



The Official Publication of ACT

P. O. Box 40074, (626) 795-2798

Volume 49
Number 11
December, 2021

Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

The Death of Women's Rights

By Denise Robb, Ph.D.



As a woman who grew up not really remembering a time when abortion was illegal, my generation and the generations beyond took it for granted that this was a sacred right that women are able to control their bodies and their reproductive destiny. However, as a political science professor who teaches Women in Politics, I know all too well the sordid history that enabled us the luxury of fearlessness. I also remember *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* when those rights were threatened and we assumed Republican Supreme Court Justice (and the first woman on the Court) Sandra Day O'Connor would be the final nail in the *Roe v. Wade* coffin. In that decision, *Roe* was surprisingly affirmed.

As I warned my students though, aside from the wacky vigilante Texas abortion law, the real threat was heard by the Court on Wednesday, December 1, 2021.

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization was truly shocking. While fetal viability is generally considered to be 24 weeks by the medical community, the politicians in Mississippi knew exactly what they were doing when they passed a law making abortions illegal after 15 weeks. Because of court challenges, the 2018 law has not yet gone into effect. It has risen to the highest court in the land solely because former President Trump's three chosen Supreme Court justices (ignoring the fact that he shouldn't have legally been able to appoint all three) were specifically chosen to overturn *Roe*. It was his litmus test.

Giving birth is actually more dangerous than having an abortion. While visions of scenes from the excellent Margaret Atwood adaptation "Handmaid's Tale" floated in my thoughts, I listened to Mississippi's argument and more disturbingly, the responses and questions by the conservative justices, who now make up 6 of the 9 seats. As Justice Elena Kagan said that in 50 years of decisions, this is part of our law, part of the fabric of women's existence in this country. *Stare decisis* or reliance



on precedent according to the Legal Information Institute “promotes the evenhanded, predictable, and consistent development of legal principles, fosters reliance on judicial decisions, and contributes to the actual and perceived integrity of the judicial process.” It helps ensure the court is not viewed as merely another political wing of the government, even though sadly, politics has been at the center of many decisions since the Court’s inception.

As U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar stated, never has the Court “revoked a Constitutional right it had extended.” Never in their history has the Court taken away a fundamental right. But the Court appears poised to do just that, some time in June when their decision is released.

Mississippi Solicitor General Scott G. Stewart said the landmark decisions of *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* “haunt our country” and “have no home in our history or traditions.” While previously, Republican states sought to tamper with *Roe* because *Casey* allows targeted laws at abortion providers, waiting periods, fake health personnel dissuading women from abortions, parental consent and other odious restrictions, the states have tiptoed around the idea of flatly outlawing *Roe*. But no more. With the outrageously so-called conservative but in reality – reactionary new Court, they feel emboldened to go for it. They seek to overturn a 50-year precedent that truly was the hallmark of women’s rights. With no exceptions for rape or incest, and viability or a burden on the mother no longer on the table, women are relegated to being forced to carry a fetus to term and give birth.

Julie Rikelman, the attorney for the Center for Reproductive Rights argued in the Supreme Court that “Mississippi’s ban on abortion two months before viability is flatly unconstitutional under decades of precedent. Mississippi asked the Court to dismantle this precedent and allow

states to force women to remain pregnant and give birth against their will.”

The Conservative/Not Conservative Reactionary justices were clear that it was not enshrined in the Constitution therefore should be left up to the states. The newest Justice, Amy Coney Barrett said there are “safe haven laws now that we didn’t have in 1973” and created a false narrative that the only burden to women is motherhood. That bearing a child for nine months and then giving birth and dropping it off at a fire station was a preferable option to a one-hour outpatient procedure that was far safer than childbirth. There was no real consideration of the autonomy of women to control their destiny. This right, granted in 1973, was and is the hallmark of women’s freedom and autonomy.

I can’t help but think of the awe-inspiring, feminist icon Gloria Steinem and wonder what she must be thinking. After going public with her own abortion and founding *Ms. Magazine* as a breath of fresh air for women stifled by their lack of choice and power, she reveled in the victory of *Roe v. Wade*. Growing up I erroneously thought (as my students think now) that so much of the work of gaining women their freedom has been done by those who came before us. How wrong we were.

~ Denise Robb, Ph.D.

Denise Robb is a professor at Pierce College in the Political Science Department.



