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31st Democrats Newsletter

Meetings are held at the Marion Grange, 27725 Sumner-Buckley Hwy E, Buckley
www.31stdistrictdemocrats.org

(Organized by R. Craig Sanders-email: z1n45rgiarc@netscape.com and Patricia Szot)

ONGOING FOOD DRIVE-We are collecting for local food banks

Monthly Meeting-February 17th

6-7 pm Social Hour; 7 pm General Business Meeting

This months meeting features:

- 1) **Rose Ehart**, Secretary of Pierce County Democrats, will discuss starting a Legislative Action Committee for Pierce County (King County already has one).
- 2) **Ron Weigelt** is running against Pam Roach this year. See the following websites for information: www.pnwlocalnews.com/south_king/aub/community/83275432.html and www.thenewstribune.com/opinion/editorials/story/1053369.html?story_link=email_msg.
- 3) **Ray Bunk**, running in the open seat left by Dan Roach, may speak at the meeting.
- 4) **Voting On the Endorsement process** discussed last month. Go to the website to see the new forms.

PROGRESSIVES ON THE PLATEAU

WHEN: February 27, 2010 (Saturday)

WHERE: Lakeland Hills Community Center (5801 Lakeland Hills Way SE, Auburn, WA 98092)

TIME: 7 pm- 10pm

COST: \$25 single or \$40 couple

We will have a jazz band and lots of food and drink (beer and wine). Come and discuss your thoughts/feelings concerning the present political system with fellow individuals that have similar thoughts, plus enjoy good music and food.

For tickets call Patti Szot (253-939-7829), leave your name and a phone number to call back (I will return your call) OR Email at szot.patricia@gmail.com or send a check to the 31st LD (20825 SR 410 E #130, Bonney Lake, WA 98391) OR pick up tickets at this monthly meeting.

A personnel comment on the function by Craig Sanders-

In my view, if you're for "We the People" then you're a Progressive. Some people think that Progressives hate business. That couldn't be further from the truth. I'm a Progressive and I love business,

especially small-businesses, because they are the backbone of the American way of life. If this country ever fails, it will be because of the death of small businesses. What I dislike is big business that's gotten so big that it's smothering the small business people, stifling competition and destroying the middle-class. As I said, I'm a Progressive. My wife and I do well and live a comfortable-enough life. I'm not interested in trying to be rich. I'm much more interested in justice. But personally, I'm worried about what kind of life my 2 kids are going to have. I doubt that they will be part of the rich, so that means that if there's no middle-class, they will be part of the poor. I think that in America, that is unacceptable. I want whatever will help all of the people of this country. Not just the rich, not just the city-folk, not just the poor. Everybody!!! This country has slowly moved to more and more conservative notions that only seem interested in self-preservation. I feel that the only way that all of us are going to survive is to look out for one another. As Jim Hightower says, "We all do better when we all do better". To me this means that if we all worked collectively and weren't concerned about whether everyone else is working as hard as we are, we would all benefit much more than if we worked individually. To a certain extent, this means that we have to start trusting each other again (like the old days). I know that this is a difficult concept, considering that nobody seems to trust government now. But I believe that the only way that "We the People" can bring about change is to join the Democratic Party and change it from within. Government is not going to improve by whining about it, nor will a third party be able to bring about significant change. **We must be the change that we hope to see** (Gandhi, I believe).

I'm not concerned in getting Barack Obama re-elected. To be honest, I think that if he worked for "We the People" instead of only supporting Wall Street, there's no way he wouldn't get re-elected (barring election fraud which is another subject). If he can't (or won't) help Main Street as much as he's helped Wall Street, then maybe he's not the one for the job.

In trying to bring about real change, we're having a fundraising gathering where we're going to be serving wine (and beer) and cheese and have a three-piece jazz group from Enumclaw as entertainment. We've called it Progressives on the Plateau and it will be held Saturday, February 27th, 2010, as described above. I hope that people reading this may feel that something may be accomplished if we all work together. I believe all of you got your invitations in the mail. It would be great if the country could start moving in a "We the People" direction.

