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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

“Not Quite Oktoberfest” A UDH Success



“Not Quite Oktoberfest” was a huge success with over 150 in attendance at the beautiful Descanso Gardens in La Canada Flintridge. The event itself took place indoors in Van de Kamp Hall. Guests enjoyed beer, wine, cheese, crackers, artisanal breads and dried fruit. The theme “Not Quite Oktoberfest” was coined in this off-year so that we could all go a bit lighter, before we do battle next year, to turn red congressional districts blue.

Congresswoman Judy Chu, State Senator Anthony Portantino, Phlunte Riddle representing Assemblymember Chris Holden, Pasadena City Councilman Steve Madison and newly elected Chair of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party, Mark Gonzalez, addressed the gathering with words of wisdom. They rallied the crowd to take action and stay involved in Democratic causes.

Tim Wendler was presented with the “Lifetime Achievement Award”. Pasadena Fire Fighters Local 809 received the “Legacy Award”. Fire Fighter Scott Austin was present to accept the award on behalf of Local 809. Nick and Jamie Stupin accepted the “Friend of the UDH Award” on behalf of Bob and Linda Angel. They have generously hosted Oktoberfest at their beautiful home, year after year. Congratulations to all of the awardees!

All of the funds raised will go towards opening a headquarters next year with a focus on turning Red Congressional Districts Blue! You can still give to Oktoberfest and the UDH by going online to pasadenademocrats.com. Join in our virtual Oktoberfest all month long. Sit at home, have a brat and a beer and donate to the UDH. You can also make out a check payable to United Democratic Headquarters and send to: Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters, P.O. Box 92404, Pasadena, CA 91109. Please be sure your phone number is on the check.



Photo from Malcolm Johnson

UDH Award Goes to Tim Wendler

Congratulations to Arroyo Democratic Club VP Tim Wendler who was awarded the Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters' (UDH) Lifetime Achievement Award at "Not Quite" Oktoberfest at Descanso on October 8.

Tim was instrumental in UDH's founding, has served as a delegate to numerous state conventions and always takes a leadership role in local party activity. The Wendlers have even let UDH store furniture and supplies in their garage in the off season! (We can't ask for more than that.)

Thanks, Tim.



Kudos to Congressman Schiff

We are extremely proud of fellow ACT member - Congressman Adam Schiff. For those of you who have been closely tuned-in to today's politics via social media, his name and his face are constantly out there. As a result of his role as Intelligence Committee Ranking Member, he has become the go-to person that our journalists and political commentators rely on for always making himself available. Congressman Schiff exhibits professionalism, honesty and possesses an integrity that quickly earned him the media's respect and that of the audience. As a result, he has become recognized nationwide.

Congressman Schiff has dedicated his career to service to his country. After graduating from Stanford and Harvard, he served as a federal prosecutor, California Assemblyman and State Senator, then a Congressman representing us - his constituents for 21 years.

You can follow him on his website and Twitter. He tweets daily, always speaking out openly and in an impressively knowledgeable manner.

As long as the current occupant of the White House remains, he will not run out of material.

ACT/ADC would like to say thank you Congressman Schiff for being the true model for all politicians. Thank you for reminding us that yes, good politicians do exist!!! We are proud!!!

On behalf of our membership, ACT/ADC donated \$500 for Congressman Schiff to use at his discretion to defray costs for the LGBT March that occurred in June.



Kip Thorne Receives Nobel Prize



Wow! CalTech physicist and longtime ACT member Kip Thorne, along with his Caltech colleague Barry Barish and Ranier Weiss of MIT have received the Nobel Prize in physics! This for their discovery of gravitational waves via their decades-long work creating LIGO, the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory.

First on September 14, 2015 and three times since, LIGO detectors registered disturbances in space-time, each caused by collisions between two black holes and offering experimental proof of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Then, on last August 17, LIGO scientists and others detected gravitational waves from a binary neutron star merger, the first time gravitational waves and visible light have been detected together.

Thorne, in accepting the award, also credited recently deceased LIGO co-founder Ronald Drever, the hundreds of scientists and engineers who built and perfected the LIGO detectors, and the hundreds of scientists who found the gravitational waves in the LIGO data and extracted the waves' information.

Kudos, Kip! We are impressed and proud.

Wonderings and Wanderings

By Inman Moore



FAKE NEWS

We hear a lot about fake news these days. The use of the term “fake news” seems to have originated with Donald Trump, but now some of his supporters are slinging it around. In many of his speeches and public statements Trump refers to the spread of fake news. At his speeches, where there is usually a press gallery, Trump simply points his finger at the location of the press gallery (which includes the printed press, radio, and television) and yells “Fake News!!!” Trump never gets very specific, but the indication from Trump is that the whole press corps, with a few exceptions, are liars. They are out to get him and don’t mind lying in the process. In other words they put out “fake news.”

