

Of the people, by the people,

# For the People

A publication by the Calhoun County Democratic Committee, January 2026



*Renee Nicole Macklin Good was a mother, neighbor, spouse, person of faith, artist, award-winning poet, & according to her wife, Becca, “lived by an overarching belief: there is kindness in the world & we need to do everything we can to find it where it resides & nurture it where it needs to grow.”*

*Her name is Renée Nicole Good. She was just 37 and the mother of a 6-year-old child. “Poet and writer and wife and mom and shitty guitar strummer from Colorado; experiencing Minneapolis, MN.” That’s how she described herself.*

*Her mom called her one of the kindest people she’s ever known: “She was extremely compassionate. She’s taken care of people all her life. She was loving, forgiving and affectionate. She was an amazing human being.”*

On January 7, 2026, Renée Good, was fatally shot in [Minneapolis](#) by ICE agent **Jonathan Ross**. Good was in her car, stopped sideways in the street when Jonathan Ross drove around and returned on foot. Other agents approached, and one ordered her to get out of the car while reaching through her open window. Ross moved to the front-left of the vehicle as Good briefly reversed, then began driving into the direction of traffic while turning away from Ross. Ross fired three shots, killing her: one through the [windshield](#), then two through the open driver's side window as it passed him. He later drove away from the scene. The killing sparked national protests and multiple investigations. (cont'd on page 5)



# Calhoun County Democratic Party Newsletter: January 2026

<u>Page</u>	<u>Article Title</u>
1	Ice Murdered her. Beverly Williams
2	Table of Contents – You are HERE 😊
3	Civic Engagement is not the Opposite of work. Sheila Gilbert
4 – 5	One Chance. Carsie Evans
5	Ice Murdered Her. Cont'd from p1
6,7,8	Embrace a Blue Wave in 2026! Jim Williams
9	This & That! Martha Jordan
10	We Have Made it to 2026! Pam Howard
11-12	Some Thoughts on Where we Are and What That Means. Jim Williams
13	Young Democrats of Calhoun County! Pam Lowery
14-15	Contextualizing Maduro's Abduction in Venezuela. Dr Lance
16	Ingwersen, Professor of History, JSU
17-18	The Power of the Spoken Word. Fred Honer
19	Believe Your Eyes. Beverly Williams

Welcome to the January 2026 Edition of 'Of the People, By the People, For the People.' If this is your first time reading the CalCoDem newsletter – we hope you enjoy it and return for more. If you are a frequent reader – you likely return for the value of the content and the knowledge of the writers.

Of special interest is a very informative and timely article by Dr. Lance Ingwersen, a historian of modern Latin America, "Contextualizing Maduro's Abduction in Venezuela." Some Thoughts on "Where we Are and What That Means" by Dr Jim Williams is another 'must read.' Also, candidate for House District 40, Pam Howard talks about her platform.

LOTS of good stuff! Get a cup of coffee (or two) or an 'adult beverage' - and read the newsletter from top to bottom 😊 and consider writing an article next time!! Speak Out while we still have FREE SPEECH!!

Thank you all! Beverly Williams, Editor

# Civic engagement is not the opposite of work

While joining the 50501 group at the Oxford Exchange in Oxford, Alabama in their planned demonstration - several local objectors would loudly rev up their engines, spew exhaustive smoke and yell, "get a job" as they passed our crowd, often circling and repeating more than once.

We were there to peacefully demonstrate our love & support of Renee Good and others who have lost their lives due to the excessive and brutal force of **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**.



Telling demonstrators to "get a job" isn't just dismissive—it's wrong. It assumes, without evidence, that people who show up to protest are idle or irresponsible, when in reality many are workers, parents, veterans, caregivers, students, retirees, and small business owners who have carved time out of already full lives. Civic engagement is not the opposite of work; it is part of the responsibility of living in a democracy. Speaking up about injustice, policy, or community

harm is not laziness—it's participation, but try telling that to Renee Good of Minneapolis who recently lost her life at the hands of an ICE agent.

Yelling "get a job" is meant to silence rather than engage. Instead of addressing the issue being raised, it reduces people to a stereotype and avoids the substance of their concerns. A healthy society doesn't shame people for caring; it listens, debates, and responds. Disagreement is fair—mockery is not. If we want stronger communities and a stronger democracy, we should respect the voices of those who show up, not try to belittle them.

Thanks, and appreciation to the 50501 crowd for maintaining control and dignity and special thanks to the Oxford Police Dept for responding to one case of an out-of-control trumpster.

*Sheila Degan Gilbert, Chair, Calhoun County Democratic Party*

# One Chance

Merely one day after the anniversary of January 6th, 2021, an ICE agent murdered Renee Nicole Good on a residential street in Minneapolis. Video evidence tells us that he fired 3 shots at nearly point-blank range, an unnecessary and unlawful use of force. He must face trial by jury and, if convicted, suffer the consequences of his actions.

However, this ICE agent did not act alone. He was recruited, trained (albeit poorly), and given permission by the current administration to carry out the inhumane work of eliminating “the other” in our society. And if innocent bystanders or citizens who stand up to preserve the rights spelled out in the US Constitution are collateral damage, then so be it.



Carsie Evans, Office Administrator

By any assessment, this administration is evil, uncaring, greedy, heinous, despicable, cruel, selfish and lacking in any semblance of moral character. Murder is their love language; murder of unvaccinated children by preventable disease, murder of immigrants in unlawful detention, murder of struggling families who can't afford food, let alone health insurance. They have murdered innocent civilians in Venezuela for access to oil, they are murdering people by the thousands by withholding USAID supplies. The list goes on.

