



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

January, 2015 Monthly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

JANUARY

Jan 8 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current** (2015) DPDC members are welcome.

Jan 24 **9th Annual Pie Party**, Bertschinger Community Center, 7860 Hwy 42, Egg Harbor, 3:00-5:00 PM. See article below.

FEBRUARY

Feb 11 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, upper level 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current** (2015) DPDC members are welcome.

Save the date:

Mar 26 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., lower level, 7:00 PM. Dean Hoegger, Executive Director of the WI Clean Water Council will speak on "Protecting the Waters of Door County".

Digest of Contents

Page 2:

- **Chair Cohn holds the Governor's fee to the "fire" of facts.**
- **The Spring election for State Supreme Court is important. Justice Bradley needs our support.**

Page 3: **Want to get your populist blood boiling? Just read Bernie Sanders telling it like it is, and how to fix it.**

Page 4 - 5: **Estella Lauter discusses Public Trust Doctrine, a potentially powerful tool in the environmental struggle.**

Page 5: **New officers and board elected**

Page 6:

- **The Enbridge Pipeline - a disaster waiting to happen.**
- **Membership matters - please join, or renew your membership in the Door Dems.**

Senator Hansen Featured Speaker at 9th Annual Pie Party

The 9th annual DPDC Pie Party on Saturday, January 24th will feature State Senator Dave Hansen, who will present an update on the new legislature and its likely new initiatives.

The Pie Party will be held at the Bertschinger Community Center, 7860 Hwy 42, Egg Harbor, from 3:00-5:00 PM. Admission is \$10 per person, and a pie per family. All-you-can-eat pie is served plain or a la mode.

Senator Hansen represents District 30 (Green Bay). Elected first in 2000, defeating the incumbent, he has been reelected three times and withstood a recall attempt in 2011. He is currently the Senate Assistant Minority Leader.

A former teacher and union steward, Senator Hansen brings a strong and broad background to a populist perspective. Come and hear the latest from Madison. See you there!



Senator Hansen

Message from the Chair:**The Governor Can Run, But He Can't Hide From the Facts**

This week's inauguration of Scott Walker as our 45th Governor contains a forecast of what to expect from his iron grip on the Assembly and Senate for the next four years.

**Chair Garrett Cohn**

He made a questionable listing of his previous term's accomplishments by declaring time and again Wisconsin was a better place to live than previously.

He didn't mention the promise to create 250,000 more jobs from his last inaugural speech. ("I know we can do it") He skipped over mentioning Wisconsin's private sector job growth that continues to lag behind the national average. Wisconsin is 32nd in the nation in job growth ending in June.

Walker has said he does not support raising the minimum wage although Minnesota has increased theirs to \$9.50 and has indexed it to increase with inflation.

Walker rejected federal money to create Wisconsin's own health care marketplace which has cost the state an estimated \$206 million over the past two years and a projected \$460 million through 2020.

Forbes magazine ranks Wisconsin 32nd as best state for business, 27th in economic climate and 17th in quality of life.

Walker continues to lead the governors as the nation's most conservative while embracing policies and ideas from American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) which is openly underwritten by the Koch brothers.

Under Walker Wisconsin has been a leader in cutting education budgets. The Center on Budget

and Policy Priorities analyzed state school funding from 2008 through 2014 and found that Wisconsin's cuts in public school funding ranked number 2 in the nation—Alabama is number 1—with a \$1,038 decrease per student.

And jobs? An analysis done by University of Wisconsin economist Menzie Chin measured nonfarm job growth in four states—California, Wisconsin, Kansas and Minnesota. All elected a new governor in 2010.

Wisconsin and Kansas are ALEC friendly states. Minnesota was ranked 46th and California 47th on an ALEC-economic index measuring taxes, public employees per capita, minimum wage and right-to-work laws (among others). Those states grew more jobs than Kansas (ranked 15th) and Wisconsin (ranked 17th).

Chin compared all 50 states and found the same results. States that received a higher ALEC ranking on how it was expected to perform economically based on 15 policy areas had worse economic records when it comes to creating jobs.

There are other measurements which show the un-varnished truth about Wisconsin's performance during Walker's first term which don't agree with his rosy review.

He took away the rights of public employees to collectively bargain (unless they were part of a union that supported him financially). He spent the last half of his term ensuring passage of voter suppression laws, mandatory ultrasound, cutting Planned Parenthood funding, passed abortion restrictions and gutted environmental protection by passing a bill written by a mining corporation so it could create an open pit mine.

Walker's list of accomplishments, does not benefit the voters of Wisconsin only him in his presidential ambitions.