While I am in a different profession I have profound respect for the news men and women who work long hours for radio, television, and newspapers. America has many distinguished schools of journalism, such as the ones at USC and the University of Missouri. Their students are taught the technical skills of writing, but they are also taught the high importance of integrity.

“Getting the story right” is of utmost importance. Journalists who “jerry-rigged” their stories are fired. We don’t have to agree with everything that is said or spoken in our democracy, but it is of utmost importance to have a free and highly skilled press corp.

My wife, Nellie, and I have four children. Two of them have been journalists (now retired). David was for many years a sport reporter for USA Today traveling all over the world. Linda, for a number of years, was a European reporter for Variety Magazine. I have the utmost respect for both their integrity and skill.

They wouldn’t have thought of tampering and adding fake details to their stories. And neither would the Washington Press Corps. Most, if not all, would be fired for putting out “fake news.”

A free press is one of the cornerstones of a democracy. People depend on the press. My fear is that Donald Trump realizes only too well the importance of a free press in maintaining a free society, and that a free press is also the natural enemy of someone who seeks total power. Dictator’s such as Hitler and Mussolini realized quickly that to have total control and power they needed to control the news sources and either take them over or shut them down. In modern times, Putin of Russia has quickly assumed control of the news outlets. There is increasing evidence that Trump would very much like to be a dictator. America would then become a subsidiary of “Trump Enterprises.” To do this he needs control of the press.

Let us be very wary of politicians in high places in America shouting “FAKE NEWS!!!” The essential essence of a free society is the freedom, in a peaceful way, to express our opinions. The First Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed freedom of speech and freedom of the press. We should never forget how important free speech and a free press are in maintaining a democratic form of government!

— Inman



Welcome New and Returning ACT Members:

Karen Breau, Glendale

Special Thanks to Sustaining Members

Bobbi Abram, Pasadena

Julianne Hines, Pasadena

Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Thursday, October 5.

Susan and I are heading out on another family vacation, so once again I'm writing my column especially early. That's a real challenge, because every day it seems there is dramatic news – from the horrific like the carnage in Las Vegas, to the ludicrous as Secretary Tillerson (accurately) refers to the President as a moron.

But two topics merit some comment: the President's tax reform package, and the Alabama election results.

The President and the GOP generally have been hyping their tax reform "framework" (because it really is more a general concept with few actual details or legislative language) as a once-in-a-generation reform of the entire system. They imply this reform is good for all taxpayers, and especially for the middle class. (Try not to laugh out loud.)

In reality, it is a remarkable assault against the middle class, and most specifically against families with two or more children. I think the Democrats have been slow to pick up on this aspect, but the whole package is already beginning to self-destruct.

The central feature intended to help lower income taxpayers is the doubling of the standard deduction, from \$12,000 to \$24,000 for joint filers (any couple, whether or not they have children). On its face, this seems good, even progressive. It might simplify life for taxpayers who no longer need to itemize their deductions (although, in truth, it's not all that difficult to complete Schedule A). Further, particularly if the reforms include eliminating the deduction for state and local taxes (which covers both property and state income taxes), then even more people would do better with the simpler standard deduction than with itemized deductions. So what's not to like about a simpler tax return and a larger deduction?

Well, somewhat hidden under the covers is another provision that would eliminate "personal exemptions". This was included to raise revenue to help offset the cost of increasing the standard deduction. "Personal exemptions" are the \$4,050 allowance given to each individual in the taxpaying family. Hence a married couple would gain the extra \$12,000 in an increased standard deduction, but that would be offset by losing two exemptions, worth \$8,100. They'd still be ahead, but not by all that much.

But what happens when you add children into the mix? There is no boost to the standard deduction, but now the family would lose the personal exemptions for both parents and however many children they have. For a family with one child, they come out about even. With two children, the family loses \$16,200 in exemptions, but gains only \$12,000 in standard deductions, so they now have to

pay taxes on an extra \$4,000. As you add children, it only gets worse. For a party devoted to “family values”, this is a stunningly insensitive approach.

And it gets worse. What if the family continues to itemize their deductions? Deductions include, primarily, mortgage interest, state and local taxes, and charitable contributions. If that total is greater than \$24,000, then they would continue to itemize their deductions, and they gain nothing from an increase in the standard deduction. For a typical California family, mortgage interest of \$1000 to \$2000 a month, which translates into a house worth between \$600,000 and \$700,000, is pretty routine. So the mortgage interest alone would lead many families to continue itemizing their deductions. Yet they still would lose their personal exemptions. Thus, they are looking at an increase of \$12,000 to \$16,000 in income taxed at their marginal rate – not exactly friendly news to middle income families.

