

Welcome, Democrats, to Kendall County!

If you've driven around Boerne and Kendall County lately, explosive population growth is hardly a surprise. The population of Boerne has grown 70% since the 2010 Census; Kendall County has also grown significantly. In his State of the City address in 2021, Mayor Handren said he believed the city would hit 30,000 residents by the next Census. Many of these new arrivals are Democrats, and the Kendall County Democratic Party (KCDP) and the local Democratic club, the Boerne Area Democrats (BAD), welcome all these new residents to the area! We are all Americans, and a diversity of viewpoints is essential to making good decisions and having a healthy community. There are more Democrats here than you think—and we're growing!

In the November 2020 general election, a record number of Kendall County Democrats cast their votes for President Biden. KCDP has a solid base of over 150 volun-



teers, and we plan to build on that growth and broaden the footprint of Democrats and the Democratic Party locally.

KCDP and BAD work to find and welcome more local Democrats and to foster a community of like-minded individuals. The groups have a joint office at 216 E. Blanco, Suite 201 in Boerne, where local residents can register to vote, ask questions about upcoming elections, and pick up materials from local Democratic candidates. BAD holds its membership meetings on the second Thursday of every month at noon at the Longhorn Cafe. The meetings feature a speaker of local interest and a means to meet and network with other Democrats.

Both groups are active participants in the community. KCDP has an Adopt-a-Highway segment on FM3351, where our local volunteers pick up trash on a quarterly basis. We participate in the Kendall County Fair and Comfort Independence Day parades and host a booth at Boerne Market Days two or three times a year. BAD conducts fundraisers for Hill Country Family Services (HCFS) and the Center for Refugee Services. Several of our volunteers serve on local boards of directors of non-profit groups.

Democrats believe that investments in public education, infrastructure (including rural broadband), and science lead to economic growth and provide everyone with an equal opportunity to succeed. President Biden's bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which passed in 2021, includes \$35 billion for Texas projects over five years, according to estimates from the

White House. These funds include \$26.9B for highways; \$537M for bridges; \$100M to improve broadband access; and \$2.9B to improve water infrastructure; among other provisions. The bill also includes funds for a "national investment in weatherization," which will help our beleaguered electrical grid.

We applaud the US Congress, which earlier this month passed the bipartisan Respect for Marriage Act; the President signed it into law this past Tuesday. We also applaud his signing the CHIPS and Science Act this past August. The CHIPS and Science Act will lower the costs of everything from cars to dishwashers, create good-paying manufacturing jobs across the country, including union construction jobs, and ensure the United States manufactures more critical technologies here at home.

KCDP and BAD encourage all local Democrats, both new and those who have been here a while, to get involved:

• Are you registered to vote (and is your address current on your voter registration)? Check now, while there's plenty of time before the next election. Visit the Kendall County Elections website to check.

• Commit to vote in 2023 elections (and beyond). Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors and encourage them to vote.

• Join the Boerne Area Democrats. Dues are only \$40 a year.

• Tell your precinct chair (look it up online) that you want to volunteer, or call our office at 830-331-1243. KCDP needs help in a variety of areas.

KCDP and BAD welcome all our new residents. It's critical that all Democrats vote in rural counties for statewide offices. We cannot turn Texas blue without your votes. For more information on how to get involved, visit www.kcdems.us.

Laura Bray is the Chair of the Kendall County Democratic Party.