See you there. Craig

As a Progressive, I listen to AM 1090 (especially Thom Hartmann 9am-1200pm), subscribe to The Nation, The Progressive, The Progressive Populist (invitational subscription \$15/6 months, published twice a month), The Hightower Lowdown and The Washington Spectator. I also enjoy the locally produced Eat the State and Pirate TV on the local channel.

Health Care Around The World

Perhaps the reason that people in the United States are reluctant to change our health care system is fear. Fear of the unknown is a very powerful emotion. It seems that all we are hearing is that there is no point trying to change the system because change won't work or that the system is working fine. But the truth is the system has been getting worse for years now and will continue to get worse if we don't take some measures to fix it. At the present time some 45 million Americans and growing don't have healthcare. When these people get sick, they have to go to the Emergency Room. It ends up being a lot more expensive and taxpayers end up paying for it anyway. If I have to pay for it anyway, I'd just as soon have it be more economical. Presently, Americans spend about 17% of the GDP on healthcare.

Did you know that all other developed nations in the world have decided to make sure that their citizens have access to affordable healthcare and that they still pay about half or less of their GDP than the U.S. pays? These countries made the conscientious decision that it would be immoral if they didn't insure that everyone was covered. In other words, they believe that health care is a right, not a privilege. How a nation cares for its citizens is a statement of how that nation values its citizens.

Information presented here is largely taken verbatim from "[THE HEALING OF AMERICA](#)" by T.R. Reid. I've tried to summarize the information into short snippets out of the book. This is an excellent book

discussing the various healthcare systems around the world (both advantages and disadvantages). **T.R. Reid has suggested that all the US needs to do is decide which system works best and then adopt it and perhaps, even improve upon it.** It isn't as though the U.S. has to totally invent a new health care system.

This month we will discuss the health care system in **JAPAN**

Japanese health care is based upon the German Bismarck system and can be summarized as no waiting, no gatekeepers and no rationing. There is a broad range of health care choices and prices are kept low (through rigid cost-control mechanisms that favor the patient at the expense of the doctors and hospitals). Insurance pays about 70% of the low-cost bill. A shoulder replacement procedure with 5 days in the hospital would cost 1/4th the amount that the U.S. would charge (with only 1 day in the hospital).

Medical care is readily available, easy to get and cheap. Japanese health care is largely the result of the private sector system. The doctors are private, the hospitals are private and the bills are paid by insurance. The author (T. R. Reid) states that Japanese doctors are the most capitalist and competitive that he has seen. There is advertising for clinics and hospitals everywhere, including buses, billboards and on the airwaves.

The Japanese are the world's most prodigious consumers of health care. They average 14.5 visits a year, which is 3 times the U.S. average and twice the European average. Nearly all of the doctors in Japan are General Practitioners (GP) and they even make house calls. The Japanese love technology; they have twice as many CAT scans per capita as the U.S. and 3 times as many MRIs per capita as the U.S. Japan also has twice the number of hospital beds per capita as the U.S. Incredibly, the average hospital stay in Japan is 36 days (compared to 6 days in the U.S.). On the other hand, the Japanese are much less likely to have invasive surgeries such as arthroplasty, transplants or heart bypass. This is probably due to both economical and cultural reasons. The doctors in Japan don't recommend surgery as often; they tend to prefer drugs to surgery. The Japanese people take twice as many prescription drugs as the people of the U.S.

The Japanese are the healthiest people in the world in terms of life expectancy (of course, crime, drug use obesity, traffic accidents and HIV infections are also lower in Japan). They have universal health care, equal access and don't usually have long waiting lists. The Japanese system provides health care to every resident for minimal fees, no waiting lists and produces excellent results. If you add up the heavy demand, an aging population and almost no rationing, one would expect to have a huge national health care bill. "Despite universal coverage and prodigious consumption, Japan spends a lot less for health care.....about 8 % " (of GDP-about 1/2 of what the U.S. spends). While all other countries health care costs have gone up, Japan's costs have held steady or dropped since the 1990's (due to deflation). The Japanese system also keeps costs down by squeezing medical providers, limiting their income, which affects doctors, nurses, hospitals, drug makers, etc. Paid for through insurance plans, the patient pays 30% as co pay while insurance pays the other 70%. Co pays are lower for children and elderly. There is a ceiling on the amount that you have to pay. If you have expensive surgery during a single month, the most you will pay will be about \$650. Insurance plans have to accept you, regardless of pre-existing conditions, and they have to pay every claim that is submitted to them.

