

# Sun City Democrats

[www.suncitydems.org](http://www.suncitydems.org)

February 2011



## General Meeting:

The General Meeting is typically on the first Saturday of each month. The meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information on the Sun City Democrats, please contact President **Roe Mackey** at 864-7948 or Communications Chair **Kay Walker** at 864-2874.

## Saturday, February 5, 2011

**9:30 AM Coffee, 10:00 Business Meeting**

**Place: Cowan Creek Amenity Center,  
Florence / Georgetown Rooms**

**Program: Steve Bickerstaff**

**Supreme Court Ruling: *Citizens United vs FEC***



**Steve Bickerstaff** served as Parliamentarian of the Texas Senate and special assistant Texas Attorney General before founding the private law firm of **Bickerstaff & Heath** in 1980. Bickerstaff retired from the private practice of law in 2001, but remains active as a member of the adjunct faculty of the **University of Texas School of Law** and several nonprofit corporation boards. He is the author of **Lines in the Sand** (2007), a book about the controversial 2003 congressional redistricting in Texas, a coauthor of **International Election Principles** (2009), and an author of more than 25 law journal articles dealing primarily with election law or telecommunications regulation. Bickerstaff was a Fulbright Foundation Scholar teaching in Germany (2000), a Rockefeller Foundation Scholar in Residence at the foundations Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, Italy (2002), and a member of a Carter Commission team advising on elections in the Peoples Republic of China (2003). In 2008 he lectured publicly in London, England and Caen, France for the London School of Economics. In 2010 he is teaching **Constitutional Law II: Redistricting Texas** and **International Election Principles**.

## **SUN CITY DEMOCRATS 2011 OFFICERS**

President: **Roe Mackey** 864-7948 (**Message on pg 2**)

Vice-President: **Duane Florschuetz** 868-2621

Secretary: **Bonnie Boorman** 863-2387

Treasurer: **Sheridan Moore** 869-4825

Communication: **Kay Walker** 864-2874

Website Editor: **Jodi Salyers** 864-2812

Newsletter Editor: **Jodi Salyers** 864-2812

Hospitality: **Pat Prudhom** 686-0506

Meeting Setup: **Fred Becker** 864-0704

Coffee: **George Wagner** 864-0641

Meeting Food: **Bettie Horn Bendewald** 931-0981

IMPACT: **Dwayne Boydston** 240-5161

Membership: **Larry Hilliard** 591-7052

Database: **Frank Wentworth** 864-3385

Programs: **Billie Reaney** 869-2690

Special Events: This position is vacant.

Study Group: **Nita Hornbeck** 869-4825

Past President: **Jodi Salyers** 864-2812

## Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Sun City Democrats will travel by bus to Austin to attend a special viewing of this celebration of **Molly Ivins**, the sharp-tongued journalist with a Texas-sized tenacity and a penchant for skewering the political establishment.

**RED HOT  
PATRIOT**  
the kick-ass wit of  
**MOLLY IVINS**





Sun City Democrats

**Please SUPPORT the Sun City Democrats – and now DUES ARE DUE!**

The Sun City Democrats provide many activities and services for members. We have educational meetings, provide speakers, social events, maintain a website, and a monthly newsletter. We exist only because of loyal volunteers.

Sun City Democrats' annual dues are \$12 per member. You may pay at the sign-in table at the meetings or mail a check made out to Sun City Democrats to: Sun City Democrats; 1530 Sun City Blvd, Suite 120; PMB #432; Georgetown TX 78633. A membership application should accompany your check; they are available online at [www.suncitydems.org](http://www.suncitydems.org) or click here:

[Sun City Democrats Membership Application](#)

**Please SUPPORT the Sun City Democrats Political Action Committee ~ IMPACT:**

Our PAC is known as IMPACT: Informed Members Political Action Committee of Texas. IMPACT is the only legal way that the Sun City Democrats may contribute to candidates. Send donations to IMPACT Treasurer, Dwaine Boydston, 722 Independence Creek Lane, Georgetown TX 78633. NOTE: This is a new address for IMPACT contributions.

**Williamson County Democratic Party:**

**Precinct 381**

~Kay Walker, Precinct Chair  
864-2874 [kaywalker@suddenlink.net](mailto:kaywalker@suddenlink.net)

**Precinct 394**

~Dwaine Boydston, Precinct Chair  
431-4412 [dwaine.boydstun@gmail.com](mailto:dwaine.boydstun@gmail.com)

**Precinct 396**

~Billie Reaney, Precinct Chair  
868-0098 [billie\\_reaney@msn.com](mailto:billie_reaney@msn.com)  
(NOTE: See Billie's Message on Page 5.)

