



Democrats of Oro Valley

Newsletter
February
2025

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Serving Democrats in Oro Valley and Greater Northwest Tucson
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The Statue of Liberty was built to sway back and forth to withstand the fury of stormy weather, to stand the test of time. Now it's your turn to stand guard. May you all be the keeper of the flame. May you keep the faith. My eternal thanks to you, the American people. After 50 years of public service, I still believe in a nation where the strengths of our institutions and the character of our people matter and must endure. I love America. God bless you all. Thank you for this great honor. *Joe Biden, Farewell Address*

2025 Dues Still Only \$20

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Speakers: JoAnna Mendoza and Shelly Hartman



JoAnna Mendoza, Candidate for Arizona's 6th Congressional District

JoAnna is running for Congress to expand access to affordable health care, support our veterans, secure our water resources, and promote economic development in rural communities, and provide the well-rounded, authentic leadership our communities deserve.

JoAnna grew up on a small rural farm in Pinal County where she worked in cotton fields to help support her family. At 17, she enlisted in the US Navy, serving her country with distinction before joining the Marine Corps. During her two decades of honorable service, she served tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan, rose through the ranks, took on leadership roles, and became a Marine Corps Drill Instructor.

A lifelong public servant, JoAnna embodies the resilience and determination required for the office she seeks. Her personal history attests to the fact that she has never backed down from a fight.

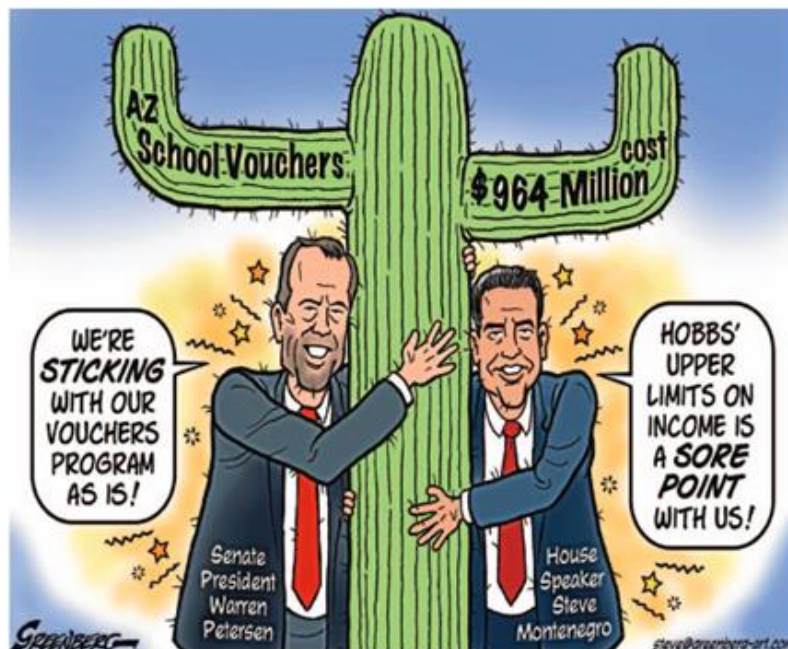


Shelly Hartman, Community Action Team Coordinator for Save our Schools

Shelly Hartman is a retired educator who spent 32 years working and fighting for Public Schools.

Born and raised in Arizona, Shelly attended public schools, received her Bachelor's Degree from Northern Arizona University, and her Master's Degree from Arizona State University. She worked in the Pendergast School District for years as an Elementary teacher and literacy coach and Glendale Elementary School District as Assistant Principal and Principal.

Having spent most of her career in Title One low-income public schools she knows first-hand the importance of fully funded public schools and the detrimental impact legislation in our state has had in student learning and growth. Her passion for education has not changed since she retired as she continues to work for our schools. She has been volunteering with Save Our Schools for several years and now works as the Classroom Assessment Techniques Coordinator (CAT) for Pima County.



