

# Eau Claire County Democratic Party Coffee Klatch Notes

Thursday, January 17, 2019

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Present: Jeanie Aloia, Bob Andruszkiewicz, Marjorie Bunce, Carol Craig (facilitator), Carolyn Dunning, Marlo Fields (from Ron Kind's office), Ann Francis, Judy Gatlin, Bonnie Golden, Barbara Gosch, Terry Goserud, Gail Halmstad, Ann Heywood, Gloria Hochstein, Daniel Hoy, Pat Kreitlow, Linda Lodoce, Ann McKinley, Mike O'Brien, Connie Russell (recorder), Liz Spencer, Vic Sorenson, Kathy Tuttle, Bob Wojnowski, Eleanor Wolf (25)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Next Coffee Klatch:** Thursday, January 24, 10 a.m. – 12 Noon; Resource Center, 440 Broadway St. Come join a lively conversation, plus a viewing and discussion of the documentary, "[Cowspiracy](#): The Sustainability Secret," a film showing how animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation, water consumption and pollution, is responsible for more greenhouse gases than the transportation industry, and is a primary driver of rainforest destruction, species extinction, habitat loss, topsoil erosion, ocean dead zones, and virtually every other environmental ill. Yet it goes on, almost entirely unchallenged.

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebrations:** If you missed the MLK Celebration at the state capital, watch on [Wisconsin Eye](#)

**Post-Midterm Elections Listening Session and Potluck:** Tuesday, January 22, 6 – 9 p.m.; Resource Center, 440 Broadway St. 6 – 7:30 will be a potluck supper and viewing of the Governor's State of the State address at 7 p.m., followed by a listening session with DPW Chair Martha Laning. This event will be in lieu of the monthly membership meeting.

## **Community Discussion on Excessive Supervision in Wis; + State Budget Advocacy Training**

Wednesday, January 23; 5 – 7 p.m.; Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 421 S. Farwell St. Join JONAH, WISDOM, Close MSDF and ExPO for this special event that will include a presentation on Columbia University Justice Lab's paper on mass supervision in Wisconsin and the testimonies of people who have been directly impacted by Wisconsin's horrific, racist system of mass supervision. Following the presentation will be a state 2019 budget advocacy training led by organizers in JONAH and EXPO.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Congratulations! Vic Sorenson is being inducted into the Ski Jumping Hall of Fame for all of his work in supporting the sport.
- You're invited! Pat Kreitlow, newly-elected chair of the **Chippewa County Democrats**, invited all Eau Claire Dems to join their gatherings. They hold monthly business meetings 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on the third Thursdays on the third floor of the Metropolitan Building, 103 N. Bridge St., downtown Chippewa Falls. They are also planning to start a Coffee Klatch-type meeting on Tuesday mornings and regular Happy Hour get-togethers. This is a part of the effort to have more regional connections among the surrounding counties' Democrats. Pat said he is working on organizing a retreat for county officers.
- **Volunteers Needed:**
  - A few people are needed on Wednesday, January 23, at 9 a.m. for about 1 ½ hours to help prepare the annual direct appeal fund raising mailing.
  - Anyone willing to bring food (soup, casseroles) for volunteer canvassers on Saturdays, should contact the office or Ann McKinley. Food will be needed most Saturdays from now until the April 2. Items should be brought into the Resource Center before 11:30 a.m.

## DISCUSSION

### **Marsy's Law**

A proposal which has been making its way through the Wisconsin legislature – Assembly Joint Resolution 1/Senate Joint Resolution 2 – is intended to ensure equal rights for crime victims. During the last legislative session, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin cleared "first consideration" in the Wisconsin Legislature with broad

bipartisan support. The next step is to pass the Senate and Assembly for a second time on “second consideration” and then be put to the voters for ratification. In order to be placed on the ballot in April 2019, the legislation must be approved by both the Senate and Assembly by Tuesday, January 22. It has cleared legislative committees in the Senate and the Assembly and could be scheduled for a floor vote in each chamber. However, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reports that Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke told members on January 17 that the chamber wouldn’t take up the amendment on January 22, saying this proposal to change the state constitution is significant and the new Assembly members haven’t spent a lot of time studying it. So, the proposal may be on hold for now.