Special Thanks to Sustaining Member

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Maria Low Way

We sadly note the death of ACT Charter member, Maria del Rio Low Way, at her Pasadena home on November 16 at 100 years of age. Born in Lima, Peru, Maria came to the United States with her family and grew up in Lynbrook, New York. She graduated from Marywood Seminary in Scranton, PA and attended Mt. Holyoke in Massachusetts and Barnard College in New York before marrying Elmer Low in 1941.



The Lows moved from New York to Pasadena in 1943, where they settled and raised their family. When the children were grown, Maria attended law school. She was admitted to the Calif. State Bar in 1978. She then practiced family law for many years as a partner in the firm started by her husband. She and Elmer Low were happily married for 59 years until his death in 2000. Maria married George Way, who died in 2013, in 2005.

In her remarkable life Maria belonged to the Town Club, the Valley Hunt Club, the University Club, the Rotary Club and the Athenaeum. She was active at the Pacific Asia Museum and a docent at the Huntington Library. She kept her subscriptions to the New Yorker, the New York Times and the LA Times – as well as her membership in ACT - to the very end.

We extend sympathy to her brother, Daniel G.W. del Rio, children Charlotte Allen, Jane Parshall, Maria Low, Tony Low and Michael Low, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



Welcome New and Returning ACT Members:

Ryan Bell, Pasadena
Brandon Lamar, Pasadena
Carl & Carol Selkin, Pasadena

ACT & ADC General Membership Meeting

Thursday, January 6, 7 p.m.
Via Zoom

Join us on Thursday, January 6 at 7 p.m. for our ACT and Arroyo Democratic Club Meeting via Zoom.

ACT and ADC's regular business meeting will follow the program. Socializing before the meeting begins at 7 p.m. The program and meeting follow at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. (The program for the meeting is still being decided.)

Find the Zoom link for the meeting on ACT's webpage, <http://www.actpasadena.org>.



PCC Honors Dr. Jack Scott

The PCC Board of Trustees and guests joined in celebrating the legacy of our good friend, Dr. Jack Scott, at the Circadian Room on the PCC campus on December 8.

The occasion for the celebration was a special recognition bestowed by the Board to rename PCC's central administration building in Dr. Scott's name. The event included a formal board vote on the matter.



Your Photo in *The Phoenix*

Please share a photo (of you) at an interesting place with *Phoenix* readers. Send it to Chuck at hains27@sbcglobal.net for inclusion in an upcoming issue.



Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Tuesday, December 7.

Congress continues to creep along, painfully, creakily, with lots of internal antagonisms and not-so-great messaging. But the House did indeed pass Build Back Better, and both Houses agreed on an interim budget to avoid a government shutdown, and we seem to be nearing a solution for raising the debt limit which might clear the way for the Senate to approve the defense authorization bill, and the Senate is inching its way toward approving Build Back Better.

So, in fact, stuff is getting done, but it just seems so messy, and Democrats are getting hammered in terms of our image and brand. Despite all that, though, we are making progress on the economic front, with spectacularly good data on unemployment and initial unemployment claims. Further, despite all the fighting over mandates, they seem to be having an effect, and the new COVID

infection and hospitalization rates are staying modestly low. It's hard to predict what the situation will be six to nine months from now, but I think it's more likely we'll see significant improvements than significant worsening.

Anyway, while all this is going on, filing deadlines are starting to approach for candidates for Congress and state legislatures, so it seems a good time to look at what's happening with reapportionment.

That's really a two-step process. First, based on the aggregate population data from the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau figures out how many seats in the House of Representatives each state is entitled to have. That part is over and done, and the numbers were not very surprising, but overall not as bad as some Democrats feared. As expected, Southern states – like Florida and Texas and Georgia – showed the greatest relative population growth, so they gained seats in the House, while northern states – like New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan – lost seats in the House. California also lost one seat, so we will have only 52 Congressmembers, instead of 53, in the 2023 – 2024 House. But some red states, like West Virginia, lost a seat, while some blue states, like Oregon and Colorado, gained a seat. Overall, then, there is a likely shift of between 2 and 4 seats toward the Reps based just on the state by state allocations.

The second step in the process happens within each state, as the boundaries of all Congressional and state legislative districts are rearranged within each state. The rules for this vary by state, with some states having an independent or semi-independent commission do the work (as we do here in California). But most states allow their state legislatures to make the final decision. That means, in deeply red states like Texas and Georgia and Florida, where the GOP has a “trifecta” – controlling the Governorship and both houses of

the state legislature – they can devise plans that grossly gerrymanders the state. In Wisconsin, for example, even though Democrats routinely get around 50% of the vote state-wide, their representation in each house of the Legislature is barely over 1/3.

