



From the President's Desk

By Rich Piper

At our February meeting, we had another great turnout and heard a rousing message from Florida Rep. Janet Long, who represented District 51 from 2006-10 and who will hopefully be back representing Pinellas County citizens in Tallahassee again after the 2012 elections. Since I focused mainly on the local political milieu in my December column and the national arena in my column last month, I'll emphasize the Florida political scene this time – the scene that Rep. Long focused on and that is the chief target of local rallies in support of public servants on March 6, Awake the State on March 8, our Tallahassee trip on March 13-14, the jobs rally on March 29 and future Tallahassee trips by the Democratic Women's Club of Upper Pinellas, Planned Parenthood and other groups.

Last fall, Rick Scott ran his gubernatorial campaign on one major theme: "Let's get to work!" As governor, his actions have blatantly contradicted this message. Instead, he and his allies are pursuing a far-right agenda that threatens the future of our state.

Scott has summarily killed, without even awaiting the cost/benefit reports previously ordered, the high-speed rail plan largely funded by \$2.4 billion in federal grants that would not only have created over 20,000 jobs in Central Florida but would have propelled this state into the forefront of creatively meeting the transportation needs of the future.

He has put forward a budget that will cut 8,600 state jobs – about 7% of the total – with crippling slashes in the Department of Corrections and Department of Children and Families and the abolition of the Department of Community Affairs, which manages Florida's growth (Troxler, SPTimes, 2/13/11).

He has endorsed radical Medicaid changes that expert analysts say will cost more than 200,000 jobs over the next decade, in addition to jeopardizing the health of many of our most vulnerable citizens (www.fcfe.org).

In addition to these shocking job-killing actions, Scott and his far-right allies have joined the Republicans' multi-state attacks on public servants and their organizations, seeking to make them scapegoats for the economic problems created by the Bush Administration's unwise economic policies and the greed of the Republicans' Wall Street paymasters. Following the playbook laid out by the Koch brothers and other plutocrats, Scott and his allies want to "punish" public servants by suddenly saddling them with effective pay cuts of 5% (through mandatory new pension contributions previously covered by the state). They also plan to go after teachers in particular by seeking to revive most

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REMINDER

NEXT MEETING of the Largo-Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club.

Bring your donation of canned goods for the local food pantries.

DATE: Mar 21, 2011

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE:

Thirsty Marlin

351 West Bay Dr # 1, Largo,
(727) 586-3474 or email
Rich at

President@largodemocrats.com



Visit our website at:

www.largodemocrats.com

of the bad provisions of the disastrous SB 6 (vetoed last year by Gov. Crist) in the form of SB 736 and linking their pay to students' scores on standardized tests (even though those scores are affected by many factors beyond a teacher's control).

Scott wants to cut programs critical to Florida's future, supposedly to balance the budget. For example, his proposed budget would cut education spending per pupil by 10%, despite his campaign pledge not to reduce the education budget. Florida teachers' salaries were 37th of 50 last year and are projected to fall to 47th of 50 this year (SPTimes, 2/18/11).

At the same time Scott calls for huge business corporate tax cuts that will reward his friends, add to the deficit and lead to demands for even bigger service cuts, sending our state into a perilous downward spiral. He refuses to consider closing tax loopholes that unfairly benefit special interests, even though these have been widely documented and could close the gap in the budget (www.fcfe.org).

Meanwhile, many Republican legislators are working to add new restrictions on women's choices (for example, Rep. Van Zant is sponsoring HB 415, which would ban all abortions, even in cases of rape and incest, and create a direct legal challenge to *Roe v. Wade*), to prohibit gay adoption rights guaranteed by court decisions and to advance other right-wing causes such as the so-called "Smart Caps" proposal that would put our state in an economic straitjacket for the foreseeable future. This last proposal is modeled on a Colorado amendment that wreaked such havoc there that the electorate voted to suspend it. It has been rejected in every other state. Nonetheless, the tea-party screamers are yelping for it and have the ear of many Florida Republican legislators (www.fcfe.org).

