

El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter – July 2022

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1. El Cerrito Democratic Club – General Information (General Membership Meetings – 4th Tuesday of the Month)

The El Cerrito Democratic Club ("ECDC") provides a forum for area residents to discuss and take action on issues and campaigns of local, national, and international importance. Our general membership meetings are open to all and held on the <u>fourth Tuesday of each month</u> except October and December, when we typically have our annual dinner and holiday party.

In light of health and safety concerns around COVID-19, meetings are currently held via Zoom, with the agenda and Zoom link (<u>http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg</u>) published in each month's newsletter. The Zoom link is the same each month. If you would like, you may download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to save the monthly ECDC Membership Meetings and Zoom link in your electronic calendar: <u>ECDC Monthly General Membership Meetings Calendar</u>

We recognize that there is a strong desire to return to "normal," be in community and once again gather in person. While precaution discourages us from meeting in person, we encourage you to join the Zoom call a few minutes early to mix-and-mingle with fellow ECDC members.

The El Cerrito Democratic Club and its activities are supported by the annual dues of its members. Please see the "Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions" section towards the end of this newsletter for directions on how to join the ECDC or renew your membership.

Officer elections for the El Cerrito Democratic Club occur annually and were last held during the ECDC General Membership Meeting in January. Special thanks to our volunteer officers:

El Cerrito Democratic Club Officers (2022)

- President Greg Lyman
- Past President Janet Abelson
- Executive Vice President Champagne Brown
- VP Media Madeline Kronenberg

- VP Membership Neil Tsutsui
- VP Programs Carolyn Wysinger
- VP Publications William Ktsanes
- VP Records Jonee Grassi
- VP Treasurer Ed Crowley

The specific duties of officer positions are described in section "VII. Officers" of the Bylaws posted on the ECDC website at <u>https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/</u>.

If you're interested in participating more actively in the ECDC, please consider volunteering with the Club. Tasks and projects arise throughout the year; help is always greatly appreciated.

2. Agenda and Zoom Link for the Tuesday, July 26th ECDC General Membership Meeting

Zoom Link to Join the ECDC Meeting: http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg

(https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87570578180?pwd=MWNoT2hVY0VXeEhubHNoaE9xZGpKUT09)

Zoom Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Passcode: c5fQKR

Dial in by phone: +1 669 900 6833 <u>or</u> +1 408 638 0968 Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Phone Passcode: 468602

Please note that the Passcode is different if you dial in by phone rather than join the meeting through the Zoom link above.

<u>Agenda</u>

- 6:20 pm Assemble and Mingle
- 6:30 pm Call to Order
- 6:35 pm Approve Minutes from the June 2022 (Action Item)
- 6:39 pm Officer Reports: Treasurer, Membership, Programs, Publications, Media, Records
- 6:45 pm Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report
- 6:50 pm ECDC Diversity Committee Report
- 7:00 pm Program: Ballot Measure Endorsements (Action Item)
- 7:30 pm Bylaw Discussion Regarding Hybrid Meetings and Changing the Membership Term (No Action Proposed for July 26th)
- 7:50 pm Good of the Order
- 8:00 pm Adjourn
- Greg Lyman, ECDC President

3. Minutes from the June 28, 2022 General Membership Meeting

6:45 pm – ECDC General Membership Meeting assembled and mingled. Zoom technical problems delayed the start of the meeting.

6:55 pm – Champagne Brown called the Meeting to Order on behalf of President Greg Lyman who was resolving technical issues for attendees.

Present on Zoom: Attendees numbered sixteen at the start of the meeting. Recording of the meeting started.

Minutes

With no corrections suggested, Dwight Merrill moved and Janet Abelson seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2022 and May 24, 2022 ECDC General Membership Meetings; motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Officer Reports

<u>Treasurer</u>: Ed Crowley (VP Treasurer) reported approximately \$12,000 in the bank account. He will propose staggering membership dues to make it easier to determine if we are on target with the budget. Janet Abelson raised the concern that any proposed changes should not interfere with a member's right to vote. Carolyn Wysinger moved and William Ktsanes seconded a motion to approve Ed's report; motion passed unanimously.

