From the President’s Desk

It seems to me that the Republican Party has lost any trace of morality. They plan to reject the Affordable Health Care Plan, leaving people to die for the lack of health insurance. The fact is that they simply do not care. These are the same people who called the section of the ACA encouraging people and their doctors to discuss end of life care, Death Panels. Now they are putting real Death Panels in place. They have nothing to replace it with. They talk about vouchers and block grants, controlled by the states. Putting people like Rick Scott in charge of making sure people get health care? Remember what happened when he was in charge of medical care at HCA? Stop and think about it. People will die because Republicans want to take away their health care. How do these Legislators sleep at night? Some of them have crawled out of their holes to have “listening sessions” where constituents, both Democrats and Republicans, beg them to keep the Health Care Act in place. People whose very lives depend on keeping their health insurance stand in front of their Legislator and beg him or her not to take away the ACA which is keeping them alive. The Legislators listen and then speak about how bad the Health Care Act is. I saw a clip of Paul Ryan listening to a young man who actually begged Ryan to keep Obamacare because he would die without it. Ryan told him to go look at the Republican Plan. There is no plan there. Calling it a Plan does not make it one. Ryan knows that. He is mean but he is not stupid.

Our speaker will be Rev. Dr. Charles McKenzie.

It is getting close to being too late. The fact that Donald Trump was legitimately elected President is beyond the comprehension of rational people. The way he was elected, using lies, insulting women, foreigners, the Pope, war heroes, Judges, blacks, immigrants and anyone who isn’t “nice” to him is outrageous. In past elections candidates made minor mistakes that ended their candidacies. Remember Ed Muskie being dismissed because he teared up when his wife was insulted? Michael Dukakis put on a silly looking helmet and drove a tank. He was laughed out of the election. John Kerry as a young man stood up against an evil war in which he was a hero. He was “swiftboated” out. Romney was taped telling a room full of big donors that 47% of people were on the dole. Obama won. Now think about the literally hundreds of insulting, bigoted, embarrassing...
things Trump has done. Remember that Russia had a role in his election. Trump won. He bragged on tape that he accosted women – and he WON! What has happened to the American electorate?

Now the Republicans in Congress sit back and watch Trump put the country in danger and do nothing. They are happy with him because while Trump hogs the media with his incompetence, the House and Senate will be pushing through their ultra conservative agenda. Beware, women, LBGT community, Blacks, Latinos and immigrants, you will be under attack.

The last few weeks has seen an enormous outpouring of activism. We have seen rallies against the Muslim ban at airports. We have seen the huge Women’s Marches all over the world from Washington DC to St Petersburg to Antarctica, London, Paris and other cities large and small. Our job now is to keep the activism going. Trump must be challenged on all sides. He is a disaster as President and we must challenge every dangerous, evil and obnoxious thing he does. We must make calls to our Legislators. When they cut off their phones we must send postcards and show up at their offices and, if necessary, their homes. In Pinellas County, in spite of the horrendous actions of this President, there are approximately 500 more Republicans registered than Democrats. We all need to be trained to register voters and go out and do it.

In 2017 we have some Municipal elections and we need to elect Democrats to form a bench for state wide and National elections in the future. In 2018 we will have mid-term elections. Our work is cut out for us. We must, at a minimum, take the Senate back and elect a Democratic Governor in Florida as well as retain Senator Nelson. Every Florida and federal House member will be up for election. Our job as Democrats right now is to start working to get Democrats elected. We need to pull this country back from the cliff it is headed over. We must find and support good candidates and then come out in huge masses to get them elected. We have no other acceptable choice.

Rev. Dr. Charles McKenzie Jr. will be our speaker at our February Meeting.

He was listed in the 1983 edition of Outstanding Young Men In America. He is the former Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Sanford, Florida and the Westcoast Center in Tampa, Florida. Rev. McKenzie is a former U.S. Congressional candidate for U.S. congressional district 3 in 2000 and state house candidate for district 55 in 2008. He is the State of Florida Coordinator of Rev. Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow-PUSH Coalition and a former member of the Rev. Dr. Charles S. McKenzie Jr. was born on April 27, 1956 in Camden, New Jersey. He is a 1975 graduate of Deland Senior High School. He did undergraduate work at the University Of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida, and Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a 1982 graduate of Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida. He earned a Bachelors degree in Religion and Philosophy. He has completed Masters coursework at National Louis University. He received his doctorate of Divinity from the Christ The King International School Of Divinity in 2010.