Of course, just as red states contort their state maps for partisan advantage, blue states do as well. New York and Illinois have reapportionments that are likely to reduce GOP representation by at least one seat in each state. Further, the worst of these plans can, occasionally, be successfully appealed through the courts, putting somewhat of a limit on how badly the Reps can twist things.

Nonetheless, between apportionment among the states and within individual states, the GOP is likely to pick up at least 6 – 9 seats, enough to take control of the House if nothing else changes. And that takes us to California, and our reapportionment process and the likely outcomes in 2022.

In California, we have an independent commission that redraws the boundaries, and that commission is nearing the completion of their work. They have draft maps out, and semi-final drafts for at least the State Assembly districts. All these maps are available for public viewing, and the commission actually has a rather neat web site with a mapping system that lets you see the current lines and the proposed new lines, for Congressional, Senatorial and Assembly districts, and overlay one upon another (www.wedrawthelinesca.org).

The Assembly lines are close to finalized; the Congressional and State Senate lines may still undergo significant revisions. That caveat notwithstanding, it's interesting to look at the proposed new boundaries, both for our local districts and for other critical districts where Dems need

to win back seats that we captured in 2018 but lost in 2020.

Our own Adam Schiff has long had at least some of Pasadena in his district, but that sliver may disappear entirely in the new districts. In the proposed “Glen2BA” district (the commission refrains from numbering their proposed districts lest that suggest a district be intended for any given incumbent), Congressman Schiff would basically keep his current district (Burbank, Glendale, West Hollywood, Eagle Rock, parts of Hollywood) but lose the Pasadena and La Canada portions.



Congresswoman Judy Chu is not so lucky. Her district, now anchored in Monterey Park and then stretching up to Pasadena, Arcadia and out to Glendora, has been cut in half. The northern parts are in a new “CD210” district, presumably named because it stretches out along the 210 Freeway, from La Canada and La Crescenta through Pasadena and Arcadia and out to Glendora and Covina, then into San Bernardino and up the mountains to include Wrightwood. The southern

portion of her old district – her home area of Monterey Park, Rosemead and Temple City – are now connected with what was the core of Congresswoman Grace Napolitano’s district.

The proposed new “CD210” Congressional district roughly mirrors what are now Assemblyman Holden’s Assembly District and Senator Portantino’s State Senate district. Either legislator would be well-positioned to run for the new Congressional seat if Congresswoman Chu decides to run in the new “CDCOV” seat centered around Covina (either because Congresswoman Napolitano retires or if she runs in a primary against Napolitano).

The one current LA district that gets totally dis-

membered in this plan belongs to Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard. The Congresswoman was first elected in 1993, and now chairs the Homeland Security Sub-Committee on the House Appropriations Committee, one of the more powerful positions in the House. Essentially, given that California needs to sacrifice one Congressional seat, hers was pretty much the seat that got sacrificed. However, the design of this district may be subject to legal challenge under the Voting Rights Act in that it negatively impacts the electoral power of Hispanic voters.

Just to the north of us, Congressman Mike Garcia captured the 25th District in a special election after the resignation of Democratic incumbent, Katie Hill. That district now includes Santa Clarita, Palmdale, much of Lancaster and, critically, essentially all of Simi Valley, a relatively conservative, Republican area. The new district would lose all the Simi Valley area and gain the rest of Lancaster, making it less conservative and more Hispanic. Garcia only narrowly won the special election in the spring of 2020, and then won the general election by 330 votes out of 350,000. So even a modest reduction of GOP voting strength puts this district squarely in the crosshairs for the next Democratic candidate.

The 48th Congressional District, in Orange County, which Harley Rouda won in 2018 but then lost in 2020, similarly becomes a little more inviting for Democrats – it gains much of Irvine while giving up parts of Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley.

Finally, we have some breaking news from up north. Congressman Devin Nunes, perhaps the number one Trump lackey in Congress and former Chair of the House Intelligence Committee, has announced his planned resignation. That might have been encouraged by the prospect of running in a notably more Democratic district in the Fresno area. Congressman Schiff will likely be delighted not have Nunes on his Intelligence

Committee any longer, and it points to another potential Democratic pickup next November. (Nunes is leaving Congress to be the CEO of the new Trump social media site, which itself is starting out life with a likely SEC investigation of potential securities fraud. Why are we not surprised?)

These potential pickups in California could be critical. With a 223 – 212 margin in the House, the Reps need only gain a net of 6 seats to take control. With gains around that number likely from reapportionment, we desperately need to pick up some House seats here in California to pad our margin, and those three seats are some of our best opportunities.

