

# The Platform



**Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club**

**P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611**

## *President's Message*



**Dear MGO Members,**

**Proposition 13 Resolution-** In the January Platform I reported to you that Lenny Goldberg, the executive director of the California Tax Reform Association, was in the process of drafting a model resolution a model Proposition 13 tax reform resolution that will be distributed by MGO to our fellow Alameda County Democratic club presidents to bring to their club members for approval. To allow time for this process to occur, another club presidents meeting will not occur until late February.

The model resolution is included in this issue of the Platform for your review. It will be on the agenda of our February 15th membership meeting for discussion and voting. The executive committee recommends passage.

The resolution you see at the meeting will be in a somewhat different format because we plan to submit it to the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee and the Democratic State Central Committee and urge passage there. Those bodies require a somewhat different structure for the whereas and be-it-resolved paragraphs. The content, however, will be substantially the same.

**Sandre Swanson to Speak at February Meeting-** In January, I also wrote executive board member Dan Kalb was contacting state senate president pro tem Don Perata, new assembly member Sandre Swanson, and a staff member from the office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi to speak at our February meeting about the state and federal legislative agendas. He did so, and, as one would expect, all are extremely busy. As this goes to press, we know that Don could not make this particular meeting date, and, luckily, that Sandre can. We are still waiting for a final word from Nancy Pelosi's office. Check the MGO website, [mgoclub.org](http://mgoclub.org), for our most up to date program announcement.

**Dues-** Last year the club changed the dues renewal date to each January 1st. The club has ongoing expenses, including the printing and distribution of this newsletter.

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## **February•March Important Dates**

**February 7th, Wednesday**, at 7:00 pm, Alameda County Central Committee, 300 Estudillo Ave., San Leandro. More info at <http://www.acdems.org/>

**February 15th, Thursday** at 7:00pm to 9:00pm, MGO General Membership Meeting featuring Sandré R. Swanson, 16th Assembly Member held in the Sky Room of the Piedmont Gardens Retirement Community, located at 110 41st Street, in Oakland. More info at <http://www.mgoclub.org>

**February 20th, Monday** at 7:00pm, MGO Executive meeting at Piedmont Gardens. More info at <http://www.mgoclub.org>

**February 22nd, Thursday**, at 6:00pm, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club (WDRC) Membership Meeting, 390 27th Street, Oakland. More info at <http://www.wellstoneclub.org/>

**February 27th, Tuesday**, at 7:30 p.m., El Cerrito Democratic Club ("ECDC"), Makemie Hall at Northminster Presbyterian Church, 545 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito

**March 6th**, The First Tuesday Luncheon is an informal gathering from Oakland's Political Community. RSVP Judy Belcher 655.8658

**March 7th, Wednesday** at 7:30 pm 16th AD Democrats Mtg. Location TBA.

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### **Inside:**

- The Presidents' message (cont.)
- In the News
- Assembly District Election results
- War by Deficit
- Remembering Susan Duncan

### **President's Message (cont.)**

**Dues- (Cont.)** If you have not yet sent in your dues, please do it now. Then come and hear Sandre Swanson tell us what it is like to join the California Assembly and what he plans to accomplish.



You have the  
POWER to  
save democracy  
Join or Renew Your MGO  
Membership Today!

**Hearing from You-** Historically, the executive board has served as the planning body for club programs. But this is your club, and we want to be guided by your ideas about what kind of programs you want and what you would like the club to be doing. We have club business as an item at every meeting, and I urge you to attend and share your ideas. I also welcome your phone calls. My phone number is listed on the first page of the Platform.

**Back to the Future-**We used to start our membership meetings at 7:30 p.m. As of the February meeting, we are resuming this practice. See you on February 15th at 7:30.

*Gary Sirbu*

### **January General Meeting Summary:**

The featured program included the introduction of a proposal for club endorsement of the meeting, which Congressman Dennis Kucinich advocates immediate removal of US troops in Iraq, held in San Francisco by the Kucinich for President Organization on January 27, 2007.

The MGO president (Gary Sirbu) asserted that according to MGO by-laws, the club endorsement of events must be preceded by a 14-day notice to the membership, and that no notice to the membership had been presented for this event.

After discussion, it was MSP that the rules for notice for this event be suspended. It was MSP that the MGO club endorses the Kucinich meeting on January 27, 2007.

A panel presentation by Oakland Think Tank (OTT) members Michael Roosevelt; Johnny Lorigo, Counselor at Leadership Preparatory High School; Liela H Moncharsh, Attorney on the issue of truancy in the Oakland Public Schools. Additional speakers included Judge David Krashna, OTT; and Iris Winograd, OTT and retired psychologist.

The OTT resolution titled, "Fighting Oakland's Truancy Epidemic" address the problems of truancy in the OUSD, the resolution proposed, among other things, that the City of Oakland create and fund a Truancy Partnership administered by a new full time position of Truancy Director.

No action was taken on the proposal pending the Oakland Unified School District response to the Oakland Think Tank proposal.