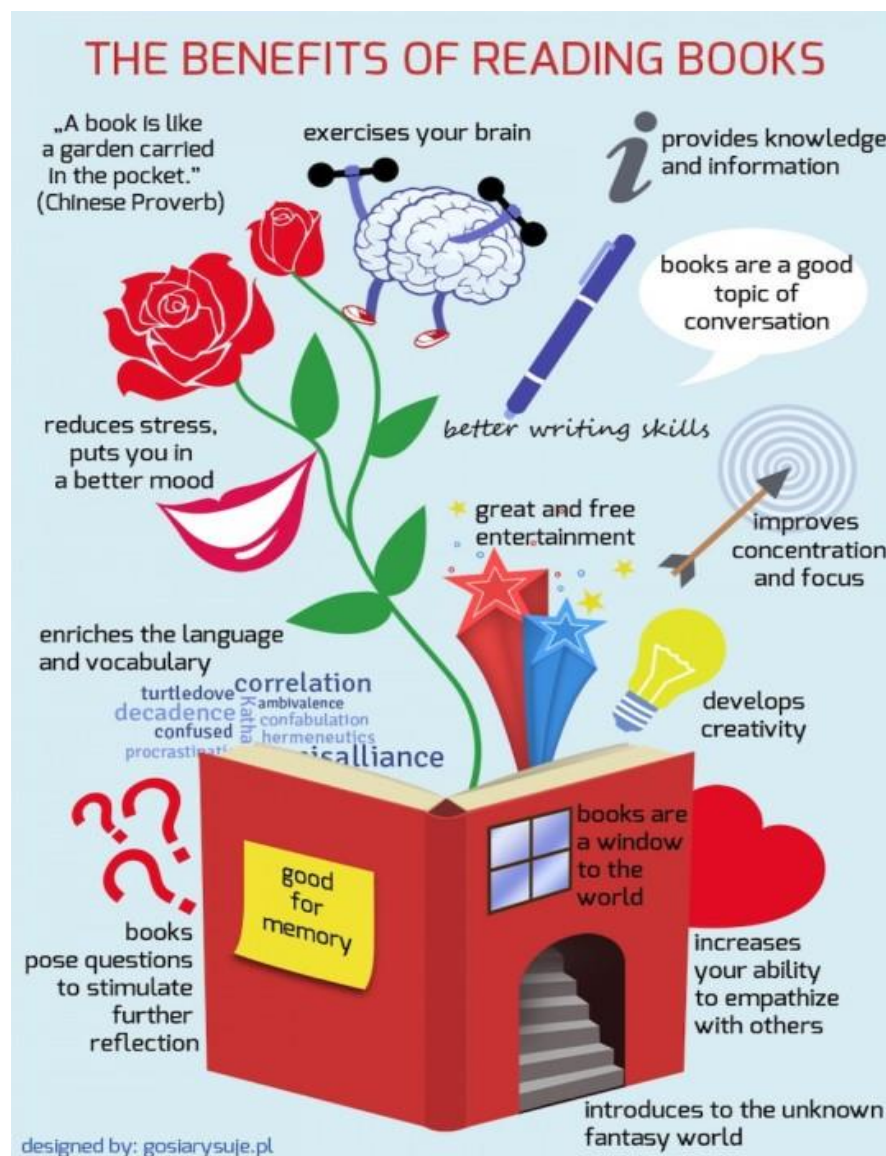
Public education is the foundation upon which democracy flourishes. It is the best opportunity to improve critical thinking skills and move upward socioeconomically. The oligarchs oppose public education; they do better when the “lower class” is under-educated. Besides, most oligarchs never attended public schools. As socioeconomic elites, most of them attended private, elite schools. ***Retired Superintendent of Schools Joseph Hentges***

I Love Reading Month

February is I Love of Reading Month for public schools across the nation. According to the Teaching Channel, it is a time to celebrate reading and the availability of books in our school libraries along with our dedicated librarians and teachers who foster a love of reading. It is a time to provide special events and activities designed to provide a magical spark to foster a need to read.

According to Regal Writer, reading increases vocabulary, improves writing skills, sparks creativity and imagination, develops critical thinking skills, increases understanding and empathy for others, expands knowledge of the world and world cultures, and improves emotional intelligence.

Everyone, regardless of age, can develop a love of reading by increasing the amount of time spent reading in a day and increasing the number of books read in a year.



