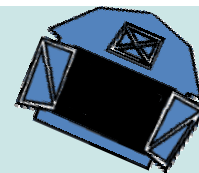


The DFL Senior Caucus welcomes you to the Great Minnesota Get-together !



Newsletter of the



SENIOR CAUCUS

Minnesota State Fair 2008 Edition

Vol. II, No. 3

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Now!

by Linda Feist, Senior Caucus Chair

Now is the time to throw timidity to the wind. We must get involved!!!!

Fellow DFLers, in these challenging and difficult times for the Nation, many of us see the election of Democratic candidates as inevitable. But, that is far from true. Surveys show Obama losing ground in battleground states, including Minnesota. Once again the Republicans are using malicious, negative campaigns and false arguments, and once again the media is eating it up as the truth.

Caucus members, consider what another republican administration would mean for the future of our state and our country. Think about the dark future we will face if a Republican is elected President, elected to the U.S. Senate; to Congress and to state houses. Consider the troubled world we will be turning over to our children and grandchildren. We must change the course of this nation NOW!

If there ever was a time to act – it is now! Pick a campaign to get involved in, give a couple of hours a week. Many campaigns have activities tailored to seniors. If you need help figuring out who to contact or where to put your energies, call me or the Board member nearest you (see page 7).

VICTORY IN NOVEMBER IS CRUCIAL!

Linda Feist 651-457-5121/ or 800-999-7457 (toll free and leave a message]

“Seniors Talking to Seniors” Kick-Off

On August 14, former Vice-President Walter Mondale rallied senior activists at the kick off for the Obama campaign’s “Seniors talking to Seniors.” [See box]. Mondale spoke on the 73rd anniversary of the passage of Social Security Act. He emphasized the importance of the involvement of seniors in this most crucial election not just to protect programs, such as Social Security that ensure our retirement, but to provide our grandchildren a world of promise.

“Seniors Talking to Seniors” every Thursday

At Obama Campaign Offices around the state on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m., seniors will gather to call or visit with other seniors as we work together to elect Senator Obama and DFL candidates.

Be a part of Seniors for Obama. When you sign up, you’ll be kept updated on upcoming campaign events in your area. Join by visiting:

<http://my.barackobama.com/pages/mnseniors>.

For locations near you or for more information call:

651.644.4850 or 800.999.7457, ask for Linda Feist to return your call..



Vice-President Walter Mondale and members of DFL Senior Caucus at the St. Paul Obama office

Al Franken speaks with and for seniors about Medicare

Before a July 30 press conference in St. Paul, DFL Candidate for U.S. Senate Al Franken talked with Senior Caucus members about their concerns with Medicare and prescription drug programs. Rep. Erin Murphy from St. Paul, a former nurse, spoke of her healthcare concerns, and Senior Caucus member John Martin, told of his experiences with increasing drug costs and introduced Franken.

Franken announced his proposals to take Medicare back from the big pharmaceutical companies and lower the cost of prescription drugs. He supports legislation to (1) allow Medicare to negotiate drug costs with drug makers, (2) to ban drug companies from advertising directly to consumers, and (3) to allow safe re-importation of drugs from Canada. "With enough Democrats in the senate next year the proposals will actually move forward," Franken said.

Franken's proposals are a good fit with issues developed by the Senior Caucus; issues that the Caucus believes are imperative to the well-being of Minnesota seniors. He has also presented his plan for caregiver tax relief, another issue high on the Senior Caucus list. In meetings around the state, Franken has consistently shown a concern for issues important to seniors. The Senior Caucus endorses and supports the candidacy of Al Franken for U.S. Senate. On page 3, you'll find a letter from Al to seniors.



Rep. Erin Murphy, Al Franken and Senior Caucus members
Dwayne King and John Martin on right at St. Paul Corner Drugs

Senior Caucus positions on major senior issues for 2008

In July, the Senior Caucus Issues Committee developed five issues to highlight with voters and candidates during this election period. They were selected from the list of issues submitted by members that the committee felt impacted the greatest number of seniors.

