

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR NORTH TEXAS DEMOCRATS

October 15, 2015

Garland, Texas

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## “How many deaths will it take ‘till we know that too many people have died?”

© 1962 by Warner Bros. Inc.; renewed 1990 by Special Rider Music <http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/blowin-wind#ixzz3noX3Dxwa>

Roseburg, Oregon (CNN) — Umpqua Community College shooting victims  
Lucero Alcaraz, 19, Treven Taylor Anspach, 20, Rebecka Ann Carnes, 18, Quinn Glen Cooper, 18,  
Kim Saltmarsh Dietz, 59, Lucas Eibel, 18, Jason Dale Johnson, 34, Lawrence Levine, 67 (teacher),  
Sarena Dawn Moore, 44

“And, of course, what’s routine is that somebody, somewhere will comment and say, Obama politicized this issue. Well, this is something we should politicize. It is relevant to our common life together, to the body politic. I would ask news organizations — because I won’t put these facts forward — have news organizations **tally up the number of Americans who’ve been killed through terrorist attacks over the last decade and the number of Americans who’ve been killed by gun violence, and post those side-by-side on your news reports.** This won’t be information coming from me; it will be coming from you. We spend over a trillion dollars, and pass countless laws, and devote entire agencies to preventing terrorist attacks on our soil, and rightfully so. And yet, we have a Congress that explicitly blocks us from even collecting data on how we could potentially reduce gun deaths. How can that be?”

**President Barack Obama addressing the nation after the shooting at Umpqua Community College Massacre,  
October 1, 2015**

### What’s Inside?

Front Page .....How many deaths will it take?.....	Page 1	Article .....Info on Constitutional Election: Dates & Ballot Sample.....	Page 8
Editorial .....“Stuff Happens” .....	Page 2	Article .....Info on Each of the Propositions (take page to the Polls) .....	Page 9
Article .....Thoughts About Guns .....	Page 3	Bits & Pieces .....From Fannin & Collin County Democrats.....	Page 10
Article .. Gun Related Violence Are Gun Sense Voter the Answer? ....	Page 4 & 5	Bits & Pieces ..DMN Letter to Editor, Speakership & Refugees Europe..	Page 11
Article .....It’s a Start! “6,000 to get out of prison” .....	Page 6	Out & About.....First Democratic Presidential Debate .....	Page 12
Article .....Words from County Chairs: Rockwall and Dallas.....	Page 7	Bulletin Board .....Edition News./Advertisement/ Ad Rates.....	Page 13

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

## EDITORIAL

### “Stuff Happens” *Jeb Bush in response to the shooting in Oregon*

“Stuff Happens,” said Jeb. I can only imagine the response of the families of any of the over 300,000 gun related deaths since 2000 have to this statement. I know the reaction I have had and that is disgust. In one short sentence, a person who wants to be president has dismissed the murder of these souls to happenstance. And dismissed the pain and suffering of untold love ones. Others dismiss these killings as the results of mental illness, bad (evil) parenting and promulgated by the always present media sensationalism.

Congress continually refuses to act on gun regulations hiding behind the smoke screen of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution — an amendment included to preserve “a well armed militia.” It is a well known fact elected officials, many bought and paid for by NRA, refuse to do anything about gun regulations for fear of getting “primaried” out of office by the hard-right extremists (read crazies).

There is no sympathy for those mealy-mouth politicians who complain they are caught between a rock and a hard place. This is certainly an example of “putting oneself” ahead of country.

After the murder of 28 children and adults in the Sandy Hook School Massacre, Connecticut passed a law requiring background checks and mandatory gun safety training. The results? Gun related murders (in CT) have dropped by an estimated 40 percent. By way of contrast, Missouri repealed it’s decades-old gun law in 2007. The gun-related homicide rate rose by 23 percent. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/12/us/gun-law-homicide-drop/>

Pundits in Oregon, chanting the NRA singsong of, “more guns will protect [us]!” and citing the states open-carry- even-on campus have admonished the one [known] concealed gun license holder on campus, who left his gun [reportedly he had no bullets] holstered. A wise choice to make when facing a mentally ill person with a gun.

Democratic Presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Martin O’Malley, have both presented plans to rein in gun violence. The difference? Hillary’s plan includes the use of Executive Order as a means to achieving the goal of regulating guns.

The other party, presidential candidates included, cower in the corner afraid - fearfilled of being “primaried” and losing their jobs and control.