Good News for Democracy *compiled by Jacolyn Marshall*

Part 1: Associated Press and Capitol Media Services

- Federal judge blocked Trump's plan to force out federal workers by offering them an incentive to resign, which is being challenged by several unions and by Democrats who warn it's a scam since there has been no authorization by Congress for said "buyouts."
- Federal judge blocked Trump's order to deny citizenship to DACA children born in the US, calling birthright citizenship "an unequivocal constitutional right that is clearly described in The Citizenship Clause of the Constitution."
- Democratic attorneys general in several states filed a lawsuit to stop Musk's task force from accessing federal payment systems containing sensitive personal data in defense of our Constitution, our right to privacy and essential funding for individuals and communities nationwide.

Part 2: Run For Something update *by Amanda Litman*

More than 15,000 people have signed up with Run for Something to consider a run for office since Trump won office in November; 2000 of them raised their hands just in the last two weeks. In less than 3 months, more people have signed up to join the RFS pipeline than in all of 2017.

Don't let anyone tell you there aren't Democrats ready to get in this. They are. And we're here to help them.

Our next candidate intro call is February 25th. You can volunteer from home or work, or the car and we'll train you on everything you need to know and how to get involved. This is a great way to support the RFS pipeline and get little bursts of optimism baked into your schedule.

[Sign up now to learn more about running for office.](#) If you don't ever want to run but want to learn a little more about what RFS does for potential candidates or see our team in action, this is a great way to do so.

In Run For Something alumni updates:

- Washtenaw County Sheriff Alyshia Dyer will not allow her department to assist ICE with deportations. This is why electing leaders like her matters.
- Alexandria, VA, mayor Alyia Gaskins said her city will not cooperate with ICE. [This is leadership.](#)
- Emma Curtis, Kentucky's only trans elected official, spoke out against Trump's anti-trans order: *The president implies that transgender folks cannot live honorable, truthful, or disciplined lives, and that is not true. Our words, our humanity, and our dignity were given to us by our creator, not by our government, not by any individual within our government.*
- CO Rep. Javier Mabrey and Sen. Julie Gonzales are introducing legislation to help tackle the cost of living in CO, including banning rent algorithms that collectively drive up housing costs.
- CA Sen. Sasha Pérez proposed legislation to shift the burden of insurance costs from Californians to fossil fuel companies, allowing people to sue oil companies for fire damage and introduced a new bill requiring schools to notify students and parents if ICE agents arrive on school campuses.

- PA Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta won the position of Vice Chair of the DNC. I have been saying for years that RFS alums are the present and future leaders of our party.

Part 3: *Good news for Democrats regarding the 2026 Primary* by Evelyn Lathram

- Hunter Holt is running for State Senate for LD17 in the Democratic primary. He's currently on the Marana School Board and Second Vice Chair in the Pima County Democratic Party.
- JoAnna Mendoza is running for CD6 in the Democratic primary. She ran for the State Senate in 2020 and was the highest fundraiser at that time.
- For more potential candidates, go to <https://apps.arizona.vote/electioninfo/SOI/68>

Can't take any more of mainstream news? Jean Meconi reminds us we have other options.

For social media: subscribe to Bluesky. It's free and it's blue - <https://bsky.social/about>

For political news: try the Meidas Touch Network. It too is free: <https://meidasnews.com/>

National & state news:

Democracy Docket (legal news on voting rights): <https://www.democracymarket.com/>

Raw Story News (news mainstream doesn't cover): <https://www.rawstory.com/>

Popular Information by Judd Legum for investigative reporting and it's free: <https://popular.info/>

The Atlantic, BBC, AP, Reuters, NPR, PBS News Hour, and The Guardian provide factual reporting.

State & local news:

Arizona Agenda: <https://www.arizonaagenda.com/>

Tucson Agenda: <https://tucsonagenda.substack.com/>

Check out the Hopium Chronicles Substack for a way forward for Democrats:

<https://www.hopiumchronicles.com/p/on-trumps-ugliness-and-becoming-the>

Other:

Good News for Lefties podcast: <https://podcastai.com/shows/77wu9f-good-news-for-lefties-and-america>

Jen Rubin's Green Room, columnist and author of Resistance: How Women Saved America from Donald:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIMaYVqnSs68Qfw32vvIKbUdn2tZbMJrl>



It's up to us

In light of the disastrous policies and actions of the Trump Administration to date along with the ever increasing misery and pain promised in his Project 2025 manifesto, it is has never been more important for us individually and collectively to step up and take action to protect ourselves and aid our fellow human beings; to do our part to save our state, our nation, and our planet from the ever worsening effects of climate change; and to increase our political involvement to preserve our democracy, our nation, and citizens of the world.

