

Siskiyou Democrats Grassroots News

Issue #11 – November 2019



WOW! What A Crowd!

The Siskiyou Democrats were out in force on Saturday, October 12! **Over 225 Democratic supporters** gathered to hear inspiring messages from our candidates – Audrey Denney, who is running for Congress (*above on stage*), and Elizabeth Betancourt, who is running for CA Assembly (*below*). Both are accomplished women of great integrity, and your local Democratic Central Committee is working hard to get out the vote for them in Siskiyou County. The money from this fundraiser supports our grassroots efforts to get them elected, so thanks to all who came or donated! (*More pictures on page 5.*)



VOTE!!! Your vote is VERY Important in the November 5, 2019 Special Election for Assembly

Elizabeth Betancourt (*left, on stage October 12*) is a candidate we can all be proud to support. Her expertise in water and forest management, and experience as a regenerative ag farmer/businesswoman, perfectly match the immediate needs of our district. Her policy positions include strong support for community colleges, growing job opportunities, and attracting medical professionals to D-1.

Over years of civic engagement and advocacy, Elizabeth has worked across party lines, business communities, and diverse interest groups to make sound policy and positive change. She's smart, principled, and determined, so let's do our best for her. <https://www.facebook.com/BetancourtforAD1/videos/474406119818053/>

The turnout for any special election is likely to be low, so we need everyone to vote and to do whatever we can to encourage our friends and relatives to vote as well. Make your voice heard! **VOTE!!**

What's Happening

SISKIYOU DEMOCRATIC GRASSROOTS
Tuesday, November 5, 2019: Yreka YMCA or
Tuesday, November 12, 2019: Mt. Shasta Library

Meetings begin at 6:00pm and everyone is welcome!
The same agenda is used for both meetings – so attend either one and get involved! It's fun!

In special election GOTV efforts, we've sent over 4,000 handwritten postcards and made over 2,000 calls. Now let's VOTE!

In This Issue

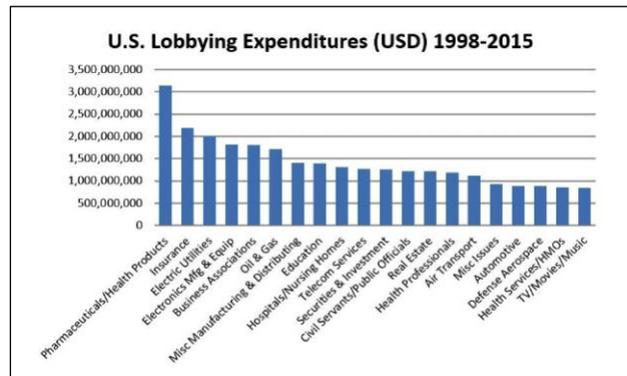
As promised, SDGNews returns this month to health care, focusing on the particular practical and policy challenges in insuring care for rural communities like ours. As always, we compare Audrey Denney's proposals with Doug LaMalfa's. And we offer the perspective of local nurse practitioner Kate Timbers on her experiences in the field. Also included are thoughts on the current impeachment proceedings from Audrey Denney and Abigail Van Alyn.

Health Insurance in District One

In a research paper published in 2016 by the National Institutes of Health, this question was asked of research subjects: “Why do you oppose the Affordable Care Act?” Here’s what researchers found, in spite of the almost universal popularity of government mandated Medicare:

“[Many] oppose the mandate that all Americans must have health insurance (the individual mandate), and they oppose a government role in health care. ... The opposition to a government role in health care is based on the fact that that the vast majority of our citizens do not trust their government. ... The overwhelmingly negative TV ads against the ACA by the Republican candidates in the elections of 2012 and 2014 have had a major impact on Americans' views of the ACA. More than 60% of Americans have stated that most of what they know about the ACA came from watching TV.”
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25731135>

However, in Siskiyou County interviews with local healthcare providers and administrators show that the ACA and expanded Medicaid have had a positive effect on county healthcare delivery and on health outcomes. More people are covered, preventive care has increased, and serious illnesses are addressed sooner and more often. But in terms of ongoing systemic problems (high costs, inconsistent regulation, reimbursements) all roads lead back to the insurance and pharmaceutical companies. Their imperative to control markets, pricing, and government oversight comes from one source: as private corporations, they must show profits above their enormous overhead and CEO salaries in the multi-millions. So, the problems we face in moving toward universal coverage are misinformation about that, often fostered by these companies themselves, and distrust of the government. In Siskiyou County and much of rural America, addressing those is a tall order. In spite of the successes of the ACA, ideological opposition to any government role remains strong.



