



# SOUND & CLEAR

SENATE DISTRICT 41 DEMOCRATS WWW.SD41.DFL.ORG

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SD 41 Democrats Meetups

7 to 9 p.m.  
Tues., Nov. 8  
and Tues., Dec. 13  
Davanni's, 5124 Gus Young Lane, Edina

### National Organizing Kickoff

Tues., Nov. 15  
As part of its 50 State Strategy, the Democratic National Committee is promoting meetings, including in Edina and West Bloomington, to start grassroots organizing for the 2006 elections. Go to the committee's website at [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org) and click on "November 15 National Organizing Kickoff," then click on "Find an Event."

### SD 41 Democrats Monthly Meetings

7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Mon., Nov 28  
and Wed., Dec 28,  
Southdale Public Library,  
Ethel Berry Room,  
7001 York Ave. S.,  
Edina

**continued on page 6**

## CANDIDATES PRESENT VIEWPOINTS

Democratic candidates for the U.S. Senate presented their views on health care, the economy and other issues at a September forum organized by Senate District 41 Democrats.

"This is the most important election in recent Minnesota history," candidate Ford Bell said. "It is absolutely imperative that we keep this seat in the DFL party. It is absolutely imperative that we hand (U.S. Rep.) Mark Kennedy a one-way ticket out of Washington back to permanent political retirement in Minnesota. As a Democrat, I have been out-



DISTRICT VOLUNTEERS WORK AT A FORUM FOR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR THE U.S. SENATE.

raged at the direction the Republican leadership has been taking this country."

The forum's goal was to help

DFLers decide which campaign to support in the upcoming election, according to organizers. About 200 people listened to Bell, Amy

**continued on page 2**

## NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT CHAIR

Our local DFL party unit is made up of volunteers. To be successful, we need effective leaders.

Since attending my first caucus in 1998 and being elected an associate precinct chair, I've had the chance to play many different roles. Here's what I've learned. If you want to feel engaged, if you want to try out new ideas, if you want to develop

your skills, become a leader. The best part is working with people who are involved because they have passion about the issues and truly want to make things better.

At our precinct caucuses March 7 we will elect precinct officers—a chair and two associate chairs. The goal of these jobs is clear: identify, organize and ener-

**continued on page 2**



DISTRICT CHAIR TOM LAFORCE

**DISTRICT LEADERS**

Chair

**Tom LaForce**

Associate Chair

**Jill Crafton**

Secretary

**Position open**

Treasurer

**Joni Kelly Bennett**

Affirmative Action

**Jack Harris**

Directors

**Donna Carlton**

**David Davison**

**Joan Kampmeyer**

**Bill Layton**

**Bill Melton**

**Patty O'Brien**

**Chuck Prentice**

**Gwen Ruff**

**Del Smith**

**Peggy Smith**

**Gwen Welckle**

Website

[www.sd41.dfl.org](http://www.sd41.dfl.org)

**SOUND & CLEAR**

Prepared and paid for by Senate District 41 Democrats

**Comments?**

Contact Gwen Ruff, e-mail [gweruff@yahoo.com](mailto:gweruff@yahoo.com)

**Cooperative Printing Association**

**CANDIDATES CONTINUED**

Klobuchar and Patty Wetterling. Kelly Doran, who didn't attend, has ended his U.S. Senate campaign to run for governor.

Klobuchar said she puts "the interests of the many in front of the interests of the few." In terms of health care, Klobuchar said "there is absolutely no reason that the richest country on earth can't make sure that all of our children have health care and that they're immunized. Thirty-one cents on a dollar is what we pay for administrative costs. That money should be going for direct care."

Wetterling said that although she's proud to be known as

gize those who share our Democratic values to take action within their neighborhoods. What you choose to work on to achieve this goal is left up to you, giving you lots of freedom to be creative and have fun.

At our March 25 Senate District 41 convention, we will elect many positions. A chair and associate chair are charged with overall leadership of this district. A treasurer manages our finances. A secretary keeps the official records. An affirmative action officer invites under-represented groups into the politi-

Jacob's mom, "there's more to me." She has worked with many organizations on health and safety issues for people all over the country.