The issues are:

- Require federal negotiated Medicare Plan D drug prices.
- Require Medicare provide a Plan D program as an alternative to private plan insurance offerings.
- Require that federal income taxes on Social Security benefits be adjusted for past inflation and indexed to future inflation.
- Remove the cap for social security withholding.
- Provide a care-givers tax credit for those who care for the ill, incapacitated or disabled.

To read a more detailed analysis, go to our website at <http://www.dflseniors.wordpress.com> and click on Issues

On the following pages, several of the candidates discuss how they feel about these and other senior issues.

The candidates on senior issues

Barack Obama — Fulfilling America's Covenant with Seniors

Protecting Social Security

Social Security has been one of the most successful government programs in our nation's history. Barack Obama opposed President Bush's efforts to privatize Social Security. As president, Obama will preserve Social Security by stopping any efforts to privatize it. He will work in a bipartisan fashion to maintain Social Security's solvency for future generations.

Securing Hard-Earned Pensions

Barack Obama will insist that companies keep the promises they have made to their employees. He will amend bankruptcy laws to keep companies from filing for Chapter 11 in order to avoid obligations to their workers. He also voted for new rules to force companies to properly fund their pension plans so taxpayers don't foot the bill.

Eliminate Income Taxes for Seniors Making Less Than \$50,000

Barack Obama will eliminate all income taxation of seniors making less than \$50,000 per year. This will eliminate income taxes for nearly seven million seniors at a savings of roughly \$1,400 every year and provide immediate relief to 22 million American seniors who will not need to file an income tax return.

Reduce Prescription Drug Costs

Barack Obama will help seniors get the medicines they need by closing the "doughnut hole" in the Medicare prescription drug program. Obama believes the federal government should negotiate for lower drug prices for seniors under Medicare, just as it does for veterans. He also supports the safe re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada.

Protect Medicare

Medicare provides health care to 42 million American seniors. Barack Obama is committed to keeping Medicare strong.

Go to <http://www.barakobama.com/mnseniors/> or phone 651.644.4850 for more information.

Al Franken — Candidate for U.S. Senate

Minnesota seniors need a Senator who's on their side - but Norm Coleman has taken more money from drug companies than any politician in Minnesota history. I

If you know a senior citizen, you know someone who's paying more than they should for their prescriptions. And if you are a senior citizen, well, I don't have to tell you what that has meant for you.

It's time for a change. I'm laying out a couple proposals to take Medicare Part D back from Big Pharma

First, I will repeal the provision preventing Medicare from negotiating with drug companies for lower prices. The government doesn't exist to generate bigger profits for drug companies, it exists to help our seniors stay healthy and to look out for our taxpayers.

Second, I will push for the safe re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada, which could save consumers as much as \$50 billion in the next 10 years.

Medicare Part D was the most corrupt piece of legisla-

tion passed during the Bush administration, and today we're learning exactly what George Bush and Norm Coleman's scheme has done for drug companies - and what it's done to Minnesota seniors. It's time for a change in Washington, and for many of our parents and friends, that change starts with taking back this huge taxpayer giveaway.

Check out my website for more information on this - and on my proposal to help Minnesotans who are caring for an aging loved one. I'm going to Washington to stand up to the special interests - and stand up for Minnesota seniors.

Al Franken

Go to www.alfranken.com/issues for more info on the issues, click on Blog for the latest on what is going on and click Action to join the team and have Amber work with you to find a volunteer opportunity or call 612.344.2008 or 888.908.2008.

The candidates on senior issues *continued from previous page*

Steve Sarvi — Candidate for Congress from 2nd Congressional District

When invited to submit an article for this newsletter, I thought about a straight ask for campaign help. And I won't let this opportunity pass without asking! I need your help to defeat John Kline in November. Please visit my website (www.stevesarvi.org) or call the campaign office (651-687-0103) to learn about opportunities to help.