Whether you call the Governor's office for "Awake the State," visit Tallahassee with us or other groups to voice your concerns, write letters to your legislators or newspapers and/or attend rallies to stand against the Scott/Republican agenda and for future-oriented, job-creating policies, please take action. We can't ignore the major national debates that are going on, but we need to pay attention to our own state, too.

Please visit our web site, www.largodemocrats.com, and come to our meetings (the next one on **Monday, March 21, 7 p.m., Thirsty Marlin, Largo**) for continuing updates on key issues and activities and new opportunities to get involved on the side of social justice and a brighter future. At the March 21st meeting, the Chair of our Pinellas Democratic Campaign Committee, Paul Starr, will be leading discussion of how we can effectively reach out to voters and win elections and soliciting our ideas and support.

It's not too late to save our state! Create jobs, innovate and educate! Yes, we can!

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FLORIDA'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

- **Sen. Bill Nelson** -
813 225-7040 or
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Email:
<http://billnelson.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm>
- **Sen. Marco Rubio** -
813 977-6450 or
(202) 224-3041 email:
http://rubio.senate.gov/contact_form.cfm
- **Rep. Bill Young** -
727 893-3191 or
(202)225-5961

Calendar of Events

NEXT CLUB MEETING

Paul Starr, a District 54 representative on the Pinellas County Democratic Executive Committee and chair of the DEC's campaign committee, will be guest speaker at the March 21 meeting. We'll get down to business at 7 p.m.; come earlier to eat and socialize. At the Thirsty Marlin Grill, 351 W. Bay Drive, Largo.

Our club is well-represented on the campaign committee by Jack Nazario, Rich Piper, Hal Alterman and Wanda Schwerer. If you know of good potential Democratic candidates for 2012, please encourage them to run and forward their names and pertinent information about them to Jack (jnazario14@tampabay.rr.com), Hal (alterman2@ij.net), Wanda (admin@largodemocrats.com) or Rich (rpiper3404@aol.com). Come to our next meeting and share your campaign ideas with Paul and other Campaign Planning Committee members

Date	Time	Event	Location
MONDAY, MARCH 21	7:00 PM - TBD	Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club	Thirsty Marlin Grill, 351 W. Bay Drive, Largo 33770
MONDAY, MARCH 21	7:00 PM - TBD	Greater Tarpon Springs Democratic Club	Walton Community Center (400 South Walton Ave., Tarpon Springs) For more information contact Gerald Goen - gjgoen@tampabay.rr.com
THURSDAY, MARCH 17	5:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Stonewall Democrats	Pinellas County Democratic Party Office - 2250 - 1st Avenue N., St. Petersburg Join the Stonewall Democrats for their regular monthly meeting at DEC Headquarters, 2250 1st Ave. N. in St. Pete. Social at 6:30, meeting starts at 7. Questions? Contact Rick Boylan at RQBoylan@gmail.com .
THURSDAY, MARCH 24	7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	PCDEC	St. Pete Marriott Hotel, 12600 Roosevelt Blvd. N., St. Pete
THURSDAY, MARCH 24	12:00 PM - TBD	On Top of the World Democratic Club Picnic	Event Location: Phillippe Park--Safety Harbor--Shelter 5 Annual March blast. Big Jim Pendleton will serve as chef. The Wade Clark Trio will provide entertainment
SUNDAY, MARCH 27	3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Old Fashioned Barbecue in support of Kathy Castor	Event Location: Home of Alex Sink & Bill McBride-11106 Old Fort Trail, Thonotosassa Event Description: Come join this wonderful event to support Kathy Castor, District 11. Suggested contribution is \$250.
MONDAY, MARCH 28	7:00PAM - 8:00 PM	Training Session for Committee People	Event Location: DEC HDQ--2250 First Avenue North, St. Pete Training session to help new and returning committee people to be effective precinct operatives. Duties of the position and resources available to you will be discussed. Helpful strategies will be provided to assist you in your responsibilities.
TUESDAY, MARCH 29	3:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Jobs Rally	Create good paying jobs with Open Trade with Cuba Now! Trade with Central and South America. Help Rebuild the Panama Canal. Call for Info 727-365-9706
WEDNESDAY,	6:30 P.M. -	St. Petersburg	Pinellas Co. Democratic Party Office, 2250 1st Ave. N., St.

