

THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



Blue Gators Mobilize to Protect Immigrant Rights June 1, 2025

By Pat Duncan

During his latest presidential campaign, Donald Trump vowed to deport thousands of undocumented immigrants, and immediately after his inauguration, his administration started to do just that. He sicced immigration and border patrol authorities on communities across the country, arresting thousands, even scooping up people who live and work here legally. Also, getting to work immediately were concerned Democrats from the Blue Gator Initiative. The group's membership comes mostly from Bonita Springs, a small city with a notable concentration of Hispanic residents. Many live in "mixed" family groups containing citizens, documented and undocumented individuals.

In February, guided by retired business professor Dr. Sigfredo Hernandez, a Spanish-speaking native of Puerto Rico, the Blue Gators started out with 5,000 business-card sized "red cards for civil rights." The cards explain, in Spanish or Haitian, the rights one has (citizen or not) when an immigration officer comes to their home. These rights stem from the U.S. Constitution's Fourth and Fifth Amendments and include the right to deny permission to enter the home unless a warrant signed by a judge or magistrate is presented. The cards explain how a valid warrant should be slipped under the door.

The cards were in such demand that more had to be printed. To date, well over 10,000 cards have been distributed.

The Gators also created 1,500 packets *in Spanish* with information for families with children. Children born in the USA have all the rights of citizens and are entitled to be protected from deportation. These packets contain a Temporary Power of Attorney for the Care of Children, a form to list a child's passport information and parents' names, and legal forms designating guardianship of American-born children if parents are removed.

Blue Gators have been going door-to-door delivering these packets. Dr. Hernandez goes along to help them feel comfortable canvassing, despite a potential language barrier. Asked how useful the information packets are, Dr. Hernandez likened them to the information people receive to help prepare for a hurricane. "It helps enormously to be prepared," he said.

This campaign was not launched for humanitarian reasons alone. "Yes, we want to show our neighbors that we care," Blue Gator Liz Matt says, "but all people, regardless of legal

status, need to feel safe when reporting a crime or needing medical care. If they don't feel safe and don't seek these services, crimes can go unreported, and infectious diseases could spread."

The Blue Gator Initiative, founded by Dr. Roxanne Levin and Liz Matt, has worked to help Democrats win elections, get their members involved in political activities, and educate the public about matters of importance for civic engagement. Want to help the Blue Gators? Contact: BlueGatorInitiative@gmail.com.

Want to distribute red cards? Check out: [Immigration Legal Resource Center](#) and [RedCardOrders.com](#) for cards that can be used anywhere in the United States.