

T.O. Opening Remarks – Making Waves for Democracy 2/18/24

WELCOME to our 68th meeting! How many of you have been with us since the beginning, in 2017?

Today I want to acknowledge the other members of the Leadership Team: Regina Birdsell, Jeannette Bronson, Linda Garnets, Xiomara Flores-Holguin, Barrie Levy, Jeanne Miranda, Marley Powell, and Brandon Zavala....

Soon you'll hear from George Whitesides, the guy who, in November, will FLIP CA-27 for good now that MAGA Mike Garcia has a track record showing he's WAY too extreme for that district. He's a co-sponsor of the national abortion ban, for gods sake!

Now our primary system, the JUNGLE PRIMARY or TOP TWO is a Republican idea for Blue states, as Sheila Kuehl always reminds me – they WANT us to spend money fighting each other -- As – alas -- in our other target, that Orange County coastal seat, CA-47, where Democrats Joanna Weiss and Dave Min are battling it out for a Top-Two spot along with Republican. After the primary, we'll happily door-knock and fundraise for whoever wins, and we'll keep up our good work in the Antelope Valley....

*** * * Okay –**

First, I feel GREAT about 2024 election.

The anti-MAGA movement is huge, the largest in American history! Millions of us are in motion. And we keep winning elections!

It's a redemptive act to save democracy. The grassroots have always saved our country, as Heather Cox Richardson reminds us daily. I subscribe to her daily Letter, send it out to 15 people, and recently saw her (along with

750 others) on a zoom. She was stunning. Here are some takeaways from what she said:

1. This moment feels “terrifying” but it’s actually “a time of effervescence” (her words!). 33% of the population being MAGA is scary -- they act bigger and louder and scarier than they are. But we are winning. (Her advice: Laugh at them!)

2. There’s lots of historical precedence for today’s civic uprising against the forces of evil. And we’ve always won. Heather 100% believes we will win again.

3. On Joe Biden: Heather thought he’d be a “CARETAKER” President but instead he’s been TRANSFORMATIONAL – because he has rolled back the central economic doctrine since 1981, trickle-down economics. That is a MAJOR accomplishment.

I say: We have Joe and Kamala – they have a traitor and criminal. We gonna win!

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I’m also a fan of Simon Rosenberg’s HOPIUM CHRONICLES. Some headlines from him:

1. The corporate news is “catastrophe porn”. Stop tuning in.

2. So much has changed in the 35 years since the Berlin Wall fell: Climate change//Putin//Rise of the Right//Covid//Internet-science. Who has better managed that change? DEMOCRATS!.... Did you know that 48 of 50 million jobs created here in the US in past 35 years have happened under Democratic Presidents?!

3. The Republicans are in the middle of the worst electoral run of losses in American history. As Simon says: “I’d much rather be us than them.”

The voters are SO with us since Dobbs in April 2022. People, especially women, most especially YOUNG women, are pissed. Nationally, 70% want Roe reinstated; similar to support for taxes on rich and gun safety laws.

***** OK, it's time to RECLAIM PATRIOTISM...**

I'm proud to wear this scarf, and carry the story that reflects the good part of an America still working out its two sides:

- I hope you've seen Origin, Ava Duverny's important film. If you have, you'll recall the scene around the table with the German couple when she talks about how it's illegal in Germany to have a statue or any symbol of Nazism – whereas in this country, there are Confederate statues sprinkled everywhere.**

The civil war is not yet over; the MAGA Right is the same force that was dormant for decades since the 60s gave us the civil rights movement, second-wave feminism and environmentalism and then the many social justice movements that grew out of them and WON AMERICA'S HEARTS AND MINDS.... (such as lesbian-feminism, LGBTQ, Chicano, AAPI, disability, and immigrants' rights, economic and criminal justice reform, Black Lives Matter, climate action AND MORE....)

But Trumpism has unleashed that ugly shadow side of America – the white supremacy, misogyny, HATRED that just went underground in the 1960s, that has never been squashed. We, the good guys, the vast majority, carry the vision forward of the world's first great multi-racial democracy.

Let 2024 be the year we finally defeat the forces of darkness. Because there IS an effervescence out there. A bubbling up of democracy. And YOU ARE ALL PART OF IT!

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I want to end with 5 of Jessica Craven’s RESISTENCE RESOLUTIONS for 2024 – The year is still young!

- 1. I will do everything to save democracy!**
- 2. I will stay in the day and do what I can. Obsessing about the future is pointless.**
- 3. I will spread good news relentlessly.**
- 4. I will ignore the polls.**
- 5. I will ask everyone I talk to if they are registered to vote and tell them: YOUR VOICE MATTERS. Anyone NOT voting this year is voting for Trump.**

As master message-maker Anand Giridharadas puts it: “The Right is a barnacle on the hull of progress”! If you haven’t yet read his book, The Persuaders, do it!

One of my sheros, writer Rebecca Solnit, says: ‘Voting is a chess move, not a valentine!’

So, let’s go WIN in 2024!

30-30-30