

# DONKEY TRACKS

## JANUARY, 2026

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Women's Democratic Club of Clark County



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Caren Wolfson,  
President



Judy Klein  
1st Vice President



Rita Ransom  
2nd Vice President



Karen James  
Treasurer



Yelé Glaster  
Corresponding Secretary



Michelle Abney  
Recording Secretary



Dr. Ouida Brown  
Inspirationalist





## *President's Message*

Welcome 2026!

WOW, what a great Holiday Party we had. Thank you Mayor Berkley and Dr. Lerhner for hosting. I enjoyed meeting new people and visiting with some old familiar faces.

This coming year will be a busy one for us. Mid-term elections are right around the corner. There will be many opportunities to help candidates. The best support we can give them is time, ok, financial assistance is great too! Let's get Democrats elected from top to bottom.

Our Club has many opportunities for you to volunteer on our committees, from big events to small tasks. All are important – and so are you! We welcome new faces and fresh ideas.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming months!

*Caren Wolfson, President*

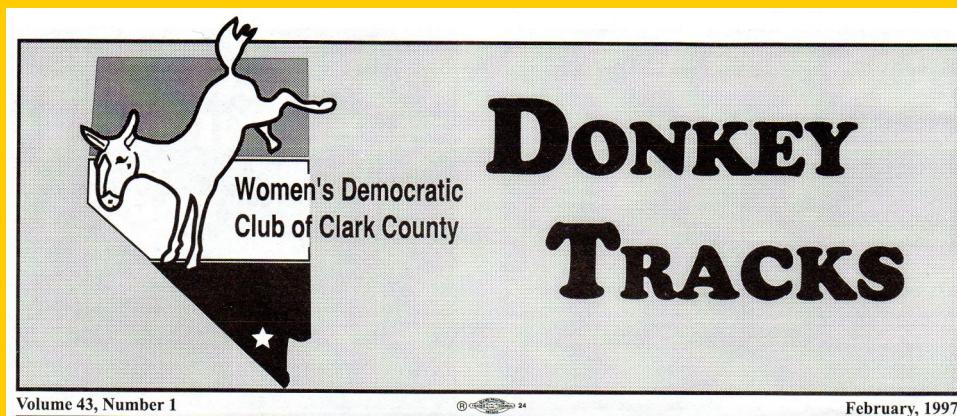
# 1997 Repeats Itself in 2026



Judy Klein served as President in 1996 and proudly passed the torch to Caren Wolfson in 1997.

Now, nearly three decades later, history comes full circle. In 2026, Judy once again passes the gavel to Caren, wishing her a successful and impactful year ahead.

This is our history—and it begins anew. Together, we embark on another year filled with purpose, goals, and challenges. Let us make this a meaningful year, guided by kindness and respect, as we work collectively to deliver our communities and our state back to blue.



## A Message From The President

By Caren Levenson

I would like to compliment Judy Klein for the wonderful accomplishments she achieved during her term as President. She will be a tough act to follow.

Thank you all for your support. You have given me a great honor when you gave me your vote for President. I will always do my best for you.

Thanks to Marie Rippes for graciously agreeing to continue as our Meeting Coordinator and to Sylvia Gross, Doris Balducci and Lee Lewalski for remaining as our cashiers.

In 1996, we gained Democratic control of the State Assembly. In 1996, we re-elected a Democratic President. In 1996, we heightened awareness of the dangers to our country posed by the radical right Republicans. This turbo-charged President Clinton's overwhelming margin of victory, especially among us voters of the sensible gender, made it even sweeter!

1996 is gone. In 1997, we look forward to the Municipal elections in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Henderson. Due to evolving patterns of voter registration and participation, these Spring-time elections will dynamically shape the November '98 campaign.

In 1998 we must re-elect Senator Harry Reid and retain the Democratic control in the offices of Governor and State Attorney General. We will, once again, face the radical right Republicans who pose as protectors of family values—as they promote policies that destroy families.

In 1997, all of our members will be called upon to participate from getting out the vote, to raising funds for our scholarship program and our candidates, to making phone calls, to sitting at tables and registering Democrats, to stuffing envelopes...to providing ideas.

Together we will continue to fight for and protect our families, our state and our country.

## Message From Outgoing President

By Judy Klein

1996 was a very good year for Women's Democratic Club of Clark County. We can all be very proud of our accomplishments as we worked together to make a difference in our community, state and nation.

There were so many individuals that made 1996 the success it was that it would fill the entire Donkey Tracks just trying to thank all of you. I would like to thank the 1996 officers for being my support group and voting so well on issues near and dear to our Club. All of our Committee Chairs were great and never once turned me or the Board down when called upon. The Chairs for the Spotlight Dinner and the Dinner Committee were the best. They worked together well and their success showed when Democratic candidates were able to receive the largest financial support ever given in the history of our Club. To our members that always came, always helped, always asked for more to do, thank you. To our core of volunteers that came every month helped check everyone in, thank you. And to all of our members, thank you for doing what Democrats do best, volunteer and give so willingly of yourself. You are the best representation this Club can give to our community.

Our Club is the premiere Club of Clark County because it reflects the very finest in all of us. I thank you for making my term of office a pleasure and a fond memory that I will always treasure.

I would personally like to thank all of you that called and/or sent cards, flowers, cookies, etc. while I was recuperating. It meant a lot.

**YOU ARE THE BEST.**

# Women's Democratic Club of Clark County



## Installation of Officers

Date: Thursday, January 8, 2026

Place: Tuscany Suites, Tuscany Room, 2nd Floor

255 East Flamingo Road, LV, NV 89169

Use 2nd Portico (West Side), Park Free, Use Elevator

Time: 11:30 a.m. Registration; Noon Installation/Program

Judge Jasmin Lily-Spells - Oath

Renee Diamond - Flag Salute

Join Us

As Our 2026 Board

Takes Their Oath Of Office

Our Program

Will Feature:



Caren Wolfson  
President



Judy Klein,  
1st Vice President



Rita Ransom,  
2nd Vice President



Karen James  
Treasurer



Yele Glastner  
Corresponding Sec.



Michelle Abney,  
Recording Secretary



Dr. Ouida Brown  
Inspirationalist

## "Nevada Through The Eyes Of A Past Governor"

Guest Speaker:

Senator Richard H. Bryan

All Registered Democrats Are Welcome To Attend



Senator Dina Neal

# celebrating **BLACK** **history** **month**



LV City Councilwoman  
Shondra Summers-Armstrong

**Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026**

**Place: Tuscany Suites, Tuscany Room, 2nd Floor**

**255 East Flamingo Road, LV, NV 89169**

**Use 2nd Portico (West Side), Park Free, Use Elevator**

**Time: 11:30 a.m. Registration; Noon Installation/Program**

**Members = \$35 \* Non-Members = \$40**

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# OPINION: Berkley Enjoys A Perfect Final Act In Nevada Politics — But She's Not Done Yet

By John L. Smith



*As mayor of Las Vegas, the longtime political dynamo is hardly resting on her laurels as she sets her sights on tough city issues.*

The black-and-white photo hangs in a place of honor inside Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley's office and speaks to a different era of Democratic Party politics in Nevada.

For one thing, it shows four Democrats actually laughing. When's the last time you saw that happen?

The picture was taken in the late 1980s, which I don't remember as a bust-a-gut decade for Democrats. But the moment of levity is captured

right there on the wall at City Hall.

The camera catches Berkley in the fast company of the state party's legendary three amigos: Sens. Harry Reid, Richard Bryan and Rep. Jim Bilbray. The prankster Bryan sticks out his tongue, the squinting Bilbray snickers. The senior Reid, no Henny Youngman on the stump, is practically grinning.

And there's the smiling Berkley, the former Strip cocktail waitress and UNLV student body president who served a term in the Assembly before winning a seat on the Board of Regents. She served throughout the tumultuous 1990s with the same academic chip on her shoulder that her friend former Regent Bilbray had when he fought for a [fair share of funding](#) for Southern Nevada's fast-growing UNLV.

