

Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 28
7:00 PM

Hermosa Beach Community Center
710 Pier Avenue, Room #4
Hermosa Beach

We will be discussing the Prop 13 Reform movement and its implications for homeowners vs. commercial properties.

Agenda:

- 1) Visitor introductions
- 2) Officer reports
- 3) Reports from local electeds
- 4) Updates on local campaigns, GOTV needs
- 5) October Program: Evolve CA & Prop 13 Reform
- 6) Reports from County Committee, the 66th AD and other related Democratic organizations
- 7) Old business
Manhattan Beach Hometown Fair held October 3-4
- 8) New business and announcements

Important reminders

BCD has changed our November meeting date from November 25 to November 18 in honor of Thanksgiving.
Also, there is no meeting in December.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reforming Prop 13

Few pieces of fiscal legislation have had the lasting effect, or remained as controversial almost 40 years later, as Prop 13. Proposition 13 (officially named the "People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation") "was an amendment of the Constitution of California enacted during 1978, by means of the initiative process. It was approved by California voters on June 6, 1978. A large contributor to Proposition 13 was the sentiment that older Californians should not be priced out of their homes through high taxes." [Wikipedia]

I have been touched personally by the issue of escalating property taxes, albeit in Georgia, rather than in California. In the 1940s my grandmother was granted a divorce settlement with which to buy a home for herself and her four children. She chose well, selecting a 7-acre rural property well outside Atlanta, but along a major rural route. Unfortunately, thirty



years later she was forced to sell her home and land due to the property tax burden. Because her property was by then considered valuable commercial real estate, rather than rural residential property, the property taxes reached \$100,000 per year, forcing her to sell her home to developers against her wishes.

No one in my family would debate that upon the sale of her property my grandmother should have been assessed its full current value and paid appropriate taxes on her capital gains. However, she was not given the luxury of deciding when she wished to sell, because her property taxes reflected the "highest and best value" of the property even before she

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BCD had our usual well-attended booth at the Manhattan Beach Hometown Fair October 3-4. Dency Nelson, Ray Waters, and Edna Murphy were instrumental in setup, takedown, and overall staffing, and other BCD members worked the various shifts. Top: Edna, Ray, and Dency.



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realized the value of such a gain. This approach to property valuation not only forces people from their homes, it also contributes to unbridled development. I'm sure this was pretty much the same dynamic that led to Prop 13, and I'll be honest -- I support limiting the valuation of residential property taxes for exactly these reasons.

Prop 13 may have gone too far, but it did address a real problem. I also support protecting small business owners from such predatory tax increases, for much the same reason. But there is no denying that Prop 13 has had a devastating impact on the California economy. It has reduced the overall share of taxes paid by corporations vs. residents, and has vastly increased the volatility of our tax base, deepening our recessions as a result. Furthermore, it has been taken advantage of by deep pocketed international businesses in order to skirt reassessments even when commercial properties do change hands.

So, what can be done to keep the positives of Prop 13 while mitigating the negatives? The Beach Cities Democrats co-sponsored a recent panel featuring Treasurer John Chiang and State Sen. Holly Mitchell to discuss just this question. Sen Mitchell described her recent legislation, SCA5, to put a measure on next year's ballot that would introduce annual reassessments of commercial properties. The Senator was very clear that all residential property would be exempt, and news sources say that agricultural property would be exempt as well. However, since the bill is a constitutional amendment requiring a 2/3 majority vote in the CA legislature, its future looks bleak. It follows on the heels of legislation last year to simply close the corporate transfer loophole, which failed despite the fact that the Howard Jarvis organization said it would not oppose it.

What can we as activists do if we want to support reform of Prop 13's treatment of commercial properties? Evolve Califor-

nia (www.evolve-ca.org) is gathering signatures and endorsements from clubs and elected officials who support Prop 13 reform of commercial properties, and I was delighted to see our own Sen. Ben Allen on their list! When you see Ben, be sure to let him know that you appreciate him taking that position and trying to recoup billions of dollars for our schools, firefighters, and other critical services in California.

I suggest that we also start asking all of our elected representatives where they stand on this issue, and letting them know where we stand. Finally, conducting information sessions to help reassure nervous homeowners that fair treatment of commercial properties will not affect their residential taxes -- and will in fact reduce the pressure to increase regressive taxes such as the sales tax -- is key as well. At the end of the day, if we want to restore the luster to our school system and provide the services that keep Californians safe and healthy, Prop 13 reform will have to be part of the solution.

Best,
Kathryn Campbell
President, Beach Cities Democrats



September Recap

Minutes Courtesy of Secretary Tom Cares

The meeting started with introductions of six new attendees.

Dency Nelson announced ongoing progress in efforts to petition Ted Lieu to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) with Iran, with 2500 signatures thus far collected. He also made announcements regarding the Waterfront Revitalization Project, the September 29 Hermosa City Council debate, and the debate at the Chamber of Commerce on October 8.

