

FEATHER RIVER DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Monthly Newsletter

May, 2016



General Meeting

Third Thursday of each month, 7-8 PM
Yuba City High School, Room 322,
850 B Street, Yuba City, CA

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April/May Meetings

E-Board Meeting: May 10
General Meeting: May 19
E-Board Meeting: June 7
General Meeting: May 16

Special Events

Garamendi Basque Barbeque: May 14

Newsletter Editor

Joene Tranter

The Obamacare Replacement Mirage
Paul Krugman, The New York Times, April 11, 2016

Hype springs eternal — certainly when it comes to Paul Ryan, whose media image as a Serious, Honest Conservative and policy wonk seems utterly impervious to repeated demonstrations that he is neither serious nor honest, and that he actually knows very little about policy. And here we go again.

But what really amazes me about the latest set of stories is the promise that Ryan will finally deliver the Republican Obamacare alternative that his colleagues in Congress have somehow failed to produce after all these years. No, he won't — because there is no alternative.

Or maybe I should say that there is no alternative to the right. Alternatives to the left do exist. True socialized medicine — an American NHS — would be feasible economically; so would single-payer, in the form of Medicare for all. The reasons we aren't doing those are political.

But on the right, is there a more free-market, more privatized system that could replace the Affordable Care Act without causing the number of uninsured to soar? No, as some of us have tried to explain many times. Once again: a useful starting point is the problem of people with pre-existing conditions. How can they be offered affordable insurance? You can prohibit insurers from discriminating on the basis of medical history — community rating. But if that's all you do, only sicker people will sign up; many will wait until they get sick to buy insurance; and so costs will be high due to a bad risk pool.

So non-discrimination must be combined with an individual mandate, the requirement that everyone get insurance. But what about people who can't afford it? There must be subsidies to lower-income families, so that they can.

What you end up with, then, is community rating + individual mandate + subsidies — that is, with Obamacare. There's nothing arbitrary about it, and you can't pick and choose from the elements: it's a three-legged stool that needs all three legs to stand. And it can't be made cheaper, either — the subsidies are already on the low end, requiring that the allowed policies can involve higher deductibles than they really should.

And all this, in turn, is the reason Republicans haven't come up with an alternative. It's not because they're timid, or lazy, or stupid (they may be all these things, but that's not why they've come up short). It's because there is no alternative that wouldn't involve taking coverage away from tens of millions.

So no, Ryan isn't going to roll out a magical solution to this problem in the next couple of months. Even if he were the policy wonk he pretends to be, he couldn't do the impossible.

Can Anyone Drive Women Votes to Clinton Better Than Trump? Try Cruz-Fiorina
Joan Walsh, The Nation, April 28, 2016



OK, let's get some things straight: Senator Ted Cruz won't have an actual "running mate," because he won't have a presidential candidacy much longer. And if he did, against all odds, get the GOP nomination at a contested convention, he would dump poor Carly Fiorina as fast as you can say "swing state." Fiorina is no electoral draw: She won exactly one delegate in the GOP primary; she lost her 2010 campaign to be California's senator, badly; and if Cruz was hoping she might somehow swing California, anyway, that's seems like bad advance work, because she doesn't even live in California anymore. Speaking as a recently transplanted Californian myself, she is wildly despised there. Nationwide, her favorable rating is 25 percent. Finally, in a year when the GOP is having to reckon with the revolt of its white, working-class base, I can't think of a worse choice to challenge Trump than an icy former CEO who shed workers with less conscience than Trump has shed wives.

Other than that, she's a brilliant choice.

But since the 2016 GOP presidential race is all lurid spectacle and strategic dysfunction, let's take a moment to appreciate how both were displayed in Cruz's Fiorina announcement.

First, it came only three days after the Texas senator's abortive pact with John Kasich. I mean, really, if you were going to seriously team up with Kasich to thwart Trump, wouldn't you try to make him your running mate? In fact, wouldn't you, earlier, have tried to lure Senator Marco Rubio? Or anyone with more than the literally one delegate controlled, right now, by Carly Fiorina?