~ Jon Fuhrman



Election of 2022 Officers

Members elected two new ACT Co-Chairs at our December 2 General Membership meeting: **Cheryl Brickey** and **George Brumder**. Welcome Cheryl and George! They will serve for two years - 2022 and 2023. Our third ACT Co-Chair, Marilee Marshall, will continue serving; 2022 is her second year. Thanks, Marilee!

We also thank ACT's and the Arroyo Democratic Club's officers for agreeing to continue to serve. (All are listed below.)

ACT Officers

Co-Chairs: Marilee Marshall, Cheryl Brickey, George Brumder

Recording Secretary: Mona Field (Barbara Paul, Sally Beer, Joanne Wendler as backups)

Corresponding Secretary: Beth Gertmenian (Monica Hubbard as backup)

Treasurer: Ed Washatka

ADC Officers

President: Tim Wendler

Vice-President: Bruce Wright

Secretaries and Treasurer: Same as ACT

ACT Joins the Pasadena Affordable Housing Coalition

By Ed Washatka



ACT members agreed by a unanimous vote to join Pasadena Affordable Housing Coalition. The vote was taken of those attending the December general membership meeting on Thursday, December 2.

The Coalition, which was formed in January now consists of a mix of seventeen community and faith-based organizations. The focus of the Coalition has been to gather community input about affordable housing policy for submission and inclusion into the City of Pasadena's Housing Element section of its General Plan.

State law requires cities update their update their Housing Elements periodically. The current Pasadena draft, which was submitted to the State's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) in October, will influence the City's directives regarding housing policy for the years 2022-2029.

The City staff is currently working on second draft for submission in December after it received comments in the review by the HCD declaring "revisions will be necessary to comply with State Housing Element Law."

Its anticipated language submitted in the updated draft may address how the City might expedite changes in current zoning laws to permit the building of affordable housing on Church property. This is one of the major solutions called for in one of the 27 demands of the Coalition.

The seventeen members of the Pasadena Affordable Housing Coalition include representation from the following faith and community-based organizations.

Following is a list of the Pasadena Affordable Housing Coalition:



Abundant Housing LA-West San Gabriel Valley

ACLU of Southern California – Pasadena Foothills Chapter

ACT

Affordable Housing Services

All Saints Church

Clergy Community Coalition

Democrats of Pasadena Foothills

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance – (IMA)

League of Women Voters-Pasadena

Making Housing and Community Happen

NAACP-Pasadena Branch

National Day Laborers Organizing Network – NDLON

Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition

Pasadena Foursquare Church

Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center – Social Justice Committee

Pasadenans Organizing for Progress – POP

Pasadena For All



Thanks for Additional Contributions to both ACT's Political and Operating Accounts

Carl & Carol Selkin

**From
25th District
State Senator
Anthony
Portantino**



Dear ACT members,

As a father and a lawmaker, I am heartbroken by the senseless gun violence on campuses and schools across the country. As many of you know, I have made sensible gun control a key part of my legislative agenda. Recently, I authored SB 172 and SB 715 which were designed to avoid many of the ambiguities found in Michigan and to strengthen California's safe storage of firearms.

Earlier this week a 15-year-old Michigan high school student took his father's licensed handgun to a school north of Detroit and shot multiple victims. Because of ambiguities in Michigan law governing the responsibility of legal handgun owners in terms of safely storing a gun where minors or prohibited persons reside in the household, it was unclear what liability the parents of the minor faced for the unsecured storage of that handgun. A police investigation showed that the parental conduct was so egregious that the parents are being charged with manslaughter under Michigan law.

Under Michigan law, only a person licensed to possess a specific handgun may generally possess that handgun with the minimum licensing age being eighteen. There are two mechanisms in Michigan as to how owners become licensed, but no one can take possession of the gun unless the recipient is first background checked and the gun is registered to the licensee at the time of taking possession. The process is supervised by the Michigan State Police.

Minors may possess handguns without a license

but only under very limited circumstance relating to target shooting with the minor being supervised and the licensed owner of that handgun present at all times. It is illegal to transfer possession of a handgun to a minor otherwise. The conduct of the parent and the Minor was such that the minor was transferred – albeit illegally – de facto ownership of that handgun.

