

Next Meeting

Manhattan Bread & Bagel
1812 N. Sepulveda Boulevard
Manhattan Beach
Wednesday, March 25
7:30 PM

This month's program will be a presentation by Bill Brand on what's next for the AES power plant negotiations now that Measure B is dead.

Agenda

- Visitor introductions
- Officer reports
- Reports from electeds
- Update from Candace Nafissi on May 12 RB Council runoff
- "AES after Measure B: What's Next?" Bill Brand, Redondo Beach City Councilman, will present how the RB City Council will approach negotiations with AES now that Measure B failed. There will be time allowed for discussion and Q&A afterwards.
- Reports from County Committee, the 66th AD and other related Dem organizations
- Old business
- Update on meeting location research
- New business & announcements
- Overview of BCD officer election process

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE STUDENT LOAN CRISIS

One pressing issue of importance to America on many levels—economic, social, and political—is our student loan crisis, and I am proud of the fact that President Obama has pushed reform of student lending throughout his presidency. Five years ago this month, President Obama signed student loan reform into law, redirecting tens of billions of dollars in bank subsidies into student aid. His administration has cracked down on for-profit colleges that made unrealistic promises to unprepared students and bilked them for millions of dollars in student loans, which those students will be burdened with forever (student loans are not dispatched in bankruptcy).

This month he released his [Student Aid Bill of Rights](#), which adds needed transparency to the loan process and helps borrowers understand the long term costs of borrowing for college. These were all important steps in the right direction, but I think we all agree with Democracy for America when they state "Higher education in America is broken." They cite the following facts:

- A student graduating college this spring will owe, on average, \$33,000.
- Nearly 40 million American families owe a whopping \$1.3 trillion in debt.
- 86% of student debt now comes from government loans.
- **The federal government is expected to produce \$110 billion in profits from its student loans over**



the next decade.

Democracy for America is now joining with Sen. Elizabeth Warren, American Federation of Teachers, Campaign for America's Future, and DailyKos to call for cancelling all student debt as a way to begin to reform our broken system. You can sign their petition at www.cancelallstudentdebt.com. Demographers now widely agree that Millennials are about 10 years later in achieving all major life milestones—including marriage, parenthood and home ownership—than their predecessors, and *the primary reason is that they are so burdened with student loan debt.*

Economists here and elsewhere universally agree that an investment in making quality higher education broadly available is key to continued competitiveness in today's global economy. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015, cited higher education as one of their key "Pillars of Competitiveness," saying "today's globalizing economy requires countries to nurture pools of well-educated workers who are able to perform complex tasks and adapt rapidly to their changing environment and the evolving needs of the production system." (Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2014-2015/methodology/#view/fn-12>). Yet nothing discourages the ongoing education of our citizens more than its high cost.

I think that it is foolhardy to try to address the issue of student loans without also addressing the cost of higher education. Just as with universal healthcare insurance, you have to "bend the cost curve" to provide a

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universal service without eventually burdening taxpayers with an unsustainable level of taxation. Globally, our higher education is among the least affordable in the developed world on an income controlled basis. That is partly a function of college costs spiraling out of control while universities try to compete with each other on the basis of ever-cooler dorm, gym and cafeteria amenities, driving up costs without actually improving the quality of education. But it is also a function of Congress' spending priorities, which for more than a decade have been focused on corporate giveaways, lowering taxes on the rich, and funding mind-bogglingly expensive wars rather than subsidizing higher education.

So, where does that leave us? While we have limited control over Congress (at least until 2016!), we can and should do all that we can to support student loan reform and debt forgiveness programs at the national and state levels. Let's actively support [America's College Promise](#), the program that Obama outlined in his State of the Union speech this year. It would waive tuition costs for students attending community colleges at least half-time while maintaining a 2.5 GPA and making steady progress toward completing a degree.

If we can't get that program through our bull-headed Republican Congress right now, we should urge Governor Brown and our California legislature to lead the way by instituting it here in California. After all, the president's program was modeled after one that already exists in Tennessee. If Tennessee can do it, I can't imagine that we can't find a way to fund and do it here



Speaking in favor of Measure B was Eric Pendergraft (left) and opposing the measure, Bill Brand (right).



in California. **Let's rebuild the California Dream, one graduate at a time!** Perhaps this is something that Sen. Ben Allen would be willing to champion. You may send him your thoughts at sd26.senate.ca.gov/contact/email.

Yours,
Kathryn Campbell
President, Beach Cities Democrats
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February Recap

Officer reports

President Kathryn Campbell mentioned that the FCC would vote on Thursday, Feb 26th on Net Neutrality. In addition to making sure that all Internet transmissions are treated equally, she mentioned that making the Internet a public utility will stop laws that prevent municipalities from offering their own broadband service even when no provider wishes to offer service.

Vice President Dency Nelson provided an update on the No on O campaign in Hermosa Beach and asked for everyone's help on the final weekend of phone banking and canvassing. He also said that he's still working with Hermosa Beach to ensure better treatment of the Free Speech area booths at Fiesta Hermosa, and promised to work with Ray Waters to ensure that we get our application in on time for Memorial Day weekend.

Teresa Bird presented the minutes from the prior meeting and they were approved by a membership vote.

Kathryn Campbell presented the Treasurer's report on behalf of Edna Murphy, who is resting at home after spending a month in the hospital and assisted living. Expenditures in the state account last month included \$30 in bank fees, \$200 donations to Redondo Beach City Council candidate Candace Nafissi and No Oil Drilling in
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Hermosa Beach, and \$75 for flowers for Edna while she was in the hospital. These were offset by net revenues from the Democratic New Year party of \$829, for a closing balance in that account of \$370. In the federal account we spent \$554 on CPA reports provided by Gary Crummitt going back to 2013 (he's billing for almost two years of services). The closing balance in that account is \$1,812.

