

Plymouth Area Democrats

September Meeting Minutes September 20, 2017

Plymouth Regional Senior Center

PAD Board members present: Joyce W, Susan M, Francesca D, Emma V.

6:05 Joyce called the meeting to order and welcome the group. Joyce requested a moment of silence to recognize Bob and Mary Crowley, strong Democrats and community leaders as well as Veronica, one of our founding members, as well as Suzanne Sidman. We also remembered the victims of the recent hurricanes and earthquake.

Joyce updated the group on the Board's efforts to design more robust meetings, including two speakers (instead of one), etc.

She us on recent special election results.

PAD had a great turnout on the mid-term Democratic convention; the convention had a number of inspiring speakers regarding gerrymandering and voter rights.

Joyce also reviewed the Board's efforts to attend local Old Home Days, etc. Chairman Buckley requested that ALL democratic contributions stay in state; he requested that all donations from NH stay in NH to assure that our delegation continues to be a strongly democrat presence.

Val announced Tuesday, October 3 at 845 AM there will be a demonstration in opposition to Northern Pass. The demonstration will be on the Plymouth Town Common during the SEC's site visit.

Emma presented the Treasurer's Report. She also reported that PAD will no longer be publishing the balance of our funds in response to a phishing attempt that occurred over the summer. All PAD members who would like financial information should contact Joyce or Emma.

Emma introduced the Honorable Sherry Frost. One of the silver linings of the past few months is the opportunity to find others who share progressive values. Sherry shares many of our progressive issues. She is an educator, a progressive, and we appreciate her dedication in traveling from Dover.

Sherry has been a registered independent for many years. She had occupied a far-left political position. She recently changed her political party affiliation and ran as Democrat for the House in Dover. She was elected in February. Her core values are against the concealed carry law and against “right to work” despite overwhelming testimony attempting to dissuade the passage of these laws. The laws were passed. “I am a woman with strong opinions and a salty vocabulary.” Sherry implores that we desperately need GOOD people to run for office. Get the young people involved. Do something little – just do something. Hold your ground.

Josh thanked Paul Phillips for his hard work and dedication. The election didn’t go as we had hoped, but we worked hard. We made great progress in Alexandria; a first house Democratic win. ONLY 28% of registered Democrats turned out to vote. This is a head’s up for 2018 AND 2020! We need to turn out Democratic voters!

Joyce introduced Dr. Dolkart, a physician at the Dartmouth School of Medicine and health care advocacy.

Dr. Dolkart reviewed a brief history of the health care policy in the US. (In the 1940’s and 1950’s, Blue Cross/Blue Shield was even, by design, a non-profit institution.) Medicare (over age 65), the Medicaid for impoverished, SCHIP for children, Affordable Care Act in 2010.

The US essentially pays about twice as much for comparable health care in other countries.

Today, two thirds of your health care premium for public funded health care programs that are inefficient and poorly designed.

Despite paying more, we are among the lowest value for dollar with regard to quality of health care. We actually spend more money on patient care, and patients actually have more doctor visits, yet have worse outcomes.

US ranks last among wealthy nations for infant mortality. We are among the worst in timeliness of care, life expectancy, etc.

Interestingly, countries that spend MORE on social services in support of health spend less on actual health care and have better long term health outcomes.

We have no controls over the cost of medication, unlike ANY other country on earth.

Why are things deteriorating?

Fewer people are insured by large companies.

Rising premiums (rising insurance premiums have been occurring well before the ACA)

Skyrocketing profits for insurance companies and pharmaceuticals

Large increases in administrative costs

Etc.

Of the people who go bankrupt, more than 70% had insurance before the health crisis. (This is primarily due to very poor coverage that could not handle the costs of their catastrophic health event.)

The Graham-Cassidy has until the end of September to pass a reconciliation bill that would repeal the ACA. This would repeal the Medicaid expansion, bringing Block Grants to states. It withdraws the individual and employer mandates which will ultimately kill the program; an insurance program depends on healthy people being in the risk pool. This program does retain coverage for kids until age 26.

Single Payer System. Medicare is a great example of a single payer system (though this system is age-based), there is one single funding source. Meanwhile an agency reviews quality of care, costs, delivery, etc.

Single Payer, the US version of a single payer system. Financed through progressive taxes, not from out of pocket expenses.

Medicare for All, Bernie Sander's bill, includes coverage for everyone from birth, covers primary and preventative care, reproductive care, vision and dental, and prescription drugs. No premiums, no deductibles, etc. One difference with Bernie's bill is that it has a four year build up, by expanding medicare slowly from 65, to 55, etc. Kids under 18 are covered upon passage. The VA and the Indian Health system would remain intact (for political reasons).

Medicare overhead is about 3%. Private insurance companies overhead are 13 to 18%.

It is our job to talk to Trump voters about how successful Medicare has been... and that we want to have our kids and others to enjoy it as well. Medicare for all!

Some other countries do allow people to purchase additional supplemental insurance to provide "Cadillac" amenities.

The next general meeting is October 18. Please plan to attend!

Joyce closed the meeting at 7:48.