California is similar to Michigan in that when a person goes through a registration-background check process to acquire a firearm, he or she is in effect licensed to own a specific firearm. While loans are allowed, there are very specific conditions which include that the lender be the registered owner of the gun. As to minors, the handgun loan rules and actual possession of handguns by minors are subject to very strict conditions which have been on the books for close to thirty years. SB 715 enacted earlier this year extended those handgun rules to semiautomatic center fire rifles as of January 1, 2022 and all guns on July 1, 2023.

However, Michigan does not have the type of safe storage requirements that California has. In 2019 Senate Bill 172 was signed by Gov. Newsom. Among other provisions, SB 172 revised the statutes relating to criminal storage of guns.

Prior to 172, the crime of criminal storage applied only if the gun was loaded. SB 172 required safe storage irrespective of whether the gun was or was not loaded as there were documented cases where minors and others obtained access to ammunition and then loaded the unsecured gun and ended in misuse of guns.

Also, prior to 172, sanctions on the owner of an unsecured gun were only applied to handguns – loaded or unloaded - where a minor or other prohibited person gained access to an unsecured firearm and took it outside the premises where it was stored. SB 172 applied that to all guns. Finally, SB 172 provided that persons convicted of safe

storage violations were barred from owning a firearm or ammunition for a period of 10 years. Since SB 172 has been in effect a number of persons – including law enforcement officers - have been convicted of these violations and have lost their gun rights.

While people have a constitutional right to own guns and ammunition, the Supreme Court noted in the Heller decision – and as the Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald noted when filing charges against the parents - when minors or prohibited persons reside in a household there is nothing unconstitutional about imposing common sense safe storage requirements to prevent access to guns by persons who have no right to possess the same who reside in that household. While some may think the 10-year prohibition is harsh, the damage from a shooting is far more permanent. What happened in Michigan is what SB 172 was designed to prevent.

Frankly, there is more we can do to make our communities safer from senseless gun violence and I'm determined to work toward that goal. Prayers and well wishes to the victim's families are more than appropriate but not enough.

Warmest and Best, ~ Anthony

Senator Anthony Portantino represents California's 25th State Senate District, which stretches along the 210 Freeway from Sunland/Tujunga to Upland.



**From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

In November, we were reminded to be grateful for our loved ones, community, and health. As we progress to close this year, I have been working to finalize my bill package for 2022. There are also a handful of two-year bills I introduced earlier this year that I look forward to moving in the legislative process as soon as we resume session in January, including AB 102 that would make dual enrollment programs permanent, and AB 768 that would provide critical updates to California's pool and open water safety programs.

Dual enrollment increases the number of college graduates, reduces time and money spent for college, and helps close the achievement gap. Making dual enrollment permanent means more school districts will be able to invest in creating these partnership agreements that benefit their students and prepare them for college and beyond. AB 102 would eliminate the 2027 sunset date for College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) partnerships, making the program permanent. The legislation also increases access to dual enrollment opportunities for students in juvenile court schools.

AB 768 requires the Division of Boating and Waterways, Department of Education, and Department of Public Health to create updated pool and open water safety policies and programming that can be readily adopted by California schools. As you may know, in June of 2019, six-year-old Roxie Forbes drowned at a summer camp in Altadena. To save precious young lives like

Roxie's, we must ensure that caregivers are equipped with the best resources, and schools are an ideal means for providing drowning prevention awareness and education to millions of students and caregivers.

Earlier this year, the Legislature and Governor Newsom approved the \$1.6 million for the Pasadena Playhouse in order to upgrade the HVAC system that would allow a return indoors. On November 9th, at the first performance of Head Over Heels, I had the pleasure to present the \$1.6 million check I secured from the State Budget to the Pasadena Playhouse at the first re-opening since the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I hope you enjoy the holiday season with loved ones and I look forward to keeping you up to date in the next newsletter.

Sincerely, ~ Chris R. Holden

Assemblyman Holden represents some 420,000 people in the foothills communities of Altadena, Pasadena, South Pasadena, Monrovia,

Sierra Madre, San Dimas,

La Verne, Claremont,

and Upland. He can

be reached via his

website at:

www.asm.ca.-gov/

[Holden](#) and fill

out the

contact

form.



My Two Cents

By Ron Garber



So, since the Supreme Court hearing earlier this week on abortion, I've been obsessed with the issue. To start, I'm 100% in favor of a woman having the right to choose whether to carry a pregnancy to term or not. Being pro-choice does not mean one favors abortion or derides life. It just means that no one has the right to tell a woman what she can or cannot do with her body.

