

# THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



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DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LEE COUNTY

## Good Vibes from the 2025 State Executive Committee Organizational Meeting February 1, 2025

*By Sandra McClinton*

The Florida Democratic Party elected officers and DNC members at its Organizational Meeting on January 25, in Lake Buena Vista. State party officers elected include Nikki Fried, continuing as State Party Chair; Daniel Henry, First Vice Chair; Ione Townsend, Secretary; and Wes Hodge, Treasurer.

Those who will represent Florida as elected members of the Democratic National Committee are Judy Mount, Juan Cuba, Ric Gable, Samuel Vilchez Santiago, Samantha Hope Herring, Sean Shaw, Lydia Hudson, Millie Herrera, Allison Minnerly, Pamela Castellana and Alan Clendenin.

This meeting marked a departure from the old “weighted vote” system where a small number of committee people each cast multiple votes. Under a new “one committee person, one vote” structure, the number eligible to participate increased to about 400, roughly three times the previous number of participants. Lee County had nine individuals as voting participants. These elected State Committeepersons were chosen by the Lee County Democratic Executive Committee and include Cory Andrews, Steven Blumrosen, Rachel Brown, Rita DiSalvo, Keith Edison, Cornelius Fowler, Kari Lerner, Sandra McClinton, and Brad Smith.



*Left to the right are attendees at the meeting:  
Rachel Brown, Brad Smith, Sandra McClinton,  
Cory Andrews, Viri Ryan as proxy for Rita DiSalvo,  
Kari Lerner, Keith Edison, Cornelius Fowler and  
Steven Blumrosen.*

Prior to the organizational meeting, there was a flurry of activity with Zoom meetings by the FDP and Lee DEC, and candidate phone calls and emails. On Wednesday before the meeting, the FDP had a candidate forum for DNC candidates. Committeeperson Brad Smith later commented, “Candidates were asked hard questions about how they were going to do

things.” On Thursday, the Lee DEC had a meeting with officers and State Committee persons to talk about the FDP empowering county parties. On Friday at the hotel, a SWFL State Committee Members meeting was organized by Kari Lerner to informally discuss the candidates running for officers and DNC positions and CD 19 Chair & Vice Chair seats.

On Saturday of the meeting, there was a lot of camaraderie as the Lee State Committeepersons sat around the table, ate a box lunch, and compared notes as to the best people to represent us. They shared their personal experiences with some of the candidates about who was best to serve. Viri Ryan, attending as a proxy for Rita DiSalvo, remarked on how unified the Lee County group was, making the most of the “power of our votes in Lee County.” Cory Andrews, our county’s Young Democrat, joined with the Young Democrats across the room as they worked together to build the next generation of leaders and were successful in getting some Young Democrats elected.

Afterward, Committeeperson Kari Lerner noted that the increased size of the membership was positive, allowing for diverse voices to be heard. She came away impressed with the overall makeup of the DNC delegation, noting that it combined a good mixture of newcomers and those with prior DNC experience. She added that “seniority is important” at the DNC and the overall shape of the delegation should serve the FDP well to make an impact at the national level.

Overall, there were good vibes about getting away from the weighted vote. This increased size of the Florida Democratic Party makes us stronger.