



**Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30**  
**Democratic Club of West Orange County**  
**Green Valley Community Center**  
**17250 Los Jardines West, Fountain Valley**

**Judge Jim Gray**

***The Pernicious Effects of the Current War On Drugs***



**James Gray** is the presiding judge of the Superior Court of Orange County. Raised in the Los Angeles area, Gray graduated from UCLA in 1966 and taught in the Peace Corps in Costa Rica. He received his law degree from USC in 1971. From 1972 through 1975, he was with the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

After five years in private practice, Gray was named to the Santa Ana Municipal Court and then to the Orange County Superior Court in 1989. Much of Gray's legal career has dealt with drug-related issues. In 2001 he wrote *Why Our Drug Laws Have Failed and What We Can Do About It* -

*A Judicial Indictment of the War on Drugs* about the War on Drugs and has argued for legalization of marijuana.

Gray, previously a Republican, joined the Libertarian Party and, in November 2003, declared his candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat occupied by Barbara Boxer. He was a keynote speaker at the 2004 Libertarian National Convention. In the election, Gray received 216,522 votes, 1.8% of the total vote. In that election, Gray picked up a newspaper endorsement - rare for a third-party candidate - from the Long Beach *Press-Telegram*.

Gray is also featured in the 2007 documentary *American Drug War: The Last White Hope*. ###

## **Democratic Club of West Orange County**

### **Vision for 2010**



Below is the vision statement crafted by the Club's Executive Board. Please contact Jo Anne to learn how you can make the vision a reality!

1. To provide membership with informative, stimulating monthly meetings and to socialize with other Democrats with the purpose of increasing participation and growing our membership.
2. To be a resource for members to become involved in various grassroots activities including precinct
3. development, registration of voters, working with future candidates, participation in rallies, signature collection on petitions, and supporting Democratic legislation.
3. To publicize Democratic patriotism and the large number of registered Democrats in Orange County by sponsoring a float in the Huntington Beach 4th of July Parade.
4. To grow our membership through outreach to newly registered Democratic voters.

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## Talking Points—Rich Gillock

It is a New Year and it is time for New Year predictions. I gave up on New Year resolutions as non-binding and disappointing. If we are lucky, my predictions will not be any more reliable than my resolutions. But here goes!

A pathetic health care bill will escape from Congress and Obama will sign it into law with great fanfare. It will be touted as a revolution when it is just business as usual with a big bonus to the insurance companies. After all, the government will demand that citizens get health care insurance at any cost, will do nothing to control those costs, and if you are about to starve to death, the taxpayer will write a check on your behalf to the insurance industry that controls Washington.

With 60% to 80% of American voters favoring a Public Option as an alternative to insurance company abuse, it is obvious that when the people speak, they are drowned out by rich campaign contributors!

But wait! There is competition for the ownership of Congress. Banks and Wall Street also lay claim to our government of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich. Congressman Barney Frank once stated that the banks owned Congress. Of course that did not keep him from accepting their largess and voting to bail them out from their own mistakes.

Don't expect any meaningful regulation of the banks or Wall Street. After all, mere mortals cannot tell the gods what to do. Nor can we be heard amidst the clamor of campaign dollars.

While unemployment rises and more businesses shut their doors, the Dow closed up 44% for the year. However, before you get excited, look at how this latest bubble was created. The taxpayer was fleeced for over a half trillion dollars, with no strings attached, to make sure the gods at Goldman-Sachs could pay themselves millions of dollars in bonuses for their job well done. This act created the latest stock market bubble which will collapse within the next year or two.

What happened a year ago with the bailout was to tell the world of investors that they couldn't lose in the American stock market. The government would assure their investments. So in a shaky financial world, this was a good place to park their investments until the economic world stabilized. It's not that value of the companies behind those stocks rose, it was that the demand for stocks in a "safe

market" out stripped supply. We can expect a long slow slide this year as the smart money is quietly moved out of our stock market and into more productive investments. Eventually everyone else will catch on and the bubble will burst once again. In the mean time expect happy talk from the official investment class.

Ultimately the high rate of investment by the baby boomers in 401K plans assures that the bedrock of the stock market will be drawn down as the baby boomers retire and draw their funds out of the stock market. Wall Street can do the math, so they are just playing us for chumps while they move out of stocks. This is one of the reasons that mortgage backed securities became so popular. Of course it would have been much better if the mortgages had not been empty promises.

