

**Report to the 25th LDDO Membership on the
Pierce County Democratic Party Central Committee
Emergency E-Board Meeting 01-17-2009
By Charley Stokes**

Jan 17, 2009

The Chair (Nathe Lawver) called this emergency meeting of the PCDCC E-Board by phone and e-mail on 1-15-09, to discuss an appropriate response by the PCDCC to the appointment of J. Shabro (R) by the Pierce Co Council, to fill the open office of Auditor.

The 25th LDD was fully represented at the meeting by all three E-Board Reps and the 25th LD Chair.

Nathe gave a quick background review.

Pat McCarthy won the election for Pierce Co Executive and resigned from the office of Auditor. By law, the Pierce Co Council is required to select an interim replacement until a special election can be held to fill the position. Pat McCarthy was elected to office as a Democrat in a partisan race. While the Pierce Co Charter was revised, by ballot, to change the office of Auditor from a partisan to non-partisan position after Pat was elected, it is the position of the PCDCC that the interim replacement should be a Democrat. To that end, a list of three Democratic nominees was submitted to the Council, as provided for under Section 4.70 of the Pierce Co Charter.

The response of the Council was to issue an "Emergency Resolution" to change the process. Under this resolution, all interested parties could apply to fill the position. From an initial twenty-three, thirteen were initially selected as qualified. In closed-door Executive Sessions, this group was further reduced, producing a short list of two Republicans and one Democrat. Shabro was ultimately declared the winner.

A 'Writ of Mandamus' (sp?) was filed on Jan 11 in Superior Court, asking that the 'emergency' resolution (No.2008-186) issued by the Council to change the process allowed for under the PC Charter be rescinded. (This action was done using internal resources; further action will require the expertise of a real attorney.)

The question: Should the PCDCC hire an attorney and assume the associated expenses that could be incurred?

The discussion was orderly and wide ranging. It was noted that a lawsuit could stir up voters against Democrats over expenses incurred by the county in what could look like a 'partisan political squabble'. Counter arguments were that this could be the first of many 'power-grabs' by the Council to erode protections established under the Charter and that we can not allow them to establish a precedent. (Sidebar: What prompted the support of Shabro by Tim Farrell?)

It was moved and seconded to pursue a lawsuit. In discussion, the question of how much money it could cost was raised. The motion was amended to authorize a max of \$8K for legal fees and also authorizing all necessary fund-raisers to meet this expense; vote carried.

It was move and seconded to authorize Nathe to discuss and ask support of LD's statewide during the Chairs meeting in Olympia; vote carried.

It was noted that a PR effort be mounted to educate the public and present a consistent message for publication and discussion with all Pierce Co voters. The message should focus on the illegal actions of the Council to change the Charter process. Gerry Baldwin penned a Resolution to create a PR Committee. It was move and seconded to appoint Becky Summers as PR Chair; vote carried.

Meeting adjourned.