



Newsletter of the



SENIOR CAUCUS

Special Rochester Convention

Vol. II, No. 2

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See you at the state convention

The DFL Senior Caucus will be active and visible at the DFL State Convention June 6-8 in Rochester. Members will staff a table at the entrance of the main convention and engage in events with other constituent caucuses.

The kickoff event for constituent caucuses is a training session at 9 a.m. Friday, June 6. The session will introduce the caucuses to DFL party members and encourage members to join caucuses that address their interests. Senior Caucus Chair Linda Feist will present the activities of the Senior Caucus, proving it to be largest and most active caucus in the DFL!

Friday evening, the constituent caucuses will host a mix-and-mingle party at the Kahler Grand Hotel. Exact time and meeting room are being determined at this writing, but the Senior Caucus plans to be included. Members of the caucus hope to meet with their counterparts and forge relationships for the coming election campaigns.

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Our Caucus—what’s going on, where are we headed? *By Linda*

DFL seniors,

As a party caucus we have achieved a lot in our first two years of existence. Since our last newsletter, we have turned out in record numbers at the precinct caucuses, submitted resolutions endorsed by our caucus and voted for favorite candidates. Many of our members helped enter data from the precinct caucuses updating the DFL voter database. Other seniors worked to spread the word about our caucus at district conventions and various meetings throughout the state. Our membership continues to grow. Currently we e-mail to more than 450 addresses and USPS mail to more than 200 households.

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E-mail saves the Caucus money and helps us keep in touch. Go to page 4 for details

2008-2009 dues are due on June 31.

If you haven't paid since January 1 of this year, please go to page 6 for details.

New DFL Senior Caucus Website

www.dflseniors.wordpress.com/

The DFL Senior Caucus has a new Website.. It 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 happenings.

Also, it is easy to use! When you go there, 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..

In addition, it provides you a place to express your suggestions and opinions.

See you at the state convention *continued from page 1*

The caucus table will be active every day of the state convention. The table will promote caucus programs and communicate its message to delegates, alternates and visitors. The table will be easy to find from the Senior Caucus Banner Quilt on display. The major table event will be the signing of a "Victory Quilt" to be given to the congressional district and senate campaigns. The quilt is five-by-eight patchwork with eighty panels for messages of support. Come write your victory message on the quilt for a donation of five dollars! Be the first with a victory wish for your representative and senator.

With all that going, the Senior Caucus will surely be the most active constituent caucus at the convention. We hope to see you there.

Our Caucus—what's going on, where are we headed *continued from page 1*

Because of our strong contribution to DFL success in 2006, the party and its candidates are already discussing how we can work with them toward a resounding victory in 2008. In addition, we will be helping other states organize seniors for Campaign 2008. The newly formed Democratic Seniors Network Inc. is creating groups in each state to provide seniors with a stronger voice in the Democratic Party. We are proud to report that they have selected the DFL Senior Caucus model as one of two models recommended for senior organizations within the state parties.

Our general objectives this year are to elect a Democratic president, eight Democratic U.S. representatives and a Democratic U.S. senator from Minnesota, and secure a veto-proof Democratic majority in the Minnesota House. Toward those objectives, the DFL Senior Caucus will hold meetings with the endorsed U.S. House candidates in Congressional Districts 2, 3 and 6 to educate them about our issues and to offer our help to their campaigns. We will reach out to seniors living in senior residences and assisted living facilities, promote Democratic candidates, help with voter registration and collect absentee ballots. We will continue to drop literature, to contact seniors through our "seniors calling seniors" program and help our DFL candidates in other ways.

We want keep you in touch with the excitement of 2008, but because of the rising postage and copying costs, we will no longer be able to mail the newsletter to non-members. We will continue to e-mail the newsletter to all. E-mail is the fastest and most economical way for us to keep in touch. If you haven't provided us with your e-mail address, please do so. It is kept in our private database, and we do not share it with the DFL or candidates without your permission. If you don't have a computer, you can still obtain a free e-mail account and get Internet access at your library (Go to page 4 for more on this). You can also check out the new Website at www.dflsenior.wordpress.com. It is still being expanded, but with your comments and other input, we can make it another way to keep in touch, share information and share concerns.

