

Newsletter: March & April 2013

Next Dinner Meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2013 at 6:15 PM

CLIMATE CHANGE; What Is It and What Does It Mean For Our Future?

Jim Donnelly, QEP- President San Ramon Valley Democratic Club

Jim will present an overview of the history of scientific evidence of climate change and current research with up-to-date charts and data substantiating its potentially huge effects. He will also discuss expected Climate Change impacts for the US and globally.

Jim Donnelly is an Environmental, Health & Safety consultant with more the 40 years of experience in the power, waste management and mining industries. He is a Qualified Environmental Professional, Past President of the Institute for Professional Environmental Practice and currently serves as the Golden West Section Chair of the Air & Waste Management Association. He teaches environmental review courses for professionals pursuing an environmental professional certification with one section of the course covering Global Climate Change. He is also a MSHA instructor for surface miners. He holds a B.S. in Chemistry and a M.A. in Leadership.

6:15 pm Social Get Together 6:45 pm Dinner 7:15 pm Program

Even if you opt to attend just the meeting, please join us at 6:15 pm to talk to socialize and have fun.

Crow Canyon Country Club
711 Silver Lake Drive, Danville, CA 94526
(925) 735-5700

Members & Invited Guests: \$25
Non-members: \$30 (\$25 for dinner and \$5 requested donation to help offset program costs)
Presentation- \$5 (requested donation)

RSVP: To make certain you have a dinner, please **RSVP. no later than Monday, April 22.**

Make checks out to James Donnelly and mail them to the address below or bring them with you to the dinner.

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Presidents Corner

Happy spring to all! The past few days have been so pleasant, they remind of one of the many reasons I live in Danville. My almond, apple, cherry and plum trees have all been in magnificent bloom and my tangerine tree is just starting to leave that wonderful aroma of orange blossoms on my deck. It is a great time of year in the bay area. In contrast, I'm in Pittsburgh for the weekend teaching in a Leadership Academy for the Air & Waste Management Association. Here the trees have not even begun to leaf out. Wednesday evening when we landed it was 85 F with thunderstorms. Today (Saturday) it is in the low 50's. Such is April in the east.

I trust you all have gotten your taxes done. I finished mine Tuesday and from reading the paper this morning found out that my effective tax rate is almost ten percent \higher than President Obama's and I make less than 25% of his salary. In fact my tax rate is almost twice what Mitt Romney declared last year on his earnings of about \$20 million. Do you think maybe we need to do something about our tax code, I sure do. In my opinion I do not think it is good for our nation to have the richest 1% earn about 25 % of the money each year while paying taxes at a much lower tax rates. When I lived and worked in Denmark the minimum tax was 50% and the marginal rate was 75%. CEO's in Danish companies only made about 20- 30 times as much as their average employees, not the 100's and in some case 1000 times we see in the U.S. We need to go back to the tax rates of the 60's and 70's if we are going to generate enough revenue to maintain our infrastructure, fund education, provide for at least basic health care for our citizens and provide for basic research to stay ahead of worldwide competition, I know I'm being idealistic but all you have to do is look around, read and listen and you must know that it is not working for way too many of our citizens. One can only hope and work toward a better future.

I must say that I am very disappointed in President Obama's proposed budget. It appears to me that once again he has broken a promise and is willing to make cuts in social security. If it is just a negotiating ploy, as his administrations say, then they need to go take a Negotiations course. You don't start off my giving in before you sit down at the negotiating table. One again I am left wondering if he is the type of president we thought we supported, worked hard to get elected and voted for? I only hope I am wrong as, other than the Affordable Care Act, I do not see many policies going out of the white house that fit with the policies I expected from a Democratic President. It is time for all of us to email the president and let him know our feelings about his proposed budget.

Teaching young environmental professionals leadership as I have been doing this weekend is one way I feel that I can maybe make a bit of a difference for the future. These young people have a lot of potential and many of them are quite idealistic and really care about the environment and their fellow humans. I just hope it lasts for them.

I'm looking forward to this month's dinner meeting where I will be giving a presentation on climate change. Since our meeting is close to Earth Day (April 22) it seems to be an appropriate topic for us all.