Murder is the despicable vehicle they use to achieve the ultimate goals of this administration: money and unbridled power. These are the only things they can love, not community, not honesty, not fairness, not this beautiful planet. They are willing, even eager, to take away lives and livelihoods to line their pockets with blood money.



WE have one chance. ONE CHANCE to reclaim our democracy and restore decency to our government. The midterm elections in November will be the critical moment. Over the next ten months, we must do everything we can to stand up, push back, educate and demand that our elected officials do their jobs for the American people. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Listen to your friends, neighbors and family about their struggles and educate them about the root cause of their problems.
- Be visible in your opposition. Protest non-violently, wave a sign, wear buttons or t-shirts with your message.
- Be vocal. Call and/or write your elected representatives to ask them to represent their constituents with awareness and concern for their lived experiences.
- Provide mutual aid where you can to help those who are negatively impacted by the administration.
- Encourage voter registration and ongoing registration verification.

- Support candidates that align with your values. Donate, write postcards, text/phone bank, canvass for them.
- Speak out about what a good government can do for its citizens when our tax dollars are not being funneled to the rich and powerful.
- Use your economic power to support businesses that balance fairness and the greater good with profits.
- Everyone does not have to do everything, but everyone must do something!

All these actions are only the lead up to the most important activity of all: VOTING! Not only must each of us commit to voting ourselves; we must also encourage and enable others to do the same. Help folks register or check their polling place. Make sure voters understand the ID requirements.



Offer transportation to the polls. Be an advocate for those who may feel intimidated as they try to vote. Volunteer to be a poll worker or poll watcher. Most important of all, express to anyone who will listen that every vote DOES count and that you will do everything in your power to ensure that it does.

**This may be our LAST chance to save our democracy for the next generation. Don't let this opportunity slip away!**

## ICE MURDERED HER.....

Beverly Williams

(cont'd from page 1)

President Donald Trump, administration officials and congressional Republican leaders purported that Good attempted to run over agents with her vehicle, but several Democrats argued that the video footage showed that was not what happened.

"Watch it for yourself and make that assessment for yourself on which of these leaders are lying to you," Ocasio-Cortez told reporters.

But Republicans have reaffirmed their support for ICE despite criticism from Democrats and the public over the killing.

"I want every ICE officer to know that their president, vice president, and the entire administration stands behind them," Vice President JD Vance wrote on X.

ICE agents were also seen blocking a witness who said he was a doctor from attending to Good after the shooting, telling the physician they had their own medics on the way.

The video on the link below is one of the best to show the gunman pulled his gun and shot her point blank as she was turning her wheel away from him. He was never in any danger.

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/photos-released-renee-nicole-good-us-citizen-killed-ice-minnesota>



# Embrace a Blue Wave in 2026!

Jim Williams, January 10, 2026

Democrats looking toward the 2026 elections may be a lot like Hoosier football fans. They've been hopeful for so long and had their hopes dashed that they almost can't grasp what's happening now. Signs are that 2026 may be a very good year for Democrats nationwide, and even Deep Red Alabama may share in that wave. What happens will in important part depend on how we respond or don't.

November 2025 elections were very good to Democrats. [Marc Elias' "Democracy Docket"](#) recap of November 5 started out "In my 35 years as an election lawyer, I've seen good election nights and bad ones. Last night was a very good one — for both Democrats and democracy. Democrats won everything, everywhere, all at once." He enumerated:



- Governorships in New Jersey and Virginia in commanding fashion, every statewide race in Virginia, and gained 13 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates.
- In Pennsylvania, three Democrats facing retention elections on the state Supreme Court easily won. That guaranteed a pro-voting-rights majority for at least 10 years.
- In New York City, the Democratic nominee not only won but the Republican candidate ran third with < 10% of the vote.
- In Georgia, two Democrats flipped seats on the Public Service Commission. This was the first statewide Democratic victory in a non-federal race in 20 years.
- In Mississippi, Democrats broke the state legislature's Republican supermajority.
- On the democracy front, the wins were even bigger. Gov. Gavin Newsom's redistricting ballot measure passed by nearly 30 points. Meanwhile, Republicans' effort to use the referendum process to impose voter ID in Maine failed by a similar margin.
- Democrats not only won every key race but did so with high turnout. "Republicans cannot claim that their voters stayed home. This was a clear referendum on Donald Trump and the Republican Party — and voters chose Democrats by wide margins."

Events since then have remained positive. In [December special elections](#) Democrats won Congressional seats in Wisconsin and Virginia. Although the Republican won reelection in Tennessee, the newcomer Democrat showed 5% gain over 2024. The Democrat won a state senate special election in Virginia on January 6, retaining a Democratic majority. This election resulted from the Democratic incumbent resigning to run for lieutenant governor, which she won in November. The Democratic candidate for Senate had resigned from a House seat but in a 'safe' district. The Democratic majority in the Virginia House of Delegates (lower house) had jumped from 51-49 to 64-36 in November.