Disallowing the deduction of state and local taxes was one of the centerpieces of the framework designed to, at least somewhat, lessen the impact of tax cuts to the wealthy. Further, since the states with the highest state and local taxes are mostly Democratic states, it was thought to be politically cost-free. Yet the proponents neglected to tally up the number of GOP Congressmen from California, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. As the leadership has begun to hear serious grumbling from those members, who rightfully are concerned about their re-election prospects in what may already be a tough year, the leadership has started backing away from this part of their framework.

However, if state and local taxes remain de-

ductible, fewer people will move from itemizing deductions to the increased standard deduction, while still bearing the brunt of the loss of personal exemptions. Thus, the whole framework begins to unravel.

Another central element in their framework is the repeal of the estate tax. The GOP leadership seems to have an irrational compulsion to repeal the “death tax”, even though only one-tenth of one percent of all taxpayers are impacted by it. Only estates larger than \$10 million are hit by this tax. That certainly leaves out most of Middle America. Yet the leadership remains obsessively committed.

Fortunately, even some GOP Senators see the illogic here, and two Senators are already off the reservation. So another piece of the framework is bending, and probably breaking, in the wind.

What remains is the reduction in corporate taxes, cutting the top marginal rate for personal taxes down to 35%, and most particularly a new even lower rate for “pass-through” income, which will just be a giant loophole for rich self-employed people to cut

their marginal rates from a reduced 35% (compared to the current 39.6%) down to 25%. But as the other pieces of the puzzle peel away, it leaves the GOP with a stupendous increase in the deficit, one so big that even the most disingenuous “dynamic scoring” (positing increased tax revenues due to economic growth spurred by tax cuts) can’t overcome.

So the GOP will be left with the basic choice: do tax “reform” and accept huge increases in the deficits (and higher taxes for many middle-class families), or abandon another marquee effort and go into a tough mid-term election essentially empty-handed. Complicating the process is that, to qualify as a reconciliation



measure that needs only 51 votes in the Senate, both the House and Senate must first agree on a budget resolution, which could entail all sorts of dicey budget cuts to things like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Reconciling the two chambers' versions could in itself be a Herculean task, even before they get to the actual tax reform legislation.

My guess, then, is that, piece by piece, the framework will fall apart, and in the end, the entire effort will fail much like the ACA repeal has failed. This will generate huge anger and recriminations on the right and it will fuel what is already brewing as a full-scale civil war within the GOP. Which brings us to Alabama.

The pollsters were pretty much dead on. Judge Roy Moore was seen to be 8 – 13 points ahead pretty steadily, and he ended up with a 55% – 45% victory. The judgment generally is that he has a lock on the seat, pretty much, probably, almost certainly, except... His opponent, Democrat Doug Jones, is a native Alabamian, a former U.S. Attorney, with great law and order credentials, but he's a Democrat, for crying out loud (and unapologetically pro-choice). Democrats haven't carried a seat in Alabama since the late 1600's, give or take, and federal elections tend to be even more partisan than state elections. And yet...

There are three salient points that offer some hope – actually, some significant hope. First, there is Roy Moore himself. It is hard to imagine a more odious candidate (and I cringe a bit when I use that language, but in this case it truly is justified). He was twice booted from the Alabama Supreme Court (by fellow Alabama judges, who are not exactly liberal cream-puffs). And he was booted because he is the quintessential “activist” judge, imposing his personal religious morality over and upon the law. What supreme irony to see conservatives who have spent their lives railing against activist judges supporting Judge Moore. It's

not that he holds the most hardcore fundamentalist beliefs, but that he brings that morality into the public square and insists that our laws ought to adhere to those personal beliefs. He is a ticking time bomb of “Macaca” moments, and a two month campaign is a terribly long time during which he will have ample opportunity to open mouth and insert a small tactical nuclear weapon.

Secondly, if you actually look at Judge Moore's electoral performance, it's not all that impressive. When he first ran for Chief Justice in 2000, he won by a modest 54.6%. Since then, of course, there have been huge GOP gains in Alabama, but when he ran for Chief Justice in 2012, he was elected by only 51.7% to 48%. In that same election, Mitt Romney carried the state by 61%. Moore ran 10% points behind Romney in Jefferson County, the state's largest, and he lost Mobile and Madison Counties (the 2nd and 4th largest in the state).

Moore ran in the 2006 and 2010 GOP gubernatorial primaries and got crushed, running a distant third and fourth. He is comparatively weakest in the strongly Republican suburban counties – the core of the better educated, “establishment” or Main Street wing of the party.

In the September run-off, Moore won with 250,000, compared to 200,000 votes for Sen. Luther Strange. That represented a GOP turnout of about 30%, so Moore's overall share of GOP voters was only about 17% -- hardly a mandate. Now it is true that only 160,000 Democrats voted in the Democratic primary in June, but Doug Jones' victory was pretty much a foregone conclusion (he got over 2/3 of the vote).