APRIL 6	TBD	Democratic Club	Petersburg. For more information, please contact Jack Killingsworth at jack@jackkillingsworth.com.
THURSDAY, APRIL 7	5:30 PM - 8:30 PM	Democratic Women on the Move	Event Location: Bardmoor Golf & Tennis Club, 8001 Cumberland Rd, Largo Please join Democratic Women on the Move with their special guest, Rod Smith, the new Chair of the Florida Democratic Party. Contact Kathryn Larkin at ktl4fldems@gmail.com
SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011	7:00 PM - 11:00 PM	Spring Event	Event Location: Gulfport Casino Put on your dancing shoes and join us for a fun evening of dancing and fellowship with your fellow Democratic friends. This is a fund raising event as well.

More Information available at:

<http://www.pinellasdems.com/calendar.asp?nDate=2%2F1%2F2011>

Pinellas Democratic Party NEWS

Break Out Your Dancing Shoes!

You can cha cha and foxtrot and help fill the Democrat war chest at an April 9 PCDEC fundraiser at the Gulfport Casino. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door for an evening (7-10 p.m.) of live music, hors d'oeuvres and cash bar.

Rich Piper has tickets and is trying to get a good showing of Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club members.



PINELLAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY

THE PINELLAS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE

ANNUAL SPRING EVENT 2011

SATURDAY, APRIL 9TH
7PM - 10PM

AT GULFPORT CASINO
5500 SHORE BLVD. S. GULFPORT, FL 33707

LIVE MUSIC & DANCING
HORS D'OEUVRES • CASH BAR

TICKETS: \$25 ADV / \$30 AT DOOR

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
BAYTECH LABEL • MITYMO DESIGN
IRONWORKERS LOCAL 397
HAZLETT CREATIVE SOLUTIONS • PINELLAS COUNTY DEC

Orlando on Feb. 13 to participate in Florida's first-ever progressive LegiCamp.



Rich Piper, Mary Lou Ambrose, Belleair Bluffs Commissioner Joe Barkley and, seated, Linda Lucas, Pinellas County's State Democratic Party

Committeewoman.

Along with other activists, experts and organizations, they strategized on how Democrats can improve the outcomes of the current legislative session. Breakout groups ranged from candidate development to reproductive rights, redistricting and how to use Facebook and Twitter as organizing tools. The focus was on the state legislative level, not Congress or the White House.

Our participants pronounced it a "great event."

CELEBRATING VALENTINE'S DAY AT LEGICAMP

The Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club's contingent - Rich Piper, Mary Lou Ambrose and Joe Barkley - were among nearly 100 of the top activists from around the state who met in

YOUNG DEMS ORGANIZING IN PINELLAS

By Samantha Ingram, Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club

There is a new chapter of the Florida Young Democrats in Pinellas County!

With Nina Hayden at the helm and our liaison to the Pinellas County Democratic Executive Committee, we have gotten off to a great start. This is a chartered chapter of the Florida Young Dems (FYD) with Shannon Love as president and yours truly as vice president. We, along with the rest of our members, are excited to get the newly reformed club rolling.

I know we can get some great work done. Young Dems is geared towards people 18-40 years of age. However, you can be an honorary member if you are past the age limit. We are happy to have any passionate Democrats.

