

# DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF WILLOW VALLEY

## NEWSLETTER

### November 2025

Paid for by Democratic Club of Willow Valley  
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## Addressing the Issues

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# It's Not the End

## Chop Wood, Carry Water 10/24

It's not the end.

Jess Craven

Oct. 24, 2025

Hi, all, and happy Friday!

I'm running behind again, so I'll let a couple of subscribers inspire you today.

Reader Rebecca R., who lives in Alabama, sent me this wonderful comment in an email yesterday:

At No Kings [this weekend] I went onstage and spoke for 13 minutes. I told everyone to call daily, gave details on HOW to call, and then I demonstrated. It was wild. 5000 people screaming in the background while I left a message for Tommy Tuberville. And I had people make their own calls right there on the spot from the rally.

And just now I called Katie Britts office -- as I do daily - and almost was in tears about these healthcare costs.



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# It's Not the End (cont'd)

And I asked, sort of defeatedly, "Do these calls even make a difference?"

And the staffer said "Ma'am, they do. You should know we've received over 1000 calls this week alone"

!!!!!!!

Tell everyone, KEEP CALLING! They are paying attention!!!!

I mean, I got chills. Fantastic! If that doesn't inspire us to keep calling I don't know what will!

Another reader, Merrill W, wrote this:

Regarding never, never giving up the fight, there is a wonderful tagline in the 2011 comic/drama "The Exotic Marigold Hotel", starring Maggie Smith, Bill Nighy and Judy Dench. The owner of the old, dilapidated hotel is a young Indian who is courageously trying to make a go of it. When challenged about his chances for success he says what I cling to in these depressing times: "Everything will be alright in the end. And if it's not alright, it's not the end."

YES! Thank you, Rebecca and Merrill, for bringing the motivation we needed today!

It's not the end, folks. So let's get to work one more time.

## Call Your Senators and Your House Rep

Hi, I'm a constituent calling from [zip]. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm calling to express my outrage over the Trump administration's ongoing abuses of power and Trump's dictatorial rule. I ask that [REP/SEN NAME]...

### [CHOOSE 1-3 options]:

- refuse to pass any blank check federal spending bill that enables this authoritarian government's unconstitutional practices, (and)

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# It's Not the End (cont'd)

- conduct investigations into Trump's ongoing use of the White House to solicit bribes from private companies, billionaires, and foreign countries, (and)
- stop letting Trump usurp Congress' constitutional authorities over spending, tariffs, and the military, (and)
- file articles of impeachment and move to convict and remove Trump for his repeated defiance of the law, (and)
- pledge to investigate and prosecute any government official who has participated in this administration's illegal actions.
- refuse to vote for additional funding for ICE, which is behaving unlawfully and terrorizing our cities.

If [REP/SEN NAME] will not fulfill their duty as a member of a co-equal branch of government and stop this authoritarian takeover, I will use my power as a voter to support a representative who will.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Get Smart!

Wondering how much Trump has made since he became President a second time? I can tell you exactly! It's \$1,802,143,574.00 and increasing literally every second. But that's not all. His net worth has increased 7.5B since he became President. SEVEN AND A HALF BILLION!!!!

How do I know all of this? Because CAP Action just released an incredible [Cashing in on the Presidency](#) tracker, and it's got facts, figures, and all the receipts! They'll continue to track Trump's profiteering until we get him out of office, so make sure to check it out often and SHARE IT with people who remain unaware of his blatant corruption.

[Find it here.](#)

# It's Not the End (cont'd)

## Grab Your Wallet

Here's a list of every company and billionaire contributing to Trump's ballroom (although for some reason Carrier isn't on it). Let's boycott those we can—I'm literally cancelling T-Mobile this week—and also spread the word about the billionaires and crypto bros who are giving so they can receive preferential treatment from the Trump administration. It's pay to play in its worst form. Spread the word.

