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## November 2017 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274  
 Visit Us on the Web at [www.pvpedemocrats.org](http://www.pvpedemocrats.org)  
 "One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

### COMING EVENTS

**Social time: 2pm**

#### 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

#### DECEMBER MEETING

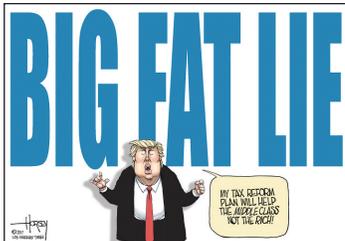
**NO MEETING** in December ....enjoy the holidays.

#### JANUARY MEETING

**DATE:** Sunday, January 19th  
**MEETING TIME:** 2:30-4:30pm  
**LOCATION:** Peninsula Center Library Community Room; 701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE  
**TOPIC:** CA Lt. Governor Race  
**SPEAKER:** Lt. Governor Candidate Dr. Asif Mahmood

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### November General Meeting Our November meeting will highlight the ACLU.

First we will hear from **Julianne Tippett**, the young woman who asked us to help fund her trip to the ACLU Summer Institute in Washington, D.C. last summer. Julianne will recount her trip and take some questions about her experience at the Summer Institute.

We will also be joined by **Jessica Farris** policy advocacy counsel and director of criminal justice and drug policy for the ACLU of Southern California. Since 2013, Jess has provided research and strategy guidance for ACLU SoCal chapters and works on varied policy and advocacy issues, with a focus on privacy/surveillance and criminal justice. Jess will provide us with an update on ACLU priorities in the age of Trump and how the organization has been on the front lines of pushing back against the extremist Republican agenda on immigration, criminal justice, and rolling back civil rights.

### October Meeting Report by Gary Boston and Carol Moeller

PV Dems were pleased to host **Peter Muller**, the Deputy State Director for Senator Diane Feinstein. Peter has been with the Senator for a bit over a year and runs her Southern California office in Los Angeles. Given the Senator's recent news announcing her bid for a fifth term -- and Kevin De Leon's announcement to challenge her from the left -- as well as her prominence on both of the Senate committees investigating Russian election interference, Mr. Muller's visit to the club was particularly timely.

Mr. Muller led off the discussion outlining

Senator Feinstein's legislative priorities in what is expected to be an extremely busy final quarter of 2017 for Congress, with several critical deadlines approaching.

One of the Senator's key focuses will be trying to reignite the discussion on **common sense gun control** legislation in the wake of the Las Vegas massacre. The Senator has long been an advocate to stronger gun control, authoring the original Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in 2004. As a preliminary measure, Senator Feinstein has introduced Senate Bill 1916 (Automatic Gunfire Prevention Act) which would outlaw so-called "bump stocks", devices used by the Las Vegas gunman that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire as quickly as fully-automatic weapons. The bill has 38 co-sponsors, but no Republicans. A similar bill in the House (H.R. 3999) introduced by Rep. Curbelo (R-FL) does have some bipartisan support. During the Q&A session the idea of mandatory liability insurance for gun owners was raised and Mr. Muller indicated that he would bring the idea back to the Senator as a further step in the fight to push back on the plague of US gun violence.



**Peter Muller**  
 Deputy State Director for Senator Diane Feinstein

When the Senate returns from recess this week, one of the first orders of business will be getting to work on a **Budget Resolution**. While not technically a law, the Budget Resolution

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lays out a framework for the Appropriations process, which is the funding mechanism for all of the major branches of government. More importantly, however, given the dysfunctional state of the legislative branch, the Budget Resolution is a powerful procedural weapon in that it allows major legislative changes to be swept up in the budget process under Reconciliation and to be passed with only 50+1 votes in the Senate instead of the 60 vote threshold required under regular order. This is how the Republicans attempted to repeal and replace the ACA last year and how they will likely attempt to pass major tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations this year. They will also likely begin the repeal and replace process again for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, Mr. Muller noted, a Budget Resolution also only needs 50+1 votes to pass in the Senate, making a stalling of the tax cut process difficult for the Democrats.

