



25th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT DEMOCRATIC FOCUS



At our March meeting, we were lucky enough to have two excellent speakers: Jaxon Ravens, Chair of the Washington State Democrats (photo above) and Todd Iverson of the International Longshoreman Workers Union Local 23 (photo on page two).

Ravens served as the Executive Director of the Washington State Democrats for ten years and was first elected to be the Chair about one year ago.

“Washington State has good solid progressive legislation. We have things we can be proud of - Obama, Marriage Equality, Inslee, minimum wage. We are a beacon of hope. It is not perfect, but a good spot to be. The State Party focuses on Progressive values and Democratic issues. Strong local parties elect Democrats and for that we need training, money, data and communication,” said Ravens.

April 25th LDD meeting will welcome former Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg speaking on the upcoming election of County Charter Review Commissioners. Meeting will be held Monday, April 6, 7 pm, Puyallup Library.



Todd Iverson addressed our March meeting. He talked about problems and issues facing labor today.

“The problem is big, huge corporations with no connection to our community are dictating to us,” he said.

State Democratic Central Committee Meeting

Olympia, WA
January 24, 2015

An important part of the January meeting is the election of officers. Chair Jaxon Ravens was challenged by Mathew Tomaskin who felt Eastern Washington and Native American tribes needed more support. After Tomaskin withdrew, Ravens was re elected by acclamation. He promised to make some changes following Tomaskin's suggestions. All other current officers were re elected by acclamation. They are Vice Chair Valerie Rongey, Secretary Rob Dolin and Treasurer Habib Habib.

In his yearly report Ravens said, "Though the party fought the good fight" we could not take back the State Senate. This year we have cleaned up the voter files and our use of social media has been improved and expanded. We are known to have one of the strongest organizations in the country. Our next task is to help Governor Inslee with his 2015-2016 plans. In 2016 we need to elect a new Democratic President and re-elect Patty Murray. To help Democrats in Eastern Washington we will open a regular state office there. The State Treasurer reported we have \$288,000 in the bank and no outstanding debt, which is better than at this time last year. When the possibility of holding a presidential primary was studied, it was found that the cost would be \$11,000,000.

From the Democratic National Committee David McDonald reported Columbus, Philadelphia and New York City are being considered for the National Convention. We will not be going to a Right to Work (RTW) state.

Near the end of the meeting delegates broke into congressional districts to elect representatives to the State Party Executive Board. After several ballots Eric Herde from the 25th Legislative District and Zach Smith, the incumbent, flipped a coin to break a tie and Zach Smith won.

The forum at lunch featured four speakers discussing conservative efforts in this state to oppose progressive Democratic policies. The Freedom Foundation's main goal is to defund unions and thus defund the Democratic Party. The Foundation seeks low wages and smaller government. Non-union people need to step up and advocate for unions. The legislature in Ohio proposed a law to curtail collective bargaining rights. However, citizens put together a big effort and turned it back. A union contract is a very valuable thing. Through a union many protections are available for union members they couldn't get for themselves. In states having RTW laws, individual voices are not heard. Our state has the best laws in the country for safety. In RTW states, safety is not assured. If a worker complains about safety issues, he gets fired. Freedom in those states means the right to work for less, under arbitrary schedules with few protections of any kind. There is a bill before our legislature to have Washington be an RTW state. RTW lowers everyone's wages because of our prevailing wage law.

RTW should be named Right to Work for Less.

Ellen Zulauf, 25th District State Committeewoman

March 2nd 2015 General membership Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Ed Herde. Flag salute was given. Roll Call of Officers revealed the following were present:

Chair Ed Herde, Treasurer Luanne Green, Parliamentarian & Webster Cliff Allo, Sergeant at Arms Bryan Yambe, Membership Chair, Blaine Pearman, PCO Chair Eric Herde, State Committeewoman Ellen Zulauf, Pierce County E-Board Reps Laura Groves and Merv Swanson, Focus Editor Joan Cronk

Consent Agenda was passed.

Fife City Councilman Brian Yambe spoke briefly regarding (a) progress being made toward extending SR167 and (b) his Youth Committee having had their first meeting.

Speakers Todd Iverson of the International Longshoreman Workers' Union Local#23 and Jaxon Ravens, Chair, WA State Dems, were introduced as speakers for the meeting.

Todd Iverson: Todd briefed us on the elements that caused the port slowdown at West Coast ports (from WA State thru San Diego, CA) The slowdown was not due to a desire for higher wages, rather the arbitration system. Todd informed that the Port of Tacoma is in a great position, i.e., it has room to grow and completion of SR#167 is germane to making that growth happen.

Jaxon Ravens: Jaxon was very informative on the operation of the party at the state level. His view is that the challenge for us is structure. The State party focus is on programming democratic values and issues. How do we move these issues forward? By developing winning strategies, i.e. strategies to win hearts. We can develop strong local parties (which are the backbone for success) and we do this via training, monetary support, having access to accurate data and good communication.

Action Item: Nick Bayard was elected to be the new PCO in precinct 25-241

Washington State Fair Planning Committee: Members Interested in joining the committee contact chair Ed Herde

The positions of Secretary and Pierce County Executive Board position 1 are open. Contact chair, Ed Herde if you are interested in one of these positions.

Good of the Order Speakers: Jerry Beckendorf, Eric Herde, Laura Groves, Bryan Yambe

Dave Jamieson dave.jamieson@huffingtonpost.com

Senate Democrats Consider Raising Their Minimum Wage Proposal To \$12

Posted: 03/17/2015 4:26 pm EDT Updated: 03/18/2015 12:59 am EDT

Sen. Patty Murray is floating the idea of raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 by 2020. (Photo: Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call) | Bill Clark via Getty Images

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), ranking member of the Senate's labor committee, has been reaching out to her Democratic colleagues to rally support for a more ambitious minimum wage proposal, according to a Senate source familiar with the conversations.