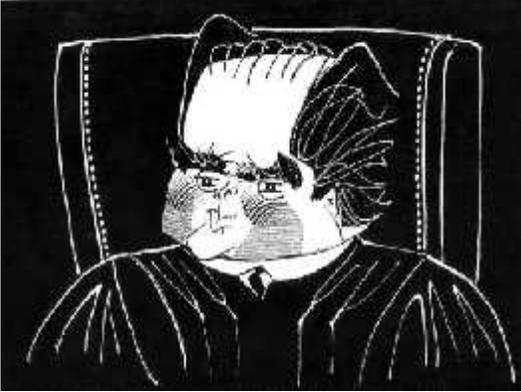
But let's give Cruz credit: He's trying to win over the women's vote, given that 70 percent of women tell pollsters they have "negative" feelings—what a euphemism—about Donald Trump. He picked Fiorina right as Trump was trashing Hillary Clinton for playing "the woman card," insisting if she "were a man, she would have 5 percent of the vote." Clinton immediately embraced the insult, with her campaign producing a "woman card" with her logo, while feminists on Twitter and elsewhere outdid themselves mocking the idiocy of the concept that being a woman is any kind of advantage in the world (this piece is my favorite.)

One big problem with Cruz's strategy, though, is that there are few female candidates as poorly situated to capture women's votes as Fiorina. Her failed presidential campaign's only rationale seemed to be that she could brutalize Clinton politically without being derided as sexist. She then became infamous for her cold-blooded lies about the doctored Planned Parenthood videos, including the morbid and oft-repeated false claim that they depicted infanticide. Sarah Palin was a smarter choice to appeal to women than Fiorina is—and Palin was a disaster.

The other problem with this obvious desperation move is that Cruz and Fiorina appeal to the same narrow base of Christian conservatives. Somehow that became more ridiculously apparent to me when Cruz seemed to introduce Fiorina—to a small, lackluster Indiana rally—as someone who was going to be his nanny, bizarrely playing up her relationship with his two young daughters. For her part, Fiorina seemed to very much want the job, coming out on stage and crooning a song to young Caroline and Catherine, in a display of political pandering that was unforgettably creepy. Again, I think there was political strategy, however deranged, behind the odd tableau: Fiorina has a seriously harsh persona, so this was supposed to humanize her. It also seemed to appease Christian conservative misgivings about powerful women—Fiorina is at once fit to be commander in chief, if anything were to happen to Cruz, as well as to care for his daughters.

But nothing is going to happen to Cruz; he will go on trying to defeat Trump with incompetence and futility. He will not be the GOP nominee, let alone president. In fact, Fiorina is perfectly suited to tell us why: As she said during her own failed campaign, Cruz is "just like any other politician" who "says whatever he needs to say to get elected," and he "cannot possibly beat Hillary Clinton." He can't beat Clinton—and, more relevant to his immediate aim of getting the Republican nomination, he can't beat Trump. But he and Fiorina gave us a day of surreal political theater, a day in which Trump's incoherent foreign policy was not the strangest thing to happen, and I'm grateful.





Antonin Scalia, who died this month, after nearly three decades on the Supreme Court, devoted his professional life to making the United States a less fair, less tolerant, and less admirable democracy. Fortunately, he mostly failed. Belligerent with his colleagues, dismissive of his critics, nostalgic for a world where outsiders knew their place and stayed there, Scalia represents a perfect model for everything that President Obama should avoid in a successor. The great Justices of the Supreme Court have always looked forward; their words both anticipated and helped shape the nation that the United States was becoming. Chief Justice John Marshall read the new Constitution to allow for a vibrant and progressive federal government. Louis Brandeis understood the need for that government to regulate an industrializing economy. Earl Warren saw that segregation was poison in the modern world. Scalia, in contrast, looked backward.