“How many deaths will it take ‘till we know that too many people have died?” (From, *Blowing in the Wind*, by Bob Dylan © 1962 by Warner Bros. Inc.; renewed 1990 by Special Rider Music)

We already know. Facts are not coincidence. Too many people have died and continue to die. We know gun regulation is the only way to stop the carnage; to end the murder of our loved ones. It is time to vote out the cowards and misanthrope right wing crazies and replace them with folks who will honor and act on their oath of office: “I will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.” (U.S. Constitution: Article Two, Section One, Clause Eight) for the president). It is time to restore our most basic right: “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

*Rachel Baker Ford, editor*

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

## THOUGHTS ABOUT GUNS

### The Founders and Gun Control

The Founders addressed civil defense in their first effort at a national social contract in Article VI, paragraph 4 of the *Articles of Confederation*, which begins with the states being prohibited with having more “vessels of war” than approved by Congress “nor shall any body of forces be kept up by any state in time of peace” unless Congress “deemed requisite to garrison the forts necessary to the defense of such state;” and : “but every state shall always keep up a well-regulated and disciplined militia, sufficiently armed and accoutered, and shall provide and constantly have ready for use, in public stores, a due number of field pieces and tents, and a proper quantity of arms, ammunition, and camp equipage.”

The Founders still had a bad taste in their mouth from their abuse by the British professional soldiers, so much so they limited their own standing army to those necessary to defend forts. The militia filled void, essentially, between forts. These were citizen warriors but “well-regulated,” meaning they were organized in the standard hierarchical military command structure, and “disciplined,” meaning they understood themselves to be “under a command structure” when called into action. They would have access to all the necessary equipment for a military force in the field and trained to use it. All of which was to be purchased by the state and stored in “public stores,” meaning in a secure arsenal.

A member of the militia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century would not understand today’s second amendment, as presently interpreted. Military units require uniformity of weaponry to facilitate the providing of ammunition in combat. All weapons of war — not hunting rifles and shotguns— were stored in a local arsenal, not in a closet where children have access. Nobody ever thought of parading around town with a rifle as some badge of super patriotism.

Today’s second amendment is all about legalizing the sale of military-style assault rifle and large-capacity handguns for the economic benefit of the gun industry, not for sport or recreation. Those suggesting our Founders were providing a way for those not in agreement with the law to seek “a second amendment revision of the law” are demanding a government including in its social contract the legitimization of its forceful overthrow. It is pure fantasy to suggest the Constitution legitimizes armed revolution or the armament of any one person.

Demanding the need for assault rifles with 100-round magazines in every family home “to protect ourselves from the tyranny of the federal government” is not an exercise of free speech; it is the voice of insurrection and violent civil disobedience. A government incapable of addressing the yearly loss of 30,000 of its citizens [to guns] is either incompetent or criminally negligent of its duty to its citizens. Congress is tasked with “securing the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity” not the profitability of the gun makers and sellers.

—Stephen L. Love

### Getting Honest with Our National Narrative

Let’s face it. The history of the United States is a violent one. We are a country born by the sword—or the gun, if you wish—and have lived by the sword while spinning tales of being a peace-loving people. For example, our Canadian and Mexican neighbors, as well as Native American populations, learned not to trust our narrative by our ruthless expansionist behaviors during the 1800s, and governments around the world have had to endure political intrusions for decades.

With each 9/11 observance, we claim the moral high ground and hold services for our losses with words that must be heard with disbelief elsewhere, given how many deaths we, though not exclusively responsible, have caused in the Middle East.

The point of these historical references is to remind us that if we fail to ask questions about the narrative by which we live, there will be continuing consequences. If we live by the sword, then we ought not be surprised when violence gets manifested all around us. From University of Texas in Austin (1966) to Seattle (1983) to Columbine (1999) to Newton (2012) to Umpqua (2015), violence spotlights the horror always just below the surface in the society we created and in which we live.

Yet, every time there is another mass shooting, we hear empty clichés. “Guns don’t kill people, people do.” “When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns.” Then there are calls for comprehensive correctives: background checks, improving mental health systems, and closing loopholes at gun shows, all fine conversations and way past due.

But, beyond rhetoric and legislative action, the heart of the matter is that we are a people who have come from a violent history, and, until we acknowledge and own that history, we will continue living it. Getting profoundly honest with our whole narrative is one of the ways we can turn it around . . . for good.

*(Adapted and condensed by Rosann Naim, with permission, from First Community Church, UCC Dallas, Texas. Newsletter article written by The Rev. Mr. Ed Middleton)*

## Are “Gun Sense Voters” the Answer?

—Katherine Savers McGovern

We are flooded by news of mass shootings on school campuses, at malls, theaters, and in almost any place where people gather. Domestic violence involving the shooting of one or more people (adults and children) is reported so frequently as to become common place.

Since the October 1, 2015 gun-related mass murders and shootings at Umpqua Community College, Oregon, where a young man killed 9 people, there have been shootings at Texas Southern University, Arizona State University and additional campus related shootings elsewhere. As with the prior 13 school shootings, the guns used by the murderers were largely obtained legally by either the gunman or a member of his family.