These results reflected what some veteran observers were already predicting to be a Blue Wave. One observer was Matt Kerbel, who was a professor of political science at Villanova University for 36 years and posts on Substack at [Wolves and Sheep](#). On January 5, he posted [Anatomy of a Wave Part II](#). In April 2025 he'd posted Part I, noting the characteristics of an electoral wave that seemed to be building. He identified indicators: voter anger levels; special election results; candidate recruitment efforts; congressional retirements; and

fundraising numbers. “We were already seeing signs in April that voter anger, special elections, and candidate recruitment were pointing toward the potential for a blue wave. We said that congressional retirements would come into focus around now, and that we would know more about fundraising a little later in 2026.” Kerbel revisited each, with these findings:

- Voter Anger: “(A)n angry electorate is key to a wave election, and we were already seeing one develop.” Key factors were that “Fundamentally, safety and prosperity form the basis of voter assessments of every president. Do people feel secure in their communities and with America’s place in the world? Is their financial situation better than it was under the previous administration?” The Trump campaign understood this, promised swing voters who decided the election was that he would make their neighborhoods safe from crime, “restore” American greatness, and lower prices – and failed to deliver. “The longer this goes on, the deeper and more permanent the anger becomes.” By April, Republicans were already avoiding town halls, and 3 million people joined in “Hands Off!” demonstrations. Kerbel called those protest number “rolling boil-level anger.” Then came the No Kings protests with 5 million and 7 million – “making them two of the largest protests in American history.” By January 2026, this sentiment had become a large vocal movement. Trump’s job approval had fallen to dangerous levels. “Because voters do not have the opportunity to take [their anger] out directly on the president, they will take aim at his party. The next nationwide opportunity to do this will be the 2026 midterms” Kerbel projected that it was already too late to do anything about it.
- Special Elections: “Democrats over-performing in special elections was a hallmark of 2025. It was already evident in April.” Results of a judicial election in Wisconsin and two special House elections in Florida were noteworthy. In Wisconsin, the liberal candidate in the state supreme court race won by 10 points over the MAGA candidate, despite heavy support from Elon Musk. Trump had barely won Wisconsin in 2024. In Florida GOP candidates won by only 15 points and 14 points in districts their GOP predecessors had won only months before by 32 and 33. Double-digit shifts left in strongly conservative bastions are noteworthy. A week earlier, a Democrat won a state senate seat in Pennsylvania that no Democrat had won since 1889. That involved a 13 point swing. In special state and national legislative elections, “Democrats have run ahead of Kamala Harris by an average of 11.4 points.” “Democratic electoral over-performance has become the norm.” Gubernatorial wins in Virginia and New Jersey were by 15 and 13 points, and wins on California redistricting and Pennsylvania judicial retention races were very heavy. “With the anger we see in the electorate directed at Republicans, 2026 is shaping up to be a strong anti-incumbent year. By November, voter anger could be at a fever pitch.”
- Candidate Recruitment: By April 2025 interest from people who wanted to run for office as Democrats was evident, making it easier to recruit competitive candidates—even in difficult states and districts—when it looks like they can win. Encouraging results from special elections create “a virtuous cycle” “attracting strong candidates to compete in districts that would usually go unchallenged and expanding the electoral map. Democrats have gained profile recruits, including former Senator Sherrod Brown in Ohio – which becomes a potential battleground. Maine’s popular Democratic governor, Janet Mills, is seeking the nomination to run against Susan Collins. Collins’ electoral record would normally intimidate high-profile candidates. In Alaska, Democratic leaders are trying to persuade former congresswoman Mary Pelotla to run for Senate. Her candidacy would put the state in play. In Alabama, former US

Senator Doug Jones' joining the race for the Democratic nomination for governor may have a similar effect. Already last week, Alabama Democrats had registered to run for every US House district, as well as US Senate, governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and several other state offices.

- **Retirements:** As members of Congress will return home to their families for the holidays before an election year, they assess the political terrain and whether or not to run again. We've already seen several early GOP retirements. Since many already stopped holding public meetings to avoid angry constituents, they will have a hard time facing voters in 2026. With the GOP House majority already down to one vote, many Republicans may just decide it's not worth winning only to serve in a minority. Since it's usually easier for the opposing party to win open seats, this dynamic favors Democrats. "This is how wave conditions feed on themselves."

### *This is our year to pick ourselves up and go!*

All these things being so, what do we have to do? The answer is simple: This is our year to pick ourselves up and go! Opportunities are almost unlimited. There are still plenty of open spots for candidates of various kinds and at different levels. Candidates to be successful need support – lots of it, of many different kinds. There will be a vast menu of kinds of support – writing postcards/letter, calling, texting, door-knocking, rallies, town halls and candidate coffees.... Campaigning goes beyond planned, formal activity. Every one of us has opportunities every day to influence someone favorably on a key issue or several. Often the most effective mind-changing comes in a passing conversation, where something comes up that matters personally to another person, giving you a chance to frame an issue in a way that they see as mattering directly and personally to them. (As almost every knows by now, about the LEAST effective way to influence people is on social media. But, for many of us, we'll try anyway. And 'Silence is assent.'

Let's make it happen!



Beverly: Click on the link below to see the list of qualified candidates

<https://aldemocrats.org/2026-qualified-candidates>

# THIS 'N THAT

## MARTHA JORDAN

\*\*\* What ever happened to privacy of personal data? Tired of medical receptionist asking for my DOB, the last 4 digits of my SSN, within ear shot of a room full of strangers. There must be a better way that takes into consideration the scammers and con artists who are always at work, any and everywhere.

\*\*\* Why is cash being replaced? Real life is starting to look like that futuristic world seen in countless sci-fi movies where cash money no longer exists. I am not ready yet. Yes, I can live in a cashless society, but I don't want to; not simply for convenience, but making the money hungry capitalists more money.

\*\*\* The only Executive Order that #47 has signed that makes economic sense is ending the production of pennies. If you don't agree, then tell me why the US government should continue to produce a coin that costs four cents to make, when it is only worth one cent. Yes, there are even worse examples of government waste, fraud and abuse, but right now I'm talking about the penny.