While I was attending Cal State Long Beach, I got involved with putting together the campus Earth Day program we presented on the first Earth Day (1970). I learned a lot from that experience about understanding and caring for the environment and, more importantly, about what works and what doesn't work in trying to raise the public's awareness. It was a heady time, one that I remember fondly. I hope all of you take some time this coming Earth Day to think about planet earth and what we as humans are doing to it. It is our children's and grandchildren's future we are impacting.

Have a good month!

Jim Donnelly- President SRVDC

"I believe that, as long as there is plenty, poverty is evil". **Robert F. Kennedy**

SRVDC Membership Drive

We still have too many members who have not renewed their membership for 2013. We need your support. Please take the time to either fill in and mail in the form below or log on to our website srvdems.org and go to the donations link. Dues are only \$25/person or \$40/family. These dues support us in presenting our programs throughout the year. Also, as this year is an election year we need your dues to help our local candidates in their efforts to get re-elected.

The primary goal of the SRVDC is to aid in informing voters and concerned citizens about issues of the day and how they may impact our lives. The SRVDC serves the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville and San Ramon. We provide a vehicle for persons interested in your communities to come together for interesting and informative meetings about issues facing all of us. We provide a voter registration and information table at the Danville Farmer's Market and other venues. We also send out a monthly newsletter presenting updates from our elected officials and provide a forum for our members to express their views.

We need your continued support for these efforts. Dues are \$25/ person and \$40 per family. Please complete the form below and mail it to address below:

Renewal or New Membership

Singly or Family Membership

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell phone

Please indicate the activities that interest you

_____ Voter Registration

_____ Get-out-the-vote activities

_____ Fundraising

_____ Publicity

_____ Local Government

_____ Newsletter

_____ Hospitality

_____ Programs & Functions

Make checks payable to: San Ramon Valley Democratic Club

P.O. Box 1218

Danville, CA 94526

Thanks.

Jim Donnelly

Gun Control

Last month we presented articles about gun control from Congressman Eric Swalwell and Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla. This month we are including some additional material from Congressman George Miller, Senator Mark DeSaulnier and Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan.

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE MILLER

GUN CONTROL

AMERICA HAS AN UNACCEPTABLY HIGH RATE OF GUN VIOLENCE. GEORGE BELIEVES THERE ARE SEVERAL ASPECTS OF OUR NATION'S GUN LAWS THAT NEED CLOSE SCRUTINY AND REFORM. HE KNOWS THERE ARE REASONABLE STEPS THAT CONGRESS CAN TAKE TO KEEP DEADLY WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION OUT OF THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO WOULD MISUSE THEM AND HARM INNOCENT VICTIMS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SUPPORTS LEGISLATION TO CLOSE THE 'GUN SHOW' LOOPHOLE BY REQUIRING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS ON ALL GUN BUYERS. HE SUPPORTS THE PROHIBITION OF LARGE CAPACITY AMMUNITION CLIPS LIKE THE ONES USED IN ARIZONA WHEN REP. GABBY GIFFORDS WAS SHOT. AND HE SUPPORTS REQUIRING CHILD SAFETY LOCKS OR STORAGE CONTAINERS FOR HANDGUNS AND TOUGH TRIGGER LOCK STANDARDS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE. !

SENATOR MARK DESAULNIER INTRODUCES TWO GUN SAFETY BILLS

February 22, 2013

Last week Senator Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord) introduced two bills aimed at promoting gun safety, fighting gun trafficking, and curbing gun violence in our communities.

"Senseless violence occurs far too often when guns fall into the wrong hands," Senator DeSaulnier said. "I introduced these bills to improve gun safety and help law enforcement better keep firearms out of the hands of criminals or illicit gun traffickers. It is imperative that when a firearm is lost or stolen our law enforcement officers are notified as quickly as possible. Every hour counts when it comes to preventing violence in our communities. Additionally, we should make sure that guns are only used by the owners who are authorized to fire them. Many technologies exist to create this kind of safety mechanism, including biometric readers. It is also important that we recognize the vast impact of gun-related suicides. These bills will help prevent depressed or despondent individuals from having access to firearms."

Senator DeSaulnier introduced the following two gun bills:

- SB 293. This bill requires hand guns have an owner authorized safety mechanism, such as biometric readers or other technologies.
- SB 299. This bill requires that every person whose firearm is lost or stolen must notify local law enforcement with! in 48 hours of the time they knew, or reasonably should have known, that the firearm had been lost or stolen. If the firearm is subsequently recovered, the local law enforcement agency must be notified within 48 hours of the recovery.