Not too surprisingly, the elected officials at every level assert that the shooter had some mental illness, or otherwise perceived insult or disrespect which the shooter had suffered. The blame never seems to go past the frequently dead shooter, although vague statements are made that better funded mental health services might have helped to prevent the murders. The failures of third persons, *e.g.*, gun buyer to secure the gun(s), gun seller(s) for selling the gun(s), the family’s failure to seek help, the government’s or medical provider’s failure to make help available, the legislature’s failure to enact effective law(s) to protect the public.

### The President’s Plan

Following the 2012 mass murder of children at Sandy Hook Elementary, on January 13, 2013 President Obama issued a modest Gun Control Proposal, which the Republican (and some Democrats) in Congress blocked.

- (1) closing background check loopholes to keep guns out of dangerous hands;
- (2) banning military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, and taking other common-sense steps to reduce gun violence;
- (3) making schools safer; and
- (4) increasing access to mental health services.

### Highlights of this comprehensive plan

- » Require criminal background checks for all gun sales.
- » take four executive actions to ensure information on dangerous individuals is available to the background check system.
- » Reinstate and strengthen the assault weapons ban.
- » Restore the 10-round limit on ammunition magazines.
- » Protect police by finishing the job of getting rid of armor-piercing bullets.
- » Give law enforcement additional tools to prevent and prosecute gun crime.
- » End the freeze on gun violence research.
- » Make our schools safer with more school resource officers and school counselors, safer climates, and better emergency response plans.
- » Help ensure that young people get the mental health treatment they need.
- » Ensure health insurance plans cover mental health benefits.

After the October 1, 2015 mass murders at Umpqua Community College, President Obama again urged enactment of effective gun control legislation, and proposed that those voters concerned with the gun-related violence consider becoming “single issue voters” on gun control and demanding that their elected officials step up for gun control. The President is absolutely correct on the fact that, unless and until we change who our elected officials are at every level from non-gun control legislators to effective and reasonable gun control legislators, gun-related violence will continue.

**“Gun Sense Voters” is what it will take to end the gun-related violence nightmare this Country is in.** Gun Sense Voters do not support or vote for any candidate who is not strong on ending gun-related violence through passage of reasonable and effective laws to control gun violence.

*“How Mass Shooters Got Their Guns”* <http://nyti.ms/1M86B07>

### Are “Gun Sense Voters” the Answer? Part 2

Current Gun Control positions for the leading Democratic candidates for President.

#### Hillary Clinton

- ★Close the so-called 'Charleston Loophole,' which was so named after it was discovered that Dylann Roof, the South Carolina man who murdered nine African-American churchgoers, including a pastor and state senator, bought his gun despite having a prior drug charge.
- ★Ban sales at gun shows until a background check is fully and legally completed.
- ★Overturn a 2005 law signed by then-President George W. Bush that banned lawsuits by gun violence victims against gun manufacturers or dealers.
- ★Renew the 1994 assault weapons ban that prohibited certain types of rifle-like weapons with large capacities for bullets. The ban expired in 2004, and congressional attempts to renew it were unsuccessful.
- ★Executive action to end so-called 'gun-show loophole' that allows some private sales without background checks
- ★Repeal of laws that shield gun manufacturers from lawsuits
- ★Ban on gun sales to domestic abusers

#### Martin O'Malley

- ★Expand and Strengthen Background Check Protections to all sales
- ★Require a background check for every gun sale
- ★End unregulated internet gun sales
- ★Encourage states to improve information sharing
- ★Implement Commonsense Safeguards for Gun Purchases
- ★Enact comprehensive requirements for gun purchases, including fingerprint licensing
- ★Set a national age requirement for handgun possession
- ★Require the responsible storage of guns at home
- ★Extend existing safety standards to all firearm sales.
- ★Reject federally mandated concealed carry
- ★Closing loopholes that allow people to buy guns from unlicensed sellers is an important first step to keeping guns out of the hands of men who abuse or stalk women
- ★Close the “boyfriend loophole”
- ★Ban guns for those subject to emergency restraining orders
- ★Disarm and prosecute those who break the law
- ★Expand Reporting Requirements to Help Law Enforcement Fight Gun Crime

- ★Establish a national firearms registry
- ★Mandate reporting to law enforcement of lost or stolen firearms
- ★Require microstamping for all guns
- ★Hold Bad Actors Accountable
- ★Revoke licenses when dealers break the law.
- ★Ensure regular and unexpected inspections of licensed dealers
- ★Increase federal penalties for gun traffickers
- ★Use the Power of the Federal Purse to Advance Gun Safety
- ★Use procurement contracts to advance gun safety
- ★End immunity for gun manufacturers
- ★Ban the sale or distribution of assault weapons
- ★Ban the sale or distribution of large-capacity magazines and “cop killer” ammunition through federal regulation

#### Bernie Sanders

- ★Strengthen and better enforce the instant background check system.
- ★Close the gun-show loophole
- ★Make ‘straw man’ purchases a federal crime
- ★Ban semi-automatic assault weapons
- ★Our mental health system is seriously broken, It’s past time for a serious discussion about identifying, intervening and treating mental illness and ensuring access to care.