\*\*\* The greater preponderance of information seen and heard by the public, so far, indicates that #47 was a pal and close friend of a pedophile. Long time ago, moral standards and political precepts would have dropped (the would-be King from any political office) like a handful of hot coals. Yet he thrives. Why? Are we that jaded and accepting?

\*\*\* MTG will resign from political office in January 2026. Any possibility she can get some of the other upstanding republican Congress members to retire with her to Green Acres. As a group, they are about as worthless in Congress as that farm on the old TV show.

\*\*\* The latest from the King and his Capitalists – 50-year mortgages. Don't be fooled or lulled into thinking a 50-year mortgage is better for you than the standard 30-year mortgage. Yes, the 50-year monthly mortgage payment might be a little lower than a 30-year. BUT, and it's a BIG but, the payback or your overall debt or payout for a 50-year loan will be much greater than for a 30-year mortgage. Mortgage companies will most likely charge higher interest rates for what could be seen as riskier loans. Higher interest rates mean you pay more money in the long term (like an extra 20 years of payments) at possibly higher interest rates.

Looking forward to a brighter New Year that will see more democratic candidates in office, and perhaps MAGAs awaking from their sleepwalking dreams and finally seeing the reality and effects of #47's incompetence. One can dream, hope and pray.

Oh no, he invaded Venezuela!!!! See you next time, hopefully.

M. Jordan, 12/30/2025



# We have made it to 2026. Happy New Year to all.

Pam Howard

I am starting the new year qualifying as a Democratic candidate for the Alabama legislature.

Most of you know I have run for this office before, and the decision to run again is not one I made lightly. To be honest, it was probably made more with my heart than my head. If I am going to ask you to support my campaign again, or for the first time, I want to clearly articulate the kind of representative I want to be.

I know not everyone agrees on every issue, but I believe we have more in common than what divides us. I am not running to fight ideological battles in Montgomery. I am running to represent our community and do what I can to ensure our children are safe, we can put food on the table, and our future is brighter than our past. With Federal funding cuts to programs that many in Alabama have long been dependent on, the work of our state legislature is more important than ever.



Our legislature has been dominated by the Republican party for almost two decades. Serving in a super-majority, Representatives have become far too comfortable. They have lost touch with the people they represent. They have been wined and dined by special interests, and greed has stifled the call to public service. The focus has shifted from serving the people and creating a state filled with opportunity, to one of self-enrichment and control. It's time for change.

We must stop treating politics like a football game and realize that we all win or we all lose together. Government is meant to serve the people... all of the people.

When we check out at the grocery store the prices are high no matter who we voted for.

When our children go to public schools, the quality of education is the same for every child no matter who we voted for.

When a hospital closes, access to healthcare is lost no matter who we voted for.

It is time to focus on moving forward with livable wages, affordable housing, access to affordable healthcare and education focused on creating a workforce that invites opportunity.

It's time to make Alabama a place where we all want to live, where businesses grow and families thrive.

These things can become a reality if our government focuses on common ground and common sense.

These are the things I want to work on as your representative. I promise you this: when I get to Montgomery, I will keep my focus right here – on this community, on this district and on your family's needs. I will always seek out common ground before I seek out a fight, but I will fight for you when I must.

If these are your values, and you believe I am the person to represent them, to represent you, I am asking for your support. I am asking you to support me financially, to volunteer and to vote for Pam Howard.

# Some Thoughts on Where We Are and What That Means

---Jim Williams

**"The party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command."**

**— George Orwell, 1984**

The last couple of weeks or so have made me think seriously about where we are as a nation and what that means going forward. I frame my thoughts in terms not only of current events but also others I've lived through or been a part of, and thoughts of others who have some special knowledge in these areas.

On Wednesday, January 7, an ICE agent shot and killed a young woman in her car in Minneapolis. There are video recordings of the shooting – including one supposedly from the phone of the shooter, who fled the scene and went into hiding. The Trump Administration immediately called the woman a 'domestic terrorist' and said the agent shot the woman when she tried to run over him. Millions of Trump supporters have adopted this view. Many others watching the same videos said the woman was trying to drive away from a confrontation. They conclude that the agent acted without cause and, in effect, murdered her. Immediately worldwide protests against ICE erupted, with calls for the officer to be held accountable. The Administration, right-wing news media, and adherents have defended the officer and labeled those supporting the woman and the anti-ICE protests as anti-law enforcement.

Yesterday the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia forwarded an article titled "[Minneapolis and the Narrative Election: When Reality Itself Becomes Contested](#)." In effect it says that we've reached a point where our ideological preconceptions determine what our minds actually see. If so, objective visual evidence is no longer compelling on its own. This reminded me of "Eyewitness Testimony," a long-used textbook for trial lawyers that I used extensively years ago in my work with oral history. What we 'see' and then recall isn't a simple process driven solely by the laws of physics. The book is a masterpiece outlining the various factors that influence both immediate perception and then recall. The overall message is that eyewitness testimony is among the least reliable forms of evidence.

All of this shines much more brightly to me in light of what happened here Sunday. During a local anti-ICE protest at the Oxford Exchange, a fellow driving a big pickup with a Trump flag in the back made several passes to 'smoke' a line of us standing behind the curb along the roadway. He then swerved close enough to one person to clip and break a sign with the side mirror of his truck. Local police pulled him over. I've been in rallies and protests at the Exchange for at least 8 years. At our last rally, this same driver had 'smoked' us several times, until the police ran him off. This time was notable for the number of ugly comments and gestures by some driving by. But this was the first time anyone had ever run close enough to possibly injure someone. One protester posted a [video clip](#) he took while standing right behind the sign as the truck clipped it. The video produced a firestorm of comments. Most were derogatory, many intensely personal against the person posing. Posts overwhelmingly denounced protesters as anti-law enforcement. Some proclaimed that Nichole Good got what she deserved and if not killed should've been arrested for attempting to kill the ICE officer.