"We are each one of us one serious illness away from bankruptcy in this nation," she said. "That's the state of our health care situation."

Bell said he is the best candidate for the Senate seat to be vacated by Mark Dayton because he has spent his entire life working in the community.

"I know our community," Bell said. "I know our state."

Klobuchar said she has taken on tough fights and won.

cal process. We'll elect 11 directors. Each provides leadership for one of our major activities, such as event coordination, fundraising, publicity or one of the many other jobs that require strong leadership. We'll elect people to represent our district on the State Central Committee, a body that manages state party affairs between conventions.

We also will endorse three candidates for the Minnesota Legislature. While being a legislator requires a tremendous amount of dedication and energy, it is the single

"I have that passion of believing you can get things done and doing it," she said.

Wetterling, who ran for the U.S. House against Kennedy in 2004, said she is "the Greater Minnesota candidate. Minnesota's a very large state. I won 46 percent of the vote in the most conservative Congressional district. I've been tested against that Republican attack machine, and it's true: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

Listen to more of the forum at [www.insideminnesotapolitics.com](http://www.insideminnesotapolitics.com).

*Gwen Ruff*

best way to directly influence the direction our state is taking.

With caucuses just over three months away, we're actively recruiting for all these positions. If you're interested, have questions or know someone we should encourage, please call me at 952-920-3313. Look for more information on our website.

A strong party needs great leaders. Please consider being one of them.

*Tom LaForce, Chair*

**DISTRICT CHAIR CONTINUED**

OUR COMMUNITY



SALLY KRUSELL AND JIM SWENSON HELP CLEAN UP EDINA'S COUNTRY-SIDE PARK IN OCTOBER.

Democrats in four Edina precincts have adopted a park as a way to build community and stay connected.

The idea emerged when people from the precincts in west central Edina got together to talk about issues

and events last spring, said Sally Krusell.

"We want to get people together, so we're not just talking to them at election time," she said. "We thought about how to keep ourselves visible and connected, to let

the community know we're here to stay."

Krusell worked with Donna Tilsner, who coordinates Edina's Adopt-a-Park program. Groups are asked to make a two-year commitment, and typically do clean-ups in spring and fall. The city provides empty bags and picks up filled ones. Groups also keep an eye out year-round and report safety or maintenance problems.

The program is a small way to help Edina's maintenance crews free up time for other duties, according to Tilsner. The city posts a sign designating who has adopted the park.

Other Edina parks are available for adoption. For more information, contact Tilsner at Edina City Hall at 952-826-0432.

HELP SAVE MONEY BY READING NEWSLETTER ON OUR WEBSITE

Senate District 41 Democrats are becoming more active and more visible. We've got a lot of activities coming up that require resources.

This newsletter is part of our increased visibility. Our mailing list keeps growing. That's great news, but it also increases our costs for printing and mailing.

So, starting with the January edition, we'll be sending readers for whom we have e-mail addresses a link to the newsletter on our website instead of a paper copy. Help us spread the word by forwarding it to friends and family who share our Democratic values.

If you *really* want to continue receiving the paper version of

*Sound & Clear*, please let us know by contacting **Gwen Ruff at gweruff@yahoo.com.**

If you've received a paper version of this newsletter and can switch to reading online, let us know we can drop you from our paper mailing list. Our website is [www.sd41.dfl.org](http://www.sd41.dfl.org).

Thanks for your help.

OFF THE BOOKSHELF

**Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream**  
By Barbara Ehrenreich

Four years ago Ehrenreich published *Nickel and Dimed*, a riveting account of working in low-wage jobs. Here, she focuses on the struggles of white-collar professionals. Posing as a public relations professional in need of a full-time job, she meets numerous career counselors, make-over consultants and other so-called experts. They're almost all hucksters, out to make a quick buck off job seekers. The result is an outlay of thousands of dollars—and no job offers other than for a couple of entry-level "independent contractor" sales positions. The counselors and consultants expound a common theme: Individuals are at fault if they can't find gainful employment. It's not the fault of companies, the market or the economy, and certainly not of government economic policy. Ehrenreich ends the book by encouraging change: "No group is better situated, or perhaps better motivated, to lead the defense of the middle class than the unemployed—assuming they could recognize their common interests and begin to act as a political force."

