

The Democrat

The Newsletter of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee

July 2015 Volume 2, Issue 6

Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) Headquarters Is Moving

The lease at the current FCDC headquarters ends on August 31, and the landlord was unwilling to entertain serious discussions about better financial terms. We also confront limitations in our current space that constrain our productivity.

Over the past year, a search team has looked for new office space. With great pleasure, I report to you that FCDC has signed a lease for a new headquarters: 8500 Executive Park Avenue, Suite 402, in Fairfax (near Prosperity Avenue). The search team has achieved every objective set for them: FCDC headquarters will remain in the Merrifield area; it will have additional and more functional space; and, it will come at a lower total rent than our current space. The Merrifield area is beginning to grow, but it has not taken off yet. Consequently, we were able to lock in a good rate for a long term.

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Message from the FCDC Chairman *Sue Langley*



As I write this report, I am visiting family in Bangkok, Thailand; a great distance away from Fairfax County, affording me time to reflect on all the work that we will invest in electing Democrats this fall.

The Joint Campaign this year consists of voters' guides, the Absentee Voter program, Back-to-School nights, and sample ballots. The voters' guide project is off to a great start with a team headed by FCDC Vice Chair Tom Johnson. The guides will be mailed to 120,000 targeted Democratic households. Some 54 candidates generate more than 70 ballot combinations for the guide. Each version will be specific to the precincts into which it is being mailed, meaning that the Democratic candidates running in that precinct will appear in that precinct's guide. This 4-color publication will inform our most reliable voters who is on their specific precinct ballot in November. It should increase votes for the candidates appearing down ballot, where every vote matters the most in a close election.

Absentee voter promotions will rely on help from the voters' guides this year. Through years of development and refinement, the absentee voter work of Rick and Burma Bochner, and their volunteer

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Deadlines for The Democrat

August 2015 Edition

Friday, July 31, 2015

September 2015 Edition

Friday, August 28, 2015

Articles/ photos must be submitted as attachments to thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org. All submissions are subject to a word limit and editing. For more information, contact thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org.

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committee resolution.*

Message from the FCDC Chairman *Sue Langley*

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team, has earned statewide recognition and has set the standard followed by other local Democratic committees around Virginia. It has produced winning margins in close elections, including special elections where we have picked up seats previously held by Republicans.

Candidate data gathered for the voters' guides will be put to further use in the school-specific flyers we plan to produce for the Back-to-School promotion this year. Just as the 54 candidates generate over 70 various combinations by precinct, they create

even more combinations by school boundary. And we have a great opportunity to educate our voters at Back-to-School nights all over Fairfax County

The Jefferson-Jackson event at the Patriot Center on June 26 was a resounding success, as it provided a fund-raising opportunity for the Democratic Party of Virginia; over \$1.2 million was raised. The funds provide DPVA with the resources they need to reclaim the Virginia Senate this November.

Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) Headquarters Is Moving

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As the build-out for the new space gets underway, our headquarters team is busy planning the move. The end of the current lease being August 31 does create some logistical challenges for the November election, but we are putting together a plan to make it as smooth as possible. Some of our functions may have to move out temporarily to a swing space. Supervisor Penny Gross has graciously made her Annandale campaign office avail-

able for our use, to host the absentee program, if necessary.

We made a point of ensuring that the new lease will end in the spring (March 31, 2026) to minimize the impact on November elections of a possible future move.

In upcoming issues of *The Democrat*, we will be featuring some detailed overviews of what the new space will offer.

Sanders, Beyer Address NVA Progressives; Over 500 Hear Ideas on 'Reclaiming the American Dream'

By Michael Fruitman

They Felt The Bern.

Vermont independent Senator Bernie Sanders received several standing ovations—some before he even spoke a word—at the July 9 policy forum [Rebooting our Policy Agenda to Reclaim the American Dream](#). This was a policy forum, not a political event, but the excitement in the overflow crowd was palpable. Also participating in the discussion was freshman Congressman Don Beyer (VA-8), in whose district the Arlington event was held. Both are members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

The idea behind the forum: to advance a progressive policy agenda that benefits all Americans, not just the rich and powerful. Frequently overlooked, say progressives, is the fact that current policy does not align with the preferences of a clear majority of Americans; their wishes no longer matter as long as the corporate and financial elites control the policy-making process. And leading economists warn that the resulting policies they have shaped foster flagrant in-

come inequality, wealth disparity, and a predatory system that ignores the needs of everyday working Americans.

