ROCKDALE DEMOCRATS georgia

ROCKDALE JOURNAL

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Rockdale Strong! Our Voice. Our Vote.



ROCKDALE DEMOCRATS

COUNTY COMMITTEE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GEORGIA

Rockdale Strong! Our Voice. Our Vote.

Our Mission:

To serve the local community and the public by promoting equal social and economic opportunities for all people through the election of candidates committed to Democratic Party ideals.

About Us:

The Rockdale County Democratic Committee is a county committee of the Democratic Party of Georgia. Under the leadership of the Executive Board, we have a total of 16 precincts which are organized with a Cluster Coordinator (serving county-wide) and three Cluster Teams, each led by a Cluster Chair, Co-Chair and Member At-Large (MAL). Within each cluster, there are Precinct Captains representing their respective precincts.

The Cluster Coordinator and Cluster Chair (Post Holders) are elected in a gubernatorial year and the Cluster Co-Chair and Member At-Large (Post Holders) are elected in a presidential year. Anyone meeting the requirements in the Rockdale County Democratic Committee Bylaws may apply to serve as a Cluster Coordinator, Cluster Team member or Precinct Captain.

Our Activities:

- We engage in Get-Out-The-Vote activities year in and year out, especially during election years;
- We find opportunities to increase Democratic performance and improve Democratic participation;
- We work to support our democratic elected officials during difficult legislative battles; and
- We strive to become the machine Democrats need us to be.

Above all, We stand for social and economic justice.

It's time for you to stand with us in this important work. To make a real difference, we need Democrats from all walks of life throughout our county.

Join Us:

www.rockdaledems.org Follow Us: @rockdaledems



ROCKDALE DEMOCRATS

COUNTY COMMITTEE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GEORGIA

Rockdale Strong! Our Voice. Our Vote.

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Rockdale County Democrats' "Rockdale Journal."

We are so pleased you are choosing to read about all the things the Rockdale County Democratic Committee (RCDC) hopes to accomplish in the next year, along with perspectives offered from our legislative representatives and local elected and appointed leaders.

As Democrats, it is important at this critical juncture in our democracy that our voices are heard, and we exercise the power of our right to vote. We are truly "stronger together" when we act in concert to ensure our family-based priorities and economic values are represented in both local and state electoral politics.

We thank Congressman Hank Johnson, State Senator Tonya Anderson, our state House Legislative Delegation and local leaders for all their hard work on behalf of Rockdale's citizenry.

As we look to 2022, it is vital that we elect Democrats to represent us at all levels of our government, especially for the Governorship and to maintain Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock's Senate seat. It will be a great challenge given the voting restrictions enacted in Georgia's



SB 202 and if, for any reason, Congress fails to enact the Freedom To Vote Act (FTVA), and/or the John Lewis Voting Rights Act (JLVRA). But we have overcome obstacles to the ballot box before; with strength in numbers, we can do so again.

It will be with the support of our local businesses and community groups featured in this edition that we will work to highlight the current issues impacting our voters and community. It is our mission to "serve the local community and the public by promoting equal social and economic opportunities for all people through the election of candidates committed to Democratic Party ideals."

Our focus on electing Democrats goes from the White House to Congress; from the State Legislature to the County Commission; from City Hall to our School Board. This way we have governance that helps ensure progress we want for our community. We do this through grassroots organizing efforts, advocating, and providing education on issues vital to our mission.

We therefore invite you to explore us in the "Rockdale Journal"; on our website (rockdaledems.org); as a subscriber to our bi-monthly newsletter (Rockdale Dems Digest); and on our Rockdale Democrats Georgia feed on Facebook and Twitter.

Please join us in our mission as we work alongside the Democratic Party of Georgia to help lead the state of Georgia into truly becoming a New South, focused on the intersections of our multi-cultural communities to create a better Georgia for our children and grandchildren in which to live, play and progress.

