



26th LD Democrats Minutes for 6/6/2019

1. Call to order, Pledge of Allegiance, Approval of agenda.
2. Recognition of elected officials, candidates, and first-time guests
3. **Program: Social/Criminal Justice Reform – Panel**

PANELISTS:

Tarra Simmons, the Executive Director of Civil Survival and Seattle University Law graduate who won a long fight to simply take the bar exam after being incarcerated; Drew Hansen, State Representative from the 23rd District; Tracy Flood, a local civil rights lawyer and President of the Bremerton chapter of the NAACP; Chad Enright, the Kitsap County Prosecutor; Danielle Armbruster, Assistant Secretary of Corrections; Joy Sanford, moderator

Summary of panel comments:

Q1: Who's being arrested, for what, and in what numbers? Armbruster - WA is 42nd in incarceration; robbery and assault are most common crimes; average incarceration is 24 months. Simmons - Population is disproportionately poor, LGBTQ, people of color, i.e., marginalized. Many from foster care. We spend \$27K/yr more on prisoners than on students. Enright points out that this population reflects our society's focus on violent crimes against property (and persons). Flood surveys different ways WA has helped and failed to help people of color.

Q2: What's the power of the prosecutor? Enright -- don't set policy so much as deal with a number of disparate individuals. Prosecutors filter each morning's reports to determine who they will/won't charge. "We choose incarceration because it's the option we have"; there are a few other options like drug court, but funding has been cut for many such choices. Simmons adds that Reconciliation Day helped many people reduce their fines. She argues for empowering victims by sentencing criminals to work that atones for the crime, or other solutions that don't involve locking up people in prisons, disproportionately people of color, where change is hard to effect. Simmons and Flood, the next speaker, argue for different, more creative options for criminals.

Q3: What's the role of prison today? Armbruster says the goal is rehabilitative, not punitive; recidivism rate is 33.5%. Her office is trying to think differently, to help prisoners get the skills and education they need to get a living-wage job upon release. Hansen talks about the fight to provide decent training for prisoners, post-GED for example, against solid Republican opposition.

Q4: What does the recently released prisoner face? Simmons - rebuilding ties to family, friends, community; difficult to find living wage work while paying off court fines for public defense etc. that eat up half a minimum-wage paycheck. Lack of a simple, essential document: WA State ID.

Q5: Tell us about voting rights for former felons. Flood talked about the many ways in which voter rights are suppressed. Hansen talked about the recently passed New Hope bill to more rapidly and easily restore voting and identity rights to released prisoners that was passed recently through some bipartisan legislative work and signed into law by Governor Inslee three weeks ago. LD 26 Rep. Jesse Young was no help in getting this important new measure voted into law, but it was supported by enough Republicans to pass..

Q: What is LFO? Legal Financial Obligations -- after sentencing, you used to have to fund the police, judge, court clerk, and often more; i.e., \$2275 plus 12% interest even for victimless crimes.



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In 2017, the law was changed to force the judge to consider ability to pay; interest was eliminated in 2018; now the fight is to reduce or eliminate LFOs for all who can't pay, as while these debts are outstanding, you can't get your civil rights restored.

Q: What can we do to help people who are re-entering society and/or making the criminal justice system more equitable. Follow Simmons' organization, which meets at Our Savior Church at 11th and Veneta, Bremerton, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm. Hansen - elect Democrats, educate yourself, practice outreach and advocacy -- lobby your reps. Flood - vote, vote, vote. Educate yourself about judges as they have a big impact on what happens to convicted felons. Seek diversity, look at endorsements from criminal justice reformers. Armbruster - look for employers, landlords; talk to former prisoners. Ask questions, educate yourself. Go to the website VotingforJudges.org to look at judges' ratings, especially judges' evaluations by various associations.

Business Meeting

4. Approval of Minutes (tacitly done)

5. Treasurer's report (Constance Maytum put latest update on budget on opposite side of agenda page; current bank balance as of end of May **\$6,085.02**)

6. Old Business

a. Update on LD 26 Democrats Fundraiser June 8 at Sehmel Park Pavilion (sign ups to help) We need all auction items brought in tonight or to Lynn Jobs at 6625 Wagner Ave Ste 220, Gig Harbor by Friday afternoon or evening.

b. IMAX Presidential Debate June 26 and 27 (fundraiser) LD26 and LD28 co-sponsors of this event; posters available to post.

c. Pierce County Launch: June 22 (IBEW Hall, Tacoma) Day of Action with Deep Listening canvass; Kitsap County is also having a Day of Action on June 15th, Eagles Nest

d. LD 26 Democrats Endorsement Process - we have revised the process; new questionnaire is posted on LD 26 website; letter sent to all Democrats running for non-partisan offices inviting them to apply for endorsement; E-Board will interview all candidates who are interested in our endorsement on June 18th, candidates may come to July 11th General Meeting where membership will vote on endorsements.

e. Upcoming events/volunteers needed for Fathoms of Fun (June 29, Port Orchard) Tony Otto says 13 people have already signed up -- it's a fun one.

7. New Business

a. Brief presentation on tax reform by Tariq Scott, Balanced Tax Code, unions, families, healthcare advocates, teachers, and more. Fighting for low-income tax relief in this highly regressive tax system. Worked to pass a 9.9% tax on \$100K profit (single filers) from stocks & bonds, \$200K profit for joint filers. This capital gains tax would only affect 0.6% of individuals, It didn't pass. Tariq is now doing outreach to build a better coalition for next session.

b. PCOS: New/updated rack card available now for canvasses.



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- c. Bylaw revisions to be presented in upcoming General Meeting. Adison has done draft on first eight Articles, Carl Olson is working on the remainder. Hoping to finish by this fall.
 - d. Discussion group organized by Larry Seaquist will go on summer hiatus, start up again in the fall.
8. Next General Meeting: July 11, 6:30 p.m., Givens Center: **Non-Partisan Candidates present, endorsements recommended by E-Board, and endorsements voted by membership**
9. Good of the Order.
- a. Anna Mockler asked the membership if they wanted to focus more on outreach - making the meetings look more like the district - and advocacy, with several clear issues and positions. The general consensus is in support of this.
 - b. Darrell Johnson moved to urge Rep Kilmer to support an impeachment inquiry. Motion passed with two opposed.
 - c. Cassandra Wolle reports that UFCW is negotiating for better safety, better scheduling, wage increase of \$1.50/hr. for journey-level workers -- Day of Action tomorrow at Port Orchard Fred Meyer, 4:30-5:15. Sign a pledge online to support grocery workers at Kroger stores and other UFCW employers. Agnes Day Lutheran Church, 6/14, Eco Film (flyers on the table)
10. Adjournment