If you consider that your support for the election of any candidate in 2016 must be based, among other important, core values, on that candidate’s commitment to the passage, funding and enforcement of effective, reasonable legislation to end gun-related violence, then **you are, like President Obama and many others, a Gun Sense Voter!**

**GOTV - end the gun-related violence.**

NOTES & SOURCES: No Republican candidates for President have published a specific Gun Control position. Cf. Websites for the various Republican candidates 2. <http://daily.ia.iowa.gov/OPT> Sec. Clinton stated at the Democratic Debate on Oct. 13, that she has a proposal. The list herein is based on news reports. Martin O'Malley for President website. <https://martinomalley.com/policy/preventing-and-reducing-gun-violence> <http://huff.to/1jp4bnw> *Huffington Post* Oct. 11, 2015; <http://cnn.it/1FaEyur> CNN report, Aug. 30, 2015

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

## ARTICLE

### It's a Start! "6,000 to get out of prison"

Dallas Morning News, October 7, 2015

The release of inmates in October of this year follows a rules change from the U.S. Sentencing Commission — an independent agency that sets sentencing policies for federal crimes. This release has been planned for a year, in response to over-crowding in our prisons, but also because of changing attitudes toward incarcerating young people for non-violent drug charges. In most cases it simply allows for early release, in about 2 years.

According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, over 50 percent of inmates are in jail because of Drug Offenses. This makes absolutely no sense. (*Neither does the 10 percent for immigration offense*)

The federal prison population has increased by almost 790 percent since 1980, when there were only about

Chart Label	Offense	# of Inmates	% of Inmates
a	Banking and Insurance, Counterfeit, Embezzlement	758	0.4%
b	Burglary, Larceny, Property Offenses	7,580	3.9%
c	Continuing Criminal Enterprise	468	0.2%
d	Courts or Corrections	611	0.3
e	Drug Offenses	98,554	50.1%
f	Extortion, Fraud, Bribery	10,687	5.4%
g	Homicide, Aggravated Assault, and Kidnapping Offenses	5,576	2.8%
h	Immigration	20,862	10.6%
i	Miscellaneous	1,552	0.8%
j	National Security	73	0.0%
k	Robbery	7,504	3.8%
l	Sex Offenses	11,946	6.1%
m	Weapons, Explosives, Arson	10,687	5.4

<https://www.bop.gov/>

25,000 inmates, according to a 2012 Congressional Research Service report. Today, there are more than 215,000 inmates in federal prison, the Bureau of Prison reports.

The thinking behind the "war on drugs" in the Nixon era of the 70's was "harsh sentences act as a deterrent." Handing out long prison sentences to drug users and dealers was supposed to cut drug usage. It didn't. Over 80 million upright citizens have admitted to some illegal drug usage. Harsh sentences on young people convicted of a non-violent drug charge simply introduces them to a life of crime and future hardships when they leave prison with a record. And there has been a disproportional number of minorities convicted. African Americans make up approximately 15 percent of America's drug users, but more than one-third of adults arrested for drug violations are African Americans.

As a country, we tried this type of deterrent before — Prohibition in the 1920's. Moral people tried to impose their own beliefs on the rest of the country, and the result was an alcohol industry controlled by gangsters, with help from corrupt police officers and city officials. We reversed Prohibition within a few short years.

The current release only applies to "federal" prisons. It is time Texas did the same for sentencing rules in state prisons. No more mandatory sentences. Texas jails about 70,000 non-violent drug offenders at a cost of \$700 million per year. Marijuana should be treated on a par with alcohol and cigarettes, harmful - yes, but unlikely to lead to criminal activity.

The change of rules by the U. S. Sentencing Commission will result in the release of approximately 46,000 out of 100,000 non-violent drug offenders in federal prisons. I applaud this action, and hope Texas will sit up and take notice.

—Peggy Henger

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

## FROM OUR COUNTY CHAIRS



### Take Control — Master the Art of Pivot

Judith Matherne, County Chair  
Rockwall Democratic Party

Republicans have owned the narrative for too long, especially in Texas. They keep it focused on ideological issues. We can change the narrative by being better informed on important issues. The challenge is not to get sucked in to an ideological argument you can't win. Be prepared to redirect the conversation to Democratic values and policies about which you have knowledge.