Our immediate goals are to grow membership, discuss future outreach and fundraising ideas and finalize bylaws and club business affairs. We will be meeting at the Marriot on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Our meeting location may change in the near future. The board is still discussing possible venues.

FYD is dedicated to educating and turning out young voters in Florida. FYD mobilizes people under 40 to participate in the electoral process, influences the ideals of the Democratic Party and develops the skills of the youth generation so they can serve as leaders at the local, state and national levels.

Our Mission

Strengthen the Democratic Party by building a strong, vibrant, reliable and active bloc of young Democrat voters, and secure the future of Florida's Democratic Party by identifying and developing this new next generation of Democratic voters and leaders.

What We Believe

It is often said that young voters are the future of the Democratic Party, but we are so much more – we are the backbone that will

make it strong today and ensure its vitality and success for years to come. WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE VOTE, DEMOCRATS WIN. And young people will vote when their peers reach out to them where they live, work and play to educate them about the importance of making their voices heard.

It's never too early to start talking to young voters! Studies have shown that when a new voter casts a ballot for a political party three elections in a row, they are likely to remain a loyal party voter for the rest of their lives. By consistently and repeatedly reaching out to young voters, FYD will create a bloc of young voters who make voting – and voting for Democratic candidates – part of their civic identity.

STANDING WITH PLANNED PARENTHOOD

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortions Act" which would cut federal funding for Planned Parenthood by about 40 percent and pro-choice supporters across the country are marching in protest.

On Feb. 25, Largo club members Mary Louise Ambrose, Doug Hickman, Peggy Goodale, Elaine Granata and Mary Freeman were among those rallying outside Bill Young's Seminole office.



*Protesters in front of Congressman Bill Young's office.
Photo by Mary Lou Ambrose*



"Not a great turnout - about 30 people, and no Young or staff, except maybe the 'suits' who

watched through dark glass," according to Mary Lou. "Glad I went, however."

The cuts would not only take away the right to safe and legal abortions, but also eliminate breast and cervical cancer screenings, annual exams, birth control and HIV testing for many under-served women.

The bill is not expected to become law. It will have a hard time winning the approval of Democrats who control the Senate and faces a likely veto by the President.

GEARING UP FOR 2012

By Paul Starr, chairman of the PCDEC Campaign Planning Committee

A primary purpose of the DEC is to elect Democrats and the sole purpose of the Campaign Planning Committee is to elect Democrats, so we will all be working together. We have set high but obtainable goals and created a difficult but doable challenge. Without your support and without your action, our goals and plans are nothing more than fancy words. This is our time, and you are the people we have been waiting for.

The state party wants us to focus on neighbor-to-neighbor campaigning, because one personal contact is worth more than a thousand robo-calls will ever be. So I am asking each of you to talk to one person a day. Not a great debate, just a friendly conversation, or even a casual comment. If we all do this, every one of us, then by Election Day we will have reached 100,000 people, and many of those will repeat our message to their friends and neighbors. But to be effective, we must all speak with one voice. Where the Republicans pick a fight, we must take the fight to them. But we must change the conversation and re-frame it in our words. Where the Republicans have no vision, we must stand up and lead. But we must do so with one voice.

The Republicans attacked us on abortion and we won by changing the conversation to one about choice. Now we must expand it into the larger context of all of a woman's rights. As the party of no choice becomes more extreme

in their attacks on a woman's right to choose, we must point out that by protecting her right to choose, we protect and preserve all of a woman's rights. For if she has no right to choose, then what good is a right to vote?

Next year the Supreme Court will rule on healthcare and, win or lose, the Republicans will attack. We must re-frame the issue with the words "Patient's rights, consumer protection, affordable healthcare, and fair treatment." Remember those words and use them often.

In the heat of the campaign the Republicans will attack again on the issue of gay rights. We must change the conversation before they attack. Do not be tricked into supporting "special rights for the GLBT community". Instead, stand up for equal rights and equal protections for all Americans. Remember those words and use them often. It is not about *special rights*, it is about *equal rights*.

