
JOHN GEORGE DEMOCRATIC CLUB

NEWSLETTER--August, 2012

**Endorsement Meeting for
November Election:**

August 18, 2012

10:30 AM- 2:30 PM

Prescott Joseph Center

920 Peralta Street

Oakland (near W Oakland BART)

**Meet the candidates and vote for your
favorites using ranked-choice voting.
Discuss State & Local Ballot measures
at 10:30 sharp. Races include:**

- **Berkeley Mayor, City Council--4
seats, School Board, Rent Board***
- **Oakland City Council--5 seats,
School Board, and City Attorney***
- **Peralta College Board--Dist. 2**
- **AC Transit--2 seats**
- **EBMUD--2 seats**
- **BART--District 7**
- **East Bay Reg. Park Dist.--2 seats**

**The meeting is outdoors so be sure
to bring a jacket in case it is
breezy.**

**Co-sponsored by Black Women
Organized for Political Action
(BWOPA), Stonewall Democratic Club,
Niagara Movement Democratic Club,
Oakland East Bay Democratic Club**

NOTE: the schedule for all candidates will depend on the number of candidates who file by the August 10 deadline. We expect the endorsement meeting to be very lively. For example, Ignacio de la Fuente will be challenging Rebecca Kaplan for Oakland's at-large City Council seat, so that is sure to be an interesting race.

*City races in Oakland and Berkeley will have ranked choice voting. This year the Club will use a ranked choice system to determine our endorsements. Each Club voter will be able to rank up to three choices in the races for Oakland City Council, Berkeley City Council, Berkeley Mayor, and Oakland City Attorney; Club voters may also choose to vote "No Endorsement", or "Abstain."

The ranked choice system will increase the chances of the Club making an endorsement in races such as West Oakland's District 3 with at least five candidates, and North Oakland's District 1 with four or more candidates.

Submit an article for the JG Newsletter!

We welcome all members to submit articles. Note that all submissions are subject to editing for length. All articles are the opinion of the writer.

John George Essay Contest Youth Awards



High School student Brian Chan reads his award winning essay, May 12, 2012 at the West Oakland Library. Photo by Laurie Soman

This year's contest was to "Write an essay on the topic, What does 'We are the 99%' mean to you? How do you think the 99% can be united and what factors keep that from happening?" The high school winner was Brian Chan. The Middle School winner was Samar Saeed. Below is Brian's essay:

The 99% by Brian Chan

A world where the few influence the lives of many is a world without justice. The Occupy Movement's purpose is to right the wrongs of a system that favors the rich over the poor. Such unbalance is not a democracy, but an oligarchy; resources are not in the possession of the majority, but are controlled by the wealthy few. The disparity between the top 1% and the 99% is exacerbated by unfair evasion of taxes practiced by the wealthy. Like Warren Buffet who pays less income tax than his own secretary, the rich are not taxed as heavily as that of the common person. Injustices such as this can only be eliminated by increasing awareness and protesting, both of which the Occupy Movement accomplishes.

However, the movement is by no means perfect; there are many factors preventing the 99% from having a larger impact than they should. The main

issue is the difficulty in determining a lucid and obtainable goal. Protesters oftentimes oppose intangible notions such as "corporate greed" or "corruption" that are impossible to combat. Boxing shadows will not result in concrete gains. The movement for equality requires a lucid and visible objective under which all can rally. Only by having a clear goal, devoid of misunderstandings and ambiguity can there be change that all can see and enjoy.

The other obstacle is the lack of coherence and aim which results in less work being done than is ideal. The sheer number of protesters allows for a great raising of awareness; it is due to the widely publicized protests that much of the nation is cognizant of the disparity between the 99% and the 1%. However, progress beyond physically occupying is not as simple. The United States is a democracy; what must change are laws and policies. Because it is a representative democracy, much of the decisions are made in the political battlegrounds, where the average citizen can only vote and hope for the best.

However, they can also influence their peers and colleagues to do the same. By garnering enough support and political action against the unfair economic situation, politicians will see that it would be in their best interests to create a society where the many are not punished for doing as they should, and the few are not rewarded for controlling that which should be owned by the people. Only when the dream of equality and fairness is realized will prosperity be in the grasp of not just 1% of the population, but 100% of all the citizens that reside in this magnificent nation.

