



# Yavapai County DEMOCRAT

May, 2011

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Theme of the Month  
**EDUCATION**

## Yavapai County Democratic Party to Host Education Forum

On Thursday, May 12, the YCDP will host a forum on the state of public education in Arizona and America: "Who will save our Children's Future?" Should we be concerned about the state of public education in Arizona and the Country? You bet we should! And here's why:

- "While Arizona is courting companies that require highly educated workers, legislators are slashing support for universities and community colleges." – **Kathleen Ingley, Arizona Republic**
- "Legislators are only too happy, however, to boost tax credits for private school tuition, draining money from the general fund and undercutting support for public schools." – **Kathleen Ingley, Arizona Republic**
- "Cutbacks don't bode well for the quality education essential to attracting companies like Intel." – **Craig Barret, Intel CEO**
- "The state's GOP leadership eliminated funding for all-day Kindergarten last year. It was a program some of them never liked. It almost seemed like they used the budget crisis as an excuse." – **Linda Valdez, Arizona Republic**
- "Each year, more than \$55 million is diverted from the state's general fund to help affluent parents pay for their children's private school tuition, while Arizona – after three years in a row of cutting public education funding – can't afford to pay for bare-bones basics for its public school students." – **Arizona Education Network**
- (The Ryan Budget) ... "would cut Pell Grants for all 9.4 million student recipients next year, removing as many as one million of them from the program altogether." – **The New York Times**
- Bill Gates wants teacher pay tied to student performance and has called on public schools to ... "increase class size as a way of cutting costs in these hard times. The private school Mr. Gates attended has an average class size of 16, and its home page says the best thing about Lakeside School is it 'promotes relationships between teachers and students through small class sizes.'" – **The New York Times**

Our public education system is in crisis, and it's no accident. We as Democrats need to wake up and see what's happening to the institution that created and sustains a strong middle class in this country, and take steps to rescue it. If not, it will be taken away from us, and more tragically, from our children.

Continued on page 3

# The Impact of Underfunding Arizona's Education System

By Vivian Perry, YCDP Vice-Chair for Political Action

Arizona wasn't always a pariah educationally. Census Bureau figures reflect the decline in Arizona's per pupil expenditures as compared to the national average as Republican strength in the State Legislature grew over time:

- 1966 - 7% above the national average
- 1971 - slightly less than the national average
- 1989 - 10% less than the national average
- 1994 - 20% less than the national average
- 2004 - 30% less than the national average
- 2006 - 33% less than the national average

From 1986 through 2007 Arizona has actually decreased its relative per pupil funding by nearly 1%, while nationally it was increased by over 36%, according to the American Legislative Exchange Council Report Card on American Education, 2006-07 figures. Our per pupil funding is now more than \$4000 below the national average.

Arizona ranks second highest in the nation for class size, increasing its class size average by 31.72% over the last 20 years to 24.2 students per class, while the national average fell 11.9% to 15.3 students per class over the same period.

Compared to the rest of the nation, Arizona's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores are:

- Grade 4 Mathematics Rank, 44
- Grade 4 Reading Rank, 47
- Grade 8 Mathematics Rank, 37
- Grade 8 Reading Rank, 42

In March, former Intel CEO Craig Barrett told Governor Brewer and the state's top lawmakers that "Arizona would not be in the top 10 locales to make an investment" as a result of the state's ailing education system. He stressed the crucial link between education and economic growth saying, "If you want those high-paying jobs – the jobs that pay two to three times the average – look for your educational infrastructure to be the key."

Judy Wood, president of Contact One Call Center Inc., expressed her concerns about our K-12 education. She hires for a lot of entry-level jobs and reports that Arizona students are lacking in basic skills.

The Arizona Education Network reports that the state has cut \$875.5 million from the budget for K-12 schools, community colleges and universities over the last two years. We rank between 49th and 51st in the nation in per pupil funding, yet Governor Brewer and the state legislative leaders are planning to cut another \$179 million from K-12 funding and \$273 million from colleges and universities.

Andrew Morrill, president of the Arizona Education Association stated that "Arizona voters overwhelmingly chose to protect funding for public education last year when they voted in favor of Proposition 100 and against Proposition 302. This budget does not reflect the priorities of Arizona and continues to drive our state in the wrong direction."