<u>Membership</u>: Neil Tsutsui (VP Membership) reported a total of 144 members. Neil confirmed that at the end of August we will start renewing memberships for calendar year 2023.

<u>Programs</u>: Carolyn Wysinger (VP Programs) announced that we will have Tiffany Woods, Co-chair of the LGBTQ Caucus of CADEM, as the speaker tonight. Carolyn, who is running for election to the El Cerrito City Council this fall, recused herself from administering the endorsement program.

<u>Publications</u>: William Ktsanes (VP Publications) indicated he will provide a brief recap of the Poor People's Campaign March on Washington in the July newsletter.

Media: Madeline Kronenberg (VP Media) was absent.

<u>Records</u>: Jonee Grassi (ECDC Secretary and VP Records) was present; had nothing new to report.

DPCCC Report

Champagne Brown (ECDC Executive Vice President) reported that the DPCCC met on June 16th with the focus of the meeting being a recap of the June primary. She expressed thanks to Club members for supporting ECDC's endorsed candidates, making special note of the strong support for Contra Costa County District Attorney Diana Becton and her successful re-election campaign. Champagne reminded us that more volunteers are needed to help with the fall election. She also reported that DPCCC has reinstated their recognition of the Ohlone Tribe, an important step towards securing health care and financial support for the tribe. When asked about insights into the Contra Costa County Sheriff's race, Champagne indicated she believes

that Ben Therriault will continue to fight and that part of the problem leading to his defeat was that people joined in his campaign too late.

Diversity Committee

Y'Anad Burrell, Chair of the Diversity Committee, was not present. No report provided.

Program

Carolyn Wysinger (VP Programs) introduced Tiffany Woods: wife, mother, trans woman, and a chair of the LGBTQ Caucus for CADEM. California's is the largest Democratic Party LGBTQ Caucus in the country and very influential as it works within the CADEM structure to provide and secure rights for the LGBTQ community. Tiffany reported that there were over three hundred pieces of anti-LGBTQ legislation introduced nationwide even before Roe v. Wade was overturned. Proposed legislation covered issues ranged from banning gender-affirming care for minors to prohibitions on changing one's pronouns or hair, with much of the legislation specifically targeting the trans community. Tiffany indicated that matters are even more dire now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned, with the removal of rights to one's body even leading some to suicide. She encouraged everyone to tell their stories, work with neighbors and friends, and get active to change hearts and minds about these issues. Tiffany stressed that this is not the time to staying in silos but rather we must partner with each other across coalitions. With June recognized as "Pride Month" for the LGBTQ community. Tiffany provided an inspirational reflection that pride is about hope, resistance, and resilience. Many ECDC members expressed their appreciation to Tiffany for her life's work and tonight's presentation.

Good of the Order

Champagne Brown proposed that the ECDC Executive Board take up the issue expressed by Janet Abelson concerning the staggering of club membership dates and ensuring that members can vote on endorsements.

Fourth of July: Volunteers are still needed to staff the ECDC table. Greg Lyman, Carolyn Wysinger, Ed Crowley, Buddy Akacic, Gabe Quinto, and Mister Philip volunteered. Gabe announced that Assemblymember Buffy Wicks will have a table near the ECDC table and US Representative Mark DeSaulnier will be making an appearance.

8:05 pm – Carolyn Wysinger moved and Ed Crowley seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

- Jonee Grassi, VP Records

4. July Program – Ballot Measure Endorsements

The program for the El Cerrito Democratic Club's July General Membership Meeting will be a discussion of the seven statewide propositions on the November 8th ballot.