Even before the incident Sunday, I'd been thinking that the ICE killing in Minneapolis could become a trigger event like the George Floyd murder a few blocks away in 2020, the Rodney King beating in LA, and maybe even

the Kent State massacre. I'm sure others can recall the [hardhat riot](#) against antiwar protesters following Kent State and the bitter division between pro and anti-Nixon/pro and anti-VN camps that followed.

All of this reminded me of what I saw 30 years ago, when I was in the NATO headquarters standing up peacekeeping in Bosnia after 4 years of vicious warfare among Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. All were parts of Communist Yugoslavia until 1991. My role in that operation made me study and learn about the dynamics behind the events that brought us there. The overriding point was that the carnage sprang from a deliberate effort to create bitter social/political divisions to serve personal gains. The leaders of Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia were all senior bosses in the Tito regime. After Tito's death, as the house of cards collapsed, each of these bosses grasped for a horse to ride. Stoking hatred by calling on 'ancient' ethnic and religious rivalries successfully created chaos. Each of the bosses seized the opportunity for his own benefit, while hundreds of thousands died, were displaced and lost their property, and much of the national infrastructure was destroyed. A major irony and a key factor in the vicious violence was that, during the Communist era, Bosnia had become a truly 'integrated' society. Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Bosnians had intermarried and raised at least two generations of children. So, dividing society along ethno-religious lines literally meant tearing families apart -- and they were.

These things also reminded me of Jefferson Davis' 1851 speech where he laid out key ideas that have proven durable and useful to many people in the US to this day:

"...no white man, in a slaveholding community, was the menial servant of anyone. ...whenever the poor white man labored for the rich, he did so upon terms of distinction between him and his negroes. And ... this very distinction elevated, and kept the white laborer on a level with his employer, because the distinction ... is a distinction of color. .... Free the negroes, however, and it would soon be here, ... as it is... where negro slavery does not exist. The poor white man would become a menial servant...reduced to an equality with the free blacks ...." Jefferson Davis, Speech in Aberdeen, Mississippi, May 26, 1851, in William J. Cooper, Jr (ed.), [Jefferson Davis; The Essential Writings](#) (2003), p. 94

With Donald Trump holding the cards he does, I see the past week as perhaps crossing a line where life is much dicier for all of us than before. We are indeed living in 'interesting times.' This reminded me of Thomas Paine's words from 1776, when George Washington's handful of troops were trying to survive a bitter winter at Valley Forge to fight against a British empire that seemed likely to win the war:



Jim Williams, Community Volunteer & Activist

*'These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.'*

Today, it's up to us to believe what our eyes see and to stand strong. The future depends on it.

# Hello Fellow Democrats -

Pam Lowery, Admin Assistant

It is now 2026, and an Election year; probably the most important election most of us will ever be responsible for...

We need to prepare for a “fight” - a fight to just be able to “participate” in the upcoming Mid-Term Election, and a fight to maintain safe, fair and peaceful elections for the future.



Calhoun County Democrats put out the call for “all hands-on deck”. And I am happy and proud to say that the Young Democrats of Calhoun County are returning to answer the call!

We had our initial meeting and began the discussion as to what the YD wants to include in our agenda moving forward. We will begin monthly meetings for the YD at HQ in Anniston for the purpose of sharing information and gathering feedback; developing next level actions and topics that need to be taken care of over the upcoming months. Achieving outreach tools such as podcasts and including them with our daily and weekly posts so that our neighbors near and far can be kept updated on our plans, successes and concerns for our Party.

Our Young Democrats have the tools, have the desire - and most important – have the faith that our Country can do better - that our Country IS better. The YD will far exceed what I can offer and get accomplished on my own and I am extremely proud to be a part of their journey... and to work for their success! Pam

(check out our youngest YD)



# Contextualizing Maduro's Abduction in Venezuela

Dr. Lance Ingwersen

As many of you, I woke up on Jan. 3 to the news that US troops had invaded Venezuela and abducted its President, Nicolás Maduro. This news came after months of escalating tensions that included seizures of Venezuelan or Venezuela-bound oil tankers and [at least thirty-five known strikes on alleged drugs boats in both the Caribbean and the Pacific resulting in at least 115 deaths](#). In the days since, I've struggled to wrap my head around what transpired. I've read newspaper accounts. I've listened to pundits and podcasts. As a historian of Latin America who regularly teaches classes on US-Latin American Relations, I've also spent time reflecting on the past in search of possible answers. Below, I'll offer some thoughts to help readers contextualize this moment in the broader scope of US foreign policy in/toward the region.

The Monroe Doctrine, formulated by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and [articulated by President James Monroe in 1823](#), was perhaps the clearest early articulation of US desires to exert influence in/over the Western hemisphere. The Doctrine established—in name at least—a US sphere of influence. Though originally a defensive declaration against European colonialism and potential incursions, the Doctrine served as the foundation of US policy and action in the hemisphere for over 150 years. James K. Polk invoked it to lobby for the absorption of new territories following the US-Mexican War. JFK did, more than a century later, to justify a naval blockade during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Ronald Reagan used it to justify invading Grenada and sending money to mercenary contras fighting against the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in the 1980s. George H.W. Bush invoked it indirectly in 1989 to justify Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989, which led to the arrest and extradition of former-CIA-asset-turned-Panamanian-President Manuel Noriega on charges of drug trafficking, racketeering, and money laundering.