—from previous page
state board of the Florida ACLU. He has been a public educator for over 25 years. He has been a guest lecturer and speaker at Churches, Colleges, Community Centers, Prisons, Juvenile facilities, and public events across the state of Florida. He has been the recipient of a myriad of awards for community service.

He was a key organizer for the Gore presidential campaign in Florida in 2000, helping to coordinate a 16 city bus tour for the Rev. Jesse Jackson, former State Senator Tony Hill, and former U.S. Representative Kendrick Meek. He also organized a host of meetings and conference calls to facilitate the GOTV efforts across the state.

He was a recent recipient of the Tampa Bay Lightning “Community Hero Award” for his longstanding commitment to advocating for voting rights, better wages, justice system reform, education reform, minority economic empowerment, and a host of other issues impacting those left in the margins of society.

Rev. Mckenzie is an Educator, Minister, activist, radio and television personality, International Evangelist, author and community advocate in the tradition of nonviolence and Christian love.

Women’s March for Social Justice - Jan 21

On Saturday, Jan. 21, [the day after the Presidential Inauguration] 20,000 people gathered at Demen’s Landing in downtown St. Petersburg to march, and to demonstrate solidarity with the Women’s March on Washington. In total, over 2 million women and advocates AROUND THE WORLD held marches in the towns, cities and villages, proclaiming JUSTICE FOR ALL.

On Exhibitor’s Row the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club, along with representatives of the Pinellas Democratic Party, South St. Petersburg Democratic Club, Great Pinellas Democratic Club, North Pinellas Democratic Club, and St. Petersburg Democratic Club set up a tent and signed up those who who expressed interest in learning more about the Party or specific Democratic Club or Caucus. We collected contact information from between 200 - 300 individuals. Those who expressed interest in the Largo club have received emails acknowledging their interest and inviting them to attend a meeting.

Pinellas County Democratic Party Vice-Chair, Amos Miers, District 68 Chair Denise Lombardi, and St. Pete Dems Club President, Mike Fox, registered voters.

A few of our members and friends marched in other cities. Judy Sellers, Cora Kostka and Jessie Forcan marched in Washington.
Many of our members participated in the marches on the day after the inauguration, and other events following. Club member Iris Szwarcz attended a meeting in St. Petersburg, and summarizes it for us.

“The Nova, a ballroom built in 1920, was jam packed with people, mostly women, this evening. I arrived about 4:15, about 15 minutes after the program was supposed to begin. People gathered in small groups and I made my way to the front of the ballroom. People kept coming in, carrying drinks from the several bars located throughout the Nova. Soon Charlie Crist came in, shook hands, kissed a few and gave a speech about how proud he is of the women who are making a difference with their marching. He said he expected 2000 to march in St. Petersburg but 20,000 came out. He said that all politicians need to be reminded that they work for the people. Trump’s election can energize people who have never participated in politics.

“After he left, the women sang This Is My Country--there were hundreds of us led by Lisa Perry, a St. Petersburg leader of the women who went to the Washington March. Then we saw a video of the marches all over the world, every continent was represented and every state in the US. That was followed by the speech that we all have to be engaged and we were introduced to a list of activities in the coming month, an activity menu for everyone from those concerned about climate to those who care about women’s choice. It was announced that the Mayor of St. Petersburg has made his city a sanctuary city. The video of Ashley Judd’s Nasty Women speech from the Washington March was played. I left after that, but it was embarrassing to leave while everyone else was so enthralled.

“The women organizers did a great job--I wasn’t the only one who cried almost throughout the program. If we are strong, committed to our country, no Nazi, no buffoon, no people from here or from far away can hurt us, but if we expect others to save us, we will lose just like we lost the election. I was proud to join the women today.”
Highlights of January Meeting

Interesting critique on our last meeting’s presenter, Dr. Allen.

Emailed to Heidi Sanchez by friend Dick Jackson

“Heidi-

In the talk he gave to the Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club meeting last evening, Dr. Michael Allen got me thinking.

1. He began with the improbability of our revolutionists to defeat the most formidable military and naval power of the day, but did not mention the impact of the French. Without French gold, Yorktown would not have been the decisive battle it was. Our enormous debt to France is too rarely acknowledged. We would not exist but for them. Talk about ‘existential’!

