



# The Banner

An Online Monthly e-Newsletter for the Democratic Party

By Authority: FCDCC, McCamie Patterson, Treasurer

February 2026

## CHAIR'S CORNER



Chairwoman Mari Lee

Happy New Year! Welcome to our first 2026 Banner. We have plenty to share, so this issue is full of updates.

Last month was difficult. Like many of you, I was (and still am) horrified by the detainment of a five-year-old preschooler in Minneapolis and the murders of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis. We should also remember Keith Porter in Maryland, and the other unjust detainments and deaths linked to ICE's reign of terror since the Trump Administration's inauguration in January 2025. ICE's actions are cruel and far exceed their claims of targeting the "worst of the worst." This must stop.

Many people continue to feel the impact of service cuts, higher costs, and rising electricity bills. Since healthcare subsidies ended in 2025, many have lost insurance. Trump and the federal government continue to ignore the law and the Constitution. The cruelty and corruption, along with his supporters' silence, are shocking.

Still, it is uplifting to see individuals, whether one, a few, or thousands, join together peacefully in hope and love, both recently and throughout the past year, in our country, in the state of Maryland broadly, and Frederick County locally. We must remind ourselves that peaceful protests and nonviolent disruptive action offer us the best chance of stopping this attempted authoritarian takeover. Our next gathering will be on March 28 at the local [No Kings III](#) event. More details will be shared soon.

Now for local news: our Central Committee members were busy throughout December and January. In December, we attended campaign launches and other Democratic events. On January 10, we held our annual planning meeting to update our bylaws and strategic plan, and to discuss campaign strategy, fundraising, and upcoming events. On the 17th, we supported the Dr. Martin Luther King Beloved Community Potluck. On the 20th, we organized a local #FreeAmericaWalkout in solidarity with the national Women's March event. At the Walkout, we spoke out against fascism and for an America that includes and belongs to everyone. On the 24th, we hosted a Democratic campaign school, where participants learned from experts in messaging, fundraising, field operations, and social media. They also received a pre-election analysis and campaign basics. The Central Committee attended Legislative District 3 Night in Annapolis and several campaign launches and events with Democratic officials. We submitted [written testimony](#) to the Maryland General Assembly, urging members to vote to end Maryland's

participation in the Federal 287(g) Program. The bill has not passed yet but we are hopeful that it will as soon as this coming week.

Now in February, we are hosting a candidate meet-and-greet on Saturday, February 14, at 10:30 AM in County Council District 1. You can meet Democratic candidates for County Council District 1, Legislative Districts, Board of Education, and more. We will announce the location soon and plan to hold monthly meet-and-greets in other districts in March, April, and May.

Please mark your calendar for our annual Democratic Party Dinner on Monday, April 27, at Dutch's Daughter on Himes Avenue in Frederick. Social time starts at 6 PM.

If you haven't heard, County Executive Jessica Fitzwater nominated Chad King Wilson, Sr., to fill the vacancy on the Frederick County Board of Education after Nancy Allen's resignation. The County Council then affirmed his appointment. Chad is a great addition to the Board and will serve FCPS, students, and support staff well.

In other news, the Central Committee recently accepted the resignation of Associate Member Louisa Conklin. We are now looking to fill that seat. Associate Members are volunteers who support our efforts. They may serve on any standing committee and have voting rights on issues related to Central Committee administration and activities. However, they are not permitted to vote on matters concerning filling vacancies. You can learn more about their role in Article III, Section 2 of our Bylaws [here](#). If you are

interested in becoming an Associate Member, please submit a letter of interest including your name, address, email, phone number, and a résumé. Applications should be emailed to [info@frederickdemocrats.org](mailto:info@frederickdemocrats.org) no later than Saturday, February 14, 2025. Applicants must also be available for a brief in-person interview on Tuesday, February 17, during the latter part of our public monthly Central Committee meeting. Following a closed discussion, members will then conduct a live, open roll-call vote. The Committee Chair will email each applicant soon after the deadline with the interview time and other details.

Our local HQ is a collection site for a canned and dry soup mixes drive this month. Local group Dems Help will distribute these items to community organizations. You can drop off donations during our hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 to 7 PM, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 AM to 2 PM. We cannot accept monetary donations, and neither Dems Help nor the Central Committee will provide a tax-deductible receipt.