(data from quoted sources, *The La Crosse Tribune*, and *The Capital Times*)

Justice Ann Walsh Bradley Running for Re-election to WI Supreme Court

An important election this spring is for the WI Supreme Court seat currently held by Justice Ann Walsh Bradley. Justice Bradley has been an independent voice on the court, without a political agenda. Her independence led to the infamous incident when she was physically assaulted by Justice Prosser, a highly political individual supported by WI Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC).

Her opponent is James Daley, presiding judge of the Janesville Circuit Court, who will undoubtedly be richly supported by WMC and conservative groups.

Justice Bradley needs our active support to help ensure the continued independence of our highest court. How to help: go to the Bradley website, volunteer for, and contribute to her campaign. The website address is: bradleyforjustice.com.

**Justice Bradley**

Bill Perloff:**New Year Resolutions From Bernie Sanders**

[Bernie Sanders is the independent junior senator from Vermont. Writing in The Progressive Populist, he documents the decline of the middle class and proposes 12 steps to reverse this trend.

Read on for excerpts from Senator Sanders' call to arms to restore the middle class. (Paragraph headings and emphases are my additions.) Ed.]

**Senator Sanders****The Key Questions.**

The American people must make a fundamental decision. Do we continue the 40-year decline of our middle class, or do we fight for a progressive economic agenda that creates jobs, raises wages, protects the environment and provides health care for all?

These are the most important questions of our time. Our answers will determine the future of our country.

The Hard Facts.

Today we have more wealth and income inequality than any major country. We have one of the highest child poverty rates, and are the only industrialized country that does not guarantee health care for all.

The percent of our people that graduated college was once the highest in the world. We are now in 12th place.

Our infrastructure, once the envy of the world is now collapsing *[see the article on page 6]*.

Real unemployment is not 5.8%, it is 11.5% if we include those who have given up looking for work, or who are working part time when they want to work full time.

Millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages. The median male worker earned \$783 less than he made 41 years ago. The median woman worker made \$1,337 less last year than she earned in 2007. **The median middle class family is now earning less than it did 25 years ago.**

What We Can Do.

The American people must demand that Congress and the White House start protecting the interests of working families, not just wealthy campaign contributors. We need federal legislation to put the unemployed back to work, to raise wages and make certain that all Americans have the health care and education they need for healthy and productive lives.

Here are 12 initiatives that I will be fighting for which can restore America's middle class.

1. Rebuild Our Infrastructure

We need a major investment to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure: roads, bridges, water systems, waste water plants, airports, railroads and schools.

It has been estimated that the cost of the Iraq war will total \$3 trillion. A \$1 trillion investment in infrastructure could create 13 million decent paying jobs and make the country more efficient.

2. Reverse Climate Change.

The United States must lead the world in reversing climate change and make certain that this planet is habitable for our children and grandchildren.

We must transform our energy system away from fossil fuels into energy efficiency and sustainable energies. We need to greatly accelerate the progress in wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and other forms of sustainable energy. This will not only protect the environment, it will create good paying jobs.

3. Create Jobs.

We need to develop new economic models to increase job creation and productivity. Instead of giving huge tax breaks to companies which ship our jobs to low-wage countries, we need to provide assistance to workers who want to purchase their own businesses by establishing worker-owned cooperatives.

Studies show that when workers have a stake in the businesses they work for, productivity goes up, absenteeism goes down and employees are much more satisfied with their jobs.

4. Ensure Workers' right to form a union.

Union workers who are able to collectively bargain for higher wages and benefits earn substantially more than non-union workers. Today, corporate opposition for workers to join a union. We need legislation that makes it clear that when a majority of workers sign cards in support of a union, they can form a union.

5. Establish a Living Wage for All.

The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is a starvation wage. We need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage. No one in this country who works 40 hours a week should live in poverty.

6. Guarantee Pay Equity for Women.

Women worker today earn 78% of what their male counterparts make. We need pay equity in this country - equal pay for equal work.

(Continued on page 4)

New Years Resolutions Continued from Page 3

7. Pursue Trade Policies That Create American Jobs.

Since 2001 we have lost more than 60,000 factories in this country, and more than 4.9 million decent-paying manufacturing jobs.

We must end our disastrous trade policies (NAFTA, CAFTA, etc.) which enable corporate America to shut down plants in this country and move to China and other low-wage countries.

We need to end the race to the bottom and develop trade policies which demand that American corporations create jobs here and not abroad.

8. Ensure Access to Higher Education.

In today's highly competitive global economy, millions of Americans are unable to afford the higher education they need in order to get good-paying jobs.

Quality education from child care to higher education must be affordable for all. Without a high-quality affordable educational system, we will be unable to compete globally and our standard of living will continue to decline.

9. Break Up the Too Powerful Wall Street Firms Responsible for the Great Recession.

The function of banking is to facilitate the flow of capital into productive and job-creating activities.

Today six huge Wall Street financial institutions have assets equivalent to 61% of our gross domestic product - over \$9.8 trillion. These institutions underwrite more than half the mortgages in this country and more than two-thirds of the credit cards.

