

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



October 2017 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274
Visit Us on the Web at www.pvpdemocrats.org
"One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

COMING EVENTS

Social time: 2pm

OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: Sunday, October 15th

MEETING TIME: 2:30 - 4:30pm

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library Community Room; 701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

TOPIC: Senate Update

SPEAKER: Peter Muller, Deputy State Director for Senator Diane Feinstein

NOVEMBER MEETING

DATE: Sunday, November 19th

MEETING TIME: 2:30-4:30pm

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library Community Room; 701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

TOPIC: Current Civil Rights Issues

SPEAKER: Jessica Farris, ACLU of Southern CA's Director of Criminal Justice and Drug Policy and Advocacy Counsel

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Upcoming Events (go to www.pvpdemocrats.org for details)

Oct 20, 11:30 am - 1:30pm
ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM & LUNCHEON, PV Golf Club, \$55,
Featured speakers Senator Ben Allen & Congressman Ted Lieu

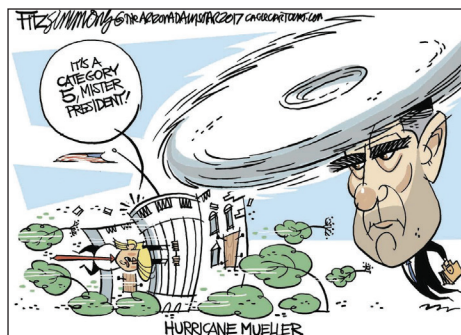
Take A Knee



October General Meeting

Our October meeting will feature a Senate legislative update from the office of Senator Diane Feinstein.

Joining us for a discussion will be Senator Diane Feinstein's Deputy State Director, **Peter Muller**. Peter leads Senator Feinstein's Southern California office and will provide us with an update of the Senator's legislative efforts during the current Senate session, including her work on the Senate Judiciary and Intelligence committees where she has been a visible player in the investigations of Russian meddling in the 2016 elections. We look forward to a lively discussion and insights into the Senator's view of the state of the nation from the ground in D.C.



September Meeting Report

by Gary Boston

PV Dems had a double-header at the September meeting with a two part program that covered both local and national politics. The meeting kicked off with a Candidate Forum featuring the three Democratic candidates for Rancho Palos Verdes City Council. The election, which will be held on November 7th, will be for two open seats on the City Council. Given a shift in the municipal

elections calendar, these open seats will only serve three-year terms instead of the normal four year terms. Joining us at the meeting were Eric Alegria, Dave Emenhiser and Ben Kelly. The candidates all provided brief opening statements and then took some questions from membership.

Dave Emenhiser spoke first, highlighting his experience on the RPV Planning and Finance Commissions as well as his run for City Council six years ago. Mr. Emenhiser spoke about how the disheartening results of the 2016 Presidential election spurred him to step into the race and expressed the need to have Democratic representation on the RPV City Council, which has become dominated by Republican members. Mr. Emenhiser has picked up one of the endorsements of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party (LACDP) in this election



Dave Emenhiser

Ben Kelly, a student who grew up in the community, has been active in Democratic politics from an early age, founding the PV High School Young Democrats club and working on Al Muratsuchi's campaign for the state Assembly. Mr. Kelly was driven to run for City Council by what he sees as a need for young people to get more engaged in the political process. He hopes his campaign can help drive increased turnout by young people in RPV. Mr. Kelly's candidacy has been endorsed



Ben Kelly

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by the LACDP and by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi.

Eric Alegria is an executive at a large healthcare company, a local business owner, as well as a member of the RPV Finance Commission and Commissioner for the California Film Commission. As a father of three young children, he spoke of seeking office as a way to work toward ensuring a strong community for them to grow up in. Mr. Alegria also ran for City Council six years ago. For this campaign, he has received the endorsements of Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, State Treasurer and Gubernatorial Candidate John Chiang, and Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon.



Eric Alegria

The candidates were asked to identify what they view as the biggest issue facing RPV and how they hoped to address it on the City Council if elected. Mr. Kelly spoke first, highlighting the responsibilities of local government in determining how a city is developed. Specifically, he mentioned the development in cell towers in the community -- a topic also addressed by Mr. Emenhiser -- and the need for the community to work to stop a bill in the California legislature (SB 649) that would "streamline" the approval process for putting small cell networking gear on public poles and lights, limiting local ability to block these installations. Mr. Kelly also spoke of a desire to keep RPV a low density environment, avoiding overdevelopment. Infrastructure was the focus of Mr. Alegria's response to the question, citing what he views as a "blindspot" in the current city process to inventory,

prioritize and manage infrastructure projects. He also noted that in a community with such a focus on natural environment, that land use will always be a focus issue for the Council. Finally, he noted that public safety was an ongoing concern among his neighbors. This theme was picked up on by Mr. Emenhiser who views public safety and crime as the top issue for RPV residents, citing concern over what is viewed as an increase in personal property crime and burglary. He noted that there has been some progress made on this front, but sees an opportunity for additional improvements. Mr. Emenhiser also highlighted the cell tower issue, noting his efforts on the Planning Commission to try to reject many of these proposals as they have come up.