These days, most people probably know Berkley best as a former six-term member of Congress, who [narrowly lost](#) in 2012 to incumbent Sen. Dean Heller (R). After suffering what she calls a political heartbreaker, she admits in a recent interview, "I had no idea what I was going to do with the rest of my life, and it actually turned out to be the best thing that could have possibly happened to me."

Berkley spent most of the next decade as [CEO and senior provost](#) of Touro University's Western Division, a private medical school system that includes a campus in Henderson. She enjoyed the work and could have retired there with no regrets — not about her years in the House, that stinging Senate loss or any of it.

But remaining on the sidelines was never Berkley's style, and entering her early 70s didn't change that. Her decision to reenter politics with a run for mayor came as little surprise to those who know her.

With Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman term-limited after a whopping 13 years in office, Berkley defeated Councilwoman Victoria Seaman in 2024. The mayor's job is officially nonpartisan, but Berkley has always worn her politics on her sleeve.

"As much as I loved Touro, I like being in office and doing work for the public," she says. "I never wanted to go D.C. again, and I never wanted to go to Carson City again. And now I'm mayor of Las Vegas, and I get to sleep in my own bed at night."

"And I think, oh, thank heavens. Because if I was back there in D.C. now, I would be ready to pull my hair out of my head."

She is not alone in that frustration, of course. The question, one that defines the office she holds, is what can a mere mayor do about it?

In a strong-manager form of government, the mayor's official duties are akin to being a member of the Las Vegas City Council with senior ribbon-cutting privileges. In practice, as the Goodman city hall dynasty illustrated, the job comes with a high-octane bully pulpit thanks to the international profile of Las Vegas. Geographical nitpicking aside, no one cares that the city limits don't include what the world knows as the Las Vegas Strip.

At a time when many Las Vegas leaders were silent and staring at their shoes, [Berkley was outspoken](#) about the damaging effect of President Donald Trump's economic chaos and dizzying tariff threats against our longtime trading allies. Trump's alienation of throngs of loyal Canadian tourists and other international travelers to Las Vegas made everyone's job harder. While gaming industry titans were experiencing selective deafness, the mayor pointed out the obvious.

Berkley remains concerned about the administration's aggressive immigration policies and use of masked federal agents and U.S. military personnel in roundups. It doesn't take a marketing maven to surmise that glorified goon squads and National Guard troops are a bad look in an ethnically blended tourist city.

"Right now, our biggest challenge is the feds, and I'm doing everything I can to keep them out of Southern Nevada," Berkley says. "The last thing I need with a soft economy is the National Guard walking down Fremont Street. I think this current administration is perfectly capable of finding a reason to come in here and be very disruptive, which would have very devastating consequences for this city. That is paramount on my mind, to be perfectly candid."

Does it sound like she's taking this personally? It should.

Berkley comes from a family that made its living on the floor of the gaming industry. Her late father, George Levine, was a storied showroom captain and maître d', and she remains proud of her early days schlepping cocktails to slot players and high rollers alike. When she promotes local businesses in the downtown corridor, including talking up traditional Vegas come-ons such as cheap shrimp cocktails on Fremont Street, she sounds authentic.

Berkley's visions for improving the city are complicated by Trump's chaotic economy and the [stinging \\$286 million settlement](#) of the Badlands Golf Course litigations that coincided with the start of her term. The city was forced to trim staff, tap general fund and liability fund reserves, delay capital improvements and jettison Cashman Field to resolve its legal fight with developer Yohan Lowie.

With her legislative experience and Washington contacts, Berkley appears well-positioned not only to raise the mayor's profile, but also its impact on the complex issues facing Las Vegas and other metro areas.

She's experienced the recurring themes that have haunted Nevada's quality of life for generations. In our brief interview, she reels off a litany of trouble spots and perennial challenges. From encouraging transportation options to improving health care and public education, she reminds a skeptic, "You get what you pay for."

"Ever since I served in the Assembly in 1983, we've been talking about economic diversification," Berkley says. "You need a strong education system to accomplish that. I'm having the same conversation that we had 40 years ago, and we still haven't done what we need to do to truly diversify our economy."

Reminded of the limits of the office and gavel, she responds, "The big issues aren't within my responsibility, but I have a bully pulpit and I talk about these issues a lot."

She calls her relationship with Clark County Sheriff Kevin McMahill professional and productive, and expresses relief to have reached an accord with the community's animal rights activists over [pet store sales](#), a surprisingly political issue in Southern Nevada.

Then there's the issue that can't be hidden: the increasing impact of homelessness on the community.

"The biggest challenge I have is homelessness," Berkley says. "Human beings should not be on the street. It's a humanitarian crisis. It's dirty, it's unhealthy, it's dangerous and I don't want to create an environment that we're sustaining people on the street. I want to create an environment where we are dealing with the root causes of homelessness — mental health, addiction, a lack of job training — and do whatever we can do to help people that are living on the street become self-sustaining and able to care for themselves and their families. It's a very, very huge challenge."

And Shelley Berkley's only a mayor.

In the final act of her long political career, it's her turn to try to do something about it.

*John L. Smith is an author and longtime columnist. He was born in Henderson and his family's Nevada roots go back to 1881. His stories have appeared in New Lines, Time, Reader's Digest, Rolling Stone, The Daily Beast, Reuters and Desert Companion, among others.*

# ***2026 Installation of Officers***

**Thursday, January 8, 2026**

**11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**Tuscany Room, 2nd Floor  
Tuscany Suites & Casino**

# ***Make Your Reservation NOW!!!***

**Use this LINK to go online**

**Use this LINK to pay at the door**

# ***Memos From Morgan***

***By Morgan St. James***



## **WHAT IS AHEAD IN 2026? Leaving an Awful Year Behind**

**Can we be hopeful that by maintaining our strength,  
possibly aided by a “miracle,” a degree of normalcy will return in 2026?**

**As 2025 draws to an end, there is no doubt that most of us would have never perceived the rapid decline into wannabe authoritarianism we have witnessed on a daily basis. Just as we think it can't possibly get any more bizarre, it does.**

Behind the scenes proponents of the “doctrine” of Project 2025 have ensured that Trump has authorized and carried out actions that would have been deemed impossible or illegal in other administrations. We have witnessed so many unauthorized acts, some through Executive Actions, that it felt like a dystopian nightmare we would eventually wake up from. But it wasn't. It has been our new reality.

Let's take a look at 2025 in retrospect. The East Wing of the White House was destroyed bypassing the need for permission and permits. MAGA Mike Johnson, at Trump's behest, literally crippled the House of Representatives so that some critical votes could not even be brought to the floor. The Senate was not much better. The Supreme Court, except for three brave Judges, along with the DOJ, have performed as though they are a legal team dedicated to carrying out Trump's personal wishes. Kristi Noem, nicknamed ICE Barbie, cosplays while commanding armed, masked thugs under the guise of ICE to roam many of our cities, terrorizing and disappearing occupants. Former Fox News host Hegseth brags about destroying fishing boats he identifies as drug runners and killing the occupants without proof or the authority of Congress. Millions of experts, government workers and general public have been fired or laid off from their jobs. Tariffs are causing price increases making many products unaffordable and causing several countries to stop dealing with us. The FBI, HHS and Dept of Education are headed by incompetents.

Millions are in danger of losing their healthcare because this administration won't extend the subsidies. However, there was no problem with giving \$40 Billion to Argentina, approving millions in tax cuts for the wealthy, increasing the military budget to a record high, and foolishly spending millions of taxpayer dollars in other ways. ARE WE GREAT YET?

To top off the year, Trump responded to the murders of Rob and Michelle Reiner with a post so horrible that even many loyal MAGA followers could not find a way to condone it. When given a chance to clear up what he intended, and perhaps recapture the loyalty of his sycophants, instead he doubled down in a TV interview. And, that might have been the straw that finally broke the proverbial camel's back. It was so self-aggrandizing and accusatory, that even in an awful nightmare it couldn't be validated as the way a President of the United States should respond to such an event. But he did. And,

beyond comprehension, some of his most loyal have commended him. More importantly, though, are the ones who condemned him for it.

Little by little cracks are showing up in the MAGA administration and the base. Sometimes it is those one or two acts too many that finally pull aside the curtain just as it did in the Wizard of Oz. Behind the curtain is a person who is not the all-powerful, but the one who is behind acts a rational administration would never carry out.