His revulsion toward homosexuality, a touchstone of his world view, appeared straight out of his sheltered, nineteen-forties boyhood. When, in 2003, the Court ruled that gay people could no longer be thrown in prison for having consensual sex, Scalia dissented, and wrote, "Today's opinion is the product of a Court, which is the product of a law-profession culture, that has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda, by which I mean the agenda promoted by some homosexual activists directed at eliminating the moral opprobrium that has traditionally attached to homosexual conduct." He went on, "Many Americans do not want persons who openly engage in homosexual conduct as partners in their business, as scoutmasters for their children, as teachers in their children's schools, or as boarders in their home. They view this as protecting themselves and their families from a life style that they believe to be immoral and destructive."

But it was in his jurisprudence that Scalia most self-consciously looked to the past. He pioneered "originalism," a theory holding that the Constitution should be interpreted in line with the beliefs of the white men, many of them slave owners, who ratified it in the late eighteenth century. During Scalia's first two decades as a Justice, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist rarely gave him important constitutional cases to write for the Court; the Chief feared that Scalia's extreme views would repel Sandra Day O'Connor, the Court's swing vote, who had a toxic relationship with him during their early days as colleagues. (Scalia's clashes with O'Connor were far more significant than his much chronicled friendship with Ruth Bader Ginsburg.) It was not until 2008, after John G. Roberts, Jr., had succeeded Rehnquist, that Scalia finally got a blockbuster: *District of Columbia v. Heller*, about the Second Amendment. Scalia spent thousands of words plumbing the psyches of the Framers, to conclude (wrongly, as John Paul Stevens pointed out in his dissent) that they had meant that individuals, not just members of "well-regulated" state militias, had the right to own handguns. Even Scalia's ideological allies recognized the folly of trying to divine the "intent" of the authors of the Constitution concerning questions that those bewigged worthies could never have anticipated. During the oral argument of a challenge to a California law that required, among other things, warning labels on violent video games, Justice Samuel Alito interrupted Scalia's harangue of a lawyer by quipping, "I think what Justice Scalia wants to know is what James Madison thought about video games. Did he enjoy them?"

Scalia described himself as an advocate of judicial restraint, who believed that the courts should defer to the democratically elected branches of government. In reality, he lunged at opportunities to overrule the work of Presidents and of legislators, especially Democrats. Scalia helped gut the Voting Rights Act, overturn McCain-Feingold and other campaign-finance rules, and, in his last official act, block President Obama's climate-change regulations. Scalia's reputation, like the Supreme Court's, is also stained by his role in the majority in *Bush v. Gore*. His oft-repeated advice to critics of the decision was "Get over it."

Not long ago, Scalia told an interviewer that he had cancelled his subscription to the *Washington Post* and received his news from the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Times* (owned by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church), and conservative talk radio. In this, as in his jurisprudence, he showed that he lived within the sealed bubble of contemporary conservative thought. That bubble also helps explain the Republican response to the new vacancy on the Court. Within hours of Scalia's death, Mitch McConnell, the Senate Majority Leader, announced that the Senate will refuse even to allow a vote on Obama's nominee, regardless of who he or she turns out to be. Though other Republican senators have indicated that they might be a little more flexible, at least on hearing out a nominee, the chances of a confirmation before the end of Obama's term appear to be close to nil.

This Republican intransigence is a sign of panic, not of power. The Court now consists of four liberals (Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan) and three hard-core conservatives (Roberts, Clarence Thomas, and Alito), plus Anthony Kennedy, who usually but not always sides with the conservatives. With Scalia's death, there is a realistic possibility of a liberal majority for the first time in two generations, since the last days of the Warren Court. A Democratic victory in November will all but assure this transformation. Republicans are heading to the barricades; Democrats were apparently too blindsided to recognize good news when they got it.