In Blue Solidarity,

Trasty

Roslyn Ridgeway, Chair

ROCKDALE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

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Ruth Wilson, Cluster Coordinator

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	Conyers	Honey Creek	Old Towne	Stanton
	Andrea Snow	Charlene Ellis	Margaret Wright	Pastor Dale Hicks
Ja	Fieldstone	Lorraine	Rockdale	The Lakes
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Karen James & Mallory Minor	Zuri Williams & John Penn				
Civic Engagement & Voter Protection	Young Adult				
Lorenzo Taylor	Puru Gaur				

Thank You!

RCDC members for your tireless efforts in keeping us active in our community.



HankJohnson Congressman for Georgia's 4th District



ello, this is Congressman Hank Johnson, proudly serving Georgia's Fourth Congressional District – particularly Rockdale County – since 2007.

I offer words of congratulations to the Rockdale County Democratic Committee, as you all have come together to produce the inaugural edition of The Rockdale Journal.

I know that you will continue to work to keep Georgia Blue. I hope this publication becomes a beacon to the community that engages the people, urges them to get out and vote and propels us forward during the critical election season in 2022 and beyond.

As you move forward with this new project, I know that you will be on the frontlines with me in the fight for social and economic justice and making a real and permanent difference no matter what difficulties might be ahead.

We will face our triumphs and struggles together.

Yours, Congressman Hank Johnson (GA-04)

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October 14, 2021

Dear Rock the Democrats,

Thank you for working in our communities to inspire Democrats to stand up and speak out about issues we all care about. 2020 showed the world what can happen when we organize, mobilize, and exercise our voting power. We cannot lose momentum or hope during this important juncture in American history.

We need to ROCK THE DEMOCRATS.

Please know the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus is prepared to fight for progressive public policy to address the inequities many in our state suffer from. Whether it's ensuring all children have access to a quality education, protecting our essential workers, improving the criminal justice system, or ending food deserts, we stand ready to act, side by side, with our partners.

Again, thank you for being leaders in our communities.

Sincerely,

Senator Tonya Anderson Chair, Georgia Legislative Black Caucus

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Greetings Rockdale Democrats,

Congratulations and encouragement as you continue to lead the state of Georgia in electing **True Blue Democrats**. Rockdale Democrats, you have always fought to do the right thing in pushing American values.

Since the Special Election November 2015 when you gave me the privilege of representing you, your concerns became my priorities.

I am so proud to be a part of the Rockdale Delegation and serve as the Vice Chair. Thank you for your confidence.

As we prepare for the 2022 session and election year, Rockdale Democrats continue to be pivotal in electing the right people, from the Governor's Mansion to City Hall. You make the difference. We are in this together fighting for the soul of our democracy and I assure you that I will continue to advocate with you. My top priorities for the upcoming session are below:

- Education
 - Fully Funding Public Education
 - o Kindergarten Readiness
 - Ensuring that our students are reading on level by 3rd grade
 - School Safety, Nutrition, and Access to Technology
- Economic Development
 - Increasing Georgia's Minimum Wage to a Living Wage
 - Affordable Post-Secondary Education including:
 - Expanding Hope Grants for Technical Colleges
 - Expanding Apprenticeship Options
 - Increased Opportunities in Career Readiness in our High Schools
 - Expanding Entrepreneurial Opportunities to Disadvantaged Communities
 - o Expanding Access to Capital and Funding for Innovative Ideas
 - Wealth Development Education in K-12 (Financial Education)
- Healthy Communities

0

- Expanding Medicaid
- o Access to Quality and Affordable Healthcare
- o Expanding Awareness of Clinical Trials
- Access to Quality, Fresh, and Affordable Food
- o Increase Funding Behavioral Health

We know that the need is great. I look forward to hearing from you to ensure that your priorities are addressed as well. I have affectionately been called the Chief Community Officer. Why? Because if you have an issue that needs to be addressed, when you bring it to me, the job gets done.

Honored to serve,

Representative Doreen Carter Georgia House of Representatives



It's my pleasure to congratulate Rockdale Democrats on the publication of The Rockdale Journal.

Your work is remarkable, and the contribution of different voices will be heard across the county.

Again, congratulations on behalf of the entire team #RunningwithRegina.

We are happy to serve Rockdale Democrats.