Proposition	Subject	Brief Description
Proposition 1	Abortion Access	Provides a state constitutional right to reproductive
		<i>freedom</i> , including the right to an abortion
Proposition 26	Sports Betting on	Legalizes sports betting at American Indian gaming casinos
	Tribal Lands	and licensed racetracks in California
Proposition 27	Online Sports Betting	Legalizes mobile sports betting and dedicates revenue to
		the California Solutions to Homelessness and Mental
		Health Support Account and to the Tribal Economic
		Development Account
Proposition 28	Art and Music K-12 Education Funding	Requires funding for K-12 art and music education equal
		to, at minimum, 1% of the total revenues that local
		education agencies receive under Proposition 98
Proposition 29	Dialysis Clinic	Enacts staffing requirements, reporting requirements,
	Requirements and	ownership disclosure, and closing requirements for
	Restrictions	chronic dialysis clinics
Proposition 30	Tax Supporting Zero-	Increases the tax on personal income above \$2 million by
	Emissions Vehicles and	1.75% and dedicates revenue to zero-emission vehicle
	Wildfire Prevention	projects and wildfire prevention programs
Proposition 31	Flavored Tobacco Ban	Upholds the current ban on flavored tobacco sales

The ECDC Executive Board recommends that the Club hold a "consent calendar" vote to <u>endorse</u> Proposition 1 ("Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment") and Proposition 31 ("Flavored Tobacco Products Ban Referendum") and to <u>oppose</u> Proposition 27 ("Legalize Sports Betting and Revenue for Homelessness Prevention Fund Initiative") and Proposition 29 ("Dialysis Clinic Requirements Initiative").

The Board did not reach unanimous consensus on Proposition 26 ("Legalize Sports Betting on American Indian Lands Initiative"), Proposition 28 ("Art and Music K-12 Education Funding Initiative") and Proposition 30 ("Tax on Income Above \$2 Million for Zero-Emissions Vehicles and Wildfire Prevention Initiative"). Several ECDC members volunteered to research the three propositions and present opposing "pro" and "con" arguments for discussion at the Tuesday, July 26th General Membership Meeting. Their summary statements for Propositions 26, 28 and 30 are in the Appendix at the end of this newsletter.

5. ECDC Wants You!

ECDC is a volunteer organization to promote good candidates. This fall is an election year, and those good candidates need your help. Here is a list of volunteer opportunities in 2022:

- <u>Be an Election Official and Assist with OpaVote</u>: A volunteer is needed to oversee the election and advise on matters regarding eligibility of members to vote, receive ballots, etc.
- Organize Endorsement Walks in September: A volunteer is needed to lead the walk effort, which involves working with the printer, getting walk lists or teaching walkers how to use the PDI On-The-Go program, counting and bundling literature, and coordinating walk volunteers.
- <u>Endorsement Walkers</u>: Volunteers are needed to walk and drop literature at households in El Cerrito.
- <u>Annual Dinner Coordinator</u>: A volunteer is needed to coordinate the venue, caterer and audio-visual equipment.
- <u>Set-up and Staff the Annual Dinner in October</u>: Multiple volunteers are needed to set up tables and chairs (5-6 pm), set up the buffet table and decorate (5-6 pm), and clean up after the event (8-8:45 pm). *Many hands make light work!*
- <u>Monthly General Membership Audio Visual Coordinator</u>: Two volunteers are needed who can make most of the monthly ECDC General Membership Meetings, deliver and set up the audio-visual system, and connect it to the Wi-Fi system (6:15-8:30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of most months).

If you are interested in any of these tasks, please contact me at ECDC.Pres@gmail.com.

On behalf of the Board, I thank everyone who plans to volunteer.