Like Nick Carraway, Scalia “wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever.” The world didn’t cooperate. Scalia won a great deal more than he lost, and he and his allies succeeded in transforming American politics into a cash bazaar, with seats all but put up for bidding. But even though Scalia led a conservative majority on the Court for virtually his entire tenure, he never achieved his fondest hopes—thanks first to O’Connor and then to Kennedy. *Roe v. Wade* endures. Affirmative action survives. Obamacare lives. Gay rights are ascendant; the death penalty is not. (These positions are contingent, of course, and cases this year may weaken the Court’s resolve.) For all that Presidents shape the Court, the Justices rarely stray too far from public opinion. And, on the social issues where the Court has the final word, the real problem for Scalia’s heirs is that they are out of step with the rest of the nation. The public wants diversity, not intolerance; more marriages and fewer executions; less money in politics, not more. Justice Scalia’s views—passionately felt and pungently expressed though they were—now seem like so many boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

The GOP Elites Have Themselves to Blame
Bill Moyers and Michael Winship, *The Progressive Populist*, March 17, 2016

Trump’s the symptom, not the disease. The Republican establishment has been infecting the body politic for years. From their “Dark Money” bagman Karl Rove to their philosophical guru David Brooks, the GOP elites are in a tizzy over saving the Republican Party from Donald Trump and the other intruders, extremists and crackpots who have fallen in behind Trump as if he were the Pied Piper of Hamelin. But who will save the party from the elites?

Look around at just some of the other sheer lunacy their party perpetrates when it’s not trying to shut government down, redistribute wealth upward, and prevent the president of the United States (who, the last time we looked, has the constitutional right and mandate) from filling a vacancy on the Supreme Court.

The Republicans in southern California just got a 7-6 majority on the region’s air quality board and have set out to reverse all of its safeguards, “reaffirming new smog rules backed by oil refineries and other major polluters,” according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Mary Lou Bruner, a Republican crank in Texas who claimed that a young Barack Obama had worked as a black male prostitute, is on track to become a key vote on the state’s board of education, the group that, as Matt Levin at the *Houston Chronicle* writes, is, “already drawing intense criticism for textbooks that, among other issues, downplayed slavery and racial segregation.” That’s important because the school board is such a major buyer of books its decisions affect editorial content in texts all over the country. So remember that Bruner is an eccentric whose Facebook declarations include “School shootings started after the schools started teaching evolution” and “The dinosaurs on the ark may have been babies and not able to reproduce. It might make sense to take the small dinosaurs onto the ark instead of the ones bigger than a bus.” Huh? Yet Republican elites seem quite satisfied to have a Mary Lou Bruner as the arbiter of what their children read in schools.

And while we’re talking about education, travel over to Texas neighbor Louisiana and look at the legacy that former Republican governor and presidential candidate Bobby Jindal has left behind for his Democratic successor, John Bel Edwards. At *The Washington Post*, Chico Harlan reported, “Louisiana stands at the brink of economic disaster. Without sharp and painful tax increases in the coming weeks, the government will cease to offer many of its vital services, including education opportunities... A few universities will shut down and declare bankruptcy. Graduations will be canceled. Students will lose scholarships... Since the 2007-08 school year, Louisiana has cut funding for higher education by 44 percent, the sharpest pullback in the nation.” Part of this can be attributed to the precipitous drop in oil and gas prices and loss of fossil fuel industry revenue crucial to the state’s economy. But the real problem, according to the *Associated Press*, is that “Jindal, burnishing his fiscal conservative credentials for his failed presidential campaign, refused to hike taxes or approve any action that even resembled a tax hike, including trimming expensive business tax credits, even amid an economic downturn... Legislators are hearing that cuts described by the Jindal administration as ‘efficiencies’ actually went much deeper, striking at services. They’ve learned about borrowing practices that increased state debts and about threats to Louisiana’s cash flow because it spent down reserves.” The result? A calamitous budget crisis in the second most impoverished state in the country, a \$900 million shortfall that has to be fixed by June 30 and another amounting to around two billion that will need to be closed next year.



