



Message from the Chair

We're all coming together to win in '21, go blue in '22

By Elias "Eli" Valentin II

Chair, GCDP

As a former coach, I am a lover of quotes. One of my favorites is from Henry Ford, and he says, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, working together is success."



As we look at where we are as a Party here in Greenville, these words must ring true if we want to see the electoral change we desire.

Thinking about ways to enhance our partnerships, I wanted to create an opportunity for stakeholders to come together in fellowship and recommit to our common purpose. This concept has transformed into a long-term vision. Our leadership team here at GCDP is happy to announce we are hosting the Inaugural Greenville County Democratic Summit next month. Of necessity, this summit will be held virtually. But we hope it will be an ongoing program that can be held in person in 2022.

We are bringing together the leadership of the GCDP, the Democratic Black Caucus of Greenville, Democratic Women of Greenville County, Young Democrats of Greenville County, and Greenville High School Democrats during this day's long event. This is the first step in combining all of our efforts and collectively working together to get Democrats elected and advance our issues.

So what will happen at the Summit?

Purpose: To build connections and collaboration, understand the vision, goal, and plans for all Democratic groups in the County of Greenville. To unify our actions, amplify our messages, and maximize our efforts to get more Democrats elected.

Overview: The summit will be an engaging, informative, and relevant workshop, which will lead to action and a deeper understanding of the roles each of the partner organizations

plays in achieving electoral success. Each organization that helps make our Democratic Party what it is will share its roadmap over these subsequent election cycles. We are also inviting our esteemed elected officials to engage with us during the



day. Working to amplify their work in the community and provide perspective on the multitude of ways they can help the local party and, in turn, ways we can support their efforts.

Goals: Our administration is updating and rewriting the Strategic Plan we first created in 2017 under Kate Franch's leadership. This project is essential to our continued growth

**"Coming together is a beginning,
staying together is progress, working
together is success."**

-- Henry Ford

as we must chart the course for success as we build political power in the Upstate. This summit and other dynamic workshops and training our team will participate in, including an Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity training, will inform our new strategic vision, codify these foundational values, and ensure they are executed.

I loved the 2016 Campaign slogan Hillary Clinton used for her bid to become President. We are always 'STRONGER TOGETHER', but can we make sure, as Henry Ford said, we are working together. There is so much work to get done.

Let's get busy!

Democratically yours,
Eli



To commemorate Women's History Month this year, we turned to you – our network, friends, volunteers – to crowdsource a multi-media curated project of more than dozens of items including virtual events, books to read, films to watch, podcasts to listen to, voices worth following and more. Here's a sample of some of the compelling, challenging, and engaging content from our contributors. [View the entire project.](#)



Read [“The Three Mothers,”](#) an exploration into the lives of three women and the impact they had on changing the course of a nation. How the mothers of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and James Baldwin helped shape the Civil Rights Movement and change the country. Read the New York Times Book Review [here](#).

South Carolina’s nine Black female representatives are making history every day. Including Greenville’s own Leola Robinson Simpson and Chandra Dillard, they mark the highest number of Black women serving in our legislature together in the 44 years since Juanita C.W. Goggins of York County was elected in 1975, serving for five years.

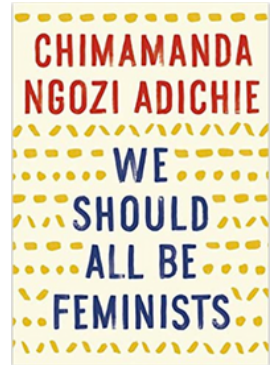
In May, Rep. Krystle Simmons told the Associated Press. “I don’t know if I digested how big this is. I just hope that little brown boys and girls, young girls, college age, I hope they look at me and say because of her, we can.”