State and National Election Preview--2012

by Jack Lucero Fleck

As reported in the previous JG Newsletter, Republicans are doing everything they can to restrict voter participation in order to defeat President Obama. These same efforts will make it very difficult for Democrats to pick up the 27 seats they need to regain control of the House of Representatives. However, California could be one

bright spot in the effort to return the House to Democratic control. As explained by Hilary Crosby's article in the always-informative El Cerrito Democratic Club newsletter, there are eight Congressional seats that Democrats may be able to pick up in California, as well as four contested seats that they need to retain. Here is a scorecard:

Congressional Seats that Democrats may pick up:

- CD 7--Ami Bera vs. Rep. Dan Lundgren
- CD10--José Hernandez vs. Rep Jeff Denham
- CD 21--John Hernandez vs. Asm. David Valadao
- CD 26--Julia Brownley vs. Sen Tony Strickland
- CD 36--Raul Ruiz vs. Rep. Mary Bono Mack
- CD 41--Mark Takano vs. John Tavaglione
- CD 47--Sen Alan Lowenthal vs. Gary DeLong
- CD 52--Scott Peters vs. Rep Brian Bilbray

Congressional seats that Democrats need to defend:

- CD 3--Rep John Garamendi vs. Kim Vann
- CD 9--Rep. Jerry McNerney vs. Ricky Gill
- CD 16--Rep. Jim Costa vs. Brian Whelan
- CD 24--RE. Lois Capps vs. LG Abel Maldonado

In addition, the California Legislature is a battleground of its own. Democrats need to pick up two seats in each the Assembly and the Senate to achieve the 2/3 they need to overcome Republican obstructionism for tax increases needed for schools, public services, and all state programs. Here are the key races:

Assembly seats that Democrats may pick up:

- AD 21-- Adam Gray vs. Jack Mobley
- AD 32-- Rudy Salas vs. Pedro Rios
- AD 61-- Jose Media vs. Bill Batey

Senate seats that Democrats may pick up:

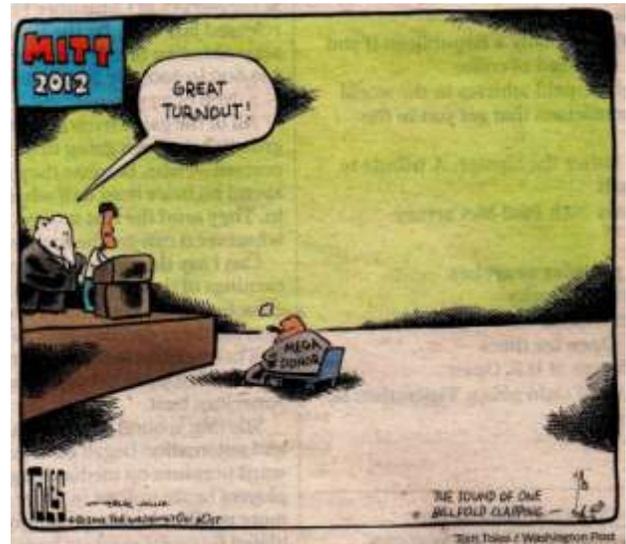
- SD 05--Asm. Cathleen Galgiani vs. Bill Berryhill
- SD 27--Sen Fran Pavley vs. Todd Zink
- SD 31--Richard Roth vs. Asm. Jeff Miller

Assembly seats that Democrats need to defend:

- AD 8--Ken Cooley vs. Peter Tateishi
- AD 13--Susan Eggman vs. K. "Jeffrey" Jafri
- AD 16--Asm Joan Buchanan vs. Al Phillips
- AD 66--Al Muratsuchi vs. Craig Huey

