

25th Legislative  
District  
Democratic Focus



Rick Talbert was our guest speaker at the 25th Democrats annual dinner in January.

He reported that 2015 was a really good year for County government.

“We’re finally putting the recession behind us,” he said.

# Chair's Message

Ed Herde

For those of you who didn't see the president's State of the Union speech this is what I heard. If you heard something different I'd like to hear from you.

President Obama is trying to be a fourth quarter populist now that he has discovered that taking the gloves off and treating the Republicans how they deserve to be treated is popular with the American people, as shown by his recent rise in his favorability rating. The president called for free community college, raising national minimum wage, infrastructure repair and replacement, and an increased income tax on capital gains and dividends. These ideas sound good. They are all things that will make the economy healthier and move us in the direction of a less lopsided distribution of wealth.

Missing from the speech was any mention of restoring some individual civil liberties by doing away with intrusive portions of the Patriot Act when it comes up for renewal this year. President Obama also failed to mention that the Republicans continue to underfund the IRS with the specific purpose of shorting the IRS of the investigative staff needed to go after the biggest tax cheats, the top 1/10 of 1% and giant corporations both of which have armies of lawyers. This reduced staffing is costing Americans \$300 Billion per year (that's "Billion" with a "B") in uncollected tax revenue. These Republicans who claim the federal budget deficit to be the biggest threat to our nation at the same time are more concerned with helping their fat cat masters.

There were two portions of the speech that were glaring in showing the president is having a fight between his inner populist and his inner corporatist. The first was the bragging about U.S. energy production and how we are drilling everywhere the locals can't stop it, juxtaposed with his very brief section on stemming climate change. The second contradiction was his talk of strengthening unions and his push for a fairer income distribution up against his imploring congress to grant him fast track status to negotiate the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) or SHAFTA (Southern Hemisphere Asian Free Trade Agreement). As we were informed by Stan Sorscher of the Washington Fair Trade Alliance at our November meeting this is a treaty that has been negotiated in secret by multi-national corporations. Our congressional representatives cannot even receive copies of any part of the proposed agreement to share with constituents. No trade agreement starting with NAFTA has been a benefit to American workers and America. The TPP or SHAFTA are no different because trade agreements are not just about tariffs any longer, they are about weakening government in the United States for the benefit of multinational companies.

Keep fighting President Obama. I'm rooting for the Populist.

2-15

25th Legislative District Focus February 2015

# #ReclaimMLK Seeks to Combat the Sanitizing of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy

Activists say that turning his holiday into a national Day of Service is an attempt to extinguish the iconic civil rights leader's fiery calls for social justice.

By: Danielle C. Belton  
Monday, January 19,  
Root

Published on  
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Martin Luther King Jr. addresses a crowd from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, during the Aug. 28, 1963, march on Washington, D.C.

Martin Luther King Jr. had more than "a dream," but you might not notice that on Monday during observances for his birthday.

Somewhere between his assassination and today began an MLK-neutering campaign meant to turn the famed agitator's holiday into a national Day of Service, a generic mishmash of good feelings that contorts King's social-justice legacy into a blissful Hallmark card of post-racial nothingness.

This has not gone unnoticed, from scholar Cornel West—who has pushed back against the "Santa Clausification" of King—to the [#ReclaimMLK campaign](#), currently being spearheaded by young activists involved in the Black Lives Matter campaign. Many realize it's time to stand up for what King actually stood for before his entire legacy is retconned into some "*Chicken Soup for the Soul Brother*," feel-good tripe.

"It's been co-opted," said Alicia Garza, one of the co-founders of *Black Lives Matter*. "People want to neutralize it."

Garza is part of the #ReclaimMLK campaign, which kicked off on King's actual birthday, Jan. 15 and involves acts of civil disobedience—marches, sit-ins and shut-ins—through Jan. 19. Protesters want to use the holiday to call for action against police brutality while reiterating King's legacy as a leader dedicated to defending black lives. Garza said that organizers are using the day off that many workers get to call for a “day on” to fight injustice.

“We really want to do everything that we can on this ‘Day of Service’ to lift up the needs and dreams of black lives,” Garza said.

The work of this campaign is important, since MLK did not die because he wanted someone to paint a wall. While volunteering in and of itself is great and people should be encouraged to give back, it is not what got him killed. He was shot by an assassin for fighting against the racist, classist status quo, murdered while in Memphis, Tenn., to support striking black garbage workers. To make his birthday a day about giving back is to defang the legacy of a man who was both revered and reviled in his time for his tireless work confronting America's sins.