**Precinct 399**

~Bill Blair, Precinct Chair  
868-9180 [billblair3@verizon.net](mailto:billblair3@verizon.net)



**To Sun City Democrats and Friends**

~ Roe Mackey

President, Sun City Democrats

The New Year has started and with it some changes have been made to make our Sun City Democrats Club even better. First we have moved – our old meeting place (the Atrium) was becoming difficult – difficult to schedule, a number of Saturdays we would have to move, and difficult to find a place to park when there are major events at the Ballroom. So January we started to meet in the Florence and Georgetown Rooms at Cowan Creek. At our new meeting room we heard our friend Walt Herbert speak on 'Social Justice and the Financial Meltdown'. There were more than 100 members and guests present to hear this outstanding program.

Also on January 26 the Issues/Discussion Group met to discuss the current "State of the Union" as well as to talk about future topics for the meetings in April and May. We also discussed the possibility of starting our own book club.

The Issue/Discussion group meets in the Andice Room in Cowan Creek on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month from 2:00 to 3:30. All members and friends are invited.

The general topics for February and March are Health Care. Specific topics are: Feb. 9 – Looking at current Health Care in the United States; Feb. 23 – Health Care in Europe; March 9 – Health Care in the rest of the World; and finally March 23 – discussion on how to improve health care in the United States, including cost, coverage and improved care.

We need your help – in volunteering – and also by suggesting topics, speakers and activities that you would like to see the club be involved in.

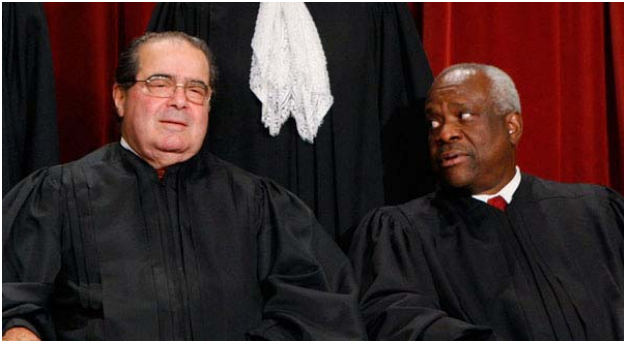
Finally last year we ended the year with over 200 members. This was great, but still under what we had in 2008. The next two years are vital as the citizens of the United States will vote for a President, all members of the House of Representatives, and 1/3 of the Senators. One of the things we need to do now is increase our membership. Over 2500 Sun City voters voted for Bill White for Governor. We need to involve many of those voters. Bring a friend or a neighbor to the next meeting; let us double our membership now as we prepare to win in 2012.



# Department of Justice is asked for Investigation: Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Justice Clarence Thomas had Conflicts of Interest regarding Citizens United vs FEC

~ Jeanne Cummings

Reporter, POLITICO, Posted on January 19, 2011



To mark Friday's anniversary of a court decision that allowed corporations to sink millions into politics, **Common Cause**, a reform group, is asking the Department of Justice to investigate alleged conflicts of interest involving two Supreme Court justices – in hopes of forcing the court to vacate the 5-4 ruling.

Common Cause officials and at least one legal expert acknowledged the difficulty of getting the landmark case overturned in this way. But in a document to be submitted to the department Thursday, Common Cause President **Bob Edgar** cites appearances by Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Antonin Scalia at retreats sponsored by **Koch Industries**, a corporation run by two major Republican donors who helped finance some of the new GOP groups founded after the ruling.

It appears both justices have participated in political strategy sessions, perhaps while the case was pending, with corporate leaders whose political aims were advanced by the decision," the Common Cause petition asserts.

In addition, Common Cause argues that Thomas should have recused himself because his wife was the founder of **Liberty Central**, a conservative group funded with a small group of anonymous donors who endorsed candidates in about a dozen 2010 races.

It's unknown whether those donors are corporations or individuals, but **Virginia Thomas** said publicly that she'd accept corporate money in light of the decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

**Mary Boyle**, Common Cause's spokeswoman, called the strategy "a long shot" but said, "Just the mention of Scalia and Thomas in Koch Brothers materials raises questions about the impartiality of both justices."

According to Boyle, "until these questions are resolved through a formal investigation, public debate over

allegations of bias and conflicts of interest will serve to undermine the legitimacy of the *Citizens United* decision and erode public confidence in the integrity of our nation's highest court.

Reformers also hope to stir debate about ruling next week by staging a counter-event and a rally outside a Palm Beach hotel where Charles Koch is hosting a semi-annual retreat that will focus on politics and policy.