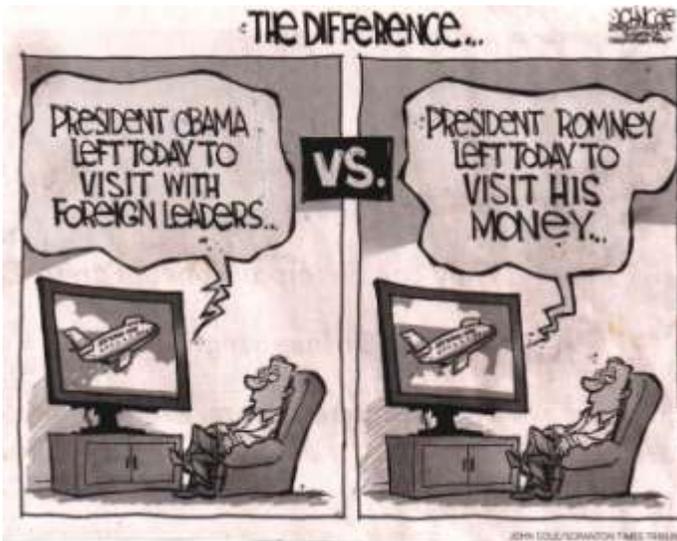
Senate seat the Democrats need to defend:

- SD 39--Asm. Marty Block vs. George Plescia



Ten Things You Now Get to Keep with Obamacare

1. Access to health insurance for 30 million Americans and lower premiums.
2. The ability of businesses and individuals to purchase comprehensive coverage from a regulated marketplace.
3. Insurers cannot discriminate against people with pre-existing conditions.
4. Tax credits for small businesses that offer insurance. Small employers that purchase health insurance for employees are already receiving tax credits to encourage them to continue providing coverage.
5. Assistance for businesses that provide health benefits to early retirees.
6. Affordable health care for lower-income Americans. Obamacare extends Medicaid to individuals with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty line, guaranteeing that the nation's most vulnerable population has access to affordable, comprehensive coverage.
7. Investments in women's health. Obamacare prohibits insurers from charging women substantially more than men and requires insurers to offer preventive services.
8. Young adults' ability to stay on their parents' health care plans. More than 3.1 million young people have already benefitted from dependent coverage, which allows children up to age 26 to remain insured on their parents' plans.
9. Discounts for seniors on brand name drugs.
10. Coverage for the sickest Americans.



Governor Brown's Tax Increase Initiative on November 2012 Ballot:

The Argument for Proposition 30

by Laurie A. Soman

Along with presidential and other vital races, the November 2012 election ballot will include eleven statewide initiatives.

Proposition 30

I want to make the case for supporting Brown's tax initiative in November--Proposition 30.

California has had a decade of increasingly difficult budget years and the Brown initiative is intended to keep the situation from getting worse and staying that way for years to come. Proposition 30 would increase the personal income tax by 1% for individuals earning more than \$250,000 and by 2% for individuals earning more than \$300,000 for seven years and would increase the state sales tax by ¼ cent for four years. The measure would raise an estimated \$9 billion over the next fiscal year. These funds would be used to do several things:

- Retire the remaining portion of the state's deficit from the current fiscal year (\$6 billion) by funding K-12 education and community colleges and position the state to stabilize financially and move forward;

- Prevent the automatic triggering of a massive \$6 billion in additional cuts over and above the deep budget cuts already taken by health, education and human services (the \$6 billion in "trigger cuts" were approved as part of the budget process for this year in the event that the Brown tax initiative failed); and
- Dedicate a portion of the new revenue as a stable revenue stream for local governments to help pay for their new Realignment responsibility for public safety and other services.

California's budget crisis is the result of a combination of factors including:

- The long-term impact of Proposition 13 (depressed property tax revenue including reduced corporate property taxes);
- The loss of \$5-6 billion per year in the DMV vehicle license fees eliminated by former Governor Schwarzenegger; and
- The deep economic recession.

Passage of Prop 30 will eliminate the structural budget deficit, meaning that the next budget year will not involve desperate struggles over which critical programs to cut even deeper.

If Prop 30 does not pass, the Administration will be required to make \$6 billion in trigger cuts this January, including a massive cut to K-12 education. The state will fall into a budget abyss, with K-12 and higher education, health care and human services back on the chopping block.

Special Hidden Funds?

A note about the "special funds" scandal: While there may be as much as \$2 billion in these "special fund" accounts that were not included in the budget calculations for this year, as the name "special funds" suggests, this money typically can be used only for the specific purpose for which the funds were raised, such as transportation projects and road repair, parks, and mental health services. Regardless of how much money is or isn't sitting in these special funds, most of this funding cannot be tapped to pay for other state programs. This issue serves as a reminder that we should always carefully consider voting for fee and tax measures that limit the use of the revenue to a specific purpose. Sometimes the fee and the purpose make

complete sense; other times, we may be putting funds in a piggy bank that can't be opened, even in a crisis.

