

**General Meeting — 7p.m. Wednesday, May 13, 2020****This will be a virtual meeting on Zoom****Vote to endorse Schools and Communities First—ballot proposition to restore funding for schools and essential services****President's Message by Pete Rockwell****Ben Grieff of Evolve California will speak on the Schools and Communities First ballot proposition**

At our May 13 meeting, the Club will vote on whether to endorse the *Schools and Communities First* ballot proposition.

Despite being the fifth largest economy in the world, California's schools rank in the bottom ten nationally.

For the last four decades, California's schools and communities have lost out on \$150 billion because of a giant corporate loophole in our property tax system. Chevron alone is pocketing over \$100 million a year because they are still paying property taxes based on what their land was worth in the 1970s. This has to change.

The *Schools and Communities First* ballot proposition is the result of a statewide, grassroots campaign to close the corporate loophole. This common-sense initiative will generate \$12 billion a year for our schools and communities while maintaining protections for all residential property owners.

Our tax dollars should pay for world-class schools and thriving neighborhoods. Instead, the corporate tax loophole embedded in 1978's Proposition 13 has drained billions of dollars from our local schools and communities for over 40 years. *Schools and Communities First* will reclaim billions of tax dollars every year for our schools and local communities by closing the loophole in corporate property taxes that benefits a fraction of wealthy corporations and investors. *Schools and Communities First* will:

in revenue for our schools and local communities by assessing commercial and industrial property at fair market value.

NOT raise taxes on homeowners or renters, while leveling the playing field for businesses.

HELP small business by eliminating the burdensome business personal property tax.

ENSURE transparency and accountability for all revenue restored to California's schools and local communities.

One of the organizations responsible for obtaining the signatures necessary to qualify *Schools and Communities First* for the November 3 ballot is Evolve California, an organization

that believes the most effective way to counter the corrupting power of money in politics is a long-term commitment to ground-up, grassroots organizing.

Ben Grieff, the campaign director for Evolve California's *Schools and Communities First* project, will speak at the Club's May 13 general meeting. [See Ben's photo and bio on page 4]

Schools and Communities First has qualified for the ballot thanks to organizations like Evolve and SEIU—who circulated petitions—as well as members of our Club like Leah Pressman, who helped gather signatures. Also, many thanks to everyone who signed the petitions, including many of our active members.



RESTORE over \$12 billion every year

The graphic above and text in this article are from www.evolve-ca.org

“Schools and Communities First” is now called “The California Tax on Commercial and Industrial Properties for Education and Local Government Funding Initiative”

From Ballotpedia

The California Tax on Commercial and Industrial Properties for Education and Local Government Funding Initiative has qualified to appear on the ballot in California as an initiated constitutional amendment on November 3, 2020.

A “yes” vote supports this constitutional amendment to require commercial and industrial properties, except those zoned as commercial agriculture, to be taxed based on their market value, rather than their purchase price.

A “no” vote opposes this constitutional amendment, thus continuing to tax commercial and industrial properties based on a property’s purchase price, with annual increases equal to the rate of inflation or 2 percent, whichever is lower.

On April 2, 2020, the campaign *Schools and Communities First* reported filing 1.7 million signatures. At least 997,139 signatures are needed for it to be valid.

Continuity of Democracy

Even under the present emergency, democracy continues and our Culver City Council still meets to do the City’s business. On May 4, 2020, there will be a Special Meeting on the subject of Rent Control!

We can’t be there in person, but the City has provided ways for us to view the proceedings live:

Time Warner subscribers—
tune to Channel 35

Frontier FIOS subscribers—
tune to Channel 37

AT&T Uverse subscribers—
tune to Channel 99

Or go to the City website—
<http://www.culvercity.org/agendas>
and click on the “In Progress” meeting

Or go to youtube—
[Youtube.com/CityofCulverCityGov](https://www.youtube.com/CityofCulverCityGov)

Share your comments with the Council on-line with the new “ecomment” feature. To submit, go to www.culvercity.org/agendas and click on the highlighted eComment link.

The ballot initiative would amend the state constitution to require commercial and industrial properties, except those zoned as commercial agriculture, to be taxed based on their market value. In California, the proposal to assess taxes on commercial and industrial properties at market value, while continuing to assess taxes on residential properties based on purchase price, is known as split roll.