If you want a printed copy of the newsletter, you must join. Membership is only \$8 per year and no one will be turned away. Please stand with us in 2008 and join. If you cannot afford membership just let me know (Membership information is on page 6).

This is a critical year for America, for its seniors and for all children and grandchildren. We have to do our best to bring this election to a successful conclusion. Please feel free to get in touch with me anytime.

Linda (lfeist@comcast.net, 651-457-5121)

2008 election activities for seniors

The 2008 election will offer an opportunity for Democrats to change the direction of our country for the better. There are many ways for seniors to get active and do your share to help elect Democrats.

Speakers: share your skills and experience

The Senior Caucus is looking for members who are willing to speak to groups or ask questions at forums. We need you if you have:

- background knowledge and expertise in topics and issues that confront seniors or
- experiences to share about seniors coping in these troubled times.

Please let us know if you can help.

Other ways to get involved

The Senior Caucus offers these ways for you to get involved. Review the list below and pick one (or more) activities that interest you and then send us an email or call us. We will contact you and help you get active and involved with the election. Working together, Senior Caucus members can do great things.

1. Seniors Talk to Seniors, our successful Senior Caucus initiative, was introduced in 2006. This phone-banking program will be expanded in 2008 to allow you to make phone calls to fellow Democratic seniors in your area to discuss political matters, to help seniors register to vote, find a ride to the polls, or obtain an absentee ballot.

For many people the idea of picking up the phone to call strangers is intimidating or at least uncomfortable. However, in this program, callers receive a list containing only senior voters.

We find that calling other seniors is easier and often enjoyable. The caller and called share life experiences and concerns, share tales of grandchildren and relate to each other around issues like health care, insurance, transportation concerns or life experiences like living on a fixed income, chilled bones or enjoying grandkids.

2. “Flying Squads”. Groups of seniors (4-6) who volunteer to do election-related activities (mailings, calling, literature drops, etc.) for candidates and who would be available on an “on-call” basis. The groups would also contact candidates who support senior issues and offer to help on their campaigns. The effort focuses on races that are close and where we would have the most impact and get the most credit for our effort and our issues.
3. Senior residence contact. Go to assisted living facilities, senior rental buildings, nursing homes and other senior housing areas and help seniors register to vote or obtain absentee ballots.
4. Letter writing. Write (or sign) letters to editors on senior issues important to Democratic candidates.
5. Voter registration. Register voters at Farmers Markets, senior picnics, festivals, parades, etc.
6. Election concern team. Talk with local election officials to express concern about possible huge turnout for 2008 elections and what arrangements (if any) they have to help senior voters.
7. Lawn sign lists. Walk (or drive) around your precinct and write down addresses of those who have Republican and Democratic lawn signs and report that information to the DFL.
8. Election Day drivers. Drive seniors to their polling place (and back).

Interested? We hope so. E-mail email or call us. We look forward to hearing from you.

junnila@comcast.net

Roger or Linda – 651-457-5121

E-mail - why and how

E-mail is the fastest and most economical way for us to keep in touch. It allows you to get news and announcements from the caucus more quickly. (You will also prove to your grandkids that you are “with it.”) You can reach our Website. It’s a way to build a community of seniors who believe in the Democratic Party.

If you haven’t provided us with your e-mail address, please do so. When you change your address, let us know. We keep your e-mail address in our private database, and we do not share it with the DFL or candidates or anyone, for that matter, without your permission.

Don’t have a computer?

If you don’t have a computer, you can still obtain a free e-mail account and get Internet access at your library. It’s easy to sign up for and use. You can also get a second e-mail account.

I have written to the directors of the state’s library systems. Some libraries have training in how to use e-mail and librarians across the state are available to help you sign up. You can check your e-mail at the library. You do not need a home computer.

We suggest using Google’s G-mail because of G-mail’s excellent spam control and ease of use. However, a family member or friend may suggest another provider.