- Greg Lyman, ECDC President

6. The Return of El Cerrito's 4th of July Celebration – A Great Success!

After a two-year, COVID-necessitated hiatus, the City of El Cerrito's "WorldOne 4th of July Festival" returned to Cerrito Vista Park. By all accounts, it was a great success! Much appreciation to El Cerrito Recreation Department Director Christopher Jones, the Recreation Department staff, and the community volunteers of El Cerrito's Park and Recreation Commission for all their hard work and dedication. *Thanks so much*! We want to give special thanks to those that staffed the El Cerrito Democratic Club's booth. Greg Lyman, William Ktsanes, Champagne Brown, Ed Crowley, Carolyn Wysinger, Neil Tsutsui, Mister Philips, and Buddy Akacic all represented the Club in style. Janet Abelson and Madeline Kronenberg were in the neighboring League of Women Voters booth and provided camaraderie and support throughout the day.

Our ECDC booth was nestled nicely between the League of Women Voters of West Contra County (<u>https://www.lwv.org/local-leagues/lwv-west-contra-costa-county</u>) on one side and the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (<u>https://www.aclunc.org/home</u>) on the other. Among the many highlights of the day were opportunities to meet face-to-face with ECDC members and a wonderful visit from US Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (pictured below).

- Greg Lyman, ECDC President; and William Ktsanes, VP Publications



From left to right, William Ktsanes, Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, Nel Benningshof, Carolyn Wysinger, Champagne Brown, and Greg Lyman at the ECDC's "WorldOne 4th of July Festival" booth in Cerrito Vista Park; Neil Tsutsui, photographer

7. Thousands Join the Poor People's Campaign March on Washington

Special thanks to ECDC member Betty Brown for raising awareness and funds in support of last month's "Poor People's & Low-Wage Workers' Assembly and Moral March on Washington." Thousands of activists from across the country gathered in the nation's capital on June 18th to call attention to issues disproportionately affecting poor and low-income Americans. Among the causes and concerns highlighted were health care, housing, gun violence, abortion rights and labor conditions.

A more in-depth recap of the Poor People's Campaign and March on Washington is provided in the *Washington Post* story link below:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/06/18/poor-peoples-campaign-dc-march/

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

8. Protest the Privatization of Medicare and Celebrate Its Birthday!

More than 50 years ago, on July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare and Medicaid into law with the Social Security Act Amendments, famously declaring at the time "I'll spend the goddamn money. I may cut back some tanks. But not health."

Please join us from 11:00 am to 12 noon on Friday, July 29th for a rally at the San Francisco Federal Building (90 Seventh Street, at the corner of 7th and Mission in San Francisco; just three blocks and a 5-minute walk from the Civic Center BART Station) to celebrate the 57th anniversary of Medicare and protest its threatened privatization.

This event is one of many taking place across the country during the week of Medicare's July 30th anniversary. Join health justice activists, seniors, and people with disabilities in demanding the Biden administration protect Medicare from dangerous schemes like "Medicare Advantage," "Direct Contracting," and the newly announced "REACH" program.

For further details see the flyer attached in Appendix "B" or contact Jonee at joneemg@aol.com.

- Jonee Grassi, VP Records; and William Ktsanes, VP Publications



9. Future Events - Mark Your Calendar!

ECDC July General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, July 26th (4th Tuesday of the month); Ballot Measure Endorsement Forum; remote via Zoom link http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg

ECDC August General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, August 23rd (4th Tuesday of the month); primarily to finalize any bylaw changes; remote via Zoom link http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg

The <u>Tuesday</u>, <u>August 23rd</u> General Membership Meeting will be brief as the ECDC is also hosting a Run-Off and Local Elections Endorsement Forum on <u>Saturday</u>, <u>August 20th</u>.

