



PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

of the CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Saturday Afternoon Breakout Session Notes

Progressive Caucus Solidarity Summit August 15-16, 2009 San Luis Obispo, CA

Following the Saturday morning general session, attendees broke into smaller groups and were given a choice of 6 breakout sessions to choose from in three rotations. Attendees chose the three breakout groups of their choice. The six choices were:

1. **The California Budget:** From Crisis to Majority Rule Campaign / Susie Shannon, Chair of Poverty and Budget Subcommittee for the Progressive Caucus, 42nd AD Exec Board Rep, CDP, Legislative Action Committee member, Homeless Advocate. Karla Salazar, Organizer with AFSCME.
2. **Healthcare:** "A Roadmap to Single Payer by 2015" / Andrew McGuire, Exec Director of Healthcare for All, and Rose Roach, CSEA Field Director, Stockton, San Joaquin County Democratic Party
3. **Foreign Policy:** "Strategizing to Challenge the Warfare State in 2010 and Beyond" / Marcy Winograd, PDLA Vice Chair and candidate for Congress, 36th CD, and Norman Solomon, author, National Co-Chair of PDA's Healthcare NOT Warfare campaign.
4. **Water in California:** What you need to know and do as Progressive Democrats" / Steve Haze, CALFED Bay Delta Program, former Chair of the Fresno County Democratic Party.
5. **The Party:** "How the Party works and how Progressives can get involved" / Henry Vandermeir, President of the California Democratic Council, DNC candidate.
6. **The Progressive Caucus Platform and Bylaws:** A review, and considerations for improvements. This is your opportunity to be a part of collective self determination. Our recommendations will be voted on at the November E-board meeting.

Reports from the Breakout Sessions

California Budget Crisis

Susie Shannon, Deana Igelsrud

There were three sessions of the budget breakout held at the Progressive Summit in San Luis Obispo led by Susie Shannon. We talked about the problems with the budget, how George Lakoff got a resolution passed at the July Executive Board Meeting on this issue, and how George has paired with the CA Majority Rule campaign to start getting the word out on what we must do to solve this issue.

Polling: We are working with a reputable polling expert who has done much of the statewide polling on this issue. He has said that George's language is something that hasn't been polled on yet, and that it is a "crucial piece of the puzzle" to see how Californian's feel about overturning the 2/3's requirement. We are currently working to raise \$35,000- to do this poll.

Speakers Bureau: Susie gave a sample presentation of the messaging that George Lakoff has created for us around this issue:

- Majority vs. Minority Rule
- How slightly more than 1/3 of either house of the legislature can "hold-up" the budget.
- That the majority of voters choose the majority of legislators, and that it is simple democracy that the majority of legislators provide for the needs of the people they represent.

This is an example of what we will be sending our speakers bureau members out with, when they go and speak to groups, clubs and organizations around the state.

We also had Q&A in each session. The feedback we got was great, thank you to those who donated money towards our poll, and the weekend itself was just terrific!!

What you need to know and what you can do to help the CA Majority Rule Campaign

- George Lakoff has created the message for the CA Majority Rule Campaign, it's his simple (14) word sentence that can change the future of our state, it reads: "All legislative actions on revenue and budget must be determined by majority vote."
- To endorse our campaign or to sign up and volunteer visit our new website: www.CAMajorityRule.com
- To help us get the poll done, donate to the [George Lakoff "Majority Rule" Poll](#)

UPDATE: Since the Progressive Summit in San Luis Obispo - the CA Majority Rule Campaign has "officially" formed a PAC and continued raising money; we've done another statewide conference call; been recruiting endorsers, volunteers and speakers; and Thursday, September 24, 2009 - George Lakoff filed a petition with the Attorney General's office to get his language on the ballot for November 2010.

We, the majority of voters, can restore democracy to California, and with it, responsible economic management.

Roadmap to Single Payer Health Care

Rose Roach/Andrew McGuire

Andrew McGuire, Executive Director of Health Care for All and Rose Roach, Field Director from the CA School Employees Association and member of the San Joaquin County Democratic Central Committee, provided Progressives with an update on the current debate regarding federal legislation then presented a comprehensive strategy for moving single payer legislation (Senate Bill 810 – Leno) here in CA by connecting up with the CAOneCare Campaign.