Proponents of the law argue:

- Crime victims, and families of crime victims (who become victims by association) should have equal rights to those who are accused of victimizing the family.
- Marsy’s Law for All argues that the US Constitution and every state constitution have a detailed set of rights for people who are accused of crimes, but the US Constitution and 15 state constitutions do not have a list of rights for victims of crime.

Opponents argue:

- Most of the “rights” being argued for are not too different from laws already in place. Specifically, the Wisconsin Legislature has passed a motion to amend Article I, Section 9(m) of the Wisconsin Constitution, which deals with the victims of crimes, for example, notifying victims (or family of victims) when the offender is free. We already have a Crime Victims’ Bill of Rights. Wisconsin is recognized as having some of the strongest statutory rights for victims in the country.
- The accused have the right to face their accuser and have due process of law. Marsy’s Law protects all “accusers” and severely limits the accused (and innocent by law) access information required to defend against false allegations. It says victims shall be entitled “*to refuse an interview, deposition, or other discovery request made by the accused or any person acting on behalf of the accused.*” This would be a facial violation of the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states: “*In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right...to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor...*” The US Supreme Court has emphasized how fundamental and vital it is under our Constitution for people accused of crimes to have all exculpatory evidence. Many people have been exonerated after exculpatory evidence has been found, sometimes years after the conviction.
- In some cases, it will be difficult to determine who is the “victim.” Could police officers be shielded by this law?
- Others states that have passed this law are being challenged and are having problems with enforcing the law. For example, hearings of the accused are delayed if the “victim” is not able to attend the hearing.
- This would costly to implement.

Related Programs & Articles:

[WPR: The Arguments For and Against Marsy's Law in Wisconsin](#)

[Pew Research article](#)

[ACLU Article](#)

Statement on Senator Jeff Smith’s [legislative website](#)

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign’s [article](#) about why this a “flawed” proposal.

### **Candidates and Elected Officials**

The situation with the Marcy’s Law proposal brought up the challenges for elected officials who have constituencies that might hold divided opinions on issues. Sometimes, a party may be divided within its ranks. The important thing is for citizens to respectfully voice their opinions and let lawmakers know they are concerned about those issues. Members noted that some lawmakers are responsive to constituents and others are not.

### **Local candidates are invited to Klatch.**

We will attempt to make sure all local candidates for offices this spring know that they are welcome to attend a Klatch gathering to have a conversation. Note: the EC Dems do not endorse candidates.

## Voters as Consumers

It's often necessary to really dig deep to figure out corporate political affiliations. Some companies deliberately donate to both political parties. Beyond campaign donations, however, we should look at whether they have supported "good neighbor" actions, or do they lobby for tax laws that short-change local taxpayers, or endorse deregulation that threatens clean water?

## Congress

### Government Shut-Down

Many aspects of the shut-down were discussed and how it is causing harm to many segments of our community. Agencies that provide services to low-income families are particularly hurt because access to federal grants has been blocked. [Polls](#) have been showing mixed results, but the trend is that more people are blaming Trump for the shutdown.

Immigration and the effectiveness of more walls along the border was discussed.

- Recommended Reading: [Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen](#) by Jose Antonio Vargas (September 2018)

### Increase in number of women and younger members of Congress

Optimism was expressed about the number of younger members of Congress and the increase in the number of women (Democrats, mostly). This shift bodes well for the infusion of fresh, creative ideas and for having members who at least understand how smart phones work.

### Healthcare

This is an issue that Democrats need to keep front and center in messaging. At the state level, Evers has told the Republicans that he will push for accepting a federal Medicaid expansion, as he promised, even though GOP leaders say it's a "nonstarter" for them.

Republicans have been moving their version of a bill to cover pre-existing conditions through the legislature. Evers and Democrats are opposing the measure because the law will not provide the same level of protection as is available under the ACA. Robin Vos has said, for example, that he doubted his members would support requirements related to pregnant women, new mothers and prescription drug costs because they are not related to pre-existing conditions.