ECDC September General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, September 27th (4th Tuesday of the month); remote via Zoom link <u>http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg</u>

ECDC Endorsement Forums

- Ballot Measures Tuesday, July 26th; remote via Zoom link <u>http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg</u>
- Run-Off and Local Elections Saturday, August 20th; remote via Zoom link http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg

Protest the Privatization of Medicare and Celebrate Its Birthday – 11:00 am, Friday, July 29th; San Francisco Federal Building, 90 Seventh Street, at the corner of 7th and Mission, San Francisco (just three blocks and a 5-minute walk from the Civic Center BART Station)

ECDC Annual Dinner – <u>Tentatively planned</u> for Saturday, October 1st, 8th <u>or</u> 15th; exact time and date to be determined and subject to the availability of potential guest speakers; no General Membership Meeting in October or December

Election Day – Tuesday, November 8th; General Election; Run-Off Races, Local Elections and Ballot Initiatives

10. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

We have lots of new members this month – WELCOME and thanks for joining ECDC! If you would like to renew, you can do so online at:

https://ecdclub.org/join/

Or by mailing a check to:

ECDC Membership PO Box 192 El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dues are \$5 for students, \$20 for single members, and \$30 for two adults at the same address. Please make checks payable to "El Cerrito Democratic Club" and provide an email address for all individual members. If you have questions, please email Neil Tsutsui at <u>membership.ecdc@gmail.com</u>.

Thank you!

- Neil Tsutsui, VP Membership

11. Call for Newsletter Submissions

The El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter is published monthly in advance of the General Membership meetings. ECDC members, friends and supporters are invited to submit articles and announcements regarding local issues and events of interest. Submissions should be emailed to me, William Ktsanes, at <u>wktsanes@gmail.com</u> for review and editing.

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

12. Link to the ECDC Website and Bylaws

Periodically the Club updates our Bylaws. The bylaws were changed in October 2018 to meet DPCCC requirements; revisions were proposed and adopted during the January 2021 ECDC meeting. The ECDC Bylaws are posted on the ECDC website at <u>https://ecdclub.org/</u>.

Appendix A

California's November 8th General Election Ballot Propositions 26, 28 and 30

Opposing "pro" and "con" arguments for Propositions 26 (Sports Betting on Tribal Lands), 28 (Art and Music K-12 Education Funding) and 30 (Tax in Support of Zero-Emissions Vehicles and Wildfire Prevention) are summarized below by ECDC Board Members Greg Lyman, Jonee Grassi and Ed Crowley. These three propositions will be discussed at the Tuesday, July 26th ECDC General Membership Meeting.

California Proposition 26: Legalize Sports Betting on American Indian Lands Initiative (2022)

- <u>Summary</u>: Allows federally recognized Native American tribes to operate roulette, dice games, and sports wagering on tribal lands, subject to compacts negotiated by the Governor and ratified by the Legislature. Beginning in 2022, allows on-site sports wagering at only privately operated horse-racing tracks in four specified counties for persons 21 years or older. Imposes 10% tax on sports-wagering profits at horse-racing tracks; directs portion of revenues to enforcement and problem-gambling programs. Prohibits marketing of sports wagering to persons under 21. Authorizes private lawsuits to enforce other gambling laws.
- <u>Argument in Favor of Proposition 26</u>: Californians should have the choice to participate in sports wagering at highly regulated, safe and experienced gaming locations. We are very proud to see tribes from across California come together for this effort, which represents an incremental but important step toward giving Californians the freedom to participate in this new activity in a responsible manner. A strong, well-regulated gaming industry is of utmost importance to California's tribal governments and the public. This initiative allows sports wagering in a responsible manner and provides for transparency and strict regulation. Increased state revenues, potentially reaching the tens of millions of dollars annually, from payments made by facilities offering sports wagering and new civil penalties authorized by this measure. Some portion of these revenues would reflect a shift from other existing state and local revenues. Increased state regulatory costs, potentially reaching the low tens of millions of dollars annually. Some or all of these costs would be offset by the increased revenue or reimbursements to the state. Increased state enforcement costs, not likely to exceed several million dollars annually, related to a new civil enforcement tool for enforcing certain gaming laws.