Thus, given Moore's relatively lackluster electoral history over the last 20 years, and the degree of opposition to his candidacy, one might believe that quite a few Republicans will either not vote for him, or even vote for the Democrat. Indeed, Sen. Strange has yet

formally to endorse Moore, and my guess is that he will not.

With this context, then, it is not surprising that post-election polling shows Moore winning by only 3 – 5% over Democrat Doug Jones. That's a remarkably narrow margin – but it's still a margin. Moore has won by similarly slim margins, and Democrats have come tantalizingly close and yet still lost many recent special elections.

And that brings us to the third point – how are Democrats doing, and what's happening among Republicans? On the same day that Judge Moore won his primary, there were two other special elections: a state Senate seat in Miami, Florida, and a State House seat in New Hampshire. In both races, Democrats captured seats previously held by Republicans. This pattern has been repeating itself across the country. Last month, in Oklahoma of all places, a liberal Jewish labor lawyer flipped a State House seat in a traditionally safe Republican district. Democrats have flipped eight state legislative seats, mostly in red states, over the past several months. Recent polling similarly suggests Democrats seem to have an “intensity” edge.

In low-turnout special elections, intensity is a key factor in motivating one's base. If the GOP side splits, with some of the Main Street, college-educated suburban Republicans either sitting out the election or even voting for Jones, a Democratic victory is conceivable (admittedly not probable, but possible). The key will be turning out Democrats. Jones needs nearly a 50% turnout among Democrats, or about 400,000 votes. That's huge for a special election, but 730,000 Democrats voted for Hillary Clinton, so it's not entirely out of the realm. As it happens, the city of Birmingham, the largest Democratic voter base in the state, is having a hot mayoral race in October, which may help energize voters

and reinforce the political infrastructure needed to boost turnout.

Additionally, in November, Virginia and New Jersey are having their state elections, which are likely to bring good news and further energy to Democrats. In fact, take a close look at the results of the Virginia legislative races. In 2015, only 39 of the 100 State House of Delegates were contested; the 61 uncontested seats were mostly Republican seats, virtually guaranteeing the GOP control of the House. This year, 67 seats are being contested. Dems currently hold 34 seats; my guess is that Dems may well seize control of the House. Even if we don't get control of the House, significant gains there would further encourage Democrats nationally and in Alabama.

Doug Jones will need a good bit of money to stimulate Democratic turnout to the degree he needs to win, but money is coming in. Already, in the week since the runoff, he's raised over \$800,000 from essentially spontaneous contributions by Democrats across the country, which suggests the grass-roots are ready to get behind Jones' candidacy enthusiastically.

With all this in mind, I'm going out on a far limb and predicting that Doug Jones will be the first Democrat is quite some time to represent Alabama in the Senate. Who would have thought that a Democrat could win the Governorship in deep red Louisiana in an off-year election, but John Belle Edwards proved us wrong. Edwards was running against a deeply flawed GOP candidate, and in Alabama we have a similar situation. Hope springs eternal.

Whatever happens in Alabama seems likely to fuel the civil war with the GOP. Already incumbent Senators like Dean Heller and Jeff Flake are facing far-right primary opponents. In Mississippi, Chris McDaniel, who narrowly lost to incumbent Thad Cochran in 2014, is

likely to run against incumbent Roger Wicker. Deb Fisher in Nebraska may also have a primary opponent. The fascinating thing is that none of these Republican incumbents has ever been seen as part of the moderate or RINO wing. Not one was ever thought of as possible cross-over vote on virtually any issue. They are all solid right-wing conservatives, but they are seemingly not sufficiently personally aggressive or assertive to satisfy the Bannon wing of the party. In Tennessee, where incumbent Bob Corker is retiring, state law calls for a plurality primary, so a Trump-like candidate could win with 30 – 40% of the vote.

All of this sets the GOP up for a repeat of their experience in 2010 and 2012, where what were considered as “winnable” seats were lost to Democrats who took advantage of extremist positions or statements by GOP candidates. So buckle up your seatbelt, because next year may see some remarkably bumpy politics.

— Jon Fuhrman



Help ADC Turn the 39th CD Blue!



Sign Up Today!

ADC is working with other progressives to help turn the 39th Congressional District seat held by Republican Ed Royce blue! We need your help to canvass the district on Sunday, October 22, at 1 p.m. We would like to get a fun group of ten people to caravan down to this Los Angeles/Orange County district. Please call Bill Hackett at 626-705-2180 or email him at billhackett2002@yahoo.com. You can make a big difference by just giving a few hours of your time going door-to-door to Democrats and Declined-to-States. It is an easy canvas!

Overview of the 39th Congressional District – Part 2

Republican Ed Royce has been adopted for early retirement by ACT/ADC. Recent registration trends in Royce’s 39th Congressional district are favorable for Democrats. In May of 2012, the 39th was 32.2% Democratic and 40.1% Republican. In February of 2017, Democrats had moved up to 34.4% while Republicans fell to 36.1%. That trend is expected to continue, and chances are good that by November of 2018 the district will have a slight Democratic plurality for the first time (in its current configuration).

