



MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 4, 2007

In an effort to prove that politics can be fun, this special "Party Endorsement Party" was wrapped in mock-convention style: festive food, lively spirits and bunting galore, with many members sporting their green PhDemClub t-shirts. Upon sign-in, all members were given a ballot, to be used after hearing the panel of candidates' representatives. Giving everyone some extra time to munch and mingle, President Joni Eisen called the meeting to order at 7:30.

Six of the eight candidates' campaigns responded to our request for representation (no presence for **Chris Dodd** or **Joe Biden**).

Luck of the draw gave Tom Gallagher, representing Congressman **Dennis Kucinich** (D-OH), the first speaking slot. Mr. Gallagher is the president of the Bernal Heights Democratic Club. He encouraged everyone to vote in February for what they *truly* believe. Should the army remain in Iraq? (Clinton) Should our troops enter Pakistan? (Obama) Should the nuclear option be left on the table? (Clinton and Obama) Do you want the support troops and contractors removed in 90 days? To leave no bases and leave the oil to the Iraqis? (Kucinich)

Because he believes health care in the US is too expensive and leaves millions of Americans either under- or uninsured, Kucinich has an "actual solution" to the health care crisis: together with Congressman John Conyers (D-MI), he has formed a plan for a universal, single-payer, not-for-profit health care system that will work for everyone.

Kucinich is the only Democratic candidate who voted against authorizing the war in Iraq and against funding its continuation. He wants to change American foreign policy by making a 15% cut in the military and using diplomacy and a return to statesmanship as the path to strong international leadership.(as opposed to throwing U.S. weight around in an effort to dominate world resources). He wants a new policy of investing in our communities and our infrastructure: a policy of "Strength through Peace."

The next speaker was Lee Hagelshaw on behalf of **Bill Richardson** (D-NM), the current two-term Governor of NM as well as a presidential candidate. Richardson previously served as a US Representative, an Ambassador to the UN and Secretary of Energy (both under Bill Clinton). He was chairman of the 2004 Democratic National Convention, and Chairman of the Democratic Governors Association in 2005 and 2006, overseeing the Democrats' recapturing of a majority of the country's governorships. Richardson has been recognized for negotiating the release of hostages, American servicemen and other political prisoners in North Korea, Iraq and Cuba, as well as negotiating a ceasefire in Darfur. He has been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Richardson has a one-point plan on the Iraq War: to end it. Believing we're an obstacle to peace, he wants to withdraw *all* troops quickly and safely so a new political process, involving the Iraqis as partners, can begin. Even though the war is costing us more than \$10 billion a month, it has failed to bring about political reconciliation. He deplores the subterfuge of the Bush administration and wants the Iraqis to fight their own civil war.

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Because New Mexico is both a swing and border state, Richardson is uniquely positioned to legislate on immigration and fair trade. He opposes the wall, but wants to protect the borders and the American Dream. He believes trade needs to be free AND fair to the U.S. AND Mexico.

Representing her father, former Senator **Mike Gravel** (D-Alaska), Lynne Gravel Mosier spoke passionately and forthrightly on his behalf, telling us things that surprised many in the larger-than-usual audience.

First and foremost, Gravel is an outspoken critic of the war in Iraq, the proposed war with Iran, the Military Industrial Complex, and the "Corporatocracy" controlling our government. He proposes real change, not just rhetoric, to end one war and prevent another. He has offered legislation that makes it a felony for Bush to keep troops in Iraq, and through cloture votes¹ and veto overrides conducted every single day, the Senate could bring about a Constitutional confrontation with the White House, bringing an immediate end to the Iraqi war.

One of the leading opponents of the Vietnam War, Gravel led the way in publicly opposing the planned invasion of Iraq in 2002. He appeared on MSNBC prior to the invasion insisting that intelligence showed there were no WMDs, that Iraq posed no threat to the US, and that invading Iraq was against America's national interests and would result in a disaster of epic proportions for both the United States and the Iraqi people. And he knows of which he speaks: he was a Senator during another unjust war in another corrupt administration. As senator, he successfully waged a 1-man filibuster (for 5 months) to end the draft. He risked imprisonment for releasing the Pentagon Papers (the secret official study that revealed the lies and manipulations of successive U.S. administrations that misled the country into the Vietnam War). He helped bring an end to the Vietnam War and the Nixon Administration.