Japan uses a modified German Bismarck model which starts with private NON-PROFIT insurance providers. One big difference though, is how many health insurance plans. France has 14, Germany over 200. Japan has about 3500 health insurance plans. Plans fall into 3 categories that have different degrees of government involvement. The first category (most common) is employer-provided health care, where premiums are split between employer (55%) and employee (45%). These large companies are not subsidized the pensioners health plans. Some companies are so large they have their own hospitals. The second category is smaller companies – same idea but they are subsidized by about 14% by the government. The third category is the Citizens Health Insurance Plan, which is for retirees and the self-employed. In this case the government and the individual split the cost of the premium.

Health insurance is mandatory in Japan (every country that uses health insurance has a mandate that most, if not all, citizens carry it). This isn't generally a problem though because it's considered a personal responsibility to do one's part by having health insurance. If you don't pay for insurance, you will have to

pay a year's worth of premiums before health insurance will start paying your bills. Even so, about 1% of the population fails to buy insurance. For the unemployed or poor, the local government pays the entire premium.

Although modeled on the German system, Japan's health care differs in four ways. 1. Japan requires everyone to buy insurance i.e. mandate (the wealthy in Germany are not required to buy insurance). 2. The employee must take the insurance plan that the employer has chosen (Germany lets the employee choose from any of the 200 insurance plans). 3. Government negotiates with the providers such that fees are the same whether doctor's office is in the country or city. 4. Because the fees are the same everywhere, the Japanese only spend 8% of GDP on health care (versus 11% in Germany).

The reason that health care expenditures are only 8% is strict cost control. In this system, doctors and hospitals are the ones that suffer. In Japan, doctors do not get rich. Doctors make about 1/3 of what U.S. doctors make. Both doctors and insurance are private entities, but the negotiating is done by the Japanese government. This results in a multi-payer system that works like a single-payer system. The result is a competitive free market that is under firm government regulation. Examples: an MRI in the U.S. costs about \$1000-\$1400; in Japan, it's about \$105. Insurance plans cover such things as dental, psychiatric, chiropractic, physical therapy, herbal massage and acupuncture. Interestingly, they don't cover pregnancy, which is not considered an illness. They do receive a maternity grant from the local government worth about \$3000. This is enough to cover the entire pregnancy.

One of the disadvantages of the Japanese system is that the providers are the big losers. Over the long-term, about 1/2 of the hospitals and clinics are underfunded and many are struggling to break even and are on the verge of bankruptcy. The hospitals are unattractive, but functional, gray concrete structures that have sparse facilities, crowded spaces and stymied innovation (this is especially true in rural areas). Most innovation that does occur in Japan happens at hospitals that are associated with medical schools. There are many hospitals that are built and maintained by large corporations (like Toyota). Anyone can go to these hospitals but they tend to be in the big cities. The rural hospitals have a much more difficult time.

The clinics are clean, but sparse buildings (mostly built after WWII), so they are also functional, but ugly, with only metal chairs and tile floors. The smaller the clinic, the less likely that that clinic will have up-to-date equipment for the latest advances in medicine. Small clinics have to get by with gimmicks, like charging money for parking or having vending machines for snacks. Almost all of the patients come to the clinic without an appointment and if you keep them waiting too long, they may go elsewhere. In Japan physicians have to love their work because they know they won't get rich. In spite of this, there is no doctor shortage. It tends to be a cultural phenomenon in that the children of doctors are expected to become doctors themselves. Although they won't get rich, doctors do enjoy significant status within their community. Patients oftentimes bring gifts to the doctor (even though this is officially frowned upon). These gifts may have something to do with the low fees that doctors receive (kind of like waitressing in the U.S.-my thought). One other benefit is that the doctors do receive generous payments for making house calls. Tuition for medical school is about \$1500/year with the local government usually helping out. Malpractice insurance runs about \$1200/year at most (malpractice is included in the organizational fees that physicians pay).

