



El Cerrito Democratic Club

Newsletter – November 2021

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ECDC
PO Box 192
El Cerrito CA 94530

Newsletter Editor: William Ktsanes

1. Agenda for the Tuesday, November 23rd ECDC General Meeting

Link to Join the ECDC Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84303785299?pwd=bUFyY3VHVXFYTEZaR3YvSIN4dUpQQT09>

ZOOM Meeting ID: 843 0378 5299

Passcode: 111652

One tap mobile: +16699006833,,84303785299# or +14086380968,,84303785299#

Dial in by phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 843 0378 5299

Agenda

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:35 pm – Approve Minutes from the September Meeting (**Action Item**)

6:39 pm – Officer Reports – Treasurer, Membership, Events, Newsletter, Website, Secretary

6:45 pm – DPCCC Report

6:50 pm – ECDC Diversity Committee Presentation

7:00 pm – Program: Redistricting!

7:50 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn

The ECDC General Meeting is regularly scheduled from 6:30-8:00 pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month (with no meeting in December). While Covid-19 precautions prevent us from meeting in person, we encourage you join the Zoom call a few minutes early to mix-and-mingle with fellow ECDC members.

2. November General Meeting Preview – Redistricting Presentation from Latressa Wilson Alford, JD

For our November meeting we will have a presentation from Latressa Wilson Alford regarding the current statewide redistricting effort. Latressa will help us understand the redistricting process, the maps that have been released and what members of our community can do to make their voices heard in the redistricting process. Latressa has worked with the Black Census and Redistricting Hub to help communities understand the “Communities of Interest” model that the California Citizens Redistricting Commission is utilizing.

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission (CCRC) is a state agency created by the passage of California Proposition 11 in 2008, the "Voters First Act." It draws the boundary lines for California state legislative districts and Board of Equalization districts after each decennial census. Passage of Proposition 20 in 2010, the "Voters First Act for Congress," put the CCRC also in charge of re-drawing district lines for California's Congressional delegation.

The Commission is drawing the lines based on the Communities of Interest model, with a "community of interest" being a neighborhood, community, or group of people who have common policy concerns and would benefit from being maintained in a single district. It is intended as a way for a community to tell its own story about what neighbors share in common, and what makes it unique when compared to surrounding communities.

Why are communities of interest important?

Keeping communities of interest together is an important principle in redistricting as it can give voice to communities that have been traditionally left out of the political process, empowering communities to define themselves by telling their own stories and describing their concerns more directly to policymakers.

CCRC Commissioners invite input and want to hear why your city should or should not be drawn into proposed districts. For example, residents successfully convinced the Commissioners that "Congressional Map # 12" was flawed because it split Oakland and placed a portion of the city in a district with West Contra Costa County. Residents expressed similar concerns with "Congressional Map # 11" as it split East Oakland.

Arguments based on party politics or the desire for a community to remain represented by a particular elected official will not be convincing as the process is intended to be independent of politics. Democrats are the minority on the 14-person Commission, which is comprised of five Democrat, five Republican and four unaffiliated ("Other Party") members.

Latressa Wilson Alford, JD – Biography

Latressa Wilson Alford, JD is an attorney and seasoned veteran of government relations and community affairs. With over 30 years in public service, she is highly sought after for her experience in public and legal policy, her effective advocacy for engagement of underserved communities, and her ability to leverage public-private partnerships. As CEO of the firm L. Wilson Alford & Associates (LWA), she is widely recognized as a social entrepreneur because of her ability to successfully navigate and problem-solve within complex, challenging relationships.

Previously, Latressa served as Senior Aide to Congressman George Miller, was a 20-year member of the City of Richmond Revolving Loan Fund Board and was a founding member of Richmond Main Street.

Recently, Latressa was tapped by Congresswoman Barbara Lee as her Senior Campaign Advisor to manage Representative Lee's reelection campaign as well as state and national campaigns that Representative Lee supports. Latressa is a delegate for Assembly District 14, serves on the board of the Community Democratic Club and is Bylaws Chair for the CA Democratic Black Caucus. She is also on the board of the Martin Luther, Jr. Peace Center.

Latressa is a Lifetime Member of Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA); is BWOPA State Director of Education, Legislation and Policy; is a former member of the BWOPA Richmond Chapter; and is a founder of the Solano-Napa Chapter, where she currently serves as Vice President.