Reports from Electeds

Sam Liu, Deputy Chief of Staff for Sen. Ben Allen, reported on the Senator's activities in Sacramento. Sen. Allen is working on legislation to provide loan forgiveness to teachers who teach in targeted school districts and to reduce predatory lenders targeting vets. He is taking a lot of heat for having introduced legislation to close a vaccine exemption loophole for homeschooled children. Please show your support for Sen. Allen and science on his Facebook page!

Endorsement consideration: Redondo Beach Measure B ("Harbor Village Plan"). Guest speakers Eric Pendergraft, Vice President of Business Development for AES, and Bill Brand, Redondo Beach City Councilman.

Eric Pendergraft of AES and Redondo Beach City Councilman Bill Brand faced off on the pros and cons of Measure B in Redondo Beach. After a spirited debate and extended Q&A session, the membership voted overwhelmingly to endorse a "No" vote on Measure B.

Reports from County Committee, 66th AD and other related Dem Organizations

Lori Geittmann and Ray Waters expressed frustration with the endorsement process at LACDP, specifically the fact that the county endorsed a Yes vote on Measure B over the objections of the local delegation. The vote was primarily influenced by labor's support of the measure.

Old business

Support for endorsed candidates, city

initiatives. A motion was made by Dency Nelson to donate up to \$300 for robocalls to Redondo Beach Democratic voters supporting our endorsed candidates and the No on Measure B position. Measure was seconded and passed.

Location suggestions/research

Kathryn & Dency announced that they are exploring the possibility of using the Hermosa Beach Community Center as a meeting location. They will explore further and report back next month. Member Rabbi Katz also volunteered to research the option of using a Kiwanis club location.

New business & announcements

Swearing in ceremony for U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu on Sunday, March 1— let us know if you need a ride!

LA County Board of Supervisors Race Discussion

President Kathryn Campbell mentioned that she and VP Dency Nelson had recently endorsed Rep. Janice Hahn for the upcoming LA County Supervisor race in 2016. Several members also voiced strong support for Hahn's candidacy, including Past President Lori Geittmann. In the end, however, it was decided that we should wait a bit longer before considering an endorsement. The race doesn't formally open until March 7, 2016, more than a year from now.

BEACH CITIES GREEN

Dency Nelson



As in Redondo Beach, where City Councilman Bill Brand says constituents are asking him "What's next?" following the defeat of their Measure B, residents in Hermosa Beach are now asking "What's next?" following our overwhelming defeat of Measure O. Well, an overwhelming defeat it was indeed. Certification of the entire vote will not be final until March 24, but as of election night the results were 4,915 "No" to 1,377 "Yes." That tally included votes cast at the polls as well as almost 1,500 Vote-by-Mail ballots that had been counted earlier that day. Still waiting to be tabulated were an additional 1,500 Vote-by-Mail ballots that had already been received, several hundred more expected to arrive by the receipt deadline on Friday, March 6, plus several hundred more "Provisional" ballots that had been cast during the day. With those kinds of numbers, this election in Hermosa Beach could prove to be record setting, with a near 60% turnout and a close to 80% if not more margin of victory for the "No on Measure O" voters. A clear message that the Hermosa Beach community, once again as it has on 3 previous occasions over the past 80 years, says "No" to oil in our town!

So, what is next in Hermosa Beach? "Keep Hermosa Hermosa" is still a valid and important movement, and the leaders of that organization are meeting to decide just what they should focus on next. I have an opinion, and readers of this column will not be surprised when they read it, as I have included the same objectives and goals in previous editions. Let me list a top three:

First, "Keeping Hermosa Hermosa" means just that. Keeping Hermosa the

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beautiful little beach town that it is. We know that the economic engine of our town, and the reason so many of us love living here, is the unique quality of the small beach town atmosphere. Tourists and local beachgoers like to come here because it isn't Redondo, or Manhattan, or Venice or Santa Monica. As has been stated in so many news reports and stories related to the oil drilling issue over the past several months, we are "quirky." I celebrate that quality, and if we build too big or develop too much, we lose that. Yes, tourism is our economic engine, and that means the inevitable hotels, but we have to keep them small and held to our 30-foot height limit, challenging the developers to use their imaginations and embrace the small town "quirkiness" and charm that is Hermosa.

Second on the list is "South Bay Clean Power," the Community Choice Aggregation project spearheaded by Torrance resident, Joe Galliani. As mentioned in previous columns, Com-

munity Choice Aggregation, already being successfully implemented in both Sonoma and Marin Counties, as well as other communities throughout the nation, allows the electricity customers in those communities to purchase clean, sustainable electricity through their local utility companies, often at a lower cost than the usual mix provided by the electric utility industry. It also allows for local rooftop solar producers to be fairly compensated for the clean solar electricity they are providing to that mix. It is a win-win for our sustainability goals and for cost savings for consumers, and it is something that Hermosa Beach has signed onto and will need to support as this project moves forward. And finally, the commitment that the City of Hermosa Beach has recently made to be "carbon neutral" by the year 2020. Carbon neutrality, or having a net zero carbon footprint, means achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset. It means

reducing the carbon-dioxide-releasing processes associated with our modes of transportation and with the production of energy for running our homes and businesses. It is something many of us are already doing in our homes and with our alternative fuel vehicles, and it is something that must be done on the largest of scales in order to mitigate the thing that keeps me and Congressman Ted Lieu and many others in our community up at night—the reality of the crisis that is Climate Change. It is something we can and must do!
That's "What's next!?"