



Democrats of Oro Valley

Newsletter
September
2021

NIL CARBORUNDUM ILLEGITIMI

Serving Democrats in Oro Valley and Greater Northwest Tucson
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The liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerated the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than the democratic state itself. That in its essence is fascism: ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or any controlling private power. *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

2021 Dues Still Only \$20

DOV Tee Shirts \$20

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BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE



SEPTEMBER ZOOM MEETING - Guest Speakers from the League of Women Voters



The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson

Please join the Democrats of Oro Valley for a video conference meeting with the League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that works to empower and educate citizens on ways to improve government. They will be explaining their advocacy for a fair redistricting process and will give you tips on how to advocate for your preferred district map.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson was established on May 16, 1941, by a group of 34 women including Margaret Sanger, a nurse and founder of the American Birth Control League, which later became the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

In its 70+ year history, some of the League's major achievements include:

- Advocated for an Arizona state law allowing women to serve on juries.
- Advocated for the Tucson Master Plan on urban growth.
- Advocated for an Arizona state law for merit selection of judges.
- Advocated for the Arizona Motor Voter Law which made it possible to register to vote when obtaining a driver's license.
- Advocated for an Arizona state law funding free textbooks for Arizona students.
- Advocated for an Independent Redistricting Commission initiative.
- Developed program positions on energy, education finance, clean air, water resources, affordable housing, money in politics, and charter schools.
- Ensured that every vote was counted in the November 2018 election by joining in the Amicus Brief.

Petition Update (Please read even if you have signed!) by Tom Meconi

With the Supreme Court's recent action, it is even more apparent that access to free and fair elections is the linchpin to saving our democracy. We have less than **2 weeks** to stop the far right's unmitigated evisceration of voting rights. The good news is that hundreds of our fellow Oro Valley neighbors have gone to the library, the aquatic center, the community center, homes of friends and neighbors and signed the seven petitions: the three voting rights referenda, the three-education fund/tax grab referenda, and the Dark Money transparency initiative. The bad news is that our only chance at success will be to maintain the outpouring of support until the upcoming deadlines.

Signed petitions need to be submitted no later than **September 18th** for AZ Deserves Better and no later than **September 26th** for Invest in AZ/Ed in order for them to be tallied and sent on to Phoenix. So, we need to reach out one last time to all the friends, neighbors, family members, fellow workers, your yoga classmates, your doctor's office (yes, we really had a doctor set aside some time so he and his office staff could sign!). It is amazing how many people share our belief in a vibrant, accessible democracy.

Please continue to encourage like-minded voters to sign the referendum petitions. Also please consider circulating petitions yourself. This is our last and only chance of stopping these destructive bills from becoming law. Please contact us at jmmecc@gmail.com to find out how you can help.

Petition Signing at the OV Library Makes the News

Right click on the arrow below + Open link to watch the coverage.



KVOA Channel 4 Tucson Interviews

Top Right: Tom Meconi, DOV Leadership Committee member

Bottom Right: Dana Offerman, Indivisible Tucson Action Alliance Chair, and DOV member Beth Cole.

Sinema Redux by Tom Meconi

Dear DOV members,

We are nothing if not persistent. Sinema has ignored our personal pleas, our first letter from the Club, and just about everything else we can think of. Either she steps up as the Democrat she ran as and saves the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, infrastructure bill, et al., or, for reasons we can only guess at, she sides with the Republicans and their voter suppression, anti-climate change agenda. We are prepared to make one more attempt by sending her the following letter unless the membership votes to the contrary at Monday's meeting.

Dear Senator Sinema,

We are writing once again as long-time supporters, contributors, fellow Democrats, and constituents. You spoke at a Democrats of Oro Valley meeting during your primary campaign of 2018, and we embraced your message of Democratic progress and a blue Arizona. We were one of the many statewide communities that organized, canvassed, telephoned, campaigned, and contributed on your behalf. We believed in your message. With current membership at 155 and a mailing list of over 500, we are once again imploring you to fulfill your 2018 promises.

Your calls for bipartisanship would ring truer if this was the 1950s or any time before Republicans started weaponizing and monetizing everything from election results to horse de-wormers. Despite all the setbacks in recent years and the systemic threat from the right to maintain minority rule across the country, it appears as if you are turning your back on your electorate who embraced your call for change.

This is the second time we have written. Although our first letter went unanswered, we are appealing to you once again as we are now on the brink of a state-by-state unraveling of the American voting process that's intended to accomplish one thing: to make sure that if the Republicans get as close in 2024 as they did in 2020, they will be able to orchestrate a successful insurrection.