Breakout attendees spent time brainstorming tactics centered around the SB 810 campaign that included:

- Creation and submission of a resolution to the CA Democratic Party stating the parties support of the OneCare Campaign
- Ensuring members of the Progressive Caucus spread the word to other organizations they belong to and ask the members of those organizations to be prepared to act
- Use Democratic Clubs and Central Committees to educate the public through forums, tabling at events/stores etc.
- Lobby visits with elected officials
- Highlight the CDP platform which is clear on the issue of health care reform – single payer
- Have a presence at the Democratic Clubs conference scheduled for the end of September in San Diego – provide the OneCare Campaign power point and move a OneCare campaign support resolution
- and prepare information on the OneCare campaign in the form of packets that can be sent to clubs and DCC's.

Action Ideas from the Progressive Caucus Meeting

- Create and submit a resolution to the CA Democratic Party stating the parties support of the OneCare Campaign;
- Make sure members of the Progressive Caucus spread the word to other organizations they belong to and ask the members of those organizations to be prepared to act;
- Use Democratic Clubs and Central Committees to educate the public through forums, tabling at events/stores etc., lobby visits with elected officials;
- Highlight the CDP platform which is clear on the issue of health care reform – single payer;
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- Prepare information on the OneCare campaign in the form of packets that can be sent to clubs and DCC's

Since the caucus meeting in San Luis Obispo in August, the caucus' health care committee has determined we should spend the next 30 – 60 days focusing on securing the inclusion of the Kucinich "state option" amendment in the final bill passed by Congress by lobbying Speaker Pelosi, Energy and Commerce Chairman Henry Waxman and Congressman Dennis Cardoza and Congresswoman Doris Matsui, who both serve on the Rules Committee. The committee will then begin drafting a plan for SB 810 that includes components centered on member and community education; concerted actions and lobbying strategies with an eye on the 2010 election. Members have been out and about in their respective communities spreading the good word about single payer bringing in more and more converts to the single payer movement.

Challenging the Warfare State

Norman Solomon, Marcy Winograd

As a result of our breakout - Challenging the Warfare State - we decided to host an E-board meeting event featuring anti-war voices regarding Afghanistan. There was talk of showing a film, inviting veterans, and possibly honoring high-ranking generals who are speaking out. Since, then we have been moving forward with talks with Robert Greenwald, director/producer of Rethinking Afghanistan, who could "skype" in for a discussion, following the showing of his film.

In the break-out, we also discussed the importance of repeating key talking points:

- a) Some say we cannot afford to leave Afghanistan. The truth is we cannot afford to stay because these trillion-dollar occupations will bankrupt our country. Every trillion we spend on destabilizing a country, a region, is a trillion robbed from health care, education, and jobs in the new green economy.
- b) We all want to feel safe and secure. Unfortunately, the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and bombing of Pakistan is making us less secure, creating new enemies, and destabilizing a nuclear-armed nation. If we want security, then we must invest in humanitarian aid, not as an occupying power, but as a global partner interested in shared prosperity.
- c) We are asking our young men and women to fight and die for what purpose? It is unclear why we are in Afghanistan, for the reason keeps changing -- from wiping out Al Qaeda to toppling the Taliban to ridding the country of corruption. Al Qaeda is no longer based in Afghanistan, our occupation has strengthened the hand of the Taliban, and war breeds corruption. We need to bring our troops home.

We also discussed introducing the McGovern House Bill calling for an Afghanistan exit strategy into each central committee.

Finally, we face an opportunity with the economic decline. Americans know something has got to change -- we cannot, in good conscience, leave our children and grandchildren with enormous debt. The U.S. can no longer afford to have military bases in over 100 countries and continue to bleed the treasury with trillion dollar wars and occupations. We must look to the future and invest our taxpayer dollars in sustainable jobs at home.

Water in California - A Call for Action

Steve Hayes

Steve Haze, Water and Economic Development Advisor for the Fresno County Democratic Central Committee gave a far reaching presentation on *Water in California – A Call for Action*. The presentation coincided with legislative hearings on the Delta beginning that week in Sacramento. This timely presentation gave an overview of the politics of water and what the political landscape looks like at ground zero in the Delta; the San Joaquin Valley – and throughout California. The presentation on water was a wake-up call for Progressive Democrats. His subject areas included:

- Introduction to Water Law – The Public Trust under the State Constitution – versus water “rights”
- Assessment of the Legislative Leadership and Political Landscape in Sacramento
- Knowing and “respecting” the Opposition
- Empowering Progressives with some key water facts
- Assessing the current legislation, including the proposed water bonds

The presentation was a launch pad for establishing a long-term commitment within the Progressive ranks of the Democratic Party – and to develop strong leadership on addressing the many ways in which to create a reliable and sustainable approach to managing our precious water resources in fair and equitable ways well into the future. He also showed how the Republicans use of the media such as through Shawn Hannity; and establishing sophisticated strategies with powerful public relation firms have even made inroads within our Democratic ranks as it relates towards abandoning the environment; building massive dams; creating private water banks; and constructing the peripheral canal. All of this, no matter the billions of dollars spent of the taxpayer’s money – and little, if any additional water.

