

## From the Chair . . .

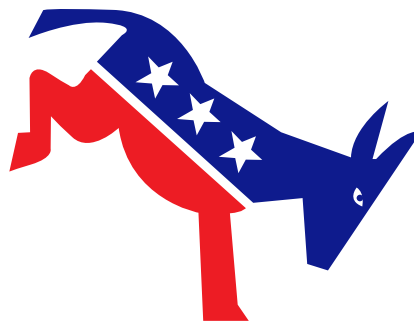
By: Lindsay Bell



I am a lifelong Democrat. I registered as a Democrat when I was first eligible to vote, and I anticipate being a Democrat forever. It could have gone the other way. We know that kids tend to register with the same party affiliation as their parents. I confess that I was raised in a mixed family: Dad was a Republican and Mom was a Democrat. Although I think Dad may have voted once for Franklin Roosevelt in the name of unity for the war effort, my folks split their vote in most elections. To be completely honest, Mom was a fairly conservative Democrat (this was Texas after all—the “Dixiecrat” version of Democrats) but it was a “liberal” issue, unions, that made her a Democrat

Mother was the youngest of four children, and in 1920, when she was still a pre-schooler, Mom’s parents divorced. As you can imagine, it was very difficult at that time for a single mother to support a family. Without any help from her ex-husband, my grandmother managed to raise her four children by running a boarding house. Grand-

mother’s sister was also in the labor force since she had never married and had to support herself. The two sisters ended up having to support their widowed mother as well. Growing up in this situation gave my Mom a keen appreciation for the plight of working women. Not only were there were few job opportunities for women, but women were routinely paid less than men doing the same work. The few jobs that were available for women were often sweat shops with deplorable working conditions, long hours, and no benefits. These circumstances, as well as horrific work place tragedies such as the New York sewing factory fire in which dozens of women perished because they had been locked in the building, led to the formation of unions some of which particularly focused on working women. While I was growing up, Mom always talked about the union movement, and how much unions had done for working women. Democrats were the party that stood by working men and women and the unions that represented them, so my Mom was a Democrat. Today, the Democratic Party still stands by unions, and that’s just one of many good reasons to be a Democrat.



## Workers’ Rights, Cont’d

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cial industry—another of the Republican Party’s ideological tenets. Such notable Republicans as Jeb Bush and Newt Gingrich would allow states to declare bankruptcy. This would permit state governments to renege on their commitments to retirees

In 2011, the Arizona Legislature proposed measures to:

- Restrict picketing
- Require that unions get annual renewal from individual members to withhold dues/money to be used for political purposes
- Revamp public employee pensions systems
- Prod or force local governments to privatize services.

When you combine refusal to recognize the effect of policy with hypocrisy, distortion and deceit, the future looks bleak.

*“The Constitution gave no rights to working people; no right to work less than 12 hours a day; no right to a living wage, no right to safe working conditions. Workers had to organize, go on strike, defy the law, the courts, and the police, create a great movement which won the eight-hour day and caused such commotion that Congress was forced to pass a minimum wage law and Social Security and unemployment insurance.” Howard Zinn*