Unfortunately, throughout much of this, Democrats have not fought fire with fire. We have tried to be respectful and rational. But that is not understood by this administration. The only thing bullies understand is when you stand up to them. Now I have hope for 2026. The millions who have marched in protests this year managed to turn around some assaults on our democracy. Governors like Pritzker of Illinois, Newsome of California and Kotek of Oregon have stood their ground against ICE, even as these thugs terrorized their major cities. Some of the worst parts of Project 2025 are beginning to take effect, and as they hit loyal MAGA voters who thought they would not be affected, reality sets in. While reluctant to admit they made a mistake, they are switching horses because it has taken their jobs, too. It has raised prices for them too. In other words, they discovered they were not immune just because they voted for Trump. They have learned he doesn't care, and the recent blue victories are evidence of that.

So while there is much more to be said, THERE IS HOPE FOR 2026 if Democrats exercise their muscle and stand up to the bullies. If the rumored Republican Representatives actually leave the House early, the power will switch. Between our elected officials, and the public we can become the victors, not the victims.



Former interior designer MORGAN ST. JAMES, lives in Las Vegas with her rescue dog Cucumber and has been writing for over twenty years. She has 21 books in publication and over 600 published articles on diverse subjects. Morgan has appeared on radio, podcasts, television and author's panels. Her books include the Silver Sisters Mysteries series co-authored with her real life sister Phyllis Bradner, the Revenge is Fun series, stand-alone novels, the Writers' Tricks of the Trade book and short stories in six Chicken Soup for the Soul books. Morgan co-authored the multi award-winning memoirs: Rob and Cheryl Cuccio's Incest, Murder and a Miracle and Bella Capo's No More Crying Angels.

# 2025



<b>January</b> Assemblywoman Tracy Brown Jonathan Cooper Joanne Gilbert Linda Givens Bryan AJ Holly Hith Ruth Hudson Kara Jenkins Senator Erica Mosca Sharon Newby Morgan St. James Jimmy Vega Lana Whiteford Bonnie Wohl Barbra Wolfe Andy Wong Jill Zinner	<b>February</b> Alexis Banta Brenda Braam Jennifer Gibbs Barbara Hill Ruth Hudson AJ Holly Huth Lori Lamson Janis Schoen Hon. Miriam Shearing Sherry Strothers Lynn Wolfe	<b>March</b> Sally Achord Myrna Baxton Kathy Carlson Ruth Harper Jeanie Hedden Deidre Radford	<b>April</b> LaVonne Hankins DaShan "Levy" Shultz
<b>May</b> Eva Chase Hollis Nieto Tyniah Quirk Richie Work	<b>June</b> Hanna Stotland Linda Ziskin	<b>July</b> Skye Burress Yele Glaster Haley Johnson April Legere Kenya McCampbell Tracy Puckett	<b>August</b> Katherine Currie-Diamond Lorraine Sledge Catherine Wiersch
<b>September</b> Dedree Butler Maria Teresa Hank Angel Kuo Emerald Lucas Amanda Swartz	<b>October</b> Jonathan Jones Ami Peterson	<b>November</b> Linda Morales-Kennon	<b>December</b> Elizabeth Taylor

# Sharing Our Legacy

## By Judy Klein



We celebrated the holiday season at the home of Mayor Shelley Berkley, and it was a resounding success. The Mayor's home was filled with laughter, friendship, and the warmth that comes from being surrounded by Democrats who share common values. Photos from the evening were taken and are available for viewing on our Facebook page. My sincere thanks to Kara Jenkins and Rita Ransom for capturing these special moments for us to share.

I would also like to extend heartfelt appreciation to all of our volunteers who stepped up to assist with check-in, greeting, bartending, and keeping the potluck refreshed throughout the evening. This is who we are. This is truly what "It Takes a Village" looks like, and I thank each and every one of you.

Because of your generosity, we raised Eight Hundred Dollars (\$800.00) for Three Square. Special thanks to Rita Ransom for chairing this effort—her thoughtful and persuasive emails played a significant role in our success. She truly has a way with words. Thank you as well to Caren Wolfson, Michelle Abney, and Rita Ransom for presenting the donation to Three Square (see photo below).

As the holiday season continues, I wish everyone a Happy, Healthy, and Peaceful Chanukah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. In a world that feels increasingly unsettled and troubled by the atrocities we witness far too often, it is important that we pause, take a breath, and pray for a kinder, more respectful world.

Chanukah, which came earlier this December, is known as the Festival of Lights. It commemorates resilience in the face of oppression and the miraculous rededication to life and hope. Yet this year, it feels as though there were not enough candles to push back the darkness. From gun violence at a university, to tragedy in Australia, to violence closer to home in Brentwood, we have seen far too much ugliness. We must do better as human beings. This cannot—and must not—continue if we are to coexist on this planet we call Earth.

I am asking each of you to rededicate yourselves to the values we hold dear. Be proud to be a Democrat. Be proud that you care about others. Be proud that you advocate for fairness and equity. Be proud that you work hard to care for yourselves and your families. Be proud to stand up and shout, "No more." Be proud to protest. Be proud to commit yourselves to joining campaigns that will turn Nevada BLUE. And be proud to be a member of the Women's Democratic Club—a club known for making and keeping lifelong friends.

Let us bring joy back, along with the sanity that seems to be slipping away. Let us return to kindness and respect for one another, even when we disagree. Differences of opinion do not mean we cannot coexist or work together to make the world a better place for our grandchildren. I am simply asking everyone to pause, take a breath, and choose empathy and joy. Let us refuse to be drawn into fights we know are wrong.

Let us dissent. Let us not allow anyone to shame us, our country, or our military. Please recommit yourselves to the values we cherish and believe in. As Maya Angelou so powerfully reminded us, "We are more alike than unalike."



# The Great Betrayal: How a U.S. Envoy Helped Russia Shape a Plan Against an American Ally

By Brian Daitzman

*A U.S. envoy coached a senior Russian official on how to influence an American president into embracing a plan that advantaged an aggressor and weakened an ally fighting for its survival as a sovereign state.*

*A betrayal rarely arrives as a dramatic gesture. It accumulates through process—through choices that elevate an adversary's interests while diminishing those of an ally, through private conversations that displace public commitments, through the quiet reordering of whose voice is heard first and whose is heard last. What occurred in October 2025 was neither an ideological shift nor a sudden rupture. It was something more deliberate: the migration of American power away from an ally fighting for survival and toward the autocrat attacking it.*

On October 14, as Bloomberg reported, Steve Witkoff, the newly appointed special envoy, placed a five-minute call to Yuri Ushakov, Vladimir Putin's senior foreign-policy adviser. He did not present an American position or outline U.S. red lines.

Instead, he coached Ushakov with an ease that would have been notable even in peacetime. According to the Bloomberg recording, Witkoff offered no deterrent message. Rather, he advised a senior Russian official on how best to flatter and influence an American president whose sensitivity to praise has been extensively documented in U.S. and foreign reporting. He urged Ushakov to schedule the call before President Volodymyr Zelensky's October 17 White House visit, ensuring that Moscow—not Kyiv—would reach President Donald Trump first. He proposed beginning with congratulations on the Gaza agreement, describing Trump as a “man of peace,” presenting Russia as cooperative, and invoking the “20-point” Gaza plan as a model. He even encouraged Putin to reference earlier “Steve and Yuri” conversations to signal rapport.

This guidance did not come from Moscow's political operatives. It came from a U.S. envoy—advice that helped an adversary prepare for a conversation with the American president at a moment when Ukraine depended on U.S. backing for its survival.

In American diplomacy, envoys do not serve as communications consultants to foreign leaders, especially not to adversaries engaged in active war. AFSA guidance, State Department protocol, and the White House's “One Voice” doctrine all define envoys as extensions of the Secretary of State, charged with advancing U.S. policy rather than refining an adversary's messaging.