Looking at the big-picture, Japanese medicine is the opposite of the U.S.-here, we spend too much and get too little; in Japan, they spend too little and get too much.

PS-An added note concerning Health care here in America:

Now is the time for President Obama to talk about health care. What Congress has come up with will hardly help anyone and it will end up being another big giveaway to the insurance industry, like Medicare Part D. He needs to ask for a cost-analysis for Single-Payer Health Care. Now that the insurance groups have spent all of this money (1.3 million a day) trying to defeat a flawed bill (except for the insurance giveaway) and the Congress has shown that it cannot get anything done, he needs to step in and push for Single-Payer. He needs to talk directly to the public about how much money it will save the United States. It would be a simple bill, not requiring much debate, like extending Medicare down by ten years of age every 2 years until we have Medicare for all. The insurance and pharmaceutical companies have already shown that this is a fight to the finish, so it's time for the knockout punch. What's the downside to Medicare for All, saving tons

of money and the gratitude of most of the nation? To me, this would be a great example of playing chess and not checkers.

Tort Reform-Information to Beat the Republican Myths

By Patti Szot

Now that there is discussion again about Health care, you hear most Republicans (Tea Baggers and Blue Dog Democrats) pushing **Tort Reform**. Now, you ask: “What is tort reform?” As a lay person (not a lawyer), this is how I see it. If a corporation in your town is found guilty of releasing a harmful compound into the cities water system and people die or are severely harmed (Can we say E. Coli in Jack in the Box restaurants or Love Canal in NY) the JURY decides how much the person (or people if more than one) are awarded for their injury. This is a very free market system. If you are guilty, you pay the price that the market (the jury) feels you owe. No one tells the jury what to award, they decide themselves based on the evidence. Tort reform says that the government will determine the amount of reward a person could get for an injury. This means the government will CAP the amount for say a lost life, inability to work, etc. Tort reform means the government intervenes in telling the jury what they can award. So if tort reform is big government why are Republicans FFing (flip-flopping-get your mind out of the gutter) on big government. We all the know the reason for Republicans to push tort reform, Republicans are really nothing but “**CORPORATISTS**”. Big government is OK for them as long as it means more profits for companies they hope to work for once they leave congress (or to tell a women what she can do with her body or whom you can marry).

They like to say tort reform will help the health care issue because doctors wouldn't have to worry about being sued for not doing something wrong (they also can't be sued when they DO something wrong either-like cutting off the wrong leg first and then having your other leg removed because the problem still exists, leaving you legless) or order many test to cover their behind in case they are sued. Several states have actually instituted tort reform so there is ample data to actually determine if tort reform really works.

The following is information addressing the “Corporatists” talking points.

Tort reform has not reduced Health care cost in any state implemented—

- 1) The cost of medical liability has stayed flat over the last 18 years, but as we all know health care costs have risen during those 18 years. Therefore, law suits are not the cause of increasing costs. Texas, a state with tort reform, had the third fastest increase in health insurance premiums and has led the nation in the percentage of its citizens without health insurance.
- 2) Medical malpractice is only 1-2% or less of total medical costs, not the 10-15% Republicans say it is. Because malpractice is such a small percentage of health care cost and because it isn't rising it has a very minimal effect on the cost of health care.
- 3) Only 4-7% of tort cases are related to health care
- 4) Few injured people actually file a malpractice case (4-7%).
- 5) In states with a cap, the amount awarded is not adjusted for inflation. Therefore, over the years the amount awarded is actually less.