2. He mentioned that individual rights are not enshrined in the body of the Constitution, but in the amendments. Our Framers did not see the necessity for a Bill of Rights, which they assumed were implicit.

3. Dr. Allen opined that the emoluments might not apply to the president. The language is clear: “no person holding any office of profit or trust under them [the United States] shall, without the consent of Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state.” The fact that Article I deals with the legislative branch notwithstanding, the language is explicit. It applies to the chief executive, as well as all officeholders in all three branches, full stop. No person means no person. (ed. Note: This fact that Article I applies only to the legislative branch is the primary reason many legal scholars believe Trump is not in conflict.)

4. Dr. Allen described the incipient presidency of Donald Trump as an “existential threat to American democracy and the republic. Dr. Allen’s solution, i.e, engaging Republicans and Trump supporters in persuasive discourse, is a limp-wristed response to an existential threat. Moreover, in my experience, even the best-educated among them are obdurately unwilling to engage in any such conversation. Lord knows, I’ve tried.

5. After the meeting was adjourned, I walked over to ask Dr. Allen whether he believed there were any statesmen or patriots among the Republicans in Congress sufficient to forestall any recklessness or constitutional overreach on Trump’s part. His laconic answer: “No.”

6. Absent any such, the prospects for the republic are grim. Every U.S. Senator and Congressperson takes a solemn oath or affirms that he or she will “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States from enemies, foreign or domestic.” The Congress have that sacred duty, beyond paltry partisan affiliation. I believe that, in a crisis, patriots will rise within the Republican caucus.

7. Nevertheless, in this instance, I believe the first bulwark against presidential folly and hubris will be the courts. A Judge Sirica will be found to rule in accordance with the law, and Congress will discover the spine to do its sworn duty. (Ed. Note: How prescient of the writer!)

8. I submit that this is not cockeyed optimism on my part, but rather faith in the resilience of our republic when the chips are down. If not, we go the way of the Weimar Republic. 🌽

REMEMBER THIS DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2018.
THAT’S THE DATE ON WHICH 33 SENATE SEATS,
ALL 435 SEATS IN THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
AND 14 GOVERNORSHIPS WILL
BE UP FOR RE-ELECTION.
Website changes that may be of interest to you.

Please note that two new blogs have been added to the Largodemocrats.com website, also a new Events widget.

The first blog you may want to investigate is the http://largodemocrats.typepad.com/local_events_meetings/. This blog lists meetings and events scheduled in the Tampa Bay area, including protests, and social events (of a political nature). Also a new widget that pulls calendar information for Democratic Party meetings, including clubs and caucuses. If you know of any events or meeting that should be added, please submit to Admin@largodemocrats.com

The second is http://largodemocrats.typepad.com/issues_and_legislation/. This blog will track any current issues or legislation that may require your action.

Headlines of each blog will be highlighted on the largodemocrats.com homepage, with links to the individual item for quick review.

Tracking the Issues

The Florida Legislature is already holding committee meetings and filing bills to be considered during their upcoming session. In Washington, Congress and the new administration have an ambitious (and disturbing) agenda for the first 100 days. Peggy Tucker is putting together a small group to track the progress on key issues in areas such as healthcare, the environment, education, etc. and keep club members up to date on their status. If you are interested in helping with this initiative, please contact Peggy at peggytucker55@hotmail.com or 727-460-5345. Thank you!
## Upcoming Speakers! 2017

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Dr. Charles McKenzie</td>
<td>Black History Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Susan Smith</td>
<td>Susan Smith is president of the Democratic Progressive Caucus of Florida. Since 2003, Susan has been a full-time progressive activist, serving as an organizer for DFA Tampa Bay, and Chair of the Campaign and Legislative Committees for the Hillsborough Democratic Party. She currently serves as an at-large member of the Hillsborough DEC Steering Committee. Susan is the former Training Resource Coordinator of the Democratic Women’s Club of Florida. Susan graduated from the University of Tennessee and is a former teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Pam Keith</td>
<td>Pam was a candidate for U.S. Senator from Florida in the August primary. Despite not having won that race, Pam is not giving up on her role as activist. We SHALL see her running for office again in the not too distant future. Let’s encourage her.</td>
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## Please Note:

In January, 2017 the Nominating Committee presented a slate of recommended Officer/Board Candidates, the Election will be held in March. Nominations for all offices may be made from the floor.