I am encouraging Democrats to learn how to pivot away from these issues. Pivoting means redirecting the conversation to something you want to talk about. Republican politicians are masters of the pivot! It is a tool they use to keep from answering questions and to stay on message.

The hot-button issues of abortion and gay rights will be before the Supreme Court again. These ideological issues are keeping us from critical issues that affect all families.

For example, on abortion and gay rights, a pivot might look like, "I believe woman must be able to make the decision that is right for their family...and speaking of family..." Or, "I believe providing LGBT folk equal protection under the law is a human and civil right...and speaking of rights..."

We can't change the mind of an ideologue, but we can redirect the conversation to issues on which we agree. There are things that are important rights for all families...clean air and water, protection from predatory lenders and mortgage companies, adequate funding for public schools, lower taxes, equal pay for working women, funding higher education, access to affordable healthcare, getting money out of politics. Add your own—values and policies about which you have knowledge.

Rockwall Democrats, indeed all Democrats, are being encouraged to learn and practice pivoting.

#### Fall Fundraiser

Fall is in the air and Rockwall Democrats are hosting a Fall Fundraiser on the Patio of Arboledas Mexican Grill, 213 Hubbard Drive, Heath, TX. Thursday, October 29, 2015 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. .

Join friends and support your local Democratic Party. More information and tickets are available under Events on our webpage, [www.rockwalldems.com](http://www.rockwalldems.com) email [rockwalldemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:rockwalldemocrats@gmail.com) .



### Fundraising and FUNraising

Carol Donovan, Chair,  
Dallas County Democrats

This is NOT a request for money. It is an opportunity to brag on our local Party.

Many Democrats already know that the budget of a local political party is seasonal. We are cash flush during the election season, and cash poor between election cycles. So, when I was elected as Dallas County Democratic Party (DCDP) Chair in June, 2015, the Party was between cycles.

With the help of an amazingly creative staff, I devised a series of fundraising projects that would be fun for everyone. So far, so good:

First, we revamped the Sustaining Member Program, by which Democrats pledge a monthly amount to the Party. For the first time, we offered prizes at each level, and we renamed the levels after various Texas items. Additionally, we added more levels to provide a wide variety for various income levels. We kicked off the program in late August, and will send out reminders to folks at year-end. We are increasing our sustaining members and will check the total at the end of the year.

Second, we redesigned the Annual Labor Day Picnic. We made sure the event remained FREE, but we added some fundraising activities: We sold Democratic items and sustaining memberships at a DCDP booth, we offered booths and sponsorship opportunities to Democratic clubs and candidates for a small fee, we held a raffle and we auctioned off a donated painting of Democratic candidates. For the first time in the history of the DCDP, we made money on this event!

Third, we created a new event: The First Annual Judicial Reception. Through this event, we honored all of our Dallas County judges at a fancy, catered reception with a low-cost admission and an open bar. Through sponsorships, we paid all costs and made over \$30,000.

Stay tuned for the following fun events:

#### Annual Democratic Fish Fry

Join Dallas Democrats for our Fifteenth Annual Fish Fry to be held at Sokol Hall, 7448 Greenville Ave. Dallas Friday, October 16, 2015, 6:30 p.m. 214-821-8331 <http://www.dallasdemocrats.org>

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

## ELECTION INFORMATION

### Constitutional Amendment and Joint Election Dates

Election Date: November 3, 2015 (3 de noviembre de 2015)

Vote in home precinct

Early Voting Monday, October 19, 2015 — Friday, October 30, 2015

Vote in any early voting site

**Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (Received, not Postmarked) Friday, October 23, 2015**

**Last day to Receive Ballot by Mail Tuesday, November 3, 2015 (election day) at 7:00 p.m.**  
(unless overseas deadline applies)

No. 0000

Constitutional Amendment Election (Elección Sobre Enmiendas A La Constitución)

(Condado De) Sample County, Texas

November 3, 2015 (3 De Noviembre De 2015)

Sample Ballot (Boleta De Muestra)

Instruction Note: (Nota De Instrucción)

Place an "X" in the square beside the statement indicating the way you wish to vote. (Marque con una "X" el cuadro al lado de la frase que indica la manera en que quiere usted votar.)