In a September invitation to the event unearthed by **Think Progress**, a liberal activist group, Koch said: "We cannot rely on politicians to do so, so it is up to us to combat what is now the greatest assault on American freedom and prosperity in our lifetimes."

He also boasted that at the summer 2010 meeting in Aspen, "our group heard plans to activate citizens against the threat of government over-spending and to change the balance of power in Congress this November. In response, participants committed to an unprecedented level of support."

Among the groups lending a hand was **American for Prosperity**, a Koch-backed group, which spent more than a million dollars airing attack ads against Democrats in the midterms.

On a page summing up next week's meeting, Koch notes that past retreats "have featured such notable leaders as Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas" among other conservative talk show and political leaders.

"We believe it is inappropriate for a Supreme Court judge to be 'featured' at or attend closed-door strategy meetings with political donors, corporate CEOs, candidates and political officials, and thereby lend the prestige of their position to the political goals of that event," Common Cause argues in its petition.

"A reasonable person would question the impartiality of Justices Thomas and Scalia in the *Citizens United* case based on their attendance at political strategy meetings sponsored by a corporation that raises and spends millions to defeat Democrats and elect Republicans," it added.

Although Supreme Court justices are not bound by the same codes of conduct as federal judges, those rules were used as a model to provide guidance to the High Court.

Common Cause wants the justice department to investigate the connections between the justices and the Koch organizations to determine if conflicts – or the appearance of them – exist. If the department were to make such a finding, it could then ask the Supreme Court to vacate the ruling.

But **Rick Hasen**, a visiting election law expert at University of California Irvine law school, said the DOJ appeal isn't likely to succeed.

"Justice Scalia has refused to recuse himself from cases involving a far closer relationship," he said, adding that there is not evidence that the justices participated in strategy sessions about the case.

# Health Reform by the Numbers

~ Suzy Khimm

Reporter, Washington bureau **Mother Jones**, Posted on January 19, 2011

As Republicans seek to repeal health care reform, they have assaulted "**Obamacare**" as a job-killing, freedom-crushing behemoth that's pushed the country onto the path to socialism. In order to defend their landmark legislative achievement, Democrats, meanwhile, have tried to highlight the bill's most popular provisions, ones that have already gone into effect. "We can either talk about abstraction, or we can talk about real people," said **Rep. Henry Cuellar** (D-Texas), at a hearing on Tuesday, where Democrats invited ordinary citizens to testify about how health reform has helped them personally. "None of us did a good enough job" explaining the legislation the first time around, **Minority Whip Steny Hoyer** (D-Md.) admitted to reporters. And so the party has scrambled to play catch-up as the GOP has launched their all-out war against reform.

Though most of the major changes under the **Affordable Care Act** won't take effect until 2014, Democrats deliberately frontloaded the law with key reforms early on, in hopes of building political support for the measure. They've now trotted out those benefits as the Republicans have made health care repeal the first priority of their new House majority—even creating a map that details the benefits of reform by each congressional district. Here's a **by-the-numbers rundown**\* of how the Democrats' health care legislation has affected Americans so far—and what the GOP is threatening to take away with Wednesday's scheduled vote on a repeal bill:

**Four million Medicare beneficiaries** are expected to receive a \$250 rebate check for their 2010 prescription drug costs since the "donut hole" that exempted some seniors from drug discounts was closed on January 1, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

**More than four million small businesses** are eligible to receive a tax credit for purchasing employee health insurance in 2010, according to a July 2010 study by Families USA and Small Business Majority (both are pro-reform advocacy groups). About 1.2 million small businesses are eligible to receive the maximum 35 percent tax credit.

**About 2 million uninsured children** with preexisting conditions cannot be denied coverage under the current law. By 2014, everyone with a preexisting condition (as many as **129 million Americans**) would receive the same insurance protections.

Nearly **2.4 million young adults** can now receive coverage through their parents' health plans, under a provision that extends coverage to dependents up to age 26, according to the Obama administration. That number includes **1.8 million** young adults who weren't insured previously, as well as some **600,000** who had to buy insurance on their own.

This year, **about 10,700 people will keep their insurance coverage** due to a provision in the bill that prohibits an industry practice known as "rescission," which entailed stripping people of their coverage when payouts grew too costly.

Pre-reform, **about 18,600 to 20,400 people** hit a lifetime limit in insurance coverage each year and were denied coverage for claims above this ceiling. The reform bill prohibits insurers from setting these coverage caps.

Finally, repealing the legislation would also increase the deficit by **an estimated \$230 billion over the next decade**, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

To be sure, not all who are eligible for these benefits will end up receiving them—either because they choose not to or because they aren't aware that they can claim them. To that end, one of the Democrats' biggest challenges in both protecting the law and improving its political appeal will be to educate the potential beneficiaries about the specific aspects of reform that help them. And the Republicans can still do significant damage to health reform by impeding this effort and obfuscating the real numbers behind the law.