Independents hold the balance of power and will continue to do so. Their ranks have been growing almost as fast as the Democrat’s. In his recent elections (without concerted Democratic opposition), Royce has been running at least 21% ahead of Republican registration, while the Democratic candidates have run only 8% or so ahead of their registration.

Part of the vote disparity is due to lower turnout and higher drop-off (failure to vote in the Congressional race) among Democrats. Underfunded campaigns by Royce’s Democratic opponents have contributed to both trends, so there’s good reason to believe a more aggressive campaign will improve Democratic performance. Nevertheless, independent voters have clearly favored Royce in the past.

Independent support for Royce varies across the district. More than 60% of the voters are in Orange County. Republicans still have a strong edge in registration. Yet, surprisingly, Royce is weaker (compared to registration) there than elsewhere. LA County has just under 30% of the voters, and a solid plurality are Democrats – yet Royce runs so far ahead of registration he’s been able to carry LA County, albeit narrowly. San Bernardino County has 10-11% of the voters, and Royce is

almost as strong there as he is in LA County.

The heart of the Orange County portion is the City of Fullerton. Along with Brea, Buena Park, La Habra and Yorba Linda, Fullerton is whiter and less Asian than the district as a whole. Fullerton is also somewhat less Hispanic. La Habra has a substantial Hispanic population, but the other Orange County cities are decidedly less Hispanic.

The LA County portion of the district includes Diamond Bar, Walnut, Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights. All these communities are heavily Asian. Hacienda Heights is also heavily Hispanic, but the other three cities are not.

Chino Hills is the main community in San Bernardino County. It is a bit more Asian, and a bit less Hispanic, than the district as a whole.

These demographics suggest that Asians are a disproportionately large share of the independent voters – and that they have leaned toward Royce in the past. That's why he's done relatively well in LA and San Bernardino counties. Nationwide (and In California), Asians have historically been less inclined to register with either of the two major parties. However, in recent years they've trended strongly away from the Republican Party, driven in large part by the GOP's overt hostility toward immigrants.

It seems clear that Democrats will have to do three things to win this seat:

- Ramp up Democratic registration and turn out their newly registered voters.
- Run a strong campaign that appeals to independents in general, and especially to Asians.
- Identify Trump opponents among independents and Democrats (and, to a lesser extent, Republicans), and focus on turning out those voters rather than converting Trump supporters.

Every indication is that partisan lines are firming up and there's little prospect of converting supporters of either party to cross over. But it is important to remember that a voter's registration often no longer reflects his or her current party allegiance. That's why voter identification is so important in close races.

The other critical component, of course, will be the energy and appeal of the Democratic candidate. ACT/ADC will not endorse a candidate before the primary. However, in case some of our members may wish to do so, future issues of the Phoenix will provide information on each of the Democratic contenders.

— Fred Register



Letter to the Editor

I am sooooooooooooo frustrated. First at Dianne Feinstein for not retiring and then at Kevin de Leon for challenging her. This is the year that we need to concentrate both our time and more importantly on money converting red Congressional districts into blue ones. Instead, literally millions of dollars will be going into an internecine Democratic Party conflict between two highly respected Democrats who's votes on the Senate floor would never differ. It's bad enough that we will have to suffer this through the primary season but I'm betting that they will both be the final two standing in the general election as California's cockamamie election rules will leave us with two Democrats who survive the primary just like 2016. Again I'm reminded of the infamous Will Rogers quote "I'm not a member of any organized party, I'm a Democrat".

— Ron Garber



Paraproisdokian

I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.

Questions about Changing Election Dates for Pasadena City Council and PUSD

Why is this issue coming up now? Two years ago, the Legislature voted to require all local entities to hold their elections on statewide election dates (typically June and/or November of even-numbered years) – if turnout for local elections has been at least 25% below the average of the four most recent statewide general elections. The law takes effect on January 1, 2018.

Pasadena (like most older and larger cities in California) is a charter city, and our City Charter prescribes local elections in the spring of odd-numbered years. So, the first question was: Does the state have the legal authority to override the Charter in this way?

At Pasadena's request, Assemblyman Chris Holden asked the Attorney General's office for a legal opinion. In July, the AG responded that the state law does cover charter cities like Pasadena – and PUSD, too, since PUSD elections are governed by the Pasadena City Charter.

What options does the city have? It can comply with the law and change the election dates – probably to June of even-numbered years. Or it can refuse to do so, likely prompting a lawsuit. Some lawyers believe the AG's opinion is quite weak and unlikely to be affirmed in court. But trials are costly and unpredictable. So the City Council must decide whether the benefits of our current election system are worth the cost and risk of going to court to preserve it.