The current sentiment of our members is clear. You will lose most of their votes should you maintain your current course. And it seems delusional to think their votes and those of thousands of Democrats across the state will be made up by so called moderates. "Moderate" is just another buzz word used to hide the minority's tyranny. The Republican minority is counting on the filibuster, a radical Supreme Court, widespread gerrymandering, and an antiquated Electoral College to maintain their rule, and for some reason you will not join with fellow Democrats to do whatever is in your power to stop this.

Could it be something as simple as money? Is the attraction of corporate donations so great that you would reject the principles that brought you to this point? We certainly hope not, but appearances seldom lie. It's not too late to reinvigorate your base and show them that they did not elect a Democrat in name only but the progressive who won our hearts in 2018.

They can easily be won back for 2024 and beyond but that requires action now. At its heart the filibuster is not some relic of bygone bipartisanship. It is just the opposite, a cudgel used to beat back equality and it needs be rejected for the sake of our voting rights, our economy, our Supreme Court, our very democracy.

We are imploring you to do the right thing, to side with the people who brought you to this point, the good-hearted, empathetic people who want nothing more than a country based on an open, accessible democracy, not a democracy in name only.

The Democrats of Oro Valley



TAKE BACK OUR COUNTRY FROM BIG BUSINESS *by Dee Maitland*

This article is in support of passage of the HR4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act of 2021. This Act would strengthen the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that was weakened by the Supreme Court in their 2013 decision in the case *Shelby County vs Holder*. There has been a 50-year long history of a corporate takeover of our nation and actions to suppress the vote. Mitt Romney said the quiet part out loud during his campaign for president against Obama: “Corporations are people too, my friend” and “There are 47 percent of the people ... who are dependent upon government ... And they will vote for this president no matter what. ... These are people who pay no income tax...I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.”

History

On August 23rd of this year, we “celebrated” the 50th anniversary of the Powell Memorandum. On August 23, 1971, soon-to-be Chief Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr wrote a memorandum to the United States Chamber of Commerce. Entitled “Attack on American Free Enterprise System,” the memo was in response to the multitude of laws passed between 1963 and 1969 during the presidency of President Lyndon B. Johnson that Powell considered seriously harmful to businesses. The list of bills included the:

- Voting Rights Act
- Civil Rights Act
- Truth-in-Lending Act
- Immigration and Nationality Services Act
- Economic Opportunity Act
- Social Security Act
- The Public Broadcasting Act
- Urban Mass Transportation Act
- High Speed Ground Transportation
- National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act
- Cigarette Labeling Advertising Act
- National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act
- Fair Packaging and Labeling Act
- Wholesale Meat Act
- Wholesale Poultry Products Act
- Service Contract Act
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Land Sales Disclosure Act
- Child Safety Act
- Flammable Fabrics Act
- Radiation Safety Act
- Elementary & Secondary Education Act

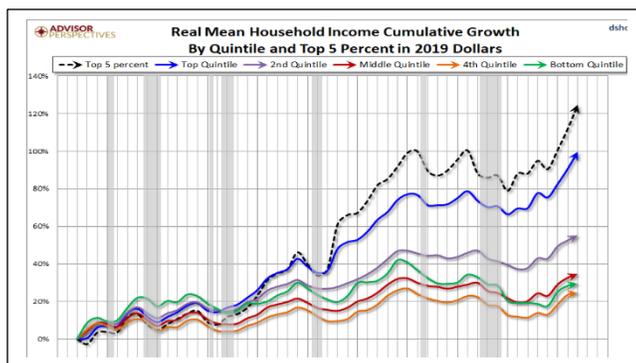
Whew! These 22 acts did four things: 1) provided equal treatment of minorities; 2) regulated multiple industries; 3) established new government agencies to oversee outcomes, and 4) increased the need for taxes.

Two other stakeholders during this time also need to be recognized: the John Birch Society (JBS) and the Koch family. Fred Koch, an oil company magnate, was one of the founders of the John Birch Society and his son Charles was an active member between 1961 and 1968. The John Birch Society was an ultra-conservative political advocacy group dedicated to fighting communism, championing limited government, and preserving white male supremacy by fighting the civil rights movement. It still exists today with a chapter in Phoenix. While the long list of laws above caused angst for JBS and the Koch family, the 11 additional environmental laws regulating the oil industry caused apoplexy:

- Water Quality Act
- Clean Air Act
- Endangered Species Preservation Act
- National Trails System Act
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act
- Solid Waste Disposal Act
- Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Aircraft Noise Abatement Act
- National Environmental Policy Act

It's not surprising that these 33 bills triggered the Powell Memorandum. He saw the threat to industry and called for businesses to use their money and influence to take the reins of government, education, media, and the legal system. The resulting movement was for small government, minimal taxes, eliminating labor unions and unregulated free enterprise, plus advancing laws that protected businesses and allowed them to profit from public goods. The Koch/John Birch Society added racism and elitism to the mix, dehumanizing the status of laborers and labeling the poor as unworthy of rights or regard.