Calling out the ills of racism, capitalism and the Vietnam War didn't involve any of the warm fuzzies that revisionists have assigned to King by solely focusing on the fantastical end of his famed speech at the March on Washington.

Marshall Ganz, senior lecturer in public policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, pointed out that while most people know about King's “I Have a Dream” speech, they may not know that the bulk of the speech was about urging the Kennedy administration to act on protecting the rights of black citizens.

Ganz pointed out that although most of the speech is about the “fierce urgency of now,” some find it more pleasant to focus on King's beautiful hope for the future. For those who think that pointing out racial inequality is racist, Ganz said, “I have a dream” is psychologically less burdensome than “America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked ‘insufficient funds.’”

“The point of the March on Washington was to put the administration's feet to the fire to make freedom now mean something, but all of that gets almost literally bleached out of it, turning it into this sort of very sanitized version of ‘Gee, isn't it wonderful,’” Ganz said. “Dr. King was a prophetic figure, and prophets are pains in the ass. They hold a critical view of the world they live in, [contrasted] with a very hopeful perspective on what was possible. I think that prophetic tradition was Dr. King's tradition. And now they just want to have the hope and leave out the pain.”

The “they” Ganz is referring to are those “who benefit from the status quo.” He says that people who benefit from the way our society is structured like things the way they are and want to avoid controversy. Neutralizing King is more about “normalizing” a once-contentious situation to make it more palatable. In this case it involves shame surrounding the enforcement of racial segregation by violence and the disregard for African Americans' citizenship.

“It’s a process of making it, ‘Oh, let’s just forget about all that challenge and struggle,” Ganz said. “It’s up to the people that continue to see the need for change to keep that spirit alive.”

Ganz lauded the efforts of #ReclaimMLK, believing that it is necessary to “retrieve” MLK’s “prophetic past as opposed to that Santa Claus, that sanitized past.

“Another generation is saying you don’t get to take away our history,” he added. “We’re going to reclaim that history.”

*Danielle C. Belton is a Washington, D.C.-based satirist and blogger. Follow her on Twitter.*



Karen and Merv Swanson visit with Nick and Sedia Bayard at the January 9 -25th Democratic dinner held at the Puyallup Elks Club.

Our February 2 meeting will feature Dixie Grunenfelder, Director of Secondary Education, and Laura Moore from the Private and Home Based Education section speaking about how homeschooling curriculum aligns with public school curriculum.

Join us for the meeting held at the Puyallup Library beginning at 7pm.

WASHINGTON STATE DEMOCRATS

# Crab Feed & Grassroots Forum

February 16, 2015



St. Martin's University Marcus Pavilion, 5300 Pacific Ave SE, Lacey, WA  
Grassroots Forum at 1:00 to 5:00 PM & Crab Feed at 5:00 to 7:30 PM

**Get your ticket before Feb. 13th or at the door for an additional cost**

General Admission: \$50 (\$60 at the door)

Children 12 and under: \$10

Grassroots Forum: \$7 (FREE for D.E.M. Club Members)

**Sponsor the event and attend the Private Reception at 5:00 PM**

\$250 - Clam Sponsor

\$2,500 - Fish Sponsor

\$500 - Oyster Sponsor

\$5,000 - Crab Sponsor

\$1,000 - Shrimp Sponsor

\*Package details available online

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Questions? Contact Mackenzie Fuentes at 206.583.0664 x114 or [mackenzie@wa-democrats.org](mailto:mackenzie@wa-democrats.org)

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25th Legislative District Focus February 2015

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info or copies of**

**Focus**  
[www.25dems.org](http://www.25dems.org)

**Next meeting:**

**Feb. 2**  
**Puyallup Library**

**7pm**

**Speakers from the office of  
Superintendent of Public  
Instruction Dixie Grunenfelder, Dir  
of Secondary Education and Laura  
Moore from Private & Home Based  
Education speaking homeschooling  
curriculum and how it aligns with  
public school curriculum**

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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: 25<sup>th</sup> LDD, P. O. Box 73594, Puyallup, WA 98374 or pay by  
credit card on <https://secureform.cloud.clickandpledge.com/20184/1/>  
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**Well, you should be if you want the truth about  
politics by Frank Blair and Traci Kelly  
Fridays at 12:00 to 1:00 PM on KLAY 1180AM!**

**And if for some reason or other you miss it then go to  
[equaltimeradio.net](http://equaltimeradio.net).**

**Tune in or be tuned out!**