**THE RECOUNT**

### Who's helping pay for Trump's \$300 million ballroom?

- Altria Group, Inc.
- Amazon
- Apple
- Booz Allen Hamilton
- Caterpillar Inc.
- Coinbase
- Comcast Corporation
- J. Pepe and Emilia Fanjul
- Hard Rock International
- Google
- HP Inc.
- Lockheed Martin
- Meta Platforms
- Micron Technology
- Microsoft
- NextEra Energy, Inc.
- Palantir Technologies Inc.
- Ripple
- Reynolds American
- T-Mobile
- Tether America
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Adelson Family Foundation
- Stefan E. Brodie
- Betty Wold Johnson Foundation
- Charles and Marissa Cascarilla
- Edward and Shari Glazer
- Harold Hamm
- Benjamin Leon Jr.
- The Lutnick Family
- The Laura & Isaac Perlmutter Foundation
- Stephen A. Schwarzman
- Konstantin Sokolov
- Kelly Loeffler and Jeff Sprecher
- Paolo Tiramani
- Cameron Winklevoss
- Tyler Winklevoss

# Hidden Cash



## The hidden cash powering this year's retention elections

10/23/2025

Much of the money being spent to sway voters in critical retention elections for three Democratic Pennsylvania Supreme Court justices won't appear in traditional campaign finance reports.

Instead, the money is being spent in a way that can be much harder to track. Welcome to the wild west of independent expenditures.

An independent expenditure is money spent to influence the outcome of an election without coordination with a campaign. They are often made by groups that can't legally give to candidates, including dark money nonprofits — 501(c)4 and (c)6 organizations that don't have to disclose their donors.

Judges and justices don't face opponents during retention elections. That's why Republican-aligned groups are using IEs to spend against the incumbent Democrats — there are no opposing candidates to invest in.

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## Hidden Cash (cont'd)

Backers of the judges up for retention also frequently opt for IEs because that approach allows them to make a political case to voters more directly. Judges themselves are prevented by law, for instance, from promising to rule a certain way.

On paper, the state reporting requirements for IEs aren't too different from [the normal schedule](#) used by candidates and the committees that give to them directly.

[Pennsylvania law requires two big disclosures](#) in the lead-up to an election — on expenditures made both 50 or more and 15 or more days before an election. For this cycle, that means reporting expenditures made up to Sept. 15, and from then until Oct. 20. (Actual filing dates are on Sept. 23 and Oct. 24). After Oct. 20, committees also have to start reporting daily, though the state's system for tracking those disclosures often lags.

Spotlight PA has identified a number of TV, digital, and mail ads [funded](#) by independent spenders. However, many groups appear to have begun spending right after the Sept. 15 filing cutoff, so they don't have to file a full disclosure until the end of this week.

That means it has so far been impossible to get a full accounting of the independent spending in these retention races. But even the piecemeal information available appears to show a striking amount of dark money.

Take, for instance, the retention spending by two linked nonprofit organizations, Commonwealth Partners and Citizens for Term Limits, both of which are opposing the sitting Democratic justices.

Commonwealth Partners is well established in state conservative politics and administers two PACs funded almost exclusively by conservative billionaire Jeff Yass. Citizens for Term Limits is newer, but was registered at the same Harrisburg address as Commonwealth Partners. It's impossible to know for sure where either PAC is getting its funding. It's also not clear how much each has spent this election cycle. Neither has filed any disclosures with the state.

These tactics aren't exclusive to Republicans.

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# Hidden Cash (cont'd)

A super PAC (which is only permitted to make independent expenditures) called People Power Pennsylvania appears to have begun funding pro-retention materials on Sept. 25, according to publicly available records of its [ads on Google](#) and [Meta platforms](#).

Because this was after the September filing deadline, the PAC hasn't yet reported any spending for this election cycle to the Pennsylvania Department of State. But based just on those publicly available records, it has spent more than \$185,000 on digital advertising in the past month.

Even among organizations that have filed campaign finance disclosures, dark money can make tracing all its sources impossible.