Other State Initiatives

Eleven state propositions will be on the endorsement meeting agenda on August 18th:

- Proposition 30: State budget measure backed by Governor Brown--(see above)
- Proposition 31: Constitutional amendment making changes to the state budget process
- Proposition 32: Would prohibit political contributions by union or corporate payroll deduction
- Proposition 33: Would allow auto insurance companies to set rates based on a driver's history of insurance coverage
- Proposition 34: Would repeal death penalty
- Proposition 35: Would strengthen penalties for human trafficking
- Proposition 36: Would change Three Strikes law
- Proposition 37: Would require labeling of genetically engineered foods
- Proposition 38: Would raise income taxes to pay for local education and early childhood programs (the alternative to Brown's initiative, backed by LA attorney Molly Munger)
- Proposition 39: Would change business taxes to raise money for clean energy programs
- Proposition 40: Would repeal newly drawn state Senate districts

Remember: Discussion of the state ballot propositions will take place at the August 18 endorsement meeting from 10:30 -11:00 am.

AIDS 2012, the International AIDS Conference, Congresswoman Lee and more...

by Alona Clifton

Known as *AIDS 2012*, the 19th International AIDS Conference ran July 22-27 in Washington, D.C., and represented a return to the U.S. after a 22 year absence. The Obama Administration lifted the ban on foreign individuals with the virus from entry into the U.S. This helped to set the stage for more than 20,000 persons from around the world to attend.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a founding co-chair of the Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus, spoke at the opening plenary session on July 22.

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced *H.R. 6138*, a bill that articulates a policy and financing framework to achieve an AIDS-Free Generation in the United States and globally. The bill was introduced in advance of the 19th International AIDS Conference.

"Thirty years after the first discovery of AIDS cases, the U.S. has made tremendous progress in addressing the global and domestic crisis," said Congresswoman Lee. Our hard won successes are in jeopardy and H.R. 6138, the Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Act, is a critical measure as we recommit ourselves to fighting to end AIDS...

Specifically, the bill supports a 5-year Global HIV/AIDS-Free Generation Strategy; to expand and improve efforts to combat global HIV/AIDS, while promoting efficiency and maximizing results.

"The conference is an excellent opportunity to shine a global spotlight on the fight against AIDS in African American communities and a national spotlight on the ongoing global epidemic," said Congresswoman Barbara Lee, founding co-chair of the Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus. "I'm calling for a new, Global AIDS Free Generation Strategy—for the US and abroad. AIDS remains an urgent global health crisis, but the end of AIDS is within our reach."

One of the attendees of the Conference, Alvan Quamina the Executive Director of AIDS Project of the East Bay, felt quite positive about the tone of the Conference. "This conference highlighted the fact that we now have a set of tools that allows us theoretically to end HIV transmission. Yet, the road ahead is fraught with many perils."

In June, Congresswoman Lee and United Nations Official Michel Sidibé toured the office of AIDS Project of the East Bay (APEB) in Oakland, CA. Mr. Sidibé is the UNAIDS Executive Director and wanted to view the operation at APEB. Of course, our Congresswoman was able to share her insights; "If we are going to truly end the AIDS epidemic...we must address the underlying issues of race, education, sex, poverty and stigma which continue to fuel the spread of HIV in certain communities." A prime example of the need to address the

aforementioned concerns can be seen in Oakland where all of the these underlying issues exist. For the last 10 years, Oakland, Alameda County's largest city, accounts for 65% of HIV/AIDS cases.

Growing Police State Eroding Liberties

By Robert Raich

As a presidential candidate, Barack Obama made numerous promises that would have led to reducing the pernicious power of the police state in America, however the actions of his administration is in opposition to those promises.

For example, Candidate Obama promised, "As president, I will close Guantanamo, reject the Military Commissions Act, and adhere to the Geneva Conventions." Yet now, during Obama's fourth year in office, the prison in Guantanamo Bay remains open, in violation of international human rights conventions.

Likewise, the administration has not renounced the use of torture, continues to operate secret prisons around the world, retains the use of extrajudicial kidnapping--euphemistically called "extraordinary rendition"--and has ended a longstanding principled policy against assassinations. President Obama's "kill list", which includes even "suspected" terrorists, as well as the list's alleged legal "justification" – are themselves kept secret. The President alone sits in judgment of who will live and who will die.

