 241-0175 (Greenville)



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Thank you, March Contributors

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<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/greenville-county-democratic-party-1>

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GREENVILLE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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