The Candidate Forum was a great opportunity to meet the candidates face to face and get their thoughts on key local issue. One theme that all three highlighted was how critical it was for Democrats to turn out for this election and vote. With two seats up for grabs, it is a great opportunity for us to bring some much needed balance to the RPV City Council.

The meeting continued with our keynote guest speaker **Professor Peter Mathews**, who led a wide-ranging discussion covering the corrupting influence of money in our political system as well as issues currently in the news and the prognosis for the elections ahead.

Professor Mathews teaches Political Science at Cypress College and Long Beach City College and is an expert on money in politics, having written a book



Professor Peter Mathews

Dollar Democracy; With Liberty And Justice For Some. In his prepared remarks, Professor Mathews walked through how the unfettered flow of private money into our political system has not only corrupted the electoral process, but, through politicians that are beholden to corporate interest, affects almost all aspects of our society. Each chapter of his book focuses on a specific area of our society and how money in politics has shaped policy. For example, he noted how tax and education policy in the U.S. has all but eliminated the low cost/no cost public higher education that was prevalent in states such as California in the 50s and 60s. As a result, student debt, a major profit center for the financial industry, has become the largest pool of debt in the US, second only to the Federal debt. Professor Mathews also highlighted the real cost of free trade deals such as NAFTA on US manufacturing and how money from Agribusiness has gutted both food safety and environmental regulations.

Professor Mathews ended his prepared remarks with some thoughts answering the question, "What can we do about it?", with a three pronged approach to begin to stem the influence of private money in politics. First, we must demand that candidates pledge to give up corporate donations and rely on small personal donations to fund their campaigns. We have seen some success on this front with campaigns such as Bernie Sanders in the last Presidential primary and with high-profile candidate, Beto O'Rourke running to unseat Ted Cruz. More locally, several of the candidates running to flip local congressional seats have made the pledge to forego corporate and/or PAC donations in their campaigns. Second, we need to push for Clean Election laws at the state and federal level. Professor Mathews cited such a law in Maine, which resulted in a system of voluntary publicly funded campaigns. There has been a version of such legislation that has been introduced in each session of Congress since 2007 -- current bill is S 1640. However, to truly blunt "Dollar Democracy" we need the third leg of the stool, says Mathews, a constitutional amendment that states that money is not speech and that corporations have no constitutional rights.

Given his presence as a media commentator on outlets such as CNN and KTLA, Professor Mathews took questions from the group on a wide number of topics. He was optimistic about Democrats' ability to make gains in 2018,

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but only if they were able to communicate a message to voters on how they planned to revitalize the American Dream, focusing on social and economic justice. When asked about the Medicare For All bill receiving recent media attention versus plans to try to improve the ACA, Professor Mathew expressed his strongly held view that the time was right to make a push for a Medicare for All type of system, noting that the money to fund it is already in the system in the form of private premiums and that Canada shows us how such a system will cost much less. On the question of gerrymandering and voter suppression, the Professor noted that while those are real problems, another big issue looming for the 2018 midterms is Democrats' historical lack of participation in off-cycle elections. There were, however, a couple of hopeful points that ended the discussion. First, the grassroots has become extremely energized which should help this cycle. Secondly, Professor Mathews does not believe that Trump will serve out a full first term.

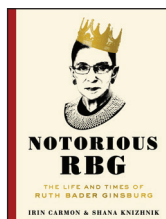
Book Review

Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik

Reviewed by Carol Moeller

A take-off on the name of a rap star, the title of this book likely summarizes the feelings of conservatives regarding Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg. Using fan art such as "Can't spell Truth without Ruth" along with many photos (showing Bader-Ginsburg as a very attractive young woman), this book ably covers her trailblazing career.



Early life was not one of privilege: her parents were Russian immigrants, her sister died when Bader-Ginsburg was only a toddler, and her mother died the day before Bader-Ginsburg graduated from high school after a long battle with cancer. A scholarship student at Cornell, she graduated at the top of her class, and then entered Harvard Law School before transferring to Columbia where she was also at the top of her class. Bader-Ginsburg had to be so exceptional to get where she is, and in doing so, made it easier for women to follow.