Fifteen years ago, I had the good fortune to view a wonderful movie called "Amazing Grace." It depicted how the Evangelical movement in England worked to abolish the 'slave trade.' Move ahead 200+ years and they are at the forefront of the pro-life movement. Their definition of life begins at conception and mine begins at viability. While I totally disagree with their position, I understand how they feel and respect them.

I predict that by a 5 to 4 margin the Supreme Court will reverse Roe v. Wade or uphold the Mississippi '15 week' law in June. If the vote is 6 to 3 my next observation will have proved to be painfully unnecessary.

Most will blame a one vote marginal loss on Mitch McConnell and/or Donald Trump and while that would satisfy Progressives, it also would please those two individuals who see what we call blame as credit. More problematic and this is going to get me in trouble, I blame Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who might be considered the greatest feminist advocate ever, as the one individual responsible for ending Roe. She knew her survival was precarious at best and could have retired anytime during Barack Obama's eight years in the White House, but held out, finally succumbing when of all people inhabiting the oval office it was Donald Trump. Steven Bryer is 83

years old and if the Democrats lose the Senate in less than one year, Mitch McConnell will never allow Joe Biden to place a Progressive Justice on the court. I pray, and I'm an Atheist, that Justice Breyer has learned the lesson, so painfully demonstrated by Justice Ginsberg.



This morning I read in the Times that the Long Beach Police Chief announced his intention to run for Los Angeles County Sheriff in November's general election and like most of the other half dozen challengers he's saying the right things. Deputies will be dismissed if they don't get Covid vaccinations, secret gangs within the department will not be tolerated, he'll cooperate with the Board of Supervisors and honor subpoenas to testify, he will not cooperate with federal immigration officials beyond what is required and will review the records of rehired personnel who had been fired prior to the current Sheriff's tenure. While that's all fine and dandy, I remember the campaign promises made by Sheriff Villanueva which were promptly broken immediately upon his being sworn in.

The current Sheriff fooled everyone including me and the L.A. County Democratic Party. While I don't know which challenger to believe, I do know that ridding ourselves of the current occupant will be one of my priorities in November. When interviewing the candidates or their surrogates for an ACT/ADC endorsement I plan on asking them, 'in light of Villanueva's deceptions in the last election why should we believe you?'

While there are other "Democrats" who have disappointed me in the past, none have so brazenly told outright lies to get elected. I don't know how we can avoid making this mistake in the future, but I do know that we need to be diligent this time around.



For those of you who are following me on my walking journey, where I never leave home, but

record my mileage on a map of the U.S., I left Duarte on Oct. 1, 2020, arrived in New York on June 1, 2021, and Seattle just this last Nov. 17. I then turned southeast, towards my next destination of Miami hitting the 5000-mile mark on Nov. 27 and am currently in central Idaho. If I am able to maintain my current daily average which is now up to 20 miles a day, I should arrive in Miami in early April and be home in Duarte by August in time to devote my full attention to the November general election.

~ Ron out



Invariable Change?

There is an old New England saying about the weather: "If you don't like the weather now, wait ten minutes and it will change." The same thing is true about politics. Yesterday's winners are today's losers, and supposedly rock-solid coalitions can crumble into dust in a matter of months.

There are many reasons for Democrats to feel discouraged about the upcoming 2022 elections, and about progressive politics in general. President Biden's approval ratings are dismal, intra-party bickering is rampant, COVID continues its inexorable spread and inflation is rearing its ugly head.

Prognosticators warn of another shellacking in the midterms, with the loss of both the House and Senate, and McCarthy and McConnell, the evil twins of the Republican party, leading the Congress into a permanent stalemate and endless investigations into the Biden administration.

Meanwhile, voters are generally fed up with both parties, which seem out of touch with ordinary folks and are led by aged leaders. The traditional

Democratic coalition of blue-collar workers and minorities, particularly Latinos, has been shattered, although the Republican party has little to offer them beyond Trump-style nihilism.

As anyone who has been around grassroots politics knows, despair does not motivate voters. It may be hard for us on the left to admit, but Trump's message in 2016, as misguided and hate-filled as it was, actually offered hope to millions of Americans. "I alone can fix it" was his credo, and that was enough to give many voters hope for the future. At least Trump acknowledged their discontent and addressed it, however racist and misogynistic his message.

The 2020 election, on the other hand, was a referendum on Trump. A majority of voters, however slim, recognized that he was a fraud and a blowhard, not to mention a racist and misogynist; that they could no longer hold their noses and vote for him. However, this was not a full-throated endorsement of Biden or the Democratic agenda, as the losses in the House reflected.