The forum was conceived, planned, organized, and moderated by Sandra Klassen, chair of FCDC's National Affairs Committee, who recruited nearly 40 volunteers to help ensure that



the evening went smoothly. It was sponsored by an amalgam of 13 local Democratic and labor groups.

Perhaps most striking to this listener was how seemingly obvious and necessary were the ideas proposed by the speakers: prioritizing work on climate change, expanding social security, free health care for all, free community college for all, overturning Citizens United to get money out of politics, allowing the refinancing of student loan debt, and raising the

minimum wage to \$15 an hour. None of this is controversial to Democrats. But according to Sanders, "The GOP today is a fringe party, and our democracy has become an oligarchy."

As evidence of the influence of the "billionaire class," Sanders pointed out that the top 1/10 of 1 percent of Americans own as

much as the bottom 90 percent. Further, in the first 6 months of 2015 alone, GOP presidential candidate Jeb Bush and his super PAC raised \$114 million.

The one main idea proposed by both Sand-

ers and Beyer to fund the programs they advocate: a tax on Wall Street speculation. This is probably the clearest difference between progressives and Republicans.

An area of disagreement between Sanders and Beyer was international trade. The Senator opposes President Obama's position on trade promotion authority and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, while Congressman Beyer supports it. Beyer believes that

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FCDC State and Local Affairs Committee Discusses Predatory Lending, *Dalia Palchik, Chairman*

On July 1, the FCDC State and Local Affairs Committee organized a discussion with local experts on predatory lending. Members of the committee were joined by additional interested members of



FCDC State and Local Affairs Committee Meeting on July 1

FCDC, including the 44th District VA House candidate Paul Krizek and a representative from Del. Kaye Kory's office. A presentation was made by Gynnie Robnett, campaign director for payday lending reform at Americans for Financial Reform; and Dana Wiggins, director of outreach and financial advocacy of the VPLC/Virginia Partnership to Encourage Responsible Lending (VaPERL) Coalition. Both advocates led a lively discussion and emphasized the necessity of a federal usury law and a cap on interest charged to active military members. The Association of State Attorneys General supports this military cap on interest.

At the national level, Robnett's organization, Americans for Financial Reform, is currently circulating a petition on proposed payday loan rules, which she plans sending to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The petition emphasizes the effects of predatory lending on both individuals and their respective neighborhoods, calling for regulation of car title, high cost, payday, and installment loans.

Wiggins notes that at a state level, this work is part of the



Pictured Above: Dana Wiggins

statewide coalition. Wiggins defined predatory lending as loans with dangerous terms such as very high interest rates, high upfront fees, unnecessary charges, unaffordable repayment terms, misleading default penalties, and prepayment penalties. Wiggins' proposed solutions include en-

forcing existing laws to stop internet lending, closing the open-end credit loophole for predatory lenders, amending the Virginia Automobile Title Loan Act and Virginia Payday Loan Act to stop loans to borrowers who are obviously unable to repay, and supporting work done by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

At the local level, Wiggins suggests the use of zoning laws to prevent predatory lenders from opening in certain neighborhoods. Wiggins called predatory loaning a "false market," meaning one that only worsens the financial conditions of borrowers. She offered alternatives such as cutting back on expenses, borrowing from family or friends, selling possessions, saving in a rainy day fund, or borrowing from a bank or credit union.

The State and Local Affairs Committee will continue the work and discussion around this matter at its next monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 5, at 7:00 pm at FCDC Headquarters in Falls Church. The discussion is open to all; please RSVP to state-local@fairfaxdemocrats.org.

Reminder to the Campaigns....