[More on next page / Explore the entire project online](#)

A few more of our "31 Days of Women's History"

Say it loud: I'm a feminist. Do you know women who are strong and independent but refuse to regard themselves as feminists? Sure you do. Restore your knowledge (and hone your critical argument skills) of what it means to be a feminist by reading the book, ["We Should All Be Feminists" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.](#)



Foreign affairs are not dry and boring topics in the hands of **Madeleine Albright**. Albright was the first woman to serve as US Secretary of State, appointed by President Bill Clinton. Albright and her family emigrated from Czechoslovakia, she has also served on the National Security Council and as US Ambassador to the United Nations. She's written some great books among them, ["Hell and Other Destinations"](#), and the prescient, ["Facism: A Warning"](#). But Albright has a lighter side. The consummate diplomat, Albright is known for her pin penchant. So much so she has published a book of her pins the unique story of each one's meaning, history, and how she used them in diplomacy. Read ["Read My Pins."](#)

They are "hidden figures" no more. The women who contributed significantly to the success of NASA's early space flight efforts, have been honored with the naming of buildings and now a space-going vessel that supplies the Space Station. Learn the story of Katherine Johnson, left, and Mary Jackson. [Read the book by Margot Lee Shetterly](#) and watch the movie starring Taraji P. Henson. [Rent on Amazon Prime.](#)



The Equal Rights Amendment is not a product of the '60s or '70s, as many may think. But was actually proposed in 1923 by activist Alice Paul and other suffragists. Although it gained approval in January of the final state (Virginia) needed to become certified as the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution, the controversy continues. The House voted on March 17 to remove the deadline for certification retroactively from the original legislation, following a court case that ruled the deadline had "expired." Read the [Brennan Center's explainer to understand - maybe - more of the obstacles women must still overcome before this amendment gains approval.](#)

Ever wonder why most podcasts are hosted by men? Or why women usually play the co-host role rather than take the lead? A study in 2020 found only 23 of the 109 chart-topping shows were hosted by women, while 15 had co-ed hosts. Despite this huge disparity, though, women make up about half of the podcast listening audience nationwide. But there are some great feminist podcasts out there, if you know where to look. [Here's a list of 27 of the best women-focused, women-hosted podcasts available.](#) "From issues of gender equality, equity, feminism, history, mental health, sexual wellness, relationships, and pop culture, these podcasts ensure marginalized voices are being heard."



Voices of Advocacy

Open Carry

Not surprisingly, the Republican controlled State House selected open carry as its second most important legislative priority for 2021. It's right behind the fetal heartbeat bill – legislation that is now in limbo as the courts hash out its constitutionality.

This year's salvo in the annual battle over permissive gun rights vs. safety, security and accountability resulted in the House passing "Open Carry with Training." This legislation was opposed by both state law enforcement and faith leaders.

Still, it was pushed through by its biggest advocate – Greenville County Rep. Bobby Cox, District 21. Let's remember that in '22.



The approved bill does require permitting and at least a minimum of training and vision testing before you can strap on a semi-automatic pistol and head out to Target. That bill now heads to the Senate for final approval.

The Senate has been the stopper in previous years and we still have an opportunity to advocate against this bill and encourage senators to stand up once again.

[We've got detailed information on the legislation as well as talking points to help you make the call and advocate effectively against this bill.](#)

Shannon Watts @shannonrwatts · Mar 15
Ninety South Carolina faith leaders are sending a letter to state lawmakers opposing bad gun bills, saying they could negatively impact communities shattered by gun violence. The letter was coordinated in part by the state's @MomsDemand volunteers. #scpol



Greenville Democrats @GVLDem · Mar 19

Despite the objections of the faith community and law enforcement, the SC house approved an open carry bill. Rep. Bobby Cox chief sponsor of the move, said the bill would "restore our 2nd amendment rights."

zcu.io/oyv4

[#scopencarry](#)



Rhodes Bailey @RhodesBailey · Mar 18

Rep. @deon_tedder makes an important point here. The open carry law will confuse what it means to commit the crime of "pointing & presenting a firearm" (felony, SC Code 16-23-410). The difference between open carry and pointing & presenting could be in the eye of the beholder.



Rep. Deon Tedder @deon_tedder · Mar 18

My amendment to the open carry bill that would protect those who are adjusting/touching their firearm from being charged with presenting a firearm was struck down by the Republicans.

This law will disproportionately affect the Black community and will be exploited to cause harm.



Vicki Ringer @vickiringer · Mar 18

Some say they hope the horror of 8 Asian Americans being shot would help tamp down the hate against our neighbors. I'm not optimistic. Five years ago, another white guy filled with hate killed 9 people in Charleston. SC's own lawmakers refuse to close the Charleston gun loophole.