<p>No. 1 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$15,000 to \$25,000, providing for a reduction of the limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for those purposes on the homestead of an elderly or disabled person to reflect the increased exemption amount, authorizing the legislature to prohibit a political subdivision that has adopted an optional residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation from reducing the amount of or repealing the exemption, and prohibiting the enactment of a law that imposes a transfer tax on a transaction that conveys fee simple title to real property." "La enmienda constitucional que aumentaría el monto de la exención de impuestos ad valorem sobre la vivienda residencial para propósitos de la educación pública de \$15,000 a \$25,000, establecería una reducción de la limitación del valor total de impuestos ad valorem que pueden ser impuestos por dichos propósitos sobre la vivienda residencial de un anciano o discapacitado para reflejar el monto de la exención, autorizaría a la legislatura a prohibir que una subdivisión política que haya adoptado una exención opcional de impuestos ad valorem sobre viviendas residenciales reduzca la cantidad o derogue la exención, y prohibiría la promulgación de una ley que imponga impuestos de transferencia sobre transacciones que transfieran título propietario y derecho a una propiedad."</p>
<p>No. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran who died before the law authorizing a residence homestead exemption for such a veteran took effect." "La enmienda constitucional que autorizaría a la legislatura a proporcionar una exención de impuestos ad valorem de todo o parte del valor de mercado de la vivienda residencial del cónyuge superviviente de un veterano de las fuerzas armadas 100 por ciento o totalmente discapacitado quien haya muerto antes de que la ley autorizando una exención para la vivienda residencial de dicho veterano hubiese tomado efecto."</p>
<p>No. 3 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment repealing the requirement that state officers elected by voters statewide reside in the state capital." "La enmienda constitucional que derogaría el requisito de que los oficiales estatales electos por el electorado estatal residan en la capital del estado."</p>
<p>No. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit professional sports team charitable foundations to conduct charitable raffles." "La enmienda constitucional que autorizaría a la legislatura a permitir que las fundaciones caritativas de equipos deportivos profesionales lleven a cabo rifas caritativas."</p>
<p>No. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment to authorize counties with a population of 7,500 or less to perform private road construction and maintenance." "La enmienda constitucional que autorizaría a los condados con una población de 7,500, o menos, a llevar a cabo mantenimiento y construcción de carreteras privadas."</p>
<p>No. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment recognizing the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife subject to laws that promote wildlife conservation." "La enmienda constitucional que reconocería el derecho de la población a la caza, a la pesca, y a la cosecha de la vida silvestre sujeto a las leyes que promueven la conservación de la fauna silvestre."</p>
<p>No. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> For (A Favor) <input type="checkbox"/> Against (En Contra)</p>	<p>"The constitutional amendment dedicating certain sales and use tax revenue and motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue to the state highway fund to provide funding for non-tolled roads and the reduction of certain transportation-related debt." "La enmienda constitucional que dedicaría ciertos ingresos de impuestos sobre ventas y uso, e ingresos de impuestos sobre venta, uso, y renta de vehículos motores, al Fondo Estatal de Transporte, (SHE por sus siglas en inglés), para proveer fondos para carreteras sin cuotas y la reducción de cierta deuda relacionada a la transportación."</p>

**GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE**  
**PROPOSITIONS ON THE BALLOT EXPLAINED**

**Oh, They are Clever:  
They are Trying to Buy Your Vote with Your Own Money!**

— Charles E. Ford, Jr. and Joseph Kulhavy, Esq.

There are seven amendments to the Texas Constitution on the November 3, 2015 ballot. Be careful what you vote for! The exact reading of the amendments can be found on the **Sample Ballot** printed on the previous page.

**Proposition No. 1.** Throttles back property tax revenue for school districts by adding another \$10,000 to the homestead exemption.

Comment:

The legislative document is S.J.R. 1. The proposed amendment is estimated to reduce the property tax of the average home by \$120 per year. Since this will reduce the revenue available to fund schools the local school district will be compensated for the lost revenue by the state. But, beware! SB1 Section 17 (d) states, “The commissioner, using information provided by the comptroller and other information as necessary, shall compute the amount of additional state aid to which a district is entitled under this section. A determination by the commissioner is final and may not be appealed.” Austin will determine the district’s allotment. This is a sneaky way for Austin to gain more control over public school funding. Another step toward privatization of the public school system.

They are buying our vote with our own money, now and in 2016. The timing of this amendment is carefully planned to precede the 2016 election. Isn’t it amazing that people are getting a tax deduction during a slowdown in the oil and gas industry, one of the states primary sources of revenue and employment?

Because of the way this is being conducted it may be **viewed as an illegal inducement in the form of financial incentives offered to voters to favor passage of S.J.R. 1.** Districts are required to send your tax bill out with your tax calculated using the higher exemption and a note explaining you will receive a second bill for a higher amount if Proposition 1 fails.

**Proposition No. 2** Exempts a handful of surviving spouses of disabled vets from homestead taxes

Comment:

The legislative document is H.J.R. 75. This amendment corrects an oversight. Approximately 3,800 spouses of 100 percent or totally disabled veterans will receive full exemption from their property tax they have not been receiving because the spouse died before Jan. 1, 2010.

**Proposition No. 3** Releases statewide elected officials from their historical requirement to reside in Austin, despite the fact that their jobs happen to be located in the capitol.