But it is not enough to simply respond to their attacks. We must stand up and lead. We must demonstrate that the Democratic Party is the party that will restore American greatness. President Obama has called upon our country to invest, innovate, and improve. We must not only invest in the infrastructure of roads and bridges, but also in the infrastructures of education and innovation, for that is the real bridge to the future.

The true power of America is to innovate. To answer the questions that others dare not ask, and to create and do the things that others dare not dream of. We must invest in innovation, for that is the true path to job creation... and that is the true path to the future.

We must improve. Where programs and subsidies are outdated, we must eliminate those and use those funds so that we can invest in the future while reducing the deficit. That is how we obtain the future that only Americans dare dream of. That is how our president, the Democratic President, says that we will win the future. Invest, innovate, and improve. Remember those words and use them often.

John F. Kennedy said "Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future."

The last thing I want to talk about is the 2010 election. Driving through the back roads, we suddenly realized that we were completely lost. So we did the natural, normal, human thing: We began to argue about who made a wrong turn and who was holding the map upside down. But sooner or later we have to stop arguing and get back on the right road. I can say with complete confidence that the House made a wrong turn because the Senate was holding the map upside down. Now that we have solved that mystery, let's all get back in the car, put it in "D", and move forward.

We are Democrats. That's what we do.

RALLIES AND MORE RALLIES

If you couldn't make the pro-choice march, there was an opportunity to rally in support of public servants on March 6.

The loud and clear message from citizens concerned with Rick Scott's budget proposals and how they will affect the quality of life, services and jobs in our communities: "Don't balance Florida's budget on the backs of public servants!" On March 4, some 300 supporters of Florida's public schools stood at three Pinellas intersections many wearing red (to make the point that SB736 is making them "see red") and waving handmade signs calling on the legislature to "Save Our Schools" and "Make Our Schools a Priority."

Club members Charlotte Maas, Peggy Goodale, Ray Davis and Rich Piper were in the crowd at the Largo demonstration at the corner of Ulmerton and 66th. Rich was interviewed by channel 8. "I blasted Scott," he said. "Don't know if they'll run it or not."



Protester Rich Piper



Club member Peggy Goodale



A local teacher who bills himself as Rick Scott's good twin."

FLORIDA IS AWAKENING

Ever since Gov. Scott and legislative leaders announced their plans to cut thousands of jobs, raise taxes on hardworking Floridians and make the deepest cuts to education in history, people from all across the state have been looking for a way to voice their opposition.

Progress Florida, Florida Watch Action and America Votes joined together to provide a platform for everyday Floridians to make their voices heard. Awake the State started as a Facebook page that quickly grew to thousands strong who have now organized rallies in cities all across the state of Florida. Rallies were organized by Floridians from every walk of life, including educators, healthcare workers, police and firefighters, advocates for consumers, working families and more. They were timed to coincide with the March 8 opening of the legislative session.



Kathleen & Chris Jamison, Rich Piper, Neil Kiernan and Beth Fountain at Awake the State on March 8

A CAMPAIGN TOOL

Any precinct committeepersons in District 54 who desire training on VoteBuilder and/or DemsLink or who need access to these can contact Rich Piper at rpiper3404@aol.com or 588-0891.



Club V.P. Lois Fries and Neil Kiernan

Pinellas County Dems took part in a rally at the corner of State Route 580 and N. McMullen-Booth Road in Clearwater and made calls to the Governor's office between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. to register concerns with Scott's budget cutting proposals.