The positions to be elected are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Parliamentarian
- Board of Directors (5)
Your Senator Handed the State Department Over to the Fossil Fuel Industry,

from Union of Concerned Scientists email, Feb. 2

(Ed. Note. This was emailed to me, and did not succeed in making me feel responsible for Rubio’s vote – I called him several times about it – but it would really be a good thing if our members did what’s suggested below.)

Yesterday, the US Senate voted on the nomination of former ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State. Your senator [Sen. Marco Rubio] voted in support of his nomination. Tell your senator you are disappointed in his vote for a nominee who has spent decades questioning the validity of climate science.

During his nomination hearings, Secretary Tillerson failed to show how he would resolve conflicts of interest over the next four years, demonstrated ignorance on foreign policy, and refused to take an unequivocal stand against human rights violations. While his confirmation passed the Senate 56-43, this vote goes down in history as the largest tally against a Secretary of State since at least 1949—highlighting just how unfit Secretary Tillerson is for this position. Congress must now hold Secretary Tillerson accountable for his actions and ensure he puts the interests of the American people above those of the fossil fuel industry.

Write today and tell your senator you are disappointed in his vote for Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State, that you will be watching the former ExxonMobil chief’s actions closely, and that you urge him to do the same. Here are address and phone of the Tampa office to make it easy:

5201 West Kennedy Boulevard
Suite 530
Tampa, FL 33609
Phone: (813) 287-5035 or (813) 977-6450

Email link [https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact](https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact)

The Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Politics in the Park PICNIC will be on Saturday, April 22, Taylor Park, Shelter 4. We’ll have good food and lots of Politics for you to enjoy.

The Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club Holiday Pot Luck is tentatively planned for Saturday, December 2, at Randolph Farms Community Center.

NOTE: this is a CHANGE from the originally announced date, due to conflicts with the clubhouse schedule.
Climate impacts demand a response

As global average temperatures rise, arctic ice melts, sea levels rise, heat waves are more frequent and last longer, and extreme weather events intensify. Scientists and advocates began calling for action to reduce carbon emissions at least as far back as the early 1990s, hoping to prevent these events from coming to pass. We are now seeing these impacts as our reality. They are becoming more common as every day passes, leaving little room for doubt that our climate is changing.

The predicted impacts are coming to pass, and despite the doubt continuing to be peddled by the likes of Tillerson and Pruitt, scientists do know—with a great deal of certainty—that burning fossil fuels is the primary cause of those impacts and they can predict, with ever improving reliability, what a warmer world would look like.

And it’s not good, it’s not something we can ‘adapt to’ and it’s coming to pass faster than expected.

Both legally and morally, this Administration is compelled to act on clean air and climate. Many local and state governments are fully committed to continuing clean energy and climate progress because it’s good for public health and their local economies, and many businesses will continue to ramp up their clean energy investments because it’s good for their bottom line.

Throwing out the Clean Power Plan won’t bring back coal. Coal is increasingly uneconomic for a variety of reasons, including cheaper alternatives like natural gas and, increasingly, wind and solar. Those market conditions will exist with or without the CPP. That’s why the Trump Administration and the Congress must do something real to help miners/coal dependent communities instead of meaningless posturing around the CPP. The clean energy transition is good for our health and is one of the fastest growing job creators. Now we need to make it work for all Americans.

The Clean Power Plan could also prevent us from becoming over-reliant on natural gas. A rush to gas would hit consumers the hardest, due to the price volatility that results from the boom and bust cycles of gas exploration. While I’m sure it is hard for an Oklahoma oil company attorney like Mr. Pruitt to believe, but too much natural gas is bad for the economy and our health.

Natural Gas Gamble

What’s your climate plan, President Trump?

So the real question is, regardless of how the court rules, what will this Administration do to tackle today’s air pollution crisis: the need to reduce the carbon pollution that is fueling global warming?

The Clean Power Plan rule did not come about on a whim. It wasn’t rushed out the door as the Obama Administration was leaving. After decades of inaction by Congress, the EPA crafted these rules over a three year period that included consultation with scientists, state officials, power companies, and public hearings. They reviewed millions of comments from citizens around the country. Similar to healthcare, this Administration has an obligation to replace if it intends to repeal.