The greed, recklessness and illegal behavior of major wall Street firms plunged this country into the worst financial crisis since the 1930's. They are

too powerful to be reformed, **They must be broken up.**

10. Establish Single-Payer Universal Health Care.

The U.S. must join the rest of the industrialized world and recognize that health care is a right for all. Despite the fact that more than 40 million Americans have no health insurance, we spend almost twice as much per capita on health care as any other nation. We need to establish a Medicare-for-all single payer system.

11. Strengthen our Social Safety Net.

Millions of seniors live in poverty and we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country. We must strengthen the social safety net, not weaken it.

Instead of cutting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and nutrition programs, we should be expanding these programs.

12. Real Tax Reform is Overdue.

At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, we need a progressive tax system based on ability to pay.

It is not acceptable that major profitable corporations have paid nothing in federal income taxes, and that corporate CEO's often enjoy an effective tax rate lower than their secretaries.

It is absurd that we lose over \$100 billion a year in revenue because corporations and the wealthy stash their cash in offshore tax havens around the world. The time is long overdue for real tax reform.

[Strong medicine indeed. But think how much fairer our society would be if these initiatives were enacted. Unfortunately, the incoming congress and WI state government are unlikely to adopt any of them. Ed]

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**A Source of Optimism: Public Trust Doctrine**

Bill Moyers concluded his broadcast career last week with a program that could make a big difference to us as Democrats. He interviewed a lawyer named Mary Christina Wood, whose book *Nature's Trust: Environmental Law for a New Ecological Age*, and whose role as an advisor to a group called Our Children's Trust call attention to a doctrine that has existed since Roman times and entered our own democratic system as "the slate on which our laws are written."

The Public Trust Doctrine establishes the government (at any level) as a trustee whose primary task is to manage an endowment for the benefit of others. The doctrine appears in case law

throughout the history of our country, but perhaps the most obvious example occurred in 1892 when the Illinois Supreme Court refused to allow the Chicago shoreline to be developed by the railroads because it belonged to all the people of the city.

**Estella Lauter**

(Continued on page 5)

Public Trust Doctrine, continued from page 4

Just last year, the Chief Justice of the PA Supreme Court wrote a decision against fracking based on the idea that the natural environment, indeed the atmosphere, is an enduring natural endowment inured in democracy for its citizens. It is an inherent, inalienable, reserved right—a property right of sorts—that must be protected for the good of all citizens, present and future, and not willfully destroyed for the benefit of the few.

Beginning in 2011, Our Children’s Trust began to file lawsuits, with plaintiffs as young as 16, in every state and at the federal level based on this doctrine. While some have been thrown out on grounds that “the environment” is a political issue (!), others are proceeding through the courts, and preparations for judicial challenges are under way.

The suits claim that our legislatures and government agencies are not responding to the violation of our children’s inalienable rights, and the liberty of our youth is at stake. (Compare this point of view with Walker’s notion of freedom in his recent inaugural speech!)

Every case asks the court to order the appropriate legislature or agency to make plans to bring down carbon emissions to the level scientists say is necessary to protect the earth’s atmosphere so that a safe and healthy planet will be available to future generations.

Ms. Wood knows that our federal legislatures are a hopeless cause because they have been purchased, and the laws we passed in the 1970s to protect the environment have also been seriously compromised by the very agencies designed to protect them. She counts on the moral authority of the children who are bringing these suits to persuade judges in some states to arrive at judgments that will set precedents for other states. And she counts on US to support them by taking to the streets if necessary.

For example, a hundred thousand people have pledged to risk arrest in order to stop the Keystone pipeline. While our authority at the polls has been damaged by big money, great numbers of people have always been able to move the system forward.

She also believes that we retain our moral authority at the local level. For example, children in Eugene, OR attended city council meetings until they convinced the city to create the nation’s most far-reaching policy for a carbon-neutral environment. From Wood’s perspective, we must do everything in our power to protect the Public Trust for our children. We cannot afford to be pessimistic about what we can achieve. We have to find new ways to act as effectively as possible.

Our climate, then, is not “just” an environmental issue; it is a “civilizational” issue. That is, civilization cannot thrive if global warming reaches its tipping point. This is democracy’s biggest issue in terms of potential harm, the number of people who will be affected and the urgency of the problem.

Public Trust Doctrine was created for just the sort of situation where a government betrays the interests of the many for the few.

The issues surrounding the condition of our environment are perhaps not the only civilizational ones we face. Since 2005, the DPDC’s slogan has been “Public policy for public good.” Some of us wanted to add “not for corporate greed or private gain” but we were outvoted.

Although the national Democratic Party has been excoriated for not having “a message,” we have been clear about our priorities. The Resolutions we make each March for the annual process of defining the state Party’s goals have been remarkably consistent, as have our recommendations for Platform priorities.