According to an ABC15 report, Governor Brewer distributed \$78 million of the \$185 million stimulus fund Arizona received to public safety (mostly jails), \$55 million to health care, and only \$6.6 million to education.

An April 2, 2011 Arizona Democratic Party bulletin suggested two sources of funds to help address our budget deficit: Go after hundreds of millions in uncollected taxes, (but Republicans propose cutting the tax collection budget by \$1.6 million), and close the tax loopholes that result in \$10 billion of exemptions from sales tax and benefit a select few.

There seems to be a determined effort over decades on the part of our Republican led State Legislature to incapacitate Arizona's public education system despite the wishes of the public and in the face of growing evidence on all sides that a poorly educated populace hinders the ability of our economy to recover and prosper.



# Boycott KOCH Products!

Brothers Charles and David Koch, with a combined worth around \$35 billion dollars, are waging a war against President Obama. The Koch brothers are the majority owners in Koch Industries, America's second-largest private company with revenues of \$100 billion in 2009, and 80,000 employees in 60 countries.

Koch Industries' main source of revenue is from the manufacturing, refining, and distribution of petroleum. They are major financiers of the Tea Party. They are also providing money to run anti-union and anti-collective bargaining ads.

We urge you to not allow your money to be used to help sponsor these campaigns! Please don't buy these products!

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**Industry/Georgia-Pacific Products by Koch:**

- Angel Soft toilet paper
  - Brawny paper towels
  - Dixie plates, bowls, napkins & cups
  - Mardi Gras napkins and towels
  - Quilted Northern toilet paper
  - Soft 'n Gentle toilet paper
  - Sparkle napkins
  - Vanity Fair napkins
  - Zee napkins
- 

# Education Forum

*Continued from page 1*

See Vivian Perry's article on page 2 for the facts and figures!

We hope to see you all at the forum! Details below.

**Date:** Thursday, May 12, 2011  
**Time:** 5:30 – 8:00 PM  
**Place:** The Prescott Adult Center, Rosser Street, Prescott  
**Cost:** \$10.00 for Potluck Supper  
**RSVP:** 928-541-0413  
**Program:** A panel of four experts will discuss the effects of education budget cuts on school districts, families, and business/industry, and the impact of tuition tax credits and school tuition organizations. Q. and A. to follow.

Yavapai County  
**DEMOCRAT**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
May 3, 2011	6:00PM	<b>DORR Movie Night</b> <i>The Corporation</i>	Sedona Public Library 3250 White Bear Rd.; W. Sedona
May 12, 2011	5:30-8:30PM	<b>Yavapai County Democratic Party County Committee Meeting-</b> A Forum on Public Education: Who Will Save Our Children's Future?	Prescott Adult Center Rosser Street; Prescott
May 18, 2011	11-1:00PM	<b>DWPA--</b> ACLU Speaker Invited	Wyndham Garden Hotel Rte. 69, Prescott
May 19, 2011	8-10:00AM	<b>DORR-Breakfast Meeting</b> A Conversation with former Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick	Olde Sedona Bar & Grille 1407 W. SR 89A, Sedona
May 26, 2011	6:30PM	<b>DOVV-Monthly Meeting</b>	Location to be determined, please call 634-1963



## The Blueberry Story

*A Businessman Learns a Lesson, by Jamie Robert Vollmer*

“If I ran my business the way you people operate your schools, I wouldn’t be in business very long!” I stood before an auditorium filled with outraged teachers who were becoming angrier by the minute. My speech had entirely consumed their precious 90 minutes of in-service. Their initial icy glares had turned to restless agitation. You could cut the hostility with a knife.

I represented a group of business people dedicated to improving public schools. I was an executive at an ice cream company that became famous in the middle 1980s when People Magazine chose our blueberry as the “Best Ice Cream in America.”

I was convinced of two things. First, public schools needed to change; they were archaic selecting and sorting mechanisms designed for the Industrial age and out of step with the needs of our emerging “knowledge society.” Second, educators were a major part of the problem: they resisted change, hun-

kered down in their feathered nests, protected by tenure and shielded by a bureaucratic monopoly.

They needed to look to business. We knew how to produce quality. Zero defects! TQM! Continuous improvement! In retrospect, the speech was perfectly balanced – equal parts ignorance and arrogance.

As soon as I finished, a woman’s hand shot up. She appeared polite, pleasant – she was, in fact, a razor-edged, veteran, high school English teacher who had been waiting to unload.