Teddy Roosevelt expanded the Doctrine through his [1904 Corollary](#). Roosevelt's revision gave the Doctrine a more aggressive tone; it declared unilaterally the US right to intervene militarily in Latin American affairs to protect US financial and political interests, establishing the US as a hemispheric police power. Big Stick diplomacy, as it came to be known, was used to justify dozens of interventions throughout the region in the next thirty years, including lengthy occupations in Nicaragua (1912-1933), Haiti (1914-1934), and the Dominican Republic. The Doctrine also served as justification for US involvement in the Spanish-American War, after which the US exerted direct control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

The Trump administration recently made available its plans to refashion the Monroe Doctrine. [A mostly polemical National Security Strategy](#) published on the White House website in December 2025 identifies the administration's approach to the region as the "Trump Corollary to the Monroe



Doctrine.” Its priorities for the hemisphere are three-fold: to halt mass migration, neutralize narco terrorists, and enlist regional partners to buy US goods and welcome US investment. Trump, in an interview following Operation Absolute Resolve on Jan. 3, named this new foreign policy approach—with his characteristic hubris and egoism—the “Donroe Doctrine.”

The US toolkit for achieving its policy aims in Latin America has been multiple and varied. In addition to military interventions and occupations, the US during the Cold War pursued tactics of psychological warfare, surveillance, industrial sabotage, and attempted assassinations of political leaders. It sold arms and provided immense financial support and tactical training to Latin American military officers in exchange for cracking down on leftist ideas, leaders, and policies under the broad label of anti-Communism. The covert extraction and removal of a sitting head of state brings up serious questions of sovereignty and international law; [according the UN Security Council, the US’ unilateral removal of Maduro from power violated international law and the UN Charter](#). For some in the US and abroad, it is also deeply unsettling. Reactions in Latin America have been mixed. Larger nations like Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia condemned US action in Venezuela in [a joint press release](#), reminding US leaders that Latin American nations are sovereign entities. Right-wing leaders like Argentine President Javier Milei have expressed support, though this isn’t shocking given the history between the two leaders; the Trump administration [offered Argentina a \\$20B bailout in October](#) ahead of midterm elections in that country in an effort to stabilize the country’s economy, suffering from austerity measures implemented by Milei, and in hopes of ushering in a win for Milei’s beleaguered political coalition, La Libertad Avanza. Nonetheless, Operation Absolute Resolve fits into the broader framework of historic hemispheric geopolitics. This is not the first time the US has been accused of violating international law in the region, and it likely won’t be the last.

Many parallels have been made between Maduro’s capture and capture of Manuel Noriega in 1989. While the two instances certainly share similarities (both were arrested and extradited on drug charges), the current context, to me, seems a lot more like US actions in the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Our current moment invokes the era when the US definitively became an empire, in spite a reluctance on the part of its leaders to name itself one. It seems more like the era of the Big Stick than the end of the Cold War, a moment when the US saw itself as a hemispheric policeman while Latin Americans thought of it more as a schoolyard bully. Trump’s threats to set inordinately high tariffs on, or even intervene in, Latin American countries whose leaders do not fall in line certainly harken back to this era, as do his [insistent calls to annex Greenland](#) under the guise of national security.

Land hunger, resource exploitation, and financial interests have always been at the center of US policy toward Latin America. During the Cold War especially, ideological battles also played a leading role. All figure into Maduro’s extrajudicial removal from power. Trump has gone out of his way, since his return to power, to paint Maduro as a corrupt narco trafficker. Trump has accused Maduro of leading the Cartel de Los Soles, a group the Trump administration has labeled a foreign terrorist organization (though which, [according to the Justice Department’s most recent indictment](#), is just a corrupt patronage system, not a drug trafficking organization). He has alleged—without proof—that Maduro emptied out Venezuela’s prisons and mental institutions and sent those individuals to the US. He has also alleged that Venezuela is a major provider of drugs that are killing Americans, though available data does not back this up.

To be clear, I do not intend this as a defense of Maduro and his regime. Political and economic conditions in Venezuela have deteriorated immensely over the past decade and a half, starting with Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chávez. Maduro's government could have—and has not—done nearly enough to improve life for the Venezuelan people. [Since 2014, about eight million Venezuelans have left the country](#), roughly a quarter of its population, due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. [Over 90% of Venezuelans live in poverty](#), and about a third skip at least one meal per day. On top of the humanitarian crisis, Venezuelans have endured further erosions of democracy. Arrests and detentions of opposition leaders, fraudulent elections, and the short-lived dissolution the National Assembly (in 2017) pushed the country even farther down the path toward authoritarianism.

However, to believe that Maduro's illegal abduction and extradition to the US is only, or even primarily, about drug trafficking and corruption is to miss the mark. If that were the case, it would render unintelligible Trump's recent pardon of former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, who was serving a 45-year sentence for conspiracy to import more than 400 tons of cocaine into the US. Instead, it seems to be driven by both personal enmity and oil, albeit not in equal measures. Trump seems to abhor the now-deposed Venezuelan leader, even as he's cozied up to other dictators with similar tendencies. Whether that has to do with Maduro's ideology, his constant anti-US rhetoric, or the growing influence of Marco Rubio, we may never know. More certain is Trump's obsession with himself, with winning, and with making deals. Venezuela is home to the world's largest proven oil reserves, yet Venezuela exports just 1% of total global oil. By removing Maduro from power, declaring that "we're in charge," and threatening acting Venezuelan officials who do not follow his directives, Trump has granted the US government tremendous influence in how it exploits Venezuela's prized commodity for the foreseeable future. We should take seriously Trump's recent post on Truth Social declaring himself "Acting President of Venezuela" and his off-the-cuff remarks that the US will run Venezuela for years to come, though the extent to which the US government *and* US oil companies will benefit from this remains to be seen.