Tort reform has not reduced “defensive medicine”—

A 1996 Florida study (Quarterly Journal of Economics by Stanford economists Daniel Kessler and Dr. Mark McClellan) found defensive medicine to cost 5-7%, but when tort reform was enacted defensive medicine fell to 2.5 to 3%. Physicians order tests based on what other colleagues do and sometimes to increase their revenue (they have stock in a particular facility that these test are done at).

Tort reform does NOT prevent Insurance companies from dropping you or not covering you for a “pre-existing condition”

Tort reform does not offer Insurance coverage to people with out it.

What tort reform does DO is to reduce the amount of money a corporation has to pay out for harming the public. That is why Republicans (Tea baggers and Blue Dog Democrats) are all for tort reform, not that they care about health care reform.

The main reason for the high health care cost that this country has is due to the heavy administrative cost of the private-FOR PROFIT insurance system. If you want to reduce the cost of insurance premiums, reform the Insurance companies.

Sources including 1) August 31st, 2009 New York Times article by Annie Underwood entitled “Would tort reform lower costs?”; 2) Americans for Insurance Reform-<http://insurance-reform.org/issues/MedMalSystemCostsFactSheet>; 3) Congressional Budget , and 4) June 10, 2009 Seducing the States with Tort Reform talkingpointmemo.com/talk/blogs/mahbarbara/2009/06/seducing-the-states-with0tort.php

Caucuses, Conventions, Nominations, Endorsements; Oh, My!

As we head into yet another election year, the only thing I can say with any certainty is that I am glad that I am not in Kansas. That unbroken line on the horizon is unnerving. Give me mountains! Give me trees that are taller than a prairie dog! Give me an ocean! Ah, Washington, thanks.

But much like what happened to Dorothy in Oz, Washington’s political yellow brick road has taken us into some dark woods. As we prepare for caucuses, conventions, nominations, and endorsements (oh, my!), I thought it would be helpful to provide folks with a bit of a road map so that we don’t get lost in the poppy fields, fall asleep, and never make it to Seattle, our very own Emerald City.

Without going in depth into the [wrangling](#) that got us here, Washington now has a Top Two Primary. The primary is not intended to act as a nominating system. Instead, the two candidates with the most votes advance to the general election, regardless of political party preference. That leaves it up to the Party to decide how best to nominate candidates for state-wide office.

Under old, well-established rules of the Democratic Party, on March 14, we are holding a **Legislative District Caucus**. People allowed to vote at the LD Caucus will include all registered voters in the 31st LD who are willing to declare themselves Democrats. At the caucus, we will elect delegates to the **Washington State Democratic Convention** (21 delegates and 10 alternates, plus our 2 State Committee persons & our LD Chair are auto-delegates). The delegates and alternates elected at the Legislative District Caucuses will meet to craft a State Party platform, address resolutions and vote on other important issues before the party.

But wait, you say, that doesn’t mention nominations or endorsements. Good observation. It doesn’t because the LD Caucus is not for nominations or endorsements. While we’re discussing this, it would be good to understand the difference between a nomination and an endorsement. Endorsements allow local party organizations to support candidates by offering them access to resources such as lists of voters and access to volunteers who can help their campaigns. Often the party will endorse more than one candidate for a single office. We can endorse candidates at any of our monthly general membership meetings (third Wednesdays at the Marion Grange in Buckley). Because we want this process to be as inclusive as possible, our local organization rules open the voting on endorsements to any dues paying member of the 31st LD Democrats. Please come to our meetings and make your voice heard.

On the other hand, the Democratic Party can nominate only one candidate for an elected office. Previously this was done through the primary; if you won the primary running as a Democrat, you were *de facto* the nominated candidate of the Democratic Party and you could say so in your advertising for the remainder of

your run for election for that office. As previously noted, the top two primary cannot be used for nominations. So what is to be done?

Well, the State Party has already nominated 7 candidates for U.S. Representative out of the 9 congressional districts here in Washington. They did this at their January meeting. The process followed by the state party for congressional nominations is not nearly inclusive enough in the opinion of this writer, and I will work to change this practice should I become a voting member of the State Party.