-Representative Regina Lewis-Ward



CONGRATULATIONS

ROCKDALE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

on your 1st inaugural publication and distribution of

The Rockdale Journal

Continued success as this, and all future publications, serves as a dynamic communication platform designed to further solidify and support the Rockdale County Democratic Committee's focus upon community education on critical issues that impact all Rockdale County citizens! Thank you for your continued efforts to promote equal, social and economic opportunities for all people within Rockdale County.

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Chairman Oz Nesbitt, Sr. Rockdale County Board of Commissioners



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Rockdale County Democratic Committee





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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

• Voted for lowest property taxes since 2010



- Spearheading outreach to include more disadvantaged businesses receiving county contracts
- Advocate for balanced growth of housing stock, including single family, multi-family, townhomes, cottage homes, accessory dwelling units

MENTAL HEALTH

- Raising Awareness, reducing stigma and providing education on Mental Health through Town Hall Meetings and Community Forums
- Developed a 50+ member Steering Committee for the Rockdale County Stepping Up Initiative to reduce the number of people in jail with co-occurring disorders
- Partnered with the Rockdale County Sheriff's Office to improve jail conditions for those with mental health and substance use concerns

ARTS & CULTURE

- Advocate for increased visibility and funding for the arts
- Supported introduction of the annual Summer Concert Series
- Approved development of Costley Mill Park to provide a venue for family and community gatherings as well as a source of revenue
- Served on the Atlanta Regional Commission committee tasked with creating a regional Arts, Culture, & Creative Placemaking Strategic Plan

YOUR CALM VOICE OF REASON

- Research and studies the issues presented to the board in order to speak from facts and information
- Recognized for NAMI Georgia Legislative A-Team Award along with Judge Nancy Bills, Judge Robert Mumford
- Vice-Chair of ACCG Mental Health Commission
- Vice-Chair of GACSB Policy Committee
- Member of Atlanta Regional Commission Community Resource Committee
- Member of NACo Health Steering Committee

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WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME A Political Commentary

To fully understand Georgia's Election Integrity Act of 2021, also known as SB202, and its relationship to The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019-2020, also known as HR 4, requires a phenomenon only witnessed by sci-fi loving movie goers—<u>time travel</u>. In 2013, the SCOTUS struck down a key provision of The Voting Rights Act (Shelby County v. Holder, 2013) that required states and local municipalities to request preclearance from the DOJ before making changes to voting laws. The removal of this requirement has led to the recent rise in sweeping voter suppression laws throughout the country.

The reason for the changes to Sections 5 and 4(b) of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965, according to Chief Justice John Roberts, is "...the U.S. has made great progress thanks to the Act...Regardless, of how to look at the record no one can fairly say that it shows anything approaching the 'pervasive,' 'flagrant,' 'widespread,' and 'rampant' discrimination that faced Congress in 1965, and that clearly distinguished the covered jurisdictions from the rest of the nation."

Clearly, the increase in voter suppression laws in the southern and midwestern territories renders the majority opinion of Justice Roberts' and other justices moot. While significant progress has been made as a result of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the removal of vital components threatens its success in a calculated effort to travel back in time to a '*lesser*' America that is a remnant of the past.

Furthermore, the conservative effort, spearheaded by the 2013 SCOTUS decision, to disenfranchise ALL voters is evident in Georgia's SB202. Undoubtedly, SB202 is an "attack on the fundamental fairness of state's elections". Moreover, many of the new provisions contained in the controversial bill are very concerning. For instance, it gives the GOP controlled state legislature power to take over the State Board of Elections, disempowers the Secretary of State [who traditionally oversees all aspects of state elections], and gives unlimited authority to the state board to usurp the authority of local county boards. Therefore, allowing the Republican party to throw out ballots in largely Democratic strongholds in the city of Atlanta and surrounding municipalities. Thus, guaranteeing that if the GOP loses, they still win. This enacts a dangerous precedent and threatens democracy at the grass-roots level in the once conservative stronghold of Georgia. (VOX, April 6, 2021, 1:30pm)

Other potentially unconstitutional parts of the bill include:

- extend voter ID requirements to vote absentee
- drastically decrease ballot drop boxes
- limit crowds in large precincts
- prosecute efforts to provide water and food to waiting voters
- significantly shorten the time between Election Day and run-off elections from nine-weeks to four.