Proposition 13 (1978) requires that residential, commercial, and industrial properties are taxed based on their purchase price. The tax is limited to no more than 1 percent of the purchase price (at the time of purchase), with an annual adjustment equal to the rate of inflation or 2 percent, whichever is lower. According to the state Legislative Analyst’s Office, market values in California tend to increase faster than 2 percent per year, meaning the tax-

able value of commercial and industrial properties is often lower than the market value.

The ballot initiative would create a process in the state constitution for distributing revenue from the revised tax on commercial and industrial properties. The ballot initiative would distribute the revenue to specific areas, rather than the General Fund. First, the revenue would be distributed to (a) the state to supplement decreases in revenue from the state’s personal income tax and corporation tax due to increased tax deductions and (b) counties to cover the costs of implementing the measure. Second, 60 percent of the remaining funds would be distributed to local governments and special districts, and 40 percent would be distributed to school districts and community colleges (via a new Local School and Community College Property Tax Fund).

How to Join the Culver City Democratic Club online

1. Go to the Club’s website:

www.CulverCityDemocraticClub.com

2. Click on the Join / Renew button:

Contact Us

Join / Renew

3. This will take you to the Actblue website

Join or Renew Your Culver City Democratic Club Membership!

The Culver City Democratic Club provides an important resource for local Democrats. Your support helps us sponsor events, advocate for Democratic candidates and promote Democratic values. Please take this opportunity and donate today. Member - \$30; Student Member - \$20; Supporting Member - \$75; Sustaining Member - \$125; Lifetime Member - \$500.

Donate via Apple Pay

We noticed that you have Apple Pay®. It's the easiest way to donate.

Your contribution will benefit Culver City Democratic Club (CA).

\$20

\$30

\$45

\$75

\$125

\$500

Other amount

Make it monthly!

Yes, count me in for 12 months

✓

No, donate once

4. Join the Culver City Democratic Club!

For questions please call Membership Secretary Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328.

Tributes to former Culver City Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells

Here are some public comments by Culver City Democratic Club members posted April 27, during Meghan Sahli-Wells' final Council meeting as Mayor of Culver City. Meghan is a long-time member and former elected officer of the Culver City Democratic Club. If anyone else wishes to send best wishes to Meghan for the next newsletter, you may email them to pete_rockwell@hotmail.com

From Disa Lindgren

Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells,

Thank you for all you have done this past year as mayor, and for the past 8 years of service you have provided to Culver City.

Hallmarks of your tenure have included:

- Competence
- Listening to and learning from everyone in our community
- Integrity
- Thoughtful policy development
- Compassion
- Prioritizing doing what is best for the most vulnerable members of our community
- Strong, principled decision-making
- Expressing appreciation and gratitude often
- Valuing new voices and hearing from people with diverse perspectives
- Providing leadership that is based on promoting the common good
- Political courage

May many more women of excellence follow in your footsteps!

Deepest thanks,

Disa Lindgren

#TeamMeghanSahliWells

#CulverCitiesBestMayorEver

From Leah Pressman

Dear Mayor Sahli-Wells,

Thank you for your caring, your decency, and your dedication to this community. Thank you for being true to the values you ran on. You don't just walk the walk, you bike to work.



Former Culver City Mayor
Meghan Sahli-Wells

Thank you for your wise and steady leadership on sustainability and the environment, equity, housing justice, and protecting the most vulnerable in our community. It was reassuring to have you as our mayor in a crisis.

Thank you for being a bright light in dark times.

From Kelly Kent

For Meghan Sahli-Wells

How can I convey this via email? She's the whole thing; she's the whole beginning? I need to find some way to thank you. Some decent way. But in case it ends up just being some stupid email read by someone who's not me, I just need you to know:

We always stand on the shoulders of our OGs, and yes our political forefathers and mothers in CC continue to guide us, but you are everything that is today's progressive CC.

You sit amongst colleagues whom you trust... you trust that you can leave the city in their hands because you were and continue to be the inspiration for so many of them.

