



THE DEMOCRAT

Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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Baird decision opens candidate scramble

U.S. Rep. Brian Baird publicly announced on Dec. 9 that he would no longer seek to represent the Washington's 3rd Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

By Dec. 11, more than a dozen Democrats and Republicans in Southwest Washington — many of them serving or former legislators — were openly considering the position.

At least five Democrats were serious about the race as the year ended: 49th Legislative District state Sen. Craig Pridemore, 17th Legislative District state Rep. Deb Wallace, former state Rep. Dennis Heck (who held the Wallace seat from 1977 to 1985), Cheryl Crist and Maria Rodriguez-Salazar.

The rules of the Washington State Democratic Central Committee call for a selection by 3rd Congressional District state committeemen and committeewomen at the Jan. 30 state party meeting in Seattle. Since the congressional district includes all or parts of seven counties and eight legislative districts, up to 40 party officials could be involved in the selection. Several of the positions are presently vacant, but replacements can be appointed by the original central committees before the state meeting.

Some in the party are urging delay of the process until the June meetings of the state party structure. Others insist that an early choice will better prepare the eventual party choice for battle against the other side.

Republicans have similar rules for picking the man or woman they'll back through the November general election. The state Democratic organization has the authority to overrule 3rd District committee members. Activists in both parties are agitating for changes in the rules to include more people in the winnowing process. None of the possible devices has come close to attracting consensus.

Whatever the parties do, the first public vote on the field probably will be at the August 17 primary election. By statute, the top two vote-getters in that primary will advance to November even though the final field could be two people from one party. Before Baird's announcement, one Democrat and three Republicans had already filed as candidates with the Federal Elections Commission. The Democrat is Crist of Olympia, who challenged Baird in 2008 but got fewer than 10,000 votes to his 36,000.

Republicans are looking at the Baird opening as an excellent opportunity to help reverse the Democratic stronghold in the U.S. House.

Baird steadily built his base over his 12 years in service to a 63 percent vote in his 2008 election, but the 3rd has long been seen as a swing district vulnerable to Republican blandishments — although Linda Smith was the only actual Republican interruption in a seven-decade line going back to Julia Butler Hansen. (During the 1980s, Clark County was part of the 4th Congressional District.)

Jeremy Zegas nominated to fill vice-chair vacancy

James Martin having resigned his position as vice chair of the Clark County Democratic Central Committee, the body will select a successor at its regular January meeting. (Martin also resigned from other party posts.)

A nominating committee appointed by the executive board of the CCDCC has nominated Jeremy Zegas for the position.

Although a fairly recent resident of Clark County, the Virginia native has been deeply involved in Democratic activities since he moved here at the end of 2007. Shortly after his arrival he was hired by Pam Brokaw as field director for her campaign to become a member of the Board of Clark County Commissioners. Since that effort fell a couple of hundred votes short, Zegas

has continued active in the party. He already serves as a member of the CCDCC executive board.

The nominating committee comprising Dan Ogden, Gail Pollock and Mike Heywood was unanimous in recommending Zegas to the CCDCC. However, nominations from the floor will be in order at the Jan. 11 meeting of the organization.

Meetings scheduled for January 2010 by the Clark County Democratic Central Committee and other Democratic organizations. (Check for updates at the county party's website: www.bluedonkeys.com).

Monday, January 4	Executive board of Clark County Democratic Central Committee, 7 p.m. meeting at the Carpenters' Hall, 610 E. McLoughlin Boulevard.
Saturday, January 9	49th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the sixth-floor training room at the Clark County Citizen Service Building, 1300 Franklin St.
Saturday, January 9	49th District Democratic Legislators begin annual pre-session town hall meeting at 10 a.m. in the county commissioners' hearing room, sixth floor at 1300 Franklin St.
Monday, January 11	Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Longshore Hall on Ingalls Street a block west of the Clark County Jail.
Wednesday, January 13	18 District Democrats meet at 6 p.m. to celebrate a new year at Billygans Restaurant, 13200 NE Highway 99/
Tuesday, January 19	Clark County section of 15th Legislative District Democrats meets at 6:30 p.m. Location to be announced.
Monday, January 25	17th District Democrats meet at 7 p.m. in the Forum Room at the Waterford on Village Loop Drive.

Candidates abound

By Dena Horton, Clark County Democratic Chair



The sudden announcement by Congressman Brian Baird that he will not seek re-election has spurred several great Democratic candidates to throw their hats in the ring to succeed him. Other Democratic candidates also are considering a run for the seat.

Now, the open seats of Reps. Deb Wallace and Jaime Herrera have also drawn some interest from multiple Democratic candidates.

Given the top-two primary process and the state party's lawsuit challenging the procedure, I received a memo from Dwight Pelz and a phone call from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) about the nomination process for Baird's seat. Both Pelz and the DCCC suggested holding off on a formal nominating process for the 3rd Congressional District seat at the state party meeting in January in Seattle. The state party may consider a nomination process at the Democratic State Convention in June or at the state party meeting in September.

Regardless of timing, the state party and the DCCC are interested in seeing which Democratic candidate can demonstrate strength and ability to raise funds, garner support, and assist with the Coordinated Campaign in order to mount a viable campaign for Congress. Holding off on the nomination process for now will allow all of our candidates time to get their campaign houses in order.

I have already spoken with both Rep. Wallace and State Sen. Craig Pridmore. They have assured me their campaigns will be about their individual qualifications, their stances on issues, and about continuing to move the country forward.

The rumor mill has been active and I would like to clear some air. At this time, as Chair of the CCDCC, I am not endorsing any candidate for the 3rd Congressional District seat. When the time comes for all of us Democrats to unite behind one candidate, then I will make an endorsement decision. In meantime, we are fortunate to have so many strong, qualified candidates to consider.

