



Democratic Progressive Club of Lee County

RALLY TO REUNITE THE CHILDREN!
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Volume 16 • Issue 4 • May 22, 2019

Notice: The Democratic Progressive Club will gather on
Wednesday, May 22, 2019,
6:30 p.m. at Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers, for a membership meeting.
Free refreshments, cash bar.

Everyone is welcome to attend.



President's Message

Hello Fellow Progressives, Here's something that just popped up on my radar. I'm a little late to the game, since it passed the House April 9, but it is not too late

to speak up!

The Taxpayer First Act of 2019 <https://congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1957/text> is yet another example of our elected officials being wooed by business lobbyists to increase the consumer's cost of necessary services by outsourcing government responsibility to for

(Continued on page 2)

Look Inside !

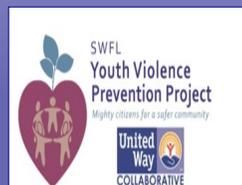
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-profit businesses.

In Justin Elliott's interview with NPR's Rachel Martin, he explains how Intuit (TurboTax) and H&R Block has, through years of lobbying both democrats and republicans, finally ensured that the IRS can never create its own simple Free File system (and several European governments have) and instead have to rely on private companies. There are many parts of this bill that look good. Free filing must be offered to taxpayers who earn \$66,000 or less, but there are no caveats that require the tax filing companies to make that free filing easy.

As we all know, many services start as free, only to become so cumbersome as to make paying extra the easier choice. Adobe Acrobat. Cell phone voicemail.

Also, these same tax service companies will be incentivized to lobby for more complicated, longer-form tax return forms for all the people who do not qualify for the free filing. And. They. Will.

The esteemed Representative John Lewis (D-GA-5) sponsored this bipartisan bill, and much of it is fine. Help from the private sector is needed at present due to the slow strangling of the IRS budget over the past decades. However, that is no reason to cement the deal for the benefit of private industry whose current product as informational technology evolves. Creative destruction is a hallmark of market-based capitalism. Thwarting it does not in the end help the economy.

What would help when industries change is for the government to find ways to help citizens move to other jobs when theirs goes the way of the typesetter.

This bill can be repaired if at least these sections are changed or removed: Section 1102a(4) makes the IRS reliance on private business permanent.

Section 1403 is an ominous warning that the IRS may be severely curtailing its customer service presence.

Section 3201 is the only

provision that is projected to substantially increase government revenue increase, albeit only by hundreds of millions over 10 years. And, surprise! That extra revenue to support the federal government's important work is not coming from TurboTax or H&R Block or from the very wealthy who have their own tax preparers. The money will come from harried average folks who make at least \$66,001 and for various reasons fail to file. Those taxpayers will pay an increased penalty for Failure to File from \$205 to \$330.

So, John and Jane Q. Public taxpayers are first to pay a little more, ergo the "Taxpayer First Act of 2019." Government and business have fundamentally different



Presidents Notes

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missions.

Our government's purpose is stated eloquently, if somewhat vaguely, in the Preamble to the Constitution:

"...to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity".

Business has but one purpose—to make profit. In doing so, businesses pay wages and taxes, spur innovation, and produce products and services—many of which have improved the quality of life for millions of people and some of which decidedly did not, e.g., tobacco (responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths, conservatively), Vioxx (approximately 140,000 heart attacks leading to almost 90,000 deaths), and the television show "The Apprentice" (attributable death tally to be determined by historians).

Individual consumers have few lobbyists to remind

our elected officials that the drive for private profit often does not serve the purpose for which they, as our government representatives, are supposed to hold above all others. Privatization of government responsibility substitutes the amoral mission of business for the moral mission set forth in our Constitution. H.R. 1957 is another step towards Americans having to pay more for legally required services.* Some things Government Can Do Better if Congress would fund the programs adequately. Please call or write your U.S. Senators and House Representatives to ask them to reject the current version of H.R. 1957.

*This bill is not the most egregious example of dangerous government—business reciprocity. The for-profit Homestead

"Temporary" Shelter for Unaccompanied Children takes that prize. Caliburn International was just awarded a \$341 million no-bid contract. Here I thought John Kelly left the White

House because he had some integrity, not because he wanted to join the board of a private equity fund and use his cozy relationship with this administration to become very wealthy keeping children incarcerated. Caliburn International was going to go public then pulled out due to controversy stemming from its Homestead contract.