Rather than war and military build-up, Gravel wants our country to spend its money on renewable energy (with a goal of getting off oil in 5 years and off carbon in 10). He believes our CO2 output is destroying the planet, causing the extinction of many species, and he doesn't want the human race to be one of those species.

Next up was Jo Hoeningher on behalf of **Hillary Clinton**, who also encouraged everyone to make their vote count. She told us a bit about herself and why she believes Clinton is "the leader who can take us there." Clinton makes wonderful promises and delivers on them. She's time-proven. She can reach across the aisle. Her health care plan can be put to work in short order, giving tax credits to small businesses and poor people. She believes health care includes insurance companies, but she "knows how to ply these waters." Clinton is intelligent and knowledgeable about how the the system works. She won't be swift-boated! She wants to get us out of Iraq without putting the troops at risk. She acknowledges the global economy, but recognizes that NAFTA is not working. She wants to bring about fair trade with other countries, guaranteeing sustainable wages, etc. Clinton supports growth of small businesses and family farms ... she wants to bring America to the people, not the corporations.

The speaker for **John Edwards** (D-NC) was John Stonich of San Jose who said right off the bat that we've got an uphill fight to change the Democratic party. He considers Obama and Clinton to be "corporate Democrats" and charged everyone to vote for the "unfettered candidate" who's not in

¹ **cloture**: the only procedure by which the Senate can vote to place a time limit on consideration of a bill or other matter, and thereby overcome a filibuster. Under the cloture rule (Rule XXII), the Senate may limit consideration of a pending matter to 30 additional hours, but only by vote of three-fifths of the full Senate, normally 60 votes.

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any corporate pocket. He reminded us that Edwards gets NO K Street endorsements, period. He's totally unencumbered. Edwards is a wealthy (self-made) man who doesn't need the special interest money. He's for the party, for the country, for equal rights, energy independence, truly universal health care, and for complete withdrawal of all combat troops in Iraq. Stonich implored people not to vote on just one issue. Edwards made his money fighting for "the little guy," and wants to bring that attitude with him to the White House.

Last up was Nick Short representing **Barack Obama** (D-IL). Short told us that prior to Obama's 2004 convention speech, he'd been apolitical, primarily wrapped up in astrophysics. But Obama's speech changed his life view, and he now puts his energy into helping the Obama campaign, believing Obama is an incredible agent of change, that he gets the big picture and has a new and progressive ability to reach across the aisle. He encouraged everyone to check out Obama's website containing "incredibly detailed" policy statements. Like the other candidates, Obama is against the Iraq war, although in his case he was always against it. In 2002, the Illinois State Senator went on record that Saddam Hussein posed no imminent threat to the US and that invasion would lead to a lengthy, expensive occupation with no good outcome. Also, like others, he has a plan for bringing the troops home. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Obama has reached across the aisle to tackle problems such as preventing the spread of WMDs and stopping the genocide in Darfur. He has also taken a stand on the right to affordable health care, seeking to unite businesses, the medical community, and members of both parties around a comprehensive solution to this crisis.

After each speaker's presentation, he or she responded to written questions submitted by members and read by the president. All speakers stayed for a brief period of direct questions from the audience. Then club members voted for their top three choices. While attendees and panel speakers socialized and partook of the festive comestibles, the votes were tallied, and the winner of the Potrero Hill Democratic Club endorsement, reaching the threshold of 60% of votes cast after several rounds of ranked-choice vote counting, was John Edwards. Barack Obama came in second, followed by Hillary Clinton. The endorsement will be advertised in the January and February issues of *The Potrero View*. Next month the membership will vote on endorsements for the rest of the February 5th ballot: state and local propositions.

The meeting was adjourned.

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M. Kate Hilsenbeck
Secretary