Of course in a more normal legislative setting, the budget should have been passed by September 30. The two major deadlines looming in Congress before year end are: **Government Funding and the Debt Ceiling.** The debt ceiling limit is set to be breached on December 8 and at some point before year end the government will run out of funding -- we are currently operating under temporary funding. These two deadlines will have both sides trying to gain leverage to move certain agenda items forward as a requirement to stop a government shutdown or, more perilously, blow up the nation's credit rating. For the Republicans, the bargaining chips may revolve around the high-income tax cuts or a border wall. The Democrats have already signalled that there is one issue they may be willing to go to the mat for--- **DACA recipients a/k/a Dreamers.**

The administration's decision to throw

DACA recipients into further limbo for six month puts a potential deportation deadline on the calendar for almost 800,000 Americans in early March. Given California's place as home to the highest number of Dreamers in the country, Senator Feinstein has been active in trying to resolve this issue. The Senator is one of 6 Democratic co-sponsors of the bipartisan DREAM Act (S. 1615). The bill would allow permanent residence—and a path to citizenship—for children of undocumented immigrants if they came to this country as children, get a high school degree or GED, pass a background check and English proficiency test, and have no criminal record.

The last topic that Mr. Muller addressed in his prepared remarks was the **Russia Investigations.** Senator Feinstein sits on both of the Senate committees investigating Russian meddling in the 2016 elections and the possibility of collusion with the Republican party to influence the outcome. Mr. Muller noted that the Senator has become "increasingly frustrated" with the Judiciary committee process despite a good working relationship with Chair Grassley. She is actively pushing for more public hearings and expects both Trump, Jr. and Manafort will shortly testify in open hearing. With regard to the ongoing Department of Justice investigation, Mr. Muller noted that Senator Feinstein has a long standing relationship with Robert Mueller, who she respects, as he was U.S. Attorney in San Francisco while she was mayor and FBI Director during her tenure in the Senate.

A lively Q&A session followed, with questions and comments covering additional legislative matters, Democratic Party messaging and the upcoming midterm elections.

When asked about the Childhood Health Insurance Program, which the Republicans

recently let expire, Mr. Muller acknowledged that it too joins the long list of items that need immediate attention from Congress, given that 9 million children rely on CHIP for healthcare. He noted that states like California will be able to pick up the slack for some period of time, but not forever. Children in less generous states will likely suffer sooner. On the administration's decision to stop funding the ACA subsidies (CSRs), Muller expected that while permanent funding of those arrangements might be accomplished legislatively, a judicial resolution might come sooner, with several State Attorney Generals announcing plans to sue the Federal government for payment.

A club member noted that both Senators Feinstein and Harris had been touring the wildfire zones in Northern California with Governor Brown in the past days and asked on the timing of bringing FEMA in to provide relief and aid in recovery. Mr. Muller noted that with fires still burning, it may yet be too early for a full assessment of the damage but that California has typically seen a timely and strong response from FEMA in past disasters.

The discussion turned toward elections with an eye toward 2018. As Muller noted, the Senate map does not look great for Democrats with more vulnerable Democrats than pick up opportunities. However, given the extreme right wing's increasing appetite to challenge sitting Republicans from the right, some unusual opportunities may arise. The upcoming Senate election in Alabama may provide some insights on such a dynamic. The retirement of Bob Corker in TN may also create a long-shot opportunity. The relative good news, however, comes in the House races in 2018 and California is ground zero for taking back control of the House. Right here in our backyard are five congressional districts with sitting Republican Reps that Hillary Clinton carried. These five districts are viewed by the DNC as "must-win" races to have a chance to regain some legislative balance in Washington.

It is always interesting to get an inside view on our elected officials and how they see the DC landscape. While it is clear that the near term will call for ongoing vigilance and activism on our part to continue to hold what ground we can, the positive takeaways from the meeting seem to have been that our efforts have paid off, whether in saving the ACA for now or pushing back on unconstitutional Muslim bans.

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## Don't Wait Until 2018 --- Get Active Now! (go to [www.pvpdemocrats.org](http://www.pvpdemocrats.org) for details)

While the 2018 midterms may seem a long way off, there are opportunities to get involved in flipping House seats today and opportunities to make even more immediate progress in state-level elections happening right now.

### Turn VA Blue

Virginia is a critical swing state. Although Virginia went to Hillary, the state legislature currently has a veto-proof Republican majority. 2017 is an election year and every seat in the House of Delegates is up for election. The Governor's seat is also being termed out, so the seat is up for grabs. Controlling state legislatures is critical to reversing gerrymandering and for building a bench for national candidates. Right here in PV there are opportunities to phone bank to help get out the vote in the Virginia elections on November 7.

