

TO Opening Remarks 8/16/26 – Making Waves for Democracy

Welcome to the 90th monthly meeting of *Making Waves for Democracy*!! I'm proud that we are all volunteers here and that we have survived and thrived as a political community....

This mid-term election couldn't be more important: our country is on the line...And remember Rebecca Solnit's motto that your vote is a chess move, not a Valentine.....

It's only 78 days till Election Day.... According to Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, you don't count today and you don't count Election Day. And here in California, we are lucky to get the ballots in the mail 30 days ahead of time, so it's really only 48 days. We are in the final stretch!

Another thing I learned this past week is that VOTING EARLY helps give Dems the advantage because Republicans focus on Election Day. SO VOTE EARLY!!! (Plus it stops the many campaign mailers that come into your mailbox....)

And here's today's pitch: sign up for ELECTION PROTECTION OUT OF STATE – or, here in LA County, become a PAID COMMUNITY ELECTION WORKER...And – especially if you cannot do either -- CALL everyone you know in one of the 8 states where we have a viable Senate candidate (ME, OH, NC, TX, GA, AK, IA and MI). Really. *Make a list, think of everybody you*

know in those 8 states -- your college buddy, your elementary school friend, work buddies who moved away -- and CALL THEM.

Everybody can do something. (Thank you Wendy Lazarus for this idea....)

I know we don't trust polling, but even Nate Silver has the Dems winning it all: 89% chance of winning the House and 55% chance on the Senate. ...Just sayin'.....

OKAY....Let's talk about SOCIALISM....

The mainstream media is hellbent on portraying the Dem Party as divided and hopelessly infighting between the progressives and the centrists. NOT true. The corporate media – OVERLY INFLUENCED BY RIGHT-WING MEDIA -- is enthralled with this idea. And it's easy to cast aspersions when you are the party of the 30% who are MAGA Trumpers, the Party of Oligarchs and White Supremacy (and Sexism and Homophobia and so much more....). The Republicans all fall in line behind their leader, the Wanna-Be-King.....

We here today intensely dislike the Orange Fascist and MAGA....and -- in a two-party system -- welcome the QUOTE "raucus pluralism" UNQUOTE of the Democrats, as Simon Rosenberg of Hopium Chronicles calls it. We Dems are changing, and that's a good thing....

Harold Meyerson has been very helpful this last couple of weeks as I've sorted this stuff out. Harold is the former Editor of the *LA Weekly* who moved to DC after a long time here in LA to become an editor of *The American Prospect*....He's a friend of mine, a leftist like I am, and the smartest person I know on socialism, communism and the left in general. I always agree with him. He's written at least twice about this current DSA brouhaha..... And to paraphrase him, it's NOT the socialism, it's the "woke-1.0"ism (as AOC calls it) that's turning voters off. It's the extreme positions of the DSA such "abolish the police" (which I agree with....but most do not)....One statistic you should know: 66% of Americans have a positive view of socialism, while only 42% have a positive view of capitalism. Let's say, like Harold does, that 20 million or 6% of Americans are self-identified socialists. *Why then does DSA not have more members?* They have 120,000, .034% of the population. That's a third of 1%!

Plus, there is a big difference between the 220 local chapters and the national; the national co-chair is a woman who is Marxist-Leninist and supports Russia and Iran....Now, I don't know about you but I love Zelensky and Ukraine and dislike Russia and Iran myself....I'm aligned with the vast majority of Americans on this..... So much for the socialist vs. the centrist Democrats.... I LIKE a vigorous debate!

On Sunday the *NYTimes* had a lead op-ed by Tressie McMillan Cottom that went viral. It had the telling headline: “Socialists Are Winning Because They Listen to People!” She said, in part, QUOTE“...It’s always dicey to make predictions. But if I were trying to read which way the wind is blowing for Democrats in 2026 and 2028, I wouldn’t be looking for a socialist wave. I’d be looking for the candidates who are thinking and running as if they know that bases are made of people, not dollars.” (UNQUOTE)

Finally....For those of you with friends and family who still buy the bullshit, there’s LeavingMAGA.org. Yes, there’s a group for you.....! It’s a bit like PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).... So check it out....

Today we have two candidates who put people first, Marni von Wilpert and Randy Villegas.... Jane will introduce them. For those of you who don’t yet know – she is the newest member of *Making Waves* Leadership Team and a bigwig in the Dem Party of California. (She was a leader in Prop 50.) We are lucky to have her! Over to you, Jane.....!