

RICHLAND DEMOCRAT*December 2009***ALL FIRED UP FOR 2010**

Although there is a blizzard outside as this eNewsletter is being written, avid Democrats (like Mike Collins, pictured here with his hot rod at the Rodeo Parade) are fired up to begin another election year. Enjoy the last eNewsletter of 09 as we review what the Democrats have been up to and where we are heading in 2010.

OBAMA LAYS OUT THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN

OUR MISSION: The President's speech reaffirms the March 2009 core goal: to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al-Qa'ida and to prevent their return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan. To do so, we and our allies will surge our forces, targeting elements of the insurgency and securing key population centers, training Afghan forces, transferring responsibility to a capable Afghan partner, and increasing our partnership with Pakistanis... This region is the heart of the global violent extremism pursued by al-Qa'ida, and the region from which we were attacked on 9/11. New attacks are being planned there now, a fact borne out by a recent plot, uncovered and disrupted by

American authorities. We will prevent the Taliban from turning Afghanistan back into a safe haven from which international terrorists can strike at us or our allies. This would pose a direct threat to the American homeland, and that is a threat that we cannot tolerate. Al-Qa'ida remains in Pakistan where they continue to plot attacks against us and where they and their extremist allies pose a threat to the Pakistani state. Our goal in Pakistan will be to ensure that al-Qa'ida is defeated and Pakistan remains stable.
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REGULAR MEETINGS ARE ON THE 2ND TUESDAYS

Calendar**December 15, 2009****December Meeting**

Due to the Blizzard of 09 we were forced to move our December meeting to Tuesday the 15 at 6:30 PM at Country Kitchen. Election of officers, Change in By Laws and planning the big Swing are on the agenda.

January 5, 2010**Filing Deadline for Spring Elections**

Nonpartisan elections are held in the spring. (April 6th) Consider running for a School, County, or Town Board position

January 12, 2010**January Meeting**

The first regular meeting for the new year will be held at 7:00 PM in the Basement of the Courthouse

February 12, 2010**The Big Event!**

Mark your calendars, clear the date, this is the gala Swing 2010. We hope to raise enough again this year to fund another Democratic headquarters for the pivotal 2010 elections

April 6, 2010**Spring Elections**

Just think the snow should be gone by this time so people can easily get to the polls.

OBAMA'S PLAN OUT OF AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan from page one:

As a result of the recent review process, we have focused our mission and developed a common understanding regarding our regional approach and the need for international support. We will deploy forces into Afghanistan rapidly and will take advantage of these additional resources to create the conditions to begin to draw down combat forces in the summer of 2011, while maintaining a partnership with Afghanistan and Pakistan to protect our enduring interests in that region.

THE WAY FORWARD: The President has decided to deploy an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. These troops will deploy on an accelerated timeline to reinforce the 68,000 Americans and 39,000 non-U.S. ISAF troops already there, so that we can target the insurgency, break its momentum, and better secure population centers. And beginning in July 2011, we will transfer lead security responsibility to Afghans and start to transition our combat forces out of Afghanistan



Pakistani forces launched an offensive against the Taliban on October 17.

THE PLAN IN PAKISTAN:

We have affirmed a commitment to Pakistan by providing \$1.5 billion each year over the next five years to support the following objectives: (1) Helping Pakistan address immediate energy, water, and related economic crises, deepening our partnership with the Pakistani people and decreasing the appeal of extremists; (2) Supporting broader economic reforms that are necessary to put Pakistan on a path towards long-term Pakistani stability and progress; and (3) Helping Pakistan build on its success against militants to eliminate extremist sanctuaries that threaten Pakistan, Afghanistan, the wider region, and people around the world.

*Edited from The White House
Office of the Press Secretary*

DON'T MISS WHAT'S

In This Issue

Obama's War

The War Plans- Page One/Two

Although many liberal Democrats are concerned over the new plans in Afghanistan, Obama promised to focus our international wars on stopping the development of terrorism in the Afghan region. Only time will tell if a surge-like plan will help us move toward a drawdown or quagmire. Read an outline of the facts. Page 1-2.



Health Care Reform

All We Want For Christmas...

Page three covers the process of moving the Legislature toward Health Care Reform. Will we have more than just snow for Christmas?



It's the Economy, Stupid

Short Memories Help Republicans

A year ago we were looking into an economic abyss. Read the economic facts on page four so that history is not rewritten.



Is It Hot In Here?

Obama Takes on Global Warming

Read page five to see how Obama is putting the heat on the Senate over Global Warming.



The Back Page

Look to Page 6

Member notes, editorials and more.