Demonstrators lining McMullen-Booth Road to Awake the State on March 8 (View from Countryside High School)

Democracy for America Sponsors "Night School"

By Rich Piper

Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club members Joe Barkley and Rich Piper (and perhaps others) have enrolled in the online "Night School" sponsored by Democracy for America. The first session, held on March 2, focused on how to organize political rallies. Derek Cressman of Common Cause led the discussion and offered a Powerpoint presentation on the topic for an hour, with opportunities for viewers to ask questions and get them answered. Other topics of the DFA night school are as follows:

March 9 - Press Conferences

The second Night School training focused on Press Conferences. We'll go into how to get the media's attention and set up a professional and effective press conference that will get positive coverage for your issue. We'll be featuring guest trainers from Health Care for America Now (HCAN) and using the 2009 health care debate as a case study.

March 16 - Petition Drives

Our third online training covered Petition Drives. We'll go into how to plan and execute a petition drive that engages and empowers people and sends a clear message to your elected officials. We'll be featuring guest trainers from www.dreamactivist.org and will use the Dream Act as a case study.

March 23 - Constituency Meetings

Our final Night School session in March focuses on Constituency Meetings. We'll cover how to set up a meeting with an elected official or their staff, how to prepare for the meeting as well as go through a sample agenda of how to run an effective constituent meeting. We'll be using Hydrolick Frackturing as the case study.

To sign up for the **free** Democracy for America Night School, go to

www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool.

At this website, you can also find the slides from previous presentations and download them. This night school offers a great opportunity for us to educate ourselves on how to increase our effectiveness as political activists.

Club News Largo Dems Elect Officers

At the February meeting, Rich Piper was re-elected for a second term as president, along with Elizabeth Snedeker as treasurer. Mary Louise Ambrose is the new secretary and Lois Fries is now vice president. In the only challenged race, Lois edged out Theresa Fedorczyk, who has been serving as v.p.



Officers, l to r, Elizabeth, Rich, Lois and Mary Lou. Photo by Heidi Sanchez

The new board of directors is Mary Ellen Lansburg, Ginny Nelson, Lodewijk van den Berg, Samantha Ingram and Deb Anderson.

Continuing in appointed roles will be Wanda Schwerer, webmaster and newsletter designer; Heidi Sanchez, photographer; Charlotte Maas, outreach coordinator; and Kathleen Jamison, newsletter editor.



Board, l to r, Samantha, Mary Ellen, Ginny and Deb. Lodewijk was elected in absentia. Photo by Heidi Sanchez

The two guest speakers were former state representative Janet Long and Pinellas-Pasco public defender, former Pinellas School Board member, and 2010 state senate candidate Nina Hayden. Both are on a mission to



revitalize Pinellas County's Democratic Party, as President Rich Piper discussed in his column.

Our former state rep Janet Long. Photo by Heidi Sanchez



Once and future (?) candidate Nina Hayden. Photo by Heidi Sanchez

The two guest speakers were former state representative Janet Long and Pinellas-Pasco public defender, former Pinellas School Board member, and 2010 state

senate candidate Nina Hayden. Both are on a mission to revitalize Pinellas County's Democratic Party, as President Rich Piper discussed in his column.

LETTERS and OPINIONS

Opinions

BOYCOTT KOCH INDUSTRIES PRODUCTS

The Koch Brothers are among the biggest funders of right-wing Republicans and the current attacks on public servants in Wisconsin and around the country. Let's not give these greedy plutocrats our money to fund their outrageous projects to destroy the middle class and democracy.

Here is a list of Koch Brothers products:

- Angel Soft toilet paper
- Brawny paper towels
- Dixie plates, bowls, napkins & cups
- Mardi Gras nap and towels
- Quilted Northern toilet paper
- Soft 'n Gentle toilet paper
- Sparkle napkins
- Vanity fair napkins
- Zee napkins
- Georgia-Pacific paper products & envelopes
- All Georgia-Pacific lumber & building products (INVISTA Products)
- Lycra
- Stainmaster Carpet

Our prodigious District 54 letter writer Frank Lupo of St. Petersburg strikes again!

Subject: Union Overreach?

The writer who thinks public sector unions have over reached isn't letting the facts get in the way of what he believes.

