

# Benton County Dems' World



David Bernstein, Editor

## Upcoming Events

In light of the current COVID-19 situation, we recommend you contact each organization prior to the meeting date to confirm it will take place as scheduled.

<p>Mon., Apr 27 11:00 – 12:00 Lunch / Social Time 12:00 – 1:00 Meeting <a href="#">Golden Corral Rogers</a></p>	<p><b>CANCELED</b> <b>Watch your email for details about future meetings.</b> BC Dems Luncheon – (4th Monday)</p>
<p>Mon., May 11 6:00 PM <a href="#">Mimi's Cafe</a></p>	<p>Will be held online. Visit <a href="https://www.democraticpartybentoncounty.org/">https://www.democraticpartybentoncounty.org/</a> for details. Democratic Party of Benton County – (2nd Monday).</p>
<p>Mon., May 18 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM <a href="#">Mount Sequoyah Center</a></p>	<p>Check the website for details. <a href="https://www.washcodemocrats.com/">https://www.washcodemocrats.com/</a> Washington County Democrats - (3rd Monday)</p>
<p>Tues., May 19 1:30 PM <a href="#">Western Sizzlin'</a></p>	<p>NWA Senior Democrats' Luncheon – (3rd Tuesday)</p>
<p>Mon., May 25 11:00 – 12:00 Lunch / Social Time 12:00 – 1:00 Meeting <a href="#">Golden Corral Rogers</a></p>	<p><b>Watch your email for details.</b> BC Dems' Luncheon</p>



**Arkansas Voters First filed a suit in federal court seeking to allow ballot signature collection that's safe for the public.**

This might be the only chance in 10 years to create a fair redistricting process in Arkansas, but first, we need to get on the ballot.

[ARVotersFirst.org](https://arvotersfirst.org) asked the court to take actions that will allow every voter to exercise our constitutional right to petition for amendments to the Constitution without jeopardizing the health and safety of ourselves or our fellow Arkansans.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3apWmHP>

Related story: [Will AR be the Next Wisconsin?](#)

# The President's Memo

## COVID-19's Crossroads



We hope you are safe and well during these difficult times. We plan to be reaching out to you this coming month to ensure you are well and discuss ways in which you are remaining an engaged Democrat. Also, please contact one of us on the Executive Committee for any information and we'll try to signpost any resources you might need.

The COVID-19 pandemic is ushering in extraordinary times which is causing as much suffering as it is a clarity of purpose for us as Americans. The exponential spread of the coronavirus will impact a great number of Americans and its effects will be profound and enduring. Our economy is going through a shock on par with the 2008 crash and the Great Depression. This crisis has revealed some essential truths that should motivate us as Democrats in restoring a noble purpose to our nation. A purpose underpinned by good governance in our national, state, and local politics.

Good governance is about making decisions and policies led by facts and science. Good governance is about responding to actual crises with competence, transparency, and decency enshrined in our Constitution. Good governance is led by a moral authority that strives for unity rather than anger, grievance, crude nationalism, and racism in order to win political support.

We are at a crossroads. This pandemic will change our politics and culture and our choices this year will determine what kind of nation and society we will be on the other side of this crisis. Our choices will be determined by our ability to vote in November. We must defend our democracy while also protecting public health. Right now, voters may only vote by absentee ballot if they provide a specific reason why they must (serious illness, being out of state, etc.). Under an **amendment to HB1085**, just filed with AR Senators Joyce Elliott and Greg Leding and AR Representatives Denise Ennett, Nicole Clowney, and David Whitaker, **Arkansans would be able to vote by absentee ballot without having to provide a reason**. Benton County Dems will keep you updated on the progress of this amendment.

