

Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

Founded 1952



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Paul Conrad

October 2012 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274
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"One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER MEETING:

DATE: Sunday, October 21, 2012, 2:30-4:30 PM

LOCATION: Pacific Unitarian Church – 5621 Montemalaga Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

TOPIC: Social Security

SPEAKER: Michael Hiltzik, Los Angeles Times columnist

NOVEMBER MEETING:

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, November 18, 2012, 2:30-4:30 PM

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library

TOPIC: Public Banking - The Key to Local Investing.

SPEAKER: Marc Armstrong

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October Meeting:

Expanding Social Security Benefits

"Let's expand Social Security benefits," was the heading for Michael Hiltzik's column in the Los Angeles Times on April 25th this year. How could he have made such an optimistic statement just after the 2012 annual report of the program's trustees reflected "disappointing economic growth, high unemployment and an unexpectedly large cost-of-living increase for beneficiaries," plus the trust funds will be exhausted by 2033, three years earlier than last year's report?

Mr. Hiltzik claims "that the program isn't 'insolvent' or 'bankrupt,'" and those points aren't clearly or adequately stated in the report. He further states that since these dire predictions are two decades off, "economic recovery alone will improve the program's fiscal condition, and the trustees say that even if Congress does absolutely nothing, in 2033 there still will be money to pay about 75% of currently scheduled benefits."

So, what are the current figures we need to know in order to keep level heads about this "crisis"?

First, the trust fund currently totals nearly \$2.7 trillion because the program ran a surplus last year of \$69 billion. Second, on Page 2 of the report, "it says that right now Social Security is providing benefits to 55 million people," keeping "20 million Americans out of poverty," thus helping to stabilize the economy "by putting money into the hands of people who will spend it on goods and services." And finally, the report "points to the best way to improve Social Security's value for all Americans: by increasing benefits to better serve the neediest workers, and to expanding its reach to cover workers and dependents who have been cheated by or

excluded from the system for far too long."

Supporters for increasing benefits exist. Please join us on October 21 and find out from Mr. Hiltzik who they are and how we can support them – now!

September Meeting Report

By Christine Mei

Club Business

Club President Connie Sullivan made the following announcements.

a) Next month's meeting will be held on October 21 at the Pacific Unitarian Church. The speaker is Los Angeles Times Pulitzer Prize winning author, Michael Hiltzik. He will speak on Social Security.

b) There will be a fundraiser for AI Muratsuchi on September 30 at the home of Melanie and Richard Lundquist. More information will be forthcoming via email.

c) A town hall meeting on fracking will be held on Saturday, September 29 @ 9:30 AM-12 PM at the Pacific Unitarian Church. The Environmental Priorities Network is the sponsor.

d) Rascha and David Hall will host a fundraiser for Henry Waxman on Wednesday, October 24. The address is 6603 Madeline Cove Drive, RPV.

e) There will be a club fundraiser at the Red Brick Pizza after the meeting.

Connie also asked club members to approve the by-law amendment. The amendment was approved unanimously.

Congressman Henry Waxman

Mr. Waxman is running to represent the 33rd Congressional District. This newly drawn district stretches from Augora and Calabasas to the Palos Verdes Peninsula. He is very excited about the

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*Rep. Henry Waxman - Democrat for Congress
33rd District*

prospect of representing Palos Verdes.

He began his speech by touting President Obama's legislative achievements. Among them are the Affordable Care Act, the stimulus bill, and the Dodd-Frank bill for Wall Street reform, just to name a few.

But President Obama's efforts were hampered constantly by a Republican Party determined from the beginning not to give the president any victory on any issue. They routinely used filibustering to block bills that the president wanted. In the case of the Affordable Care Act, the president had to give in to the demands of some Democrats and one Independent in exchange for their support. In the case of the stimulus bill, every House Republican voted against the bill. The president had to convince three Republican senators to vote with the Democrats to pass the bill.

On the foreign policy front, Mr. Waxman feels the president has been calm and methodical. In the case of Iran, the president is using the combination of sanctions, diplomacy and sensitivity to try to obtain win-win solutions



*Al Muratsuchi - Democrat for State
Assembly District 66*

for all parties. It has not happened yet, but he believes we have to give that concept a chance. The president has great understanding of the situations in the Middle East. He knows it requires careful deliberation on the part of the United States. Mr. Waxman feels that talks of drawing a red line or using military force are unnerving. That kind of mentality got us into the Iraq war.

This election is about choosing the basic vision for the future, Mr. Waxman contends. The Republicans' vision for the future is the budget endorsed by Governor Romney. It seeks to shift Medicare costs to seniors, deprive the safety net for the very poor and disabled and give tax breaks to upper income people. Mr. Waxman and the Democrats, on the other hand, believe in a society that gives people opportunities, provides education to enable them to go as far as their abilities will take them, and, when they do not have the abilities, treats them with decency, which means a safety net for all.