Meghan, you were the spark that lit the fire for so many of us. And it's no small feat, because the team that grew from that fire has built the beginnings of a city that will continue to lead in protecting renters and low income residents, in advocating for more housing, in making streets safer for families on foot and bike, in adopting

climate-friendly policies, in standing tall in the face of intimidating developers and oil companies and advertisers and plastics companies and big tobacco... and I could go on and on and on.

And that, right there, is the leadership part. When the moral principle is clear, you do not back down. This is why you've also been so important for women in this town.

You are why women will run. Why women who aren't in favor of the status quo will run. Why women will stay firm in their convictions amongst a body of people who aren't yet willing to look critically at their own privilege.

We watched you late into the night, in the packed chambers that now sit empty, deliberately and righteously laying out the rationale for what became the obvious answer; even for many of your detractors. Thank you for representing so clearly and unequivocally what it looks like to make policy when people, and nothing else, are the bottom line.

Because of you, every day of work, I will continue to ask, "Who am I here to serve?"

Meghan, you ran when you thought you were small. But you are the largesse that is why we are here.

And you are my mentor, and I will never tell my story without you in it.

Thank you.

From Jeff Schwartz

I am writing to express my thanks to and appreciation of the outgoing Mayor.

It has been a source of great comfort and pride to have an articulate, compassionate, well-informed, and accessible leader in these strange times, but Meghan Sahli-Wells' greatest contributions are to the future. No Culver City politician before her has spoken as powerfully about the existential threat climate change poses to our civilization and our species. The work she has done towards banning single-use plastics, shutting down the Inglewood oil field, promoting public transit and biking, and moving the entire city to 100% renewable energy by default is not complete, but it is profound. I look forward to future leaders continuing on the path she has drawn.

Dear Rashelle



Rashelle Zelaznik has been a stay-at-home parent for over 19 years. She started getting interested in politics when she learned she was wheat/gluten intolerant in October 2011. Before that she was a “Blue no matter who” voter!! She is very passionate about environmental and social justice issues.

Dear Rashelle,

I work full-time, am a single parent of one son in college and another on his way in the fall. Can you please list for me names of organizations and what they do, so I can find a way to get politically involved from home and also share with other people I know that want to as well?

Sincerely, Deena G.

Dear Deena,

Congrats on soon having two sons in college!! Yes I can make recommendations for you and your friends! Thank you for your question. I can share with you some organizations and ways that you, your friends, family and colleagues can get politically involved NOW. You CAN make a difference, and your voice

counts whether online, with your time, with donations of any kind. We are at a critical junction where all of our voices matter.

1. Support your local Democratic Club! I became a member of the Culver City Democratic Club <http://culvercitydemocraticclub.com/> because I met several of the members at various political events and found that they were of like mind. They have meetings once a month, host speakers from public office, people running for an elected position, environmental organizations, and issue based campaigns. Always a plethora of information to stay involved, especially locally.

2. Who are your local, state, house and senate representatives? <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials> It is a great idea to have your reps from city council to the house and senate in your contacts. It is really easy to call them, send an email or contact through their social media accounts, to let them know how you feel about matters that concern you, your community, and bills that are being voted on. Also, for California senate or assembly, try <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov>

3. SoCalBlue <https://socalblue.org/> is an organization that partners with other organizations such as Swing Left <https://swingleft.org>, Code Blue <https://www.codeblue.team>, strives to keep event information up to date and suggest ways to get involved.

4. Field Team 6 <https://www.fieldteam6.org/> is an organization that registers Democrats. You take a clipboard with voter registrations and go out into the public and talk to strangers and register them to vote. (Field Team 6 is developing an online strategy which is

going full force, too!)

5. Food & Water Watch <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/> is a great environmental organization that mobilizes regular people to create political power to move bold and uncompromised solutions to the most pressing food, water and climate problems of our time. They work to protect people's health, communities, and democracy from the growing destructive power of the most powerful economic interests, such as fracking, oil drilling and industrialized farming.

I hope these recommendations for how to get involved now make it quick and easy for you to get involved today. I want people to know that politics matters and affects us all. If you work, eat, breathe, drink...everything is a political choice.

Stay healthy, stay safe, and stay connected to organizations and groups that CAN make a difference and that WILL affect your life. In Health.