The real problem is that we have an economy based upon counting other people's money with very little production for export. Our trade deficit and our foreign debt continue to devalue the dollar. Compared to the Euro, since December 2000 the dollar has declined by about 40%. That means that the \$10,000 Dow is worth about \$6,000 in real money. We have recovered from the depth of 2008, but we are still way behind the real value of the market in 2000.

The Bush years ran our national debt from \$5.6 trillion to \$11.2 trillion, creating as much debt as all of the Presidents before him combined. Obama added another \$900 billion to the debt since he took office. The majority of the debt is a direct result of three things, massive tax cuts in 2001, the bank bailouts, and two wars that were not even in the budget until this year.

One of the scariest parts of this is that \$4.4 trillion of the \$12.1 trillion total debt is held within the government, primarily in the Social Security "lock box." When the baby boomers retire, that debt will have to be paid back to fund their Social Security retirements. When politicians complain that Social Security is in trouble, they are lying. It is the General Fund that is in trouble because there is no way to pay back what it owes to Social Security without raising taxes.

The only way to save the American economy is through massive tax increases, ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and slashing the defense budget. Does anyone think that's going to happen? I predict not!

## **Welcome Orange County Democrats Program Roz Freeman**

'Welcome Orange County Democrats' (WOCD) is a new outreach effort guided by Henry Vandermeir, the new Political Director for the Orange County Democratic Party. The idea is every time a new Democrat is registered to vote, that new Orange County Democrat will receive a personal welcome from one of their Democratic neighbors - one of us! The OCDP has been busy assembling envelopes for the new Democrats. A welcome letter from the Chair, a folder listing all the pertinent information for Orange County Clubs, a voter registration form (there may be more Democrats in the

household). A shiny new Obama button completes the envelope.

As West Orange County Vice Chair, I now have the first envelopes ready to be delivered. If you live in Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Los Alamitos, Midway City, Seal Beach or Westminster, I might have a new Democrat for you to meet. If you would like to welcome a new Democrat to your city, precinct or neighborhood, contact me either by email: ochbdem@isp.com or phone 714 262 2314. ###

## **Message from the President—Jo Anne Jennings**

Following the debate on health care has been a roller coaster ride. Elation over the passage of health care reform in Congress is followed by despair over the inclusion of the Stupak amendment banning any funding for abortion. Pleased that the Catholic Church supports health care for all, I'm dismayed they have chosen to insert themselves in the legislative process.

Our Constitution guarantees separation of church and state. When John F. Kennedy, a practicing Catholic, ran for president he reassured the populace that his first obligation was to the Constitution and that the Pope would not become the de facto leader of the United States. Yet today we have elected leaders who seem to believe that they owe their allegiance to their various religions rather than to the Constitution.

To those who argue that our founding fathers intended our nation to be a Christian nation, I counter that Thomas Jefferson, the writer of the Declaration of Independence, and George Washington were both Deists. The concept of the Trinity has been the canon of the Christian Church since the 3rd century A.D. so both men failed to fully adopt Christian canon. Also, Thomas Jef-

erson cut out passages of the Bible with which he didn't agree and gave us the Jefferson Bible. Benjamin Franklin, a committed Quaker, believed in religious tolerance.

Our founding fathers were educated men who knew European history. They were knowledgeable about religious intolerance. The Crusades, the Inquisition in Spain with its expulsion of Jews and Muslims, civil wars between Catholics and Protestants meant continuous war, cruelty and strife. Not only that, they knew about religious intolerance in some of the colonies that was expressed by exclusion of some so-called undesirable faiths and the burning of witches in Massachusetts. The founding fathers chose to save us from the divisiveness of religious differences by explicitly including separation of church and state in our Constitution.

If there is indeed a case for American exceptionalism, it is this Constitutional requirement of separation of church and state. Our government is for the people, by the people, not for the church, by the church. I believe health care for all is indeed a moral issue but that the church is not the sole possessor of morality. Our legislators need to respect the Constitution. ###

## **Democratic Party of Orange County—Central Committee News**

Melihat Rafiei Executive Director stepped down from her position on December 31st. Henry Vandermeir is the acting Executive Director.

The Truman Dinner was a big success and there were over 600 attendees. Official accounting has not yet been released but there was at least a profit of \$60,000 from the event!

## Who Is Phu Nguyen? Candidate for 68th AD

With roots deep in Orange County, Phu Nguyen came from humble beginnings, but has established himself as a successful and motivated businessman and community leader.