So that's how you govern when you have the power. Thanks, Republicans!

And while we're at it, ponder, too, the once-great state of Kansas, where, under the right-wing ideology bumbling leadership of Republican governor Sam Brownback, the clowns are running the circus. The state legislature there is moving toward passage of a bill that would allow the impeachment of Kansas Supreme Court justices for, among other newly-thought of high crimes and misdemeanors, "attempting to usurp the power" of said same legislature or the executive branch. The reason? As per Edward Eveld of The Kansas City Star, "A recent state Supreme Court decision, citing the Legislature's constitutional duty to properly finance public schools, has demanded that lawmakers fix a school funding formula by June 30 or risk the shutdown of public schools for the 2016-2017 school year."

The court also has overturned death sentences and is considering a case that would void anti-abortion rules. So in a classic, don't-raise-the-bridge-lower-the-river solution, the GOP legislators – who outnumber Democrats by three to one – have decided that the answer is to do away with the judges they don't like and to hell with checks and balances. In the words of Esquire's inimitable Charlie Pierce, "They recognize no limits to their power, no curbs to their desire. There are few frontiers in democratic government that they will not work to violate, or to twist to their own purposes. And they absolutely will not stop. Ni shagu nazad, as Stalin said to his army. Not one step backwards."

We could go on. Let's not forget what Governor Scott Walker has done to Wisconsin and Michigan Governor Richard Snyder to Flint. And what Republican poobah has dared call out Grover Norquist, whose monomaniacal crusade against government has thrown public education into crisis, turned streets and highways into bottomless potholes, and produced stratospheric deficits? (Bobby Jindal, by the way, was just one of the many who signed Norquist's no-tax pledge, a major reason why his state is barely holding on by its fingernails.)

Finally, this is the party whose elites deceived America into war after cutting taxes on the wealthy so they wouldn't have to pay for it. And so it goes. All of which leads us to the conclusion that what's wrong with the GOP ain't just about Donald Trump, apoplectic, mendacious malcreant though he is. Over decades, the Republicans have built castles of corruption and citadels of crony capitalism across the country and now the angry villagers are climbing over the ramparts. Not one step backwards? Too late.

So Little to Ask For: A Home
Nicholas Kristof, New York Times, April 7, 2016

One of the people I greatly admire is Khadijah Williams, a young woman who was homeless for much of her childhood. Khadijah bounced from home to home, shelter to shelter, from the time she was 6. "I can't count how many times I've been forced to move," she recalls. "Though school was my salvation, my test scores suffered as a result of missing so much school and having no place to study," she adds. "I stopped trying to make friends because I was so tired of crying about losing friends." Ultimately, Khadijah found a home — because she won a scholarship to Harvard, enabling her to move into a dormitory. Now 25, she's working for the city government in Washington, D.C., and one of her tasks is helping homeless kids.

But Khadijah's trajectory is exceptional. The United States has 64,000 families who are homeless, including 123,000 children, and many will be permanently harmed by the experience. We have growing evidence that traumas like homelessness can flood a child's brain with a stress hormone, cortisol, and impair brain development.

In a year in which there finally is serious talk about inequality, the ultimate poverty is lack of shelter. And the good news is that in the last decade or so, we've figured out what works to address it; the problem is not inevitable. The Housing First approach, which gets people quickly into permanent housing and then offers support services to keep them there, seems particularly cost-effective. Family homelessness is down almost one-fifth since 2010, and veteran homelessness is down much more — two states say they have functionally ended homelessness of veterans.

Another reason for optimism: With almost no fanfare, President Obama's budget proposal includes \$11 billion over 10 years, which he says would end family and youth homelessness. This is a step to end a level of homelessness that just isn't tolerated in other developed countries.

So if we can have a robust national debate about the way Donald Trump's campaign manager grabbed a reporter's arm, let's also muster a debate about whether candidates will help end family homelessness in America. This goes to the heart of American poverty — and values.