10

35

150





A full slate of community activities is planned

By Whitney Wright

Democrats Care (formerly known as the GCDP Huddle) is the service arm of the GCDP that works to improve the lives of the people of Greenville County by listening to, connecting with, and offering labor, expertise, and support for our neighbors. We lend our shoulders, knowledge, and hearts, not just at election time, but all of the time, because we want to show that Democrats Care.

Democrats Care volunteers embody the vision, values, and priorities of the Greenville County Democratic Party in both neighborhoods in-need, and in the community at-large. The unofficial motto of Democrats Care is: "How can we help?"

So far this year, seven volunteers have already completed a February service project that not only benefited the oftentimes homeless population in Downtown Greenville, but also commemorated Black History Month, in partnership with the nationally registered African-American historic Allen Temple AME Church's Soup Kitchen Ministry. On Saturday the 20th, 18 individuals suffering from food insecurity were served meals to-go, were also given masks and hand sanitizer, and received prayer as well.

Democrats Care continues to seek volunteers who will give their time, donations, and energy, to causes all over Greenville County, and a calendar of upcoming events through August, 2021 is located on our [website](#).

The planning process this year looks different than in previous times, with in-person Democrats Care meetings making way for virtual conversations to discuss the outcomes of volunteer events after they have already occurred, and increased open availability for community servants to assist as many or as few organizations as desired.

Democrats Care is adopting a renewed focus on hosting impactful projects that are tried-and-true, and were successful in the past, while tracking Key Performance

Indicators (KPIs) related to each of them. The group is also expected to explore new initiatives in September and October, 2021 (More to come!), for fundraising and in continued collaboration with the Greenville Latinx community.

Those interested in working with Democrats Care are encouraged to contact Volunteer Coordinator Stacey Mars for general information and to complete a Volunteer Interest Form or Democrats Care Coordinator Whitney Wright, to sign-up for capacity-controlled opportunities.

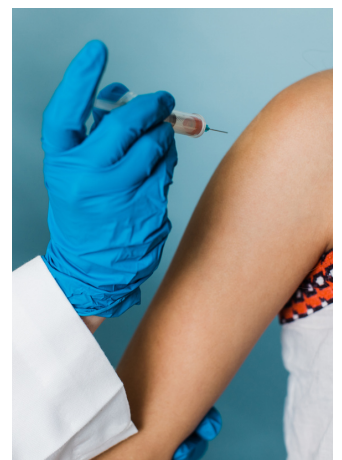
Don't miss your shot! We're here to help

The GCDP is planning a project to help residents in underserved communities get their COVID vaccine shots.

From mid-April through mid-May, we're planning on having a COVID vaccine appointment hotline set up with as many as eight volunteers manning it. We'll help callers find an appointment by doing the tedious computer digging that is difficult for many.

We know that getting an appointment is just the first step, so we are also planning on using our "Ride to the Polls" infrastructure to find "Rides to Your Shot".

We'll also be following up to make sure we get everyone who needs it a ride to their second shot, if necessary.



We'll need volunteers to help do lit drops in communities of need, as well as to man the phone lines for the nine weekend days we are planning on operating this, and to serve as drivers.

Contact Stacey Mars at volunteer@greenvilledemocrats.com if you are interested in being a part of this project.

GCDP

PRECINCTS

Precinct leaders aren't just needed in an election cycle

By Leigh Learning

Precinct Development

Building connections with like-minded voters, and potential voters, throughout Greenville County is a year-round process for the Greenville County Democratic Party.

We should be continually identifying and reaching out to the neighbors in our precinct (or local voting district) who will support the Democratic Party ticket and candidates so that we have an accurate and functional sense of our political muscle.

By continually strengthening the foundation of our precinct network, we're then ready to jump into action whenever need arises and Get Out the Vote efforts during elections are much more efficient and effective.

One way to establish that foundation is through continual recruitment and training of precinct officers. While South Carolina's Democratic Party precinct officers are elected every even-numbered year at our state mandated "Precinct Reorganization," the GCDP can still fill holes in its leadership roster as volunteers present themselves. With 151 precincts in Greenville County, there are lots of positions to fill and lots of ways to help.

Officer recruitment takes many forms. Current officers can invite potential new officers to our Precinct Reorganization (the next one is in early 2022) and they can stand for election. Social media and newsletters such as The Bray can advertise the need for new officers. Curious attendees of our monthly breakfast can decide to get more involved in their own precincts.