[Pennsylvanians for Judicial Fairness](#) (PJF) is another PAC dedicated to making independent expenditures on behalf of Democrats. According to [its latest campaign finance filing](#), it has pooled funds from a wide array of major political donors, including the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, the national Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, and the [dark money nonprofit PA Alliance Action](#).

The more than \$360,000 that PA Alliance Action has contributed to PJF this year is a black box — because the organization is incorporated as a 501(c)4 nonprofit, it doesn't have to say where it gets its own money from.

In other words, even when the dust settles on these expensive retention elections and all disclosures are filed, voters still won't have a full tally of all the people who worked to influence their votes.

— [Katie Meyer, government editor / reporter](#)

# Hope is an Action

## Chop Wood, Carry Water 10/27

Hope is an action.

Jess Craven      Oct. 27



From the [Visibility Brigade](#) in Paramus, NJ

## Hope is an Action (cont'd)

I attended a [Protect Our Care](#) call this morning from the airport—POC works to promote and protect policies that provide healthcare, nutritional assistance, and other social safety-net programs for Americans. I learned a couple of highly relevant facts on the call, and wanted to share them with you.

First, Republicans claim that they have no choice, if the government remains shut down, but to allow SNAP funding to run out on November 1. This is absolutely *not* true. SNAP is, in fact, pre-funded, meaning it receives all of its funding a year in advance to prevent it from running out at just such times as these. According to John Foti, the legislative Director of Americans For Tax Fairness, the Trump administration [has access to a 6B dollar contingency fund](#) with which they absolutely *could* fund SNAP. They are choosing not to, because politically they feel it's better for them to use food shortages to hurt Democrats than to just do their jobs and help people. Ergo the outrageous nonsense now posted on the [USDA website](#)'s home page.

The second thing I learned is that there are only about two weeks left for Congress to come to an agreement on extending the ACA premium tax credits. Why? Because Open Enrollment starts on Saturday, and shortly thereafter the outrageous new premiums we're starting to see will be locked in. Even if Congress should decide on extensions after that it'll be too late. I suspect Republicans are counting on this.

I tell you all of this not to discourage you, but to motivate you to call and write to your representatives. Also, please talk to your friends and family. They are likely hearing Republican propaganda and it's important that we counteract it with the truth. Again, this isn't about providing healthcare to undocumented people, and it's not about a lack of funds. The money to fund these programs IS there. Republicans are just choosing to spend money on ICE, billionaire tax cuts, Argentinian bailouts, and Trump's golf trips instead. Spread the word!

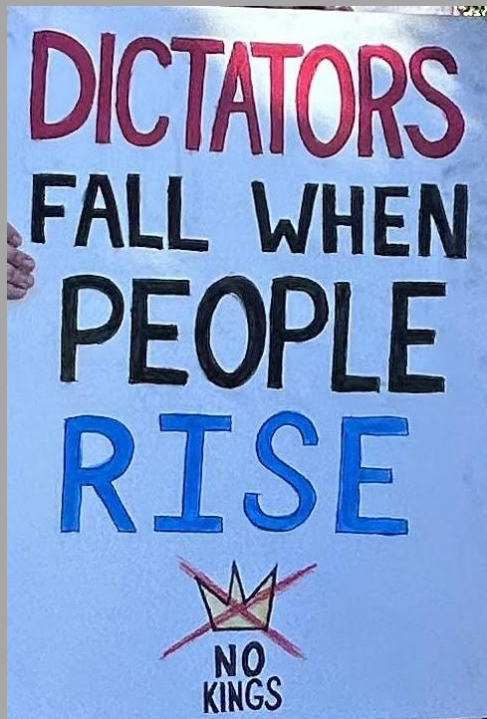
One last thing: I'm gathering stories about ACA premium increases. If you find out what your new premium is and feel comfortable doing so, please send me screenshots of the old price and the new one, as well as what city and state you're in. I want to share these stories—they have tremendous impact. You will remain entirely anonymous, of course. Send them to [hjesscraven101@gmail.com](mailto:hjesscraven101@gmail.com).