You think addressing family homelessness sounds worthy but unaffordable? To put this Obama budget request in perspective, the average annual sum is only about 1 percent of what we were spending in Afghanistan at the peak.

I've been thinking about housing after reading a superb new book, "Evicted," by Matthew Desmond, a sociologist at Harvard. Desmond lived as a researcher in impoverished sections of Milwaukee and tells of his neighbors there struggling to find places to live. "Every year in this country, people are evicted from their homes not by the tens of thousands or even the hundreds of thousands but by the millions," Desmond notes. About one-fourth of all moves by Milwaukee's poorest renters were involuntary, and such moves disrupt children's education, make it harder to hold onto jobs and damage the fabric of entire neighborhoods. "Without stable shelter, everything else falls apart," Desmond says.

The system is also dysfunctional. A renter who calls 911 too many times will be evicted, which puts battered women in an impossible situation: They can summon help when they are beaten or strangled, but that may land them out on the street.

Liberals who write about poverty sometimes ignore self-destructive behaviors, while conservatives sometimes see nothing else. To his credit, Desmond acknowledges that people on the edge periodically abuse drugs or squander money — he writes about one woman who devoted her entire monthly allocation of food stamps to a grand lobster dinner. But he also emphasizes that it's not so much irresponsibility that causes poverty as the other way around. And Desmond notes the generosity among the neediest: The woman who bought the lobster used her food stamps in a different month to buy food for a neighbor who was even more desperate.

The United States does allocate immense resources to housing. But they go mostly to benefits for homeowners, like the mortgage interest tax deduction. These benefits aren't particularly effective: Homeownership rates are lower in the U.S. than in Canada, which doesn't have the deduction.

In comparison to the mortgage deduction, Obama's request to end family and youth homelessness would cost a pittance. "Compared to the cost of so many things out there, and to the cost of inaction, this is a great deal," Julián Castro, the secretary of housing and urban development, told me.

My friend Khadijah managed to overcome her lack of shelter as a child, but most of the 123,000 kids who are homeless won't be so lucky.

"Housing was once the forefront of the progressive agenda," Desmond told me, but then it fell off. Today the problem isn't a lack of solutions, but a lack of political will and a failure to fund programs that work. So let's ask the candidates: Will you back the president's budget request and try to end family homelessness?

Cruz Hopes to Tap Into Immense Popularity of Carly Fiorina
Andy Borowitz, The New Yorker, April 27, 2016



INDIANAPOLIS (The Borowitz Report)—In choosing the former Hewlett-Packard C.E.O. Carly Fiorina as his running mate, Senator Ted Cruz hopes to tap into the immense popularity of one of the most beloved public figures in America.

Minutes after the news of Cruz's selection leaked, political insiders called the choice of the wildly adored Fiorina a game-changer for the Cruz campaign.

"It's no secret that Ted Cruz has some trouble with likeability," the Republican strategist Harland Dorrinson said. "What better way to fix that than by choosing Carly Fiorina, a person everyone is absolutely crazy about?" Fiorina's reputation for winning the hearts of everyone she comes in contact with dates back to her days as the incredibly well-liked C.E.O. of Hewlett-Packard and, before that, Lucent Technologies.

"At Lucent, she could light up any room with her smile,"

former Lucent employee Tracy Klugian said. "If you had to say what people loved about working at Lucent Technologies, it all came down to two words: Carly Fiorina."

"Carly was more than our boss: she was our hero," Kent Bantwell, a former Hewlett-Packard employee, said. "There wasn't a person in the company who wasn't touched in some way by her kindness and humanity."

Dorrinson, the Republican strategist, said Cruz's campaign will see a huge boost from what is widely known in political circles as "the Fiorina magic."

"Picking Fiorina was a masterstroke," he said. "Now all Ted has to do is sit back and watch Carly do what she does best: make people fall in love with her."

