

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

January 2014 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

JANUARY MEETING

DATE: January 19, 2014

TIME: 2:30– 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library
701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

TOPIC: Water Sustainability, Desalination,
and Costs

SPEAKERS: Conner Everts, Lou Vince

FEBRUARY MEETING

DATE: February 16, 2014

TIME: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library
701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

TOPIC: Our Prison System

SPEAKER: TBD

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January Meeting Water Sustainability, Desalination, and Costs By Connie Sullivan

I once heard Ken Burns, the brilliant documentarian, say historians would recognize the two wars we fought in Iraq as the "Oil Wars" but future wars will be known as "Water Wars". Let's hope it doesn't come to that.

The main topic for our January meeting will be about water sustainability issues with special focus on the potential for desalination to provide water for our needs. We'll hear from Conner Everts, Executive Director of the Southern California Watershed Alliance, a group dedicated to maintaining a sustainable water supply and to properly managing watersheds for our community's long-term health. Mr. Everts is well known in water policy and water sustainability circles and formerly served on the State Task Force on Desalination. He has provided advice to water policy activists on desalination and other water-related environmental issues.

On another side of the issue we will hear from a second speaker concerned about the fiscal challenges cities face in complying with the new storm water permit requirements, which could have negative impacts on our cities' programs and services.

Should be an interesting exchange.

Finally, we will hear from Lou Vince, a Democrat running for Sheriff. I'm sure every one of our members has heard about the various ongoing scandals in Sheriff Baca's jails and his department. Now is the time to replace Sheriff Baca, a man who seems to be strangely oblivious to what goes on in his own department – and that's the generous assessment of his mismanagement.

November Meeting Report By Marta Leipzig

Introducing our new and improved name:
Palos Verdes Democrats!

Out with the old. In with the new. President Connie Sullivan kicked off November's meeting by asking members to vote on shortening our group's name from Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club to the much easier to pronounce – and remember -- Palos Verdes Democrats. At a previous board meeting, members felt that dropping "Club" from our name would sound more welcoming and less exclusive.

Roger Schamp motioned to accept the change, it was quickly seconded, the motion carried and thus our new name was born.

The timing is perfect since our charter application with the LA County Democratic Party is due in December.

What's Really Going On with Covered California and the Affordable Care Act (ACA)? Three Local Experts Speak Out

Following weeks of negative news about the dysfunctional roll out of Obamacare, three of the LA area's most knowledgeable specialists on the topic offered their perspectives at November's meeting. Presentations were made by: Dr. Trudi Carter, Chief Medical Officer of LA Care Health Plan; Jeff Flick, National Vice President for Government Programs at HealthCare Partners (HCP); and Marcia Davalos, Southern California Outreach Manager for the Small Business Majority. Each explained their organizational goals while acknowledging the wave of implementation challenges that lie ahead.

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Carl Muchnick, PVD 2nd Vice President

Carl Muchnick, 2nd Vice President, introduced the panel after giving his personal overview about the evolution of healthcare insurance and “the variety of schemes” that Americans have seen over the past several decades. “ACA is addressing the critical needs of millions of uninsured Americans who have fallen through the cracks in the past. It was never meant to cover the whole country like socialized medicine,” he said. “Canada has a single payer system and the single payer is the government. ACA is designed differently. Our speakers today will explain why”.

What follows are highlights from each speaker’s presentation.

Dr. Trudi Carter, LA Care

LA Care is the nation’s largest publicly operated health plan with over 1 million members.

More than 2 million residents of Los Angeles County are currently uninsured.

LA Care strongly supports national health care reform and Medi-Cal expansion.

California is 1 of 17 states that decided to create their own health insurance exchange not tied to the federal rollout.

Covered California is the first legislated state health exchange, LA formed under the ACA.

There are two separate exchanges under Covered California - individual and small business.

All Covered California plans must offer 10 essential health benefits including ambulatory care, hospitalization, prescription drugs, laboratory services, pediatric care, maternity care, mental health care and laboratory services.

Medi-Cal has offered very limited behavioral, mental health and substance abuse provisions in the past. All Covered California plans must offer benefits for these conditions.

All four “metal levels” of Covered California (Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze) must offer the same benefits. The more expensive levels cover a higher percentage of costs but the premiums are higher.

LA Care is the lowest cost plan at the Bronze Level.

LA Care’s main focus is on appealing to Bronze and Silver Levels of the Medi -Cal population.

The major rollout problems Covered California has experienced include:

- Electronic glitches
- Not enough testing time
- The complexity of the sub-populations in the exchange and lack of awareness concerning their needs
- Narrow networks
- Effective ways to document and report results

If you want to understand why Washington is struggling so much with the website rollout, my slide deck will show you how complicated the program really is.

I’ve seen the enormous flow chart with the huge number of variables that must be factored into the Covered California and the national websites. It’s crazy, crazy!

But I do believe Obamacare is here to stay. Yes, the next 18 months will be rough and progress will be slower than expected. But things will settle down and we’ll find a way to make it work.

The Exchange concept will drive innovation.

Obamacare will survive and evolve. It will no doubt look different in the future.

As Churchill once said, “you can always count on Americans to do the right thing – after they’ve tried everything else”.

Jeff Flick, HealthCare Partners

I worked at The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in DC in 2006 when the “donut hole” rolled out. It was a horrible mess in the beginning. Websites weren’t working.