Yet a U.S. envoy prepared a Kremlin adviser for a call with the American president before America's ally had even been heard. In alliance politics, sequencing is not ceremonial; it determines influence. The first speaker sets the frame; the second must work within it. By advising Russia on timing, tone,

and approach—by helping an adversary craft a calibrated appeal to a president whose reaction to praise is a matter of public record—Witkoff granted Moscow advantages alliances normally reserve for partners. Ukraine—under attack and reliant on American military and intelligence support—entered the conversation only after the adversary had already shaped its outline.

This inversion was not procedural noise. It was, in operational terms, a form of betrayal: an American envoy equipping an adversary to shape his own president's perceptions while the ally under attack received no comparable preparation in a moment that cannot be replayed—the initial framing that guides all subsequent decisions.

Two days later, as *Bloomberg* documented, Putin followed the guidance closely. He opened his two-and-a-half-hour call with Trump using the congratulatory tone, Gaza framing, and conciliatory posture Witkoff had outlined. The overlap between the coaching and Putin's talking points was unmistakable in the recorded evidence.

Within days, *Axios* and *Bloomberg* reported that Witkoff met in Miami with Kirill Dmitriev, head of Russia's sovereign-wealth fund and long identified by the Senate Intelligence Committee as a Kremlin-linked backchannel to Trump-aligned networks. By month's end, *Axios* reported that Dmitriev and Ushakov were discussing how far Russia should press its "maximum" terms.

This was not coincidence. It was structure.

Dmitriev is a Kremlin-designated backchannel operator; Ushakov is Putin's top foreign-policy aide. Both participated before Ukraine saw anything resembling a plan. The pattern was unmistakable: the adversary brought into the room early, the ally relegated to reacting after the framework had already taken shape.

The result was a shift in negotiating power toward the aggressor—before the victim state had been invited to the table.

Ukraine eventually received a 28-point peace proposal—unsigned, unattributed, and far from what Kyiv expected from a major ally. AP and *Axios* reported that the language displayed hallmarks of Russian bureaucratic drafting: legalistic verbs, administrative cadence, and syntactic patterns associated with Russian state memoranda rather than American diplomatic documents. Ukrainian officials recognized these features immediately. The text did not resemble something produced in Washington. It resembled something shaped in Moscow.

The damage lay not only in authorship, but in form.

A peace proposal is a trust-bearing document: an ally offers it to safeguard another's sovereignty. Here, Ukraine received a plan labeled as American—expected from the country supplying its weapons and intelligence—only to discover linguistic traces of the state invading it.

This was not a minor irregularity. It was a procedural breach: Ukraine received, under an American banner, the conceptual architecture of the aggressor—a plan demanding concessions and long-term constraints that originated not in Washington but in consultations with the invading state. Few signals could more deeply erode confidence than a document bearing an ally's label and an adversary's fingerprints.

This is why the proposal alarmed Ukraine and Europe. It was not only the terms. It was the realization that the voice inside the document did not sound like Washington's.

When Ukraine examined the plan, it found demands that, according to AP, *Axios*, *The Guardian*, and Politico Europe, would formalize Russian territorial gains without requiring Russia to withdraw or disarm. The proposal required Ukraine to recognize Russia's control over Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk; withdraw from additional territory Russia had not taken by force; accept frozen front lines in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia; renounce NATO membership; and limit its troop levels and long-range weapons. Russia, meanwhile, faced no reciprocal force caps, no withdrawal, and would receive phased sanctions relief.

These provisions were not theoretical. They would have redrawn Europe's map, weakened Ukraine's capacity to defend itself, and rewarded Russia's invasion in concrete terms. They would codify gains achieved by force while constraining only the victim.

Perhaps most revealing were the proposed "security guarantees." AP reported that they were non-binding, dependent on the political choices of future U.S. administrations, and voidable if Ukraine used certain U.S. weapons. Ukraine was being asked to trade territory and sovereignty for assurances the United States could reverse easily.

The historical record—Helsinki in 2018, the 2019 Ukraine aid pause, public statements suggesting NATO allies deemed "delinquent" might be left vulnerable, and the 2025 suspension of military and intelligence support—shaped how Kyiv evaluated those guarantees. These events, reported by CBS, PBS, AP, UPI, and the Senate Intelligence Committee, formed the context through which small states assess reliability.

# Highlights of December 2025



Yelé Glaster, our 2026 Corresponding Secretary, has just graduated from UNR with a Masters in Instructional Technology and Learning. *Congratulations* Yelé on this major accomplishment!

Visit  
[www.womensdemo.com](http://www.womensdemo.com)  
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## Annual Holiday Party



## Pardon The Corruption

### By Don Moynihan

Trump's justification for invading American cities and other countries is to reduce the crime he is actively encouraging through his pardons.

The President of the United States has said that preventing the flow of drugs from South America into the U.S. is a national priority. On that basis, the U.S. military is killing alleged drug traffickers without due process. It is also preparing to invade Venezuela. Trump says the leader there is involved [in narcoterrorism](#), justifying the extraordinary step of war.

But if Trump is opposed to drug trafficking from south of the border, why did he [just pardon](#) another leader in the region who was part of a massive drug trafficking ring? Juan Orlando Hernández, the former President of Honduras, was tried and convicted of exactly the accusations that Trump is using to drum up a pretext for war against Venezuela. Hernández was convicted of receiving millions from violent drug gangs for facilitating the flow of 400 tonnes of cocaine into America, while corrupting state institutions.

A prosecutor reported that Hernández boasted to drug dealers that "together they were going to shove the drugs right up the noses of the gringos." An agent who worked the Hernández case [said](#): "It means any attempt to work your investigations to the highest levels is meaningless."

Trump is also invading Democratic cities with military or paramilitary forces. His justifications for their presence is to improve public safety and enable his immigration sweeps. Trump officials label [protests](#) of federal officials in Democratic cities as "insurrection," justifying the federal presence.

But if Trump was interested in law and order, why does he keep pardoning criminals? While many of those criminals are white collar, he has also pardoned violent convicts. Of the nearly 1,600 Capitol insurrectionists pardoned, more than 200 of these were convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers. [Many](#) of those pardoned by Trump have gone on to commit crimes.

In one especially grim case, a child molester [tried to silence](#) his victim by promising a share of reparation money he expected to be paid by the Trump administration.

Let's take a closer look at how Trump has used his pardon powers for corrupt purposes.

### Pardon Abuse

The pardon power is a weird [constitutional inheritance](#) that mostly draws attention when it is abused. (In this post, I am going to treat pardon, clemency, and commutation as broadly falling under the category of pardon powers, though they have distinct legal effects).

Over time, Presidents sought to minimize the risk of abuse by making it more consistent with the ideals of a Weberian bureaucracy: transparent, impartial, and subject to clear criteria. This has given way to a reliance on leveraging of political connections and appealing to Trump's personal whims. The use of pardons is now consistent with Trump as "a king above the law" in Justice Sotomayor's memorable framing.

The pattern of extreme politicization of the pardon process began in Trump's first term. William Barr, Trump's former Attorney General [said](#) "there were pardons being given without any vetting by the department." One [analysis](#) found that only 11% of Trump's 238 first term pardons went through the formal DOJ review process.

Things have gotten even worse in his second term, partly because of Trump's broader indifference to norms, but also because he has installed Ed Martin to oversee the process. Martin is the first partisan political appointee to lead the Office of Pardon Attorney, which was previously manned by career civil servants.

DOJ lawyers normally apply standard [criteria for pardons](#), these include: post-conviction conduct, character and reputation; seriousness and relative recency of the offense; acceptance of responsibility, remorse, and atonement; and need for relief. The ideal case was someone who had served significant time, especially for more serious crimes, expressed remorse, and faced real hardship because of their conviction. Now, the ideal case is a wealthy supporter of the President who would prefer never to see the inside of a jail cell for their crimes.

According to [ProPublica](#):

For those who followed the standard protocol set out by the Department of Justice, the sense is growing that the process no longer matters; they've watched the public database of applicants swell with thousands of pending cases, while Trump grants pardons to people who never entered the system at all.