So how do we Democrats go from discouraged to hopeful next year? Above all, remember the mantra about New England weather – things inevitably change. But what are the hopeful signs of change? First, the Republicans are in disarray and continue to be the party of nihilism, representing a destructive and obstructive approach to government. But railing against the Republicans will not win elections in the post-Trump era.

Probably the biggest determinative of the 2022 elections is the economy. If inflation eases and the economy improves, then Democrats have a better shot. And while the COVID pandemic will likely continue, it may recede as a political issue as Americans accept that it is here to stay and that reasonable measures to cope with it become less controversial.

Recent events also provide a few glimmers of hope. The Supreme Court's abortion case may

rouse complacent voters to engage in support of human rights. The Republican efforts to restrict voting rights can also boost turnout for some progressive voters. And while there has been much hand-wringing over Republican gerrymandering and voting restrictions, the 2022 elections will be determined by turnout, which is a factor of voter enthusiasm.

So what do we Democrats have to get excited about? On the substantive side, the infrastructure and Build Back Better legislation, while victim of the usual DC sausage making, will make a big difference in the lives of Americans. If we can get the message out to voters about what Democrats are doing for ordinary people, that could provide a crucial edge in voting. Kitchen table issues are invariably a strength for Democrats.

A couple of recent developments are also encouraging. Beto O'Rourke has announced his candidacy for the governorship of Texas. The incumbent Republican, Greg Abbot, has moved to the extreme right in attempt to snuff out a primary challenger, but that leaves him vulnerable in a general election. In Georgia, Stacey Abrams' gubernatorial chances have improved with the announcement that former Senator David Perdue will challenge Governor Brian Kemp, thus splitting the Republican vote.

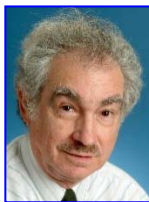
While the Georgia and Texas elections will not necessarily impact the mid-term elections in the House, the prospect of both Georgia and Texas having Democratic governors is inspiring, particularly since both O'Rourke and Abrams have been mentioned as possible 2024 presidential candidates. A presidential candidate who wins in Texas, for example, would be a virtual shoo-in for the White House, considering the boatload of electoral college votes that state represents.

So while the dark clouds are gathering and the sky is threatening, just wait awhile, things are bound to change.

~ Hoyt Hilsman, Chair UDH Steering Com.

Book Review

By Robert V. Frampton



“The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir” by Samantha Power

In her memoir, Samantha Power tells the story of her early life in Dublin, Ireland, immigration to the United States at age 9, her experiences as a free-lance reporter in Bosnia during the Serbian aggression, as a congressional aid to US Senator Barack Obama, as a member of Obama’s National Security staff and as US Ambassador to the United Nations. In summer 1990 following her junior year at Yale, she traveled throughout Eastern Europe and witnessed the post-Soviet situations in Poland, Czechoslovakia and especially Yugoslavia. After graduating from Yale with a major in history, she took an internship at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC, working for its President, Mort Abramowitz, a former US Ambassador to Turkey. In early 1992 Mort Abramowitz and Fred Cuny were working to improve the deteriorating conditions in Bosnia and to bring these conditions to the attention of the Clinton Administration. Abramowitz had established the International Crisis Group, an NGO dedicated to conflict prevention, with a field office in Bosnia. During her internship, Power compiled a detailed chronological history of events leading up to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the advent of the civil war, which she self-published as “Breakdown in the Balkans”. She was invited by British journalist Ben Cohen to attend a conference in Slovenia, after which she travelled to Croatia. After her internship ended, at Cohen’s suggestion, she decided to become a free-lance journalist to cover the emerging war in Bosnia, and reported on

many of the atrocities committed by the Serbs, under President Slobodan Milošević. The reporting of Power and other journalists on the scene, together with the efforts of Abramowitz and Cuny, led to a NATO military intervention. General Wesley Clark details the first military action taken by NATO in Europe in his memoir, *Waging Modern War*.

Before the NATO intervention began, Power returned to the US to attend law school at Harvard. She took off one year from law school to write *The Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, for which she won the Pulitzer Prize. (I will review this book next year.) This book, which is concerned with the history of genocide in the twentieth century and in particular the role that the United State has played in the efforts to deal with the problem, caught the attention of the new Senator Barack Obama, who brought Power onto his Senate Staff. After Obama’s election, Power joined his Administration as Senior Director and Special Assistant to the President for Multilateral Affairs at the National Security Council, advising the President on all matters related to the UN. She was thus the main liaison between the White House and UN Ambassador Susan Rice. In Obama’s 2nd Term, Power took the position of UN Ambassador. In this memoir, Power gives us a view of the activities of the National Security Council and the US Mission to the UN.

