

Minutes of the Progressive Caucus meeting in Chelan 4-27-2013

The meeting was chaired by Coralee Brewer, the Eastern WA Vice-Chair, as Judith Shattuck and other board members were attending the Camp Wellstone workshops given over the weekend. The minutes of February 2, 2013 and April 6, 2013 were approved. The former had corrections for the spelling of Sarajane Siegfried's name and noted that she had submitted a draft of the KCDCC legislative agenda. The proposed meeting agenda was approved.

Treasurers Report

Carolyn Potts submitted the treasurer's report, which was approved. Our cash balance as of as of 4/30/2013 was \$1,450.94.

Summary of Interim Meeting in Carnation on 4/6/2013

Martha Koester and Walter Kloefkorn gave a summary of the main items discussed at our interim meeting. A major concern was making sure that the progressive brand means something, unlike FUSE, which endorsed the charter schools initiative last year. FUSE just does a numerical average of the ratings for candidates from all of its member organizations. Reproductive rights and gun background checks are two areas where legislative action has been blocked, despite large bipartisan majorities of the public favoring both. We need a comprehensive process for vetting candidates. It is a matter of major concern that more hospitals in Washington State are coming under religious control.

Bylaws approval

The bylaws have been rewritten to reflect our current practice of assigning specific tasks to at large board members. They were approved unanimously.

The Chained CPI—the first cut in Social Security proposed by a Democratic administration

Martha Koester provided a brief overview of this attack on the survival of retirees and the disabled. Only one of our Democratic congressional delegation, Jim McDermott, has signed any of the letters circulated by progressive congressional members objecting to this policy. Senators Murray and Cantwell have come out against it, but have not promised to vote down a budget containing the proposal. Overwhelming bipartisan majorities of the public disapprove of chained CPI, and passing a budget containing it is going to cause serious damage to the Democratic Party brand. The day the budget came out, top Google hits on "Republicans + chained CPI" were two stories. The first featured the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee attacking Obama for reducing the living standards of retirees. The second featured Republican House leadership applauding Obama for being willing to compromise, and asking for more of the same.

Website overview

Coralee Brewer gave a brief overview of the site with a direct link projected. A blog and a moderated forum have been proposed. Members with issue expertise are invited to submit content for the various listed topics.

Move to Amend

There is a national convergence meeting being held next weekend in Portland sponsored by the national organization Move to Amend. In Washington State, the WAMEND coalition (consisting of local affiliates of three national organizations and a number of local groups), backed a joint memorial in support of a constitutional amendment abolishing corporate personhood and re-

establishing control of campaign contributions. It did not get out of committee in the senate, despite a substantial amount of public testimony in favor. WAMEND is considering running a statewide initiative in 2014.

Resolutions

Walter Kloefkorn reported on the Friday deliberations of the Resolutions Committee. Resolution #611 opposes religious restrictions when health care mergers occur. The recommendation was DO PASS. Someone asserted that in her experience, some hospitals will compromise and not insist on Catholic directives after a merger. Elaine Phelps pointed out that this was not guaranteed, and that religious hospitals rely on federal aid for about 27% of their operating budgets. It was moved and seconded that the Progressive Caucus add its support to this resolution. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution #588 against the Trans Pacific Protocol was tabled by the committee for clarification. The final approval of this gift to global corporations will probably occur well before the next scheduled WSDCC meeting in September. Walter will work to bring it back to the floor this afternoon. Stopping the fast tracking of this legislation could potentially kill it.

Task Force on Endorsements

A good job of vetting candidates will take more time than can be spared at quarterly meetings. It was moved and seconded to establish a task force for endorsements—unanimous approval. Sarajane Siegfriedt, Honna Sheffield, Mark Hintz, Walter Kloefkorn, Linda Tosti-Lane and Andrew Brewer volunteered to be on it. In addition, we should have another interim meeting. It was moved and seconded that we have a meeting either electronically or in person on June 29th in Ellensburg, depending on the availability of a venue. Approved unanimously.

Other Business

Candidate Michael Wolfe (chair of the 37th LD Democrats) is running for Port Commissioner. His day jobs have given him considerable experience in travel and tourism, a major source of income for the port. Tax dollars need to go to public goods and not corporate welfare. Airline and truckers need better working conditions and access to basic facilities, which they do not now have. In addition, they are misclassified as owner/operators, when in reality they are treated as employees. They need representation and health care. The Port Commissioners should do more to grow jobs in travel and tourism. Sex trafficking is a serious issue—mostly victims come in via airport and with valid tourist visas. We need training for airport workers so they can spot possible abuses. On the coal port issue—grade crossing downtime will be a very serious problem for the port, so the Port Commission should oppose the ports.

Evening meeting

We will have an after-meeting somewhere nearby.

Martha Koester
Secretary
May 5, 2013