Edna Murphy gave the treasurer's report. As of July 31, 2015:

Federal Acct

Beginning Balance	\$1,811
Money in	\$125
Money out	\$50
Total Federal	\$1,891

State Acct

Beginning Balance	\$560
Money in	\$0
Money out	\$15
Total State	\$545

The minutes from the July membership meeting were unanimously accepted.

Elected Official Reports

Sam Liu, Field Representative for State Senator Ben Allen, spoke about the Senator's efforts to expand infrastructure funding. In response to a question from

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Top: Jeff DuClos and Justin Massey are both running for Hermosa Beach City Council. The club endorsed both candidates.

Left: Monique Ehsan spoke about her candidacy for the Hermosa Beach School Board. She also received the BCD endorsement.

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President Kathryn Campbell, he indicated the Senator supports a split roll application of Prop 13 property tax limitations.

Hermosa City Councilmember Hany Fangary spoke about environmental issues, indicating he thought it was likely the city would pass a ban on plastic bags and about initiatives to have more solar energy in Hermosa.

Hermosa School Board Member Margaret Bove-LaMonica spoke very briefly to ask that club members show support for schools.

Endorsements

Two speakers spoke on behalf of Rep. Janice Hahn, seeking the club's endorsement for County Supervisor. Tony Hale moved for the endorsement. It passed unanimously.

Hermosa Beach School Board candidate Monique Ehsan introduced herself to the club and asked for the club's endorsement. Ray Waters moved to endorse her. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeff Duclos, who previously served on the City Council, and Justin Massey, an environmental lawyer, both sought endorsements for Hermosa Beach City Council. They were both endorsed unanimously.

The club then discussed endorsing increasing the Hermosa Beach Transient Occupancy Tax from 10% to 12%. Julian Burger moved to endorse. Motion passed unanimously.

The club then proceeded to explore taking a position on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) with Iran. There were three speakers in favor of supporting the JCPA and one against. The club voted to support the JCPA, 31-1.

Announcements

Tony Hale spoke about new Democratic Party resolutions and the process of

becoming a DNC delegate.

Connie Sullivan gave updates on Al Muratsuchi's Assembly campaign and contrasted his \$70k total fundraising to Asm. Hadley's \$350k. Dency Nelson added that Hadley has been doing push polls.

Ray Waters spoke about the upcoming Fiesta Hermosa and the BCD booth. We will promote Democratic Candidates and include literature promoting the California Disclose Act.

Kathryn Campbell spoke about the Manhattan Hometown Fair, taking place October 3rd and 4th (mbfair.org). She also brought up that she may potentially seek to move the club to ask Rep. Lieu to support federal legislation requiring mandatory reporting of police shootings to the FBI.

Dency Nelson discussed the Redondo Beach Waterfront Revitalization Project

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

U.S. Senate

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Local # 213-894-5000
boxer.senate.gov

Dianne Feinstein
D.C. # 202-224-3841
Local # 310-914-7300
feinstein.senate.gov

House of Representatives

Ted Lieu (33rd C.D.)
D.C. # 202-225-4099
Local # 310-652-3095, 310-321-7664
lieu@house.gov

Janice Hahn (44th C.D.)
D.C. # 202-225-8220
Local # 310-831-1799
hahn.house.gov

State Senate

Ben Allen
310-318-6994
sd26.senate.ca.gov

With thanks to Julian Burger and the Progressive Democratic Club

Sustainable Food Forum

The Environmental Priorities Network (EPN), a local South Bay volunteer organization, is presenting a public forum on how we can help create "good" food systems to replace our current industrial food system that is harmful to people and planet. The "Creating Healthy, Just and Sustainable Food Systems" public forum will take place on Saturday, October 24, 2015 at the Pacific Unitarian Church on 5621 Montemalaga Drive in Rancho Palos Verdes. From 9 to 10 AM, you are invited to enjoy light refreshments and drinks as you visit tables with information from local groups involved in creating these food systems.

From 10 to 12 noon, speakers will discuss these two systems of food production, why we need to transition to better ones, and how we can be part of that transition. Jim Montgomery from LabelGMOs.org, DW Ferrell from Slow Money Southern California and Localism, Inc. and Rishi Kumar from The Growing Club will be speaking. From 12 noon to 1:30PM continue visiting tables, networking with others and enjoy a healthy, organic lunch for purchase from "Green Truck," a local, sustainable business whose mission is "Healing our Planet One Meal at a Time."

Cosponsors include the PUC Green Sanctuary Committee and the South Coast Interfaith Council. Admission is free, but contributions are welcome. For more information, contact Jim Montgomery at jim.f.monty@gmail.com or at 818-257-0879.

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