How a \$15 Minimum Wage Went From 'Extreme' to Enacted
Katrina vanden Heuvel, The Washington Post, April 5, 2016

What once was considered "pie in the sky" is slowly becoming law. In New York, state legislators just agreed to raise the state minimum wage to \$15 an hour, with the full effect beginning in New York City by December 2018. California just passed a compromise raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2022. New Jersey and the District are planning to move similar laws. After New York and California, nearly 1 in 5 (18 percent) in the U.S. workforce will be on the path to \$15 an hour.

How did this reform go from being scorned as "extreme" to being enacted? Consensus politicians don't champion it. Pundits and chattering heads tend to ignore it. Many liberal economists deride it as too radical. The idea moved only because workers and allies organized and demanded the change.

Three years ago, fast-food workers walked off the job in what began the "fight for \$15 and a union." With the federal government as the largest low-wage employer, federal contract workers demonstrated repeatedly outside the Pentagon, Congress and the White House, demanding executive action under the banner of a "Good Jobs Nation."

Progressive politicians added their voices. In Seattle, Kshama Sawant, an engineer and economist running under the banner of Socialist Alternative party, won a seat on the city council in 2013. She made a \$15 minimum wage a centerpiece of her campaign and pushed it when in office. The Service Employees International Union, one of America's largest unions, and political leaders such as Seattle Mayor Ed Murray helped build the coalition needed to get it done. Now wages in Seattle are headed to \$15. And in SeaTac, the airport district that passed a \$15 minimum wage in a referendum, the wage is in effect now. In New York, insurgent mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio made raising the minimum wage central to his campaign.

At the national level, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Congressional Progressive Caucus co-chairs Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) and Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) joined with demonstrating contract workers. The CPC lobbied President Obama to use his executive power to raise wages for federal contract workers. The president responded with three historic executive orders, lifting the minimum wage for contract workers to \$10.10, cracking down on wage theft and other workplace violations, and extending paid leave to contract employees.

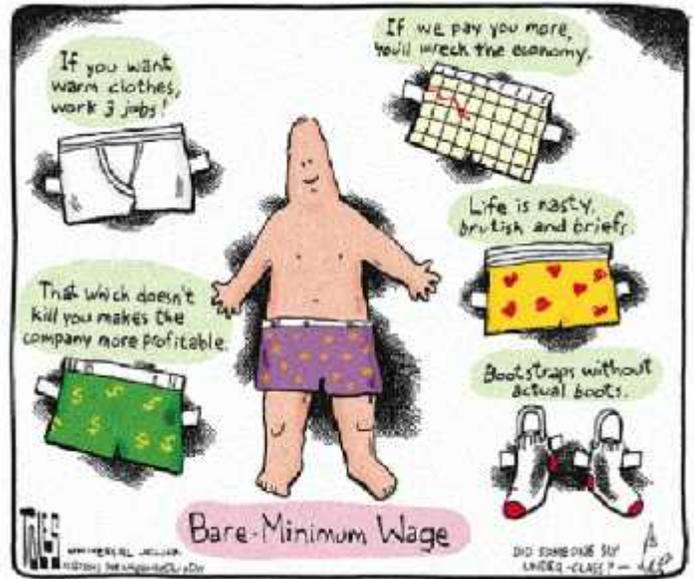
Obstacles remain. Today, 42 percent of American workers earn less than \$15 an hour. And the right to a union has been trampled by relentless and at times lawless corporate resistance. The Republican leadership in Congress refuses even to allow a vote on raising the national minimum wage that, at \$7.25 an hour, means full-time workers can't even raise their families out of poverty. But now Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project, says that "the Fight for \$15 launched by underpaid workers has changed the nation's economic trajectory, beginning to reverse decades of wage inequality."

Contrary to the business lobby, an analysis by economists at the University of California at Berkeley shows that New York's increases will not lead to job losses. The higher wages will generate billions in new consumer spending; the increased sales will offset the costs to businesses. In Seattle, the unemployment rate reached an eight-year low after the initial increases in the minimum wage last year.