Here are some of the well-established organizations already working on our behalf that are now in desperate need of our help to stem the terrible tide:

Humanitarian Organizations:

Local and National: Southern Arizona Community Food Bank; Planned Parenthood; Habitat for Humanity; Youth on their Own; Boys and Girls Club; Casa de Los Ninos; Disabled American Veterans.

International: UNICEF; Heifer International; Doctors without Borders.

Environmental Organizations:

Local and National: Sierra Club; Sky Island Alliance; National Park Foundation; National Wildlife Federation.

International: Waterkeeper Alliance; Environmental Defense Fund (EDF); Greenpeace; World Wildlife Fund; The Climate Reality Project.

Political Organizations:

Local and National: ACLU; League of Women Voters; Common Cause; Progressive Turnout; Indivisible Tucson Action Alliance; Civic Engagement Beyond Voting.

International: Obama Foundation



The Best of Biden *by Jacolyn Marshall*



Health & Safety

- Biden administration announced 24 million people signed up for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act during the last enrollment period, the largest number of enrollees since it started in 2010.
- FDA and Drug Enforcement Administration both issued warnings about the risks of buying prescription medicines from online pharmacies, noting 96% are run illegally and their drugs are ineffective or contain dangerous inert ingredients. Many of the three dozen retailers named are in China or elsewhere in Asia.
- USDA and Agriculture Department reported Boar's Head plants in Indiana, Arkansas, and a second Virginia plant have been operating in the same unsanitary conditions as the Jarratt, Virginia plant linked to the deadly outbreak of listeria poisoning last year.
- FDA banned Red3 dye from the nation's food supply and ingested drugs 35 years after it was barred from cosmetics due to its potential cancer risks.
- FDA acknowledged the health benefits of nicotine pouches and authorized Philip Morris to produce them.

Economy

- Labor Department reported job growth surged in December with employers adding 256,000 new jobs, an unexpected show of economic strength. The US continued to create jobs steadily throughout 2024, adding 2.2 million jobs in all.
- Treasury Department has recovered \$31 million so far in Social Security payments that went to dead people after having gained access to the SSA's files for 2023-26. They expect to recover \$215 million.
- Commerce Department awarded \$1.2 billion to ASU-affiliated research programs and labs for semiconductor packaging that protects semiconductors and connects them to the devices they power.
- Federal Trade Commission sued PepsiCo for engaging in illegal price discrimination by giving unfair price advantages to a single large retailer at the expense of other vendors and consumers.

Environment & Climate Change

- Electric vehicle sales rose 8.8% for the year to just under 1.3 million, beating last year's record; gas-electric hybrids kept rising in popularity as well with over 1.6 million sold, a 36% increase over 2023.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service announced the effort to restore Mexican wolves to Arizona and New Mexico is doing better than expected according to their 5-year review.
- EPA reported sewage sludge fertilizers that are spread on pastures where beef, milk and other products come from contain forever chemicals that can cause kidney, prostate and testicular cancers, and can harm the immune system and childhood development.
- Biden administration distributed \$2.7 billion in financing to clean-energy companies across the nation.

Immigration & Border Security

- Biden administration finalized a new rule allowing the US to quickly remove undocumented immigrants deemed ineligible for asylum at the border, streamlining the process for preventing those who pose a public safety or national security threat from entering the country.
- Customs and Border Protection reported a 45% drop in border crossings in the first two weeks of January.