Faithfully yours,  
*Julia K Bailey*

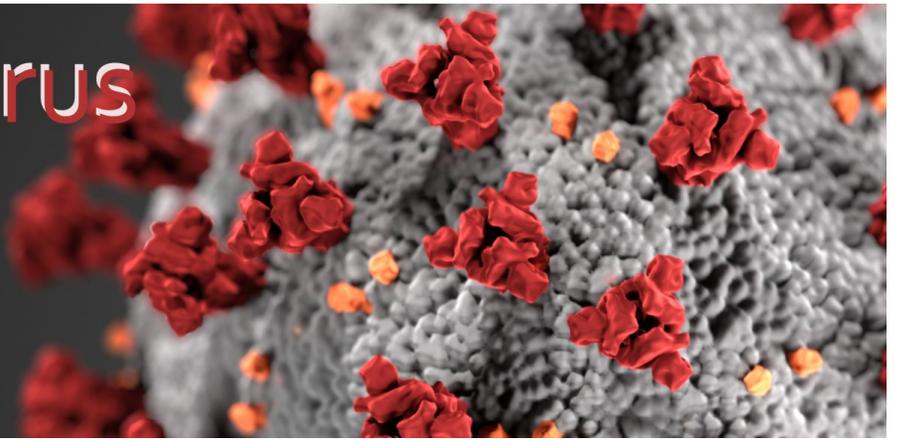


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## Do you know...

Know of a member who is sick or in need of our assistance, please forward requests or information to our corresponding secretary at [dao.bcdems@gmail.com](mailto:dao.bcdems@gmail.com).

# Coronavirus Support Resources



Interview with Dr. Anthony Fauci

[Read More](#)

Democratic Party of Arkansas' COVID-19 FAQ & Services Guide

[Read More](#)

Community through COVID Guide

[Read More](#)

Comprehensive List of Food Pantries in Benton County

[Read More](#)

CARES Act Guide for Small Businesses

[Read More](#)

Make your own mask, make them for those on the front line

[Read More](#)

## Candidates Spotlight

This month we are featuring Celeste Williams. In the coming months, we will feature additional local Democratic candidates.

[Celeste Williams](#) has dedicated her life to serving others - as a family nurse practitioner, educator, mom, and foster parent. After 20 years as a nurse, she realized not all problems she sees can be fixed in the exam room. That's why she's running for U.S. Congress. "I am fighting for a world where we can all succeed, where getting sick doesn't mean you go

broke, where our children have a world-class education, and we restore dignity to workers in America.

Celeste is a graduate of Southern Nazarene University and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She works as a family nurse practitioner and is a member of the American Nurses Association, the Arkansas Nurses Association, and the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. She is active in her community through Rotary and her church. She lives just outside of Bella Vista with her husband, four children, chickens, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, 2 peacocks, 3 ducks, 2 rabbits, and a bearded dragon.



# Will Arkansas Be The Next Wisconsin?

## Choosing Between Health and Your Rights

by David A. Bernstein

Wisconsin is not the kind of place that comes to mind when thinking about the source of major political change. Nevertheless, last month it became the epicenter of what may become a key issue for the November national elections. The coronavirus now appears to be a major stumbling block for voters who are used to going to the polls to cast their ballots.

To the extent that COVID-19 continues to require individuals to shelter-in-place, it seemed like a rational request to allow Wisconsin residents to vote by absentee ballot. This is exactly what attorney John Devaney asked the Wisconsin State Supreme Court to approve. During an emergency hearing held via videoconference Devaney asked the court to simply extend the deadline for mail ballots by six days past election day. This compromise was suggested to ensure that more people could vote, and vote safely.

Lawyers for the Republican Party had made no provisions for this and preferred to hold the election as scheduled. In the end, Judge William Conley of the Western District of Wisconsin federal court agreed with the plaintiffs and issued an order extending the deadline for mailed ballots as requested by Devaney.

With only a few hours left before the election, the Supreme Court order a stay and essentially reversed the decision of the lower court. [1] The end result being that voters who had not previously planned on voting by mail, could no longer request a mail-in ballot, even if they could have returned it by the agreed-upon deadline.