When Phu's family first arrived in Orange County, California in 1982, they had exactly \$2. Phu's parents worked tirelessly and were able to provide Phu and his sisters with the opportunity to attend local Catholic schools. An alumnus of Mater Dei High School, Phu exhibited leadership and initiative as president of his class, member of the football team, and represented the school at statewide events, such as the American Legion's Golden Boy's State. Upon graduation, Phu was recognized as the Mater Dei's "Young Man of the Year."

Phu went on to earn a bachelor's degree in political science at the California State University, Fullerton. He was then awarded a Gandhi Fellowship in the Master's program in Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego, where he graduated from this interdisciplinary program in International Relations, Conflict Resolution and Ethics.

Phu has been an active leader in the local community since his teenage years, engaging in community organizations and activities that encourage and promote youth leadership. As a young adult, Phu served as president of the Union of Vietnamese Student Associations of Southern California (UVSA), an umbrella organization for students from local high schools, colleges and universities. Phu also chaired the Vietnamese American community's annual Tet Festival hosted by UVSA. Under Phu's leadership as president and as chair, this annual 3-day event grew dramatically to become the most prominent Vietnamese New Year's celebration in the United States, with annual revenues going from \$30,000 prior to his tenure to net incomes of nearly \$300,000 a year during his tenure. Phu was instrumental in establishing a grant program, wherein, proceeds from the event are invested back into the community through grants to nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Orange County. In this decade alone, proceeds from the Tet Festival have contributed almost 1 million dollars back to the community.

Phu continues his local community involvement as a Commissioner on the Orange County District Attorney's Viet-

namese Advisory Commission and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA), a community-based organization that receives grants from government and foundations for health care research and services that target the unique needs of the Orange County Asian community.

Phu also commits time and effort to philanthropic work overseas. He is an active member of the Franciscan Charities, a nonprofit group which has raised about 10 million dollars in the last 5 years to provide education, health care, and skills training to poor and underprivileged youth and seniors in Vietnam. In 2007, Phu founded the People Empowerment through Micro-Credit and Training (PEMCT), a small NGO that provides small loans to women living in poverty in Vietnam with the purpose of encouraging these women to establish their own small businesses and lift themselves out of poverty, rather than relying on charity or government assistance.

Professionally, Phu is the vice president of Saigon Central Post, Inc. (SCPI), a remittance company serving the Vietnamese American Community. Phu is also the CEO of My Vietnam Inc., a company that provides cargo and telecommunications services to Vietnam.

Phu is married to Yen Khanh, a math professor at Santa Ana College. They have an active two-year-old named Christopher and are expecting another child in the spring of 2010. Phu's family is a member of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fountain Valley.

Phu's outlook on life has been shaped by his family, faith, and the freedoms and opportunities his family embraced when they immigrated to the United States and settled in Orange County. Like so many other Vietnamese immigrants, Phu's family fled Vietnam on a small boat in the early 80's to pursue hope and freedom. Stranded at sea for nearly a month before being rescued by a Hong Kong fishing vessel, nine children died of starvation. By the grace of God and the sacrifices made by his parents, Phu survived the long journey. This experience continues to motivate and inspire Phu to live life to the fullest, never taking a day, or even a breath, for granted.

Phu's philosophy in life can be summed up in a quote by John Wesley: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

## The Fabulous Year-End Event - Steph Campbell

A huge thank you goes out to Pauline Younkin for putting this event together. Everything from the invitations down to the table poinsettias was perfectly done with the understated dedication that Pauline is known for. We all owe her a big “thank you!”

Thanks also go to Linda Reynolds and Shirley Gentilini for the silent auction (as well as those who provided items for the silent auction—as well as all the bidders), Ben Miles for his introductions of our speakers and, of course, for president Jo Anne Jennings moving everything along.

Thanks to Haig Parechian for photographs used here and on our web site!

Awards were given to Kathleen Rockney (who unfortunately was not able to attend the event) and for Pat Goodman for all her activist work on health care and peace issues this year. Below is a smiling Pat having received her award.



Departing DPOC Executive Director introduced Henry Vandermeir whom we all hope will be selected by the County E-Board to formally replace Melahat. Henry will have big shoes to fill. Melahat briefly introduced Bonnie Castrey—the only attending elected—and Joe Shaw—the only attending candidate. She talked about the “Welcome Wagon” program which the Club has signed up for.

But at the end of the evening all anyone could talk about was the fabulous Senator Joe Dunn—and when exactly is he going to run for something again. He was a tireless advocate for progressive causes in the State Senate. We all agreed—we need Joe Dunn representing us again!