These bills also take aim at reducing gun-related suicides. By decreasing illicit guns on the streets and preventing unauthorized users from operating handguns, the availability of guns to depressed or suicidal

individuals is limited. Nationally, about 19,000 of the more than 31,000 gun-related deaths each year are due to suicide. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 85% of suicide attempts involving guns result in death, making firearms the leading method of suicide in the United States.

Last year, DeSaulnier introduced SB 1366 requiring lost or stolen firearms to be reported to local law enforcement. SB 1366 was supported by a wide range of law enforcement and co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Sherriiff, Lee Baca. It was vetoed by Governor Brown.

Joan Buchanan Statement on the Newtown, CT, Shooting

One of the most fundamental responsibilities of society is to protect our children. Our schools must be safe and secure places where children thrive, learn, and grow. Sadly, this was not the case on December 14th when a severely disturbed young man entered Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed 20 beautiful young children and six brave adults before killing himself. My heart aches for the pain the families and community feel, and I continue to keep the children, staff, and families in my prayers.

All of us must ask what we can do to keep our children safe. California has already enacted stricter protections against gun violence than the federal government, but there is more we must do. I do not believe our founding fathers ever envisioned 6-year olds needing to defend themselves from assault weapons when they wrote the 2nd Amendment, nor did they imagine children dying daily on the streets of our inner cities, nor our public safety officers having less fire power than criminals. I simply do not see the need for citizens to own assault weapons or high capacity magazines. Additionally, requiring background checks before all gun sales is a reasonable step to keep weapons out of the hands of criminals.

To do this we must come together to reform our laws and, at the same time, ensure diagnostic services and treatment for mental illness are accessible to everyone who needs care.

Some have suggested that we train and provide school personnel with weapons or have armed law enforcement personnel at every school. While I support school resource officers, because of the wide range of services they provide, I do not believe these suggestions are wise or constructive. Weapons do not belong on our school campuses.

California has been proactive with respect to school safety plans. Every district and every school must have an Emergency Preparedness Plan that includes actions to be taken if an intruder is on campus. The plans include coordination with local public safety agencies. As new classrooms are built and existing classrooms are modernized, doors are required to have interior locks. As we plan for the next statewide facilities bond, we will look to experts to determine if there is more we can do to keep our schools physically safe.

Finally, I am committed to working with my colleagues, at the local, state and federal levels, to pass laws that promote responsible gun ownership and to assure the safety of our communities, schools, and children.

Member Editorials

Each month we invite you to present your views on about any subject you wish to discuss. This is an important way to understand what are major concerns for our members. Surely there are things going on that make your blood boil. Let it out, express your opinions here.

Reports about/from our Elected Officials

Congressman George Miller

Rep. Miller statement on President Obama's FY2014 Budget Proposal

Apr 10, 2013 Issues: Federal Budget and the Economy

! WASHINGTON- U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-Contra Costa) issued the following statement upon President Barack Obama's Budget submission today:

"President Obama's budget makes difficult choices, to be sure, not all of which I agree with. But his plan is clearly intended to grow our economy, create jobs, and invest in our future. I commend his effort to balance the need between increasing revenues, long term deficit reduction, and investing in and growing our economy as the path forward. Refusing to agree to a balanced approach is refusing to be part of the solution, only part of the problem.

"Now, Speaker Boehner, who has stated repeatedly this year how important it is for Congress to pass a budget, should appoint congressional conferees right away so that we can get to work reconciling the differences that Democrats and Republicans have regarding the budget and our economy.

"Understandably, a great deal of concern has been raised over one aspect of the president's budget that has been offered in the past by Republicans as well, the proposal to change the measure of inflation for cost-of-living adjustments for a number of programs throughout the budget, including Social Security benefits, known as chained CPI. I have serious concerns about whether chained CPI is the right step to take and believe that Congress must study the proposal very carefully before taking any action on it. I have never let seniors down, nor veterans and the disabled, in all of my years in Congress and I won't let them down now."

Congressman Eric Swalwell

Rep. Swalwell Statement on Voting No on the Republican Leadership Budget

Mar 21, 2013

Press Release

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Eric Swalwell released the following statement after he voted “no” on the budget put forth by the Republican House Leadership.