What the Donroe Doctrine means for other countries in the region and for ongoing global disputes is less clear. The removal of Maduro has certainly raised the specter of further US action in the region, and [leaders like Colombia's Gustavo Petro have taken notice](#). Time will tell whether that threat expands to other regions of the globe, and how it might affect US decision-making in Ukraine and the Middle East.

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***Ps Ya'll remember the mention of the 'Donroe Doctrine' at the last CalCoDem Meeting? bw***

# The Power of the Spoken Word

Fred Honer, Guest Writer

If you want people to see things your way, to vote for the candidates and issues you believe to be the best for people, then speak to them. The spoken word has moved mountains, changed history. Use it. However, like flying a plane, designing a rocket, painting a portrait, learning a language, effective speaking takes study and practice. Lots of practice. The speech must be well constructed, and the speaker must be well prepared. Anyone can pick up a brush and put paint on a canvas, but how many can paint a Mona Lisa? The upside is much of the practice can be done while driving, washing dishes, during TV commercials, or sitting at a desk.



When speaking to people you are making a case, presenting an argument, advocating for one side. There are guidelines for doing this. These are the means of being effective. The first of these is how to make what you say remembered. The way you compose your speech is:

- 1<sup>ST</sup> Tell them what you are going to say.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Say it
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tell them what you said.

Another guideline is speech length. Your audience is not captive. Even if they are physically captive, their attention is never captive. An important key to an effective speech is brevity. A speech that grabs and holds attention is brief.

Your speech must be organized. Plan what you are going to say. Chronological order is always a good idea. Another good idea is domino effect. But have some logical sequence. No one wants to listen to someone ramble.



Remember, what you are trying to convey is an idea, a belief. The idea is what it is about. It is not about you. It is often a good idea to connect what you are saying to personal situation, but it must be about the personal situation of the audience, not your personal situation. You must relate to their interests. No audience is going to follow you because it is in your interest. They are going to vote their own interests. What you say must be a plan the audience believes is in their interest. Construct your speech accordingly.

A speech, an argument, a case is delivered to an audience. Make your speech feel like one person to another. Have good eye contact with the audience. Your eyes should connect with the eyes of as many of the eyes of the audience as you can. Be animated. Don't be afraid to move, to show some emotion. Never read a speech. Have notes at which you can glance but keep focused on the audience about 90% of the time. This is preparation and memory. Every speech must grab the intellect and the emotions of the audience. Even if it's something as academic as using one system to solve a mathematical problem as opposed to another, no one is going to believe in your system if they don't think you believe in it. The audience are people and people have emotions as well as thoughts. Appeal to their emotions as well as their thoughts.

Pick your target audience. If you are on the left those who are already on the left have heard your ideas many times. They are already going to vote left. Go for the right, preferably Trump republicans. That's where the votes you need to win are. The goal here is to win those voters to your side. If you alienate them, insult them, tell them they are wrong or in any way at fault you will never get any of them over to your side. You must assure them that you believe them to be good well-meaning people. Tell them that they were lied to, taken advantage of, used. Tell them that others, whose only goal is their own self-interest, are lying to them. Those

others are serving only themselves. You can site examples, site evidence but don't make your audience feel guilty and remember brevity. Argue for your position but relate it to their interests. Here you can include your experience. If you were once of their persuasion show the audience how you found out the "truth" and changed. Include but don't emphasize your experience. Get them to identify with you. Don't ever lie. If you're caught in a lie your ability as a speaker is forever diminished. To this audience be encouraging, sympathetic and emphasize their good will, good intentions. If the audience is initially hostile to your viewpoint, you will never connect with them if you don't connect on an emotional level. They must like you before they can accept your viewpoint.

I said that the spoken word has moved mountains and changed history. Some might be skeptical. Look at what happened at the Democrat party presidential convention of 1896. At that time there was no television, no public debates. Delegates from each state were chosen in smoke-filled back rooms. These chose the nominee from the large group of nomination seekers. Some of which had significant backing, some had none, most were in between. They took turns presenting themselves at the podium. An unknown from the backwoods of Kansas got his turn at the podium and delivered what became known as the "Cross of Gold" speech. That unknown was William Jennings Bryan. He went from nowhere to the presidential nomination with one speech. His speaking ability was so strong that even Clarence Darrow, the greatest trial lawyer in American history, didn't want to go one on one with him.

Another public speaker of note, even though he is far less politically correct than Bryan, is Adolph Hitler. In Germany in the 1920s there were political parties everywhere. At the time not one of the political party leaders liked Adolph Hitler. Even though Hitler was not liked, he was wanted. The strength of a political party is its numbers. What gives a party its numbers is how its speakers can attract people. Adolph Hitler could attract and hold audiences like no one else. If William Jennings Bryan was the Babe Ruth of public speakers of the twentieth century Adolph Hitler was the Lou Gehrig.

Speaking is a skill that must be learned. One good place to learn and practice is a group called Toastmasters. They can be found online. There are groups all over the country. At Toastmasters you get over any fear of speaking in public, and you get practice. You will receive feedback on all aspects of your speech and its delivery. In addition, you will give feedback to other speakers. In this way you are teaching and the best way to learn a subject is to teach it. Any local Toastmasters group can give you practice in general public speaking but to learn political speaking, motivating, being critical, you will have to shop around for a toastmasters group that allows political speeches. Most don't. When you want to graduate to political speech practice you may have to find a group online that allows political speeches and practice via Zoom.