For those of you who have heard Senator Dunn speak you know that reading about him is nothing like hearing him in person. But I did want to give you a flavor of what he had to say. I am writing this right after the event—you

won't read this until January. It will give us a chance to see how prescient the Senator is!

Senator Dunn spoke about health care and politics and wanted us to put aside the rhetoric of both the right and the left and focus on the what the health reform bill is really about (money) and politics.



He gave us the history lesson from the Johnson administration. Johnson had signed into law historic civil rights legislation in 1964; it was clear that there would be political ramifications from this. It may have been one reason why Johnson pushed Medicare through. They knew that it was the right

thing to do and knew how to get it done; they also faced the reality that between this effort and the civil rights legislation that it would cost them the next election—regardless of what happened in Viet Nam.

Senator Dunn made clear that politically we need legislation this year; if we have no legislation this year we won't get any—this is because of some of the newly elected Democrats who will face very tough challenges in 2010 and want to stay as far away from health care reform as possible.

He identified and discussed the 4 issues of health reform:

1. The fight against recession and pre-existing conditions.
2. Health Information Technology which provides a transition to electronic health records
3. Addressing the 30% profits that the health insurance companies make while physicians and hospitals are barely surviving. There was an excellent explanation of what the problem is with an oligopoly and the parallels with the energy problem that began in 2000.
4. The public option

It was a wonderful evening as I'm sure all the attendees will attest. If you weren't there you missed a great event.

## Upcoming Calendar of Interesting Events for Dems!

<b>Jan 25</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Orange County Central Committee.</b> All Democrats are welcome.  Carpenter's Hall, 1816 W. Chapman Avenue, Orange.
<b>Jan 27</b> <b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Democratic Club of West Orange County—Meeting—See Page 1 for details</b>
<b>Jan 29</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Fundraiser for 68th AD Candidate Phu Nguyen.</b> Parcel Seafood Restaurant, 15583 Brookhurst Street, Westminster, CA 92683. For more info: <a href="http://www.votephu.com">www.votephu.com</a> or Email: <a href="mailto:votephu@gmail.com">votephu@gmail.com</a>
<b>Feb 10</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	Next meeting of the <b>67th Area Wide Democratic Alliance;</b> International Association of Machinists Hall, 5402 Bolsa Avenue, Huntington Beach. For more details see <a href="http://www.67thad.com">http://www.67thad.com</a> .
<b>Feb 15</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	Next meeting of the <b>68th Assembly District Committee.</b> Contact them via their web site for additional information at <a href="http://www.68thad.com/contact.asp">http://www.68thad.com/contact.asp</a> . Carrows, 16931 Magnolia Ave., Huntington Beach
<b>Feb 19</b> <b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>LULAC 81st Anniversary Celebration</b> The Orange County LULAC Foundation, has made plans for a major banquet (among other events) in order to mark the 81st Anniversary of LULAC and to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our Nation's oldest, largest and best known Latino advocacy and civil rights organization. Banquet attendees will include LULAC National leaders, members and LULAC Youth, legislators from several states, union representatives, non-profit group leaders, corporate sponsors and members of our Latino community. If you are planning to attend or be an sponsor please contact us at 714-357-4328, or by E-mail: <a href="mailto:benydiaz@sbcglobal.net">benydiaz@sbcglobal.net</a> .
<b>Feb 20</b> <b>2:00 pm</b>	<b>Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Dr. Phil Zuckerman,</b> professor at Claremont and prolific author. Also a contributor to The Huffington Post where he wrote on "The Religious Support Behind Proposition 8." Dr. Zuckerman will be speaking on " <b>The Separation of Church and State And What We Can Learn From The Least Religious Countries</b> " Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine <a href="http://www.au-oc.org">www.au-oc.org</a> or call 714-299-4551 for information.
<b>Feb 26</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	Debate at Saddleback College: " <b>Is God the Best Explanation for Moral values?</b> " <b>Debaters: Dr. James Corbett and Sean McDowell.</b> Debate moderated by <b>Dr. Craig Hazen,</b> Director of the M.A. Program in Christian Apologetics at Biola University. <b>Dr. James Corbett</b> teaches Advance Placement European history at Capistrano Valley High School. <b>Sean McDowell</b> is the head of the Bible Department at Capistrano Valley Christian Schools. Debate is open to the public. Cost is \$5 for the public and free for the Saddleback College community. For more information, email: <a href="mailto:feb26debate@gmail.com">feb26debate@gmail.com</a>

**Next E-Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm**  
**Pauline Younkin's Home**  
**10960 El Domino, Fountain Valley**  
**Call Jo Anne at 714-846-5201 or Pauline at 714-589-1211 for information**

## Year in Review: Year Ahead—Jo Anne Jennings

Although 2009 was not an election year the club did not sit quietly. We registered voters at the Strawberry Festival and the Orange County Fair. A float in the Huntington Beach 4th of July parade was successfully sponsored. Many members under the leadership of Pat Goodman collected signatures in support of the public option and then presented them to our legislators in their local offices.

