



26th LD Democrats Minutes for 11/7/2019

6:30 PM

1. Call to order, Pledge of Allegiance, Approval of agenda.
2. Recognition of elected officials, candidates, and first-time guests

Newly elected officials were introduced: Lori Wheat, Bremerton City Council #4; Linda Weeks, Parks Commission; Chuck West, Peninsula School District #1; Deanna Keller, Port of Tacoma Commissioner #3; Anna Mockler, failed candidate for Bremerton City Council #6; Robyn Denson, Gig Harbor City Council; report on Robyn Denson's campaign — 65% of the vote despite being outspent by Republican at over two-to-one. Call for candidates for Port Orchard and Gig Harbor City Council in next election cycle - many ran unopposed this year.

6:40 – 7:50 PM

3. Program: Trump Administration Attacks on Immigrants and Ways We Can Fight Back. Features AIDNW and Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center sharing what is happening to immigrants in Kitsap and Pierce Counties and how we can provide support to immigrants targeted by the Trump administration. Deborah Cruz is Program Manager for AIDNW, an organization serving immigrants detained in and released from the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma; she manages 180 volunteers. Betty Devereux volunteers at the Welcome Center of AIDNW and collects hotel-sized soap, shampoo and other personal items that she donates for use by detainees released from the Detention Center. Ammar was detained at Northwest Detention Center and will share his experiences. Ray Garrido volunteers for Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center, defending immigrants who are in removal proceedings.

Panelists introduce themselves:

Cruz - Details of how they provide emotional support to detainees, and transitional support upon their release. Pick up detainees upon release, drive them to host houses. 2/3 of detainees were picked up in ICE raids. <50% have criminal records, 70% get deported. Released detainees stay in AIDNW Hospitality House for weeks or months. Some are waiting for bond; some to be reunited with family; some to figure out what to do next.

Ammar - stayed at Hospitality House for a couple of months. Was in US Army from 2005-2011, over 300 missions in his native Iraq. After troop pullback in 2011, Ammar was in Texas, could not return to Iraq for well-founded fear of retaliation — his home was bombed after he became a soldier. Immigration problems started right then. He came to visit a friend in Seattle, applied for



26th LD Democrats Minutes for 11/7/2019

asylum, this is still in process today, even though several generals have recommended him. Normal interviews are less than an hour; 2015 interview lasted 8 hours without water or food. In 2018, he was arrested on the street, his pants pulled off, because, they claimed, he had missed an immigration court appearance and was therefore a fugitive. He was dragged in full-body cuffs to Tacoma Detention Center, told he would have a new court date in a few days to a week. Two years later, he was released with an electronic ankle bracelet. Despite the videos of the 300 missions, his asylum application was cancelled, and he was scheduled for deportation. He refused to sign the deportation papers, was sent to Georgia, then Louisiana, then El Paso TX, Louisiana, Arizona, then Seattle. Seattle judge refused to reopen asylum case, but Ammar appealed and won his asylum because ICE did not provide the correct documents. He then had to cooperate with ICE, e.g., be home every Tuesday morning and wear an ankle bracelet. This bracelet, by the way, was made by GEO, who are making a lot of money.

It was moved by Luellen, seconded by Carl Olson, that Derek Kilmer should sit down and talk about Ammar's situation — Ray Garrido will approach Kilmer's lawyer and all sit down together. The motion was passed with one dissenting vote. Text of the resolution:

Be it resolved that the 26th LD Democrats request, and are willing to assist with, placing Congressman Kilmer and his office in contact with Ray Garrido of Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center, and Ammar and his Northwest Immigrant Rights Project attorney. We encourage Congressman Kilmer to tell Ammar's story during a one minute floor speech to raise awareness and to highlight the injustice of our immigration system. We further request Congressman Kilmer to propose or support legislation that moves immigration courts from Class 1 status under the Department of Justice to Class 3 status, and to continue promoting legislation that protects Dreamers, and treats all immigrants with dignity and respect.

