
 <p>Donkey Tales Volume XXI, No. 3 March 2011</p>	<p>Newsletter of the Democrats of North Orange County</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="519 241 812 388"> <p>Executive Board Meetings (all are welcome!) 2nd Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m. at Banco Popular 1701 N. Euclid Ave., Fullerton</p> </td> <td data-bbox="860 241 1177 420"> <p>General Meetings (bring new members!) 1st Thursday of every month 7:00 p.m. at The Sizzler 1401 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton (meet us for dinner at 6:00!)</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Executive Board Meetings (all are welcome!) 2nd Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m. at Banco Popular 1701 N. Euclid Ave., Fullerton</p>	<p>General Meetings (bring new members!) 1st Thursday of every month 7:00 p.m. at The Sizzler 1401 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton (meet us for dinner at 6:00!)</p>	 <p>Chartered by the Democratic Party of Orange County</p>
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Suddenly, Activism: From Wisconsin to Egypt to Rancho Mirage, Protesters are Making Headlines

Protests in Wisconsin are, as this newsletter goes to print, looming as one of the major labor stories of the new century. In Tunisia, Egypt, and beyond, common citizens are reshaping their political systems. Southern California Democratic activists also made the news for taking a stand against a shadowy retreat run by the Koch Brothers – the very people who promoted Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker.

INSIDE:

- New DPOC column starts in March
- John Burton says: “On Wisconsin!”
- Redistricting Commission hearings
- An essay to share on unionization

The Kansas billionaire brothers, financiers of the Tea Party Express, have long run retreat for selected rich conservatives. Last January 30, 11 busloads of protesters went to Rancho Mirage to spotlight and bring public attention to the Kochs and their activities. Koch Industries’ Political Action Committee was one of the main beneficiaries of the *Citizens United* decision that opened up an unlimited tap of corporate contributions. The PAC spent \$2.5 million. The Kochs funneled even more of their money through groups like “Americans for Prosperity.”

DNOC members there included John Smith (who helped organize it through Common Cause), Sharon Brown, Jeanne Moffitt, Molly Muro, Monika Broome, and former DNOC Art Munguia, who was one of 25 Greenpeace members arrested for civil disobedience.

March 3 DNOC meeting to feature speaker on “human trafficking”

The speaker for the March 3 DNOC meeting will be addressing a subject that almost defies belief: contemporary human slavery.

Kristine Kil is Volunteer and Communications Coordinator for California Against Slavery (<http://www.californiaagainstsavery.org>). California Against Slavery is a nonprofit organization that seeks to place an initiative on the 2012 ballot to create the toughest state law against human trafficking.

Human trafficking, also known as modern day slavery, is the second largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world today (after drug dealing, tied with arms sales.)

The growth of human trafficking is likely due to its low risk and high reward:

- Human traffickers are difficult to catch
- The crime is difficult to prosecute
- The penalties are relatively light

Victims of trafficking, sometimes sold by relatives or lured into captivity on false pretenses, are forced into sexual and/or labor exploitation through fraud, threat and coercion.

The proposed initiative would give California the toughest state law against human trafficking. It would: 1) increase penalties to traffickers; 2) direct 70% of fines to victim restitution (prevention program, safe homes, counseling) and 30% to law enforcement and prosecution agencies; 3) require a minimum mandatory two-hour law enforcement training; and 4) make those convicted of sex-related human trafficking register as sex offenders.

Please join us on March 3 for what looks to be an important and striking presentation.

Redistricting Commission Holds Public Hearings

California's new Redistricting Commission has begun holding public hearings on new districts for Congress and State Senate and Assembly.

In ranked order, the criteria for districts are:

1. *Comply with the U.S. Constitution, including equal population requirements.*
2. *Comply with the federal Voting Rights Act.*
3. *Be geographically contiguous.*
4. *Respect the geographic integrity of any city, county, or city and county, neighborhood, or "community of interest." "Communities of interest" shall not be defined as related to incumbents, candidates, or parties.*
5. *To the extent practicable, after the above criteria have been satisfied, be **compact**.*
6. *To the extent practicable, after the above criteria have been satisfied, be **nested**.*

There are two "anti-criteria": Incumbents' residences may not be considered; districts may not be drawn to favor politicians or parties.

A main issue on which the public may want to speak to Commissioners is what constitutes a "community of interest." Also, what geographic boundaries should be respected? Do we like districts crossing the Puente Hills (in the case of SD-29, from Placentia to Big Tujunga?) Now is the time to speak – or hold our peace.

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Watch this space for State and County Party news!

The new North Orange County Vice-Chair for the Democratic Party of Orange County is Jesus Silva, who is also known hereabouts as the husband of Fullerton City Council member Sharon Quirk-Silva. Jesus Silva will begin writing a monthly column for *Donkey Tales*, keeping us up-to-date on county political activities, as readers have enjoyed in this space from his predecessor Susan Uballe.

The 72nd District E-Board representatives at the state and local level have also been selected. Monika Broome will represent the district at the state level; Greg Diamond will do so at the county level. All involved welcome input from DNOC members (and others) about what they want to convey and what they want to learn from their respective groups.