The year 2010 will be even busier. Senator Barbara Boxer needs our support as do our many local candidates. We will need to register new voters, walk precincts and help get out the vote. Dave Sonneborn has asked for volunteers to help collect signatures to place an initiative on the bal-

lot for California Majority rule. Roz Freeman needs volunteers to welcome newly registered Democratic voters.

At our November meeting, the club voted to continue sponsoring the float in the 4th of July parade. I will be meeting with a committee this January to set benchmarks for funding and to begin the fundraising process. Placement in the parade depends on the date the entrance fee is received. Because that fee was paid on the last day in 2009, our float was at the end of the parade. This meant a three hour wait after the parade began before our float got started. We want to be near the beginning of the parade this year. After funds are collected and parade day arrives, we'll need people to transport marchers. We hope to have many, many marchers this year. ##

**John Perez**, freshman L.A. Democrat won the unanimous support of the party to be the **next leader of the California Assembly**, a choice that will make him the first openly gay lawmaker to hold the powerful post. He is a former labor union official and a cousin of L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

"It says more about California than it does about me," Perez said. "It means that California is a place where everybody has a seat at the table." Born into a working-class family on L.A.'s Eastside, Perez earned a political science degree at UC Berkeley, and then became a top official with several unions and the California Labor Federation, focusing on political campaigns and government relations.

## February Dynamic Democrat Submissions due on: Feb-3-2010

**Treasurer's Report: Club Combined Account Balance: \$6,145.88**

## Thank You Patrons!

Sally Alexander	Sukhjit Chahal	Jo Anne Jennings	David and Deborah Rector
Kenneth Arnold	Nancy Donaven	Donna Kapche	Linda Reynolds
Donna Ashley	Paul & Arlene Flanagan	James Karis	Eileen Ringerman
Gus Ayer	Roz Freeman	Eleanor & Ed Klein	George Rivera
Keith Bohr	Scott Fudal	Alex & Patty Kuczynski	Bill & Kathleen Rockney
Caren & Steve Bolinger	Richard Gillock	Marko & Karen Markovich	Sal & Jan Sapien
Armida Brashears	Pat & Phil Goodman	Pat Mathewson	Judith Shenkman
Stephanie Campbell	Odette & Ted Gotsch	Haig & Jean Parechian	Al Snook
Richard Carlburg	Chris Hilger	Charlotte & Don Pirch	W. & B. Van Lanningham
Bonnie & Robert Castrey	Mary Ellen Houseal	Elmer & Isabel Phibbs	Pauline Younkin

# Abortion Rights and Health Care—Steph Campbell

Last month, the House included an abortion coverage ban in its health care bill. On December 8, the Senate voted down an amendment by Sens. Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT). But in late December, under so called Senate leadership, reproductive rights suffered a tremendous setback as Sen. Nelson bribed (and there is no other word for it) the Senate to include a provision in its health care bill that would deny millions of women access to abortion and impose onerous restrictions on millions more.

The provision that would require women to write a separate check for abortion coverage has no other purpose than to stigmatize abortion. It is designed to undermine the health, dignity, and well-being of women in order to impose a religious view of reproductive rights on all of us. Further, women in states that exercise the Senate's "opt out" provision may lose access to abortion coverage under the plan altogether.

Here's what the National Council of Jewish Women – a tireless advocate of choice – had to say: "The ongoing war against women's ability to exercise their constitutional

right to obtain an abortion has advanced another step with the inclusion of new restrictions on insurance coverage in the Senate version of pending health care reform legislation. The use of a desperately needed health reform bill to roll back women's rights and undermine women's health care is an outrage."

For those of you who have worked tirelessly to advance choice for women, and women's rights in general, please be sure to communicate to our Senators (both strong advocates of choice) that this is not acceptable. Senator Boxer has taken many opportunities to make this point in the media. But it is important that she knows that she is supported by her constituents. The right does a good job of pounding her with their views. Her Legislative Assistants have told me that it is critical that they hear from the progressives so that she can continue to support us. I am sure the same is true for Senator Feinstein.