Presidents could and sometimes did ignore DOJ recommendations or worked outside of the formal process. Most notoriously, on the last day of his presidency, Bill Clinton pardoned Marc Rich, a white-collar fraudster living in exile, after his wife made large contributions to the Democratic party and Clinton's presidential library. We could see this as a precedent for Trump's actions, but not a justification. The pardon triggered an FBI investigation, and was enough of a scandal that Clinton expressed remorse. Similarly, Joe Biden bypassed the review process to issue a pardon to his son, Hunter Biden. The decision drew much criticism, but the logic — that Trump would weaponize the legal system to attack his family — is increasingly hard to disagree with. Trump has repeatedly said he will void such pardons.

The bureaucratic process for reviewing pardons minimized the potential for the type of broad corruption we are seeing now. Abuses of the system were considered scandals, aberrations from the norm. Now the aberrations are the norm. Martin has proudly politicized the pardon process, posting "No MAGA left behind" on his social media after Trump pardoned a supporter convicted of taking bribes while serving as a sheriff.

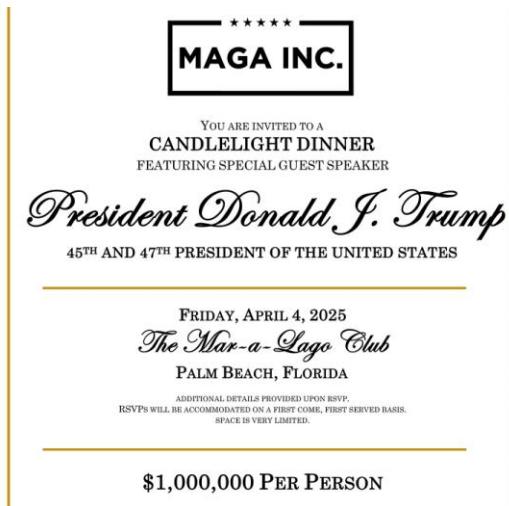
### **Pardoning Loyalists and Suplicants**

Trump accepts two primary types of currency for his pardons: loyalty and money.

In addition to the January 6 insurrectionists, Trump has pardoned 77 people who sought to overturn the 2020 election on his behalf, [including](#) slates of alternate electors, legal guides, and those who promoted false claims about the election, or who directly pressured election officials or falsely accused them of corruption.

In addition to loyalists, Trump has also pardoned the well-connected and the well-heeled, such as:

- Jonathan Braun, a drug smuggler and predatory lender, whose pardon was facilitated by Jared Kushner, the President's son-in-law. Doing so damaged a criminal investigation where the DOJ was hoping to get Braun to flip on other criminals. Once the pardon came, Braun had no reason to co-operate.
- David Gentile served about two weeks of his seven year prison sentence when Trump commuted his sentence. He was involved in a \$1.6 billion fraud of thousands of investors. The judge told Gentile that his crimes got him "a one-way ticket to jail." Little did he know that Trump was offering a one-way ticket out of jail.
- Paul Walczak stole over \$10 million of his employees' payroll taxes to fund a luxury lifestyle. When he was sentenced, the judge emphasized there "is not a get-out-of-jail-free card" for the rich. How wrong he was! Walczak's pardon application did not dwell on why he was innocent, but on his Mom. More specifically, that she had raised millions for Trump, that she had funded efforts to publicize Joe Biden's daughters drug problems. Weeks after she took the opportunity to join a "candlelit dinner" (cost: \$1 million) to dine with Trump, Walczak was pardoned, allowing him to skip jail and a \$4.4 million restitution.



Trump has been especially zealous in tilting the legal system to protect allies in the crypto industry. Trump once labeled crypto to be a "scam" that "can facilitate unlawful behavior, including drug trade and other illegal activity" but came to see the scam as an opportunity to

capture political allies and financial patrons. Trump and his family have netted billions in crypto holdings, partly by offering free passes to key figures in the industry. For example:

- Trump pardoned the former CEO of Binance, CZ Zhao of his money laundering crimes after Zhao and Binance promoted World Liberty Financial, the crypto company the Trump family has a stake in with its \$TRUMP coin. The SEC's fraud investigation into another crypto tycoon, Justin Sun, was paused after Sun spent tens of millions on \$TRUMP.

### **The Impunity Is the Point**

Trump is not waiting until the end of his term to issue questionable pardons. He is reveling in them. They signal impunity from the law for Trump's associates, and that the pardon store is open for business. Whatever loyalists do now that is likely illegal, they can hope for a pardon from Trump in the future.

In addition to the loyalists and wealthy supplicants, there is another category of pardonee: politicians who have been prosecuted for corruption. Twelve members of Congress accused of bribery or corruption have been pardoned, ten Republicans and two Democrats. But Democrats can also benefit. For example, Trump pardoned Henry Cuellar, the Texas Democratic Congressman, even before his trial began. Cuellar was indicted on accusations that he accepted \$600,000 from a foreign government and Mexican bank to influence US policy. Trump did not weigh in on the details of the case, merely claiming that Cuellar, like him, was the victim of a weaponized justice system. The net effect seems to be to decriminalize political corruption in America.

In justifying the pardon of former President Hernández, Trump said "They gave him 45 years because he was the president of the country — you could do this to any president on any country." Hernández, like other applicants, drew explicit connections with the prosecutions of Trump: "Just as you, President Trump, I have suffered political persecution, targeted by the Biden-Harris administration, not for any wrong-doing but for political reasons." Hernández's appeal was forwarded to Trump by another pardonee, and political fixer, Roger Stone. It is hard to miss the parallels between Trump's sense of grievance over prosecutions of his own misdeeds, and his willingness to exempt other politicians for their abuses of office.

Trump embraces his pardon power by also helping [celebrities](#). The more attention, the better. Pardon lawyers were told to recommend that Mel Gibson have his access to guns restored, despite a domestic violence record. Liz Oyer, the lawyer consulted, [said](#): “My recommendation was sought, I believe, to give a veneer of legitimacy to what was actually a political favor for a friend of the president. I said I couldn’t recommend restoration.” She was fired. When she was invited to testify in the Senate, only Democrats attended the hearing: “It has really perplexed me that there’s not a shared level of bipartisan concern about what’s happening inside the Department of Justice.”

### **A Broader Pattern of Abuse**

Trump’s pardon spree is part of a broader pattern of transforming the rule of law into rule by law. He is pardoning politicians who have been convicted of corruption, even as he is using the justice system to target political opponents. *For my friends, everything; for my enemies, the law.*

Not only did Trump pardon January 6 rioters, he directed the Department of Justice to stop prosecuting cases. One J6er whose case was subsequently dismissed correctly predicted: “President Trump’s going to be in office six months from now, so I’m not worried about it.” He was later [arrested](#) for aggravated kidnapping and sexual assault.

Not only has Trump pardoned crypto criminals, Trump has blocked several other investigations and enforcement actions into crypto donors and investors (see p21-23 of this report from Democrats on the [House Judiciary Committee](#)).

### **A Two-tier Pardon System**

The perception that Trump is handing out pardons is fueling a gold-rush. About [10,000 people](#) filed for pardons in the first nine months of the Trump presidency, which is about two-thirds of the total pardon applications for the entire four years of the Biden administration. The gold-rush benefits Trump, but also those in his orbit who have connections to a personalist regime. [Kenneth Vogel](#) of the *New York Times* has been covering this beat:

Lawyers and lobbyists with connections to Mr. Trump have scrambled to take advantage. They have collected large fees from clemency seekers who would not be eligible for second chances under apolitical [criteria](#) that are intended to guide a Justice Department system for

recommending mercy for those who have served their time or demonstrated remorse and a lower likelihood of recidivism. Instead, clemency petitioners are mostly circumventing that system, tailoring their pitches to the president by emphasizing their loyalty to him and echoing his claims of political persecution.

For example, a nursing home magnate who withheld \$38 million in payroll taxes was prosecuted by Trump's Justice Department, with Trump's former personal-lawyer-turned-US-Attorney Alina Habba claiming credit. After giving almost \$1 million to lobbyists, the magnate was out after three months of his three year sentence. The lobbyists in question, [Jack Burkman and Jacob Wohl](#), became infamous for their laundering of [conspiracy theories](#) during Trump's first term, and were subsequently convicted in multiple states for voter suppression efforts.