The Democrat will run a special monthly insert titled, *Campaign Trail 2015*. All Fairfax County candidates are welcomed and encouraged to share a human interest story from their campaign travels or a campaign update. Candidate article submissions must be limited to 250 words and be about the candidate's experience on the campaign trail or a campaign update. One picture may be submitted with narrative. No fundraising promos, please. Articles/photos must be submitted as attachments to thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org

Sanders, Beyer Address NVA Progressives; Over 500 Hear Ideas on 'Reclaiming the American Dream'

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the protections written into the legislation will be sufficient to protect American jobs and ensure that other nations follow the agreement. According to him, if the United States does not set the rules on international trade, China will—with negative effects on human rights and national security. Senator Sanders sees American jobs as being at great risk, and fears that corporate collusion would make a mockery of the rules.

Questioned on gun control, Sanders said that guns in rural areas such as Vermont are very different from guns in inner cities. While he voted to ban assault weapons, institute background checks, and close the gun-show loophole, he did not support holding gun manufacturers responsible for acts committed with their products. In sum, the Senator called for overcoming the “cultural divide” on guns to come up with reasonable solutions.

Shifting to foreign policy, the authors of “Principles for a Progressive Foreign Policy” in Foreign Affairs magazine recently asserted that a re-ordered world demands rethinking our foreign policy. Among the principles they suggested: a new Marshall Plan for at-risk regions, the United

States working with its partners and allies, constrained covert actions such as mass surveillance and lethal CIA operations, and the need for us to address the immediate threat of climate change. Congressman Beyer and Senator Sanders agreed with these ideas; Beyer reiterated that climate change is the world’s biggest threat and that we must tackle world problems together, not unilaterally.

After criticizing Republicans for their eagerness to go to war virtually anywhere, Senator Sanders asked, “Wouldn’t it be good if the world’s poor knew we were on their side?” And agreeing that coalitions are necessary, he asked why Saudi Arabia—with one of the largest fighting forces—doesn’t put its own soldiers on the ground.

Finally, the speakers agreed that it will be up to grass roots America to determine whether the rich and powerful continue to control this country. An obvious first step is to vote: Last November, only 63 percent of eligible Americans voted. If we want change, we need to say so, and make our voices heard.

Celebrate Fairfax! Presidential Straw Poll Results

By Rose Chu, Vice Chair for Outreach

FCDC sponsored a booth at Celebrate Fairfax June 5-7 in a prime location, right across from the main entrance to the Government Center. Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, Clerk of the Court candidate Bettina Lawton, and Sully supervisor candidate Kathy Smith met with a number of voters and handed out brochures, stickers, and fans. FCDC interns had made buttons for Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, and Martin O’Malley that were offered for a voluntary donation. Special thanks to Todd Thurwachter, the George Mason Democrats, the Hunter Mill District Democratic Committee, and FCDC interns for volunteering.

STRAW POLL RESULTS		
Candidate	Votes	Percentage
Lincoln Chafee	1	1.1%
Hillary Clinton	42	47.7%
Martin O’Malley	3	3.4%
Bernie Sanders	29	33.0%
Jim Webb	7	8.0%
Write-In/Other	6	6.8%
Total	88	

Write-ins:	
Joe Biden	3
Tim Kaine	1
Elizabeth Warren	1

FCDC Dem Volunteers Helped Make Fairfax 2015 World Police and Fire Games a Success

From June 26 to July 5, the Fairfax 2015 World Police and Fire Games were held in Northern Virginia. Many of our FCDC members volunteered to help make these world games a success. If you did not have a chance to volunteer, we hope you were able to attend one or more of the numerous events to support our first responders. If not, [click to see a short video on the games](#). Let us take a moment and thank those who volunteered.

Our sincerest gratitude to the many fire fighters and law enforcement personnel from Fairfax County and the surrounding

communities who worked many long hours to make this major world event a success.

Thank you Sherriff Stacey Kincaid; the FCDC members, who were volunteer coordinators and spent many hours helping to ensure their respective events went smoothly: Terry Matlaga Bell (5x5 Basketball and Indoor Soccer); and Janet Muldoon (Softball); to the many FCDC members including Michael Fruitman, Jim Moran, and Bob Sledzaus, who were an instrumental part of the team processing the games' 16,800 credentials; to the many volunteers

on the medical teams including Phyllis Klein, who provided first aid assistance at the basketball games and Casey Crowe who was in the Medical Reserve Corps on standby status; and to the numerous FCDC members who helped out volunteering for the separate athletic events, including Howard Carlin (Indoor Volleyball). Our hats are off to all of you!