Steve’s presentation demonstrated that even though the State Constitution under Article X, Section 2 clearly states water as a Public Trust – and, that all water belongs to the people of California to only be used in wise and beneficial ways for the many – that in fact, there has been a continued erosion away from this fundamental principle towards a massive privatization and profiting of water for the few.

Structure of the Democratic Party and How to Get Involved

Henry Vandermeir

The "Structure of the Democratic Party and How to Get Involved" workshop covered the hierarchy of the party from the DNC level down to the clubs. Also included was an overview of the different ways that activists can get involved at

each level. The room was filled to capacity, which was an unexpected surprise considering that most attendees have already been involved at one level or another.

However, it was quite apparent that many did not have a full understanding of how the party operates and appreciated the information. There were a lot of questions from the group and I believe that everyone left the workshop better informed and felt the time was worthwhile.

Progressive Caucus Bylaws/Platform:

Present: Jeffery Killeen, Karen Bernal, Mal Burnstein, Leah Herzberg, Thom O'Shaughnessy, J Brian Washman, Dotty LeMieux

Suggested Topics for Discussion:

- Amendment process
- Removal of officers
- Quorum
- Notice - wait for rules to get their necessary changes made and out to us
- Purpose statement
- Modify officers - more at large and a Central Cal. VP
- Should officers all be elected at large, and they decide who has what position
- Dues as set? That's in there. Need to spell out when it is due.
- No amendment from the floor/ 2 readings?
- Emergency rule?
- m/s O'Shaughnessy/LeMieux Use 2008 CDP Platform to see what needs to be modified as the basis for testimony from the Progressive Caucus for the 2010 platform.
- Passes, ad hoc subcommittee on bylaws.
- Herzberg motion that we send any ideas for improvements to the Party to the organizational and development Committee.
- Karen - Sexual orientation/gender, insert the phrase "gender identification," after "gender"
- Others not here have ideas, they will send to Karen, we will talk about this at the Nov. E-board.
- Karen – wants to add organizing workers' rights
- Make language inclusive, people, not citizen; discussion of that, if we are working as the CDP PC, should we talk about "people" or what
- Thom O'Shaughnessy – change language of Death Penalty to "eliminate the death penalty" not sure what the next phrase is.
- Do we need a platform Committee, Brian suggests Bylaws/Platform as one committee. Start a Yahoo group.
- Discussion of same. Jeffrey wants it to be Bylaws only Karen suggests timeline. Platform for month, then Bylaws.
- Bylaws must be changed in Nov. Rules is looking at all Caucuses and will make recommendations to be recertified.
- We announce we are doing it, then give it a finite life.
- First reading of platform in November, then up or down vote at Convention.
- Notice must be by Oct. 10th.
- Give members until Sept. 15th to submit platform changes. Then officers get it and we adopt them.
- Our committee figures out bylaws.
- m/s - consensus
- Brian – we can use email to communicate with the Bylaw/Platform subcommittee.
- Notice is one of the changes that is coming from Rules
- Karen – wants to change 10 day notice to 30 days
- Discussion on "Sense of body" versus first second reading.
- Mal- concerned we make changes without opp. For discussion. Some are stupid, but others may not be.
- Jeff – what about if we give them so long to discuss at the first reading, then if changes, they vote next time.

- Brian – should only be at Conventions.
- Leah – suggests we have separate meeting before our meetings for the complainers to bitch.
- Mal- practicalities where held, time? Etc.
- Removal – provisions in Robert's rules that Jeffrey will review and report on it
- Purpose statement - Mal says it doesn't make sense.
- Leah – Wishy washy. We need to be bold!
- Thom – if we add Central VP, we need 4 Officers at Large. To keep odd number. Or drop to 2 officers at large. Irish American Caucus has designation by County/
- Where is the central? East west.
- Do we want to change the Chair to nonvoting? Mal says no. Jeffrey says chair votes last.
- Karen says we should put out notice thirty days before November.
- Separate Platform and Bylaws committees.
- At large v. officers choose who's what?

It was agreed that two Google groups would be created to work on the bylaws and platform separately. All present agreed to serve on both committees.