**\*Clarification:** There are 12.4 million ways in which Americans have already benefitted from reform (the aggregate of the numbers cited above). But there are less than 12.4 million people in total, as some qualify for more than one kind of benefit—e.g. young people under 26 who can qualify for their parents' insurance who also have pre-existing conditions.



# ObamaCare Facts vs. Fantasy

~ Billie Reaney

Precinct Chair 381, Williamson County Democratic Party; Program Chair, Sun City Democrats

The Republicans provide the fantasy. This week, Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to repeal **Affordable Healthcare Act** (Obamacare). Their vote will have no effect, since the repeal bill will not even come up for a vote in the Senate. Obamacare benefits seniors in a number of ways and they are justifiably concerned about repeal. Seniors are also concerned about the facts on how Obamacare affects Medicare.

One such concern is the Obamacare provision aimed at cutting costs of **Medicare Advantage (MA)** plans. MA is Medicare offered through for-profit insurance companies. These private sector plans costs \$1000/year/enrollee more than regular Medicare. This additional cost is borne by all Medicare participants. The cost-cutting provision in Obamacare requires that the for-profit insurers must, starting January 2011, spend at least 85% of Medicare Advantage payments on patient care. That means more dollars spent on the care of MA seniors, not less. It means less, sometimes much less, for the insurance companies' profit, marketing, and administrative costs. In one year, 2009, the CEOs of the 10 largest insurance companies offering Medicare Advantage programs collected \$228.1 million in personal compensation. Over the last decade those ten persons collected almost \$1 billion.

For seniors to feel secure with their health insurance, reliable, factual information about Obamacare is important. Rare are the newspaper articles or columns not colored by misinformation and bias. Good information can be found here: <http://healthreform.kff.org>, <http://www.healthcare.gov>, <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/timeline/index.html>.



-Help us stop the spread of-

## Mad Billionaire's DISEASE

**It's time to quarantine the Koch brothers.**  
Far-right oil tycoons, and #1 funders of the Tea Party, David & Charles Koch, have been buying elections for the last 40 years - injecting the influence of Big Money, and Mad Billionaire Disease into the body politic. Below, a history of how they spread the disease that has infected our democracy.

**1935 & 1940:**  
Charles and David born into one of the richest oil families in the country.  
*Silver spoons anyone?*

**1958:**  
Father co-founds John Birch Society in order to "purify" America, uses immense wealth to influence right-wing politics." (JBS accused Eisenhower, Truman and Roosevelt of communism)

**1967:**  
Inherit a measly \$300 million from their father. Parlay it into fortune worth billions today, begin using it to bend public policy in a more billionaire-friendly direction.

**1977:**  
Charles co-founds libertarian Cato Institute, the granddaddy of industry front groups, perhaps the most effective private force pushing to end social security, deny climate change and cut public education.  
*Not that Kato*

**1980:**  
David runs for President on platform of eliminating Social Security, minimum wage and corporate taxes. Gets 1% of vote.  
**Dave Koch for President**

**1990:**  
David founds Citizens for the Environment, which calls acid rain a myth, and is found to have no actual citizen members.  
*unless you're a billionaire chemicals salesman - duh :)*

**1997-2008:**  
Koch Industries donates nearly \$48 million to climate-change-denial groups.  
**GLOBAL WARMING IS BALONEY WE THRU OPEN 24 HRS**

**1998:**  
Koch-funded Mercatus Center hires economist who argues that smog helps prevent skin cancer.

**2001:**  
Koch industries fined \$30 million for over 300 oil spills, largest civil penalty ever under the Clean Water Act; and pays \$25 million settlement for stealing oil from federal and Indian lands.

**2004:**  
David founds Americans for Prosperity and then FreedomWorks, which will go on to start-up the Tea Party network.  
*Cash comes in handy!*

**2010 (June):**  
New York Magazine calls him the "tea party's wallet." In response, David claims "I've never been to a Tea Party event. No one representing the Tea Party has ever even approached me."

**2010 (October):**  
A few months later, footage surfaces showing Tea Party leaders reporting directly to David about turnout at their local anti-tax rallies.  
*omg what's in that tea?*

**January 30, 2011:**  
Koch Brothers and other right-wing billionaires meet in Palm Springs to plan out the next phase of their pro-corporate agenda (2 Supreme Court Justices attended last time).

Help protect America from Mad Billionaire's Disease. Join the People's Center for Disease Control (PC/DC) and help us Quarantine the Kochs.  
**PC/DC Rocks!**

the other 98%

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