Finally, someone with a national presence is not only saying that the doctrine of public trust is the foundation of democracy but also giving a new generation some tools to bring that doctrine back into play throughout the country.

I don’t know how the DPDC or the DPW might use this information, the model of Our Children’s Trust, the doctrine of Public Trust, the idea of moral authority and/or the book Nature’s Trust, but I see this kind of thinking as a way forward, not only for Democrats but for all Americans in the long run. In a political situation that looks very bleak at the moment, it offers at least a ray of light.

New Officers and Executive Board Elected

At the December 18th membership meeting, officers and Executive Board members were elected for 2015-16. They are:

Chair: Garrett Cohn
 Vice-Chair: Naomi Rowley
 Secretary: Suzanne Holvenstot
 Treasurer: John Franz

Executive Board:

Northern Door - Sam Carmen, Bill Perloff
 Sturgeon Bay - Rod Bohn, Cal Holvenstot,
 Ron MacLean
 Southern Door - John Harris, Tammy Starnard
 At-large: - Dean Hoegger, Maryann Zjala

Aged Pipelines: A Dangerous Threat to Lake Michigan

Among the elements of our aging infrastructure, are oil, gas and tar sands pipelines. Some of these are environmental catastrophes waiting to happen.

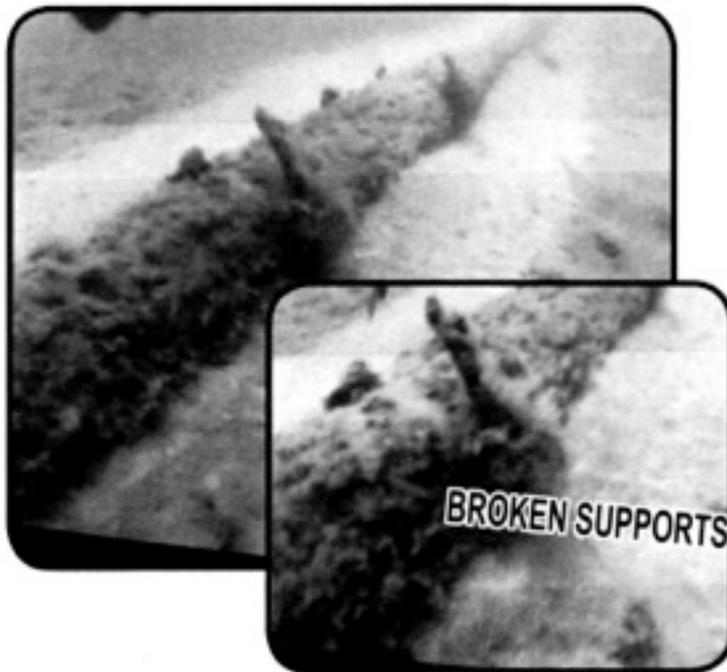
The 60 year old, 20 inch diameter Enbridge pipelines carry tar sands oil across the Straits of Mackinac.

As described in the Fall 2014 Door County Environmental Council (DCEC) newsletter, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) sent divers to examine and photograph the pipeline. The photo below is a frame from the video taken by the divers, with a close-up section showing broken supports.

The DCEC newsletter goes on to state:

“If these pipelines rupture, the resulting oil slick would cause irreversible damage to fish and wildlife, drinking water, Lake Michigan beaches, Mackinac Island and our economy.”

For further information, and action to take, view the video: ecowatch.com/2013/10/15/footage-of-tar-sands-pipelines-beneath-great-lakes/



Membership Matters

If the issues discussed in this newsletter are important to you, then we need you to help us elect progressive Democrats at local, state and national levels.

Membership in the Democratic Party of Door County is one way to join with others to multiply the effect of your single vote. Members meet monthly, often with an informative speaker.

Your membership in the Door Dems also makes you a member of the Democratic Party of WI, and enables your voice to be heard at the state level.

Joining is simple: just print and fill out the form below, and send it to our PO Box. Concerned about the cost? Call Bill Perloff, 920-839-9282, and we will work out a suitable arrangement. Thank you!

or Renew **Yes, I'll Join the Democratic Party and Help Democrats Win!**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

This is a Cell Phone Home Phone

Email _____

County: **DOOR**

Sign me up for:

- \$10 Senior/student/limited income
- \$20 Two seniors/students/limited incomes
- \$25 Individual general membership
- \$35 Pairs (includes 2 memberships)
- \$45 Activist family (includes up to 3 memberships)
- \$75 Family supporters (includes all family mem's)

I would also like to join:

- American Indian Caucus
- Black Caucus
- Latino/Hispanic Caucus
- LGTB Caucus
- Rural Caucus
- Veterans' Caucus
- Women's Caucus

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me.

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