

# THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



## Be a Good Citizen. Get Involved. July 1, 2025

What's a *good citizen*? Back when the ancient Greeks invented democracy, Aristotle told us a good citizen was someone “with the knowledge and the ability both to be ruled *and to rule*.” In short, citizenship in a democracy was not a spectator sport.

Good citizens were those who stepped up and took an active part in running their community. They held office and felt the give-and-take of democratic decision-making. They learned how to work with others and get things done. (See “Parthenon”!)

### **Serve on an Independent Special District**

In Florida, there are lots of opportunities to be good citizens, to step up and get things done for the community. Florida has local government bodies called “**Independent Special Districts**.” These are **created for specific purposes** (like water management, fire protection, or community development). They operate within a limited boundary, independent of other local governments.

Lee County has over five dozen independent special districts—from the Alva Fire Protection and Rescue Service District to the Wildblue Community Development District. ([Here's the full list](#). Scroll down!) These districts have literally hundreds of seats needing to be filled in the 2026 General Election. They are non-partisan. Getting on the ballot is easy. All it takes is 25 signatures on a petition. The petition deadline is May 11, 2026.

Although these offices are non-partisan, they offer an excellent opportunity for Democrats to get their feet wet in local politics—to get their names out there, to learn the ropes of campaigning, to gain experience in holding public office and to show their fellow citizens what they can do for the community. Having Democrats elected to these positions helps build “bench strength” for the Party.