Sometime before May 24, 2010, the elected and appointed Precinct Committee Officers of the 31st LD Democrats must be called to a **Nominating Convention** for two State Representatives and one State Senator. We are currently planning to do this as part of the general membership meeting on April 21, 2010. While party rules do not allow us to extend the vote to non-PCOs, we want to hold the Nominating Convention at a general membership meeting so that the process is transparent, and if the general membership has endorsed candidates for these offices by that date, you can be certain that this PCO will take that into account when casting his vote for the nomination.

There's no place like home!

Brian Gunn
Democratic Precinct Committee Officer
AUB 31-0062
<http://31stdistrictdemocrats.org/>
253-334-8614

2010 Democratic Caucus

When: March 14, 2010 (Sunday)

Where: Enumclaw Library (1700 First St, Enumclaw, WA 98022)

Time: 1 pm

Review of Ralph Nader's book, "Only the Super Rich Can Save Us"

By Betty Ogden (Tacoma)

Nader calls his book "a fictional vision that could become a new reality [involving] ...some well-known people who appear in fictional roles". In the book, Warren Buffet, Bill Cosby, Phil Donahue, William Gates Sr., Paul Newman, Yoko Ono, Ross Perot and others gather together in a beautiful Hawaiian setting to partake of gourmet food and plan the rebirth of democracy and the demise of corruption in government. Yes, this would take a lot of bucks, but these fellows have got it.

The group begins fomenting a progressive reformist movement along dozens of tracks:

- a) creating an alternative to the reactionary Chamber of Commerce;
- b) putting pressure on Wal-Mart to allow its workers to unionize
- c) FOUNDING A CLEAN ELECTIONS PARTY TO challenge congressional incumbents;
- d) running Warren Beatty to replace the present governor of California.
- e) galvanizing public opinion with publicity stunts like running corporations for public office (in their glorious "personhood") and proposing to amend the pledge of alliance so that it ends, "With liberty and justice for some."

Their ultimate aim is to pass a slate of transformational reform legislation through congress, ("The Agenda") that will clean up politics, humanize the economy and usher in a new, more democratic progressive era. Could they actually bring it off? I won't spoil the ending by telling you if they succeed.

The book is full of imaginative ideas for achieving way out political dreams. It is hard to tell whether it is a spoof of the human power struggle or a satire on bushy-tailed political idealists, but I must wonder how many readers will make it to the end of its 832 pages. Maybe you'll be one who does.

Recently the 31st LD Sharon Hodgins sent a letter to a newspaper for publication. Here is what she sent us- The News Tribune had some great articles this last Sunday on the recent court decision which says that we are not adequately funding schools (it has been proven before, but?) to fulfill the State's Constitution which says, roughly "It is the paramount duty of our State to pay for Public School Education". If the levies don't pass, nearly all schools will be in a world of hurt and I may have to un-retire to pay for private schooling for our grandsons!

Dear Editor:

As a retired Washington State Public School teacher, it amazes me that in several court cases for adequate state school funding over the last 40 years, no one brings up the fact that the mandatory school attendance law and the Special Education laws passed in the 1970's and 1980's, have vastly increased the cost of public education. When I started teaching at a high school in 1967, I could well have been teaching in a private school; students could drop out after 8th grade, and work in the woods. But those jobs are rare, and many no longer pay well.

When I attended Western in the 1960's, college costs were low; my parents, both blue-collar workers, were able to meet tuition, board, books and room costs. My husband was able to work at a summer job in a local mill and make nearly enough for a year's college; those jobs are also rare today. Government grants and loans at a low interest rate were available—today, government loans are few, and private banks loans put graduates into perpetual debt.

Today, we are truly the only nation mandated to educate everyone to their potential---from the disabled to the gifted. Educators use great new teaching techniques, thanks to brain research and staff training. Brain research now proves that the learning taking place in the womb to age 6 is the most critical for later academic success; affordable Pre-Schools are the most cost-effective thing our society can support to prepare our children for skills needed in the 21st century.

