



# Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida

Newsletter

January - March 2018

## DVCF 2018 Retreat

By Reuben Sparks

The Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF) 2018 Retreat proved to be a great success. The retreat held at the beautiful Mission Inn Resort in Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida provided a stunning backdrop for attendees. Mark Lipton a candidate for Florida State House, District 79, which includes some areas of North Fort Myers, spoke at the breakfast. Mark spoke about The Future of Healthcare in America. Mark spoke about his experience as a lawyer, working with employers and employees, making dollars go farther and saving benefit plans millions of dollars. He said his experience could be used to help Florida manage its benefits costs. Mark also worked as an Adjunct Professor at Florida State University teaching The Legal Environment of Real Estate and Business. He gained detailed knowledge of zoning and variance laws and understands the constitutional challenges to eminent domain that can arise.

President Phil Giorno welcomed everyone to the first general session. John Lantigua from the Florida American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) spoke about Veterans for Voting Rights. After lunch several candidates seeking office spoke to the

group. At the end of the afternoon session, Robert Lockette, President of the Lake County DVCF showed and described the Veterans Handbook, his county has developed. The handbook provides a resource that shows veterans how to accumulate information on Survivor Assistance for US Military, Social Security Survivor Benefits, Funeral Honors, Survivor Checklist, Identity Theft and Family Planning Checklist. The comprehensive booklet proved to be a valuable asset.

The attendees were treated to a fabulous steak dinner in the evening. First, Ambassador Nancy Soderburg spoke about "Today's Global Threats to our Troops." The keynote address in the evening was given by Ron Armstead, the Director of the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust. Mr. Armstead has been the Executive Director of the Braintrust since its inception in 1988. One of the preeminent events piloted by the Braintrust is conducting the Veterans Braintrust Forum at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference. This forum is a family affair which brings veterans, their families and advocates together from throughout the country and

gives all the opportunity to discuss issues of concern. The focus of Mr. Armstead's presentation was "If your ship hasn't come in, swim out to meet it." The DVCF presented two awards at the end of the evening. Carlton Cartwright was presented the DVCF Distinguished Service Award for Five Years of Service as the DVCF Media Chair. Reuben Sparks was presented the DVCF Best New Project Award for the DVCF Newsletter.

The 2018 Retreat offered the opportunity for attendees to meet state candidates, plan for the future and relax in the beautiful confines of the Mission Inn Resort.

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## DVCF Leadership

<i>President</i>	Phil Giorno
<i>Vice President</i>	Elena McCullough
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<i>Secretary</i>	Vacant
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Reuben Sparks

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Retreat Photos by Carlton Cartwright



## Upcoming Events

DCCA 2018 Retreat  
April 13-15, 2018  
Orlando, FL

Leadership Blue  
June 29 – July 1, 2018  
Diplomat Resort  
Hollywood, FL

November 6, 2018  
National Mid-Term Election Day



## The DVCF would like to salute the sponsors of the 2018 Retreat.

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Mark Lipton

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