The clients who can buy their access to Trump's inner circle tend to be white collar criminals. White collar crimes are less shocking than violent crimes, but have real costs. For example, some of Gentile's victims lost their life savings. These crimes are also incredibly difficult to prove in court, even as the rich are able to fund a legal defense beyond the reach of ordinary people. Nevertheless, many might decide a good insurance policy is to put a down-payment on a pardon. After a wealthy fraudster served two weeks of a 42 month jail sentence, one DOJ prosecutor [said](#):

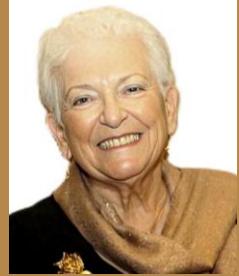
Afterward, defense attorneys are telling us they can't get their clients to take good or reasonable plea offers because they felt they're better off spending their money on a political donation, drawing Trump's attention, and getting the case dismissed or going to trial and getting a pardon.

The focus on the wealthy also robs victims and the public of restitution. One analysis by Democratic House Judiciary staffers found that Trump's pardons eliminated [\\$1.3 billion](#) in restitution and fines. It also reinforces the sense of a two-tier justice system. A lawyer for a pardon applicant [bemoaned](#) that his client had no chance even though he fit the DOJ criteria:

If you're just an average citizen, you can't even get in the line. I told my guy he'd probably be better off if he broke into the Capitol or made a major donation to Trump's inauguration.

## Bill Gates Didn't Tell Us The Entire Story

by Rita Ransom



Recently Bill Gates made headlines with his statement that humans will survive climate change, and he appeared to be abandoning his commitment to fighting it, which was welcome news to climate skeptics. What he is advocating is a new approach, seeking global climate equity especially for poorer nations, and asking for more innovative technologies to deal with the worsening climate. All good and necessary actions.

However, his belief humans will survive did not go far enough in explaining the reality of this forecast. Yes, humanity will survive climate change regardless of whether or not we take strong action to mitigate its worst effects. We humans are amazingly resilient and adaptable, as history has shown. Early humans survived incredible obstacles including ice ages and the geographic challenges of mountains, deserts, and seas to disperse and populate the entire globe.

But he fails to acknowledge that although humanity will likely survive, we may not much like the "how" of it and that our population may be greatly reduced. It's probable our lives in the future may be very different from what we're used to or have come to expect. Climate change is now contributing to the extinction of a multitude of animal, plant, bird and insect species resulting in the destruction of the very ecosystems upon which our modern life depends. These complex interactions among flora, fauna, and the microscopic world have evolved over eons, allowing the existence of life as we know it and cannot easily be replaced or recreated.

Left unchecked, disasters from flooding, wildfires, landslides, and storms may alter our landscapes so that humans can no longer live in places such as our existing shorelines and mountainsides, and what may be left of forests. Climate "refugees" will seek other places to live, increasing the burdens of burgeoning populations on these places. Resources we take for granted now may be in ever-decreasing supply. Southern Nevada with its ongoing drought is a prime example of a place where population growth may eventually exceed what the over-allocated Colorado River can supply.

Competition for dwindling resources will intensify and become uglier than ever, with poorer nations and populations potentially affected the worst; some may even cease to exist. They may have to be absorbed into other countries, if those countries will have them. We're already seeing some of this forced emigration with people leaving their homelands due to civil warfare, resource depletion, drought, and famines, and finding they are often not welcome in other countries. Destabilizing consequences and unrest have flourished. This emigration and its consequences will amplify as the climate worsens. Mr. Gates, please take a look at the furor you've released with your position on climate change. Humanity may survive but what will life be like in that future? The answer right now is to continue exhorting Congress to enact serious, strong climate legislation to slow its impacts while there is still time. A Democratic majority in both Houses is crucial for this action.



# Field Registrar Newsletter

## Clark County Election Center

Annie Aviles – Field Operations Coordinator

# DECEMBER 2025

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

### Judicial Candidate Filing:

January 5 - 16, 2026

The list of candidates for judicial office who filed for candidacy will be posted on the Secretary of State site. -Pursuant to NRS 293.179, certain judicial candidates are now required to fill out and submit a questionnaire during the filing period.

### Non-Judicial Candidate Filing:

March 2 - 13, 2026

The list of candidates for non-judicial office who filed for candidacy will be posted on the Secretary of State site.

### Close of Registration Primary: May 12, 2026

#### Primary Election:

-The 2026 Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, June 9, 2026.  
-The Effective Absentee System for Elections (EASE) will be available to use no later than Friday, April 24, 2026, and will close with polls on Election Day.  
-Early Voting begins on Saturday, May 23, 2026, and runs through Friday, June 5, 2026.

### Close of Registration General: October 6, 2026

#### General Election:

-The 2026 General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.  
-The Effective Absentee System for Elections (EASE) will be available to use not later than Friday, September 19, 2026, and will close with polls on election day.  
-Early voting begins on Saturday, October 17, 2026, and runs through Friday, October 30, 2026.

### Volunteers Needed!!

Volunteers are always needed. If you would like to be placed on the “Special Call List” for any future voter registration events, please contact me at (702) 455-0076 or by email at [Annie.Aviles@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:Annie.Aviles@ClarkCountyNV.gov)

### Election Department Website:

Take the time to visit the Election Department's website at: [www.clarkcountynv.gov/vote](http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/vote)

and utilize the tools that are available to you. Updates to class schedules will post in January 2026.

2026 Election Information  
(Check Out What's New!)  
On-Line Registration  
New & Existing Voter Services  
Upcoming Class Schedules  
2026 Important Dates  
Polling locations  
Election results (posted when polls close)

### Classes for New Hire and Existing Field Registrars/Mail-in Distribution:

To schedule training, you must email me at [Annie.Aviles@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:Annie.Aviles@ClarkCountyNV.gov) with at least a minimum of 24 hours' (one business day's) notice. I will send you a confirmation email informing you of your scheduled training. Please do not show up without first receiving my email confirmation.

### NOTICE OF INTENT FORM:

If you are moving or no longer want to continue as a Field Registrar, you must fill out the Notice of Intent Form. (Check the NO box, print, sign, date) and return to me via mail, email, in person or fax.

### For additional Information

**Election Department Main Line: (702) 455-VOTE (8683)**

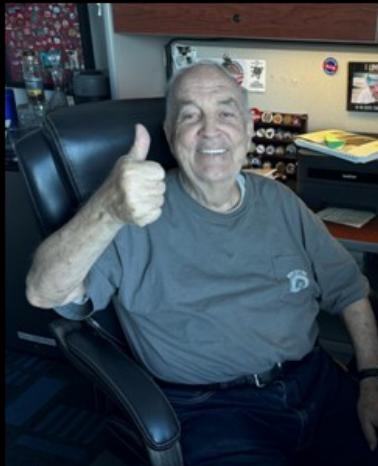
**Thank you all for renewing your badge and continuing as a Field Registrar. I wish you all a safe and Happy Holiday Season.**



**Peggy Maze Johnson** was a valued member of the Women's Democratic Club of Clark County and a monthly contributor to *Donkey Tracks* for the past six years. To many of us, Peggy was a dear friend, and we always looked forward to her visits to Las Vegas from Washington State and the time we were fortunate to spend with her.

Peggy was a fierce advocate who believed deeply in every cause she undertook. She served on commissions and committees too numerous to name—simply look up her name to see what a true warrior looks like. She brought passion, conviction, and an unwavering commitment to making a difference.

I will miss her infectious laugh and the remarkable stories of her life. Rest well, my friend. May the angels bring you home, and may your memory always be for a blessing.



**Forrest Darby** was an IBEW member for more than 50 years, dedicating his life to working Nevadans because he understood—firsthand—the vital role organized labor plays in our country. He was a lifetime member of the Paradise Democratic Club, where he served as a Trustee, and he was also a member of the Women's Democratic Club of Clark County.

Forrest's vast knowledge of politics and his unwavering commitment to electing Democrats to office were without parallel. He believed deeply in justice, fairness, and doing what was right—and he lived his life guided by those values.

On a personal note, Forrest was a dear and loyal friend. I will miss our long conversations about current events and the state of our state. Rest in peace, my friend. May the angels bring you home, and may your memory always be for a blessing.