—Rashelle Zelaznik

I'd like to add these three suggestions that are related to the pandemic. They were sent in by Sarah Hager: —Editor

Sean Penn's organization is asking for donations and has set up testing centers that are freely available to certain populations. <https://www.coreresponse.org/covid19>

Hospitals also need masks and other supplies. Here is a site that has a database to help people locate hospitals near them who need these masks. <https://www.getppe.org/>

Though, I'd argue donating money to local food banks is the best use of resources. <https://www.lafoodbank.org>

—Sarah Hager



Ben Grieff

Ben Grieff of Evolve California to speak at May 13 general meeting

Ben Grieff is the Campaign Director for Evolve California, a non-profit organization based San Francisco that he helped found in 2011. For the last 7 years Ben has led Evolve California's campaign to restore funding for California's public schools by reforming Proposition 13. His work has helped change the political narrative around a once untouchable issue that is the root cause of California's public education system falling to the bottom ten in the nation in per student funding. Ben sits on the Executive Committee of the historic *Schools and Communities First* initiative that will appear on the November 2020 ballot. This initiative will reform the commercial side of Prop. 13 and reclaim \$12 billion a year for California's schools and communities.

The following resolutions were passed unanimously at the April 22 general meeting of the Culver City Democratic Club

[Editor's note: On April 28 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to send vote-by-mail ballots to every voter registered for the November general election.]

Resolution on Ballot Design in the November 3 Election

WHEREAS, The Primary Election of March 3, 2020 was characterized by voting screens not working properly, long lines, long waiting periods at the new voting centers; and

WHEREAS, candidates running for the same office were placed on different pages with the result that voters could have missed voting for some of the candidates if they had not pressed the “more” button on their voting screens; and

WHEREAS, voters who registered to vote by mail did not receive their ballots in time and had to drive to Norwalk to vote early; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Culver City Democratic Club urges the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to allow all eligible voting residents of the County of Los Angeles to vote by mail in the November 3, 2020 election to avoid the technical problems encountered in the March 3 election; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Culver City Democratic Club urges that the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk list the names of the candidates running for the same office on the same page of the ballot, just as it was done for the Presidential candidates, so that the voters can view and evaluate ALL the candidates at the same time.

Respectfully submitted: Khin Khin Gyi

Ronnie Jayne Solomon
Tom Camarella

Resolution on Vote-By-Mail in the November 3 Election

WHEREAS, Governor Gavin Newsom has decreed a Stay-At-Home social distancing advisory to slow down the rate of infection with the coronavirus COVID-19 in order not to overwhelm our hospitals and our inventory of personal protective equipment (PPE) stockpiles; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has been compared to one of its coronavirus pandemic predecessors, the Spanish Flu that occurred between 1918 and 1920, we must prepare for the current pandemic to last months rather than weeks in realistic terms; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 can be spread by everyone pushing the same buttons when voting and congregating in one place without maintaining the recommended six feet separation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Culver City Democratic Club urges the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to mandate all eligible voters in Los Angeles County to vote by mail in the November 3, 2020 election to protect the health of the County's residents and poll workers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, when passed, this resolution be distributed to all the Democratic Clubs chartered by the Los Angeles County Democratic Party, to California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, and to Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Dean Logan.

Respectfully submitted: Khin Khin Gyi

Ronnie Jayne Solomon
Tom Camarella

Something to read

Here is a link to an online article that Carlene Brown sent in to the newsletter:

Pandemic Doesn't Stop Corporate Media From Crusading Against Universal Healthcare

https://fair.org/home/pandemic-doesnt-stop-corporate-media-from-crusading-against-universal-healthcare/?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=email_this&utm_source=email

Things to do

There is a whole lot of (virtual) activism going on. For one thing, there are two special elections in May—Christy Smith for the 25th Congressional District and Elizabeth Romero for the 28th State Senate District. Work is also underway getting out the vote to turn the Senate blue. And we need to register Democratic voters with special emphasis on vote by mail.