Power notes the slowness of the United States to respond to the genocides in Bosnia and in Rwanda. She writes: “I was struck that, 50 years after the Holocaust, the world had stood by during both the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides. This disconnect seemed to illustrate the perplexing coexistence of Americans’ purported deep resolve to prevent genocide, and our recurring struggle to acknowledge when it is happening in our midst.” This insight guided Power’s response to her roles in the Obama Administration,

to respond to the emergence of conflicts (such as in Niger with the atrocities of Boko Haram) and seeking to prevent escalation of such conflicts before they spun out of control.

Next Month: A review of *Heart of a Patriot: How I found the Courage to Survive Vietnam, Walter Reed and Karl Rove*, by former US Senator from Georgia, Max Cleland. Senator Cleland died last month.



Votes at Our December ACT / ADC Meeting



In addition to the election of officers, two other votes took place at the December ACT/ADC General Membership meeting. First, members voted to approve Bylaws changes that will deactivate the defunct Election Procedures Committee, sanction voting electronically, and drop the requirement of signing ballot return envelopes.

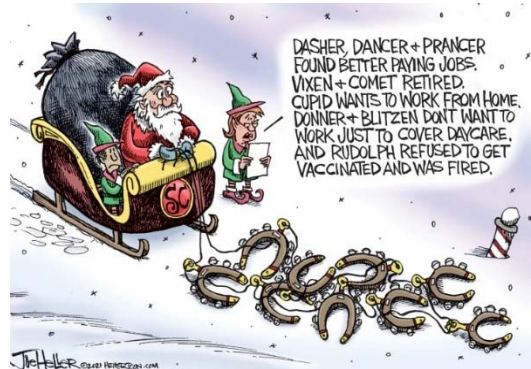
And second, after discussion, members voted unanimously to join the Pasadena Affordable Housing Coalition. (See Ed Washatka's piece on page seven for details.)



Calling Facebook Users



Please visit the ACT Pasadena Facebook page, [@actpasadena](https://www.facebook.com/actpasadena), and click the 'thumbs up' button to 'like' our page. ACT and the Arroyo Democratic Club post meeting announcements and candidate endorsements on our Facebook page as well as on our main website. Thanks!



Does ACT Have Your Current Email Address?

Please help ACT keep in regular contact by giving us your current email address, if you have one. We promise not to bombard you with email messages. We will only contact you when we need to share very important information like last-minute plan changes or events or certain deadlines.

Please share your email address with ACT Executive Director Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com (that's jon underscore fuhrman) or leave a message on ACT's answerphone, 626 795-2798.





Calendar

- January 6 ACT / ADC General Membership
Thursday Meeting via Zoom. Social-
7 p.m. izing: 7 p.m.; meeting: 7:30 p.m.
- January 10 UDH Steering Meeting via Zoom
Monday 5:30 p.m.



January *Phoenix* Deadline

The likely deadline for the January *Phoenix* will be Monday evening, January 10. Please send items for publication to Chuck Hains at hains27@sbcglobal.net and to Sally Beer at sally.beer125@gmail.com. (Chuck will continue to contact regular contributors with a deadline reminder.)



ACT's and ADC's Website

Website manager, Bruce Wright, asks for your ideas and commentary, and items for the website calendar. You can reach him at: brucewright@sbcglobal.net.



You will always find the current *Phoenix*, plus a newsletter archive on the website at www.ACTpasadena.org.



**P. O. Box 40074
Pasadena, California
91114-7074**

Renew for 2022!

Pay your 2022 ACT and/or ADC membership dues now and get a head start on 2022!

Use the form below, or renew or join online at www.actpasadena.org. If you have any questions about your membership, please check with Executive Director Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com or 626- 864-5255.

**I'd like to join both groups for one low price!** (Checks payable to ACT/ADC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

I'd like to join ACT (Checks payable to ACT)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Gift Membership (NEW!) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

I'd like to join the Arroyo Democratic Club (Checks payable to ADC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

Extra Contribution

- \$ _____ Political Account (for endorsed candidates and issues)
- \$ _____ Operating Account (for organizational costs) \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

Name

Home Phone

Address

Office Phone

City

ZIP

Email address

Mail to ACT, P. O. Box 40074, Pasadena, CA 91114-7074

Information you provide will be available to other members and endorsed candidates upon request.