The Fairfax 2015 World Police and Fire Games gave FCDC Dems an opportunity to step up and show our Fairfax Pride for the world to see—and we did just that.

People in the News

Joseph B. Wisniewski, Jr., a former Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) member for decades, passed away June 19 at the age of 86. Joe enlisted in the United States Army in 1944 and was stationed in Munich, Germany, as a member of the Signal Corp. There he met his future wife, Marianne Mitterweger, and they were married in 1951. He served in the Army for 25 years, retiring as Chief Warrant Officer in November 1969. In addition to Germany, his tours included Korea and Vietnam. He was awarded numerous medals including the Bronze Star and the Army Commendation. He was instrumental in setting up the Paris White House for Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. He and his family settled in Springfield, Virginia, in 1964, where Joe and

Marianne lived until 2009. He dedicated innumerable hours to a wide range of campaigns and political organizations, including serving as treasurer for Congressman Herb Harris, Senator Richard Saslaw, Delegate Vivian Watts, Supervisors Audrey Moore and Sharon Bulova, FCDC, the 8th District Democratic Committee, the Annandale District Democratic Committee, and others. Joe also served as treasurer and on several boards, including the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission, the National Consumers League, and the White House Conference on Small Business. He was awarded the inaugural Joseph V. Gartlan Award for community service to citizens of Fairfax County in 2008 and the Jefferson Jackson Award by FCDC in 1994.

Beyond telecommunications, politics, and community activism, Joe was a beloved family man. His wife, Marianne, preceded him in death. Joe is survived by his children, Karen A. Wisniewski and her husband Robert Boucher, Nina M.W. Oldham and her husband Mitchell, Vera A. Wisniewski and her husband Marco Sacasa, and Marc J.L. Wisniewski and his wife Cynthia Lamons; as well as by five grandchildren. His memorial service was held on June 25. Burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association; Alcoholics Anonymous; Boys Town; or to the Joseph B. Wisniewski, Jr., Memorial Scholarship (for a graduating senior majoring in political science at Annandale High School.)

Letter to the Editor: Lack of School Board Meeting Participation Disheartening

Based on the comprehensive article in last issue of *The Democrat*, I attended the School Board meeting because I thought my presence was important to the progressive cause. What I found was a packed auditorium, but over 80 percent of it consisted of a well-organized group of people wearing red T-shirts (that color being conspicuously mirrored in the attire of the Springfield District School Board member).

Typically, the "red shirts" misquoted prevailing science, figuratively waved the bible, and literally waved little American flags. In one presentation, they said "Doctors or scientists ... would tell you that the belief that one is the wrong sex or is born in the wrong body is just like the belief of the anorexic girl that she is fat."

Of the 20 percent of the audience supporting teaching the facts, I saw only one Democratic candidate, and FCDC representatives could be counted on one hand. Most of the 20 percent was wearing T-shirts or buttons from one or another LGBT group.

This situation is disheartening, even disgraceful.

- In a matter of weeks, FCDC and its candidates will be going to these same LGBT groups for money and participation for our November candidates. That seems almost hypocritical when we were not there to support them.
- FCDC-supported School Board members showed an astounding amount of courage by doing the right thing; they took a tremendous amount of name-calling and heckling from the 80 percent, yet voted for the needs of Fairfax County students. We (FCDC) left them hanging out on a limb alone.
- We missed an incredible opportunity to recruit new FCDC members and supporters. The 20 percent were fully energized and predisposed to activism. Yet those I spoke with had no idea that FCDC had formally supported their views with a resolution.
- We left the media no choice but to, once again, give free coverage to the extreme right. Must we continually be out-organized and under-represented when we know our views are those of the majority?
- Most importantly, lack of FCDC member support at the meeting let down the students in Fairfax County who need and deserve an objective and academic atmosphere. Sexual identity is part of human health, even if it has not ended up in Fairfax County Public Schools' human health curriculum.

My plea: get off your backside and put it in a seat where it can next make a real difference. All the well-meaning resolutions in the world will not further our causes if we don't SHOW UP.

—Nancy Kaufman

Celebrating the 4th of July