In 2016, Latressa founded LWA, a consulting firm experienced in providing political management and successfully delivering campaigns and education initiatives around diversity, inclusion and engagement. She has been actively involved in California's restricting process, with LWA leading BWOPA outreach efforts for the Black Census and Redistricting HUB.

Latressa was recognized as the 2021 Woman of the Year by Assemblyman Tim Grayson, listed in Who's Who in America (2021) and inducted into the Bay Area Blues Society Hall of Fame (2013). Latressa has a Jurist Doctorate and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism. She has three daughters: Nikole, Alyssa and Justice.

- Carolyn Wysinger

3. Additional Resources for Redistricting Information and Advocacy

If you're interested in learning more about or providing input into the restricting process, please consider attending the Public Hearing on Redistricting and presentation to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors at 9:00 am on Tuesday, November 23rd. The hearing will be held in-person at the County Board Chambers at 1025 Escobar Street in Martinez but also accessible via live-streaming.

Contra Costa County Board meetings are televised live on Comcast Cable 27, ATT/U-verse Channel 99, and WAVE Channel 32, and can be seen live online at www.contracosta.ca.gov. The public may also call in by dialing 888-251-2949 followed by the access code 1672589# or participate via zoom by following the links in the published agenda for the November 23rd meeting: http://64.166.146.245/agenda_publish.cfm?id=&mt=ALL&get_year=2021

Comments and questions are encouraged and may be submitted to the Clerk of the Board at clerkoftheboard@cob.cccounty.us.

While November 23rd is the last of five scheduled redistricting hearings, others may be added if deemed necessary. You can find more information about this meeting, as well as materials and videos from previous meetings, near the bottom of this web page:

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/8136/Timeline-and-Events>

Notice of and additional information about the November 23rd Public Hearing on Redistricting is available here in English, Spanish and Chinese:

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/73297/Contra-Costa-County-Redistricting-Public-Hearing-11-23-2021-Notice-PDF>

- William Ktsanes

4. September 28th ECDC Meeting Notes

6:20 pm – ECDC General Membership Meeting assembled and mingled

6:34 pm – President Greg Lyman called the meeting to Order

Minutes

August minutes: motion to approve

Motion: Janet Abelson. Second: Chris Peoples. Passed unanimously with one abstention.

Officer Reports

Membership: Please renew your membership!

Events: Our Annual Meeting is coming up on October 16th! Attorney General Rob Banta is our speaker. There will be appetizer boxes that may be ordered.

Newsletter: No report.

Website: No report.

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County Report

Champagne Brown noted that she will be completing two reports in October. We did a great job on the Recall!

ECDC Diversity Committee Report

Buddy Akacic presented a historical review of some social justice music at the last committee meeting. It was noted that the City of El Cerrito will note “Equity” as part of their operations.

Cheryl Sudduth discussed the book Color Theory: Race is a Powerful Illusion by Oakland community leaders Aeshah and Kokomon Clottey.

Program

Greg Lyman introduced the evening’s Program: The Poor People's Campaign.

Good of the Order – None

8:11 pm – Meeting adjourned

- Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch

5. Recap of ECDC’s October 16th Virtual Dinner with Special Guest California State Attorney General Rob Bonta – *Thank You, Everyone!*

The El Cerrito Democratic Club hosted via Zoom its 69th Annual “Dinner” on Saturday, October 16th with California State Attorney General Rob Bonta joining as our keynote speaker. Attorney General Rob Bonta shared his compelling life story and brought us up-to-date on the current work and priorities of his office. Although we were not able to meet in person for our dinner this year, many participants enjoyed delicious, elegantly-prepared charcuterie dinner boxes delivered to their home by local, Black-woman-owned Char•Kute•Rie caterers.

Thank you to everyone who attended. Very special thanks to Attorney General Rob Bonta for joining us; to Gabe Quinto for reaching out and inviting AG Bonta; to Carolyn Wysinger for connecting with Char•Kute•Rie and coordinating delivery of the meal boxes; and to Char•Kute•Rie for their delicious, home-delivered dinners.