It's not too early to consider being an election judge, also known as a poll worker, for the 2026 elections (primary and general). You can find details about how to apply, compensation, and more on the Frederick County Board of Elections [website](#). Central committee members cannot be poll workers, so we appreciate any of you who sign up to run our democracy and make the election fair, secure, and accurate.



*Tom Slater, Frederick County Democratic Party Historian*

***The Rest of the Story: "Ignorance" and Professor/Mayor Bob Preston's Passing***

As I have been promising for some time, I am about to embark on a series of columns about the Frederick and Maryland Democratic parties over the years. In 1971, I was awarded a master's degree in history from The George Washington University. As part of the degree requirements, I was required to write a thesis. My thesis was entitled "Frederick County Politics 1950-1970: A Study in Rural Conservatism." In preparation for writing my thesis, I interviewed many of those who ran or held offices in Frederick County during that time period, and I read twenty years of the Frederick News-Post. In my thesis, I emphasized the importance of the re-emergence of the Frederick County Young Democrats led by Galen Clagett, Ron Young, Beverly Byron, Paul Phillips, Sherman Mason, me, and others in the late 1960s. Some years later, I was asked to give a presentation to the Frederick County Historical Society (Now Heritage Frederick) about my thesis. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation to use at the community room at the C. Burr Artz Library. Among those in attendance was Dorothy "Dotty" Handley Ewing, a friend of mine, a local school educator, and an active Democrat. After my presentation, Dotty approached me and I asked for her reaction to my presentation. She said something to the effect of "it's not exactly how I remembered it." I did not give her comment much thought.

A few years ago, the Democratic State Central Committee acquired about four boxes of Democratic materials that Florence Schell had acquired over the years. Flo was very active in the Women's Democratic League (WDL) and the local Democratic Party. In preparation for the WDL's celebration of their 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Flo had gathered newspaper clippings and other items from some of the older members of the WDL. As the Democratic Party Historian, I reviewed all of the materials that were in Flo's boxes and discovered lots more information about the activities of the WDL and the Young Democrats of Frederick County in the 1950s and early 1960s, including many newspaper clippings and program books. Dotty Handley (later she became Dotty Ewing) figured prominently in that information. I had not included anything about the earlier activities of the Young Democrats or the WDL in my thesis. I was ignorant about the activities of the Young Democrats and WDL during that period of time. Not knowing about the history of a subject or period of time results in ignorance i.e. lack of knowledge or information.

On 4/25/90, the Frederick News-Post reported on the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner (the precursor to our Democratic Gala) which was held at the Lewistown Fire Hall. The guest speaker, Governor William Donald Schaefer, commented on the resurgence of the Frederick County Young Democrats. The writer from the News-Post noted that the "Frederick County Young Democrats have been nonexistent for about 40 years." This is obviously not accurate, as you will discover, in my future columns about the history of the Maryland and Frederick County Democratic Party. The News-Post reporter was ignorant about the history of the Young Democrats in Frederick County.

(Continued on the next page)

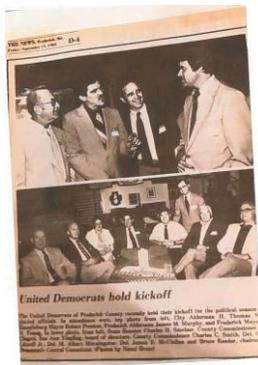
At the Democratic Convention in Chicago in August 2024, I was having a late-night adult beverage with the chair of the Maryland Democratic Party, Ken Ulman. I was talking to him about the 1974 mid-term conference in Kansas City. Ken stopped me mid-sentence and said, "why are you talking about 1974?" and I said, "because 1974 was the year that I was first elected to the Frederick County Democratic State Central, and I was an alternate delegate to the mid-term conference." He said to me, "I was born in 1974!" It occurred to me that clearly many current leaders of our local and state party are also ignorant of much of the history of the party.

My intent, after reviewing all of the information I have collected over the last fifty years, numerous trips to the Maryland Hall of Records, lots of Googling, and interviews with those who have been intimately involved with local and state Democratic Party activities, is to provide as much information as I can as to the activities of the local and state Democratic Party, at least over the last sixty-five years, perhaps to the point of ad nauseam. This may take a year or more worth of columns, but at least when I am finished, much more of the history of our local and state party will have been recorded for history, and there will be less ignorance. Regardless, despite any research that I have done or will do, there will still remain much that we all will remain ignorant about.