Adjusted for education, public sector workers make salary and benefits which are 5% lower than comparable workers in the private sector.

In addition, the budget shortfall in states has nothing to do with the modest salaries and benefits of public sector workers.

It was caused by increased unemployment reducing tax revenue, asset reduction in pension funds invested in toxic securities which have become almost worthless, and many states failure to comply w/ its state laws to contribute to the fund, using the revenue for other purposes.

Even though the public sector workers and their unions in Wisconsin have not caused the state's budget shortfall, they have all agreed to increase their contribution to their pensions and to pay a larger share of their health insurance to do their fair share to help balance the budget.

But Governor Walker refuses to accept the unions' agreement to his demand for budget concessions. He is using the budget problem as a smokescreen for his extreme ideology of breaking public sector unions.

As the opinion polls show, most residents of Wisconsin have figured out Walker's real motives and don't support his union-busting actions that have nothing to do with the budget.

But as with most extreme ideologues, once they have the power, they have little concern for public opinion.

It looks like the only option for voters of Wisconsin is to separate Walker from his abuse of power by recalling him as governor.

WHAT HEALTH REFORM MEANS FOR YOU

The health care bill will eventually affect everyone, and it's important that everyone can know what the implications of it are. Here's a simple summary of what exactly is going to change because of health care reform. Thanks to Frank Lupo for providing this simple summary of what exactly is going to change and sparing us from reading through the more than a thousand pages of the bill.

COVERAGE

- You can keep your present coverage and doctors.
- Denying children coverage for pre-existing conditions is prohibited
- Denying adult coverage for pre-existing conditions will be prohibited starting in 2014.
- Until 2014, uninsured adults with pre-existing conditions will have access to affordable coverage with a subsidized insurance pool.
- Companies can no longer place lifetime or restrictive annual limits on the amount of care patients receive.
- Insurance companies can no longer drop people from coverage when they get sick.
- Young people up to age 26 can stay on their parents' insurance policy.

STRENGTHENING MEDICARE

- Guaranteed Medicare benefits are preserved and expanded.
- In 2010, seniors in the "donut hole gap" received \$250 rebates to help pay for prescription drugs.
- In 2011, seniors in this coverage gap will receive a 50 percent discount for brand name drugs.
- By 2020, the donut hole will be completely closed.
- Beginning in 2011, Medicare beneficiaries will receive free preventive-care services.

HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES

- Small businesses are eligible for tax credits of up to 35 percent of their premium contributions for employee coverage.
- In 2014, small businesses with up to 100 employees will have access to state-based Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP).
- Starting in 2014, small businesses may qualify for tax credits up to 50 percent of employer premium contributions.

Holding Insurance Companies Accountable

- Beginning in 2011, insurance companies will be required to submit justifications for requested premium increases.
- Any company with excessive or unjustified premium increases may not be able to participate in the new SHOP exchanges.
- Insurers will be required to meet new standards that limit overhead costs.
- Insurers will provide premium rebates if they fail to satisfy these new standards.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE COVERAGE THROUGH TAX CREDIT

- The new law provides tax credits to middle-class families who cannot afford insurance on their own.
- These tax credits provide the largest middle class tax cuts for health care in history.
- New plans will have a cap on what insurers can require beneficiaries pay in out-of-pocket expenses, such as co-pays and deductibles.
- New plans will control premium costs by no longer including the cost of formerly uninsured patients who receive emergency room or in-patient hospital care.
- Beginning in 2014, those few individuals who choose to remain uninsured will pay an annual fee to cover the cost of their hospital medical care with exceptions or waivers that include financial hardship or religious objection.
- Reform will expand health insurance coverage to 32 million Americans, guaranteeing 94 percent of Americans will be covered.