This movement continues to build. The Fight for \$15 and Good Jobs Nation initiatives will ratchet up their walkouts and demonstrations this month. On Monday, an interfaith coalition of religious leaders issued a call for "moral action on the economy." They will press presidential candidates to pledge to "issue an executive order to make sure taxpayer dollars reward 'model employers' that pay a living wage of at least \$15 an hour, provide decent benefits and allow workers to organize without retaliation." As Jim Winkler, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, summarized: "This election is fundamentally about whether the next president is willing to take transformative executive action to close the gap between the wealthy and workers."

Sanders has made \$15 and a union a centerpiece of his campaign. He has urged Obama to take executive action and surely will sign the pledge. Hillary Clinton supports raising the minimum wage to \$12.50, allowing cities to go higher. Her position on the pledge is unknown. The Republican candidates — Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), Donald Trump and Ohio Gov. John Kasich — oppose raising the minimum wage and would likely repeal Obama's executive orders on low-wage contract workers if elected.

With inequality reaching record extremes, childhood poverty the worst in the industrial world and more Americans struggling simply to stay afloat, this country is desperately in need of bold reform. Yet bold ideas are repeatedly mocked as unrealistic and blocked by entrenched interests and conservative politicians. What the activists and low-wage workers have shown with their fight for \$15 is that the changes we need will come if people organize and force them. Many commentators deride Sanders's call for a political revolution, but that may be the most realistic idea of them all.



Why Cats Aren't Republicans



Living with a cat for the first time, you quickly pick up on its behavioral quirks, many of which are common among other cats. What you soon find out is that cats aren't Republican. Here are 12 reasons why not:

- 1) Cats are curious about what you do in your bedroom, but they don't try to legislate away your freedom to do it.
- 2) Cats may take away your cushion, but they'll give it back to you with a gentle push.
- 3) Cats give you attention and sympathy when you're sick.
- 4) Females are treated with importance in the cat world.
- 5) Cats make use of solar power, often all day long.
- 6) Cats lick their own problems and take care of other cats too.
- 7) Cats don't blame black and brown cats for their troubles.
- 8) Cats know how to ration their resources.
- 9) Fat cats are not at the top of the cat hierarchy, are not cat role models, and have more trouble surviving and thriving, not less.
- 10) While Republicans blindly follow authority, it is said that getting Democrats to act in unison is like herding cats.
- 11) Cats don't foul their own nest.
- 12) Cats are popular and well-liked on the Internet and elsewhere.

If you would like to join our club, please call Janet Brown at 530-674-9227 or attend our May 19 meeting. We meet from 7PM – 8PM at Yuba City High School, Room 322, 850 B Street, Yuba City.

Obama and His Mama - Happy Mother's Day!



SEE WHAT OUR CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATORS THINK ABOUT CURRENT ISSUES
Congressman John Garamendi, California 3rd Congressional District: www.garamendi.house.gov
Senator Barbara Boxer: www.boxer.senate.gov
Senator Dianne Feinstein: www.feinstein.senate.gov

In Memory of Lynne Koester
January 1, 1947 – December 25, 2015

Lynne Koester was born January 1, 1947, and died in the early hours of Christmas morning at the age of 68. She was a mother and grandmother, a teacher, a talented political organizer, and above all an extraordinary friend. She found her voice in local politics as a leader of the 2008 Obama movement, and continued to serve as an officer and member of the Sutter County Democratic Central Committee and the Feather River Democratic Club. At the time of her death, she was our long-time club chair and the person who – in her English teacher identity - reviewed every word of every issue of this newsletter, correcting any of the editor's typos, fixing punctuation errors tolerated by the original news source, and changing all the quotation marks to straight (slanted were particularly offensive to her). This is the first issue since her death; it and subsequent publications will be the worse without her contribution.