# Letters From An American

## By Heather Cox Richardson



"For the last couple of months, Senator Rumson has suggested that being president of this country was to a certain extent about character. And although I have not been willing to engage in his attacks on me, I've been here three years and three days. And I can tell you, without hesitation, being president of this country is entirely about character."

In 1995 the late Rob Reiner— who, along with his wife Michele Singer Reiner, lost his life yesterday— directed *The American President*, written by Aaron Sorkin. In the film, President Andrew Shepherd, a widower, is facing a challenge from Republican presidential hopeful Senator Bob Rumson, who attacks Shepherd by focusing on the activist past of the woman he is dating, lawyer and lobbyist Sydney Ellen Wade.

The final scene of the film is a speech by the president rejecting the pretended patriotism of his partisan attacker, who is cynically manipulating voters to gain power. It is a meditation on what it means to be the president of the United States.

"For the record, yes, I am a card-carrying member of the ACLU," Shepherd says to reporters at a press conference, "but the more important question is, why aren't you, Bob? Now, this is an organization whose sole purpose is to defend the Bill of Rights, so it naturally begs the question, why would a senator, his party's most powerful spokesman, and a candidate for president choose to reject upholding the Constitution?"

"America isn't easy. America is advanced citizenship. You've got to want it bad, 'cause it's gonna put up a fight. It's gonna say: You want free speech? Let's see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who's standing center stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours. You want to claim this land as a land of the free? Then the symbol of your country cannot just be a flag. The symbol also has to be one of its citizens exercising his right to burn that flag in protest. Now, show me that. Defend that, celebrate that in your classrooms. Then you can stand up and sing about the land of the free."

"I've known Bob Rumson for years, and I've been operating under the assumption that the reason Bob devotes so much time and energy to shouting at the rain was that he simply didn't get it. Well, I was wrong. Bob's problem isn't that he doesn't get it. Bob's problem is that he can't sell it. We have serious problems to solve, and we need serious people to solve them. And whatever your particular problem is, I promise you, Bob Rumson is not the least bit interested in solving it. He is interested in two things, and two things only, making you afraid of it and telling you who's to blame for it.

"That, ladies and gentlemen, is how you win elections."

# Happy Birthday

## JANUARY



Ruth Andrade  
Mayor Shelley Berkley  
Kathleen Buttrey  
Sharen Delano  
Christian Datian  
Assemblyman Reuben D'Silva  
Dawn Dudas  
Michael Haji-Sheikh  
Maria Teresa Hanks  
Valerie Hyams  
Alexandra McLeod  
Linda Morales Kennon  
Linda Morales-Kennon  
Hollis Nieto  
DaShan "Levy" Schultz  
David Tipton  
Jennifer Valesquez  
Bonnie Wohl  
Judge Bita Yeager

## FEBRUARY

Hon. Nancy Allf  
Sue Bird  
Eva Chase  
John Delibos  
Jeanie Hedden  
Ruth Hudson  
Vanise Karris  
Carole Kilburn  
John Kubota  
Valerie Migliore  
Cinthia Moore  
Sharon Newby  
Tina Past  
Amanda Ramos  
Marta Schmitt  
Miriam Shearing  
Former First Lady Kathy Sisolak  
Dave Thomas  
John Wanderer

## Trump Says That You Are The Problem

By Paul Krugman



Everything is perfect. Why aren't you grateful?

Last night Donald Trump gave [an important speech on the economy](#) in Pennsylvania — supposedly in a working-class area, although the actual venue was a luxury casino resort. The event was initially touted as the start of an “[affordability tour](#),” the first of a series of speeches intended to reverse Trump’s [cratering approval](#) on his handling of inflation and the economy. A number of news analyses suggested that he would use the occasion to blame Democrats for the economy’s troubles.

That was never going to happen. Trump did, of course, take many swipes at Joe Biden, as well as attacking immigrants, women and windmills. But to blame Democrats for the economy’s problems he would have to admit that the Trump economy *has* problems. And the speech was important because it revealed that he won’t make any such admission, and will continue to gaslight the public.

On Monday [Politico](#) interviewed Trump, asking him, among other things, what grade he would give the current economy. His answer: “A-plus-plus-plus-plus-plus.”

In fact, until very recently Trump wouldn’t even accept the reality that ordinary Americans don’t share his triumphalism. When Fox News’s Laura Ingraham asked him a month ago why people are anxious about the economy, Trump [replied](#)

I don’t know they are saying that. The polls are fake. We have the greatest economy we’ve ever had.

Since then Trump and his minions seem to have come around to admitting that Americans are, in fact, unhappy with the state of the economy. But if the economy is A+++++, why don’t people see it? The problem can’t possibly lie with him — so it must lie with you. “The American people don’t know how good they have it.”

I put that line in quotes because it isn’t a caricature or a paraphrase. It is, in fact, literally what [Scott Bessent](#), the Treasury secretary, said the other day:

We’ve made a lot of gains, but remember, we’ve got this embedded inflation from the Biden years, where mainstream media, whether it’s Greg Ip at the Wall Street Journal, toxic Paul Krugman at New York Times or former Vice Chair, Alan Blinder, all said it was a vibecession. **The American people don’t know how good they have it.**

Incidentally, I appreciate the personal plug. Trump has already called me a “[deranged bum](#).” Now Bessent says I’m “toxic.” Give me a [fake peace prize](#), and I’ll have all the honors anyone could ask for.

Incidentally, I appreciate the personal plug. Trump has already called me a “[deranged bum](#).” Now Bessent says I’m “toxic.” Give me a [fake peace prize](#), and I’ll have all the honors anyone could ask for.

Anyway, I may not be a political strategist, but I don’t think “You’re all a bunch of ingrates” is a winning message. It was, however, really the only message Trump could deliver, given his utter lack of empathy or humility.

At this point I could bombard you with a lot of data showing that the economy is not, in fact, A+++++. But it isn’t a disaster area, at least not yet. So why *are* Americans feeling so down? The main culprit is Trump himself.

First, during the 2024 campaign Trump [repeatedly promised](#) to bring consumer prices way down beginning on “day one.” We’re now 11 months in, prices are still rising, and voters who believed him feel, with reason, that they were lied to. Last night Trump insisted that prices are, in fact, coming way down. Again, “Who you gonna believe, me or your lying eyes?” is a self-destructive political strategy.

Second, Trump would be in much better political shape right now if he had basically continued Biden’s policies, with only a few cosmetic changes. When he took office inflation was on a declining trajectory. Consumer sentiment was [relatively favorable](#) at the start of 2025. Americans were still angry about high prices, but the inflation surge of 2021-3 had happened on Biden’s watch and was receding into the past. My guess is that many voters would have accepted Trump’s claims that high prices were Democrats’ fault and given him the benefit of the doubt about the economy’s future if he had simply done nothing drastic and left policies mostly as they were.

Instead, he brought chaos: Massive and [massively unpopular](#) tariffs, DOGE disruptions, masked ICE agents grabbing people off the street, saber-rattling and war crimes in the Caribbean. Many swing voters, I believe, supported Trump out of nostalgia for the relative calm that prevailed before Covid struck. They didn’t think they were voting for nonstop political PTSD.

And there’s more to come. Health insurance costs are [about to spike](#), because Republicans refuse to extend Biden-era subsidies. Inflation may pick up in the next few months as [retailers](#), who have so far absorbed much of the cost of Trump’s tariffs, begin passing them on to consumers.

So the “affordability tour” is off to a disastrous start. And it won’t get better, because while Trump insists that the problem is you, it’s actually him. And he isn’t going to change.

# What Happens When A Bonkers President

## Takes Over The Private Sector

By Robert Reich



We need independent regulatory agencies to contain him

What's really at stake in the fight between Netflix and Paramount for Warner Bros Discovery?

Let me make it clear I'm against Netflix acquiring Warner Bros Discovery. That would concentrate corporate power in ways that harm consumers and distort American politics.

But Paramount's acquisition of Warner Bros would be just as bad, if not worse.

What's at stake in all of this is Trump's — or any president's — power over the private sector of the American economy.

