

7th Legislative District Democratic Newsletter

May 2008

www.7ld.newa-democrats.org

Vol. 2; No. 5

Successful Legislative District and County Conventions: Congratulations on a job well done! From all reports our respective county conventions were a huge success with many people in attendance and energized. Jan Anderson, Chair of Pend Oreille reported that:

“Pend Oreille County had two fantastic gatherings with good attendance and good newspaper coverage of each. Others in our county party ran the Caucus and Convention and did a great job. I was at the front table but only welcomed the attendees and led them in the pledge. Of course, we did a lot of preplanning prior to the events. Our folks are so talented!

We elected three Obama delegates and one alternate and one Clinton delegate and one alternate. The neat thing is that I only knew one of the six who was elected yet heard their impassioned speeches for their candidate and why they wanted to be elected themselves. Their first involvement was the Caucus and they are enthused to attend the next two Conventions.”

Bryan Bremner reported in from Ferry County that:

“We had about 50 people show up for the Ferry County Democratic Convention. Of these, 23 were elected delegates from the precinct caucuses - 16 for Obama and 7 for Clinton. We had 8 elected alternates - 6 for Obama and 2 for Clinton. We had 16 who signed in who were not delegates or alternates. We had several visitors who did not sign in including one confused Republican who left as soon as he realized that we weren't very interested in his platform ideas and that he wasn't interested in our platform ideas.

After substituting alternates for delegates who were not present we ended up with 19 votes for Obama and 7 votes for Clinton. This resulted in the selection of 1 delegate for Obama and 1 delegate for Clinton with our alternate supporting Obama. We agreed on a platform.

The 7th LD in Spokane County met with the 9th LD in Spokane County as part of the County Convention and adjourned into our separate caucuses to elect our delegates. The 7th elected 4 Obama delegates and 2 alternates, and 3 Clinton delegates and 2 alternates. I was really impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment from everyone in attendance. From what I have heard from others who were at the Lincoln, Okanogan, and Stevens County conventions this is the pattern that everyone experienced.

What a wonderful momentum as we head into the 5th Congressional Convention, the State Convention, and on to the National Convention!

5th Congressional District Caucus and Nominating Convention: May 17th

Registration for the 5th CD Caucus at 9 a.m.

Registration for the 5th CD Nominating Convention est. 1p.m.

Trent Elementary School Auditorium, 3303 N Pines, Spokane

We will need many volunteers to run the meeting since we are expecting at least 300 people to attend. Call letters for both the 5th CD Caucus and the Nominating Convention will be coming.

Although voting members are those delegates and seated alternates selected at the Legislative District caucuses, everyone is invited to this meeting.

The primary order of business includes:

- Election of 5 delegates (3 male, 2 female); and 1 alternate (female). The presidential preferences of the Seated Delegates and Alternates seated as delegates at the caucus will determine the number of delegates elected to the National Convention for any given Presidential candidate.
- Election of an Elector and Alternate Elector
- Election of one member to the State Party Judicial Review Board. This board was formed many years ago to resolve disputes in the Democratic Party, but to my knowledge has never been called to action. This person can't be a State Committee Member or Chair of a Legislative District or County Party.
- Democratic Candidates for prominent positions will be invited to speak as well as prominent elected officials.

Anyone that isn't elected as a National Convention Delegate or Alternate that still hopes to serve in this capacity has a chance to do so at the State Convention. Seventeen (17) at-large Delegates and four (4) Alternates will be elected by the Elections Committee made up of district level elected national Delegates and allocated by presidential preference as defined by division of preference of the Elections Committee. Anyone wishing to be considered as an at-large Delegate must provide a letter of intent to the State Party Office by 5:00 PM, **June 10**.

All those to be considered as National Delegates are subject to approval by the Presidential Candidate or that candidate's authorized representatives as long as they approve at least two names for each position for which the presidential candidate is entitled.

5th CD Nominating Convention will take place following the caucus. Those members voting at the nominating convention are precinct committee officers. This is a new requirement resulting from the recent US Supreme Court decision. The following statement from Washington State Chair, Dwight Pelz provides some answers to our most frequently asked questions about this new process.