Then where do our candidates stand? In the last issue, we broadly outlined their positions. Here’s a closer look:



Denney’s View

Audrey Denney addresses rural health care and insurance issues with the same complex thinking she brings to every policy position. She supports an approach that works first with the existing ACA to lower costs and close loopholes, then moves to a single payer plan.

She understands the interplay between broadband and telehealth, between student loan forgiveness and education for doctors and nurses, between infrastructure and attracting health professionals, and other economic opportunities, to our rural areas.

For more, see: <https://audreyforcongress.com/issues/healthcare-rural-health/>

La Malfa’s View

Following the lead of his Freedom Caucus, Doug LaMalfa’s positions are largely ideological. He wants to repeal the ACA while having only vague aspirations to offer in its place.



“I support repealing Obamacare and replacing it with reforms that lower the cost of care and put patients back in charge of their health care decisions.” For specific rural problems, he supports grant funding for health centers and doctors’ education, without mentioning the many obstacles to attracting doctors to rural communities. And the words “insurance industry” and “Big Pharma” are not in his vocabulary.

A Perspective: Living Uninsured in Rural America

By Kate Timbers, FNP – Mt. Shasta

In the United States, people die because of lack of access to health care. As a nurse practitioner working in rural areas for the past 17 years, I have seen the real human costs of our broken system, and it breaks my heart. A few years ago, when The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was passed, I was working in a community clinic in rural Arizona, a state with a Republican governor and legislature. Under the ACA, states could choose whether to expand Medicaid to cover more of the population with federal dollars. Many “red” states opted not to do that. Our legislature had voted not to expand Medicaid, and we were waiting to see if our governor would veto this decision.

For several of my patients this was a life or death decision, not just politics. Some were clients not covered by Medicaid because they were childless adults. One was a young woman in her 20s with bone cancer, who was in terrible pain. Another was a man in his 50s who had lung cancer and needed surgery. Previously, I had a client with cardiomyopathy who received a settlement from disability. This made him ineligible for Medicaid, and so he lost his spot on the transplant list. A father with young children, he passed away before he could get back on Medicaid. Thankfully for others like him, the governor overrode the legislature and signed the Medicaid expansion.

Many people believe that those without insurance can go to clinics for care. In Arizona, I was working in a Federally Qualified Health Clinic, that can accept uninsured patients. These clinics do a fantastic job, but they can’t provide MRIs, surgery, chemotherapy, heart transplants, or most specialty care. Others believe that people without insurance can go to the ER. Under the EMTALA Act*, hospitals are required to stabilize a client but not to provide ongoing treatment or medication. Insurance may not cover the ER physician’s fee and often will not cover an ambulance.

Then we have the problem of those under-insured, or with astronomical deductibles. I worked for a while in an urgent care center. One insured patient had severed a finger using a table saw. We sent him to the ER, but he couldn’t afford to pay the ambulance fee, so he drove himself. Understandably, he was driving erratically and was pulled over by police. Another case was a young man who arrived with a concussion after a head injury. He urgently needed a CAT scan, so I sent him to the ER. He refused to go because he had a \$5000 deductible. It’s terrible to see people suffer like this unnecessarily. And it’s terrible to imagine that we might do even worse under something like Trumpcare.

So how do we compare, in my experience, with other countries? For years I would go annually to Guatemala,** to volunteer with the Flying Doctors. I remember a woman who had an extremely uncomfortable but non-life-threatening gynecological issue. “I can’t see a doctor,” she said. “I have no money.” I took her to one of the Guatemalan medical residents, who assured her that everything would be covered. Guatemala is very poor, not one of the “developed countries” so often cited in health insurance discussions. If Guatemala can manage to cover the uninsured, surely we can do this for our citizens.



Left: A rural clinic in Guatemala, where everyone is covered. Right: In the US, Care Force doctors treat the uninsured.



*EMTALA, enacted into federal law in 1986, requires that patients receive emergency services regardless of ability to pay. But these services are seriously limited.