Why be a precinct leader? Getting plugged into the Party at the precinct level gives you great insight into what's important to your neighbors. You are the liaison between them and the GCDP. They'll look to you as a resource for any election questions they may have. Not only can you answer questions about the election process (early voting

start dates, absentee ballot requirements, poll locations, etc.), but you can also tell them why our candidates deserve their vote.

Speaking of candidates, precinct development encompasses candidate identification and recruitment as well. You might meet someone who would be a great elected official. You could be the person who nudges them to run, especially if you can show them how strong support is in their own neighborhoods.

You don't have to know everything about your precinct or even the county Party to participate. Ongoing training for precinct officers teaches participants how to phone bank, canvass, register voters, and engage with their neighbors through community events such as HOA meetings, council meetings, etc. You just need to be willing to spread the word that Greenville County does have engaged Democrats who are determined to elect change agents committed to building a more equitable and responsive community, state, and nation.

If you'd like to get involved with your precinct, please email the precinct development team at precincts@greenvilledemocrats.com, or our volunteer coordinator Stacey Mars at volunteer@greenvilledemocrats.com.



Get a peak at our new look and the volunteers who made it happen. View this 2-minute video and, with our office back to normal operating hours, stop by and say hello to our office volunteers and check it out.

58 years later, can pay equality become a reality?

By Sharon Garrett

GCDP, 2nd Vice Chair

January 29, 2021 marked the 12th Anniversary of President Barack Obama signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law. It was the first bill to become law in the new president's term.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy but, nearly 60 years later, has not been able to fulfill its promise.

Now, the 117th Congress will attempt to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act this year, after 24 years of support from numerous women's rights organizations and Civil Rights groups.

Everyone wants and deserves a livable wage to support themselves and their families, which will contribute to a growing economy and increase the standard of living for all Americans. The \$15 minimum wage increase will help to keep women and children out of poverty and in decent housing that families can afford. This is part of the American Dream – being fair and equitable to every citizen regardless of age, sex, national origin, religion, race, or gender preference. This is what John F. Kennedy was trying to accomplish – a level playing field for diverse Americans.

The Briefing

A news and info dispatch for Greenville Dems

Hopefully, most of the Bray's readers are subscribers of the GCDP. If so, you received something new last week – The Briefing. It's a new twice-monthly dispatch crammed with local and statewide news, information, opportunities, advocacy, and a lot more. Early reviews are very positive.

This new format will let us present more info in a tighter format for busy readers. If you are not a subscriber, [please sign up.](#)

The addition of The Briefing also marks a transition for The Bray, which will now appear quarterly. We encourage Bray readers to check out The Briefing to keep you in the know during the in-between times. The next Bray will be the Summer 2021 edition appear in early July.

The Paycheck Fairness Act will address the disparity of Caucasian women making \$0.82 for every dollar that non-Hispanic men earn. The statistics are different for each ethnic group. [According to the American Association of University Women](#), Latina women earn \$0.55, Asian women \$0.87, African American women \$0.63, Alaskan Native \$0.57, and Pacific Islander \$0.61 less than men. We cannot forget that mothers earn \$0.71 less than men which affects the lives of millions of women and their families over a lifetime. Women are often the breadwinner for their families.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused record unemployment and housing crises for which women and children are disproportionately bearing the burden. There are many contributing factors such as systemic racism, sexism, and biases, to name a few. The Paycheck Fairness Act will breathe life into a struggling single mother and her children.

Similar legislation is also pending in the State Legislature. [Bill H. 3183](#) in the lower chamber would make it illegal to pay less to "than the rates paid to employees of other races, religions, colors, sexes, including gender identity and sexual orientation, ages, national origins or disability statuses." The bill is currently before the Ways and Means Committee.

A companion bill is in the Senate ([S. 0514](#)) and is before the Labor, Commerce, and Industry Committee.

Pay Equity applied honestly means many phases of life and liberty for gender- and race-based injustices that ethnic groups encounter are eliminated. This, in turn, contributes to a healthier economy. Women will be better equipped to compete in the workforce, educational levels of children will rise, and communities will thrive.

The Paycheck Fairness Act is a win for all Americans but, especially women and children. Tell William Timmons, Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott vote yes for The Paycheck Fairness Act in 2021.