What is the rationale for changing election dates? The main justification is to increase voter participation in local elections. Proponents believe that this would also have the effect of giving a stronger voice to younger, low-income and minority voters.

In addition, there could be efficiencies and cost-savings from consolidating elections and having fewer of them. Indeed, the change in law is already causing the closure of some consulting firms specializing in running elections for cities and school districts. So even if we wanted to stay with our current system, Pasadena could be forced to contract with the County at a substantially higher cost.

Would this change increase turnout? It almost certainly would, but not necessarily by a large margin. Average turnout in Pasadena for statewide general elections is @63.2% (higher in Presidential years, lower in gubernatorial years). By contrast, turnout for local elections is rarely higher than 20%.

However, the local elections are primaries, not general elections. They would likely be consolidated with statewide primaries in June, when turnout is much lower than in November. Over the last four June primaries Pasadena's turnout has averaged 34.1%.

Moreover, in statewide elections there is always a large voter drop-off from races President or Governor to lesser-known, down-ballot races. So, participation in local primaries under this system would likely average a bit below 30% -- certainly more than the recent average of @20%, but not radically so.

Are there disadvantages to making this change? The answer depends partly on how you view partisanship in local elections. The current system purposely de-emphasizes partisanship. Making this change would probably make party affiliation the dominant factor in all local elections. Some people like that idea. Others fear highly polarized partisan grid-lock – as in Washington and Sacramento.

A second concern is that consideration of local matters could be overwhelmed by the controversy and media coverage surrounding presidential (and, to a lesser extent, gubernatorial)

primaries. Even the best-known local candidates, and most critical issues, would become after-thoughts to most voters.

The closest analogy is the way judges are currently elected: no party labels, poor ballot position and relatively low-information. As a result, the races get little attention, few people have any idea who the candidates are, and voter drop-off is very high. This, in turn, gives enormous power to commercial slate cards, which are typically sold to the highest bidder – and often without any regard to their alleged party connections. Thus, a Republican with sufficient money can buy lots of “Democratic” slates – and vice-versa. Many well-informed voters wrongly regard these slate cards as jokes. Yet they are very powerful, often decisive, in low-information races on long ballots – as local races would be under the new system.

As a result, the cost of running for local office would certainly rise. Local candidates would be forced to buy slates in addition to all their current expenses. Indeed, they might well have to spend more on everything to be heard over the clamor generated by larger, better-funded partisan campaigns.

Are there other issues to be considered?

Yes. Changing dates would force the Council (and PUSD) to decide which seats are given shorter or longer terms in the transition. Most likely, current terms would all be extended by a year or more.

There is also the question of what to do about run-offs. Currently, if no one wins a majority in the primary a run-off is held six weeks later. But under the new rules, all run-offs would be delayed for five months – eight months in presidential years! Dragging out races like that would be enormously costly in time and money for local candidates. To avoid it, the City might have to adopt a fundamental change: Either allow candidates to win with a

plurality instead of a majority; or adopt some form of instant run-off – like ranked voting, where voters rank the candidates instead of choosing just one.

The Pasadena City Council will decide this issue soon. Be sure to let council members know how you feel.

— Fred Register



Next Meeting – November 2 with Supervisor Kathryn Barger

We are excited that L A County Supervisor Kathryn Barger will be our guest speaker at the next ACT/ADC meeting on Thursday, November 2, (socializing at 7 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.), at the home of Wendy Gordon and Michael Gottlieb, 1535 Ontario Avenue, Pasadena.

ACT Co-Chair Ed Washatka will chair this meeting. The agenda includes the selection of a Nominating Committee. (It will meet in November and report back at the December meeting. As is our tradition, the outgoing Co-Chair - Jeanette Mann - will chair the Nominating Committee.)

We hope you can come. Everyone is welcome.



Progressive Discussion Group

Friday Morning Progressive Discussion Group meets every first and third Friday of the month from 9-10 a.m. in the back room of Dupar’s Restaurant, 214 S. Lake Ave., Pasadena. Parking is available in the big lot behind the restaurant off Shopper’s Lane. You can always count on a lively discussion of a current political topic at a PDG meeting.

Come and join in. Everyone is welcome. Order breakfast, coffee, etc., or not.

For additional info msg Dale Gronemeier at dlg@dgronemeier.com.

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



Dear ACT Members,

As many of you know, I work very closely and collaboratively with the Armenian American community throughout our district and across California. I've had the opportunity to visit with Armenian Leaders in Yerevan and to visit troops fighting for independence against Azerbaijan aggression in the ethnically Armenian independent country of Artsakh.

This week, I was asked by the Armenian Ambassador to the United States to facilitate a meeting between Governor Brown and the Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Vache Gabrielyan for the purpose of Armenia's signing on to the *Under 2 Coalition* climate accord and to discuss expanding trade opportunities between California and Armenia.