If we do not adequately fund our schools – from Pre-K through University level--and SOLVE our perpetual school funding problem in this state, we are dooming our kids and our country to a third-world status. It is time to SOLVE the public school funding crisis going on in our state for 40 years...NOW, and NOT BY 2018. Our Pre-School grandsons deserve what we got -- a world-class education supported by the taxpayer.

Sharon Hodgins
4818 Lakeridge Dr. E
Lake Tapps, WA 98391

As I See It—The End of Democracy? – *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*

Be careful what you wish for. You think politics is bad now. It's about to get much worse. "We the People" suffered a tremendous setback recently. This setback was so monumental that even the main-stream media (MSM) mentioned it. It's going to totally change our lives. If you thought corporations had too much power in politics before, just wait. The recent Supreme Court decision which I warned you about previously has come to pass (google Thom Hartmann *Fascism Coming to a Court Near You*). In a Supreme Court decision that wasn't even sought, the radical conservative court justices Roberts, Alito, Thomas, Scalia (RATS) and Kennedy have opened the floodgates for corporation's (the wealthy) ability to spend vast sums of money in campaigns by declaring that corporations are persons and that money is free speech. You thought that politicians were corrupt before. Now it's all out in the open. Politicians are up for sale. The incumbents may think that this is a good thing, but corporations, as soon as this was passed, informed politicians of all

persuasions to quit asking them for money. This may mean that the corporations are now going to hand-pick their own “candidates” and use their vast coffers to defeat the incumbents. This includes both Democrats and Republicans. The Republicans have gotten their way by appointing these “conservative” judges, who, when interviewed for the Supreme Court position, said that they would just be like an umpire calling balls and strikes. But this turned out to be a concerted effort by Roberts and his radical (just like George Bush was a radical president) gang to continue the takeover of America for the wealthy. I’m sure that Republican politicians were all backing this maneuver, but I think that it’s going to blow up in their faces. They too, will be replaced unless they totally do the bidding of their corporations. What better way for the wealthy to take over the government than to take over the judiciary, which can, in turn, change the rules by which the other two branches of government are chosen.

Do you think that multinational corporations care about what is good for America? No, all they care about is power and money (in that order). What this means to you and me is that Communist China (or even Osama bin Laden) can support a phony corporation that gets their people elected to Congress (or even the White House). Talk about Manchurian candidates. And with our winner-take-all two-party system, you’ll really only have a choice between the Republican and Democratic candidates. If they are both corporate shells, it won’t matter which one that you vote for.

This decision is probably going to greatly affect local politics, too. It doesn’t take all that much money to win a state senate or representative seat and if corporations buy them there, then they don’t cost so much when they run for federal positions later. Can you imagine getting wall to wall radio and television commercials favoring a terrible (from the point of view of “We the People”) candidate and virtually never hearing from the non-corporate candidate?

Of course, all of this could backfire on the corporations. Ultimately, it may come down to two candidates that are both backed by two different large corporations that spend ever larger amounts of money to stay in power. Did I mention that it’s all about power? It will be like a poker game where there is unlimited raising of the stakes. The winner will be the corporation with the most money. But the benefits of winning will be so tremendous. Lately, “investments” of millions of dollars seems to turn into billions of dollars worth of business and profits.

Ironically, this may bring an awakening public to demand both publicly-funded elections and/or a change to the bill of rights to add the word “natural” persons to the 14th amendment. Corporations (and a lot of already-elected officials) would hate this and do whatever they could to defeat any hint of having “We the People” have any say about our future. But if publicly-funded elections were to exist, “We the People” would know which candidate was and which candidate wasn’t receiving corporate money (that would be the selling point for the publicly-funded candidate). So, picking the “real” candidate would be relatively easy, unless both of them were bought and paid for. But I also can see that this would finally be a real opportunity for “third-party” candidates. In this way, corporations may end up losing some or all of their power to influence the election process.