In my opinion, SB202 not only disenfranchises nonwhite voters, it negatively impacts all Georgians' right to cast a ballot. Therefore, it threatens the democratic ideal of free and fair elections in the U.S. Not to mention, that the entire premise of SB202 is predicated upon a lie, the false belief that the 2020 presidential election was stolen. Albeit, there is no evidence to support this claim and all efforts to do so have been debunked by the courts nationwide.

As a result of SB202 and similar legislation, The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 was drafted and passed by on Congress August 24, 2021. However, the bill faces an uphill battle in the Senate with Republicans refusing to back the bill which they see as a clear and present danger to their efforts (by any means necessary) to retake the Congress, Senate and Presidency.

WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME A Political Commentary [cont.]

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act seeks to remedy the damage done by the SCOTUS removal of sections 5 and 4b as previously discussed. In fact, it seeks to restore those very provisions that were struck down in the Shelby County decision. The *Lewis* bill specifically states,

"Following the Shelby County decision seven years ago, several states passed sweeping voter suppression laws that disproportionately prevent minorities, the elderly, and the youth from voting."

To this end, the following provisions of the Lewis Act challenge Chief Justice Roberts assertions that basically suggest America has made significant progress since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and creates a targeted process for review of voting changes nationwide:

- Significantly, the 25-year period "rolls," or continuously moves, to keep up with "current conditions," so that only states that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting are covered.
- States that have repeated and persistent violations will be covered for a period of 10 years, but if they establish a clean record moving forward, they can come out of coverage. (<u>leahy.senate.gov</u>)

To this end, the destinies of both SB202 and The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act are inextricably linked. One bill seeks to travel back in time to resurrect a tumultuous period in American history while the other seeks to move forward, in the present and rectify it. Ultimately, the American people will decide. Undoubtedly, the will and action of the voters will determine which bill emerges victorious. I believe the changing electorate, which is more diverse that ever, will decide the fate of both bills. For me, the answer is obvious. The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act is the better of the two because of its inclusionary nature. On the other hand, SB202—an exclusionary, divisive measure, is a bad bill that is founded upon shaky ground and *"sinking sand"*—again, a lie. Unfortunately, many people believe it. The danger in ascribing to such an enormous falsehood is this: It creates a dangerous distrust of government. We must be careful in these uncertain political times to listen carefully and discern the truth. In conclusion, I offer the following as a stark warning and gentle reminder:

3 "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts [self-interests] shall they heap themselves teachers, having itching ears [seeking those who tell them only what they want to hear]."

4 "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." —2 Timothy 4:3-4

17 "A truthful witness gives honest testimony (tells the truth), but a false witness tells lies."

18 "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise bring healing." —Proverbs 12:17-18

P.S. The recent tide of disastrous political maneuvers, such as SB202, proves one thing; we were never meant to travel back in time.