The Under2 Coalition is a diverse group of governments around the world who set ambitious targets to combat climate change. Central to the Under2 MOU is an agreement from all signatories to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 80 to 95 percent below 1990 levels, or limit to 2 annual metric tons of CO₂-equivalent per capita, by 2050. A total of 188 [jurisdictions](#) spanning 39 countries and six continents have signed or endorsed the Under2 MOU. Collectively, the Under2 Coalition represents 1.2 billion people and \$28.9 trillion in GDP – equivalent to 16 percent of the global population and 39 percent of the global economy (last updated October 2017).

The Under2 MOU originated from a partnership between California and Baden-Württemberg with the aim of bringing together ambi-

tious states and regions willing to make a number of key commitments toward emissions reduction and to help galvanize action at the COP 21 (Conference of the Parties) Paris Climate Change Conference in December 2015.

I was joined at the meeting by Armenian American community leaders from the Armenian National Committee of America Western Region for this historic moment and thought it would be of interest to ACT members still struggling with Trump's wrong-headed actions on the Paris Agreement. Many people ask me about California's leadership and in particular Governor Brown's strong use of his stature and office to drive our progressive agenda. Here's an instance where our friends in other countries are responding to California's leadership and I was honored to be on hand and to facilitate this historic meeting.

Respectfully,

— Anthony



Senator Portantino with Governor Brown and Deputy Prime Minister Gabrielyan of Armenia



Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Operating Account

Bobbi Abram, Pasadena

**From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

It was a very busy September as the legislative session came to an end. Adding to the list of accomplishments this year for the legislature as a whole was passing an aggressive affordable housing package that will help relieve California's housing crises. The package includes Senate Bill 2 that will generate \$300 million annually for affordable housing through a \$75 fee on real estate transaction documents and Senate Bill 3 that authorizes the issuance of \$4 billion in general obligation (GO) bonds for affordable housing programs and a veteran's home ownership. We also passed Senate Bill 35 that creates a streamlined approval process for infill developments in localities that have failed to meet their regional housing needs assessment number which will help create more housing for people of all income levels. These pieces of legislation, among others in the package, are a bold and necessary step to helping millions of Californians with affordable housing.

I am still waiting for Governor Brown's signature on a number of my bills that made it to his desk, but I am happy to report that my bill, Assembly Bill 959, to empower families with developmental services needs from regional centers was signed into law. Currently, many families face barriers – especially those living in low-income, minority & non-English-speaking households – from obtaining the services they need simply because of how the information is presented by the regional centers. The bill requires the Department of De-

velopmental Services to expand the type of information offered by regional centers on their website and describe the services offered in plain language for parents to understand. The bill also ensures that regional centers use language that is culturally and linguistically appropriate in order to reduce service disparities for minorities. In addition to the positive impact this legislation will have for families across the state, I'm extremely proud to see this bill signed into law because it came directly from constituents who approached me with the idea.

In the district, I continue to look for opportunities to support organizations that make a powerful and positive impact in the 41st Assembly District. In a small ceremony at my district office Pasadena based non-profits Shepherd's Door, First Tee of Great Pasadena, Delta Foundation and Mentoring & Partnership for Youth Development (MPYD) received grants through AT&T California's "Investing in California Awards." The purpose of the "Investing in California Awards" program is to provide resources and recognition to organizations and programs that are improving lives in their communities and the state by advancing economic growth, educational opportunities or new technologies, or by providing other essential community services. As policy fixes are not the only way to help our community it is essential we continue to support non-profits like these every way we can.

Lastly, as chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Regional Transportation and Interconnectivity Solutions, I invite you to participate in an informational hearing "Advancing Sustainability in Regional Transportation Projects" to join me and other subject matter experts for a discussion to address time-



ly transportation issues for the region and state. The hearing will take place on Thursday, November 2nd, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in the Richard Chambers U.S. Court of Appeals in Pasadena.

To RSVP or for questions please contact my office at (626) 351-1917.

Sincerely, — Chris R. Holden

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



ACT's Webpage: Photos Wanted

ACT's webpage www.ACTpasadena.org is a handy source of political news – local, state-wide and national. It is also a good place to find information on local meetings and events. The current on-line edition of *The Phoenix* (in color and often with items that couldn't be fitted into the print edition) is always available on our webpage.

Bruce Wright, our website manager, asks for photos for the webpage. Please submit ideas & photos to him at brucewright@sbcglobal.net.