She began quietly, “We are told, sir, that you manage a company that makes good ice cream.” I smugly replied, “Best ice cream in America, Ma’am.”

“How nice,” she said. “Is it rich and smooth?”

“Sixteen percent butterfat,” I crowed.

“Premium ingredients?” she inquired.

“Super-premium! Nothing but triple A.” I was on a roll. I never saw the next line coming.

“Mr. Vollmer,” she said, leaning forward with a wicked eyebrow raised to the sky, “when you are standing on your receiving dock and you see an inferior shipment of blueberries arrive, what do you do?”

In the silence of that room, I could hear the trap snap. I was dead meat, but I wasn’t going to lie. “I send them back.”

“That’s right!” she barked, “and we can never send back our blueberries. We take them big, small, rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened, confident, homeless, rude, and brilliant.

We take them all: GT, ADHD, ADD, SLD, EI, MMR, OHI, TBI, DD, Autistic, junior rheumatoid arthritis, English as their second language, etc. We take them all! Everyone! And that, Mr. Vollmer, is why it’s not a business. It’s school!”

In an explosion, all 290 teachers, principals, bus drivers, aides, custodians and secretaries jumped to their feet and yelled, “Yeah! Blueberries! Blueberries!”

And so began my long transformation. Since then, I have visited hundreds of schools. I have learned that a school is not a business. Schools are unable to control the quality of their raw material, they are dependent upon the vagaries of politics for a reliable revenue stream, and they are constantly mauled by a howling horde of disparate, competing customer groups that would send the best CEO screaming into the night.

None of this negates the need for change. We must change what, when, and how we teach to give all children maximum opportunity to thrive in a postindustrial society. But educators cannot do this alone; these changes can occur only with the understanding, trust, permission and active support of the surrounding community. For the most important thing I have learned is that schools reflect the attitudes, beliefs and health of the communities they serve, and therefore, to improve public education means more than changing our schools, it means changing America.

### Democrats, we need your help!

The Yavapai County Democratic Party needs to tighten its belt as we all are doing in these tough economic times. Our donations are down due to the recession, and we must rein in as many expenditures as possible. We like to have snacks and drinks available for our loyal hardworking volunteers at Headquarters, but this is an expense we must cut. If anyone would like to donate wrapped snacks and bottled or canned sodas and juices (NO BOTTLED WATER) for our volunteers, you may drop them off at Headquarters at 1555 Iron Springs Road, Suite # 1; or call us at 541-0413, and we may be able to pick them up. Thanks for all you do for Democrats in Yavapai County!

## From the Chair...

By: Lindsay Bell

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the recently passed state budget has been devastating for public education. Arizona children have been short changed by years of Republicans underfunding the State's education system. In fact, most Arizonans support public education and want it to be adequately funded. Voters made their intentions loud and clear last year with the overwhelming passage of Prop 100 to prevent further cuts to education, and with their vote in the general election to retain the early

childhood education program, First Things First. The legislature responded to the expressed wishes of the voters by cutting another \$200 million from K-12 education and making substantial additional cuts to higher education as well. Cuts to universities in this budget are larger than all the cuts from the last four years combined. Our state's universities and community colleges have already laid off over 2,000 faculty and student support staff, consolidated 180 college courses/programs, closed eight extended campuses, and increased tuition an astounding 63%. Money invested per student by the state has declined

dramatically. The anticipated amount per student for FY2012 is \$4,200, an amount equivalent to state funding provided in FY1963! Adding insult to injury, the legislature has essentially transferred \$500 million of the revenue raised by the 1% sales tax increase to big corporations and big business in the form of tax cuts. This budget again confirms that the extremist Russell Pearce Republicans don't share the priorities of mainstream Arizonans who care about a stronger economy, better schools and safer streets. The Republicans' extremist agenda is failing Arizona. It's time for a change.



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 by investing in the work of the Yavapai County Democrats

*I will support the Yavapai County Democrats!*

I Pledge  \$10 per month  \$20 per month  \$25 per month  \$50 per month  \$100 per month  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month  One-time contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Arizona law requires political organizations to report the name, address, occupation and name of employer for each individual whose aggregate contributions exceed \$25.00 in a calendar year

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 ATTN: Ms. Fran Chadwick, Treasurer