The Powell-inspired power grab was wildly successful. It precipitated the creation of the Federalist Society, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the Heritage Foundation, Americans for Prosperity, the Republican Freedom Caucus, the Tea Party, and Fox News. The power of the United States Chamber of Commerce, American Enterprise Institute, and the National Rifle Association grew significantly. As a result of influence on politicians, the pattern of equalizing the trajectory of productivity and wages rising in tandem which was established after World War II was stopped. From the mid-1970s only the wealthy saw significant increases. This allowed them to fund politicians, media propaganda, universities, and Federalist Society judges to further their wealth, while the rest of us saw limited income growth and loss of political power:

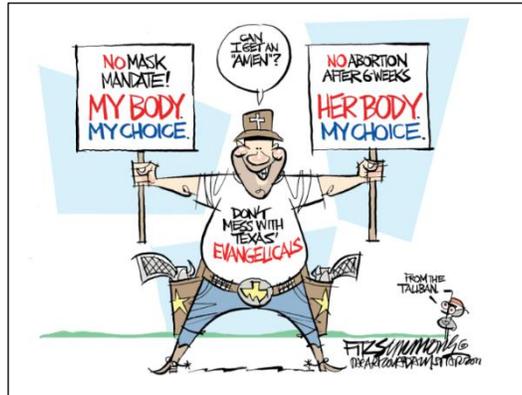


The most permanent damage that been done is in education. First, there was a push to defund state universities and public schools. For college students it meant a significant rise in tuition and the acquisition of major debt. For educators it was chilling. The capitalist disdain for labor changed universities from a predominance of tenured and full-time educators to a majority of underpaid part-time staff. We know what the results have been for public schools. Then, to establish influence on what was taught, the Kochs funded the establishment of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University (which championed economists Fredrick Hayak and James Buchanan Jr) and the 300+ Centers for the Philosophy of Freedom, including 3 in Arizona. These schools spawned a generation of true believers in the supremacy of free market capitalism; the poor being lazy takers; and the anti-tax pledges of Grover Norquist. The graduates went into finance and economics championing greed-is-good, winner-take-all policy positions that culminated with the elimination of the Glass-Steagall Act and the 2008 financial crisis. Finally, in 1982 the Federalist Society was founded by a group of students from the Yale Law School, Harvard Law School, and University of Chicago Law School with financial support from the Kochs who “wanted to challenge the liberal or left-wing ideology that they perceived to dominate most elite American law schools and universities”. This has resulted in the pro-business, anti-voter Supreme Court we suffer from today. Never forget Citizens United and “Corporations are people too, my friend”.

The Present

Thus, the Powell Memorandum template funded by big business codified into the law unregulated capitalism, limited government, white supremacy, patriarchy, shareholder value, and cruelty. Voter suppression laws, private takeovers of public services, defunding schools, an obscene growth of wealth for the top 5%, the rise of anti-vaxers/anti-maskers spreading death, the January 6th insurrection, financial support for anti-abortion vigilantes, and fraudits are all by-products. Powell inspired ownership of multiple media outlets spreading propaganda that resulted in militant minions who believe their loss of economic security is caused by Democrats, not by capitalists unwilling to pay a living wage or support social services, such as healthcare. The Texas abortion law is the perfect culmination of their

campaign. ALEC legislators supplied the written draft; Federalist Society judges on the Supreme Court gave it a pass; fanatical Evangelicals gained political power; the poor lost a constitutional right; the lives of 13-year-old incest victims are physically and financially crippled by unwanted pregnancies; women are properly dominated; and testosterone-fueled bullies get to own military weapons and play vigilantes. This is perfectly enshrined by our beloved Fitz:



Call to Action

There is only one way to stop 50 years of the deliberate corporate takeover of our country: **Pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act!** We are out-gunned and out-funded. Only by protecting and using our right to vote can we prevent our democracy from becoming an oligarchy. Its passage will reap many benefits:

- 1) Voter suppression bills written by ALEC and the Heritage Foundation and passed states will become void, including the three on the petitions we are circulating.
- 2) We can limit the power of Federalist Society judges who side with corporate interests and share the Republican Party's disdain for voters, women's autonomy, labor unions, and the poor. We can expand the court or restrict its use of the shadow docket, which allows court rulings without oral arguments.
- 3) It will allow Democrats to gain a nationwide majority. Polls consistently show that voters favor Democratic policies.
- 4) Under the Act we can challenge the gerrymandered districts currently being drawn by Republicans. The Center for American Progress published a report "that found that unfairly drawn congressional districts shifted, on average, a whopping 59 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 2012, 2014, and 2016 elections. That means that every other November, 59 politicians who would not have been elected based on statewide voter support for their party won anyway because the lines were drawn in their favor". The voters most unrepresented are Democrats. (Use ctrl + click to open the link for [report](#).)
- 5) We can rid ourselves of the filibuster. This would help mitigate the extreme population imbalance between a California Senator representing 19 million people and a Wyoming Senator representing 1.5% of that many. Currently, the top 25 most populated states represent 83.6% of voters, while the bottom 25 states represent only 16.4%, yet they can sabotage the will of the substantial majority. The filibuster allows tyranny by a tiny minority, not the slim minority Sinema would have us believe.
- 6) The Electoral College further allows for the tyranny of the minority by allocating 23% of electors to the states representing just 16.4% of the population. With Republicans threatening to have state legislators select electors instead of the voters, it may be time to eliminate this antiquated procedure.
- 7) We can pass laws to get rid of Dark Money. The Supreme Court ruled money is speech; it did not rule free speech could be anonymous.
- 8) We can pass laws that rid the Republican supported insurrectionists and vigilantes of their military weapons.

The road open to us to preserve our democracy, constitutional rights and economic well-being is through the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. Tell your legislators; donate if you can; write letters; share your support with friends and family; and **VOTE...** for Democrats!

The Best of Biden by *Jacolyn Marshall*

Afghanistan

- Biden stated that the war in Afghanistan no longer had a clear purpose that served our vital national interests. Thus, with the evacuation of over 124,000 people, America ended its longest war. The cost: 2,400 American lives and \$2 trillion, including billions that were funneled to Taliban forces.
- Biden pledged continued support of the Afghan people through diplomacy, international influence, and humanitarian aid. He pledged to continue to champion the human rights of women and young girls.
- The State Department announced that 100 countries, NATO, and the EU had received assurances from the Taliban that anyone with travel documents could still leave the country.
- Biden noted that ending the Afghanistan war is a crucial step in recalibrating American foreign policy to address the challenges posed by China, Russia, and counterterrorism, which pose a more potent threat to our national interests.
- Biden's foreign policy shifts from troops on the ground to the use of technological weapons, financial pressure, and diplomatic cooperation and coordination with international partners.

Health

- Biden administration is taking steps to require nearly all foreign visitors to be vaccinated for Covid. This is in addition to the requirement already in place that all travelers to US must show proof of a negative Covid test taken within 3 days of air travel to US.
- With FDA approval to the Pfizer vaccine, all military personnel are now required to get vaccinated under a plan laid out by the Pentagon and endorsed by Biden.
- Biden is seeking to expand home and community-based care as an alternative to nursing homes in a giant domestic agenda bill. Although nursing homes and long-care facilities account for a tiny proportion of the population, they account for 3 in 10 Covid-related deaths.
- Biden administration has approved a significant and permanent increase in the levels of food aid available to needy families, the largest single increase in the program's history.
- The EPA is banning the use of chlorpyrifos pesticide on food crops to safeguard farmworkers, their families, our communities, and our food supply.
- US health officials announced they will dispense Covid booster shots to all Americans to shore up their protection against the delta variant eight months after they had their second shot.
- US State Department announced a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest of a Chinese nationalist suspected in fentanyl trafficking.
- Biden directed the Secretary of Education to use all his oversight authority and take legal action for violations of safety against governors who prohibit school officials them from requiring masks.
- Biden's administration plans to launch an effort to ensure that women have access to safe and legal abortions as protected by *Roe v Wade*.

Housing

- CDC issued a new moratorium on evictions through October 3rd to help millions keep their homes as Covid spreads and states lag in releasing federal rental aid. Treasury Secretary Yellen stated that work is underway to ensure the federal housing aid makes it to renters and landlords.
- Biden's economics team intends to deliver 100,000 affordable housing units over 3 years by increasing mortgage availability and financing options through tax credits, loans, and grants. His broader economic agenda would lead to the construction and renovation of 2 million homes.

Jobs

- US has been adding 750,000 jobs per month for the last three months. Total job creation is nearly double that of any previous president, proof that the Biden plan is working.

Immigration

- Biden administration is changing how asylum claims are handled. Rather than being overseen by Immigration courts with a backlog of 1.3 million cases, routine cases will be overseen by asylum officers from US Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- The change will help those with legitimate claims for protection, while allowing officials to more quickly deal with those who do not qualify.