Jeff Flick, HealthCare Partners



Marcia Davalos, Small Business Majority

People couldn’t get the drugs they relied on. Fingers pointed in all directions. All I can think is, let’s try to get it right this time.

I do believe Obamacare will get fixed --- maybe in 3 or 4 months – possibly up to a year. But it will be challenging and it’s going to be a little bumpy for a while.

Our healthcare insurance industry is broken. Almost 50 million Americans have no health insurance at all

But the majority of insured Americans are getting coverage they like from their employers. They don’t want to give it up.

It’s a very tricky line to walk. The ACA is a law with winners and losers. If you’re older and not on Medi-Cal, you’ll like it. If you’re young and healthy, you won’t like it. Women will like it. Men not so much. Above middle income people won’t like it. Below middle income people will like it.

I think we’ll find a way to work this out.

DC hit the panic button last week. Young

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people, especially, are frustrated with all the computer glitches and the costs of health insurance they don't think they need right now.

We need a balanced group of participants.

The truth is we need a program that will work for all people who really need help AND appeal to those who don't want to give up the plans they already know and like.

Marcia Davalos, Small Business Majority

My group recently received a grant specifically for health care outreach and education for small businesses in Southern California.

Many small businesses in the area will find new opportunities under the ACA.

Covered California is offering a combination of choice and benefits for small businesses to offer on par with what large employers do, but without having to pay additional fees.

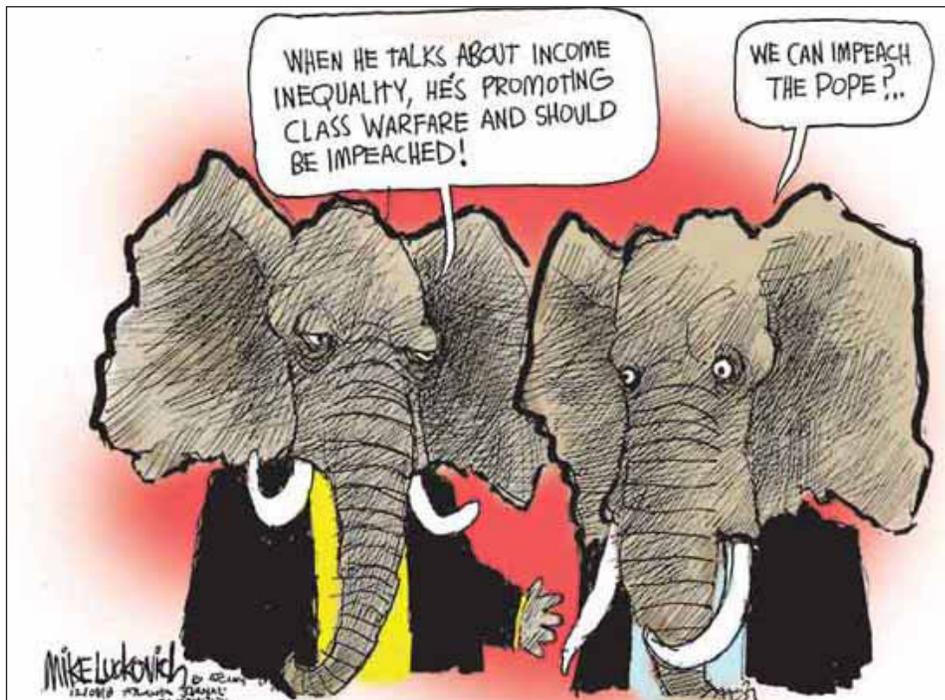
Small businesses – those with fewer than 50 employees – are not mandated to provide health insurance under the ACA. But small businesses that want to provide insurance may now be eligible for subsidies based on a sliding scale.

Currently there are 28 million small businesses in the country.

Small business health care insurance costs would more than double by 2018 without current reforms.

30% of the self-employed are uninsured and can't make ends meet when it comes to health insurance.

In California -- home of entrepreneurial greatness -- a quarter of a million people could now be able to break away and start their own



businesses because of the ACA .

70% of all Emergency Room users are youth – the young invincibles who can't seem to justify the cost of health insurance.

96% of small businesses have less than 50 employees..

Small businesses offering health insurance can now receive tax credits on a sliding scale.

375,000 small businesses in California fit the criteria for tax credits.

Covered California allows small business owners to pick a level of coverage and their employees can pick any plan at that level. It's a win-win for all.

Please note that the PowerPoints presented by Dr. Trudi Carter and Marcia Davalos are available at pvpdemocrats.org.

Club Expenditures

By Connie Sullivan

It's been a while since we spent any club funds on anything other than meeting room rentals or refreshments, but in December we made a \$200 donation to Tim Goodrich who is running for Torrance City Council.

Tim is a member of our club and an elected member of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party. You may remember that he spoke to our club last spring when we had a panel that spoke about a military topic.

Tim is a veteran who is part of the Truman National Security Project, which advocates for clean energy solutions to break us of our dependence on foreign oil.

Board Vacancy

By Connie Sullivan

If you're interested in joining our board, you're in luck! We have a new vacancy in the Parliamentarian position. This is a perfect way to get involved without too much of a time commitment. Basically, the Parliamentarian attends our monthly general and board meetings and makes sure I follow Robert's Rules. It's a nice way to get your feet wet.

If you're interested, please give me a call at 310-378-1554 or send me an email at pvedems@gmail.com.

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 Democrats
 Founded 1952

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 Rolling Hills Est. Ca 90274

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

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 _____ 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:

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 I might offer my home for a meeting or social event