Several public pensions are reportedly investors in Caliburn.

If I can verify, I will post on our website so we can try to put pressure on them to find a different investment firm.

I hope to see many of you at our next meeting.

- Ken Jaros is going to delve into our State's political/environmental relationship. Hint: Some relational intervention needed.

- We will also be sharing news on the ReUnite the Children movement and more!

Kelly Lawrence, President



ReUnite the Children Mother's Day Rally

May 12
Lehigh Acres
Corner Lee Blvd
and 82
Noon to 1 pm

Sponsored by Pine Island ROAR
Democratic Progressive Club of Lee
NOW, Indivisible, area Churches,
Lee County Democrats



ReUnite the Children Mother's Day Rally

Thanks to Fox 4 News for coverage of the rally!



Parents spend Mother's Day advocating for asylum-seeking families

LEHIGH ACRES, Fla. — Instead of getting spoiled by her children and grandchildren, **Susan McGuire** was one of many mothers who spent Mother's Day advocating for other asylum-seeking families.

"I think about all the mothers and grandmothers who don't have their children with them," McGuire said.

Over the last several months, families were separated while seeking asylum at the border, and children were taken by the federal government to "temporary influx facilities" across the

country while the parents await court dates.

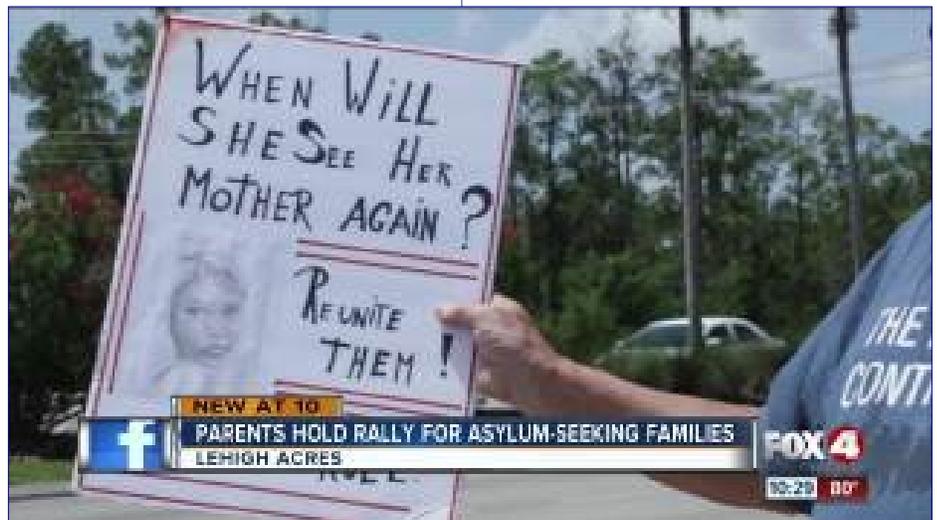
Thousands of children get sent to facilities like the one in Homestead, a city south of Miami. According to the U.S. Border Patrol, authorities apprehended 8,897 children at the border in April alone.

McGuire says these fami-

jected while they were asking for help.

"They're reaching out to the nation that's known as the 'Beacon of Hope and Humanity', and we're trashing it and throwing it in their face," he said.

Groups including **Pine Island Roar, Democratic Progressive Club of Lee County,**



lies are only trying to give a better life to their loved ones.

"They do what all mothers do - they bring their children to a safer place. They protect their children," McGuire said.

Steve Sherman says he's sad to see families get re-

Fort Myers/Naples NOW, and other agencies organized this event.

They plan to make their next rally traveling to Homestead and visit the Federal Children's Detention Center there.