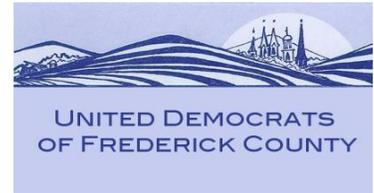
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On December 20, 2025, I attended a memorial Mass for Robert M. Preston. Other than his wife, who I had taught with at Catoctin High School in the late 1960s, I recognized no one there. Bob was 84. He was a long-time history professor at Mount St. Mary's University (College when he first arrived there in 1968). He earned a Ph.D. in American History from Catholic University. He retired from the Mount in 2001 and served as vice president at Trinity University in

Washington, D.C. from 2001 to 2005. More relevant to this column's readers, Bob was the Mayor of Emmitsburg from 1982 to 1992. Another professor and Democrat from the Mount, Emile Nakhleh, served on the Emmitsburg Town Council when Bob was Mayor. Emile was the guest speaker at a United Democrats meeting on February 13, 1984. On October 25, 1995, Bob Preston was the guest speaker at the inaugural meeting of the "Democrats and Friends" in Thurmont at the Mountain Gate restaurant, which evolved into what is known today as the "North County Democrats". About thirty people were in attendance, and Bob gave a historical perspective on the growth of liberalism after the prominence of Social Darwinism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and predicted that liberalism will be vigorously debated in the next century. Bob was a very committed Democrat and good public servant. I wish we had more Democrats serving in municipalities such as Emmitsburg.



The UDFC kickoff for the 1984 campaign with Emmitsburg Mayor Robert Preston in the upper picture (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) with Frederick Alderman H. Thomas Summers, Frederick Alderman Jim Murphy, and Frederick Mayor Ron Young.



**UNITED DEMOCRATS OF FREDERICK COUNTY**

Dear United Democrats and Friends!

UDFC invites you to attend our February 2nd meeting downtown at the C. Burr Artz Library from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Our guest speaker will be Jason Ciemielewski, who has filed as a Democratic candidate for sheriff in 2026. We also welcome Karl Bickel who is considering running for Sheriff, but has not filed yet. Karl will introduce himself, but has asked not to participate in the Q & A, since he has not formally declared yet. This is an opportunity for us to get acquainted with a candidate and to re-acquaint with a possible candidate! Please join us!

Our January meeting was also held at the library and we had an excellent turnout to meet 7 out of the 8 Democratic candidates who have filed for the school board race thus far. Photos attached with the article!

This is going to be a very busy election season with many events and activities to attend and get involved in. Please make sure you are signed up with Mari Lee and the Frederick County Democrats to get the monthly "Banner" newsletter, and the weekly "Blue Wave" sent out by Mari Lee.

Hoping to see you on Monday February 2nd at 7:00!

- Maureen Grayzeck  
President, UDFC

The 2026 School Board Candidates at the January meeting: Chloe Celeste, Casey Day, Jess Douglas, Nathan Foltz, Rae Gallagher, Dean Rose, Chad King Wilson, Sr.





**WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE OF FREDERICK COUNTY**

The WDL joined the Frederick community in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Trinity United Methodist Church. We welcome you to join us next year as one of WDL's community service event.

The **WDL's February 16th meeting** will discuss how you can *Follow the Campaign Money* with Christopher Knapp starting at 6:30pm (discussion at 7:00pm) via Google Meets. Please use the following link to join the meeting: <https://meet.google.com/kma-sbfm-ocf?hs=224>



**SOUTH FREDERICK COUNTY DEMOCRATS**

The monthly meeting of the South Frederick County Democratic Club (South County Dems) is set for February 21, 9:30 – 11 am at Bar-T Mountainside at 2914 Roderick Road, Frederick. Guest speakers will be the District 4 Democratic candidates running for State Assembly office: Lara Westdorp, candidate for State Senate, and Jerry Donald, Alleria Stanley, and Andrew Duck, candidates for the House of Delegates. South County Dems welcomes the opportunity to hear directly from the candidates who seek to represent us in Annapolis.

At Bar-T Mountainside, we meet in the larger white building located past the small white building (camp office) on your right. Our building is across from the next, and larger parking lot, and has a side entrance under the porch overhang on the right side of the building.