“We will deploy forces into Afghanistan rapidly and will take advantage of these additional resources to create the conditions to begin to draw down combat forces in the summer of 2011”

President Barack Obama



The Long Wait For Health Care Reform: *We May Be Called Into The Doctor's Office Soon...*

Harry Reid told reporters, while refusing to provide the details, that a team of 10 Senate Democrats -- five liberals and five moderates -- had worked for days and agreed upon a substitute to the government-run "public" insurance option after moderates voiced concerns about it.

The government-run plan has been one of the biggest hurdles for the healthcare overhaul. Democratic Senate sources said the substitute would create a non-profit plan operated by private insurers but administered by the Office of Personnel Management, which supervises health coverage for federal workers.

One of the liberal negotiators, Democratic Senator Russ Feingold, said he had concerns about the direction of the talks. "I do not support proposals that would replace the public option in the bill with a purely private approach," Feingold said. "We need to have some competition for the insurance industry to keep rates down and save taxpayer dollars."

The negotiators also sought cost estimates on an expansion of the Medicare health program for the elderly, which is now available at age 65, to Americans as young as 55 who could "buy-in" to the coverage, a Democratic source said.

That proposal, designed to create more affordable insurance options for older workers, had been pushed by



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Senate Democratic healthcare negotiators said they agreed on Tuesday to replace a government-run insurance option with a scaled-back non-profit plan and would seek cost estimates on the deal.

liberal Democrats in exchange for dropping their support for the public option. "Insurance companies will certainly have more competition," Reid said of the deal, which he said would be enough to bring the bill to final passage. "The American people will certainly have more choices."

The other potential hurdle to the healthcare overhaul was abortion, and the Senate on Tuesday rejected an attempt to tighten restrictions on abortion coverage -- a vote that could threaten a crucial Democrat's support for passage of the bill.

Without the abortion language, Senator Ben Nelson had threatened he would not back the final

healthcare bill when it came to a vote. If true, the Democrats would be one vote short of the 60 they need to pass the measure. But after his amendment failed, Nelson softened his stance slightly. "It makes it harder to be supportive. We'll see what happens," he told reporters.

The amendment would have blocked people who receive federal subsidies from buying insurance plans that cover abortions and prohibited a proposed government insurance plan from offering abortion coverage in most circumstances.

Edited from Reuters

Now We Wait For the Doctor?

Reid is pushing for a final vote before Christmas. Given Republican opposition, he probably needs to file at least three procedural motions to cut off debate and move to votes. Each of those motions requires at least 30 hours of debate.

Then, the House of Representatives passed its own version of a healthcare overhaul last month that includes a government-run insurance option. The Senate and House bills must be reconciled and passed again before they are sent to Obama to sign. If the Senate substitutes the non-profit

plan, it will create particularly thorny negotiations. Some House liberals have already said they are unhappy with the compromises in the Senate. The House bill also includes stricter language forbidding the use of federal funds for abortion than the Senate bill. (Reuters)

Let's Not Forget!

One Year Ago, The US Was Facing A Near Economic Depression!

If you listen to the talking points of the Republican Party and the “Right-biased” media, you would think that Obama and the Democrats are part of the most fiscally irresponsible Party ever to walk the planet. They repeat a mantra decrying deficit spending and an increase in the National Debt. Then point to the high unemployment statistics as more evidence of fiscal incompetence. What is perplexing is the lack of acknowledgement that when the Democrats took control of the Presidency and of the Legislature, the nation was facing devastating financial conditions. The vast majority of economists agreed that the country needed an economic boost. Which was exactly what President Obama’s Recovery Act did.

Recently, the independent, nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released a report on the economic impact of the Recovery Act. The CBO determined that, between its inception in February of this year and the end of September, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has:

- Saved or Created up to 1.6 Million Jobs
- Added up to 3.2% to the Growth of Real GDP
- Reduced the Unemployment Rate by as Much as 0.9 Percentage Points

DNC Chairman Tim Kaine

released the following statement in response to the report:

“As the CBO analysis shows, the Recovery Act has lessened the effects of the worst recession in a generation and is beginning to help turn things around.

“The CBO found the Recovery Act is responsible for 600,000 to 1.6 million jobs and has raised GDP by 1.2 to 3.2 percent. Without the Recovery Act these jobs would have either disappeared or never existed in the first place and this positive economic growth would not have been possible.

“Our economy still has a long way to go and we will not rest until everyone who wants a job can find one, but the economy is no longer in a free-fall. Democrats in Congress showed real leadership by supporting the Recovery Act. Unfortunately, Republicans - the Party of NO - refused to offer an alternative. They stood on the sidelines as President Obama and Congressional Democrats took the steps necessary to reverse the economic decline they inherited after eight years of failed Republican economic policies. Now, by cheering for the Act’s failure, the GOP remains on the

wrong side of history. As President Obama and Democrats continue to take steps to strengthen our economy, it’s time for Republicans to stop saying 'No', quit playing politics and start working with us on behalf of American families and workers.”