Comment:

The legislative document is S.J.R. 52  
The elected office holders impacted by this amendment are charged with supervising critical government departments requiring their full attention and often immediate reaction to events. It is not sufficient to show

up in Austin on a whim. We do not need an Attorney General housed in Huntsville! We are not forcing them to go to Austin. They accepted their office knowing they are required to reside at the Capital.

**Proposition No. 4** Would authorize professional sports team charitable foundations to conduct charitable raffles.

Comment:

The legislative document is H.J.R. 73. The law may authorize the charitable foundation to pay with the raffle proceeds reasonable advertising, promotional, and administrative expenses. The team can set aside up to ten percent to cover the expense of running the raffle.

**Proposition No. 5** Would adjust the population cap that prohibits all but the tiniest of counties from using county road crews to build and maintain private roads, so as to ensure that slightly-less tiny counties will be able to use county road crews to build and maintain private roads.

Comment:

The legislative document is S.J.R. 17. Currently counties with a population of 5,000 or less can perform private road construction and maintenance.

**Proposition No. 6** Would specify that Texans have a fundamental constitutional right to hunt, kill and harvest wildlife and fish, including by “traditional means.”

Doesn’t define “traditional means,” but presumably that includes hitting things with rocks.

Comment: The legislative document is S.J.R. 22. SJR 22 states this amendment does not affect any provision of law relating to trespass, property rights, or eminent domain. Also, it does not affect the power of the legislature to authorize a municipality to regulate the discharge of a weapon in a populated area in the interest of public safety.

**Proposition No. 7** Would redirect roughly 10 percent or more of the state’s annual tax revenue exclusively to transportation projects.

Comment:

The legislative document is S.J.R. 5. This proposition is an accounting game but the legislature is at least trying to plan ahead a few years.

Conclusion

Assuming low voter turnout and almost zero visibility, all of these amendments probably will pass. Our schools will get a little poorer; our state revenue will be a little more strained; and the Dallas Cowboys Foundation will be able to have a raffle.

###

<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/analyses15/analyses15.pdf>

<http://texaselectionlaw.wordpress.com/2015/10/08/the-2015-state-constitutional-amendments-in-review/>

### **COLLIN ★ COUNTY** **DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

#### **Fannin County Democrats** **Where We Stand**

##### **Education**

- ✓ Protect and Strengthen public schools
- ✓ Textbooks must be historically, scientifically, and factually accurate
- ✓ College must be affordable
- ✓ Protect the benefits and pensions of all teachers

##### **Economy**

- ✓ Raise the minimum wage to provide a living wage that lifts workers out of poverty
- ✓ Support and expand Social Security.  
NO privatization. NO raise the retirement age
- ✓ Break up the big banks
- ✓ Reform the tax code to help wage earners

##### **Equality**

- ✓ Respect and uphold the rights of all citizens
- ✓ Equal pay for equal work

##### **Families**

- ✓ Affordable healthcare for all citizens
- ✓ Adequately reimburse healthcare providers for their services
- ✓ Accept the expansion of Medicaid
- ✓ Allow the government to negotiate for the best drug prices
- ✓ Take care of our veterans and their families, especially our wounded warriors

##### **Citizenship**

- ✓ Respect and uphold the Constitution
- ✓ Respect citizens' privacy
- ✓ Get big money out of politics.
- ✓ Return power to the citizens

Democrats are never distracted from the real issues.  
We vote for the things that make all our lives better.  
We don't vote against our own best interests.  
We think and we care. Vote smart.

#### **Vote Democratic**

Jane Alvizo, Chair Fannin Co. Democratic Party  
Fannin County Texas Democrats  
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4th Monday of each month 7:00 p.m.  
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Email: judyteller@cableone.net

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<http://www.collindemocrats.org>

[chair@collindemocrats.org](mailto:chair@collindemocrats.org)

RE: Remarks by Jason Villalba  
Dallasnews.com · 10/04/15

Unfortunately, my neighbor, Jason Villalba has let his partisan enthusiasm overtake reality. The National Socialist German Workers Party or Nazi Party, was never socialistic. It was anti-Semitic and fascist. Suggesting that the Democratic Party or Bernie Sanders harbors such values is a slur unbecoming a Methodist and a member of the Republican Party I grew up with... and only serves the interests of those who just want to perpetuate partisan bickering and fighting. Jason owes an apology to every Democrat and old-school Republican who lives in his district! — *Steve Love*

**Muslims in America**

Re: “It’s OK to be Muslim, really,” by Sayeef Rahim, Thursday Letters.

I agree with Rahim, who wants the media to say there is nothing wrong with being a Muslim when someone labels President Barack Obama one.

Remember, Obama had to explain his loyalty to his longtime Christian minister, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, whose hatred of Jews was made known during Obama’s first presidential campaign.