If you have any questions about the 5th CD Caucus or Nominating Convention please contact Bob Esvelt, besvelt@centurytel.net

Message from Dwight Pelz, Chair, Washington State Democrats:

Top Two Primary FAQ: A Primary Primer for Democrats

What is the difference between the Top Two primary, and the primaries we have always conducted in Washington?

A primary election can serve either one or two roles: to **winnow down** the number of candidates who will appear on the general ballot; and to **nominate** the candidate for a political party.

In a non-partisan election, such as city council races in Washington, the primary takes a field of candidates running for a given office and **reduces** (winnows down) that field to two.

Historically in Washington, for a partisan race such as the Legislature or Congress, the primary **reduces** the field to two; but also serves to **nominate** the candidate of the Party. In 2004 Ron Sims ran against Chris Gregoire for Governor. When the voters gave more votes to Gregoire, they **nominated** her to be the **nominee** of the Democratic Party.

The Top Two Primary will only serve to **winnow down** the field to two candidates; and will no longer **nominate** a candidate for one party or the other. This is true even when the general election features one Democrat against one Republican – neither will be the nominee of their party.

Why are we holding Nominating Conventions?

The Top Two primary took from our party the ability to have the voters nominate a candidate. We are not willing to have this vital role eliminated. That is a time honored role of our political party in America – to let the voters know who is our **nominated candidate**.

The Supreme Court in its ruling clearly acknowledged the right of the parties to nominate through "whatever mechanism" we choose. "Whether the parties nominate their own candidates outside the state-run primary is simply irrelevant. In fact, parties may now nominate candidates by whatever mechanism they choose because I-872 repealed Washington's prior regulations governing party nomination.'

Who decided we should hold Nominating Conventions?

In 2005 the State Central Committee extensively debated how the Party would nominate candidates in the event that the State or the courts implemented the Top Two Primary. The Central Committee voted and passed the **Rules for the Selection of Candidates and Nominees for Public Office**.

These rules were applied in 2005 in two County Council races, one in King and one in Snohomish. In King County, PCO's had to choose between two incumbent Democrats, and nominated Bob Ferguson over Caroline Edmonds. Both candidates filed, and the race was very close, and not decided for a week after the voting.

On April 3 this year the Executive Board met and reviewed these rules. Because the rules were adopted by the Central Committee, the E Board could not amend them, rather they met to decide whether an emergency Central Committee should be called to consider amending the rules. The E Board decided against an emergency CC meeting for 3 reasons: 1) they felt the rules were well drafted and a good response to the current election cycle; 2) they were not certain the necessary quorum could be met for an emergency meeting; and 3) they doubted the Central Committee would amend the rules if a quorum were met.

Why Should the PCO's Have the Power to Nominate?

There is ample precedent for this. Elected PCO's are elected public officials, and granted legal powers by statute. PCO's are currently charged by state law with the responsibility to nominate a candidate to the county authority, to fill vacancies in the Legislature and other partisan positions. This is not a task PCO's in Washington shirk.

When PCO's choose a person to fill a vacancy, that person is usually sworn into office within a week. The "winning" candidate takes office, the "losing" candidates go home.

Filling a vacancy arguably is a more consequential task than nominating a candidate at a Nominating Convention. Both the nominee and the challenger are free to file for the position, and campaign for the Top Two primary. In highly Democratic districts the two may face each other a third time, on the general election ballot.

What if our LD or County Organization Does not Nominate?

It is the policy of the WSDCC to have a nominee in contested partisan races. According to the **Rules for the Selection of Candidates and Nominees for Public Office**, the State Party Chair shall nominate a candidate in the event that the local party does not. I will propose a nominee to the Executive Board, and ask them to approve that candidate.

Is it *democratic* for the Local Party and the PCO's to nominate a candidate?

Clearly it is far more responsive to local voters and the local party for the PCO's to exercise this power than for the State Party Chair to act. Elected PCO's are elected officials, and appointed PCO's are also officers of the party.

The Washington State Democratic Party is a **democracy** -- a **representative democracy** governed by the State Central Committee. It is the role and responsibility of local party organizations to follow policies adopted by the Central Committee.

The act of nominating a candidate at the Nominating Convention is not the same as endorsing a candidate. This is not an endorsement meeting, there is no two-thirds rule, and there will be no dual nominations. As the **Rules** state:

These rules are mandatory and are not amendable by any party organization other than the Washington State Democratic Central Committee or the State Convention.