However, I decided I also needed to talk about one of the reasons I'm running. Fixing our health care system is a high priority for me. I know many of you share that priority. I also know that for many seniors, Alzheimer's disease (AD) is as frightening as any other fatal disease or accident.

More than five million Americans live with AD. By 2030, that number may be 7.7 million. Alongside this crisis lie the financial problems plaguing Medicare and Medicaid and lack of commitment from the Bush administration to AD research.

Costs to Medicare and Medicaid for patients with AD and related dementias, plus costs to businesses for em-

ployee caregivers' time off, are \$148 billion annually. I think we all can agree that the best way to solve these problems is to find a cure. Unfortunately, Congress is not expected to finish work on a bill to fund AD research this year due to a White House veto threat.

This year will bring many big changes to Washington. With your help, I'll be part of them and be able to work alongside President Barack Obama and other new Democrats in Congress to get beyond the obstacles put in our way by George W. Bush and John Kline. We know this is the last year George W. Bush will be in office; help me ensure it's also John Kline's last term!

Thank you!

Steve Sarvi

For more information, visit www.stevesarvi.org. To get engaged contact the campaign office at 651.687.0103.

Ashwin Madia — Candidate for Congress from 3rd Congressional District

In 1961, the last time Minnesota's Third District had a DFL Representative, a new car was just \$2,000 and gas was 31 cents a gallon. But some things never change. The Third District still wants a Congressman who will work with all sides to get things done and who will have the courage to stand up for what is right in this country.

As a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and an Iraq War veteran, my campaign is charting a new course for our country and redefining what it means to be patriotic. Real patriotism isn't just bumper stickers and slogans. It means shared responsibility, keeping our promises, and ensuring that everybody plays by the rules in this country.

The essence of Social Security is the idea of shared responsibility for retirement security. That is why I oppose President Bush's risky scheme to let Wall Street firms bet our Social Security dollars on the whims of the stock market. Worse, that proposal did nothing to solve Social Security's long-term challenges. A better solution would be stop Congress from raiding the Social Security trust fund and demand a balanced federal budget.

We must keep our promises to seniors that Medicare

will provide them with high quality care. With the baby boomer's retirement looming, we must lower costs through innovation and payment reforms, not by cutting access to care. Minnesota is already leading the nation in efforts to lower costs by paying doctors more for care coordination and primary care in order to improve quality and reduce the risk of expensive diseases.

It is time for pharmaceutical companies to play by the same rules in Medicare that they already do with the Veterans Administration. Negotiated drug prices will improve Medicare's prescription drug coverage, simplify the program and help eliminate the gaps in coverage.

We are going through some difficult times right now, but our nation has overcome much bigger challenges in the past. We are doing something truly special with this campaign and I would be honored if you were a part of it.

Ashwin Madia

For more information, visit www.madiaforcongress.com or to get engaged please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Laurie Pryor, at 763.424.3808 or lpryor@madiaforcongress.com.

The candidates on senior issues *continued from previous page*

El Tinklenberg — Candidate for Congress from 6th Congressional District

The current economic chill is impacting every one of us, but perhaps our seniors most of all. While we all struggle with rising food and energy costs, seniors face additional financial burdens associated with healthcare and maintaining retirement security.

In July, when it became politically convenient, Rep. Michele Bachmann voted to override President Bush's veto of the Medicare bill. Yet seniors will remember that she voted against that bill the first time, when it mattered most. With the strain of patient costs and the need to retain skilled medical professionals, this kind of election-year maneuvering on Medicare is unacceptable.

Meanwhile House Republicans decry Social Security as financially unsound, even as they continue to raid the Social Security Trust Fund to offset rampant deficit spending. We know that small, incremental adjustments can ensure the financial solvency of Social Security for decades to

come. But we will only be able to achieve these changes when we move past Republicans' reckless privatization schemes and end the Bush Administration's out-of-control deficit spending.