PROVIDING MORE OPTIONS THROUGH THE NEW INSURANCE EXCHANGES

- Starting in 2014, small businesses and individuals who are uninsured, self-employed, or have lost or changed jobs will be able to choose insurance coverage in new competitive insurance marketplaces.
- These state-based exchanges will pool buying power, providing Americans with the same private insurance choices that Members of Congress will have, and fostering choice and competition.
- The new law allows States to enter into interstate health care choice compacts, where qualified health plans can be offered in all participating States, allowing families to purchase insurance across state lines and find the plan that works best for them.

ADDRESSING MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

- The new law establishes a grant program for States to explore alternative means of resolving disputes over medical treatment, and to find ways to reduce medical errors.
- These grants give States the flexibility to propose tort reforms that work best for them.
- Medical liability demonstration projects are also being funded through the Department of Health and Human Services.

CUTTING WASTE, FRAUD AND ABUSE

- Health reform implements unprecedented measures to fight waste, fraud, and abuse.
- It improves the quality and outcomes of care for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.
- The law ends unwarranted subsidies to private insurance companies and takes

important steps to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions.

- It improves patient safety, coordinates care, modernizes payment systems, and streamlines record-keeping.
- It realigns incentives to reward medical providers for the value, not the volume, of their care.
- The law includes virtually all of the main ideas recommended by health policy experts to slow the growth of health care costs over time.

HEALTH REFORM LAW REDUCES THE DEFICIT

- The Congressional Budget Office confirmed that health reform will reduce the deficit by over \$100 billion in the next decade.
- The new law will reduce the deficit by over \$1 trillion in the following decade.

For Your Information

Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club Board of Directors

President Rich Piper President@largodemocrats.com	Vice President Lois Fries
Secretary Mary Lou Ambrose Admin@largodemocrats.com	Treasurer Elizabeth Snedeker
Webmaster Wanda Schwerer Admin@largodemocrats.com	Director Mary Ellen Lansburg,
Director Samantha Ingram	Photographer Heidi Sanchez
Director Lodewijk van den Berg,	Director Ginny Nelson
Director Deb Anderson	Newsletter editor Kathleen Jamison
Outreach Coordinator Charlotte Maas	

All of the officers were elected February, 2011, to serve until their term ends in February 2013.

Additional contact information is available on www.largodemocrats.com – click on Opinions and Letters

What Do We Include in the Newsletter?

It's clear that we Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club members are an interested, involved, informed - and opinionated - bunch. And providing a forum for all that "good stuff" is an important function of our newsletter. The Board encourages articles and letters to the editor.

This newsletter is created by volunteers who make every attempt to publish factual information, and who encourage the free exchange of information and opinions. It should include input from all of us. However, the opinions and viewpoints expressed by contributors may not necessarily reflect those of the club.

Please send submissions to newsletter editor, Kathleen Jamison, at Editor@largodemocrats.com

If you don't wish to receive this newsletter, let Editor Kathleen Jamison know. She will also be happy to add more folks to our newsletter email list. (Please forward to anyone you know who may be interested in what we do and how to join.) Her address is newsletter@largodemocrats.com.

Why Join the Largo-Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club

The club provides a variety of ways to stay informed and involved in local, county, state and national political discussions. But we're not just about talk. We will be part of the action in finding the best candidates and getting them elected, as well as supporting the most important causes. We will write letters, make phone calls, knock on doors, register voters, and whatever else it takes to bring change to our communities, our county and our state. But, just as important, we also want to make time to enjoy each other's company and celebrate each other's efforts at social events throughout the year. Grassroots politics is effective and fun!

As a member of the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club you can:

- Meet other active Democrats
 - Meet and get to know your elected officials and potential candidates
 - Raise funds and work for candidates
 - Participate in community service projects
 - Hear speakers and discuss issues of local, state and national importance
- Attend special events and monthly meetings.
 - For membership information, email administrator@largodemocrats.com

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ANNUAL DUES ARE JUST \$10

CHANGE, YES WE CAN!