There are many sides to Justice Ginsburg,

and some of those facets appear to be in direct opposition to one another. Generally thought of as studious and unassuming by casual acquaintances, RBG is known to fight fiercely for equality in all aspects of life. By contrast, her husband, Marty Ginsburg, was outgoing and loquacious and became a noted tax attorney (Ross Perot was one of his clients). Although her diminutive size makes her come across as frail, Bader-Ginsburg meets with a personal trainer a few times a week for a workout that involves squats, planks and push-ups! Her philosophic rival was Judge Scalia, and yet he was a close personal friend. Although most of her early work involved women's rights, her favorite case involved the right of a widower to Social Security funds earned by his wife, in order for him to stay at home to care for their young children.

One of her early cases involved a woman in the military who found herself pregnant and was given the choice of leaving the military or getting an abortion (ludicrously, abortions were allowed on military bases at a time prior to Roe v Wade when they were illegal elsewhere in the US). The argument Bader-Ginsburg made as an attorney for the ACLU was the right of women to make decisions affecting the course of their lives.

Having taught at Rutgers and Columbia, Bader-Ginsburg sees herself first and foremost as a teacher. As such, she sees a role for herself to teach the current justices of the Supreme Court that we do not have gender equality in our country, and we do not have racial parity in this country and we do not have economic or social fairness in the USA. The elimination of bias is Ruth Bader-Ginsburg's mantra.

Be a Pre-Endorsement Caucus Delegate!

by Carol Moeller

Pre-Endorsement Conferences are the first determining step for the California Democratic Party's endorsement process. A Pre-Endorsement Conference for our 66th Assembly District will be held next January, and



The 66th Assembly District Democratic Council (ADDCC) hosted Tom Steyer, Founder and President nextgen CA on August 29th at the Torrance Civic Center. The large auditorium was packed! People even came from Orange County to attend! Posing with Tom Steyer (4th from left) is Al Muratsuchi, Tony Hale, Connie Sullivan, Diane Wallace and Varo Asorian. Tony, Connie, Diane and Varo are members of the board of the 66th ADDCC.

you do not have to attend the conference to vote. In addition to those delegates elected (held at Zamperini Field...remember that?), and also those appointed (by elected officials and by officials of the Central Committee) last January for two-year terms, each club can also send delegates based on yearly membership. The PV Democrats should have 8 slots for pre-endorsement delegates that we can send this year, based on the club membership roster we submitted at the end of June. Delegates must be registered Democrats, must live in the 66th Assembly District, and their names must have been on that June roster. It is requested that our candidates be equally divided between men and women as much as is possible. Once we get the list of those interested in being a delegate, then we will hold a vote at our November membership meeting.

Delegates to the pre-endorsement caucus represent our club by voting on candidates running for office in our district. If a candidate at the pre-endorsement caucus receives 70% of the vote, then that candidate is eligible for party endorsement status. If a candidate receives over 50% of the vote but less than 70%, that endorsement may be decided later by a caucus held at the convention. The pre-endorsement caucus has been important in the past; in fact it has been crucial for some candidates.

So, YOU have a chance to be a part of this pre-endorsement process. Please submit your name to Lynn Bommer (labommer@gmail.com) if you fulfill the requirements listed above and wish to be considered as a pre-endorsement delegate.



Palos Verdes Democrats Officers for 2017-2018

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Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded in 1952 - One of the oldest and largest Democratic Clubs in California

www.pvpdemocrats.org

As a member of the Palos Verdes Democrats, you can:

- Meet other Democrats
- Meet and get to know your elected officials, raise funds and work for candidates
- Attend special events and monthly meetings
- Hear speakers and discuss issues of local, state and national import
- Receive a monthly newsletter
- Vote on club issues, unless registered as NPP (No Party Preference)

Please send your membership form to P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. Ca 90274
Please fill in all items to ensure that we have your full and correct current information.

Name _____

Name* _____

* Fill in if Applying as a Family - two memberships

- ☐ I am a registered Democrat
☐ I am registered No Party Preference
☐ I am a registered Democrat
☐ I am registered No Party Preference

Residence Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ Zip _____ Cell _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____

E-mail Address _____

*Select One: ☐ Individual: \$ 25.00/Year ☐ Family Membership \$40.00/Year
☐ Young Adult \$10.00/Year

Amount enclosed _____ ☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

Please contact me to help in the following areas:

- ☐ Hospitality ☐ Newsletter ☐ Membership ☐ Publicity ☐ Correspondence
☐ Voter Registration ☐ Campaign Work ☐ Website/Facebook ☐ Phone Tree