Closer to home, contact members of the [House Ways and Means Committee](#), and the [Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee](#) and demand that they move this bill forward. Similar legislation was put up in the last session and died in committee. Let's act to make sure that doesn't happen this time.

Calendar: What's going on?

March

25

The Democratic Black Caucus hosts a panel on March 25 at 6:00 p.m. titled "Black Girl Magic: Greenville". It will feature five powerful black women living and working in the Greenville area, who will discuss the issues most pressing to black women today. Email whitney.wrightsc@gmail.com for the link or watch live on the [group's Facebook page](#).

27

Celebrate Women's History Month at our March breakfast with Ann Warner, the CEO of WREN, our featured speaker. Also Adriene Atkinson from the National Council of Negro Women. [Click here to join](#), 9 a.m., Feb. 27.

April

Celebrate Earth Day 2021 by collecting spring cleaning supplies for United Housing Connections residents. Donations of cleaners, wipes, trash bags, laundry detergent, etc., will be accepted at GCDP Headquarters, 1300 J East Washington St., Greenville, from April 5 until COB on April 22nd. Contact **Whitney Wright at whitney.wrightsc@gmail.com** for more information.

7

Young Democrats hold their virtual monthly meeting and organization elections. 6:30 PM. **Contact the group at youngdemsgreenvilledemocrats.com** for a Zoom link.

7

It's Clyburn Day! The SC Democratic Party and the Welcome Party host the inaugural Clyburn Day, with a webinar. **Reflect, Rejoice, Relearn** will reflect on Whip Clyburn's leadership and his vision for the future. [Sign up to receive an email link to the event.](#)

8

Will young Democrats be the leaders who turn SC blue in '22? That will be one of the topics at our 2nd Thursday Conversation: Youth and Democracy. [Register to receive the link.](#)

12

League of Women Voters Good Governance Virtual Symposium, Part III, Electoral College and Institutional Reform. Experts discuss reform options to the Electoral College and filibuster reform. 6 PM [Check the League's page on Facebook for updates and registration links.](#)



Recurring Meetings

Greenville City Council

Meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. 3:30 pm is a work session; 5:30 pm is a formal meeting. [Agendas and meeting information available online.](#)

Young Democrats

Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Email youngdems@greenvilledemocrats.com for a Zoom link.

Democratic Black Caucus

Meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. Email whitney.wrightsc@gmail.com for a Zoom link.

Democratic Women of Greenville County

Meets the 2nd Monday of each month at noon. Members will receive a Zoom link to the meeting via email. Or contact demwomen@greenvilledemocrats.com.

GCDP 2nd Thursday Conversations

Occurs on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. [Check our online calendar for updated links each month](#)

GCDP Volunteer Huddle

Meets the last Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. [Register online to receive the Zoom link.](#)

GCDP Monthly Breakfast

We gather for breakfast – currently virtually – on the 4th Saturday of each month at 9 am. Join at this link: <http://bit.ly/gcdp-breakfast>.

ICYMI



Four current and former Greenville City Councilwomen came together to discuss what women's leadership looks like in one of the country's most up-and-coming cities.



Bakari Sellers joined Democratic Women of Greenville County's February meeting to offer his views on '22 elections among other topics.

League of Women Voters' Good Governance Symposium

The Good Governance Symposium is a collaboration of several leagues, including Greenville, across South Carolina. The series will promote education and awareness of issues that affect us from local to federal government. Each session includes pre-reading materials and ends with an advocacy component for further action.

The first session on voting rights was held on March 1 [Watch the first session replay here and register on YouTube to be notified when new replays are available.](#)

Session II: **Redistricting Reform**, was held Monday March 22. A "redistricting 101" plus information from the League's State Redistricting Working Group about affirmative actions. Replay TBA.

Upcoming Sessions (find information and register online)
Session III: **Electoral College and Institutional Reforms**, Monday, April 12, at 6 p.m.

Session IV: **Dark Money and Campaign Finance**, Monday May 10, at 6 p.m.

Session V: **Election and Voting Systems and Approaches**, Monday June 7 at 6 p.m.



We had a meaty conversation at our February breakfast: First about the challenges of getting the COVID vaccine. And then two towering leaders of the Black community took on Black History and what we must build on for the future.

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Thank you, February Contributors

Thank you to those who donated to the GCDP in February. We are grateful for your support.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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