



## 25th Legislative District Democrats FOCUS



Speaker at the August meeting of the 25th Legislative District Democrats was Mary Sherman of the Washington State Senate Democrats Staff and a member of the Franklin Pierce School Board.

Mary told the group that this year there was a complete redefining as to what collaboration was. “Next year will be interesting,” she said.

Next meeting of the 25th LDD will be held Monday, September 14 at 7 pm at the Puyallup Public Library. The speaker will be Amanda DeShazo, AFL-CIO Community Labor Liaison for Pierce County.

Member Meeting, August 3rd, 2015  
Held at the Puyallup Library

Meeting called to order at 7:09pm by chair Ed Herde. Ed Herde led the flag salute. Roll was called.

Officers Present: Chair Ed Herde, Assistant Treasurer Bill Havens, Parliamentarian and Webster Cliff Allo, PCO Chair Eric Herde, Focus Editor Joan Cronk, State Committeewoman Ellen Zulauf, PCD E-Board Rep Merv Swanson

Approximate total attendance: 20

The agenda was approved as presented.

Elected Official: Mary Sherman of the Franklin Pierce School Board

Speaker: Mary Sherman from the Senate Democratic Caucus staff spoke on the budget

Candidate reports: Carolyn Merrival and Eric Herde

Good of the Order: Bud Metzger, Jerry Beckendorf, Ellen Zulauf, Carolyn Merrival, Eric Herde, and Bob Koreis

Adjourned at 8:42pm

**Republicans Against Retirement – The New York Times**  
**By Paul Krugman August 17, 2015**

Why have most Republican candidates vowed to limit Social Security? Because they really answer to the relatively few people who oppose it.

Something strange is happening in the Republican primary — something strange, that is, besides the Trump phenomenon. For some reason, just about all the leading candidates other than The Donald have taken a deeply unpopular position, a known political loser, on a major domestic policy issue. And it's interesting to ask why.

The issue in question is the future of Social Security, which turned 80 last week. The retirement program is, of course, both extremely popular and a long-term target of conservatives, who want to kill it precisely because its popularity helps legitimize government action in general. As the right-wing activist Stephen Moore (now chief economist of the Heritage Foundation) once declared, Social Security is “the soft underbelly of the welfare state”; “jab your spear through that” and you can undermine the whole thing.

But that was a decade ago, during former President George W. Bush's attempt to privatize the program — and what Mr. Bush learned was that the underbelly wasn't that soft after all. Despite the political momentum coming from the G.O.P.'s victory in the 2004 election, despite support from much of the media establishment, the assault on Social Security quickly crashed and burned. Voters, it turns out, like Social Security as it is, and don't want it cut.

It's remarkable, then, that most of the Republicans who would be president seem to be lining up for another round of punishment. In particular, they've been declaring that the retirement age — which has already been pushed up from 65 to 66, and is scheduled to rise to 67 — should go up even further.

Thus, Jeb Bush says that the retirement age should be pushed back to “68 or 70”. Scott Walker has echoed that position. Marco Rubio wants both to raise the retirement age and to cut benefits for higher-income seniors. Rand Paul wants to raise the retirement age to 70 and means-test benefits. Ted Cruz wants to revive the Bush privatization plan.

For the record, these proposals would be really bad public policy — a harsh blow to Americans in the bottom half of the income distribution, who depend on Social Security, often have jobs that involve manual labor, and have not, in fact, seen a big rise in life expectancy. Meanwhile, the decline of private pensions has left working Americans more reliant on Social Security than ever.

And no, Social Security does not face a financial crisis; its long-term funding shortfall could easily be closed with modest increases in revenue.

Still, nobody should be surprised at the spectacle of politicians enthusiastically endorsing destructive policies. What's puzzling about the renewed Republican assault on Social Security is that it looks like bad politics as well as bad policy. Americans love Social Security, so why aren't the candidates at least pretending to share that sentiment?

The answer, I'd suggest, is that it's all about the big money.