## I N S I G H T O N I S S U E S : P O V E R T Y

**The percentage of people living in poverty rose steadily during the last four years, from 11.3 percent in 2000 to 12.7 percent in 2004.**

The U.S. Census Bureau has released its annual survey of poverty and health insurance coverage. The report, based on 2004 statistics, made for grim reading, but it received scant attention in the press. Here are some highlights:

After adjustment for inflation, the median income of U.S. households has declined in each year since 1999. The total decline amounted to 3.8 percent. Most of it occurred during the first four years of the Bush administration.

The percentage of people living in poverty rose steadily during the last four years, from 11.3 percent in 2000 to 12.7 percent in 2004. This represents an increase of 5.4 million people in poverty. In contrast, as the chart below indicates, the poverty rate declined substantially during the 1990s.

Perhaps the saddest statistic in the whole report is this: 13

million kids lived in poverty in 2004, a mind-numbing 17.8 percent rate. It should be noted that the Census Bureau uses an extremely Spartan definition of poverty. For example a family with two adults and two kids was considered impoverished in 2004 only if their annual income was less than \$19,803. That works out to \$381 per week! More generous poverty definitions would produce substantially higher poverty rates.

The main driver for declining real median incomes and rising poverty was the stagnation of employment during the Bush administration.

The number of people covered by employer-provided health insurance plunged by 3.7 million during the last four years, a 2.1 percent decline. The number of people on Medicaid soared by 8 million, a staggering 27 percent increase. The number of peo-

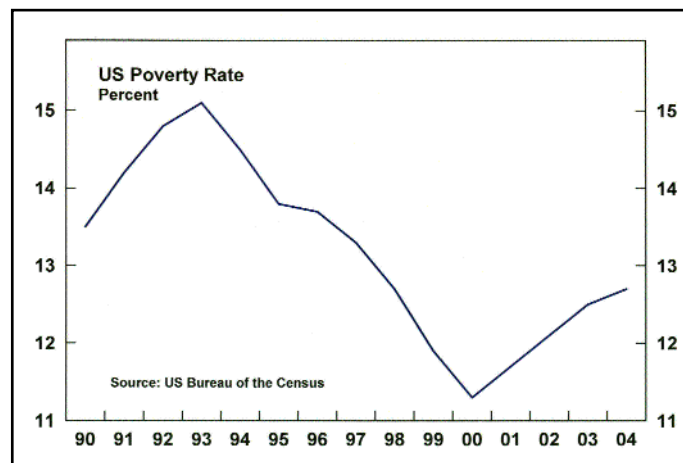
ple with no health insurance coverage of any kind jumped by 6 million, a massive 15.1 percent.

Relative to other states, Minnesota has fared well. Our state's median household income is among the very highest, and our poverty rate of 7.2 percent is among the lowest.

Minnesota truly excels in health insurance coverage. Thanks to MinnesotaCare, among other things, only 8.8 percent of Minnesotans lacked health insurance during 2003-04—by far the lowest ratio of any state. Compare that to Texas, President Bush's home state, with a horrible 16.7 percent poverty rate and a colossal 24.8 percent of people uninsured!

These things don't just happen; they reflect conscious policy choices. Now, the Republican Congress is considering cutting Medicaid funding. And in the last legislative session, Gov. Tim Pawlenty tried to cut MinnesotaCare eligibility for thousands of people. Fortunately, Democrats and other compassionate Minnesotans kept that from happening. They deserve the sincere gratitude of the whole state.

*Bill Melton*



INVEST IN SENATE DISTRICT 41 DEMOCRATS

In the world of politics, we are constantly making investments.