Murray's idea: hike the federal minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, rather than the current \$10.10 proposal languishing in Congress. The wage floor would then be tied to an inflation index so that it rose with the cost of living.

"Right now the conversations are focused on building support for that [\$12] number and gaining consensus," said the source, adding that Murray brought up the idea with several colleagues during a caucus lunch on Tuesday.

The current minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. The proposal Murray is floating would bump it to \$8 in 2016, then a dollar each year thereafter until it hit \$12 in 2020.

The proposal underscores the challenges Democrats face in raising the federal minimum wage to a level they deem adequate. The current \$10.10 proposal was first introduced two years ago. With Republicans blocking the measure in both chambers, that figure has since eroded against inflation.

Republicans may be even less likely to get on board with a \$12 measure, but Democrats could choose to support the number anyway -- to be better positioned in the event Republicans do come to the table. Speaking to colleagues, Murray described a potential \$12 proposal as an update to the current \$10.10 notion, according to the source. (The current proposal would have set a \$10.10 minimum wage by this coming summer.)

Americans on the whole support the idea of raising the minimum wage. As the \$10.10 proposal has stalled in Congress, cities and states around the country have hiked their own wage floors, either through legislation or the ballot box. In November, voters in four red states -- Alaska, Arkansas, Nebraska and South Dakota -- approved minimum wage increases, and for the first time, a majority of states now have a higher minimum wage than the federal level of \$7.25.

Given their popularity, relatively high minimum wage proposals -- be they \$12 or even \$15 -- are looking more and more achievable, at least on the local level. The city of Seattle has already passed a \$15 wage floor, and legislators in Murray's home state of Washington are now weighing a \$12 proposal. Washington already has the highest state minimum wage in the nation, at \$9.47.

The federal minimum wage hasn't been raised since 2009, after the last of a series of increases signed into law by President George W. Bush. Democrats haven't always agreed on how high the next minimum wage should be set. President Barack Obama originally laid out a plan for a hike to \$9, to be tied to inflation. Congressional Democrats later pressured the White House into supporting \$10.10 instead.

The minimum wage was at its historical high in the late 1960s, when it equaled roughly \$10 in today's dollars.

Chair's Message

Ed Herde

Setting a new wage floor of \$15 per hour will likely be on the ballot in Tacoma in November. This is not a proposal for a graduated minimum wage increase; it is a proposition that if approved by voters will move the minimum wage from the state's minimum of \$9.47 to \$15.00 per hour in one adjustment for all businesses with annual gross income more than \$300,000.

There will be some voters who believe that the minimum wage needs to be raised, but will be swayed to vote against prop 1 because the increase is "too much in one step". They will look at Seattle taking 7 years to fully implement their city council approved \$15.00 minimum wage law and use this to help them vote no in Tacoma. Aside from this striking me as ironic seeing how many Tacomans shun all things Seattle (except when they are financially supporting Seattle's sports team owners), it does not take into consideration recent developments. The Washington Legislature is looking into a \$12 minimum wage, and Senator Murray is floating a \$12 minimum wage in Congress (although these are phased-in increases). If either of these proposals were to pass Tacoma's \$15 would be only \$3 higher than most other places in the state.

I would have chosen to put a phase-in in the proposal of 2 or 3 steps over 2 or 3 years to make it more palatable to those concerned with a large percentage increase in one step, but the same arguments against the proposal would most likely have been made no matter how slow of a phase-in was written into the initiative. This is a case of not letting the perfect be an enemy of the good.

Over 80% of those on minimum wage are over the age of 19. We continue to subsidize large companies that pay low wages by assisting their employees with food stamps, healthcare, daycare, heating their homes, etc. The main issue that this boils down to is: If someone doing their job for a full 40 hour work week deserves to be able to for their self and a child put a roof over their heads, food on their table, clothes on their backs, and stay healthy. In this oligarchic economy in the United States it is less achievable for workers to do this. With low union membership and no one to advocate for workers a minimum wage that supplies a level of basic dignity and gets the tax payer off the hook for covering the basics is necessary.

As the center of the metropolitan area of Pierce County what Tacoma does influences the economy of the rest of the county. Those that live in the 25th Legislative District and work in Tacoma could get a pay raise and bring that money back to the 25th to spend it. Those who run businesses in the 25th will be influenced to raise their worker's pay or risk losing their best employees to businesses located in Tacoma. Workers on the lower end of the pay scale spend a much higher percentage of their income, and therefore an increase in those low paid workers income will stimulate the local economy and those benefits will work their way up to higher paid workers as that money is spent.

4-15

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**NEXT MEETING
SCHEDULED FOR
MONDAY, APRIL 6 AT
THE PUYALLUP
LIBRARY AT 7 PM.**

**SPEAKER WILL BE
FORMER PIERCE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE
JOHN LADENBURG.
HE WILL BE
SPEAKING ON THE
UPCOMING
ELECTION OF
COUNTY CHARTER
REVIEW
COMMISSIONERS.**



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Tune in or be tuned out!

**HAVE YOU PAID YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?
DUES SHOULD BE PAID NOW FOR 2015**

**Use this form to recruit friends and neighbors to join you
In helping our Democratic party**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ **E-MAIL** _____

**Dues: Evergreen (Includes Senior, outside district, etc.) \$10 per member
Rainier \$25. Chair's Voice \$50. Senator's Club \$100. (Can be paid
In installments.)**

**Please send dues to: 25th LDD, P. O. Box 73594, Puyallup, WA 98374 or pay by
credit card on <https://secureform.cloud.clickandpledge.com/20184/1>**

(Can be paid in installments)