

Utah County Democrats

The monthly newsletter of the Utah County Democratic Party

December 2007

Upcoming Events

January 8 (Tuesday)

Central Committee Meeting, 7-9 p.m.
Location yet to be determined but will be communicated to Central Committee members prior to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to amend the county party constitution. Electronic and hard copy drafts of proposed amendments will be sent beforehand to committee members.

Please send information about upcoming events to newsletter@utahcountydems.com.

March 25 (Tuesday)

Democratic Party Caucus Meetings.
Locations and times yet to be determined, but mark it on your calendar now!

Each Thursday

BYU Democrats meet every Thursday night at 7:30pm in 240 SWKT. The public is invited. For more information go to <http://byudemocrats.org>.

Eldon Money Circle

The Utah County Democratic Party leaders have created the Eldon Money Circle to honor the contributions of former Senator Eldon Money.

Senator Money served in the Utah State legislature as a state representative or a state senator for over 20 years. He represented south county.



The Money Circle will be a donor club of those who donate at least \$50 a month (or \$600 per year) to the county party. This donor circle will help build the county party into a viable, competitive organization as it was during Senator Money's time in the state legislature, reminding all of us of a time when Democrats won elections in Utah County and served honorably to promote the values of the party and the voters of Utah County.

With the help from donors to the Money Circle, the party can once again field candidates who will win and change policy in a positive direction in our county and state.

Those who are interested in contributing to the Money Circle may go to the party website, <http://utahcountydems.com>, and contribute through ActBlue by clicking the *Get Involved!* link at the top of the page. Alternatively, checks may be sent to the party's address, located at the bottom of this newsletter.

Message From the Chair

Richard Davis



For those of us who attended the Fall Social, we enjoyed a wonderful treat.

The food was good as was the company.

It was a delight to hear Scott Howell tell us about how he got involved as a candidate and what a difference he was able to make during his ten years in the state legislature.

Thanks again to all those who helped make that event a success.



The topic of Scott's address was not a coincidence. We are currently recruiting candidates for the state legislature from across the county. All of the legislative seats and half of the senate seats are up for election this next fall.

So far we have recruited three individuals to run for the state legislature. They are viable candidates who have excellent chances of beating vulnerable incumbents. I will not announce who they are, but let them do that in their own announcement events in January. However, I want to applaud them for their willingness to do this.

They are the beginning of the slate of candidates we are creating for the 2008 campaign. There are several others we are meeting with and encouraging to

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make a race themselves. I'm hopeful they, too, will carry the banner for us in their districts and ultimately unseat the Republican incumbent in each case. I expect we will fill as full a slate as possible with competitive candidates who, with our support, can become state legislators.

Just a personal note: I will be away for job-related reasons for nearly all of the time between mid-January and May. I have been offered a research fellowship at Harvard University. Professionally, this is a wonderful opportunity.

Although it will make it difficult for me to attend most events or meetings during that time, I will still be using the telephone and e-mail to assist candidates and conduct party business. Also, I expect to return some during that time and will be able to conduct party business personally as well on those occasions.

In addition, we have a capable vice-chair in Larry Brown who will cover for me for any events I cannot attend. My goal is to recruit most of the candidates who will be on our slate within the next month and prepare them for the early stages of their campaigns. Then, in June, we will gear up for the fall campaigns.

The party has moved forward in a marvelous way. We will shake up elections next year and make a difference for ourselves and our children and all of those in Utah County who want better government than they are now getting.

Central Committee to Meet on January 8

The Central Committee of the Utah County Democratic Party will meet on Tuesday, January 8, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. The location is yet to be determined but will be communicated to Central Committee members prior to the meeting.

Central Committee members include the four county party officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer), Legislative Chairs, and Precinct Chairs and Vice Chairs

The purpose of the meeting will be to amend the county party constitution. Prior to the meeting, an electronic or hard copy of both the current constitution and the proposed new draft constitution will be sent to you with a set of instructions of what to do.

Legislator's Conflict Bares Lax Ethics Rules

Richard Davis and Larry Brown

Is this a conflict of interest? You decide. A legislator starts a business in an industry that, for safety and environmental reasons, is closely regulated by the state. That same legislator is vice chairman of the committee that sets regulations for that industry. And the legislator is pushing for regulations that help the industry and, consequently, his business.

Does that sounds like a conflict of interest? Rep. Aaron Tilton, a Republican from Springville, says he doesn't think so. Of course, he's the legislator in question here. Tilton and Rep. Mike Noel, R-Kanab, are vice chairman and chairman, respectively, of the Legislature's Public Utilities and Technology Standing Committee. Those positions give them jurisdiction over the rules that govern the energy industry in Utah. In fact, Tilton has been a strong advocate of bringing a nuclear power plant to Utah.

At the same time, Tilton is owner of Transition Power, a private company that is seeking to obtain a license to build a nuclear power plant in Utah, and has negotiated with Kane County Water Conservancy District to obtain water rights for such a plant. Transition Power won't actually build the plant. Instead, it will sell the license to another company that will build the reactor and operate the plant. Transition Power will pocket the profit from selling the license.

Tilton claims that there is no conflict of interest. Yet he was slow to reveal that he was the owner of a company attempting to bring a nuclear power plant to Utah. His company formed in February. He didn't disclose his own role as CEO of the company until October. Why would he do that if he really thought there was no conflict of interest? Tilton's committee held hearings in July and September on regulations on building nuclear power plants in Utah. Throughout these hearings, Tilton never mentioned that he had a financial interest in the outcome of the very regulatory process he was presiding over.

No conflict of interest? How can Rep. Tilton make such a statement with a straight face? He must have a low opinion of his constituents and the people of Utah generally.

The fact that a state legislator could help his own business (pretty much exclusively)

through his position and not consider it a conflict of interest is strong evidence the ethics laws for the Utah Legislature are far too lax.

Undoubtedly, members of a part-time Legislature will have some conflicts of interest. But in addition to full disclosure of the conflict when it occurs, they should be required not to vote on an issue where there is a specific conflict, not required to vote. There should be stiff penalties for not disclosing conflicts of interest. And legislators should not be allowed to vote in committees on legislation that directly benefits them financially.

Public service is a public trust, not an opportunity for personal enrichment. Rep. Tilton should know that. If he doesn't, the voters ought to replace him with someone who does.

Richard Davis and Larry Brown are chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Utah County Democratic Party. Reprinted from the Deseret Morning News, November 23, 2007.

COUNTY-PLATFORM CORNER

Health Care

As Utah County Democrats, we believe everyone should have access to affordable, quality health care.

In the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth we believe no one should have to choose between seeing a doctor or paying the rent.

We call for efficient and effective public health programs for children, seniors, and the working poor leading to universal health care for all citizens.

To read the entire platform of the Utah County Democratic Party, please visit our website at <http://utahcountydemocrats.com>.

“The men who create power make an indispensable contribution to the Nation’s greatness, but the men who question power make a contribution just as indispensable, especially when that questioning is disinterested, for they determine whether we use power or power uses us.”

—John F. Kennedy



**PO Box 1813
Orem UT 84097-1813
(801) 356-0290**

**Richard Davis — Chair
Larry Brown — Vice Chair
Hinckley Jones-Sanpei — Secretary
Kristin Gerdy — Treasurer**

Public Relations

Please contact Janita Anderson at presssecretary@utahcountydems.com

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