Candidate Obama had claimed that "Transparency and the rule of law will be the touchstones of this Presidency." Unfortunately, the federal government has been using Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions to withhold information from requesters 49 percent more often than under Bush. At the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) alone, under Obama, Administrator Michele Leonhart (a Bush holdover) has presided over a 114 percent increase in FOIA rejections.

While candidate Obama pledged that his administration would enhance "whistleblower laws to protect federal workers," his administration has used

the Espionage Act to prosecute an unprecedented number of whistleblowers – so far twice the number of prosecutions as under all previous administrations *combined*. The mistreatment of Bradley Manning is just one example of such abuse of power.

Earlier this year, President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which purportedly permits the indefinite detention of people – including Americans – without charge or trial.

President Obama also fought for, and persuaded Congress to pass, legislation to grant immunity to the telecom companies for their massive warrantless wiretapping under Bush. Warrantless wiretapping has continued under this administration. Cell phone companies are now responding to demands from law enforcement for "subscriber data" thousands of times per day, frequently without subpoenas or other court orders. This is happening many times more often than during the Bush years.

Now the National Security Agency (NSA) is, for the first time since the Nixon administration, turning its surveillance apparatus on the U.S. and its citizens. The NSA is completing construction on the "Utah Data Center," which will intercept, decipher, store, and analyze vast swaths of the world's domestic and international communications.

Drone attacks are another major cause for concern. If males are killed in the targeted area, they are defined as terrorists by the U.S.. They are adjudicated guilty, sentenced to death, and executed by remote-controlled robots operated by individuals thousands of miles away at U.S. air bases. Drone attacks are only fomenting more hatred against America--"radicalizing" whole communities--thereby ensuring there will be more terrorist attacks. In a vicious spiral, such attacks could funnel more tax dollars to "national security" contractors, and promote passage of a Patriot Act 2, which would take away even more human rights and individual liberties, and give more power to the police, the military, and "national security" operatives.

Regarding the federal War on Medical Cannabis, Obama-the-candidate (who repeatedly promised not to use federal "resources to try and circumvent state laws on this issue") would be appalled by the actions

of the Obama Administration. The number of raids conducted by the DEA has already far surpassed the total number of raids during George W. Bush's entire two terms in office. Moreover, the Obama administration has broadened the assault on safe access to cannabis beyond the DEA, utilizing the resources of an unprecedented array of federal agencies, including numerous U.S. Attorneys' offices, the IRS, FDIC, HUD, ATF, Treasury Department, Department of Agriculture, and various others.

All of these actions constitute a serious assault on civil liberties. We must hold our president accountable for his actions, just as we hold Republicans accountable for theirs.

Housing Forum

August 24, 2012; 9am-2pm

200 Grand Avenue, Oakland

By Sandra J. Johnson Simon

Right now you may be living in your own home or an apartment and everything is fine. Things do happen. A change can happen in your health, medical condition or simply aging that may require you to move away.

Join the Downtown Oakland Senior Center (DOSC) for Planning Your Next Move for a Senior Housing Forum. This educational forum will feature a panel of experts to tell you about all of the various types of senior housing available. The Forum will also include speakers discussing the emotional, financial and legal issues involved in moving. The world of senior housing has changed and we all need to be aware of the changes. Also, included will be a Resource Room. Staff members from various housing organizations will be on hand to answer your specific questions about their facilities and services.

Refreshments will be served. Also there will be drawings for \$50 gift cards. This event is FREE but you must RSVP by calling [510 238-3284](tel:5102383284) or sign up at the DOSC Reception Desk.



JOIN NOW OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2012!

Now is the time to join or renew your membership in the Club. Join us to add your voice to building the progressive wing of the Democratic Party.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Tel: (D) _____ (E) _____

Email: _____

Enclosed are my dues for:

___ \$30 (Reg).

___ \$10 (Low Income)

___ \$50 (Sustaining)

___ \$100(Sponsor)

Please make checks payable to John George Democratic Club and mail to P.O. 18802 Oakland, 94619. Contact: 510-436-7682, email: jgdc@jgc.org, web: www.jgdc.org

John George Democratic Club
P.O. Box 18802
Oakland, CA 94619

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