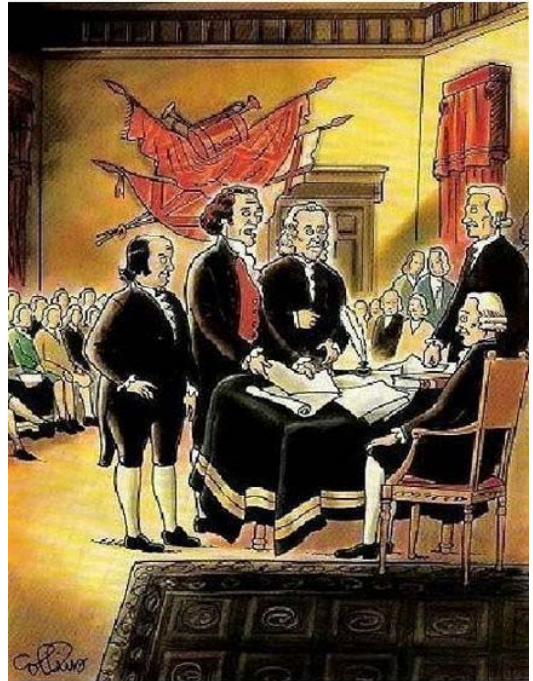
Upcoming Meetings

December - Holiday Potluck meeting with Assemblymember Chris Holden.

January - Local resident Hank Guerrero, who served on the County's Civil Grand Jury, will report on how a citizen is selected to participate, which social and justice issue his jury focused on, who reads their report and what happens with the jury's recommendations.



MAYBE THIS IS THE BEST POLITICAL CARTOON EVER!



"I keep thinking we should include something in the constitution in case the people elect a f*%#g moron."



Where Have You Been Recently?

Inquiring minds want to know. Whether you have been near or far, please send a high-resolution photo (of you) to Chuck Hains at hains27@sbcglobal.net for inclusion in *The Phoenix*.



The Phoenix Editorial Policy:

Signed articles and letters appearing in *the Phoenix* represent the opinions of the individual writers and not of ACT. Their appearance does not imply endorsement by ACT or agreement with the opinions expressed. The accuracy of facts is not guaranteed. We welcome articles of interest and encourage our members to write.

BEST CITIZEN, Monica Hubbard

When it came to Pasadena's Best Citizen the smart money was on activist Monica Hubbard taking home the well-deserved trophy. Nice job, Monica.

Monica Hubbard is many things to many people. At Caltech, she conducted choirs in academic, church and community settings from 1966 to 1999. After leaving conducting, she opened a consulting practice for arts and social services nonprofits with a focus on board development and capacity-building, with clients such as the Pasadena Playhouse, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, the AIDS Service Center and Occidental College. In Altadena, her work with nonprofits and other community-based organizations earned her the title Citizen of the Year in 2014. "When I see people do good," Monica once said, "I like to help them in any way possible."

-- Pasadena Weekly, October 5, 2017



November *Phoenix* Deadline

The deadline for the November *Phoenix* will be Sunday evening, November 5. Please send your items for *The Phoenix* to Editors Chuck Hains or Sally Beer on or before the deadline, at hains27@sbcbglobal.net.



Future Speakers Wish List

Have an idea for a topic or speaker for our monthly meetings? Suggestions are welcome. Email Program Chair Linda Centell at lcentell@charter.net.

Oct Nov Calendar

- October 22 39th CD canvassing. Contact Sunday billhacket2002@yahoo.com 1 p.m. to help.
- November 2 ACT Steering and ADC Meet- Thursday ings at the home of Wendy Gordon and Michael Gottlieb, 1535 Ontario Ave., Pasadena. 7 p.m. Special guest speaker is Supervisor Kathryn Barger. Socializing at 7 p.m.; meeting at 7:30 p.m. All members welcome and urged to attend.
- November 3 Progressive Discussion Group Friday at Dupar's Restaurant, 214 S. 9-10 a.m. Lake Ave., Pasadena. Contact Dale Gronemeier for more info at dlg@dgronemeier.com. Also 11/17 and 12/1.
- November 7 UDH Steering meeting at the Tuesday home of Karen Wingard, 737 7 p.m. Magnolia Ave., Pasadena.



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

Does Your Address Label Have a **RED CHECK**?

Have you sent in your 2017 membership check? A **RED CHECK** on your address label of this **Phoenix** tells you we haven't yet received it.

Hey! We need your continued support! Please use the form below or renew online at www.ACTpasadena.org. Many thanks!

If you have any questions about your membership please contact Executive Director Jon Fuhrman at 626 795-5255 or jon_fuhrman@charter.net.

P.S. Thanks to all of you who have already renewed - for your amazing generosity and support.



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

\$40 Single	\$70 Single Sustaining
\$25 Each additional member per household	\$90 Double Sustaining
\$15 Student or limited income	\$150 Patron
	\$275 Benefactor

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

\$35 Single	\$60 Single Sustaining
\$20 Each additional member per household	\$85 Double Sustaining
\$15 Student or limited income	\$125 Patron
\$20 Gift Membership (NEW!)	\$275 Benefactor

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

\$35 Single	\$60 Single Sustaining
\$20 Each additional member per household	\$85 Double Sustaining
\$15 Student or limited income	\$125 Patron
	\$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 provided will be available to other members and endorsed candidates upon request.