This is not a Democrat versus Republican issue (some of my conservative friends are very concerned, too). It is an issue between the wealthy corporations and “We the People”. The Founding Fathers certainly never intended corporations to have the same rights as people. Republican president Teddy Roosevelt (the Trust Buster), a century ago called for public financing of elections because he was worried about the power that the trusts (corporations) might yield in elections. He said “All contributions by corporations to any political committee or for any political purpose should be forbidden by law.” To her credit, Justice Sonia Sotomayor suggested that the Supreme Court should re-examine the misguided original 1886 Santa Clara decision, which originally “gave birth to corporations as persons”. At any rate, now is not the time to just sit back and accept that things just get worse for “We the People”. President Obama has said “I can’t think of anything more devastating to the public interest. The last thing we need to do is hand more influence to the lobbyists in Washington, or more power to the special interests to tip the outcome of elections.” One solution would be to amend the Constitution to state that corporations are not people and, therefore, are not entitled to First Amendment rights and freedoms except, of course, for freedom of the press. Many groups (including Public Citizen and People for the American Way, to name just two) are scrambling to counteract this radical, un-American decision. Once again we are at a crossroads of what America stands for. In 1936 Franklin D.

Roosevelt said: "In vain they seek to hide behind the flag and the Constitution. In their blindness they forget what the flag and the Constitution stand for." Seems like déjà vu, all over again.

To get more information on this monumental decision and its consequences go to Citizen.org, movetoamend.org. and/or freespeechforpeople.org.

Our Representatives-how to get hold of them

Senators: Patty Murray (D) and Maria Cantwell

Patty Murray- DC office phone: (202) 224-2621
Seattle Office
2988 Jackson Federal Bldg.
915 2nd Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174
Phone: (206) 553-5545
Fax: (206) 553-0891

Maria Cantwell- DC office phone (202) 224-3441
Seattle Office
915 Second Avenue
Suite #3206
Seattle, WA 98174
206-220-6400
206-220-6404 – FAX
Tacoma Office
950 Pacific Avenue, Suite #615
Tacoma, WA 98402
253-572-2281
253-572-5879 FAX

8th CD Representative-Dave Reichert (R)
Dave Reichert- DC Office phone (202) 225-7761
District Office
2737 78th Avenue, S.E. Suite #202
Mercer Island, WA 98040
(206) 275-3438
(206) 275-3437 Fax

9th CD Representative-Adam Smith (D)
Adam Smith-DC office phone (202) 225-8901
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2209 Pacific Ave, Suite B
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(253) 593-6776

State Senator-31st LD

Pam Roach (R)
POB 40431
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State Representatives-31st LD

Chris Hurst (D)
POB 40600
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Email: Hurst.Christopher@leg.wa.gov

Dan Roach (R)
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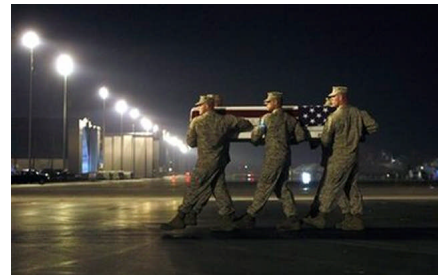
Occupation Statistics (<http://www.antiwar.com/casualties>)

4,376 US Military Deaths (Iraq)

986 US Military Deaths (Afghanistan)

31,648 US Military Wounded (Iraq)

151,000-1,366,350 Iraq Civilian Deaths



DO YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR LOCAL POLITICAL SYSTEM?

YES!! Join us

Fill out the form below (questions are required by the state Public Disclosure Commission) and hand it in to one of our volunteers at our monthly meeting or mail it in (31st District Democrats, 20825 SR 410 E #130, Bonney Lake, WA 98391). You can pay 2010 dues now or later by check (made out to 31st District Democrats) or on-line by credit card. Dues are \$31 per year (January-December), but members can pay what they can afford with a minimum of \$5.

NAME _____
Street Address _____
Mailing Address (if different from above) _____
Telephone # _____
Email _____
Occupation _____
Employer _____