While not necessary, if you could RSVP to [danmelgalloway@verizon.net](mailto:danmelgalloway@verizon.net) with your plans to attend it would be helpful to know how many to set up for and that we will have a good turnout for our guest speakers.

If someone wants to volunteer to bring light refreshments, please let us know and thank you.

Please feel free to invite your like-minded friends to join us. If you have questions, please contact South County Dems President, Melanie Galloway, at [danmelgalloway@verizon.net](mailto:danmelgalloway@verizon.net) or the Vice President, Annette Breiling, at [Annette.breiling@gmail.com](mailto:Annette.breiling@gmail.com).

We look forward to you joining us.

As I said, the work doesn't end—it just changes. I should clarify that not all delegates have this workload. Many have other jobs to supplement the \$56,000 legislator salary and simply don't have the time over the interim. And members of the minority party is not asked to do much between sessions. But for those of us who can, we are called upon to serve not only in the 90-day session, but over the remaining 275 days as well.



**LARA WESTDORP  
Candidate, Senate Senator -  
Legislative District 4**

Meet the candidates for Legislative District 4:

- **February 21st from 9:30 – 11 am** with South Frederick County Democratic Club (South County Dems) at Bar-T Mountainside at 2914 Roderick Road, Frederick.
- **March 14th from 10am to 11 am** with North County Democrats Club at the Thurmont Library.

Senate candidate: Lara Westdorp  
[Westdorp4Senate.com](http://Westdorp4Senate.com)

Delegate candidates:  
Jerry Donald  
[Donald4Delegate.com](http://Donald4Delegate.com)

Andrew Duck  
[Duck4Delegate.org](http://Duck4Delegate.org)

Alleria Stanley  
[Alleria4StateDelegate.org](http://Alleria4StateDelegate.org)



**DEMS HELP**

**Soup's On**

Local group Dems Help will be focusing on the ultimate winter comfort food...soup...during the month of February as we mark a year since the launch of this grassroots initiative to support Frederick County's food banks and our neighbors in need.

Please deliver canned and dry soup mixes to Dem headquarters, Dublin Roasters drop box or the next meeting of Rise Up Frederick.





Join **CLUBBLUE!** Our monthly sustainers are activists and everyday people who contribute a monthly monetary donation to help the Party sustain its competitiveness in current and future local and statewide elections. Click [here](#) for more details. Donate as little as \$5 a month and let the Frederick County Democrats do all the work!



Don't forget to check the calendar on our website to keep up with Democratic meetings, candidate events, and more!

<http://www.frederickdemocrats.org/events/calendar>

## Volunteers Needed!



We are looking for volunteers, to help us staff our Democrat booth at various events, canvassing, and our Get Out the Vote efforts. Please click on the link below for more information and to sign up.



### Editor's Corner

**Gmail** users – Our mail server may cause *The Banner* to be delivered to your email “Promotions” tab instead of your inbox. If you do not receive your monthly edition, please check for it in that tab. If it isn't there, please send me an email and I'll check your subscription. You may also view *The Banner* on our website by clicking [here](#).

#### **Banner Newsletter Ideas?**

Send me an email with your ideas, materials, or feedback for consideration.

Hope you enjoyed reading!

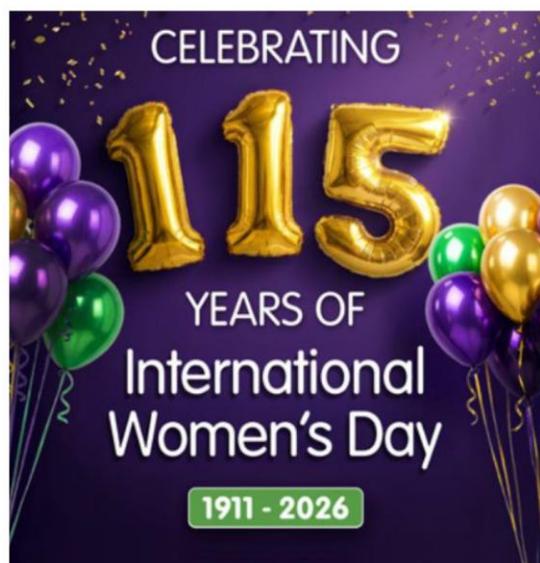
*Shelly Beard-Francois,*

[shelly@frederickdemocrats.org](mailto:shelly@frederickdemocrats.org)

or

Central Committee -

[info@frederickdemocrats.org](mailto:info@frederickdemocrats.org)