It is time for Congress to stop the partisan rhetoric and start working together to protect Medicare and Social Security, bring down prescription drug costs, and guarantee long-term care benefits. These will be my priorities in representing the seniors of the Sixth District, and I will work hard to build the kind of coalition that can help us reach these goals.

For more information, or to get engaged please visit www.tinlenberg08.com contact campaign of or call 763.785.4676.

Do you or a friend need an absentee ballot this year?

How will you feel on Election Day; where will you be? – You can always vote an Absentee Ballot.

Vote in person—The easiest way to vote by absentee ballot is to do so in person at your county auditor's office or city or township clerk's office, starting 30 days prior to Election Day. Contact your county auditor for details.

Vote by mail—However, you can do it by mail. To obtain an absentee ballot through the mail, complete the Absentee Ballot Application and return it by mail, e-mail or fax. Your ballot will be sent to you when it is ready (as early as 30 days before Election Day). Your voted absentee ballot must be received in your precinct by Election Day when the polls close, or it will not be counted.

Forms are available, in many languages, from the Secretary of State's Office. In the metro area call 651.215.1440 or outside the metro area call 877.600.VOTE (8683). Forms can also be downloaded from the Secretary of State's Website

<http://www.sos.state.mn.us/home/index.asp?page=211>

Coming Events

August 25 and 28 – Senior Days at the Minnesota State Fair!

Come visit us at the DFL booth!

Every Tuesday 10:30 a.m. until you're ready to leave. — Cd-5 Senior-to-Senior Phone Calls

Ellison Campaign Headquarters, 2700 East Lake St., Suite 2400, Minneapolis

Sign up by going to <http://my.barackobama.com/page/event/detail/4414f>.

August 31 (Sunday) 1–3 p.m. — Keith Ellison's Annual Labor Day Barbeque

Boom Island Park, Minneapolis

It's a day early this year. For more info go to campaign@keithellison.org or call 612.522.4416

September 3 (Wednesday) 1–3 p.m. — DFL Senior Caucus Board Meeting,

Wright Bldg, 2235 University Ave., St. Paul (2 blocks west of Vandalia Ave.)

September 4 (Thursday) 1– 8 p.m. — Peace Island Picnic

Harriet Island, St. Paul, (just across the river from the Republican Convention)

Music all day w/Pete Seeger's grandson and many more! Peace kite flying and building, etc.

For more info go to <http://theunconvention.com/projects/peace-island-picnic>.

September 5 (Friday) 5:30-7 p.m. — Women for Franken Reception

Jo-Jo's Rise and Wine, 12601 Nicollet Ave, Suite 100, Burnsville

Al and Franni, Speaker, Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Rep Shelley Madore and Rep Sandra Masin will be there. Leave your checkbook at home. Talk about issues facing Minnesota women and their families.

RSVP Natolie Volin, 952.548.6054 or Natalie@alfranken.com

September 9 (Tuesday) 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. — Primary elections

September 13 (Saturday) 10 a.m.-Noon — DFL Candidate Forum on Senior Issues

Local 49 Operating Engineers Hall, 2929 St. Anthony Lane So., St. Anthony

Sponsored by the DFL Coordinated Campaign and DFL Senior Caucus. Meet, hear and talk with Rep. Keith Ellison, MN Political Director for Obama, etc. State legislators are also invited to participate. For more info go to

www.dflseniors.wordpress.com, campaign@keithellison.org or call 763 522-6103 or 651 235-0221.

September 19 (Friday) 9–11:30 a.m. — Northwest Suburban Legislative candidates Forum

Maple Grove Community Center, 12952 Weaver Lake Rd., Maple Grove

Meet and hear candidates from Senate Districts 32, 44, 45, 46 and 47. Sponsored by MN Senior Federation, Northwest Suburban Region. For more info go to www.mnseniors.org or call Mary Ann Beneke, Chair, 763 522-6103 or write

pmbeneke@comcast.net.