# Photos from No Kings II



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# Photos from No Kings II (cont'd)



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# Photos from No Kings II (cont'd)



**THE RULE  
OF LAW  
IS KING!**

This is a nation of  
Constitutional  
LAW  
NOT  
Martial Law  
— Judge  
Immergut

**WE BELIEVE:  
SCIENCE IS REAL  
WOMENS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS  
BLACK LIVES MATTER  
NO PERSON IS ILLEGAL  
LOVE IS LOVE  
DIVERSITY MAKES US STRONGER**



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# Coming Events

## **Understanding Our Democracy**

Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM  
Cultural Center Education Room

Jerry Henige will present the results of the  
November 4<sup>th</sup> elections  
plus we will be thanking you for  
all your valuable participation  
this past year  
with snacks and beverages

## **Dems Club General Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on  
Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# General Meeting Minutes

## Democratic Club of Willow Valley General Meeting October 28, 2025

Jerry Henige opened the meeting at 1 p.m. and introduced guest speaker Kristy Gismot, Vice President of Resource Development of United Way in Lancaster County.

**Ms. Gismot** began with the announcement that 2025 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of United Way in Lancaster County and gave a brief overview of its Mission Statement's major areas of focus: education, economic mobility, and the health of the community. She described many of the services provided by United Way:

VITA is the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for lower income families.

211 call center helpline addresses human services needs and is the entry point for all housing services in the county. Calls to 211 have increased 100% in 2025 over 2024.

The Volunteer Center provides trained volunteers for nonprofits in the area.

Project Blueprint provides training for nonprofit boards.

Grants are written to support nonprofits, as well as filling in funding for emergency needs, especially in food and housing. Emergency funds from FEMA have not been provided in 2025.

In partnership with Lancaster Rotary, Summer Youth Experience provides funds to nonprofits for at-risk Lancaster County youth summer programs.

Ms. Gismot also spoke of effects of the state and federal government shutdowns on Lancaster County. On October 31, all SNAP food benefits will end, an impact on over 54,000 Lancaster County residents. Also there will be no November 3 opening of LIHEAP, a program that provides assistance for those struggling with home energy costs in winter.

Following her talk, Ms. Gismot opened the floor to Q&A. Questions were asked about when and where is the best time to donate — directly to a nonprofit or to United Way? Either is effective. Ms. Gismot stressed that the greatest need now is for food staples which can be donated at different centers around the county such as the Food Hub in downtown Lancaster.

Jerry thanked Ms. Gismot for an insight into the work of the United Way and its benefits to the communities of Lancaster County.

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# General Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## Business Meeting

**November 4 Ballot:** Jerry provided an overview of the ballot and stressed the need to vote.

**Solicitation of topics for 2026:** Attendees were asked what areas they would like to see addressed. Topics that arose were:

- need for basic civics education
- information on how the Democratic Party works nationally as well as locally
- mid-year evaluation of impact on current government policies
- more collaboration with organizations such as Indivisible
- ways to increase voter registration, possibly with League of Women Voters
- the difference between protest and resistance, use of boycotts against corporations

**Treasury:** balance \$5,392.93 including \$1,657.00 for Scholarship

**Membership:** total 141 with 94 renewals and 47 new members

**Advocacy:** Barbara Bonanno reported that 95 volunteers sent over 2,200 post cards to Swing States asking to vote YES in the Supreme Court judge retention on November 4 election.

## November 4 Election

Jerry Henige added that Locust precinct will have no write-in for judge of elections as Dick Coyne has declined. Voting in the Lakes precinct will take place in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor auditorium due to current construction.

## Upcoming Events:

**Tuesday November 4:** election at Lakes and Locust precincts

**Tuesday, November 18:** Cultural Center Education Room, 10 a.m. A combination meeting of *Understanding Our Democracy* and general meeting to discuss results of the November 4 elections local and nationwide. Following will be a social gathering to thank members for their work this year.

Lucy Painter, Secretary