Before Pruitt is confirmed, Senators and all Americans are entitled to know, if not the Clean Power Plan, then what? President Trump, how will your Administration address this huge environmental and public health problem?
House Republicans Just Made America A Lot Less Safe

By Tim Keller - February 2, 2017

On Thursday, the House overwhelmingly voted to get rid of a piece of Obama-era legislation intended to keep firearms out of the hands of people with severe mental illness.

The votes came down largely along party lines, with a 235-180 vote striking down the Social Security Administration’s attempt at blocking citizens with a wide spectrum of potentially dangerous mental disorders from owning guns. The list of mental illnesses listed range from severe cases of anxiety to paranoid schizophrenia.

The rule would’ve required caseworkers to report people who had received disability benefits from the government for these mental illnesses to the FBI’s background check database. Opponents of the measure say that these restrictions would unfairly single out people receiving disability benefits who simply needed financial help managing them.

The NRA has fought the rule in the past, and likely sees this legislative step as a huge victory after being early Trump supporters. Chris Cox, the NRA’s top lobbyist had this to say about the ruling:

“The Obama administration’s last minute, back-door gun grab would have stripped law-abiding Americans of their Second Amendment rights without due process.”
One of the most respected and influential groups in the continuing breast-cancer screening debate said on Tuesday that women should begin mammograms later and have them less frequently than it had long advocated.

The American Cancer Society, which has for years taken the most aggressive approach to screening, issued new guidelines on Tuesday, recommending that women with an average risk of breast cancer start having mammograms at 45 and continue once a year until 54, then every other year for as long as they are healthy and likely to live another 10 years.

The organization also said it no longer recommended clinical breast exams, in which doctors or nurses feel for lumps, for women of any age who have had no symptoms of abnormality in the breasts.

Previously, the society recommended mammograms and clinical breast exams every year, starting at 40.

The changes reflect increasing evidence that mammography is imperfect, that it is less useful in younger women, and that it has serious drawbacks, like false-positive results that lead to additional testing, including biopsies.

A doctor reading mammograms at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. The American Cancer Society said women should begin mammograms later and have them less frequently. 📚
STATE & COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

For the most up-to-date information on your Federal, State, and County representatives including all contact information, go to:


HOW TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Many of you expressed interest in making regular contributions to the LARGO/MID-PINELLAS PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL COMMITTEE. The Political Committee allows us to DONATE MORE TO CANDIDATES or issue advocacy than our club bylaws and state statute allow from our General Funds.

For example, many banks have repeating automated bill paying. That makes contributing automatic and easy each month. Contact us for the Account number for the electronic deposit.

Or you can send a check to:

The Payee Name must be: Largo/Mid-Pinellas Progressive Political Committee. OR LMPPPC

The mailing address is
Largo/Mid-Pinellas Progressive Political Committee. or
Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club
P.O. BOX 1242
LARGO, FL 33779
What do we include in the Newsletter?

It’s clear that we Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club members are an interested, involved, informed - and opinionated - bunch. And providing a forum for all that “good stuff” is an important function of our newsletter. The Board encourages articles and letters to the editor.

This newsletter is created by volunteers who make every attempt to publish factual information, and who encourage the free exchange of information and opinions. It should include input from all of us. However, the opinions and viewpoints expressed by contributors may not necessarily reflect those of the club. Please send submissions to newsletter editor, Lois Fries, at loisfries@gmail.com.

Why Join the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club?

The club provides a variety of ways to stay informed and involved in local, county, state and national political discussions. But we’re not just about talk. We will be part of the action in finding the best candidates and getting them elected, as well as supporting the most important causes. We will write letters, make phone calls, knock on doors, register voters, and whatever else it takes to bring change to our communities, our county and our state. But, just as important, we also want to make time to enjoy each other’s ‘company and celebrate each other’s efforts at social events throughout the year. Grassroots politics is effective and fun!

As a member of the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club you can:

- Meet other active Democrats
- Meet and get to know your elected officials and potential candidates
- Raise funds and work for candidates
- Participate in community service projects
- Hear speakers and discuss issues of local, state and national importance
- Attend special events and monthly meetings.
- For membership information, email admin@largodemocrats.com

Stating in membership year 2017 our dues will be $15.00 per year. This is the first increase in dues since our founding in 2009.