Justice

- DOJ released special counsel Jack Smith's findings on Donald Trump's efforts to undo the results of the 2020 presidential election but withheld the rest of the report dealing with Trump's hoarding and mishandling of classified and top-secret documents.
- DOJ sued six major landlords that collectively operate more than 1.3 million units in 43 states and DC of scheming to keep rents high by using an algorithm to increase rents and sharing that information with their competitors, leaving renters powerless while boosting their profits.
- DOJ rescinded its protocol for federal executions that allowed for single-drug lethal injections with pentobarbital after a review raised concerns about the potential for unnecessary pain and suffering.
- Biden commuted the sentences of nearly 2,500 people convicted of minor, nonviolent drug offenses, nullifying prison terms he deemed too harsh.
- Biden pardoned Dr Fauci, retired General Milley, and members of the House committee who investigated the January 6th attack on the Capitol to guard against Trump's vowed revenge.
- Biden pardoned his siblings and their spouses due to the unrelenting attacks and threats they have experienced, noting they were motivated by the worst kind of partisan politics: a desire to hurt him.
- Biden commuted the life sentence of Indigenous activist Peltier who Native American leaders have maintained was wrongfully convicted and Amnesty International long considered a political prisoner.
- Regarding his pardons, Biden stated "These are exceptional circumstances, and I cannot in good conscience do nothing. Even when they have done nothing wrong and could ultimately be exonerated, the mere fact of being investigated or prosecuted can irreparably damage reputations and finances."

Social Justice

- IRS is distributing \$2.4 billion to taxpayers who failed to claim their Covid Recovery Rebate Credit on their 2021 tax returns; 1 million taxpayers received payments up to \$1,400 by the end of January.
- Biden signed into law the Stop Campus Hazing Act requiring colleges receiving money from federal student aid programs to disclose all incidents of hazing in their annual security reports, identify the groups found in violation of school policy, and give students and their families access to the information.
- Biden administration canceled loans of more than 260,000 former students of the defunct for-profit Ashford University who were misled about its accreditation, costs, and requirements to graduate.
- Biden posthumously pardoned Black nationalist Marcus Garvey and other civil rights leaders in the 1920s along with a top Virginia lawmaker and other advocates for immigrant rights.

Technology & Cybersecurity

- Biden administration announced the US Cyber Trust Mark Initiative asking manufacturers to affix a label on their products if they meet federal cybersecurity standards to help Americans pick smart devices that are less vulnerable to hacking.

- Biden signed an executive order to ensure the cutting-edge aspects of AI would be developed within the US and its closest allies, balancing national security AI concerns with our economic interests.

Government

- Biden, the first senator to endorse Jimmy Carter's 1975 run for the White House, delivered a eulogy extolling Carter's character, his lifelong respect for the dignity of others, and his service to the nation.
- Vice President Kamala Harris presided over the certification of President-elect Donald Trump's election without challenge and without violence in stark contrast to the proceedings of January 6, 2021.
- Biden signed a bill to raise Social Security payments for public employees.
- Treasury Department announced new sanctions targeting a Chinese hacker affiliated with Beijing's Ministry of State Security in connection with a massive hack of American telecommunications companies and a breach of the agency's own computer network.
- Biden awarded national Presidential Awards for Excellence to five UA faculty members for their contributions to science, education and mentorship.
- Biden spent his last full day as president addressing the congregation of Royal Missionary Baptist Church in South Carolina reflecting on the influence of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement and urging Americans to keep the faith of better days to come.

International Relations:

- Biden lifted the US designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism as part of a deal to free dozens of political prisoners considered by the US to be unjustly detained; they were released on January 20.

International Relations: Israel

- US and Qatar mediators announced Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the release of dozens of hostages and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, and access to humanitarian aid; Israel's Cabinet approved the deal to take effect Sunday, January 19th.

International Relations: Ukraine

- Biden administration announced expanded sanctions against Russia's energy sector in a new effort to further hamper Putin's war against Ukraine.

January 2021 – January 2025: It has been an honor to report the steadfast and compassionate actions Biden and his dedicated administrative staff took every month throughout these past four years to make our state, our country and the world a better, more prosperous and safer place for us and our allies to survive and thrive.

OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE BE GENEROUS HELP OUR LOCAL FOOD BANK SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

* Please consider donating some non-perishable food items or making a cash donation to one of our local food banks during this stressful time.

*The Democrats of Oro Valley care about the health and well-being of our community.

* Thanks to all of you who support our brave troops.

**Please donate any of these items to one of our local veterans' groups for distribution: deodorant, shaving items, toothpaste, toothbrushes, pocket novels and puzzle books.*

March Meeting

**Monday, March 10
6:00 -7:30 pm
Oro Valley Library**

**Speaker:
Dustin Williams**

**Topic:
Future of Public Schools**