

34th Democrats Membership Meeting Minutes, October 11, 2023

In-person at the Alki Masonic Temple, with Zoom Access

7:01 PM – Call to order by Chair Graham Murphy

Chair's opening remarks and announcements

- Graham listed a few of the events done since our last meeting:
 - A canvassing event in Burien on October 7 included all our endorsed candidates in Burien, the Highline School District, KC D8 Candidate Teresa Mosqueda.
 - A cleanup party on 16th Ave, our Adopt-A-Street.
 - We participated with the 33LD Democrats in a joint Pop-Up Social.
- Graham announced that assorted t-shirts from campaigns of various candidates were available for members to take. Ed Dupras brought them in from the estate of late 34th Democrats member Lois Elenich.

2023 Annual Recognition Awards

- Chris Porter will be chair of the ad hoc committee to assign the awards. Members were asked to submit nominations by October 31, using an online form.

Meeting Business

- The meeting agenda was presented. Peter Newbould moved to approve; Michael Parker seconded. The agenda was approved without objection.
- The minutes were shown and approved without objection.
- Chair Murphy gave the financial report for September.

Opening Ceremonies

- 1st Vice Chair Rachel Glass gave the Land Acknowledgement. She also suggested members donate to the Urban Native Education Alliance to give meaningful support to Aboriginal peoples of the area. <https://www.urbannativeeducation.org/>
- Carla Rogers announced a canvassing event to be held at C&P Coffee on Saturday, October 21. She spoke of the importance of in-person voter contact and urged all to donate 2 hours. She asked for a commitment from an initial five volunteers. Peter Newbould, Steve Butts, Graham Murphy, Rachel Glass, and Chris Porter stepped forward.

Guest Speakers

Leslie Harris, Seattle School Board Director

Leslie provided a few observations on her 8 years in office:

- Seattle Schools needed to drain their rainy-day fund to cover a deficit.
- A difficult reconfigure of classes was needed 6 weeks into the school year, as enrollment proved to be lower than expected.
- We need to keep pressure on the state legislature, noting as she has in the past that “McCleary is fake news”.

- School board directors need to be reimbursed much better, given the time they devote to the position.
- We need to support Gina Topp in her race, and afterward should she win.

Potential strike action against Kaiser Permanente of Washington

Member Chris Lampkin, Political Director at SEIU Healthcare 1199NW, introduced Cathy Jessup, a physical therapist at the Kaiser Burien Clinic.

- A strike is imminent and would begin on November 1st after their contract ends at the end of the month if no deal is struck.
- Although nationally Kaiser is doing well, they are operating with “an austerity mindset” which affects staffing levels and facilities.
- Kaiser is not following through with promises given when they took over Group Health Cooperative.
 - Jessup cited the newly built Burien clinic as an example. The facility is not large enough for increasing population growth in the area while a promised West Seattle clinic has not yet even been put into the planning stage.
- Increased staffing levels and higher wages are being sought for staff such as nurses, physical therapists, pharmacists, technicians, social workers, and others.
- She provided a petition to sign in support of the union, and asked that Kaiser members contact Kaiser Customer Service to voice their support.

Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Superintendent Reykdal gave a status report on the public schools in Washington State. These are a few points from his speech:

- The state ranks high in closing the learning gap between ethnic groups, English language arts and math, and high school students earning dual college credits.
- Public school enrollment is down due to causes such as changing demographics, and he noted wealthy families have choices outside of public school systems.
- Groups such as “Moms for Liberty” and social media figures seek to undermine support of public schools.
 - They are pushing book bans, and misinformation such as the misapplied use of the academic term “Critical Race Theory”.
 - They seek to funnel kids into schools run by conservative religious groups.
 - Ultra conservatives are targeting school boards in the state, and some have been successful in attaining seats. We need to flip those boards that become problematic.
- He is proposing raising the wages of para-professional teachers to livable levels.
- The McCleary Decision was not the final solution to funding. Washington needs to devote the same percentage of its GDP as do other states.

Nick Brown, candidate for State Attorney General

- Brown, originally from Pierce County, is a West Seattle resident and a new member of the 34th District Democrats.
- He attended Morehouse College, Harvard Law School, then served in the Army.

- He spent 6 years in the justice department as an Assistant District Attorney working on fraud and violent crime cases.
- Brown served in the Inslee administration, assisting with the capital punishment moratorium.
- He drafted the text of the gun safety Initiative 1639 which was passed in 2018.
- President Biden named Brown to be US Attorney for Western Washington in 2021.
- See his website at: <https://nickbrownforag.com/>

General Election Slate of Candidates

We heard from our slate of General Election Candidates:

- **Teresa Mosqueda** is running for King County Council District 8.
- Dow Constantine spoke for **Gina Topp**, the candidate for Seattle School Director, District 6.
- **Rob Saka** is our endorsed candidate for Seattle City Council District 1.
- **Stephanie Tidholm** and **Carlos Ruiz** are our picks for Highline School Board.
- **Patricia Hudson** and **Kyrstal Marx** are running for Burien City Council seats.

Good of the Order

- Chris Porter noted earlier in the meeting that October 11th was “Coming Out Day”, and described how coming out is a process as a person informs family, friends, and coworkers about their sexual orientation.
- Elizabeth Heath informed us that the West Seattle Democratic Women meeting will feature a discussion on cruise ships and their local impact.
- Leslie Harris was to hold a community meeting of Seattle District 6 constituents Saturday, October 21st at the West Seattle Library.
- Richard Bartlett rose to express his pleasure at being able to see everyone in person.
- Chair Murphy announced that the Executive Board Meeting would be held Wednesday, October 18, and the November Membership Meeting would again be in person on November 8th.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.