Garrido - KIAC was started by two women, Martitha May and another. It was a real one-room floating assistance center for immigrants. Garrido started ESL tutoring in 2009, was asked many questions about immigration status, of which he then knew little. NW Immigration Project helped train Ray, and others, to become advocates for immigrants. Since then, 130 green cards, 21 citizens, 20,000 volunteer hours per year, 7 staff. It's an endless, brutal process because the Department of Justice is capricious and all-powerful, and judges serve at top officials' pleasure. Since Inauguration Day 2017, directives have flown weekly or more frequently, narrowing almost to invisibility the chance that they'll receive asylum. Obama administration didn't have a stellar reputation either, but the gleeful cruelty of the current regime is unprecedented. The current immigration court is Class I — we need a Class III court. Every time you speak to your representatives, tell them we need a Class III court.



26th LD Democrats Minutes for 11/7/2019

Devereux - We sit in the RV across from the Detention Center. When people come out, we welcome them, bring them into the RV, give them snacks, advice, comfort. People now are coming out of Detention who have lived in USA for 20, 30, 40 years, paying taxes, checking in regularly with ICE — and then suddenly ICE doesn't let them go. Or they detain them at a 7-11. Or as they leave a court hearing. Or pick them up in the fields as the harvest ends. There are myriad small cruel glitches: their families don't have credit cards; their identification doesn't match ICE demands; bond for immigrants has to be 100%, not the normal 10%; the hit-and-miss screening by TSA; a Byzantine visitation schedule that means detainees can't even see their friends and family much of the time. GEO, the contractor with ICE for Tacoma Detention and many others, receives >\$100 night for each detainee — they're getting a return on investment of over 25%. Perhaps the hardest thing for detainees, apart from the callous and even abusive treatment, the language barriers, the lack of phone card funds, and more, is that there is literally nothing to do in detention. People make origami, bouquets, cowboy boots, bracelets, out of the potato chip bags. There is nothing at all to do.

7:50 – 8:30: Business Meeting

4. **Approval of Minutes (September and October)** Moved and seconded, voted to approve.

5. **Treasurer's report** (Constance Maytum) See the budget on the back of the agenda — we need more recurring donations, though.

6. Old Business

a. **Results of Non-Partisan Races:** Six out of seven candidates in Pierce County side of LD 26 Democrats won their election:

Robyn Denson, Gig Harbor City Council

Chuck West, Peninsula School System

Linda Weeks and Mark Michel, KP Parks Commissioners

Deanna Keller and Kristin Ang, Tacoma Port Commissioners



26th LD Democrats Minutes for 11/7/2019

Only Lori Wheat (Bremerton City Council, running unopposed) won election in Kitsap side of LD 26 Democrats.

- b. 2020 Fundraiser for LD 26 Democrats SAVE THE DATE: April 25. Wesley Inn, GH
- c. Democratic Discussion Group Status and Plan Update (more info coming soon)
- d. Membership drive for LD 26 Democrats: pay dues now, dues will cover 2020 membership
 - e. Monthly donation to LD 26 Democrats: Request that everyone consider making a monthly donation toward 2020 races; can be done on-line with automatic deduction

7. New Business

- a. Status of Bylaw Revisions (Carl Olson/Adison Richards) — we'll be presenting draft language in January or February.

- b. 2020 LD 26 Caucus for State Delegates — April 26 2020, Goodman Middle School, Gig Harbor for both Pierce and Kitsap counties. We'll be selecting delegates to Congressional (6) Caucus, where delegates will be chosen for national convention. The number of delegates will be pre-determined by the primary election.

8. Next General Meeting: December 5 6:30 p.m., Givens Center: **holiday celebration**. Program will be focused on labor issues, e.g., overtime with labor speaker Jordan Waits and possibly other labor representatives.

9. Good of the Order - Inslee and Stacey Abrams in an Inslee-for-Governor fundraiser at the Westin Hotel, 11/24. Don Bartley moved to thank all veterans for their service, unanimous agreement.

10. Adjournment