If you want help setting up an account and don’t have a family member available, the librarian at your local library will be happy to help you set up an account. After you have your account you can check your e-mail from any computer.

Setting up a G-mail account

- On a computer at the library of a family member or friend, go to <http://mail.google.com>.
- Click “Sign up for G-mail”
- In the “Create an Account” screen, enter your first and last name and your desired login name and click “Check Availability.” (You may have to try several names to come up with one that is unique.)
- Choose a password and re-enter it.
- Answer the security question.
- You probably don’t have a secondary e-mail address, so you can leave this blank. (Be certain to have a record of your login and password, in case you forget them.)
- Per the instructions, type in the funny letters you see on the screen.
- Click “I accept. Create my account.”
- Congratulations! You have a G-mail account.

Information for seniors

Stimulus rebate reminder

In general, people need more than \$3,000 in 2007 income to qualify for the federal stimulus rebate. Seniors who do not earn income can qualify for a stimulus check if their Social Security benefits, VA benefits, and/or railroad retirement benefits equal at least \$3,000 annually. Some higher-income taxpayers will not receive a stimulus payment or will receive a reduced payment.

To receive the economic stimulus check, seniors need to file a 2007 federal tax return on IRS Form 1040 or 1040A, even if their total income is normally low enough that they were not required to file in previous years.

You must file by Oct. 15 to qualify for a check.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides help to low- and moderate-income taxpayers. Call 800-906-9887. Help is also available at www.irs.gov.

Older voters turning out in twice the numbers as those under 30

While organizers and the media have made much of record turnout among young voters in recent months, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that older Americans remain the most reliable and consistent group of voters.

According to exit polls, at least one-third of all voters in most of the 2008 presidential primaries have been over age 60, with the number rising to over 40 percent in Massachusetts, Ohio and California. Senior voters have generally turned out in twice the numbers as people under 30.

Candidates recognize the importance of the “grey vote” and are expected to campaign hard for this demographic in part because young people have not yet established voting as a habit. Those under 30 are also more likely to face problems with residency requirements when they do go to fill out a ballot – they move much more frequently than seniors and may not have properly updated registration information. College students must frequently vote by mail when they attend universities out of state.

“These exit polls show just how important our votes will be come November,” said Edward F. Coyle, executive director of the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Alliance for Retired Americans: a modern grass roots organization, *great Website*

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a modern, grass-roots organization with a great Website: www.retiredamericans.org/

The alliance encourages and organizes grassroots activism on behalf its members. In 2008, it will organize workshops and training sessions which will focus on membership recruitment, retiree voter registration and retiree voter participation. These regional meetings will provide a forum to work with other activists to learn how to increase grassroots advocacy, get seniors and retirees registered and voting, and educate federal, state and local legislators on the issues that concern retirees and seniors, including prescription drugs, Medicare, Social Security and retirement security.

This organization provides all those Internet-based services which the AARP does not, due to its last-century structure. The Website provides detailed information on many political issues, from congressional voting records to Sen. John McCain's “Social Security Privatization Plan” and his “reform Medicare” proposals. It regularly publishes position papers on senior issues.

Go to their Website to join and sign up for a weekly e-newsletter.

Senior Caucus membership dues

Membership dues provide the primary financial support of Caucus activities: newsletter, special mailings, flyers, tables at gatherings, and a multitude of other activities that make the Caucus an effective voice for seniors.

Dues are \$8 per year (July thru June). This year, dues paid after Feb. 1 will cover membership until June 30, 2009.

While not a requirement for participating in the Caucus, we strongly urge everyone who can afford it to send in their dues. Because of postage and copying costs, we can only USPS mail the newsletter to paid members. This does not affect seniors with e-mail.

Send your dues to: **Mary Ann Beneke, Treasurer, DFL Senior Caucus,
255 East Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107**

Make checks payable to **DFL Senior Caucus**. Include your name, address and e-mail or phone number for proper accounting.

DFL Senior Caucus
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First Class