

Galveston Island Democrat Club
Monthly Membership Meeting Minutes
ILA Local 20 Union Hall
Tuesday, February 25, 2025

President Carol Derragon brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Minutes from January 28, 2025, were accepted as written.

Loretta Davis, Treasurer, reported that Galveston Island Democrats (GID) started February with \$14081.30 and ended with \$13,848.91. Expenses were incurred from Mail Chimp and ordering new GID shirts. Some Act Blue donations were collected, and it is expected that we will collect funds from t-shirts, buttons, and cookbook sales.

Reports from committees are as follows:

Hospitality – Kenneth Mcpherson: Thanks to the team for support.

Island Volunteer Deputy Registrars (VDR) – Lynda Harvey: Still looking for volunteers. The audience offered that anyone could hand out voter registration cards, but only registered VDR people can help a person with registration.

Legislative Affairs – Joe Willis: Voucher bill has passed the senate (SB 2) and is in committee in the House (HB 3). Many rural Republicans are not convinced that a voucher system is appropriate for their areas, so it is important to email and call these representatives with our concerns. If enough rural Republicans join the Democrats to oppose the house bill, it can be defeated.

Lynda Harvey shared that another bill of interest was the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE) (HR 22, SB128). If passed, the bill would require all voters to provide a document such as a passport or a birth certificate to register or update their voter registration. This is a concern in that most married women do not have the same name as on their birth certificate. Unless they travel internationally, they may not have a passport.

Under the SAVE Act, voters would be required to visit their local election office, in person, with the necessary documentation to register to vote or to update their registration. Mail and online voter registration services that are currently available in almost every state would be functionally eliminated by the SAVE Act. Anyone with limited time or the ability to travel to their local office would be impacted. Given the reduction in federal employees, lines will be long and appointments so far in the future that local voting will be impacted.

There are already strong safeguards in place to protect against noncitizens from voting and the incidence of illegal voting is rare.

Membership – Cas Luis & Janie Marshall: 74 in attendance tonight with 20 new people attending. Membership is selling “Jimmy” buttons that remind us to be like President Jimmy Carter.

It was shared that it is important to wear our shirts at events to show visibility and to capture news photo opportunities.

Outreach - Lodie Massey: Many opportunities to be visible and show support are available in the coming months such as Economic Protest, Women's March, Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) march. Please see the "Activities" list below.

Parliamentary Rules – Conni Rivers: No news.

Technology & Communications – Janet Jordan: Work is underway to revamp the website and convert it from a single person ownership to a group format. It is believed that this change will centralize information and improve functionality.

New Clubs, Committees and Liaisons

Book Club – Carol Hollaway: Carol Hollaway was introduced as the lead of the new book club and shared that she has selected the first book as, [The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet](#), by Michael E. Mann. It is available on Amazon in various formats. The Book Club will meet every four to six weeks via Zoom. Carol Hollaway can be reached at precinct223chair@gmail.com.

Civic Affairs Liaison – Conni Rivers will be the liaison with team members attending various civic meetings. Meetings and attendees are as follows:

City Council – Shelia Salinas

City Wharves Board – Conni Rivers

County Commissioners – Pam Denny

Galveston Independent School District (GISD) – Linda Harvey and Peggy Purvis

State Democratic Committee Liaison – Conni Rivers

Social Events – Randy Penn and Hector Arias will co-chair this committee

The President stated that more help was needed for committees with needs in fundraising and a historian.

Activities:

Protests, Actions:

Black Owned Banks support: Francis King shared organizational effort to support local black owned banks by opening checking and savings accounts. For more information, contact Francis King at the March meeting.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) Women's Center "Journey to Recovery" Walk will be April 12, 2025: 8AM at 45th and Seawall. GID has been a sponsor of this event for multiple years. ADA is a licensed substance abuse treatment center. The walk brings awareness to the possibility of recovery from the disease of addiction. More information can be found at <https://givebutter.com/Journeytorecovery2025>.

Economic Blackout, February 28, 2025: Try to only shop and eat locally and avoid non-local purchases on this date. We hope the power of the economy speaks to American consumer's concerns over rising prices on everything from food and gas to housing and utilities, epitomized by the soaring cost of eggs and the lack of action from the federal government to manage this burden.

International Women's Day March, March 8, 2025: 12:00 pm — 2:00 pm. Begin at 2800 Seawall Blvd, Galveston. RSVP at <https://action.womensmarch.com/events/international-women-s-day-unite-resist-in-galveston-tx>

Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) Protest, March 9 and 10, 2025: CERA hosts the world's most powerful and influential people regarding energy and financing and is scheduled in 2025 for the week of March 9th. Citizens are invited to speak out against the CERAWeek conference during March 9th - 14th, 2025 to demand an end to fossil fuel industries that make profit by exploiting people's health, environment, and future prosperity. For more information, contact Maggie Sager at Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN) 1028 Broadway Avenue, Galveston, TX 77550 (409) 795-8426.

Fun:

Piano Bar Happy Hour: March 6, 2025: Time TBD

ETC theater: Date and time TBD

Special Guest Speakers:

Frank Garcia, Galveston Immigration Attorney

- Background in business immigration with emphasis on H-1B Specialty (Professional) Worker visas.
- First Trump administration focused on family immigration, but new emphasis has emerged over professional immigration via visas and Permanent Resident (Green Card).
- Expect immigration bans to expand to travel bans with more care placed on language that may pass judicial scrutiny.
- The H-1B federal cap for 2025 is 65K for regular quota with 20K additional for applicants with master's degree or higher.
- Humanitarian and business immigration compete for same resources and both classes have impact on lives of American citizens. Lack of business visas limit American access to experts in medicine, engineering and other globally limited fields. Humanitarian

immigration restrictions create unchecked strife and unrest and limit unskilled labor in areas such as construction and agriculture.

Elizabeth (Chiqui) Sanchez Kennedy, Executive Director and Co-founder, Galveston Houston Immigration Representation Project (GHIRP)

- Background in providing legal services to immigrants at non-profit organizations. Prior to starting GHIRP, she was the Director of Immigration Legal Services at the YMCA International Services and Assistant Director of Cabrini Center (Catholic Charities). Proud graduate of Ball High, she received law degree from South Texas College of Law in Houston.
- Founded GHIRP in 2020 with 3 full-time staff. Current staff at 42 with 20 staff members dedicated to representing children.
- Conducts “Know Your Rights” seminars at St. Vincent's House at 2817 Post Office.
- In 2024, GHIRP represented over 200 individuals (not counting family) and is on track to triple that number this year.
- Observing a lot of unrest in their business this year due to inconsistent application of laws due to policy shifts and numerous executive orders. Recent stop-work by withholding federal funding was rescinded because of community involvement contacting congress concerning the critical nature of representing children.
- Safe zones (schools, places of worship, and hospitals) no longer observed by ICE. Immigrants fear basic needs such as school for children, medical attention, and food.
- More information is available at ghirp.org and stvhope.org.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 25th at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Shelia Salinas

Secretary

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<http://galvestonislanddemocrats.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/GalvestonIslandDemocrats>

Questions: email us at galvisledems@gmail.com