Wealthy individuals have long played a disproportionate role in politics, but we've never seen anything like what's happening now: domination of campaign finance, especially on the Republican side, by a tiny group of immensely wealthy donors. Indeed, more than half the funds raised by Republican candidates through June came from just **130 families**.

And while most Americans love Social Security, the wealthy don't. Two years ago a pioneering **study** of the policy preferences of the very wealthy found many contrasts with the views of the general public; as you might expect, the rich are politically different from you and me. But nowhere are they as different as they are on the matter of Social Security. By a very wide margin, ordinary Americans want to see Social Security expanded. But by an even wider margin, Americans in the top 1 percent want to see it cut. And guess whose preferences are prevailing among Republican candidates.

You often see political analyses pointing out, rightly, that voting in actual primaries is preceded by an "invisible primary" in which candidates compete for the support of crucial elites. But who are these elites? In the past, it might have been members of the political establishment and other opinion leaders. But what the new attack on Social Security tells us is that the rules have changed. Nowadays, at least on the Republican side, the invisible primary has been reduced to a stark competition for the affections and, of course, the money of a few dozen plutocrats.

What this means, in turn, is that the eventual Republican nominee — assuming that it's not Mr. Trump — will be committed not just to a renewed attack on Social Security but to a broader plutocratic agenda. Whatever the rhetoric, the GOP is on track to nominate someone who has won over the big money by promising government by the 1 percent, for the 1 percent.

## **The rebellious spirit of the First Labor Day is spreading anew**

**Jim Hightower for The Progressive    September 2015 issue    <http://www.progressive.org>**

It's a bit odd that in America's thoroughly corporatized culture we have no national day of honor for the Captains of Industry, and yet we do have one for working stiffs: Labor Day! Where did it come from? Who gave this day off to laboring people? History books that bother mentioning Labor Day at all usually credit president Grover Cleveland with its creation: He signed a law in July 1894 that proclaimed a holiday for workers in Washington D.C. and the federal territories.

But Cleveland? Holy Mother Jones! He was an extreme laissez-faire conservative, a "Bourbon Democrat" who never lifted a presidential pinkie to ameliorate the plight of exploited workers. To the contrary, in that same month of 1894, Cleveland enshrined himself in Labor's Hall of Eternal Infamy: At the behest of robber baron George Pullman and other railroad tycoons, he ordered some 12,000 U.S. Army troops in to crush the historic Pullman Strike, which was being led by union icon Eugene V. Debs. Thirty workers were killed, Debs was arrested on trumped-up charges of conspiracy, and the workers who supported the strike were fired and blacklisted.

Far from being a gift to workers, Cleveland's recognition of Labor Day was a desperate political ploy to mollify the anger of the union movement he had just decimated. He and his Democratic Party rushed the federal holiday into law only days after his military assault on Pullman strikers. In fact, this day was not "given" by anyone in power—it was taken by laborers themselves. In a bottom-up act of democratic audacity, this was our first national holiday to be put on the calendar by ordinary people. And they were not doing it just to get a day at the beach, but to get into the faces of power.

Matthew Maguire, a 19th-century New York machinist and an unrelenting activist for higher wages and shorter hours, was the one who first proposed a day-long solidarity rally to focus the forces of labor on reclaiming the democratic rights of workers and gaining a fair share of the wealth they create. Known as "the dauntless Maguire," he was secretary of the fledgling New York Central Labor Union, and in May 1882, he called for all 56 unions in the vicinity to make "a public show of organized strength." The CLU agreed and set the date of Tuesday, September 5, for a "Mammoth Festival, Parade and Pic-Nic." Adding to the audacity, the union council unilaterally declared that the day was to be a holiday for all workers who wanted to leave their jobs and join the action. Doing so was beyond bold, for it could get them fired—the bosses ruled workplaces with iron hands, compelling 12-hour days, six days a week, for \$2 a day.