Just as you invest your hard-earned dollars in stocks and bonds for retirement, Senate District 41 Democrats use your contributions to invest in all of our futures. We work hard every day to advance Democratic causes. During election seasons we invest money and volunteer time to elect Democratic candidates to local, state and national office.

Whether it's an election season or not, we continually work hard to keep Democrats informed and connected. We accomplish this through regular monthly meetings and meet-ups, our annual summer picnic and special events like the

recent U.S. Senate candidates forum, an upcoming discussion of Minnesota's tax system and Hope on the Prairie with Garrison Keillor last year.

Since the 2004 elections, Senate District 41 Democrats have been re-energized. More than 24,000 people in this district voted for John Kerry. We know we have better ideas; we need the resources to communicate, connect and compete.

So we need your continued investment. Help us finance the infrastructure needed for strong Democratic candidates for the Minnesota House and Senate in 2006. Help us pay for precinct caucuses and the endorsement convention we will hold in early 2006. Help us sponsor

special events that inform and bring Democrats together for fun and education.

And last, but not least, help us circulate this newsletter to as many Democrats as possible. Your contribution of just \$50 allows us to send one issue to 139 Senate District 41 Democratic households containing 250 Democratic voters.

If you haven't already done so this year, please contribute to Senate District 41 Democrats under the Minnesota Political Contribution Refund Program. Under this program, individuals can donate up to \$50 per year, and married couples up to \$100, to Senate District 41 Democrats and receive a full refund directly from the state.

This is entirely separate from your Minnesota income tax return and can be done at any time during the year. When we receive your contribution, we'll send you a receipt and a refund form. It takes about five minutes to fill out and a 37-cent stamp to send it in. You can use the form at the bottom of this page to send in your contribution.

If you've already donated under the program this year, thank you! Of course, we always appreciate contributions outside of this program.

Thanks, in advance, for your support. We will do our best to invest your money wisely.

Joan Kampmeyer
Finance Team Chair

Senate District 41 Democrats Contribution Form

Electing Democrats is important. I'm enclosing my (our) check, payable to Senate District 41 Democrats.

\$150 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Please mail my (our) receipt to the address below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

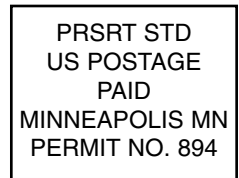
Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Joni Kelly Bennett, Senate District 41 Democrats Treasurer, 4003 Lynn Ave., Edina, MN 55416
November 2005

Senate District 41 Democrats  
5901 Tingdale Ave.  
Edina, MN 55436



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## HELP WANTED

**We need lots of volunteers to help plan and run our caucuses and convention coming up in March. There are lots of jobs to do. Even if you've never worked at such events, please consider lending a hand. If you can help, contact Chair Tom LaForce at [chair@sd41.dfl.org](mailto:chair@sd41.dfl.org) or 952-920-3313.**

## U P C O M I N G E V E N T S C O N T I N U E D

### Rethinking Minnesota Taxes

7 p.m., Fri., Dec. 9

Room C1025, main (south) entrance, Normandale Community College, 98th Street and France Avenue, Bloomington. Free and open to the public.

Joel Kramer, executive director of the Growth and Justice Tax/Revenue Project and former *StarTribune* publisher,

will discuss the project's report on how a mix of revenues can support economic growth and economic justice. Co-sponsored by Senate District 41 Democrats, Normandale Community College and the Minnesota DFL Education Foundation.



### 2006 Precinct Caucuses

7 p.m., Tues., Mar. 7

Edina precincts will meet at Valley View Middle School, 6750 Valley View Road, Edina. Bloomington precincts within Senate District 41 will meet at Jefferson High School, 4001 W. 102nd St., Bloomington.

### 2006 SD 41 Democrats Convention

Sat., Mar. 25

8:30 a.m. registration; 9 a.m. call to order. Valley View Middle School, 6750 Valley View Road, Edina