Climate Change

- Biden unveiled plan for more electric-powered vehicles in a nonbinding deal with most automakers to have electric, plug-in hybrid or hydrogen-electric vehicles make up half of US sales by 2030.
- Biden is taking steps to assess how climate change could harm financial markets with a 75-day comment period on how the impact could reshape the insurance sector. The request for information comes as the US is coping with the unmistakable costs of climate change, with wildfires in the west and Hurricane Ida in the south.

Rental Assistance Program Lags Behind: *A letter by Dan Sullivan, the Director of the Pima County Community & Workforce Development, in response to a question posed by DOV member Becky Masterson.*

Supervisor Scott asked me to reach out to you and answer your question regarding the Arizona Department of Economic Security's Emergency Rental Assistance Program. You are correct that DES is behind on its spending. As of this morning, DES has distributed \$13.74 million of its \$289 million allocation from the Department of the Treasury.

Things are going a lot better locally. Pima County is ahead of the rest of the state with distribution of funds, and it is easier for people to access funds through a joint County-City program. Together, Pima County and the City of Tucson received \$31.85 million for its combined Emergency Rental Assistance Program. As of this morning, our program has paid or obligated more than \$21.4 million, which is more than 70 percent of program funds and has helped 3,411 households avoid eviction. We anticipate local funds will be completely spent by the end of September.

Moving forward, with our colleagues from the City, we will be requesting funds from the DES program so that they are spent urgently and are not recaptured by the Department of Treasury. Additionally, there is a second allocation from the Treasury that we will also begin spending soon, totaling more than \$26 million between the County and the City.

I have been fascinated with and following these programs closely across the country. Many states and local governments are having a rough go of it. For example, New York State, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles are examples of many governments who haven't spent anything so far. On the other hand, places like Houston are doing very well. They have a consolidated County/City program similar to our program locally. Still, overall, the majority of the programs across the country are lagging behind.

Another example of the Pima County Board of Supervisors leading the way on this issue is the creation of the Office of Emergency Eviction Legal Services, which started last Monday, with Court Navigators who can help tenants with housing resources and legal assistance stationed directly at the Court. A major component is the ability to fast-track rental assistance applications for people in the eviction process.

Dan Sullivan, Director

Pima County Community & Workforce Development

P.S. It is so disheartening to know that the money is there and through ineptitude, disregard for Arizonan's well-being, or both that is not being spent, putting families' lives at risk. We keep seeing this over and over again - in mask/vaccine restrictions and withholding over a billion from public schools. It makes me sick.

A Public Service Announcement by Tom Meconi

You've seen them, perfectly normal-looking people packed into the produce section of your favorite grocery store, and not one of them is wearing a mask. Sure, we're all tired, but it's better than being sick and tired, Delta sick and tired. We continue to pay a dear price for the inaction and lies of the last administration. Who knows whether pushing election lies and not the vaccine prevented us from hitting herd immunity before Delta, but it's here and it's horrific. It's ripping through the unvaccinated and, to a much lesser extent, the vaccinated. We understood from the beginning that our only hope was to follow the science and embrace the sound advice of modern medicine. 637,000 dead and still counting. Don't become a statistic. Wear a mask, wash your hands, sanitize, limit indoor contacts, avoid crowds. Stay safe.

Use ctrl + click on the link below to watch our "Stay Safe"

<https://biteable.com/watch/3201095/8d65872d213c3e823d23db43ba5499f0>



DOV Hits the Road!

Kurt Ohlrich heads up our Adopt a Roadway Clean-up events. As our representative for the Department of Transportation, he organizes and sets up each of the Democrats of Oro Valley roadway clean-up efforts.

Here is our DOV Roadway Clean-up Crew in action. From left to right: Sandy Salz, Ken Smith, Brian Bickel, Mike Zinkin, Chris Dayton, Kurt Ohlrich, Kathryn Boyne, Mike Dayton, and Nancy Smith.

OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE BE GENEROUS HELP OUR LOCAL FOOD BANK SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

* Please consider donating some non-perishable food items or making a cash donation to one of our local food banks during this stressful time.

*The Democrats of Oro Valley care about the health and well-being of our community.

* Thanks to all of you who support our brave troops.

**Please donate any of these items to one of our local veterans groups for distribution: deodorant, shaving items, toothpaste, tooth brushes, pocket novels and puzzle books.*

October Meeting

Monday, October 11
6:30 pm

Speaker: Tom O'Halleran
CD 1 Representative

Topic: Legislative Update