D. M. Sanders, D. Ed. Min.1st Vice Chair, Rockdale Board of Elections



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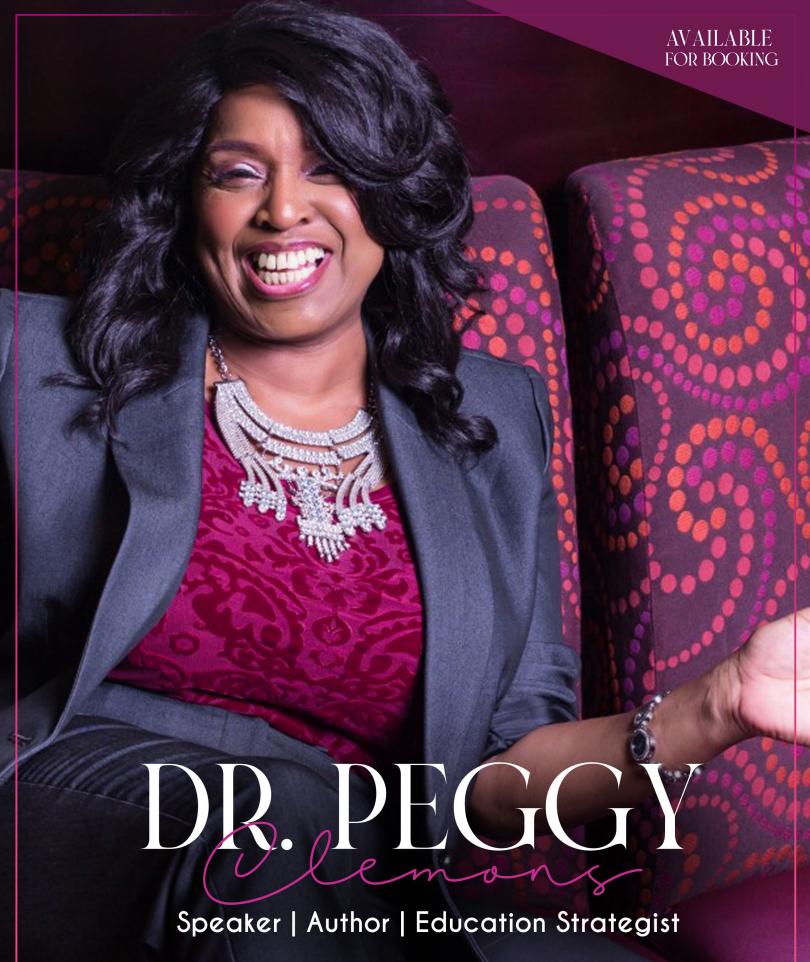


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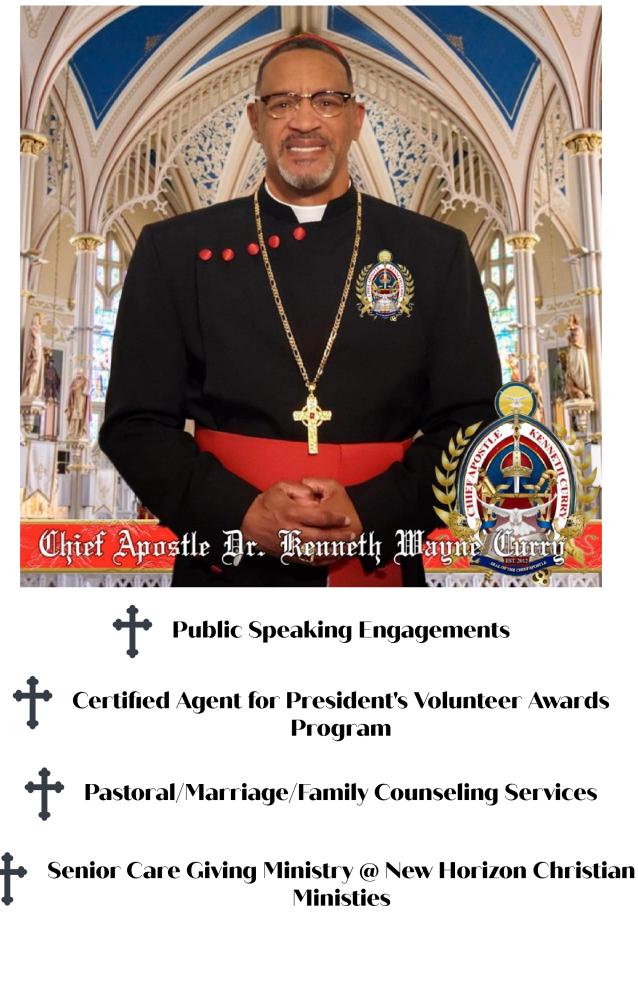
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"Community

cannot for long feed on itself; it can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond, their unknown and undiscovered brothers." - Howard Thurman

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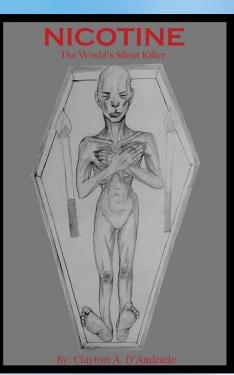
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Rockdale County Democratic Committee



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