Westside Democratic Headquarters organizes virtual phone banking, text banking, and postcarding on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and alternate Sundays in May. To RSVP, go to: www.westsidedemhq.org/events/

Field Team 6 has a plan to register Democrats to vote by mail! and SAVE THE WORLD! To RSVP go to: <https://www.mobilize.us/ft6/>

Votefwd.org has the perfect activism for introverts. Send “Get Out the Vote” letters to low propensity voters! To sign up, go to: Votefwd.org —*Cynthia Hart*

The following resolution is presented for consideration by the Culver City Democratic Club

Resolution to Protect and Preserve the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve

Whereas, the California 2010 Code of Regulations reiterates State's policy "to protect threatened or endangered plants, wildlife... or specialized habitat types... for the future use of mankind through the establishment of ecological reserves;" and

Whereas, California spent \$140M of public funds in 2004 to acquire 607 acres of rare, biodiverse, freshwater wetlands and associated habitats; placed them under the State's protection by establishing the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (BWER); and appropriated an additional \$25M of public funds to be used within three years for planning (\$2M) and restoration (\$23M); and

Whereas, the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve is a natural gem, that provides rare habitats for migrating birds; a safe haven for a diversity of year-round inhabitants including rare and endangered bird and animal species; abundant flora; a food source for pollinators reliant upon seasonal wetlands diversity, rare grassland and upland habitat; and soil/subsoil carbon sequestering microbiomes; and

Whereas, the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve and the State Lands Public Trust Freshwater Marsh are the last vestiges of over two thousand acres of rare, historic, seasonal freshwater wetlands; BWER needs rehabilitation from past challenges to its ecosystems integrity that included agriculture; dredging out of the Ballona Flood Control Channel and Marina del Rey (a saltwater habitat); commercial/residential development including Playa Vista; ongoing oil/gas exploitation; and

Whereas, seventy-eight years of underground gas storage in BWER have given rise to migrating/escaping toxic gases contaminating the environment; threatening public and ecological health and safety; requiring remediation and monitoring by private fossil fuel interests and commercial/residential development, and monitoring by the city of Los Angeles and the State; and

Whereas, systematic corporate groundwater pumping-out policies have dewatered the BWER since its creation, violating the Coastal Act; freshwater continues to be diverted from Ballona, while the California Constitution mandates that groundwater be managed sustainably for environmental benefit (SB-1168, Pavley. Groundwater management); and

Whereas, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) would violate precautionary "DO NO HARM" fundamental principles of conservation, by:

1. Removing Ballona Channel levees that protect the wetlands;

2. Exposing Ballona to rising seas, higher tides, contaminated/toxic superstorm runoff;

3. Flooding approximately 65%, or 400 acres, of the Ecological Reserve with millions of gallons of increasingly acidified seawater;

4. Contaminating underlying freshwater aquifers with saltwater intrusion;

5. Excavating five million tons of soil with its habitat and seed bank;

6. Destroying abundant flora and fauna;

7. Removing approximately 20% of current wildlife habitat by blanketing 120 acres of habitat with 5 miles of 25-30-foot-high/200-foot-wide levees; US Army Corps of Engineers levee regulations disallow deep-root system growth and employ Vector Control to prevent burrowing animals, prohibiting levees from being used as habitat;

8. Obstructing wetland views, including in the Coastal zone; and

Whereas, the CDFW's FEIR would violate sacred sites of the Tongva indigenous people who lived in Ballona for 10,000 years; causing the destruction of ancient settlements and gravesites, thereby violating principles of human rights and environmental justice; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved that Culver City Democratic Club supports:

1. Protecting the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve as a community-engaged restoration that honors "DO NO HARM" restoration principles preserving the land, water, and species dependent on this threatened ecosystem where birds and other wildlife require every acre in order to survive;

2. Protection from fossil fuel interests who threaten Ballona's environment and the public's health, safety, and well-being;

3. Returning Ballona's freshwater to the BWER, opposing further drainage, diversion, and throw-away of its life-giving freshwaters;

4. Opposing the industrial scale bulldozing, demolition, and conversion of Ballona Wetlands into a full saltwater tidal bay;

5. Standing in alliance with environmental justice principles and policies that protect the sacred sites of indigenous peoples, such as the sites of the Tongva within the Ballona Ecological Reserve.

Submitted by,

Sierra Club Airport Marina Group Grassroots Coalition