According to the New York Times, “It was the first major voting-rights decision led by the court’s conservative newest member, Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh, and it was in keeping with a broader Republican approach that puts more weight on protecting against potential fraud — vanishingly rare in American elections — than the right to vote, with limited regard for the added burdens of the pandemic”. [2]

With the prospect of the COVID-19 virus still affecting Arkansas voters – even come November – State Representative Joyce Elliott recently introduced a bill that would allow individuals to cast a ballot by mail or in person. Elliott told reporters she had circulated the proposal and had no negative comments from fellow lawmakers. “Any qualified elector could request a ballot. It would allow voters to vote safely without encountering virus dangers”, she said.[3] Nevertheless, the Joint Budget Committee killed Elliott’s proposal putting an end to a Democratic Party push for “no-excuses” voting in November.

Bentonville Rep. Jim Dotson proposed a competing amendment that would allow no-excuses voting only if the governor still had an emergency declaration in effect. And, according to his amendment, voters requesting an absentee ballot would not be allowed to vote in person. Other state representatives objected to Elliott’s proposal for a wide variety of reasons.

It is worth noting that Gov. Asa Hutchinson has already authorized “no-excuses” absentee voting for few recent runoff primary elections. This did not seem to present a problem to state Republicans at the time. However, in Arkansas under normal circumstances, a voter must have a bona fide reason for voting by mail – being unavoidably absent or seriously ill.

The question on my mind is if we are still in a semi-quarantined state, will the Republican-led state legislature pull another Wisconsin style end-run around voters' rights? Perhaps the only way we can be sure this does not happen is to let our state leaders know how important true "no-excuses absentee voting" is to us.

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[1] [\*Republican National Committee, et al. v. Democratic National Committee, et al.\*](#) No. 589. U. S. Supreme Court. 6 April 2020.

[2] Rutenberg, Jim and Nick Corasaniti. "How a Supreme Court Decision Curtailed the Right to Vote in Wisconsin." 13 April 2020. The New York Times. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/us/wisconsin-election-voting-rights.html>>.

[3] Brantley, Max. "Republican opposition defeats Joyce Elliott's proposal for no-excuse absentee voting in November." 9 April 2020. Arkansas Times Arktimes.com. <<https://arktimes.com/arkansas-blog/2020/04/09/republican-opposition-defeats-joyce-elliotts-propoosal-for-no-excuse-absentee-voting-in-november>>.

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## Bean Dinner Fundraiser and Monthly General Meetings

The Executive Committee of Benton County Dems is reviewing the COVID-19 impact on whether to reschedule its Bean Dinner fundraiser for 2020. The general monthly meeting schedule for 2020 is also under review. These events will only be held if it is deemed safe (by public health experts and officials) for groups to get together without danger of infection. Until then, we will strive to keep you connected (from a safe distance) to Benton County candidate campaigns and politics.

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## General Meeting Minutes

### NO GENERAL MEETING WAS HELD IN MARCH

Information About the May General Meeting to Follow Soon.

# Treasurer's Summary

## March 2020

by Timothy Boyer, Treasurer



**Beginning Balance:**      \$3,547.36

**INCOME:**

Dues

Bean Dinner Ticket      \$902.96

Blue Bowls

**Total Income:**              \$902.96

**Ending Balance:**          \$4,450.32

**EXPENSES:**

Campaign Contributions

Postage

Printing

**Total Expenses:**              \$0

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## 2020 Benton County Dems Officers & Committee Chairs

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
President	Julia K. Bailey
Vice-President	Walter Hinojosa
Treasurer	Tim Boyer
Recording Secretary	Deb Ostas
Past President	Eunice Van Tuyl
Membership Chair	David Bernstein
Social Media Chair	Joel Ewing
Newsletter / Publicity Chair	David Bernstein
Corresponding Secretary	Deb Ostas
Reservations Chair	Betty Cauldwell
Publicity Chair	Catherine Deeley