"The Ryan-Republican budget reflects the priorities that Americans rejected soundly last fall in the election. It asks too much of middle and low-income Americans, but nothing from those at the highest income. It implements European-style austerity to finance tax breaks for the rich, and slashes critical federal investments in health care, education, clean energy and research & development.

"Once again, the Ryan-Republican budget turns Medicare into a voucher system, meaning seniors will pay more and receive fewer benefits. I was proud to vote in favor the House Democratic budget alternative introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen, which prioritizes growth, maintains our investments in education, energy, research and infrastructure, preserves the Medicare guarantee and asks the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share. Americans deserve an honest budget that is fiscally responsible and promotes economic growth."

State Senator Mark DeSaulnier

Homes and Jobs Act Passed by Senate Transportation and Housing Committee

April 10, 2013

The Homes and Jobs Act, SB 391 authored by Senator Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord), was passed by the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee yesterday.

“The lack of affordable homes in California is a very real threat to our state’s continued economic recovery,” Senator DeSaulnier said. “Too many Californians have seen more of their wages go into housing, with even less options available to them when it comes to finding an affordable home. Working families and young people fall into the rent trap as mortgages remain out of reach, pushing them into a rental market already suffering from short supply—and leading to record-setting rent increases.”

“The Homes and Jobs Act will help strengthen both our economy and our communities today, and for many years to come. This bill will get California building affordable homes again, creating 29,000 thousand jobs annually in the construction industry. We cannot expect business to succeed if there are not homes within reach of California’s workforce.”

SB 391 imposes a fee on the recordation of each real-estate document, excluding documents related to the sale of a property, in order to permanently fund the California Homes and Jobs Trust Fund. The fund will support the development of affordable homes.

California’s redevelopment agencies used to generate \$1 billion per year for affordable homes. With the elimination of redevelopment agencies, this funding stream has disappeared completely. In 2000 and 2006, voters approved roughly \$5 billion in housing bonds. Nearly all of the voter-approved funding for affordable housing has now been awarded, and no more bond funds are available.

SB 391 addresses the loss of funding for affordable housing. The bill raises \$500 million annually for state investment in affordable home production and leverages an additional \$2.78 billion in public and private funds.

Leading business organizations have endorsed SB 391, including the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Orange County Business Council, Silicon Valley Leadership Group and the Bay Area Council. The bill is sponsored by the California Housing Consortium and Housing California, and supported by AARP, United States Veterans Initiative, Mental Health America in California, SEIU State Council and other leading voices for working families, people with disabilities, seniors, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness.

SB 391 is scheduled for its next hearing in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee on April 24.

Assembly Woman Joan Buchanan

Buchanan Announces Bills to Protect Children

SACRAMENTO - Assemblymember Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo), chair of the Assembly Education Committee announced today the introduction of two pieces of legislation designed to protect and ensure the safety of our children: AB 375 Teacher Discipline and Dismissal and

AB 1338 Mandated Reporting of Child and Sexual Abuse.

Assemblymember Buchanan stated, “Our children are our future. It is critically important that they attend schools that are safe and where all adults who work with them understand their responsibilities to keep them safe. We have been debating these issues long enough and have too many examples of where the current system has broken down.”

AB 375 streamlines the appeal process for teacher dismissal, resulting in faster resolution and significant cost savings to school districts. In cases of child and sexual abuse, AB 375 maintains the ability of school districts to immediately remove the teacher from the classroom as well as the ability to issue a notice of dismissal at any time during the calendar year.

AB 1338 protects students by requiring all school districts to have a board policy on their child abuse reporting responsibilities and to review that policy with all employees annually. This bill is in response to recent incidents in which school district employees failed to report incidents of child or sexual abuse, thus allowing the abuse to continue for extended periods of time.

“These bills reflect all that I learned while serving on our local school board for almost two decades and extensive meetings with members of the education community – parents, teachers, and administrators.” Buchanan said. “I look forward to continuing the dialogue and working with my colleagues and the education community to pass these important bills.”

Assemblymember Buchanan also plans to submit a bill on teacher evaluation later this month. The bill will establish a Professional Improvement Evaluation System to increase the capacity and effectiveness of teachers through an evaluation process that is based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.