We encourage you to support Char•Kute•Rie and other local businesses. (510) 221-8202; www.instagram.com/char.kute.rie/; www.facebook.com/CharKuteRie/

- William Ktsanes

6. Recap of the East Bay Peace Action October 17th Conversation about the Intersection of Racism and Militarism – *Recording Available*

The connection between racism and militarism is a subject seldom discussed in the Peace Community, according to Jim Anderson, President of Peace Action of New York State. Anderson was one of several peace activists from across the country that took part in a thought-provoking discussion about the intersection of racism and militarism that took place at the October 17th East Bay Peace Action Annual Gathering.

A recording of the talk and transcript are available now on the East Bay Peace Action website, eastbaypeaceaction.org. A Spanish translation is forthcoming.

Leading the conversation was Afro-Latina Afghanistan War veteran Brittany Ramos DeBarros who recently stepped down from her position as organizing director of “About Face: Veterans Against the War” to run for Congress in New York’s 11th District.

Militarism, she said, represents a logic that the only way to create peace is through violence. DeBarros explored multiple ways white and gender supremacy, and militarism support oppression and economic exploitation.

- Betty Brown (ECDC Member) and Paula Brown-Williams (East Bay Peace Action)

7. Future Events – *Mark Your Calendar!*

Contra Costa County Public Hearing on Redistricting – 9:00 am, Tuesday, November 23rd at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 1025 Escobar Street in Martinez. (See “3. Additional Resources for Redistricting Information and Advocacy” on pages 4-5 for more information.)

ECDC November General Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, November 23rd (4th Tuesday of the month); presentation from Latressa Wilson Alford, JD regarding redistricting; remote via Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87280246407>

ECDC December General Meeting – No meeting in December; *Happy Holidays to everyone!*

ECDC January General Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, January 25th (4th Tuesday of the month); ECDC annual officer elections; remote via Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87280246407>

ECDC February General Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, February 22nd (4th Tuesday of the month); remote via Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87280246407>

8. Interesting Exhibit about Berkeley Politics

With People's Park and its controversies once again in the news, many of you may be interested in an exhibit entitled "From the Streets to the Ballot Box: Berkeley Politics in the 1970s" on display at the Berkeley Historical Society, 1931 Center Street in downtown Berkeley. Featuring selections from the David Mundstock Collection, the exhibit opened earlier this month and will remain through April 9, 2022. The late David Mundstock was a voting rights activist, supporter of progressive causes and political historian who amassed a large archive of posters, papers and other materials detailing the evolution of local politics. One particularly interesting piece on display is a poster of a young Ilona ("Loni") Hancock running for Berkeley City Council in 1971.

A review of the exhibit is on the Berkeleyside news website:

<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2021/10/31/berkeley-historical-society-from-the-streets-to-the-ballot-box-berkeley-politics-in-the-1970s>

More information about this and other excellent exhibits (including one online entitled "African Americans in Berkeley") is on the Berkeley Historical Society website:

www.berkeleyhistoricalsociety.org

Thank you to ECDC member Chris Peebles for alerting us to this fascinating exhibit!

- William Ktsanes

9. Upcoming ECDC Officer Elections

Officer elections for the El Cerrito Democratic Club occur annually and are scheduled for the ECDC General Meeting on Tuesday, January 25th. *Member participation is highly encouraged!*

Current Officers (2021)

- President - Greg Lyman
- Past President - Janet Abelson
- Executive Vice President - Champagne Brown
- VP Membership - Neil Tsutsui
- VP Treasurer - Kathy Fleming
- VP Publications - William Ktsanes
- VP Records - Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch
- VP Programs - Carolyn Wysinger
- VP Media - Madeline Kronenberg

Kathy and Margaret have expressed their intent not to seek reelection to the Board in 2022. We greatly appreciate their work and thank them for their service. We will miss them both dearly!

- William Ktsanes

10. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

Please remember to renew your Club membership – and many thanks to all who have renewed already! Dues are still just \$5 for students, \$20 for single members, and \$30 for two adults at same address.

You can renew online at: <https://ecdclub.org/join/> or mail a check to

ECDC Membership
PO Box 192
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Please make checks payable to “El Cerrito Democratic Club” and provide an email address for all individual members.

Memberships follow the calendar year, so your renewal now is good through December 31, 2022. If you have questions, please email Neil Tsutsui, ECDC’s Vice President for Membership, at: membership.ecdc@gmail.com. Thank you!

- Neil Tsutsui

11. 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: <https://ecdclub.org/>