Something to consider:

Had Meg Whitman been elected California's Governor this past year, she might very well be trying the exact same thing here that Scott Walker is doing in Wisconsin.

Let no one say that electoral politics doesn't make a difference!

John Burton's Statement on WI Protests of Anti-Worker Proposals

The governor of the state of Wisconsin today is reaping the results of the Republican Party's relentless and shameless campaign to scapegoat public employees. Governor Walker's approach is in fact standard Republican operating procedure: attack working people for the problems caused by Wall Street banks and financial speculators.

Stripping hard working men and women of their collective bargaining right is an unconscionable attack against all hard-working Americans, whether they belong to a union or not.

Peace and friendship,

John Burton,

Chair, California Democratic Party

Union is the Measure

By Mark Sumner, *DailyKos.com*

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One word in the first line of the U.S Constitution describes the instrument through which freedom is held. It's a term for people acting in concert to secure their liberty and hold those rights against any opponent. That word is **union**.

From its founding, the story of this nation has been the story of union. It is the story of two centuries spent in building up the ability of ordinary citizens to treat with wealthy, powerful, politically connected entities. That story contains instances of tragedy. Thousands died in the struggle, many thousands more suffered poverty or were outcast from communities. But the story of union also contains far-reaching triumphs. Every paid vacation, every weekend, every overtime dollar, every protection from arbitrary dismissal and unfair treatment, all that ever makes working life tolerable, came because people stood together *in union* at risk to their own livelihoods and often their lives. Some of those laws exist only because workers stood *in union* when not only corporations but their own government attacked them not just with guns, but with bombers. They paid the price. You reap the benefits.

When we talk about "the greatest generation" that brought the nation through World War II and built America into a post-war powerhouse, we're speaking of a population where nearly a third of workers were union members. It's no coincidence that the peak period of growth and progress coincides with the peak period of union membership. When people act in union, there's nothing they can't accomplish. When people cannot join in union, when everyone must face the powerful alone, all rights are nothing more than words.

Whether in a union of states and nations or a union of workers and citizens, only by working in concert can rights be wrested from oppressors and held against despots. Tyrants quake at the sound of union. That's why the right to act in union is what the downtrodden most desire and authorities first attack. Union is the measure of freedom.

The outlawing of independent unions is the clearest and most consistent marker of despotism around the world. When Gaddafi seized control of Libya in 1969, his first speech proclaimed the end of labor unions. No sooner had he secured control of Cuba than Fidel Castro banned the ability of unions to strike or to bargain over salary and benefits, saying such demands were detrimental to "the national economy." In Colombia today, right-wing militias work with corporations to keep down costs and

demands for decent working conditions in the most effective way they know—executing union leaders.

There's a good reason why governments and corporations alike show trepidation when people are able to organize. Union is effective. For all the pretty speeches and all the ham-handed threats, the signal that the Iron Curtain was finally rising didn't come in Berlin or Washington, D.C., it came in the shipyards of Gdańsk, when men dared to wave the flag of an independent union. Want to determine where governments are actually concerned about the rights of their people? You only have to look at how free people are to organize for a cause. Without that, no other rights matter. With it, all other rights will follow.

The First Amendment to the Constitution enshrines a number of freedoms including religion, speech and the press, but this amendment should not be read as a random list of disconnected items. Everything in it directly depends on the liberties held out in the closing words: the ability of the people to peacefully assemble and to petition for redress. When the Constitution extends the right of assembly, it's not just giving us the right to gather together for no purpose. What's protected is the right to join together *in common cause*, and to seek *as a group* to move institutions that would not respond to individuals acting alone.

The American dream—the dream that an average citizen can enjoy a decent life, raise a family, and hope for the future—was created in union, sustained by union, and is dependent on union. That dream stands on a knife edge. Already the forces that oppose union have torn away the hopes of many Americans. As union membership has fallen, decent pensions have disappeared. As union membership has fallen, health care costs have increased. As union membership has fallen, pay for workers has stagnated. As union membership has fallen, corporate profits—and executive pay—have soared. The decline of union is the birthplace of inequity.

At this moment, the same forces that have ripped union away from most workers are acting against those few who still share the ability to speak with a collective voice. They want to wreck this last bastion, burn it down, stomp it, bury it, extinguish it forever, so that they can sleep safe knowing their power will not be challenged. They want to erase the work of two centuries, turn the American dream into a subject for nostalgia, and make the Bill of Rights into a sheet of paper.

That is what's on the line in Wisconsin.

Nothing has changed since the time that first line of the Constitution was written. Union is not just a means to oppose tyranny, it is the *only* means.

Democrats of North Orange County Membership Application

Annual non-deductible dues: students/seniors (55+) \$15.00; others \$20.00
[address checks to "DNOC"; mail to Tammi McIntyre at P.O. Box 6597 Fullerton, CA 92834]

Are you a registered Democrat? YES no not yet eligible to register

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Name: _____ e-mail address: _____

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City: _____ Zip: _____ Cell: _____

Assembly District: _____ State Senate District: _____ Congressional District: _____

Do not allow other DNOC members to contact me Do not contact me about events or meetings

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