As the bill moves to conference we need to get these restrictions removed. The only way this will happen is if we keep up the pressure. ###

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### Membership Application Democratic Club of West Orange County

Your name, address, occupation and employer is required by Federal & California Law for all cash donations \$25 or greater. \$100 or greater donations must be by check only.

Date	\$ Donation	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$60
		<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$40
Name		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25
Address		<input type="checkbox"/> Senior-Student	\$20
City, ZIP		Select your newsletter preference:	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter by USPS	
Phone		<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter by E-mail	
Email		Make your check payable to: DCWOC Mail check to:	
Occupation (Self Employed is not an Occupation)		DCWOC Attn: Treasurer 2781 W. MacArthur Blvd., #B-Box 347 Santa Ana, CA 92704	
Employer			

## Interesting Wal-Mart Facts

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Americans spend \$36,000,000 at Wal-Mart every hour of every day.</li> <li>2. This works out to \$20,928 profit every minute!</li> <li>3. Wal-Mart will sell more from January 1 to St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) than Target sells all year.</li> <li>4. Wal-Mart is bigger than Home Depot + Kroger + Target + Sears + Costco + K-Mart combined.</li> <li>5. Wal-Mart employs 1.6 million people and is the largest private Employer, and most speak English.</li> <li>6. Wal-Mart is the largest company in the history of the World.</li> <li>7. Wal-Mart now sells more food than Kroger &amp; Safeway combined, and keep in mind they did all</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>this in only 15 years.</li> <li>8. During this same period, 31 Supermarket chains sought bankruptcy.</li> <li>9. Wal-Mart now sells more food than any other store in the world.</li> <li>10. Wal-Mart has approx 3,900 stores in the USA of which 1,906 are Super Centers; this is 1,000 more than it had 5 Years ago.</li> <li>11. This year 7.2 billion different purchasing experiences will occur At a Wal-Mart store.. (Earth's population is approximately 6.5 Billion.)</li> <li>12. 90% of all Americans live within 15 miles of a Wal-Mart.</li> </ol> |
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## Ideas Needed for the 2010 Holiday Event

For those of you who did not attend our fabulous party in December we are soliciting feedback to incorporate into a potential end of the year event in 2010. If you could email (westocdems@yahoo.com) or snail mail (2781 W. MacArthur Blvd., #B-Box 347, Santa Ana 92704) your responses to the following we would appreciate it:

1. I prefer not to attend holiday parties
2. The price of \$55 was too high (what would have been a reasonable amount for you?)

3. I didn't like the venue because \_\_\_\_\_
4. I don't like silent auctions
5. I don't like to go out on Sunday evenings
6. I didn't like the food offered
7. I wasn't interested in the speakers

And most importantly if you could complete this sentence:  
I would have attended if \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

The Board really appreciates your input!

## Do You Know What The Current Terror Alert Level Is?



Terror alerts are much in vogue with the recent incident on the Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. It occurred to me that our readers may not know what the current terror alert level is. But fear not, all you need to do is go to our Club web site at [www.dcwoc.org](http://www.dcwoc.org). The Homeland Security color coded threat levels are red, orange, yellow, blue and green. Our

terror alert level information comes from Homeland Security and is displayed via [www.geekandproud.net](http://www.geekandproud.net) where the colors are converted to your favorite Sesame Street characters: Elmo (red), Ernie (orange), Bert (Yellow), Cookie Monster (blue) and Oscar (green). If you go to our site you will see both Ernie and Bert. Ernie (orange) is for all commercial flights and Bert (yellow) is for everything else.

Oscar is my favorite character—do you think we'll ever see him again ... no wonder he's a grouch!



***Dr. Phil Zuckerman Presents***

***Society without God: What We Can Learn From the Least Religious Countries in the World***

**Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Orange County Chapter - General Meeting**

***Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm***

**Irvine Ranch Water District<sup>1</sup> 15600 Sand Canyon Ave. (at Waterworks) in Irvine**

Dr. Phil Zuckerman, author of the 2008 book "Society without God" will host a discussion about what we can learn from countries less religious than our own. He will focus on issues of religion, justice and contentment.