** “The Government of Guatemala, through the Ministry of Health and the Guatemalan Institute for Social Security, is committed to universal, free health care for its citizens. In most rural areas, health care for underserved, vulnerable populations are offered largely through the public sector.” – USAID

Thoughts on Impeachment

A Statement from the Audrey Denney Campaign

“For the first time in history, an impeachment investigation is occurring through bipartisan committees of our elected members of Congress, instead of hidden grand juries with zero elected member involvement. The idea that this investigation is anything but bipartisan and open is absurd. There are 47 Republican members of the house who are allowed equal time to question every witness and observing the Democrats questioning. The American people, every elected representative, Donald Trump and his lawyers will all get the access guaranteed by our constitution when/if the president is charged and public impeachment hearings in the House occur, and if a public trial occurs in the Senate. Until then, our representatives are proceeding carefully and appropriately. If our Congressman [Doug LaMalfa] disagrees with that, he either does not understand the law, does not believe in law and order, or is simply manufacturing a crisis to distract from the truth.”

A Reflection from SDGNews

In Federalist Papers No. 65, founder Alexander Hamilton writes that “high crimes” are “... those offenses which proceed from the misconduct of public men, or, in other words, from the abuse or violation of some public trust. They are of a nature which may with peculiar propriety be denominated POLITICAL, as they relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to the society itself.” [Caps are Hamilton’s].

As the impeachment investigation proceeds in the House, there seems to be a lot of confusion about the meaning of the word “political.” In modern times we have redefined “political” to mean “partisan.” But that’s not its meaning in Greek. Greece was the first country to experiment with democracy, and Greek is a language most of the founders studied. “Political” as such means of or concerning the *polis*, the city and its citizenry; or as Hamilton puts it, “the society itself.” As for partisanship, Hamilton continues:

“The prosecution of [these injuries—that is, impeachment], for this reason, will seldom fail to agitate the passions of the whole community, and to divide it into parties more or less friendly or inimical to the accused. In many cases it will connect itself with the pre-existing factions, and will enlist all their animosities, partialities, influence and interest on one side or on the other; and in such cases there will always be the greatest danger that the decision will be regulated more by the comparative strength of parties, than by the real demonstrations of innocence or guilt.”

And here we are, as Hamilton predicted. So with respect to President Trump’s admitted violation of the public trust, in seeking foreign interference in our elections: a conscientious process* including both political parties, and a trial carried out with non-partisan deliberation and integrity, are essential to an outcome that will unite, not further divide, the country. Unlikely as it seems, I hope we’ll all do what we can to cool our “animosities and partialities,” and to heal the wounds this administration has opened in our society. Let’s stand together for a democracy of, by, and for *all* the People.

--Abigail Van Alyn, Staff, SDGNews

* Given recent objections by Freedom Caucus members to depositions in private, secure settings, it’s worth noting that these proceedings follow House rules made by Republicans themselves, and rigorously followed in their fruitless investigations of Hillary Clinton. At the time, Trey Gowdy (R-SC, retired) famously said, “closed hearings always produce better results.” In addition, all Republican members of the relevant committees are *already taking part* in the depositions, as Freedom Caucus members, including Doug LaMalfa, well know. In fact several with seats in the secure hearing room were IN the group storming the chamber on October 23. They were faking their exclusion, while bringing cell phones into the room to “dirty” its security and make it unusable.

Oh! What a Night!



Our Candidates: Audrey Denney and Elizabeth Betancourt!

Audrey stressed the importance of public service, free from the influence of corporate donors and PACs. She urged us to be neighborly in this tough political climate. Elizabeth impressed the crowd with the story of her personal journey from young scientist to small town public servant to seeking public office.



At left, dinner attendees join Audrey in lining up for a delicious dinner. Karen Zeigler and her crew did an outstanding job of creating a meal that exceeded expectations. Special huge thank-yous to Dale Zeigler, Dale Walker and crew, for their heroic cleanup efforts.



At right, the bar is a hit. Ayn Perry and Tom Laurent serve up craft beer and excellent wine.



Above: Grassroots coordinators (from left) Alice Rogers and Robin Richards provide a report of remarkable accomplishments over the past year, and plans for future organizing efforts. Carolyn Miller, DCC Chair, was the MC.

Your Democratic Central Committee of Siskiyou County (DCCSC):

Officers: Carolyn Miller - Chair, Alice Rogers – Vice Chair, Katherine Shelton – Secretary, Robin Richards – Treasurer; Members: Neldena Anderson, Kate Coggin, Rick Green, Ann Herfindahl, Al Lugo, Larry Marks, Bill McKillop, Karina Pollard, Maggie Robeson, Steve Robeson, Daniel Soltis, Abigail Van Alyn Booraem, Dolly Verrue, and Karen Zeigler. For more information, visit our website: siskiyoudemocrats.org or Facebook page: [SiskiyouCountyDemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/SiskiyouCountyDemocrats). Send mail and donations to: DCCSC, Post Office Box 4, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067.