### **In the News**

#### **Health Care:**

Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act  
Passed: 255-170

The House of Representatives voted to give Medicare the right to bargain with pharmaceutical companies – a major step in the fight for lower drug prices.

#### **Education:** Title I Academic Achievement Awards

This program is authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Section 1117 (b) requires all states receiving Title I funds to establish a program that recognizes Title I schools that exceed Adequate Yearly Progress for two or more years or significantly close the achievement gap among numerically significant subgroups.

In addition to these federal law requirements, California's program has been designed to identify and honor Title I schools that have also doubled their Academic Performance Index (API) growth target for two consecutive years, and that meet a designated median API score in both English-language arts and mathematics.

#### **Title 1 Academic Achieving Schools List**

American Indian Public Charter  
Franklin Elementary  
Fruitvale Elementary  
Glenview Elementary  
La Escuelita Elementary  
Laurel Elementary  
Lincoln Elementary  
Munck (Carl B.) Elementary

### **Assembly District Election results: Congratulations!**

#### **AD 14, Executive Board: Janet Stromberg**

**At-Large Members:** Taina Gomez, Kathy Klein, Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, Ces Rosales, Ann Shrieve, Michael Barnett, Larry Buchalter, Donald Goldmacher, **Dan Kalb**, Robert T. Klein, and Leonard McNeil

#### **AD 16, Executive Board: Mark Briggs**

**At-Large Members:** Michelle Gabriel, Suzi Goldmacher, Linda Joseph, Rachel Richman, Veronica J. Williams, Tara Machant, Arnold G. Fong, **Jason L. Gohlke**, **Wayne Nishioka**, Anand Singh and Dan Wood.

#### **AD 18, Executive Board: Rocky Fernandez**

**At-Large Members:** Eileen Barr, Barbara Halliday, Patricia M. Kohnen, Edith Looney, Kathleen Dejong Wilson, Melissa West, William (bill) Evans, Jim Kohnen, Chris Parman, Jim Prola and **Bill Quirk**

**Bold/Italics** denotes MGO member



*Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club*

P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611



## Save the Dates:

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**February 20th, Monday** at 7:00pm, MGO Executive meeting at Piedmont Gardens.

Check the MGO website, [mgoclub.org](http://mgoclub.org), for our most up to date program announcement.

**Kicking Elephants  
and Taking Names**



## **[PROPOSED] RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CALIFORNIA SPLIT-ROLL REAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT**

Whereas the assessment system for non-residential commercial property is the most significant failing in our tax system, costing local governments and schools \$4-5 billion annually, and

Whereas the change of ownership applied to non-residential commercial property is massively ridden with loopholes, allowing corporations and commercial property owners to avoid reassessment even when property changes ownership, and

Whereas the commercial assessment system is economically irrational, putting the burden of taxation on new investment and development instead of on the windfall from land ownership, the exact opposite of the principles of a good tax system, and

Whereas the system provides little or no return to local government when it invests in new infrastructure or other public services, shutting off what should be a virtuous cycle of infrastructure spending, and

Whereas the system encourages local government reliance on big-box retailing to generate sales tax, since job-generating commercial growth brings little revenue return to local government, and

Whereas the commercial assessment system promotes sprawl and speculation, because there is little cost to keeping in-fill land or other vacant land off the market until speculative gains can be achieved, and

Whereas competitive businesses pay wildly different property taxes, despite the fact that, unlike for homeowners, the value of the real estate is directly related to the income which can be earned from it, and

Whereas the share of the property tax borne by homeowners has increased steadily since the early 1990's, growing now to 40% of the tax roll, a 25% shift from a burden that was traditionally 32%.

Whereas, the state and localities continue to suffer from an on-going fiscal crisis,

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the \_\_\_\_\_ [Democratic Club] [Assembly District Party Committee] [County Central Committee] [State Central Committee] supports split-roll real property tax reform and changing the California Constitution to exclude all non-residential real property from the current two percent ceiling on annual real property assessment increases.

Further, that a broad-based campaign be initiated to expose the flaws in the current property tax system, thereby developing public support to amend the California Constitution to require that non-residential commercial property be assessed at market value, and

Further, that proposals be developed which make certain that such changes will be accomplished in a just way, including ensuring that cities, counties and schools receive a fair allocation of revenue and that the potential burden on small businesses and farms be addressed, and

Further, that such proposal be presented to the voters of California through the initiative process as soon as possible.

## War by Deficit Spending not in the U.S. Interest

As I began researching articles on military spending, I came across an astonishing array of figures that represent a monumental and mind boggling increase in defense spending since George Bush took office six years ago.

Overall, military spending has increased by 22%. But the amazing thing is that this figures does not include deficit spending on the Iraq War in the form of supplemental appropriations, now estimated to add up to almost a half a trillion dollars by the war's conclusion.

The estimated actual size of Pentagon spending was put at \$800 billion out of a federal budget of \$1.4 trillion in an article written by David Francis February 2004, for the Christian Science Monitor entitled "Hidden Defense Costs Add up to Double Trouble".