Posted: 11:09 PM, May 12, 2019 ■

Dem Candidates 2020 (So Far)



Joe Biden, Former VP (D)



Corey Booker, Senator (D)



Pete Buttigieg, Mayor (D)



Julian Castro, Former HUD Secretary (D)



John Delaney, Former US Rep (D)



Tulsi Gabbard, Former US Rep (D)



Kerstin Gillibrand, US Senator (D)



Kamala Harris, Senator (D)



John Hickenlooper, Former governor (D)



Jay Inslee, Governor (D)



Amy Klobuchar, Senator (D)



Wayne Messam, Governor(D)



Seth Moulton, US Rep (D)



Beto O'Rourke, Former US Rep, D)



Tim Ryan, US Rep (D)



Bernie Sanders, Senator (D)



Eric Swalwell, US Rep (D)



Elizabeth Warren, Senator(D)



Youth Violence Prevention Program

The recipients of the **Youth Violence Prevention Grants** from the Unitarian Universalist Church and the United Way will present their programs to the public.

The Youth Violence Prevention Partnership (YVPP) is a collaboration of the Unitarian Universalist Church and the United Way to encourage the development of programs that bring awareness of youth violence and the risk factors that contribute to it.

The program is open to the public. In addition to the student presentations, **Dr. Mike Martin, President of Florida Gulf Coast University, and Jim Nathan, adjunct professor of Health Services at FGCU** will be featured speakers. ■

*Important Event,
don't miss this!*
**Unitarian
Universalist Church
13411 Shire Lane,
Fort Myers**

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Student Grant Recipients Showcase Projects

Friday May 24th at 5:30 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church
13411 Shire Lane, Fort Myers

Join us for a thought provoking evening
on preventing youth violence!

High school students will present their ideas on preventing youth violence. The Youth Violence Prevention Project (YVPP) is a collaboration of the Unitarian Universalist Church and the United Way. Students were awarded grants based on proposals submitted to YVPP for programs that bring awareness of youth violence and the risk factors that contribute to it. Grant recipients include:

Human Trafficking Awareness Partnership
I WILL Mentorship Foundation
Quality Life Center
South Fort Myers High School
WellFit Girls
Young Life of Dunbar High School
Girl Scouts



Special Guest Speakers

Dr. Mike Martin
President of
Florida Gulf Coast University

Jim Nathan
Adjunct Professor Of Health
Services at FGCU &
retired President of
Lee Health



C

A Tale of Life

SAVE THE DATE



SAVE THE DATE

is coming

August 2, 2019

Don't miss this year's end of summer school show from the Quality Life Center! Mark your calendar, get your tickets! **Friday, August 2, 2019 at 6 PM – 7 PM, Dunbar High School, 3800 Edison Ave, Fort Myers, Florida 33916** Contact for ticket information:

Mailing Address:

P. O. Drawer 1290, Ft. Myers FL 33902-1290

Telephone Numbers:

Office: (239) 334-2797

Fax: (239) 334-3599

Fair Automatic Simple Tax

Presented by Winston Negrón <winston@rationalamericans.com>



Why We Need FAST:

The U.S. tax code is inefficient, corrupt, unfair and rigged to benefit wealthy campaign donors and corporations. Through expansive use of deductions, loopholes and special credits, these "beneficiaries" are able to substantially lower their Effective Tax Rates to the point where some corporations often **pay less than 1% on \$Billions of income.**

The Outrage:

- 80% of American wealth is owned by the top 10%!
- Some corporations often **pay less than 1% on \$Billions of income.**
- The 2019 deficit is projected to be \$985 Billion.
- U.S. national debt is \$22 Trillion and growing.
- Debt interest paid to wealthy investors, China, etc., will exceed \$800 Billion – money which could be better spent to improve Americans' lives and security.

The Problem:

Due to the massive debt incurred by irresponsible Republican tax cuts and policies:

- Our rigged, compromised tax system is not able to regenerate the revenue necessary to pay for the **American Agenda** (healthcare, education, infrastructure, the environment, global warming, etc.).
- American leadership in the world is waning, leaving China and Russia to become more assertive, thus threatening our national security.

Fair Automatic Simple Tax

The Solution:

The **Fair Automatic Simple Tax ("FAST")** Model

is **Progressive and consists of 8 brackets**

- taxes all income, eliminates all deductions, special credits and loopholes
- generates necessary revenue to fund the **American Agenda**
- pays off the \$22-Trillion gradually in about 10 years
- keeps politicians' hands off the tax code
- saves billion\$ in debt interest, IRS publications, postage, etc.
- makes federal income-tax-return filing "a thing of the past" for most employed and self-employed taxpayers
- encourages wealth creation as abilities allow but **everyone** must pay his/her own fair share.
- once adopted, makes it possible to address the **American Agenda** immediately because the national debt will **automatically** go down every year until it is paid off.