Mr. Waxman is very proud of his own accomplishments. Many bills he sponsored were passed with bipartisan support. Examples are the Clean Air Act, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Hatch-Waxman Act

for generic drugs, the Orphan Drug Act, etc. His emphasis has always been on health and environmental issues, but he stays on top of foreign policy and budget issues.

Mr. Waxman's opponent is a very wealthy Republican running as an independent to attract votes. Anyone who is interested in helping Mr. Waxman, please contact Christina Romero at 323-413-2332.

Al Muratsuchi

Al Muratsuchi is the candidate for the 66th Assembly District. He is a state prosecutor and a Torrance school board member. He got into this race because he was frustrated with the severe state budget cuts to the Torrance schools. Similar cuts are affecting schools throughout California.

Al focused on three issues that separate him from his opponent:

a) Public education – Al will fight to restore funding for schools because he understands the consequences of budget cuts on the quality of education. His opponent, Craig Huey, just wants to cut spending and shrink the government.

b) Women's rights – Al is 100% pro-choice while Craig Huey calls Roe v. Wade evil and Planned Parenthood the murder mill. In last year's congressional race, his supporters made an offensive video "Turn Right USA" depicting Janice Hahn as a stripper and pole dancer.

c) Environment – Al is an environmentalist. He will fight to protect our environment. His opponent is on record calling global warming a fraud and environmentalists pagans and sinners.

Al asked the audience to spread the word to help elect him. His website is www.alforasassembly.com.

Election Endorsements

The California Democratic Party endorses the following:

For office holders: President Barack Obama, Senator Diane Feinstein, Henry Waxman (CD-33), Maxine Waters (CD-43), Janice Hahn (CD-44), Alan Lowenthal (CD-47), and Al Muratsuchi (AD-66).

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Sergio Carrillo, regional chair of California Democratic Party

For state propositions: Yes on 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40; No on 31, 32, 33, 38; Neutral on 39.

Among the races for the office holders, there are two very competitive races, the CD-47 race and the AD-66 race, because voter registration for both parties in these two districts is very close. Sergio Carrillo, the regional chair of the California Democratic Party, told the audience the importance of winning these two races for Democrats:

If Alan Lowenthal wins, Democrats can take back the House if California Democrats also capture five seats currently held by the Republicans.

If Al Muratsuchi wins, Democrats will have a two-thirds majority in the state legislature. Winning the AD-66 assembly seat will determine California's future. This is the most important race in California for Democrats to win. It is absolutely important for all of us to help Al win.

Sergio went over some of the recommendations on the propositions and the rationale behind the recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned after raffling off three Obama campaign items.

2012 Elections to cost \$5.8 Billion By Hans Grellmann

Our democracy is up for sale. Actually, many of our "representatives" have already been bought and paid for. They now represent whoever provides them with the truckloads of cash required to get elected or re-elected in this country.



It keeps getting worse from election to election. It is estimated that \$5.4 billion were spent on the elections in 2008. This year it is projected to increase to \$5.8 billion, with \$2.5 billion to be spent for the presidential race alone. That is 5,800,000,000. If you laid this out in \$100 bills end to end along the interstate highways from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., they would reach from LA to DC and back, with \$170 million left over.

It wouldn't be so bad if this money were spent educating voters about the issues and the underlying facts. But no, this flood of money is spent spreading outright lies and carefully crafted misinformation to confuse rather than educate voters. Our election circus focuses on personalities and trivia while the important issues are avoided or ridiculed. This ain't democracy, folks!

Our campaign finance muddle (it doesn't deserve the term "system") has gotten worse after every Supreme Court decision, with the 2010 Citizens United ruling removing practically all remaining restrictions so that big donors and corporations can give unlimited amounts in secret.

Our political system cannot be repaired unless the campaign finance system is reformed. Moves are afoot to require disclosure, which would help but not fix the muddle. There

is also a drive to amend the constitution to overturn the effects of the Citizen United decision. This has been compared to climbing Mt. Everest, but it could be done with sufficient citizen pressure on our political class. All of us should get involved.

If you want to become an informed citizen on these matters, I urge you to watch Bill Moyers Journal every Friday. Every one of his programs is a journalistic masterpiece.

Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club Expenditure By Connie Sullivan

This month our board voted to donate \$1,000 to Congressman Henry Waxman's campaign. This was the only expenditure.

PVP Democratic Club Board Meetings By Connie Sullivan

Our board meetings are open to any and all members who might wish to attend. Board meetings are usually held on the Tuesday evening following our Sunday general membership meeting each month. The Pacific Unitarian Church at 5621 Montemalaga Dr. graciously provides space to us. Our meetings begin at 7:00 pm.

Hope to see you there.

PVPDC Officers for 2012 Contact Info

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Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club
 Founded 1952

P.O. Box 2234,
 Rolling Hills Est. Ca 90274

Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

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

As a member of the PVP Democratic Club, 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

Please Send your membership form to P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. Ca 90274

Name _____ I am a registered Democrat
 Name* _____ I am a registered Democrat

* Fill in if Applying as a Family - two memberships

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
 I might offer my home for a meeting or social event