

Plymouth Area Democrats
June Meeting Minutes June 21, 2017
Plymouth Regional Senior Center

Board Members Present:

Joyce, Sarah, Francesca, Susan. (Emma is in Italy!)

6:05 Joyce called the meeting to order.

Recognition of Elected Officials Present:

Kevin Maes

Steve Rand

Suzanne Smith

Tink Taylor

Martha Richards

Catherine Mulholland

Catherine Friedman

Bill Bolton

Fran Taylor

Carolyn Friedman

Moved, Seconded and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the May meeting as posted on the PAD website.

Joyce requests that every attendee contribute \$2.00 toward the rental of the Senior Center.

Suzanne Smith is collecting signatures for the health care bill.

PAD Summer Activities:

- This is the last general membership meeting until September.

- Ashland Fourth of July parade. Please come march with us.
- Saturday, July 8 at Warren Old Home Day with Sue Ford, et. al. Martha suggests that Joyce reach out to Charlie Chandler
- Labor Day Block Party, September 4, from 10 AM to 3 PM at the Plymouth Town Common. Joyce requests volunteers for this event. Francesca is the point person for this event. Volunteers should reach out to Francesca.

Special Election

PAD is trying to coordinate a forum for all candidates, but the Republicans are thus far non-responsive. The tentative date for this event is July 11 in Bristol.

Legislative Update

- Steve Rand:

Tomorrow, the Keno-garten bill will come to a vote. Keno proceeds will be used to fund full day kindergarten. Optics are difficult; I will be voting no.

- Kevin Maes

Kevin spoke of other larger more complex funding needs. Medicaid loss will devastate many children throughout the system, as well as 50,000 other people throughout the state.

Taxes need to be increased! We need an educated work force and a strong school system. "Our biggest export from NH is our kids." We are going backwards in educational funding

- Suzanne Smith

Education funding is flat funded; essentially the university system funding is going down.

The Keno-kindergarten bill will assure \$3700 per student for full day kindergarten. (\$1100 per year will come from the state regardless of Keno bill. If the bill passes, additional funding will be forwarded to municipalities.)

Dan Feltes will speak more about the budget.

Senate Bill 66. Allows a person to be prosecuted for manslaughter or homicide for the death of a fetus. There was a huge change to the bill, so there will be another vote on the bill tomorrow. Suzanne will vote no.

Positively, we did defeat Right to Work. We have voted bills to protect women from violence.

Speaker Lou from the ACLU

- In general, people strongly endorse civil rights, though it is a nebulous topic. These are the rights that the ACLU takes very seriously. I have been active in the ACLU for over 50 years.
- May 4, 1970 – Kent State shootings. This was an important event in my life and part of the reason I am active in the ACLU.
- Today we have 1.5 million members, and an affiliate in NH, a substantial budget for promoting and defending civil liberties. Five active defenders in NH. We speak with lawmakers often. We will litigate right to the Supreme Court.
- Sample cases:
 - o We are working on a voting rights bill that focuses on the elderly and disabled who vote via absentee ballot. The moderator has the responsibility to match the ballot and the associated envelope. If the moderator believe that the signatures do not match, there is no redress or appeal. This case includes only a few dozens of these votes. We expect to win this case.
 - o We are working on a case that addresses the rights of an incarcerated person to receive a sketch or drawing (from his/her child). At the same time, sketches can be drawn with ink laced with drugs. The ACLU is looking for a solution.
 - o Debtors Prison. Those who cannot pay a fine go to debtor's prison. This unfairly targets the underprivileged.
 - o Taping of a police action should be allowed, while the State of NH feels that taping of a police action should not be allowed. This is ongoing.
 - o Ballot selfies have been posted online. The Ballot Selfie has been declared illegal. The ACLU battled this and won.
- The ACLU is vigilant whenever it believes that civil liberties are being eroded.

Introduction by Joyce. Welcome, Dan!

Speaker Dan Feltes

- o The proposed budget gives massive tax cuts to the wealthy elites and short changes corrections, workforce training, health care, education, high

education. In general, this budget provides 22 million in tax cuts for the wealthiest. (more than the funding for the opioid epidemic). This budget will likely spend a net LESS than last year to address the opioid epidemic.

- o On child protection, funds currently fund case assessment workers at DCYF, but does NOT fund the recommended wrap around services to prevent further child abuse.

- o The proposed budget does not provide additional funding for mental health workers. Mental Health workers have not had a pay increase since 2006. These workers need raises to retain good employees for this important work.

- o NH has codified for the first time that no support could be made for women's health services.

- o 53,000 Granite Staters have health insurance because of Medicare Expansion. The current legislation requires a federal reauthorization of the expansion, which puts these 53,000 citizens at risk.

- o It is anticipated that the Republican Freedom Caucus will vote to support the budget; this will provide sufficient votes to pass the proposed budget.

- o Elevate your voice!

- o Question:

- o What do you surmise is Gov. Sununu's long term career goal?

- I don't know. Gov. Sununu certainly uses rhetoric similar to that of the President.

- o How do we motivate democrats to be aware, involved, and to take action (particularly in the upcoming mid-terms).

- Speak out! Post to Facebook. Write a Letter to the Editor, then upload to facebook. Collective action. As much as these are frustrating time, talk about the issues! Keep the momentum up!

- o Apprenticeship programs are critical to education. These need to be reinstated. What do we need to do?? Why did the NH business community not speak out loudly against the loss of workforce development?

- Speak out!

- The budget moves to far right hand of center. We must point out the injustices of this legislation!

- o Do we have a strong candidate for Governor? (Martha Richards posed this question.)

- Dan suggested that there is "a long time" prior to the election; a strong candidate may be identified.

Joyce encouraged everyone to write a letter to the editor in this slow news season.

Sarah encouraged everyone to “like” and “share” PAD posts! Sarah welcomed people to reach out to her if someone wants to post some blogs.

Joyce suggested that PAD go to the BRISTOL Fourth of July parade because of the special election, rather than the Ashland parade.

Francesca presented Lou and Dan with a thank you gifts for their time tonight.

Joyce adjourned the Meeting at 7:30.