Here are some upcoming phone banking opportunities and contacts:

**Monday October 30** 2-6 pm: Pat Maier (patandken1@cox.net) hosting 4739 Lone Valley Dr, RPV 310.541.6490

**Thursday November 2** 2-6 pm: Email Caryl Schwartz (pvcaryl@verizon.net) for details

### Help Flip SoCal Blue 2018

Southern California will determine whether or not we can regain control of the House in 2018 and Orange County is ground zero for those efforts. Our illustrious next door neighbor, Russia's favorite Congressman, Dana Rohrabacher is one of the prime targets for flipping a seat. Major efforts are underway to mobilize and register Democrats in the 48th District well ahead of the election. However, our neighbors need help and need volunteers. You can find a constantly updating list of voter registration events in the 48th at [www.volunteersignup.org/WTPB](http://www.volunteersignup.org/WTPB). Also a group of 20 or so local Democratic clubs and allied organizations have formed the 48 Congressional District Action Council to coordinate efforts and are also looking for volunteers. You can reach out to PV Dems member Connie Koehler ([ckoehler@pacbell.net](mailto:ckoehler@pacbell.net)) to help Flip the 48th.

In addition, there has been a wave of candidates coming forward to run in opposition creating a real opportunity in 2018 -- and in 2017 in state and local elections-- to turn the tide.

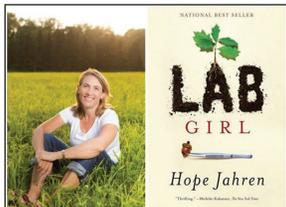
## Book Review

### Lab Girl

by Hope Jahren

Reviewed by Carol Moeller

My reasons for reading this book had nothing to do with our Dem Club and everything to do with the fact that the author was a scientist and taught at a university, both of which were hats I wore.



While providing readers with extremely understandable, interesting and vivid reasons to appreciate all things green and growing, Jahren also portrays the extreme difficulties she encountered trying to make a living in her area of expertise (Botany) while teaching at the university level. That someone who received a PhD from Berkeley should start out so underpaid and so overworked (at one point, she realized she had to work at least one 24-hour shift per week, along with long, long hours the rest of the week, including weekends, just to get all her work done), is a clear example of the disdain our society currently shows for academics. I taught in a university licensure

program for laboratory medicine, and because my graduates qualified to sit for board exams leading to jobs in the more lucrative medical field, their starting salary was more than that of a newly-minted PhD teaching in a university, even those teaching in medical programs!

This is what compelled me to report on this book. Those in "curiosity-driven research" (fields that have a lesser likelihood of providing immediate profit) are low priority for the one source of grants these researchers have available, the National Science Foundation (NSF). NASA gets twice what all the other sciences get combined, but that pales in comparison with the discrepancy between science research and military spending (whose "discretionary budget" is sixty times that of the entire NSF budget). All of these are pre-Trump numbers, so expect the gap to widen considerably under the current science-denying administration.

**Editor's Note: Lynn Bommer, at our October meeting, was excited to report about the LCASB and here Phil Borden tells us what it is all about.**

## Left Coast Alliance LA South Bay (LCASB)

by Phil Borden



Left Coast Alliance - LA South Bay (LCASB) brings together the progressive organizations of the area. LCASB represents a coalition of groups with similar purposes and goals but often

different ways of converting them into actions. LCASB aims to transcend the fragmentation of the left by creating a safe place for similarly inclined established political entities to advance their common goals. It will support, not restrict, activities of its individual member groups.

Since its formation in late September, LCASB has created a Website ([leftcoastalliance.org](http://leftcoastalliance.org)) so that progressive organizations can present and exchange action oriented information. The Website features a common left-oriented calendar-at-a glance, a news feed, a blog, and space for detailed information on each participating organization. The Alliance also has a Facebook page (on Facebook, search *left coast alliance la south bay*) for member groups and their constituents to exchange views on a more informal basis.

The Alliance will hold periodic conversations at which individuals of all persuasions can exchange ideas on specific political topics in a large open face-to-face forum. The first such event will take place January 27. A panel of subject experts on air and water issues and effective environmental action will lead a broad ranging audience discussion on the local impact of these issues, and on how concerted actions have succeeded in other localities.

The Palos Verdes Democratic Club is an active member of LCASB. It is one of eleven similar clubs, political action and information organizations to participate so far. The list is growing. See the Website, Facebook page, or [philawed@gmail.com](mailto:philawed@gmail.com) for further information.



### 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](http://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 \_\_\_\_\_  I am a registered Democrat  
Name\* \_\_\_\_\_  I am registered No Party Preference  
\* Fill in if Applying as a Family - two memberships  I am a registered Democrat  
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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

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