



The Anderson County Democrat

The Official Voice of the Anderson County Tennessee Democratic Party Jan 2016 Issue 10

Vote in the March 1st primary for a Democratic candidate!

Martin Luther King: One man, against all odds. What can we learn? by Scott Julius

This month we celebrate the birth and life of a great American patriot, Dr. Martin Luther King. He dedicated his life to achieving equality for all Americans. Indeed, Dr. King once said, *"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."* The belief that we all should be treated fairly while having equal opportunity and rights was a hallmark of his passion. Not only was that his passion, but it is the belief of the Democratic Party.

It was an uphill battle during the Civil Rights movement to achieve Dr. King's dream. The odds were stacked against him and his followers of ever seeing equality for all, especially the African-American community. To gain equal rights people were beaten crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, thrown in jail (see Dr. King's *"Letters from a Birmingham Jail"*), harassed by the KKK, had to be escorted by the military into school at Little Rock, and put up with humiliation at the Greensboro sit-in's. A fair and just society wasn't just handed to them. People had to take a stand, say enough is enough, and make change happen. The fact the odds weren't on their side meant nothing, it was what the right thing to do that mattered.

Today in Tennessee we are watching a General Assembly run amok. They want poor Tennesseans to be kept away from affordable healthcare by refusing to pass Insure Tennessee. So un-insured Tennesseans either stay ill or rely on the Emergency Room for treatment. This is causing rural hospitals to close. This can't keep happening. We continue to see our legislator pass a cornucopia of laws that loosen gun regulations. We hear the same tired scare tactic *"Obama is coming after your guns!"* as an excuse to do nothing to pass common sense gun control legislation. Yet San Bernardino, Roseburg, and Newtown are household names. How many more lives may be lost before they act? Women's rights, a livable minimum wage, welcoming refugees, are all issues being ignored or trampled on. This is injustice and it's happening right under our noses.

In 2016, we have not only the President to vote for but many local and state offices. We need to be sure the next President is a Democrat, but also that state and local Democrats get as much support from you as possible.

The time has come once again to take action. Simply shaking our heads in frustration every time our General Assembly causes yet another injustice won't cut it. Just looking at the statistics of the Republican Tennessee legislator is discouraging. The odds sure seem against us, but they're not insurmountable odds. If we do nothing, then nothing is going to keep happening.

Dr. Martin Luther King had a dream, a dream that in many ways is still a work in progress. What he and his followers accomplished was done not by sitting back saying *"This is awful, something needs to be done."* It happened by saying *"This is awful, what can I do to change this?"* As Democrats, we have differences of opinion on some issues and candidates from time to time but that can't distract from unity in making change happen in Tennessee. So let's work together, united in the face of the many injustices the Republican's have been guilty of. This is a dream within our reach, a dream I'm sure Dr. King would approve of.

"We must all learn to live together as brothers, or we shall perish together as fools." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

"King walked so Obama could run" Jay Z

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

"The time is always right to do what is right" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

"A right delayed is a right denied" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

Past issues can be found at: www.andersoncountymdemocrat.com

Editor: Pat Fain

Asst. Editor: Scott Julius

Consulting: Catherine Denenberg

Contact us: patfain.acdp@gmail.com

Anderson County Democratic Party: Respect...Inclusion...Equality

Proud to be an American! Proud to be a Democrat! By Pat Fain

This column is going to be about Health Care, but I needed to express myself after watching the State of the Union address. Proud to have voted for him! TWICE!

So let's talk ObamaCare, aka the Affordable Care Act. I am in my 10th year as a Medicare recipient and had regular insurance for all of my life prior to age 65, so I have some experience in this area. Medicare costs me \$99 per month; requires no referrals to specialists; pays my doctors promptly; does not contest my coverage; pays 80% of allowable costs; and in every way is as good as any private insurance I ever had. This is a gargantuan government-run program that investigates provider fraud and uses its power to hold cheaters accountable. It is a resounding success and provides a security net for both the old-girls-and-guys and also for their families (who would otherwise be choosing between grandma's doctor bill and their kids' college tuition or food on the table). The downside is that doctors and other providers are feeling squeezed by cost controls. OMG! A government program that works! Efficiently!

The ACA is not the single payer model Democrats were trying to enact for the rest of America: those who could not afford the high cost of individual health insurance. The compromise we got is the ACA. It is not all that we wished it to be, but it is a great achievement. The ACA was enacted in the worst years of a serious recession and was the best we could get at the time.

So why do the Republicans keep saying the ACA is so destructive of the country... the worst thing ever. Just ask one of them why. Let me know if you get an actual answer. They protected the private insurance corporations and transferred an awful lot of public money into those private coffers.

However, there are now 17 million more people with some insurance and badly needed affordable coverage. What did these 17 million people do prior to this? Mostly they did without health care and died an early death. Heroic attempts have been made for years to provide health care to the uninsured. There are the free clinics (one in Oak Ridge) run by volunteer medical professionals and staff. A community effort that works, but with lots of limitations.