September 24 (Wednesday) 9--Noon — Congressional District 3 Candidates Forum

Plymouth Creek Center, 14800 – 34th Ave. No. Plymouth

Sponsored by MN Senior Federation West Suburban and Northwest Suburban Regions. For more info go to

www.mnseniors.org or contact Jim Michaelson, 763 473-3683 or jnkmich@comcast.net

Also check www.mnseniors.org for an upcoming Congressional District 6 Forum in St. Cloud.

Communication among Senior Caucus members newsletter, e-bulletins, website, list serv and contacts

The newsletter and e-mail addresses —

The newsletter is an important part of an overall plan to keep Senior Caucus members throughout the state informed about what other members are doing, future events, Caucus positions on legislative initiatives and our interaction with the DFL. Of all the methods of communicating to members, it is the only one that has the potential of reaching every member, those with e-mail and those without.

Newsletter printing and mailing costs are the greatest single expense of the Caucus and are supported entirely by member dues. Members with e-mail addresses contribute significantly to savings.

If you have an e-mail address, we request that you register it with the Caucus and, if you change it, let us know. Now, because of increased copying and postage costs, the Senior Caucus may not be able to continue to mail printed newsletters to non-dues-paying members.

The Senior Caucus website —

The DFL Senior Caucus is a place to find items of interest to seniors in Minnesota — news, announcements, information pages, links to other political and health care sites and Caucus and DFL happenings. You can find it at:

<http://www.dflseniors.wordpress.com>

Because it is built around blog software, it provides you a place to express your suggestions and opinions through comment sections after each post.

Also, it is easy to use! For the most part is clearly labeled, but if you want some instruction click on the How-to page to find how to use the site. You are encouraged to email to dflseniors@gmail.com with questions or items you would like posted.

The list serv —

The list serv is designed for quick e-mail announcements and conversations between members who sign up to be on the list. It makes it easy to send and receive group messages, coordinate, vote, and share files.

All Caucus members with email are encouraged to join the list serv. If the you find the number of emails or the content is not what you are looking for, it is easy to unsubscribe without affecting your other Caucus electronic messages.

The general list serv is **DFLSC**.

To join go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DFLSC/> , then select *Join this Group*.

To send a message the address is: DFLSC@yahoogroups.com

If you have any problems or questions contact John Martin at bigheadjohn1@comcast.net or 952926.4522.

Officers and Directors—DFL Senior Caucus

Chair	Linda Feist	CD4	(651) 457-5121	lfeist@comcast.net
Asst. Chair	Ed Mars	CD7	(218) 287-2693	ed-mars@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Mary Ann Beneke	CD5	(763) 522-6103	pmbeneke@comcast.net
Secretary	James Reed	CD3	(763) 421-9387	jreed11665@comcast.net
Members`	Jim` Poradek	CD4	(952) 997-3169	jimp27@gmail.com
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Contacts

Senior Caucus Website

www.dflseniors.wordpress.com

Senior Caucus mailing address

DFL Senior Caucus, 255 East Plato Blvd,
St. Paul, MN 55107

E-mail:

seniors@dfll.org

Phone messages may be left at the DFL

toll free number 800.999.7457

Senior Caucus list serve

DFLC@yahoo.com

List serv moderator

bigheadjohn1@comcast.net

Minnesota DFL

www.dfl.org

DFL Senior Caucus Membership Form

Dues for the Senior Caucus membership are \$8 per year.

All money collected is used solely for DFL Senior Caucus business (newsletter copying and mailing, website, flyers, evens and other expenses supporting senior initiatives and communicating with members).

Yes, I would like to join the Senior Caucus. Enclosed is my \$8 _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ MN Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

(If you have an e-mail address, please print it clearly. It will make your dues contribution go further.)

Please return this form and your check made out to DFL Senior Caucus to:

Mary Ann Beneke, Treasurer
DFL Senior Caucus
255 East Plato Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55107

DFL Senior Caucus
255 East Plato Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55107

See us at the Fair

First Class