Sure enough, as the 10 a.m. start time approached, only 80 union members had mustered at City Hall. But then came a faint sound of horns and drums—200 members of the jewelers union from Newark were just minutes away, arriving with a 35-piece marching band! This small group kicked off the parade, and after a few blocks 400 bricklayers merged with them from a side street, moving in step behind wagons bearing artistic arches of brick testifying to their skills. At nearly every cross street, more marchers joined: longshoremen in checkered jumpers; frame makers wearing beaver hats and carrying huge axes; cigar makers with red banners and singers belting out ballads; and piano makers marching with a float bearing a union member pounding out tunes. Thousands of workers paraded— row after row of laborers, marching six abreast with verve for miles through what was then the most ostentatious corridor of wealth and power in America.

In a 1982 article, historian Richard Hunt described the wondrous incongruity of this mass of working-class Americans striding so

purposefully up Fifth Avenue: “They passed August Belmont’s house; they trudged on past the tonish Burnswick Hotel; past the uptown Delmonico restaurant; past the elegant new Union League Club; past the mansion of Vincent Astor. Mrs. Astor—along with many of her millionaire neighbors—was in Newport for the season. Nonetheless, if the consciousness of capitalism was not penetrated, its precinct was.”

The day culminated with a frolicking festival attended by 25,000 at Elm Park, which included the city’s biggest beer garden, a dance pavilion, playgrounds for children, and ample picnic areas. [Note to present-day organizers: If you want people to turn out, follow this 1882 model of providing beer, music, food, and fun—so people will want to come.]

It was from this march and festival that both the concept and name of “Labor Day” were born. When New York’s CLU resolved to do it annually, barons and bosses damn near swallowed their \$2 cigars at such effrontery and tried to forbid it; editorialists decried it as rank ingratitude to the “job creators” of the day; and the establishment’s politicians warned that labor’s show of strength was anarchy on parade. But workers had found their voice and a measure of class-consciousness in a day to focus the public on their cause, and unions quickly spread the idea to other cities across the country. By the time Grover Cleveland finally sanctioned the federal holiday, 23 states had already set aside September’s first Monday as labor’s own day.

It’s easy to ridicule what Labor Day has now become for many of us: just a day off to go golfing, take a swim, watch a ballgame, crank up the grill, and do some 12-ounce elbow bends. Oh, yeah—and also hit the malls for the sales. (What irony—labor’s day has been turned into a corporate Shop-a-Palooza by megachains and big box stores, requiring millions of low-wage retail employees to put in a full shift on what’s supposed to be their day.)

But ridicule only leads to debilitating cynicism and surrender—the exact opposite of the spirit that created Labor Day and exactly the defeatism that the corporate order thrives on. So rather than sinking into cynicism, let’s notice that (1) our modern-day George Pullmans and Grover Clevelands have created a new Gilded Age of gross inequities and worker exploitation, and (2) that this is sparking a rising new rebelliousness among all sorts of workers.

America’s grassroots have come alive with organizing campaigns to reverse the rampant inequities and abuses being perpetuated by the plutocratic powers: Fast-food workers and the “Fight for \$15,” organizing drives by adjunct college professors, Moral Monday, a Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service, Our Walmart, United Workers Congress, and grassroots opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Such uprisings now exist in practically every zip code—from Silicon Valley to most college campuses, from day laborers gathered at your local Home Depot to nannies in the homes of the rich. And new groups are popping up regularly, as unorganized, maltreated people not only get fed up, but also see others standing up, getting organized, and showing the way.

Indeed, the spirit of Matthew Maguire’s Labor Day is spreading again across our country. As we approach Labor Day 2015, let’s take heart in this rising rebelliousness, join the parade, and take part in lifting our society closer to America’s highest democratic ideals.

# Chair's Message

Ed Herde

**The Fair:** It is time once again for the Washington State Fair. Thank you to all who have signed up to volunteer at the Pierce County Democrats booth. Once again the booth is in the great location under the Grand Stand directly across from the big triangle scone booth. Even though the booth is a Pierce County Democrats project, the 25<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Democrats are doing a lot of the work to plan and set up the booth, as well as helping to support the booth financially. If you are at the fair, stop by, checkout the booth, and visit with the Democrats volunteering at the booth.