Unfortunately if economists are correct, unemployment will be that last part of the economy to recover.

Undoubtedly, Republican strategists understand this as well and will continue to use high unemployment as talking points to confuse the public on exactly what is being done by Democrats to help our economy. So spread the facts to help people remember from whence we have come. Aren’t elephants supposed to have long memories?

“By cheering for the Act’s failure, the GOP remains on the wrong side of history.”

Obama and the Environment: Doing What Bush Failed To Do.

The Environmental Protection Agency finalized its “endangerment finding” on greenhouse gas emissions, formally declaring that carbon and other pollutants are harmful to the public’s health and welfare. The finding lays the groundwork for the future regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from mobile (e.g. transportation) and stationary (e.g. power plants, factories) sources.



An Article from Politico 12-09 quotes EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, “The threat is real,” Jackson said. “Climate change has now become a household issue.” Jackson announced Monday that her agency has concluded that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and public welfare — opening the door to sweeping new pollution regulations that would cover a wide swath of industries. The ruling forces the EPA to begin mandating greenhouse gas emissions reductions from industrial polluters like power plants, factories, and auto makers. The EPA, Jackson said, “is now authorized and obligated to make reasonable efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Energy Act.”

The EPA announcement comes two and half years after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the Bush

administration to reconsider whether greenhouse gas emissions are pollutants. The EPA then ruled that the emissions endangered public welfare, but the White House refused to sign off on the decision, leaving it in regulatory limbo until the Obama administration took office last January.

“This is the most significant step the federal government has taken on global warming,”

Last month, President Barack Obama said that the United States will reduce greenhouse gas emissions 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. That’s only a 4 percent decrease, when compared to 1990 levels – the baseline used in the Kyoto Treaty. The European Union has pledged a 20 percent reduction below 1990 levels, with an increase to 30 percent if other nations promise similar cuts. But Obama can’t promise more than Congress will agree to sign into law. The 17 percent goal mirrors targets included in legislation that passed the House in late June and a bill

currently moving through the Senate.

The finding puts new pressure on the Senate to pass legislation preempting the regulations before the EPA can begin to act. The bill's future remains uncertain. Coal, manufacturing, and rural state Democrats have raised concerns that the legislation would kill fossil-fuel intensive industries and spike electricity rates. Several have asked the Senate to delay action on the legislation until the economy recovers. The only other way to stop EPA action, say experts, is with a lawsuit or for Congress to vote to defund the EPA -- both options that could force moderate Democrats to come out against a key White House initiative.

“The administration appears to be playing for keeps here,” said Kevin Book, managing director at ClearView Energy Partners.

Environment America Federal Global Warming Program Director Emily Figdor agreed. “This is the most significant step the federal government has taken on global warming,” she said. “The stage is now set for EPA to hold the biggest global warming polluters accountable.”

Blizzard Blows Meeting Into Following Week

Last week our December meeting was cancelled due to the blizzard that swept through Wisconsin. The meeting was changed to Tuesday December 15th. We will meet at the County Kitchen starting at 6:30 PM for those who may wish to order supper. It is an important meeting as we will be nominating and electing officers, working on our by-laws, and planning our big fundraiser in February to raise funds for the election year headquarters.



Members Speak: As I write this, two extremely important bills are being debated in the U.S. House and Senate - in the Senate, the health care bill; in the House, the financial reform bill.

Unfortunately both bills are struggling under the burden of political partisanship. I have been watching with great interest the Senate debate on C-Span. Having seen this, I believe a workable compromise can be worked out without leaving the Republicans out. Here are some possible concessions:

1. Give up the public option and replace it with an extension of the Federal Employees Health Benefits program, making it available to all Americans.

2. Give on medical malpractice by eliminating punitive damages and giving to judges the discretion of whether to strip the license of a guilty practitioner.

3. Vote on the pending amendments to give both parties full opportunity to have their say.

4. Avoid extending medicare to those under 65. This would just hasten the bankruptcy of that program.

I believe even without a public option the reforms that would be enacted by this bill would have an historic impact on our society.

Jerry McConoughey



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We hope you enjoyed the Email version of our newsletter. Forward a copy to a friend and encourage them to email us and add their names to our list.

RC DEMS: CARRYING THE TORCH WHILE HAVING FUN

End Notes

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.rcdems.org/

The Newsletter is authorized and paid for by the Richland County Democratic Party, Bill Davis Treasurer.

