

Northwest Democrats News



Jan., 2012
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Northwest Democrats, P.O. Box 681911, San Antonio, TX 78268; TXDemocrat@satx.rr.com

Jan. 21st Program: Sheriff, JP, Constable

Don't forget to attend our Jan. 21st meeting when we will hear from candidates running in contested primaries for Sheriff, JP Precinct 2 Place 1, and Constable Precinct 2. In addition, we'll be hearing from the candidates for the 57th District Court (which became a contested race after last meeting).

Please join us for this important meeting at 8:30 am at Luby's at Ingram Park Mall.

2010-2012

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867-6338

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680-5701

February Special Project: Eckhert Road Clean Up and Haven for Hope

We'll be collecting for Haven for Hope and next month's meeting.

In addition, we'll also have our first Eckhert Road Clean Up of the year after next month's meeting.

Any questions, contact Adam Castillo, adamcastillo55@yahoo.com

13th Annual Northwest Democrats Super Bowl Party/Fundraiser

February 5, 2012

Absolutely Everything Catering

4:00 – 9:00 pm

Authorized & Paid for by the Northwest Democrats

To submit an article or other info, email Jacob Middleton at:
TXDemocrat@satx.rr.com

A Few 'Joyce' Words

by Joyce Dorrycott

Normally, we Texans would now be working hard for our candidates for the March Primary. Instead, we wait daily for another announcement of a delay in just when that primary will be held. Currently the date is set for April 3rd. However, we are still awaiting both the Supreme Court's ruling on Republican Attorney General Greg Abbott's appeal against the maps drawn by a Republican dominated Federal Court in San Antonio which, God forbid, showed some modicum of fairness in establishing legislative and congressional districts in Texas. The Supreme Court heard the arguments on January 9th, but the decision has not come down as yet.

But, that is not the only decision we await. Another federal court in Washington should make its decision on February 3rd about the challenge several groups have made on the maps drawn by the super majority Republican dominated state legislature. This challenge is based on the grounds that this map violates the Voting Rights Act. It is possible we will get no decision from the Supreme Court until this federal court makes its decision because there will surely be an appeal to the Supreme Court by the losing party in this decision. At some point there will be a final decision concerning which map to use or whether our local federal court will draw new maps or adjust one of the older ones which will involve more time.

Meanwhile, constituents have no idea which candidates in these races to support because the candidates are not sure which districts they will be running in. But, there is another group of people equally confused, yet they are responsible for conducting the primary – our county election offices. They have numerous rules concerning when and how these primaries are held – once all the courts are finished with their deliberations.

And, one factor not being talked very much is the cost of all this delay. Whether it is the costs of all the court time, costs to political parties which must stay open and prepared for any last minute decision, or more importantly, the cost to having county elections offices having to perform additional functions other than just conducting the primaries – all these additional costs are paid by the same group – US. Now, we know that gerrymandering (which is indeed the case in the map produced by the Republican-controlled legislature) during redistricting is nothing new. Both parties do it. But, it is particularly egregious in a year when Texas gets 4 new congressional seats based on the increase in population in our state. And, what group brought those new seats to Texas? Primarily, minorities. If drawn with even a minute degree of fairness, Hispanics would have been assured of two or three seats and African Americans of one.

Republicans, fearful such districts would produce more Democrats in the congressional delegation, instead drew these seats in favor of Republicans. Any look at the map produced by the Republican controlled state legislature reveals such strange shapes that even the father of gerrymandering, Elbridge Gerry, would have been surprised. No wonder there were almost immediate challenges from minority groups.

So who is to blame for this debacle – a greedy Republican dominated (101-49) legislature which drew the original map? a Republican Attorney General who challenged the map drawn by the federal court in San Antonio (which while Republican 2-1 drew a fairer map) to Justice Antonin Scalia, or a Republican governor anxious to run for president? And what can we do about it?

We can REMEMBER! Remember when you go to vote in the primary whenever it is held, and remember when you vote in November.

Something Wicked This Way Comes

by Jacob Middleton

There is no way around it...something very bad and very nefarious is happening in Congress. And it's on a bi-partisan basis. Right now two bills are working their way through each house of Congress. In the House, we have SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act sponsored by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX)) and in the Senate we have PIPA (Protect Intellectual Property Act sponsored by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)). If it isn't already obvious, these bills are internet-related and are supposed to target illegal online activity. Let me make no bones about these are bad bills. Since we've just come through the holidays, let me paraphrase Ebenezer Scrooge and say both these bills should be boiled in their own pudding and have a stake of holly driven through each of them.

This space is hardly enough to go into full detail about all the bad of these bills; visit americancensorship.org to learn more about these bills. In any case, these bills are being pushed by big industry, especially the entertainment industry. There's a great write-up by someone who works in the entertainment industry that goes through some of the faults of these two bills. Marta Evry is a freelance film editor, who currently works on the ABC show Castle, and is a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. To read Marta's full post visit: <http://calitics.com/diary/14115/confessions-of-a-hollywood-professional-why-i-cant-support-the-stop-online-piracy-act>

Her post makes several points, including the fact that SOPA/PIPA Interferes with United State Foreign Policy, SOPA/PIPA Interferes with US Cyber Security, and SOPA/PIPA Places all the Burden for Enforcement on US Websites and Businesses.

You're probably thinking these bills don't affect me. They only target illegal activity online. Guess what, you're likely wrong. If you have a computer or a laptop, you likely have some sort of anti-virus, anti-spyware software on your computer like Norton Security or McAfee. Marta Evry points out that this bill would allow targeting software to go after, "...the same security software we use to keep our personal computers safe from malware, networked businesses safe from denial-of-service attacks and even payments to online financial service providers like PayPal safe from theft..." So because the people writing this bill either don't understand the internet or have simply used the language provided by the entertainment industry, we all have to pay the price. So I can't keep my computer safe if these bills pass, because having anti-virus software to protect my computer would be ridiculously targeted as something illegal.

Locally, Rep. Lloyd Doggett has come out against SOPA (I say locally because the maps are still up in the air). Rep. Lamar Smith is SOPA's sponsor, so he's for it. My question, what are the positions of our other Congressmen and what are the positions of our candidates for Congress?

Rep. Charlie Gonzalez? Rep. Henry Cuellar? Rep. Quico Canseco?

District 20 candidates: Joaquin Castro? Ezra Johnson? District 21 candidate: Elaine Henderson?

District 23 candidates: John Bustamante? Pete Gallego?

District 35 candidates: Ciro Rodriguez? Sylvia Romo? Patrick Shearer?

And for all you candidates and officeholders, from an article in Roll Call, here's a fun thing that will be perfectly legal if these bills pass: *Imagine you are running for Congress in a competitive House district. You give a strong interview to a local morning news show and your campaign posts the clip on your website. When your opponent's campaign sees the video, it decides to play hardball and sends a notice to your Internet service provider alerting them to what it deems "infringing content." It doesn't matter if the content is actually pirated. The ISP has five days to pull down your website and the offending clip or be sued. If you don't take the video down, even if you believe that the content is protected under fair use, your website goes dark.*

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**Live Auction During
Halftime. Items include:**

**Breakfast with Rep.
Charlie Gonzalez**

**Gift Certificates from
Allied Advertising**

Leather Jackets