Join us in celebrating  
**International Women's Day**  
and  
**Lara Westdorp**  
campaign for MD State Senate

**Sunday March 8, 2026**  
1:00pm to 4:00pm

Celebration Cellars Winery  
9831 Fox Rd  
Frederick, MD 21702

**Signup & Sponsorships at**  
<https://goodchange.app/donate/celeb-0z>  
Rights.Justice.Action for ALL Women & Girls

**COMMUNITY CANVASS**  
WITH  
**CASEY & CHAD**  
Talking with voters is how we win!  
With so many households to reach,  
**we need everyone's help**  
to make it happen!  
**\*\* No prior experience needed! \*\***

When: Saturday, February 21, 9:30 am  
Where: Giant Food parking lot  
5316 New Design Rd.  
Bring: Yourself & a Friend or 3  
We'll Have: donuts, hand warmers, water, lists, literature, and fun!



Sign up at [aGoodDayForFrederick.com](https://tinypurl.com/canvass221)

Plan to join us for an hour or two on 2/21 to help us get out the word to voters about this important election! We will be knocking on doors in the Ballenger Creek neighborhood in partners!! Sign up here to join us and bring a friend or 3! No experience needed! <https://tinypurl.com/canvass221>.

**SIGN UP!**

Lace up your walking shoes and go  
**DOOR KNOCKING WITH CASEY**

We will work together to visit neighbors and talk about the BoE race and what this campaign brings to the position!

[tinypurl.com/knockwithcasey](https://tinypurl.com/knockwithcasey)



Lace up your walking shoes and join Casey for a few hours to talk with some voters. We will work together to visit neighbors and let them know all about the Board of Ed race, and specifically what our campaign can bring to the position. Let's work together to knock out some of the door knocking! Visit <https://tinypurl.com/knockwithcasey> to sign up.



When the snow melts, your yard is going to need something new. Visit <https://tinypurl.com/signs4casey> to get a special yard sign delivered right to you. We have regular-sized yard signs and yard signs that are 4' x 4' for folks with busy streets and good locations. You can add all the information in the form! The sign is the perfect accessory for any lawn or stoop! Thanks!

**COMMUNITY VOICES**  
With Casey Day & Chad King Wilson Jr.

Join us for a virtual listening session for

**Families & Guardians of Students with Disabilities**

February 19 7-8:30 pm

Register for free today!  
[tinypurl.com/cv21926](https://tinypurl.com/cv21926)



Authority: Friends of Casey Day, Lindsey Berk, Treasurer & Committee to Elect Chad Wilson for Board of Education, Lee Benninghoff, Treasurer

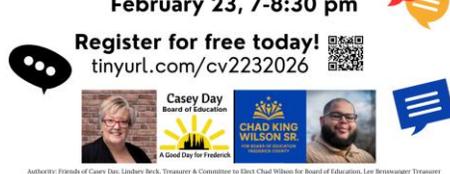
**COMMUNITY VOICES**  
With Casey Day & Chad King Wilson Jr.

Join us for a virtual listening session for

**Special Ed Teachers, Support Staff, & Service Providers**

February 23, 7-8:30 pm

Register for free today!  
[tinypurl.com/cv2232026](https://tinypurl.com/cv2232026)



Authority: Friends of Casey Day, Lindsey Berk, Treasurer & Committee to Elect Chad Wilson for Board of Education, Lee Benninghoff, Treasurer

We will be hosting two community listening sessions in February: One is for families with students with disabilities to talk about their experiences and ideas for our schools and one is for special education teachers and support staff to share their experiences and ideas. Please share this widely with friends, families, and neighbors. Folks need to register and then the virtual link will be shared with them the day of the event. The specific registration link for each event is on the image. Stay tuned for more listening sessions in this series in March.

February 2026 At-a-Glance



**United Dems of Frederick Co. (UDFC) Monthly Meeting**

**Monday, February 2 at 7:00 p.m.**

Café 611, 611 North Frederick Street, Frederick

**Young Democrats of Frederick County (YDFC) Monthly Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 10 at 6:00 p.m.**

C. Burr Artz Library, 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick

**North Frederick Co. Dems (NFCD) Monthly Meet-Up**

**Saturday, February 14 at 10:00 a.m.**

Thurmont Regional Library, 76 E. Moser Road, Thurmont  
(Please bring a non-perishable item for the area food bank.)