The Top Two primary eliminates choice.

Proponents of the Top Two primary argue that the measure expands choice for voters.

In fact the Top Two primary eliminates many of the choices voters have had in Washington elections. The new primary is described as a blow to the Democratic and Republican parties, when in fact it insures they will be the only two parties considered in Washington.

We are virtually banning minor parties in Washington. In 2006 there were five parties to choose from in the US Senate race – Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Green, and Independent. If that election were held today, under the Top Two primary rules, you would be

free to choose between Mike McGavick and Maria Cantwell. If you are a Libertarian or Green or Independent you no longer have any choice.

Part of our political heritage in America has been the right to cast a protest vote. That right no longer exists in Washington state.

Under the Top Two primary, a Republican in Seattle may be free to choose between two Democratic candidates for the legislature, while a Democrat in Ritzville will be free to choose one of two Republican candidates for the legislature.

The Top Two primary will confuse Voters.

Every November in America voters look at their ballots to see who is the Democrat or the Republican or independent candidate; and they cast their votes. Some voters take more time to research the candidates; others trust the Republican Party or the Democratic Party and vote more or less along party lines. Under the Top Two system voters will not know which candidate is the nominee of the Democratic or Republican Party.

Instead they will view a new, goofy ballot which reads:

Booth Gardner Prefers Democratic Party

John Spellman Prefers Republican Party

We should not be making voting or ballots more difficult for voters. Only 54 percent of eligible voters in the US cast their ballots during the last four decades of presidential elections. We rank 35th in voter turnout out of the world's prominent democracies – 90% of Italians, 80% of Germans, and 76% of French and Canadian voters vote.

State Convention: The event that we have been waiting for ever since Spokane County won the bid to host the 2008 Washington State Convention is fast approaching!

The 2008 State Democratic Convention will be held from June 13-15, 2008 in Spokane, WA at the Spokane Convention Center (334 West Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, Washington 99201). At the State Convention, we will elect an additional 29 Delegates and 4 Alternates for the National Convention and address resolutions and the State Party Platform.

But it's not all business! The events at the State Convention will be a great opportunity to mingle with other convention attendees.

Please register <http://wa-democrats.org/index.php?page=display&id=309> as soon as possible. For information about the special Spokane County events held during State Convention please go to <http://www.spokanedemocrats.org>

Now is the time when all of you who said that you would “**help**” with the Convention to step forward. We need people to help with greeting and registering people on Friday, Saturday and Sunday; as well as helping with hosting the special Spokane County events (**Toad Hall** on Thursday evening, the **Salmon Feed** on Saturday evening, and

the **Scholarship Breakfast** on Sunday morning). The more volunteers we have the smoother the process and the better “first impression” people will have of us as “can-do” Eastern Washington Democrats. This is where we can all shine! Let’s welcome everyone and show them how we do things together here in Eastern Washington!!

To volunteer go to <http://www.spokanedemocrats.org> and select the Volunteer option on the left side of the page. If it is easier to contact me please do so. I know the **7th LD** said that we would support Spokane County “all the way” on their attempts to get the Convention here on this side of the State – **NOW IS THE TIME!!**

Challenge from the State: What it will take to win in Northeastern Washington – and we just keep making progress now with our very successful county and legislative conventions. Building from these successes, we can make this challenge easy! Let’s start identifying our voters!! Remember if you need training on the use of the on-line voter database (VoteBuilder) – the tool that will help us to meet this challenge – contact me. Training can be arranged!

The Challenge from the State for the 7th LD is to get 500 new Gregoire votes in 2008. This breaks down for each of our counties to:

- **Ferry** needs 36
- **Lincoln** needs 37
- **Okanogan** needs 92
- **Pend Oreille** needs 51
- **Spokane** needs 121
- **Stevens** needs 162

Dates to Remember: for details, including a map, go to our web site www.7ld.newademocrats.org and select the Calendar option, then select the date of the event.

May 17th: 5th CD Caucus; 3303 N Pines, Trent Elementary School, Spokane Valley; 10 a.m.

May 17th: 5th CD Nominating Convention immediately following the 5th CD Caucus

June 10th: Last day to file letter of intent with the State to be a candidate for Delegate at-large to the National Convention

June 13-15th: State Convention; Spokane, Convention Center; 9 a.m.

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