Then there is a federal law that does not allow any hospital that receives federal money to turn away any patients. This time it is the hospital absorbing the cost for care of limited scope. There is also TennCare, the joint state/federal Medicaid program operated by the state that serves those too poor to qualify for the ACA. TennCare provides partial funding to 134 Community Health Centers

statewide: there is one in Clinton.

The big difference is that people will be paying for insurance policies triggering insurance payments to these community agencies and hospitals plus having access to private doctors willing to accept the insurance payments. The idea is that insuring more people will result in more money flowing directly into medical care via insurance premiums and that care costs will cease to grow faster than the cost of living. The Congressional Budget Office predicts that total *dollar increase* in federal costs currently being spent on uninsured medical care will be less than \$1 billion per year for the next 10 years, a great improvement on pre-ACA predictions.

Rather than universal health care, as found in every 1st world country except this one, we still have a hodge-podge of alternatives, solely dependent on age or economic status of the patient for access. The free clinics will continue to be needed; TennCare will be the provider of last resort and the Community Medical Centers will not disappear and small hospitals will not go bankrupt. Their funding may come from different sources and hopefully the measures to control too rapid increases in cost will work and people will no longer panic when they need a doctor.

The ACA is unquestionably a flawed system, but it is already lowering medical cost growth, because it has insurance companies paying the bill. They will be able to negotiate with doctors, hospitals and drug companies for lower costs. This alone should greatly reduce these costs. When the Bush Congress added the drug benefit to Medicare in 2003, they made the mistake of prohibiting the federal government from negotiating costs directly with the drug companies; this resulted in running up costs and triggering attempts by the uninsured to buy drugs in Canada.

Continued on Page Three

A Correction From Issue Nine

We have learned that there were errors in the previous edition regarding the upcoming election. We were given incorrect information that we had trusted was correct. We will email out a corrected list for the upcoming election separately within a week. We apologize for the error.

Proud Article Continued...

(Continued from Page Two) The ACA is also different from Medicare in that the insurance companies are allowed to tailor each plan to the benefits and cost for the individual, whereas Medicare is more "one size fits all" plan where even the cost of premiums are averaged among the entire participating group. The main benefits at this time also include easier access to doctors and medicine, no more denial due to pre-existing medical condition, insurance of children until age 26, no more dropping of insurance due to catastrophic costs and major medical coverage.

Medicare has been tweaked many times over the 50 years of its existence and of course, the elderly vote regularly. The ACA offers benefits and problems and there are amendments and improvements to look forward to. This is a social program that is critical to the health and prosperity of the nation. The actual achievement of getting anything enacted was monumental and the election of a Democratic Congress and Senate is crucial to continued existence of health care for all the people.

Light Reading for the Political Junkie

1. What makes Democrats different than Republicans?
<http://www.vox.com/2016/1/13/10759874/republicans-democrats-different>
2. It is now 2016 and already the Republicans have presidential problems (surprise!). https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2015/12/30/why-the-republicans-start-2016-with-a-serious-presidential-problem/?wpmm=1&wpisrc=nl_opinions
3. The worrying "hollowing" of the middle class. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-hollowing-of-the-middle-class/2016/01/03/167309ea-afdc-11e5-9ab0-884d1cc4b33e_story.html?wpmm=1&wpisrc=nl_headlines

Upcoming Events...From the Anderson County Democratic Party Chair

January 28th: Party meeting at ATLC in Oak Ridge, 109 Viking Road at 6 PM. No Food

February 20th: East Tennessee Regional Training at Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church 10-4 PM, Lunch Provided

February 25th: Chili Supper and Auction at Claxton Elementary School, 6 PM

March 5th: County Convention for Delegate Selection– Oak Ridge Civic Center Social Room– registration will begin at 11 AM– DOORS CLOSE AT 12:00 PM. Call to order promptly at 12:05 PM EST. Anyone in line to register may complete registration. NO ONE ALLOWED IN AFTER DOORS CLOSE!!!

March 24th: Party meeting at ATLC in Oak Ridge, 109 Viking Road, 6 PM.

April 21st: Party meeting, 3rd Floor of Clinton Courthouse, Judge Elledge's courtroom at 6 PM

May 26th: Party meeting at ATLC in Oak Ridge, 109 Viking Road at 6 PM.

A debate watch party in February!

The Anderson County Democratic Party is working on preparations for hosting a watch party for the Democratic Party presidential debate for **February 11th, 2016**. It looks like the time it will start will be at 9PM (the debate start time). Join us at Fulin's in Oak Ridge for good times and good food! It doesn't matter if you're "Felling the Bern", "Standing With Hillary", or voting for O'Malley stop on by! Put on the T-Shirt of the candidate of your choice and watch three fine candidates talk about their vision for being commander in chief!

FELLOW DEMOCRATS...