**Women’s Democratic League of Frederick County  
Monthly Meeting**

**Monday, February 16 at 7:00 p.m.**

Democratic HQ, 8 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Frederick

**Frederick County Democratic Central Committee (FCDCC)  
Monthly Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m.**

Democratic HQ, 8 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Frederick

**South Frederick Co. Dems (SFCD) Monthly Meet-Up**

**Saturday, February 21 at 9:30 a.m.**

Bar-T Mountainside, 2914 Roderick Road, Frederick.  
Meet in Upper Barn



and

**Frederick County Democrats**

**Like us on Facebook**



**Follow us on Twitter**



**Visit our website**



**Follow us on Instagram**



Click on the icons for a direct connection.

**Check us out on YouTube too!**



The Frederick County Democratic Central Committee does not endorse Democratic candidates in any races that are contested in the primary election. We encourage you to get to know them and help the campaign of your choice in any way you see fit.



**DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR THE 2026 COUNTY/STATE PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

Frederick County voters will cast their votes in 2026 for Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, Congressional District 6, Maryland General Assembly, Frederick County Executive, Board of Education, and more.

Candidate filing deadline: Tuesday, February 24

**CURRENT FILED DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES**

**GOVERNOR/LT. GOVERNOR**

Ralph Jaffe, Donald Palmore

**MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Anthony Brown

**REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS – DISTRICT 6**

April McClain Delaney  
George Gluck  
Daniel Krakower  
Ethan Wechtaluk

**STATE SENATOR - LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 3**

Karen Lewis Young

**STATE SENATOR - LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 4**

Lara Westdorp

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES – DISTRICT 3**

Kris Fair  
Ken Kerr  
Karen Simpson

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES – DISTRICT 4**

Jerry Donald  
Andrew Duck  
Alleria Stanley

**COUNTY COUNCIL AT LARGE**

Renee Knapp  
Brad Young

**COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT 1**

Jenn Alcorn  
Louisa Conklin

**COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT 2**

Shelly Beaird-Francois  
Jamie Shopland

**COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT 3**

Christian Benford  
Natasha Valencia

**COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT 4**

Kavonte Duckett

**COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT 5**

Johnny Mercer

**JUDGE OF THE ORPHAN’S COURT**

Lois Jarmon

**SHERIFF**

Jason Cabel Ciemielewski

**DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

\*No more than half of the members can be elected from the same gender.  
Deb Reynolds  
Milton Hallin

Click [here](#) to view a current list of all candidates, regardless of affiliation, for all offices on the general election ballot in November 2026, as outlined on the Maryland State Board of Elections' website.

**CURRENT FILED CANDIDATES REGISTERED AS DEMOCRATS FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN 2026**

Chloe Celeste  
Casey Day  
Jessica Douglass  
Nathan Foltz  
Rae Gallenger  
David Migdal  
Dean Rose  
Chad King Wilson, Sr.

## A LOOK BACK AT FREDERICK DEMS IN THE COMMUNITY IN DECEMBER 2025 & JANUARY 2026

1<sup>st</sup> row: Campaign launches – Lara Westdorp for LD4; Chad Wilson, Sr. for BOE; Jamie Shopland for Council D2; Andrew Duck for LD4; Shelly Beaird-Francois for Council D2 | 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Del. Ken Kerr for LD3; Frederick City Inauguration; Maryland Democratic Party State Meeting; Frederick Dems Trustee event; Western MD Dem PAC meeting



3<sup>rd</sup> row: Campaign School; Natasha Valencia for Council D3 Campaign launch; MLK Beloved Community Potluck; Next two photos: Del. Kris Fair Fundraiser  
 4<sup>th</sup> row – 1<sup>st</sup> 2 photos - ICE Out Rally; Next two photos – FreeAmericaWalkout; MLK Community Service



5<sup>th</sup> row: Vigil; Frederick County Young Dems launch; Next 3 photos - Legislative District 3 Night in Annapolis

6<sup>th</sup> row – Legislative District 3 Night in Annapolis; Next 2 photos – City Inauguration; Next photo – Trustees event; Last photo – United Dems January meeting