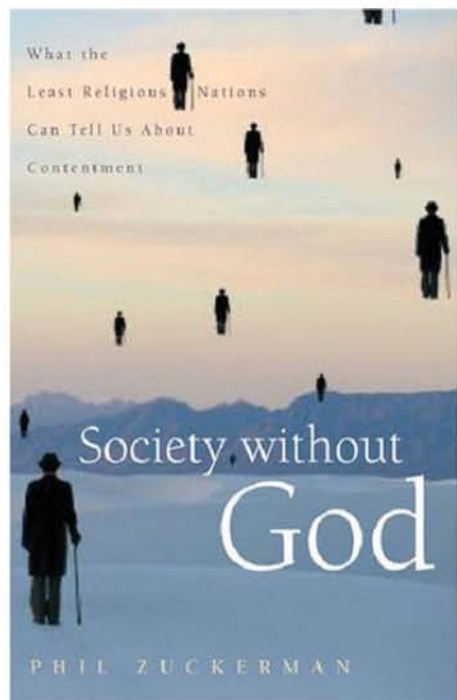


In 2005 Dr. Zuckerman was a guest professor in Denmark where he did research on secularization and its impact on society.

He received his PhD in sociology from the University of Oregon. He currently is a professor at Claremont where he teaches sociology and a graduate seminar on the sociology of religion.

He is a prolific author and in addition to "Society without God" he has written "Strife in the Sanctuary: Religious Schism in a Jewish Community."

He has also been a contributor on "The Huffington Post" where he has written on "The Religious Support behind Proposition 8." He concludes that Prop. 8 passed because of religious people who think that God will punish us if we allow gay marriage. He shows the fallacy of that argument from a sociological perspective and concludes that "religious supporters of Proposition 8 have a right to their opinion but that doesn't make their opinion right."



**For more information:**

[www.au-oc.org](http://www.au-oc.org) or email: [orangecountyau@yahoo.com](mailto:orangecountyau@yahoo.com)  
Fax: 714-515-4248 or call: 714-299-4551 or 714-957-0748

<sup>1</sup> Irvine Ranch Water District neither supports nor endorses the cause nor activities of organizations which use the District's meeting rooms that are made available as a public service.

# California Education - We Cannot Afford to Dither

by Michael Matsuda, President, Board of Trustees for  
the North Orange County Community College District

The father of modern public education, John Dewey once said, "Luck, bad if not good, will always be with us. But it has a way of favoring the intelligent and showing its back to the stupid." When it comes to the decisions we've made about public education, it is doubtful that luck will be on our side. California has slipped to 47th in investing in k-12 education and now spends more on the prison system than on higher education, even though there is a strong correlation between illiteracy and incarceration. Thanks to our elected leaders who continue to posture to be "tough on crime," California now ranks number one in the world in incarceration rates and per capita spending on prisons.

Consider this: adjusted for inflation, University of California tuition has gone up over 500% since 1980. During the same period, expenditures on corrections have also gone up 500%. As we spend ever more on warehousing prisoners, we're forced to make students pay ever more for their education. The annual cost of incarcerating one inmate in prison is close to \$40,000. The cost per youth in California Youth Authority is \$90,000 per year. Both have a 70% recidivism rate within three years.

Besides the recent highly publicized decision by the UC regents to raise tuition by 32%, budget cuts proposed last week will cause community colleges to turn away 262,845 current students if implemented, analysis released by the Community College League of California shows. The loss of a quarter of a million students is the equivalent of closing the University of California. The state's rising unemployment rate and decisions by the California State University to limit enrollment will likely lead to even more students finding the doors to higher education closed.

We used to have the world's greatest k-12 and higher education system and we thrived. Now we have the world's biggest system of prisons and we're broke. That's the decision Californians have made over the past three decades: more prisons and better paid prison guards, but lower taxes and less education. It's hard to think of a stupider allocation of resources.

And speaking of resources, ranked by per capita taxes collected, California comes out 12th in the nation according to the nonprofit nonpartisan California Budget Project. Contrary to what some pundits would have people believe,

our tax rates are not overly burdensome for the eighth largest economy in the world. Moreover, the CPB has reported that the bottom fifth of California's taxpayers -- those earning less than about \$18,000 -- paid about 11.7% of family income in state and local taxes. By contrast, the top 1%, earning \$430,000 or more, paid only about 7.1% on average, counting the deduction of state and local taxes many could take from their federal tax bill.