The back story here is that Warner Bros Discovery owns CNN, and Trump loathes CNN. He frequently complains that its coverage of him has been too negative. He's termed those running CNN "corrupt and incompetent" and has told top aides he wants new ownership of CNN, along with changes in CNN programming and personnel.

Last week, Trump [declared](#) he would involve himself in any proposed sale of Warner Bros, and on Wednesday he said it was "imperative" that the transaction result in the sale of CNN and replacement of its leadership.

Another part of the back story involves Larry Ellison — one of the richest people in America and the largest individual shareholder of Paramount, whose son runs it, and whose operation on Monday launched an unfriendly tender offer for Warner Bros Discovery, to counter Netflix's friendly offer.

Ellison is an ally of Trump. He has [assured](#) Trump and his top aides that if Paramount gains control of Warner Bros and CNN, it will get rid of CNN personnel whom Trump apparently detests, including Erin Burnett and Brianna Keilar. (Paramount already owns CBS.)

Paramount is portraying itself as the best bid for Warner Bros Discovery because it will have an easier time "getting regulatory approval" of the deal than will Netflix — even though Paramount is relying on financial backing from three Middle East sovereign-wealth funds (along with Jared Kushner).

Who in their right mind would give Middle East wealth funds *any* leverage over CBS and CNN? Answer: Trump, whose family business is already deeply dependent on financing from the Middle East.

Trump trusts the Ellisons because they pushed Paramount to settle Trump's frivolous \$16 million lawsuit against CBS and cancel Stephen Colbert — much to Trump's delight.

Trump loyalist flak Brendan Carr, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, then promptly [approved](#) the \$8 billion merger of Paramount with Skydance Media.

Trump's alliance with Larry Ellison goes back to 2020, when Ellison hosted a fundraiser for Trump at his home. According to court records, after the 2020 election, Ellison participated in a phone call to discuss how Trump's defeat could [be contested](#). In June 2025, he and his firm, Oracle, were co-sponsors of Trump's military parade in Washington.

Now in charge of Paramount and its CBS division, Larry's son, David Ellison, has [gutted](#) DEI policies at CBS, [put](#) right-wing hack Kenneth R. Weinstein into a new "ombudsman" role there, and made anti-“woke” opinion journalist Bari Weiss editor-in-chief of CBS News, despite her lack of experience in either broadcasting or newsrooms.

The FCC's Carr has already effectively blessed the Paramount deal. What other “regulatory approval” might be needed? Theoretically, the Federal Trade Commission could object on antitrust grounds. But, as Trump did at the FCC, he planted loyalists at the FTC to do his bidding. (Pam Bondi has asserted that she and the Justice Department's anti-trust division will oversee the merger.)

This past week, the Supreme Court heard arguments about whether Trump had a right to fire an FTC commissioner (the FTC, like the FCC, is supposed to be an “independent” regulatory agency).

Chief Justice John Roberts — who believes that the framers of the Constitution intended a “unitary” executive rather than one whose authority might be shared with independent regulatory agencies established by Congress — suggested during the oral argument that Trump's removal power should be the norm.

But if Trump's maneuvers over Warner Bros Discovery has any lessons for the future, the independence of regulatory agencies may be more important than ever before. Otherwise, a wannabe tyrant sitting in the Oval Office can interfere in any business transaction he wishes, to enlarge his own power and stifle criticism

# **Silent Invasion: How To Fight Back Against Data Centers In Our Communities**

Americans are NOT powerless from fighting back against Big Tech's unchecked growth and profiteering.

We are rightfully consumed by the urgent fights against corruption and threats to our democracy. But right now, at great pace, another immediate crisis is unfolding right under our noses: **the silent invasion of massive data and AI centers in communities all over the country.**

These digital fortresses, fueled by the insatiable demands of Big Tech and consumers, are devouring our public resources, eroding our tax base, and leaving behind a wake of environmental and social costs that local residents are left to bear. The truth is stark: while these tech giants promise progress, they deliver peril. Too many Americans find themselves powerless against a wave of unchecked growth that is **aggressively supported by the Trump administration and complicit Republicans.**

## **The Hidden Costs: From Water Wars to Noise Pollution**

The allure of “tech investment” often masks the devastating realities of what these facilities truly demand.

- **Draining Our Lifelines:** Data centers are voracious consumers of water, often siphoning millions of gallons daily for cooling systems. In regions already grappling with drought, this creates a cruel irony: residents face mandatory water restrictions while multi-billion-dollar corporations operate without constraint, leveraging precious public resources for private profit.
- **Straining Our Grid, Polluting Our Air:** A single large data center can demand as much electricity as a small city. This monumental energy pull strains local power grids, often necessitating new, costly infrastructure like substations, and frequently increasing our reliance on dirty energy sources to keep servers running. And let's not forget the constant, low hum of massive cooling towers—noise pollution that erodes the peace and quiet of nearby homes. Residents can hear it.
- **A Raw Deal for Taxpayers:** State and local governments routinely offer colossal tax breaks, property tax abatements, and sales tax exemptions that can last for a decade or more. This means the very communities hosting these resource-intensive behemoths lose out on critical revenue for schools, roads, and emergency services.
- **Jobs Mirage:** The promise of local jobs from data centers is a mirage, not a reality. While construction offers temporary work, an operational data center typically employs **fewer than 50 people.** This is a dismal return on the massive public investment made through tax incentives and

subsidies. Worse, the few permanent positions—often low-wage maintenance and grounds-keeping jobs—fall far short of the promised living-wage opportunities for the community.

### **The Power Imbalance: Political Collusion and Corporate Conquest**

The unchecked spread of data centers is not accidental; it's the result of a systemic imbalance of power and **direct collusion between Big Tech and the Trump Administration/Republicans**.

The goal is simple: **deregulation and aggressive use of tax policy** to ensure massive companies can build infrastructure quickly and at minimal cost, at the expense of the American people.

- **Federal Regulatory Sabotage:** The administration has issued Executive Orders aimed at fundamentally reshaping the regulatory landscape. These orders **streamline environmental reviews (NEPA)**, expand expedited permitting for large infrastructure projects (FAST-41), and instruct agencies to **limit or waive key regulations** under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act (Section 404 permits).
- **Massive Taxpayer Subsidies:** Aligned with federal policy, Republican-led statehouses aggressively compete by passing laws that grant **100% sales tax exemptions** on equipment (servers, cooling gear) and offer long-term property tax abatements, sometimes extended until 2050 or later. This is often the costliest state subsidy, shifting financial burdens onto communities—US!
- **Direct Financial Incentives:** Federal initiatives directed by the Commerce Department are funneling financial support—including loans, grants, and tax incentives—to “Qualifying Projects” with minimal environmental oversight, provided the companies commit vast capital expenditures.
- **Government Secrecy:** Negotiations involving state incentives often rely on Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), preventing local officials from disclosing crucial details (like water or energy usage projections) until the project is approved.



# **WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CLARK COUNTY**

## **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Please Print**

# **2026**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook \_\_\_\_\_ Twitter \_\_\_\_\_

Instagram \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

**I affirm that I am registered to vote with the Democratic Party in the State of Nevada: Yes [ ]**

(Only a registered Democrat can be a member)

**General Membership: \$35 Annual Dues Paid By:** Check [ ] Money Order [ ] Cash [ ]

**Past WDC Presidents and Current Students: \$15 Annual Dues Paid By:** Check [ ] Money Order [ ] Cash [ ]

**Renee Diamond Scholarship Fund Donation:** Paid By: Check [ ] Money Order [ ] Cash [ ] Online [ ]

**I am interested in participating on the following Committees:**

(you will be notified if there are vacancies available)

[ ] By-Laws   Donkey Tracks [ ]   Fundraising [ ]   Historian [ ] [ ]   Holiday Party [ ]   Legislative Advisor [ ]   Mentorship [ ]   Political Action [ ]   Political Education [ ]   Pot 'O Gold [ ]   Program [ ]   Renee Diamond Scholarship Fund [ ]   Social Media/Publicity [ ]   Sunshine [ ]   Telephone [ ]   Voter Registration

**Thank You For Joining  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CLARK COUNTY**

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