

SRV DEMOCRATIC CLUB NEWSLETTER APRIL 2011

Presidents Corner

It has been quite a month since the last time I set pen to paper. One of the biggest earth quakes in history followed by a Tsunami has left a portion of Japan in ruins and once again exposed the world to the risks of nuclear power. The Arab spring continues with the US not quite knowing how to respond. Do we support the rebellions, to we intervene, how far do we commit to aid? Those are serious questions with no good answers and many pitfalls no matter what we do. I'm glad that I do not have to make the hard decisions and do not profess to know the right answers. I just hope that we do not get ourselves pulled into another unending quagmire. On a positive note we passed a continuing resolution keeping the government running for a while longer. The flip side is we are still under a cloud of having the government shutdown over the extension of our debt ceiling. Do the Republicans have any idea what the consequences will be for the economy if they following through with the threat of shutting down? Talk about an anti-stimulus plan.

The California Democratic party State Convention will be held in Sacramento over the weekend of April 29 through May 1. A number of our club members are going as delegates to the convention and would welcome any input our members or friends may have concerning issues you would like us to try to address during the convention. Either email me with your thoughts or bring them up at our dinner meeting next Thursday.

For those worried about what Japan's nuclear disaster means to the US from a health point of view, there was a very good article posted in the Christian Science monitor on Thursday, April 24. The title: "Radiation and Health; The aftershocks of Japan's Nuclear Disaster". There is also an article in today's San Francisco Chronicle Insight section. In my working life one of the positions I held was Assistant chief Nuclear-Environmental Engineer for Bechtel Houston Power Division. From this perspective, my opinion is that we have very little to worry about from the events in Japan. On the much bigger issue of how much should we rely on nuclear power to meet our future energy needs I am more ambivalent. In another issue I'll expand on the reasons why I feel the way that I do. To close this thread I would like to say that nuclear power has an unequalled safety record when one looks at how many people have been injured from nuclear power when compared to other forms of generating electricity. However, the risks from nuclear power (the product of the frequency of probable occurrence times the potential consequences of an occurrence) are, in my opinion, are high and if we are going to rely on nuclear power we must be extremely diligent in addressing these risks in all phase of the nuclear cycle. That is something as a nation have not been willing to address.

I wish everyone a good month ahead as we go from wintery weather (cold, gray and wet) to more summer like weather (dry and hot).

Regards, Jim Donnelly

President, SRVDC

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.

Contra Costa Democratic Party

The Contra Costa Democratic Party (DPCC) also called the Central Committee is looking for associate members. The Party meets in Martinez at 7:30 PM on the third (3rd) Thursday of each month. Annual dues are \$24 . The Party has a lot on their agenda this year. Governor Brown is going the need a lot of help in getting his tax proposal on the ballot and passed. The Party has plans for registering more Democrats to Vote By Mail. People who vote my mail are almost twice as likely to vote in an election and we need all of the Democratic votes we can get to move forward our Democratic principles. We are also planning in the next couple of months, a Health Care forum presented by our elected officials to help us better understand the Health Care Bill and the challenges by the Republicans in congress.

Come join us for our next meeting and see if you like what we are doing. For more information call Jim Donnelly @ 925 570-9289

Reports from our Elected Officials

Congressman Jerry McNerney

McNerney Statement on Republican Budget Proposal to End Medicare, Ship Jobs Overseas



April 15, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) today issued the following statement regarding the budget offered by House Republicans for fiscal year 2012.

“Our nation faces enormous challenges and needs bold solutions to move forward. The budget offered by House Republicans is not the answer. Their proposal will have a devastating effect on our seniors, children and our country’s economic future.

“This budget will end Medicare as we know it, cut education funding for millions of children, and at the same time give away billions in tax breaks to large corporations that ship American jobs overseas.

“Instead, we should be focused on creating jobs, protecting benefits for America’s seniors, improving our children’s schools, and investing in the economic future of our country with

infrastructure projects and research and development of new technologies.

"I will keep fighting for these priorities and stand in opposition to the Republicans' harmful budget proposal."

Congressman John Garamendi

Congressman Garamendi Votes Against Republican Budget that Sacrifices Seniors and Middle Class to Pay for Tax Cuts for Millionaires and Billionaires

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman John Garamendi (D-Walnut Creek, CA) today voted against the House Republican 2012 budget, because he is opposed to dismantling Medicare and other critical American priorities to pay for a drastic reduction in the tax rate for millionaires and billionaires. Congressman Garamendi issued the following statement:

"I voted against the 2012 Republican budget, because it does not reflect my values or the priorities of our great country.

"I for one did not come to Washington to destroy Medicare, an effective, affordable, and popular program that provides the peace of mind of quality health coverage to 47 million seniors and persons with disabilities. The Republican budget dismantles Medicare, replacing it with an untested privatization scheme that will lead to less coverage and higher premiums. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the Republican budget would more than double the amount seniors pay for health care, forcing them to pay \$6,000 more by 2022. Under the Republican budget, thousands of seniors would lose their health coverage entirely. In a few short years, this plan will lead to delayed preventative treatments, harming seniors' quality of life, increasing preventable deaths, and imposing on all insured Americans the 'hidden tax' of costly emergency room visits.