The popular view of state government is that it does little beyond handing out welfare payments and free healthcare to the poor. For the wealthy, this is a useful urban myth, for it rationalizes "flattening" state taxes, giving them a tax cut and everyone else an increase. The harsh reality is that the income gap between rich and poor is reaching Grand Canyon proportions and as a growing number of sociologists have warned, huge differences in income can be counter-productive and damaging for economies, and rising income inequality represents a danger to the entire social fabric. Ben Bernanke are you listening?

Over the last several years, the top 1 percent of Americans have received their largest share of national income since 1928. Alarming, data on income disparity also shows that the top 300,000 Americans collectively enjoyed almost as much income as the bottom 150 million Americans. In 1980, the ratio of pay between executives and workers was 40:1. It is more than 400:1 today, and real income has remained flat or gone down for more than 80 percent of Americans during the same period.

Education, as Horace Mann said, is the "great equalizer of conditions of men." In these times of uncertainty and growing gaps between those who have and those who have not, education is perhaps the only means of leveling the field and for saving our great golden state.

But we have to act now because there is little doubt that if our educational system implodes, we may as well just rearrange the deck chairs. Indeed it is time that our elected leaders speak honestly about the need for investing in our educational system and to break the mantra of "no new taxes" so that once again Californians can dream of a future of hope, prosperity and better times for their children and grandchildren.

## How to Write to Congress: Letter Writing Tips from Grover Norquist

When you write Congress, you speak for hundreds of other people. That's the lesson from Grover Norquist.

Businesses have a rule of thumb that each letter they receive represents another 200 people who had a similar concern. "Two hundred people thought about it, were mad, went home mad, said I'm going to write a letter, and then forgot to write the letter because they got busy," Norquist said.

Still, there's more to it than just sending a letter, he said. Here are a few other tips:

\* Tell — don't show — your anger. Writing in all capital letters or using foul language just makes you sound unhinged. "You can say how unhappy you are without swearing or calling anybody stupid," he said. "You can say, 'I'm very angry.' You don't have to sound angry. You can just say it. 'I'm very angry. This really irritates me. This is very bad.'"

\* Don't be unreasonable. If the tone of your letter makes you sound as though you won't be happy no matter what politicians do, they'll ignore you. "They think, 'How can we please this person? They're crazy,'" Norquist said. "I have a very nice crazy file in my office, but I tend not to write

back to those people."

\* Tell them if it's your first letter. Norquist said it's very effective to let Members know this is the first time you've written or that you haven't written in a long time. It helps them understand how strongly you feel about the subject of your letter, he said. He compared it to the joke about the boy who ends years of silence to complain about the broccoli at dinner. "Until now, everything's been fine," he said

\* Narrow your focus. Norquist said too many advocacy groups focus on a laundry list of issues. It's more effective to focus your energy on a single issue, he argued, pointing to advocates for home-schooling who have done well in fights against teacher's unions. "That's like marijuana growers went up against (pharmaceutical companies) and beat them," he said.

\* Act locally. If you want to meet your Member of Congress in person, track them down when they're in town — not when they're in Washington. "I was a quiet critic of the idea of bringing people to D.C. for a rally," he said. "Why would you do that? If you have 1,000 people in North Dakota, have them talk to their guy in North Dakota."

## Discrimination Against Women—from the Women's Rights Project

Nearly every country in the world has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the United States is one of only seven that have not.

Like women all over the world, women in the U.S. suffer gender-based violence: each day, an average of 630 women are raped or sexually assaulted, and an average of three women are murdered by an intimate partner. This violence is one of the most critical obstacles to women's and girls' full participation in society in the U.S. And as the CEDAW Committee has long recognized, violence against women and girls is itself a form of gender discrimination.

If ratified, CEDAW would require the U.S. government to take more proactive steps to eliminate gender-based violence, including exercising due diligence to prevent violence committed by private individuals, investigating and punishing acts of violence, and providing compensation to

victims. CEDAW would help fill the gap left in U.S. law by the absence of a strong federal law prohibiting violence against women. It would also redress Supreme Court decisions denying victims of violence an avenue to gain justice through the federal courts and holding that survivors of domestic violence have no constitutional right to police enforcement of a protective order. Ratification of CEDAW is especially important for young women, poor women, and women of color, who are disproportionately targeted for gender-based violence, particularly Native-American women, who because of jurisdictional issues cannot obtain a remedy through state courts.

In his first speech before the United Nations General Assembly in September, President Obama indicated that the U.S. intends to prioritize human rights in both domestic and foreign policy, pledging that, "America will always stand with those who stand up for their dignity and their rights." CEDAW ratification is an essential piece of fulfilling this promise. ###