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Moeller calls for state revenue rationality

By Democratic Rep. Jim Moeller
49th Legislative District

Count a big one for progressives, the liberals with the capital L, the folks who care about the “service” part of public service, who care if public health is funded, if kids get educated, if criminals get locked up or if grandma ages at home.

I admit I was cynical. “Initiative 1033 will pass *easily*,” I said. “The people will vote their pocketbooks.” Although it passed in Clark County at 55 percent, it failed resoundingly statewide on both sides of the Cascades. Well, slap me and call me silly!

Year after year, grinding voter tax limiting initiatives promoted by the fringe right tied the hands of elected representatives trying to balance demand for service with revenues. All the while our Republican neighbors insisted, “We don’t have a funding problem; we have a spending problem.” What baloney!

Our state government has a funding problem and the people know that. They responded on election day showing Tim Eyman the door on I-1033 along with the rest of the right-wing loonies who still think gay and lesbian people are evil and only want to destroy their marriage and indoctrinate their children. (By the way, although rejected by 55 percent in Clark County as a whole, R-71 was approved by 53 percent in the Fighting 49th.)

Bashing government and its efforts to make a difference in people’s lives by letting the elderly age at home or integrating developmentally disabled kids into mainstream classrooms or expanding basic health care to the working poor and accusing it of “waste, fraud and abuse” had become nearly a sacred creed of Republicans of all stripe.

Certainly, the discussion that will take place with my Democratic colleagues this coming session will be very different than if I-1033 had passed. As we look towards trimming another \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion off an already severely reduced budget the only place to really look for those kind of reductions are health and human services — this means our aged, our children and our disabled.

This means the Basic Health Plan could be gone. This means Public Health severely reduced and community services for our disabled and aged could be gone. All the things we think of as our social safety net will be on the chopping block at the very time when citizens will be looking to their government to help (because they’re the only ones who can) the state budget will be slashed

again. That will result in not just a reduction of service this time, but elimination of whole programs.

That means the T word. Taxes. Of course the cry comes up from R and D alike: “How can you even think of raising taxes at a time like this?!!” Exactly the same lament I heard when the money was rolling in over the previous six years. There is no good time to raise taxes. Also, not everyone is out of work, and I’m not suggesting we raise taxes on the middle class or business.

I believe there is a better way than what we are doing now in funding state government.

I believe we are too dependent on sales tax as a primary revenue source. Besides being regressive (the poor and middle classes pay 17 percent of their income to sales tax while the wealthy pay 3 percent) so that those who can least afford it pay the most, Moreover, the sales tax is too dependent upon economic swings.

I believe both the middle class and business already pay their fair share.

The wealthy have been under-taxed in this state for decades. With no income tax the only tax on wealth is property tax and the sales taxes is just a cost of doing business. This is supported by countless studies and some of the richest men in the world, including Bill Gates Sr. Additionally, Washington is still a great place to do business according to Forbes Magazine, which rates Washington as second in the country as a place that’s good for business.

Our better Democratic idea is that government has a legitimate place in the social fabric of our communities to protect the vulnerable and to “promote the general welfare” to be successful. The budget is a problem to be solved, and new revenue (taxes) should be part of the discussion because people need help in this time of crisis .

We will govern. And we will govern with our principles. There are those that say we will lose the majority if we raise taxes. I believe that true leadership never goes out of style. Our principles — humility, honesty and compassion — got us the majority to begin with.

What will new tax proposals look like? I don’t know. What I do know and expect is a full and open discussion about all those options beginning now.

The defeat of I-1033 and the approval of R-71 show that the citizens of this state get it. I believe that we are all in this together, and together is the only way we will get out of it.

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Monica Stonier seeking seat as 17th LD rep

This is the fifty-eighth in a series of introductions to some local Democrats. Send suggestions for subjects of future columns to mikewrit@hotmail.com.

Monica Stonier, the first Democrat to fire up a campaign to succeed Deb Wallace as 17th District representative in the state House of Representatives, first rose to party prominence as an activist for Barack Obama more than two years ago.

The mother of two, who teaches seventh graders and coaches track at Pacific Middle School in the Evergreen District, won election as a Clark County Obama delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 2007. Her participation at the Denver sessions as well as her intensive local campaign efforts for Obama caught the eye of U.S. Rep. Brian Baird, who invited her and her mother-in-law (a Cowlitz County Obama delegate) to the Obama inaugural festivities.

In Denver, she said, "When asked by various media outlets about what inspired me to get involved, I spoke of my defining belief that education is the posthole for all other problems and solutions we face, that teachers who work hard to help students become critical thinkers and aware citizens need our support. I became increasingly connected with local Democrats and found many local candidates to support as well."

Although some national convention delegates and Obama enthusiasts dropped out of the local process, Stonier remained very active. "We held a platform party at our house," Stonier said. "I organized a debate-watching party, sign-waving events and helped organize the Obama tent at the Farmer's Market. My husband Brandon made and sent buttons to organizers in key states, and I sold buttons here in Vancouver to fund his efforts."

Since the election, Stonier said, "I have served as the secretary for the 17th Legislative District and am currently trying to get information out about how important it is to pass the Evergreen Public Schools levy as well as other levies coming up. Many teachers, parents and community members have already started phone banks so we can let voters know that this maintenance levy will simply maintain the existing funding and that not passing this levy could mean cutting after-school sports programs and any other programs not funded by the state such as tutoring, arts and music."

She was born at Edwards Air Force Base, moved to Washington while in high school and got her bachelor's degree at Western Washington University and her master's at Washington State University Vancouver. She married Brandon in 2001, and they moved to Vancouver in 2002.