"Republicans on the House floor have talked about 'shared sacrifice,' but the Republican budget inflicts sacrifice on working families with deep cuts to essential health, education, and employment programs. This plan increases college tuition and slashes 1.7 million jobs in manufacturing, transit, research, education, clean energy, and other national priorities. Flood protection would be stymied, and public transit and road construction would be drastically scaled back. Yet House Republicans propose making these deep cuts in a budget that actually reduces the tax rate for millionaires and billionaires by a third. This budget also continues \$40 billion in Big Oil subsidies while slashing clean energy investments by 70 percent. Why are House Republicans cutting good middle class jobs to increase profits for BP and Donald Trump?

"I call on the U.S. Senate to reject this short sighted budget proposal, giving us time to develop a more balanced and better focused compromise. There are responsible ways to reduce the budget while still preserving our most critical investments, and I'm hopeful the Republican Majority will eventually produce such a compromise. In the America I

love, people across the political spectrum agree that we don't kick seniors off of their health care to pay for a billionaire's yacht."

State Senator Mark DeSaulnier

Helping Prison Industry Authority Serve Non-Profits

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Senate Bill 608 (DeSaulnier) Allows Prison Industry Authority to work with Non-profit Organizations

The Senate Public Safety Committee today unanimously approved SB 608 (DeSaulnier) to allow the California Prison Industry Authority (PIA) to provide desperately needed services to California non-profit organizations. This bill came about as a result of the efforts of K to College, an East Bay non-profit organization.

K to College provides free school supplies to disadvantaged students. The organization gathers school supplies from a variety of vendors and then fills backpacks with paper, binders, pencils, protractors, compasses, note pads, etc. Historically, K to College has used volunteers to assemble these school supply packets. However volunteers are no longer able to meet the increasing demand. So in 2009, they asked Senator DeSaulnier to help them get the backpacks filled behind prison walls.

In response, Senator DeSaulnier led the effort to obtain one time authority from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to allow PIA workers (inmates) at Folsom State Prison to work with K to College on the project. In September 2010, Folsom inmates were able to fill 150,000 school backpacks, a project too large in scale to be accomplished by volunteers. Working with PIA was the only viable way for these packets to be assembled and reach the students who so desperately need them.

However, this one time authority was a temporary solution to a long-term problem. In order to make programs like this sustainable, California statute must be amended to allow non-profits to work with PIA. SB 608 makes the needed changes in law.

"Efforts like K to College deserve all the support we can get them," said DeSaulnier. "Non-profit organizations are struggling to raise necessary funds and are assuming a larger role as public agencies face reduced funding and non-profits step up to fill the gaps. This bill will allow non-profits to take advantage of PIA resources that would otherwise be unavailable to them."

Under current law, only government organizations may purchase goods or services from PIA. This bill not only supports the philanthropic endeavors of California non-profit organizations, but also supports the rehabilitative and vocational efforts of PIA. Many of the inmates who worked on the K to College project were parents themselves. They enjoyed the opportunity, especially knowing that the backpacks they were filling may end up in the hands of their own children or other children from their communities. This is also especially important at a time when the State is cutting costs, and thus reducing its contracts with PIA. By 2012, K to College hopes to distribute as many as 500,000 school packets across the state.

Assembly Woman Joan Buchanan

Buchanan Honors Business Leader Linda Best as 15th District “Woman of the Year”

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo) today joined with her colleagues to honor Contra Costa County business leader, Linda Best, as the “Woman of the Year” for the 15th Assembly District during a ceremony at the State Capitol.

“Linda is an extraordinary business and community leader,” Buchanan said. “She is a pivotal leader in Contra Costa County and a dedicated advocate for public policies that enhance the quality of life in our communities and create economic growth.”

Since 2004 Linda has served as the President and CEO of the Contra Costa Council and the Economic Partnership, with members from business, education, and public and non-profit leaders. Linda’s leadership has resulted in the Council becoming the regions’ primary public policy and economic organization.

“Linda understands that one of the key underpinnings to long-term economic growth is a strong education system. Her work to build a work force with the right education and skills is fundamental to our economic prosperity”, said Buchanan. “Linda is respected throughout the county.”

The Woman of the Year ceremony is sponsored by the Women’s Caucus of the California State Legislature. The annual Woman of the Year event was started in 1987 by former Assembly Members Bev Hansen and Sally Tanner. In celebration of the contributions to society made by outstanding women throughout California one woman from each Senate and Assembly district is invited to come to the Capitol to be honored for their accomplishments. Today’s ceremony on the Assembly floor continues that tradition.

Additional food for Thought!

How is it that the USA’s biggest Corporation, GE, could make over \$19 Billion in profit in 2009 and pay \$0000 in Corporate taxes when the USA has the second highest corporate tax rate in the world. (Something is wrong with our tax structure!)