Mr. Francis and other analysts of military defense spending arrive at this figure because military spending and contracts also comes under the rubric of other federal departments like the Department of Energy, which has contracts to develop "bunker busters" and other weapons.

\$800 billion is a scary number indeed for most Americans to consider. However, luckily, many more are beginning to ask the question: "What are we getting here?" With something like \$18 billion having gone to one Pentagon contractor alone to date, namely Halliburton, for the prosecution of the Iraq War, we increased neither the security of the Iraqi people nor that overall of the United States.

Instead, it is acknowledged now by a large number of military generals that we have increased the political instability of both Iraq and the entire Middle East. Even worse, polls conducted by a number of respected organizations such as the Pew Poll have shown that the goodwill and influence of the United States has dramatically plummeted in countries around the entire globe since the onset of the Afghanistan War.

Nevertheless, President Bush continues on his relentless requests for yet more and more supplemental funding for the prosecution of the Iraq War, the Afghanistan War, and the overall war, the "War on Terror". The frightening part that I suppose many others besides me continually wonder and ask "when and how is it all going to end?"

For the American people have not been told the political and economic price that we will pay for endless war and endless deficit financing. We have not been told what the price is that we will pay either morally or socially for spending \$10 million on war every minute. (<http://nationalpriorities.org>)

In addition, while it would be tempting to conclude that these funds would otherwise be available to communities like Oakland, it is not exactly that way. It would be more correct to say that the people of Oakland and the rest of the United States have, in effect, cosigned a note payable to the central banks of China, Japan, and South Korea.

This is because the bonds floated to pay off the debt are being bought up by these countries. The net result of carrying this debt is to create a lien on future tax revenues and to make it more difficult to finance needed infrastructure projects and social spending, both now and in the future.

In addition, U.S. debt has been growing at an estimated \$1.26 billion dollars a day since September 2006 ([www.brillig.com](http://www.brillig.com)). Scared now?

*Val Eisman*



**Remembering Susan Duncan**, a longtime Bay Area political activist, died in Oakland on Jan. 13 after a long illness. She was 75.

Mrs. Duncan grew up in the Los Angeles County town of San Marino and moved to the Bay Area to attend UC Berkeley, where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1953 and a year later received a general teaching credential from Berkeley.

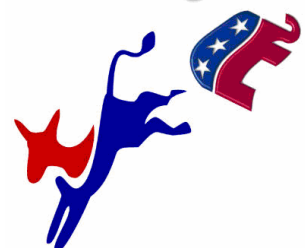
Over the years Mrs. Duncan a MGO member, a trustee of Peralta College District, past president of the League of Women Voters of Oakland, active in the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute, Lincoln Child Center board, National Women's Political Caucus, I Have a Dream - Oakland, Nuclear Free Oakland, Chabot Space and Science Center advisory council and the Women's Political Committee.

Mrs. Duncan is survived by her husband of more than 50 years, George Robertson Duncan, sons Douglas and Garrett, daughter Barbara Linssen and 4 grandchildren.

A public memorial is planned for March and her family has requested that any memorial donations be made to the Peralta Colleges Foundation, 333 East Eighth Street, Oakland, CA 94606.

If you would like to participate in a collective donation to the Peralta Foundation through MGO, send a check to Steve Statler, Treasurer, MGO Democratic Club, P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611. Write "Susan Duncan" in the memo line on your check.

**Kicking Elephants  
and Taking Names**



RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED

Remit Membership DUES for 2007, today!  
(Please disregard, if dues has been paid)

www.mgoclub.org

P.O. Box 11622,  
Oakland, CA 94611



## MGO Membership Information

JOIN NOW

**Remit dues annually in January**

### Membership options:

Senior/Student \$20    Individual \$30    Family \$45

Mail dues to:

**P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611**

For membership information, please contact  
**Jean Brown at 510.653.3204**  
or **email: jbr936@aol.com**

Download Membership form from  
<http://www.mgoclub.org/member.htm>

FPPC# 790500 (California) FEC# C00402651 (U.S.)

Don't forget to join our MGO Talk yahoo group:  
[http://mgoclub.org/join\\_mgotalk.htm](http://mgoclub.org/join_mgotalk.htm)



You have the  
**POWER** to  
save democracy  
**Join or Renew Today!**

## Resources and Links

- Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club:  
<http://www.demlawyers.org>
- Alameda (City) Democratic Club:  
<http://www.alameda-demo.org>
- Cal Berkeley Democratic Club:  
<http://www.caldems.com>
- Castro Valley Democratic Club:  
<http://www.ebdir.net/cvdeos>
- El Cerrito Democratic Club:  
<http://www.ECDClub.org>
- East Bay Young Democrats:  
<http://www.eastbayyoungdems.com>
- Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club:  
<http://www.wellstoneclub.org>
- California Progress Report:  
<http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/>
- Smart Voter <http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/alm/>
- California Democratic Party <http://www.cadem.org>
- Democrats of Rossmoor  
<http://www.ebaydemo.org/DOR.html>
- League of Women Voters Oakland  
<http://www.lwvoakland.org/>