<u>Argument Against Proposition 26</u>: The measure would not only make tribal casinos and racetracks the home for sports betting in California, but also allow tribes to offer new games like roulette and craps. Tribes have long had exclusive rights to offer certain types of gambling, like slot machines, but state law prohibits roulette and dice games. The measure would also allow tribes to sue cardrooms, which they argue illegally offer games like blackjack. The California Contract Cities Association overwhelmingly voted to oppose because it will not benefit our residents or communities. Proposition 26 exploits the Private Attorneys General Act, opening the floodgates for frivolous lawsuits on card rooms that will harm city revenues that fund vital city services such as roads, schools, homelessness services and fire protection. This initiative does nothing to advance sports wagering, and instead expands the tribal casinos' tax-free monopoly on gaming and rewards those operators for prioritizing their own wealth over public health and safety. Proposition 26 increases the types of games that stimulate the neuro system and will increase the number of gamblers and disproportionately target low-income families and none of the revenue will aid with gambling addiction.

California Proposition 28: Art and Music K-12 Education Funding Initiative (2022)

<u>Summary</u>: Provides additional funding for arts and music education in all K-12 public schools (including charter schools) by annually allocating from state General Fund an amount equaling 1% of required state and local funding for public schools. Allocates greater proportion of the funds to schools serving more economically disadvantaged students. Schools with 500 or more students must spend at least 80% of funding to employ teachers and remainder on training, supplies, and education partnerships. Requires audits and limits administrative costs to 1% of funding.

Argument in Favor of Proposition 28: Californians should be Generous.

<u>Argument Against Proposition 28</u>: Budget decisions should be left to the legislated instead of being codified by voters in a difficult-to-change initiative process. This proposition provides no additional revenue, so additional funding for art and music will likely come out of STEM, reading, writing, physical education, school lunches, sex education, school buses or vocational education.

California Proposition 30: Tax on Income Above \$2 Million For Zero-Emissions Vehicles and Wildfire Prevention Initiative (2022)

- <u>Summary</u>: Proposition 30 would increase tax on personal income over \$2 million by 1.75% for individuals and married couples and would allocate new tax revenues as follows: (1) 45% for rebates and other incentives for zero-emission vehicle purchases and 35% for charging stations for zero-emission vehicles, with at least half of this funding directed to low-income households and communities; and (2) 20% for wildfire prevention and suppression programs, with priority given to hiring and training firefighters.
- <u>Argument in Favor of Proposition 30</u>: The two largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in California are transportation and wildfires. Despite recent efforts to reduce the harmful emissions, the current budget is insufficient to address these problems. This proposition would cut to the heart of the climate crisis in California according to California Environmental Voters group. It has the potential to raise \$3 billion to \$4.5 billion annually according to the Legislative Analyst's Office. The biggest threats of this climate crisis have been shouldered by the most underserved populations. We need to assist low and middle-income families to be able to purchase or lease an electric vehicle and provide a network of affordable charging stations for homes, apartments, and workplaces. Investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure will create thousands of good-paying green jobs for skilled workers.
- <u>Argument Against Proposition 30</u>: Prop 30 is just a costly and unfair tax hike that will have absolutely no benefit to combating climate change - but will do irreparable damage to the economy of our state because it will drive affluent and mobile Californians out of State. Previous climate change funding streams have gone to high-priced consultants, politically-connected insiders, and wasteful programs that have almost no impact on environmental outcomes. Revenue for the proposition aims to go toward climate change measures, but the definition of programs eligible for these new funds is quite broad as to allow the funds to be used in a wide-range of ways.

(Researched and presented by Greg Lyman, Jonee Grassi, and Ed Crowley)

Appendix B

Celebrate Medicare's 57th B-Day

Make It A Birthday, Not A Funeral!



STOP Privatization of Medicare Hands off our Medicare!

Sponsors: California Alliance for Retired Americans, Senior Disability Action, Physicians for a National Health Program-CA, The Movement to End Privatization of Medicare, SF Gray Panthers, & SF DSA