

DEMOCRACY NC

Donor Briefing

Spring
2024



1.8 MILLION VOTERS TURN OUT DURING NC PRIMARY ELECTION

North Carolina voters took to the polls during the 2024 Primary Election, with more than 1.8 million voters casting their ballot during the early voting period and Election Day.

Anti-voter policies throughout the 2023 legislative session, including attacks on same-day registration, early voting, and local election administration, have already begun to permeate our elections and will continue to have long-term implications for North Carolina voters.

“We appreciate everyone who cast their ballot, as well as the incredible efforts of election officials and advocates to protect the vote during this primary season....As we have said time and again, if voting wasn’t important, certain individuals wouldn’t be working so hard to keep us from doing it.” —Cheryl Carter, Co-Executive Director (March 7, 2024)

REGIONAL ORGANIZING SPOTLIGHT

Sugelema Lynch — Greater Triangle



“What hopes do you have for the future of your region?”

In the Greater Triangle, we're working towards a future where our state's democracy serves the people of North Carolina with equity and inclusion. I believe it's crucial that every resident, particularly those from marginalized communities, has unrestrained access to voting and fair representation.



“What strategies are you taking to mobilize voters this year?”

I'm committed to creating opportunities for community members to understand the way local and state policies are interconnected with their everyday lives. My hope is to bring clarity to each role performed by elected officials in local government in order to increase voter engagement in neighborhoods, towns, cities, and small rural communities in the region. I would also like to engage community members in getting to know each other and local elected leaders to build collective power for the sake of cooperative governance.



I'm actively familiarizing myself with each county's landscape, identifying community gathering spots and local faith-based organizations, while also participating in events. Additionally, I recognize the significance of connecting with local community leaders who possess deep-rooted knowledge and genuinely care about their surroundings.

As an organizer, I have established relationships with local grassroots leaders, offering support for voter engagement initiatives through teach-ins, material distribution at events, organizing phone banks, election protection, and providing training to strengthen organizing skills as needed or requested.

“What does community building look like in your region?”



Recently, I was invited by Pat Ross, a Democracy NC Monthly Sustainer, to attend a community meeting in Erwin, NC. The invitation was to meet with the Riverside Community Action Network ("RCAN"), a local group committed to advocating for civic and environmental issues. The meeting took place at the Oak Grove AME Zion Church, where members expressed their concerns about the notably low voter turnout in the area, especially among Black and brown communities.

The group discussed the need for resources and training to enhance understanding of the voting process, emphasizing the importance of clarifying voting eligibility, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who often face misconceptions about their voting rights. They highlighted the importance of sharing information regarding felony convictions and voting eligibility.



Notably, the group expressed concern that recent changes to voter ID laws and registration deadlines might confuse residents and act as barriers to participation. They emphasized the need for clear guidance and effective strategies to help the community navigate these changes and boost voter turnout in Harnett County.

Riverside Community Action Network ("RCAN") brings together residents in Erwin, NC for fellowship and to care for one another and the community.

MONTHLY SUSTAINER SPOTLIGHT

Pat Ross — Erwin, NC

"Why do you support Democracy NC?"

Elections have always been very very important to me ever since I can remember. I remember voting when there was no such thing as early voting, it was only one day, you had the election. And Election Day was in November, and it was cold and snowing and you had that one day to vote and there were lots of people waiting in line to vote. I appreciate Democracy North Carolina because they want to make sure elections are fair and accessible for everyone!



"Why is giving to Democracy NC important to you?"

I have been a proud Monthly Sustainer since 2020 and have always believed in the importance of having a voice advocating for voting rights, fair elections, and educating voters. What I didn't realize is the amount and scope of work that is constantly being done by Democracy NC for the people of North Carolina. Democracy NC's support of RCAN has been fantastic. The dedication of their staff and volunteers continues to inspire our efforts to take action in the community!



STORIES FROM OUR STAFF

Amanda Matson — Raleigh, NC

Amanda began her time at Democracy NC in the fall of 2014 as a part-time fellow and officially joined the staff in 2016. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Mount Union in Ohio and her graduate work in Community Psychology at NC State University. She has decades of experience conducting research on social justice issues and advocating for her community.



Amanda serves on the Communications Team as Engagement Evaluation Specialist and is a proud Monthly Sustainer of Democracy NC!

"With two young kids, I'm not okay with the thought of them having fewer rights than I have. I'm not okay with leaving the future of our democracy to chance. I want American democracy to be freer and stronger for them than it has ever been.

Next year will be my 10th year working for Democracy North Carolina. If I didn't believe in our mission and in the people working to accomplish it, I wouldn't still be here. I'm planning to continue giving in every way I can!"



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MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Democracy NC relies on community and business leaders for guidance and support of our mission. In 2024, we are excited to introduce three members to our Board of Directors!

Manny Diaz – Manny currently serves in the United States Air Force and lives in Utah. Prior to joining the Air Force, Manny was the Southeastern Regional Managing Organizer for Democracy NC. He was a member of the Fayetteville Police Accountability Commission Task Force and interned with Global Action to Prevent War and the Center for Community Action.

Christian Stoltze – Christian serves as the Finance Director at the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation and resides in Asheville, NC. He brings more than 20 years' experience in finance and operations in the nonprofit sector. Christian served on the Buncombe County Board of Elections from 2019-2023.

Dionne Sanders – Dionne is an accomplished marketing technology consultant who recently pivoted to the role of Sr. Knowledge Manager at Iterable, Dionne has volunteered with Democracy NC as a Vote Protector and with other nonprofits focused on improving adult literacy. Currently living in the North Carolina Triad area, Dionne continues her advocacy work and sustainability practices, and encourages others to embrace a more mindful approach to living.