To win over voters, speech is most effective but only if it is done well. The best race car driver in history is not going to win if his car is not well constructed. The best race car ever built is not going to win if the driver does not know how to use it. If you want to give a speech that speech has to be well constructed, organized, never rambling or longer than it has to be. As the race car must be constructed for the surface on which it is going to race, the speech must be crafted to the audience to which it is going to be delivered. The winning driver changes from accelerator to break and back many times, he steers according to turns and conditions. The speaker varies his tone, has head, body, arm, and hand movements in accordance with points in his speech. The speaker is alive, emotional and raises the emotions of the audience. The eyes are the most important. The speaker focuses on the audience just like the driver focuses on the track. You look people straight in the eye and they will listen.

I have used the term 'your audience' several times. Remember your audience can be one person or a thousand people. The principles are the same.

# Believe Your Eyes

Beverly Williams, Newsletter Editor

**"We didn't start the fire"** It's 2026, and the lyrics hit harder now than ever  
Watch/listen here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFTLKWw542g&t=191s>

I think most of us are in some state of shock. Engulfed in emotions brought on by watching innocent people being murdered on live television. Gruesome videos being taken by people on the scene and shared with the world. We KNOW what we SAW. Yet others, who saw the same videos, will tell you that ICE was under attack and afraid for their lives. They are hired killers, paid with our tax dollars.



While I dragged my feet on getting the newsletter out – a second citizen has been murdered on the streets of Minneapolis - as he tried to protect a woman who was being pushed to the ground by ICE and Border Patrol agents. I don't remember how many times the 6-8 thugs who were on top of him – shot him. Eight or ten times? Then they all backed away as if they thought he might raise up and shoot them, cowards that they are. <https://www.wmtw.com/article/alex-pretti-shooting-video-analysis/70128171>

As with Renee Good, White House officials immediately began vilifying Alex Pretti, a 37-yr old ICU nurse, again claiming officers feared for their lives. **The Trump**

**administration defended the shooting, claiming that Prett was an aggressor.** Prett was legally carrying a concealed weapon at his back, which one of the officers removed prior to his cold-blooded murder. His killing was more like an execution by a firing squad. US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Prett was shot because he was "brandishing" a gun. Evidently, she didn't watch the video. Local police officials and the FBI have been "refused access to the scene". *Kash Patel said, "all the pieces of the investigation are being led by DHS in HSI and I don't want to comment on their ongoing investigation."*

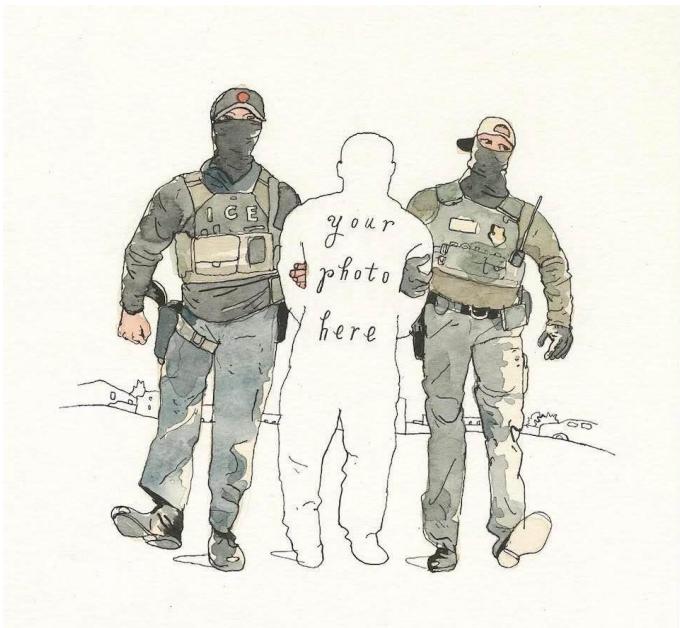
Minnesotans reacted as you would expect – they marched in the streets in numbers - braving subzero temperatures. Other cities across the country marched in support of them and called for the removal and dismantling of ICE. And for the arrest and trial by jury of the gunmen responsible for these deaths.



If you're like me, you are in shock, mad as hell, sick to your stomach, outraged and feeling helpless and hopeless. All at the same time. We can't let that feeling last and 'set in' though.

**CalCoDems hope to have hundreds of people line the streets in protest of ICE soon, possibly Saturday. Watch the FB page and email for final plans. Please come and bring all your friends and family! It's up to us, and numbers make a difference. If you have contacts at JSU, please ask them to be on watch for details and JOIN us.**

Thanks for reading, and if you'd like to write an article for the newsletter, just email it to [thisis2hard4me.beverly@gmail.com](mailto>thisis2hard4me.beverly@gmail.com)



ICE is Rump's new SS terrorist group.



KatzMeow420



**Renee Good and Alex  
Pretti were murdered  
twice by the Trump  
Administration.**

**First, it destroyed their  
bodies, then it  
assassinated their  
characters.**

**Decent Americans  
cannot stand for it.**

john pavlovitz

Join the Calhoun County Democrats! Vote! Get your friends and family to Vote!

Donate your time.... And donate your money! A WIN takes both!

**PLEASE WATCH THE YOUTUBE VIDEO MADE BY LOCAL CONCERNED CITIZENS!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdOVChn5qMg>