Muslims have been in America since Columbus came with some Muslim crew members. Apparently, many of the Africans captured and sold as slaves in America were Muslims. In the 1800s, about 5 percent of the U.S. population was Muslim and less than 3 percent of the U.S. population is Muslim now. (*Reference: One Nation Under Gods: A New American History by Peter Manseau.*)

There’s nothing wrong with someone being Muslim. Odds are you’ll be hurt by a Christian politician rather than by a Muslim in America.

—Willia Kulhavy, Garland

~~The Dallas Morning News~~ Letters to the Editor Published: Sept. 26, 2015  
<http://letterstotheeditorblog.dallasnews.com/2015/09/more-thoughts-about-being-muslim.html>

Subject: the Speakership  
A Weaker Speaker, Points,  
*The Dallas Morning News* 10/4/15

Kevin Williamson’s op-ed concludes that the impotence of the speakership is due to the usurpation of the legislative branch by the executive. According to him, we no longer have a President with limited powers; we have an autocratic President.

I guess we should not blame a correspondent for the National Review for wanting to deflect responsibility. After all, it was they who endorsed the idea that Congress ought not do anything, because, to do so would make Obama look good. They advocated for a legislative vacuum and what they got was an expanded presidency. That’s not a conspiracy; that is nature at work!

It is hard to make the case for an active Congress when the National Review’s hero is Reagan, whose claim to fame was his belief that government was incompetent, at best, and most likely corrupt and the running of the nation should be turned over to an administration unable to restrain itself from secretly trading arms with Iran for hostages to pay for a secret war in Central America. If we have an autocratic presidency, we have only to look back at the Reagan presidency to see the seeds.

— Steve Love



This banner was on a government building in Salzburg.

**Editor’s Note:**

In September, Chuck and I visited Munich, Germany, and Salzburg and Vienna, Austria. At this time, the Syrian refugees crossed the border into Hungary, on their way to Germany and safety. Hungary, according to BBC World News reports, closed their border — erecting rolled barbed wire fences and had many heavily armed soldiers. Germany, Austria and eventually Croatia welcomed the families — gathering the travelers in the respective city train stations.

As we traveled past and through the stations, we observed the many refugee families with small children, adults and seniors a huddled together, waiting to resume their journey to safety. We saw no violence, no altercations - just frightened, hungry families being cared for— provided with food and water and care by officers and locals. We did not see any rifles, cannons or bullying. No SWAT teams ready to shoot. No crazy politicians waving AK47's or building fences.

— Rachel Baker Ford, editor

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

## OUT & ABOUT

### The First Democratic Presidential Debate



Left to Right: Former Virginia Sen. Jim Webb, Senator Bernie Sanders, Former Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, and Former Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee

— Willa Kulhavy

The first Democratic Presidential Debate was much more fun to watch than I expected. It surprised me how supportive of each other all the candidates were in spite of their differing opinions, egos, and experiences. Sometimes I think Bernie Sanders may have gotten in the presidential race just to make enough noise to get Hillary Clinton elected. However that wouldn't explain why the three other candidates at the debate, Martin O'Malley, Lincoln Chaffee, Jim Webb, also treated everyone else with respect.

As a result, this debate was very different than the Republican debates have been. With no one willing to launch personal attacks, this Democratic debate was about issues. Some of the issues addressed were: pay equity for women, immigration policy, national security, trade agreements, mitigating climate change, affordable education, legalizing marijuana, gun rights and laws, regulation of banks and Wall Street. So each of the debaters had chances to attract and chances to repel supporters.

Candidates were asked this question:

“Which enemy that you've made in your career are you the most proud of?”

Chafee: “The coal lobby. I've worked hard for climate change and I want to work with the coal lobby.”

O'Malley: “The National Rifle Association.”

Clinton: “In addition to the NRA, the health insurance companies, the drug companies, the Iranians, probably the Republicans.”

Sanders: “As someone who has taken on probably every special interest that there is in Washington, I would lump Wall Street and the pharmaceutical industry at the top of my list of people who don't like me.”

Webb: “The enemy soldier who threw the grenade that wounded me but he's not around right now to talk to.”

Hillary Clinton has been declared the debate winner by Gromer Jeffers of *The Dallas Morning News*, on National Public Radio (KERA 90.1), and by everyone I have talked to who watched the debate. The NPR reporter said “Hillary had all the P's this time — Poise, Personable, and Prepared.” And I agree Hillary Clinton had it all together during that debate.

Bernie Sanders maybe wasn't not quite as smooth as Hillary but of course he will be at the next debate. Martin O'Malley did well in the debate so I expect he will be in the next Democratic debate, Saturday, November 14, 2015.

# GARLAND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

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I received a followup call from John Flores, Technical Support Manager checking to make sure all was well.

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