**The Candidates:** We are in the campaign season presently and we have several great candidates running for office in the 25<sup>th</sup> LD. These candidates could certainly use our support and help. Especially if you are in their district please ask them what you can do to help. Every time you place a sign in your yard, give a donation, help distribute literature, or doorbell with the candidate it does gain them votes. Please help because we all know how close an election can be. Go to <http://25dems.org/> to see the list of candidates endorsed by the 25<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats including seven members of the 25<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats.

**The Ask:** Over the past few years donations to our organization have dropped off. We are not in the position we were in the past to help good Democratic candidates in our district. We now have no Democrats in the legislature from the 25<sup>th</sup> LD. This needs to change if we are going to help be a backstop against right wing billionaires who have Washington State on their list of state legislatures they will be working hard to take over by funding Republican state legislative candidates in 2016. The good news is we have good Democrats that are working hard to get elected to lower tier offices within the 25<sup>th</sup> LD, and we have some very strong Democrats that with support will run for office in the future. If you have not done so please renew your membership to the 25<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats, and if you are able donate beyond the membership amount so we can work on rebuilding the Democratic Party in the 25<sup>th</sup> LD. Please go to <http://25dems.org/> to pay dues or to make an additional donation to support local Democratic candidates and other projects like the Democrats fair booth.

9-15

**OFFICERS 25th  
Legislative District  
Democrats (LDD)**

Chair: Ed Herde  
(253) 531-9067  
[eherde@earthlink.net](mailto:eherde@earthlink.net)

Vice-Chair:  
Karen Edwards  
(253) 376-0109  
[karenfedwards@comcast.net](mailto:karenfedwards@comcast.net)

Treas: Luanne Green  
(253) 848-0289  
[luannegreen9@msn.com](mailto:luannegreen9@msn.com)

Ass't Treas:  
Bill Havens  
(253) 535-1954  
[behavens@q.com](mailto:behavens@q.com)

Secretary:  
Vacant

Parliamentarian &  
Webmaster:  
Cliff Allo  
(253) 208-8167  
[pco@cliffallo.us](mailto:pco@cliffallo.us)

Sgt. At Arms:  
Bryan Yambe(  
206) 383-7499  
[bryanyambe@gmail.com](mailto:bryanyambe@gmail.com)

Membership Chair:  
Blaine Pearman  
(253) 840-1516  
[b.pearman@comcast.net](mailto:b.pearman@comcast.net)

PCOChair:  
Eric Herde  
(253) 531-9067  
[ericherde@gmail.com](mailto:ericherde@gmail.com)

FOCUS EDITOR:  
Joan Cronk  
(253) 229-2450  
[JoanCronk@Comcast.net](mailto:JoanCronk@Comcast.net)

**State Representatives**

State Committeeman:  
David Henry  
(253) 770-6158  
[birddog64@comcast.net](mailto:birddog64@comcast.net)

State Committeewoman  
Ellen Zulauf  
(253) 845-9370  
[eazul@comcast.net](mailto:eazul@comcast.net)

**PIERCE COUNTY  
REPRESENTATIVES**

Pos 1.  
Vacant

Pos. 2: Laura Groves  
(253) 223-6187  
[groveslm@gmail.com](mailto:groveslm@gmail.com)

Pos. 3: Merv Swanson  
(253) 845-0194  
[mswa658080@aol.com](mailto:mswa658080@aol.com)

Website for latest  
information or copies of  
Focus:  
[www.25dems.org](http://www.25dems.org)

**DEMOCRAT'S  
CONTACT  
INFORMATION**

DNC: [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org)

WA. STATE DEM. PARTY:  
[www.wa-democrats.org](http://www.wa-democrats.org)

PIERCE COUNTY DEMS:  
[piercecountydems.org](http://piercecountydems.org)

25TH. LEG. DISTRICT  
DEMOCRATS:  
[25dems.org](http://25dems.org)



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!

**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: 25<sup>th</sup> LDD, P. O. Box 73594, Puyallup, WA 98374 or pay by credit card on  
<http://25dems.org/Anedot/Dues.php>

(Can be paid in installments)