Bonus:

The **Fair Automatic Simple Tax ("FAST")** Model

- is a non-partisan solution
- appeals to most voters regardless of party affiliation
- makes Democratic party more appealing to Independents and Republicans dissatisfied with today's Republican party.



**It's All About
Revenue**

Without sufficient revenue, no matter what politicians promise, nothing gets done in America ~ or anywhere else ~ especially when a nation is saddled with an ever-growing **\$21 Trillion + debt** and a corrupt tax system rigged to favor wealthy individuals and corporations!

Quality Life Center 2019 Gala

Sponsorships are available for Quality Life Center's annual gala.

The event will take place in our new building.

Come join the excitement! Contact Jan for information at jsommer@qlcswfl.org or 239.334.2797 ext. 110.

November 1, 2019, 6 p.m. at Quality Life Center!

Mark your Calendar, get your tickets!

QUALITY LIFE CENTER 2019 ANNUAL GALA

Soaring Into the Future



Gala and Gallery Walk

November 1, 2019

6:00 p.m.

Quality Life Center

3210 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.

Fort Myers

Presidents Notes

Are you looking to work on a campaign this year? Are you interested in running for office?

Do you have a desire to help a candidate, but don't know where to start?

Are you a filed candidate that needs fundraising or messaging training?

If so, we have a training for you! Ruth's List has an aggressive training calendar for 2019, looking to train future candidates and staff for the crucial 2020 races. See below the opportunities in Florida. You do NOT want to miss these opportunities!

Email to: Info@ruthslistfl.org

Ruth's List Florida, 100 E Madison St., Suite 302 , Tampa FL 33602

FB @RuthsListFlorida

RUTH'S LIST FLORIDA

SHE'S THE CHANGE

is coming to a city near you!

Jacksonville

September 11th You Should Run

Orlando

May 7th You Should Run

June 1st Staff 101

October 27th Candidate
Fundraising & Message Training

Palm Beach

November 13th You Should Run

Broward

July 10th You Should Run

October 16th You Should Run

Gainesville

August 14th You Should Run

Tampa

July 31st You Should Run

October 26th Staff 101

St. Pete

April 17th You Should Run

Miami

April 27th Staff 101

June 19th You Should Run

November 16th Candidate
Fundraising & Message Training



We cordially invite you to join us in making a difference. **The Democratic Progressive Club of Lee County** features: sharing ideas, supporting candidates, interesting speakers, group activities and providing a voice for local Progressive Democrats.



As the party 'of the people' our grassroots efforts are designed to inform and involve like-minded people to end the Republican ultra-conservative stranglehold on public policy on the national, statewide and local level. Membership is open to all registered Democrats and attendance is open to all who share our ideals.

If you care about the issues that affect our quality of life – as social security and Medicare, veterans and union issues, voters and civil rights issues, foreign affairs, education and the environment and all the other issues that have defined the Democratic Party – we welcome you to The Democratic Progressive Club of Lee County!

Name:		
Street:		
City:	State:	Zip:
E-mail Address:	Phone #:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm a registered Democrat. Here are my annual \$30 dues per individual, \$45 per couple.		

Mail To:

The Democratic Progressive Club of Lee County
 c/o Kelly Lawrence President
 13871 Eagle Ridge Lakes Dr. #202, Fort Myers 33912
 2019

Officers/ Contacts:

2019/2020

- President: Kelly Lawrence
 - Vice President: Tom Cox
 - Secretary: Jay Crean
 - Treasurer: Maria Polo
- Board Members**
 Don Richards
 Carol McCutcheon
 Steve Sherman, Past President

**Mail: Kelly Lawrence,
 President**

13871 Eagle Ridge Lakes Dr.
 #202, Fort Myers, FL 33912
 ka.lawrence77@yahoo.com

Newsletter Production:
 Lydia Lowell-Sherman

- E-MAIL: lydialowell@aol.com

Deadline: Second
 Monday each month.

