

MEETING MINUTES  
BONHOMME TOWNSHIP DEMOCRATIC CLUB  
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

**Opening:**

Dennis Roach called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Everyone was then asked to introduce themselves to each other.

Dennis began by reminding us that as Democrats, we have much to be happy about – we have many good candidates for 2016 who are good campaigners, including Deb Lavender, Bill Otto, and Jason Kander. We have also made a connection via the Green Tree Festival with a group of about 30 young Democrats at Kirkwood High School. They are interested in working with us. Dennis is planning to work on building a relationship with them.

Members stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Speaker:**

Dennis then introduced the speaker, Dr. Ed Weisbart, M. D., chair of the Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP)– Missouri chapter. Dr. Weisbart has given hundreds of presentations for the national organization and is seeking contacts with business organizations that would allow him to give his presentation to them. His own background includes years as a physician and seven years experience at Express Scripts.

Dr. Weisbart's power-point presentation was entitled "Speaking Beyond the Choir" – designed to provide those in favor of a single payer system with talking points and ways to handle common objections. He compared the costs and benefits of our system to that of Canada, which has lower costs and is more inclusive. The U.S. has the highest health care costs, even though Americans pay the highest out-of-pocket costs of any nation. We also pay over 4 times more than the UK/Canada for drugs, since they are able to negotiate bulk pricing discounts with drug companies.

The single payer system would establish a kind of "Medicare for all," where everyone would automatically be part of it. It has multiple health and cost advantages, as it would include preventative health care – decreasing the number of emergency visits for critical care. All doctors would be included, as no insurance company could limit which doctors are in the network. Also, financial barriers related to large deductibles and copays would be eliminated, allowing patients to get care when needed. A "Medicare for all" system would also lower administrative costs. Currently Medicare spends about 2-3% on administration, whereas the insurance system spends 10-15%. Dr. Weisbart also advocates letting Medicare negotiate drug prices, since we pay over 4 times more than the UK/Canada.

Dr. Weisbart also referenced his personal experience as a physician and his frustration with wanting to treat patients without worrying about who is eligible and keeping a staff of several

people to just deal with insurance and payment issues. Dr. Weisbark also advocates letting Medicare negotiate drug prices, since we pay over 4 times more than the UK/Canada.

The PNHP supports the federal bill H.R. 676 – “Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act” and also advocates the passage of MO HB 1405, which would establish the Missouri Universal Health Assurance Program to provide a publicly financed, statewide insurance program for all residents of this state. Unfortunately, these acts do not have strong support in the Republican-dominated state and federal legislatures.

More information about how a single payer system can lower the cost of health care is available at the PHPN website <http://www.pnhp.org/resources/pnhp-research-the-case-for-a-national-health-program>.

### **Business Meeting:**

Treasurer’s Report – we have a balance of \$772.40, some of which will be spent for the club’s Holiday Party.

Our by-laws call for a Nominating Committee to nominate 3-5 persons, and mail the slate to members for voting. Officer positions are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant at arms.

Dennis requested volunteers for a committee to work on planning programs and speakers for 2016. Volunteers are Judy Nedwek, Sharon Ryan, Kayla Vaughn, and Dennis Roach.

### **Upcoming Events:**

Gateway Democrats meeting – Saturday, November 14, 2015 – focus on “Income Inequality: the Endangered Middle Class” at the UFCW Union Hall at 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Bonhomme Township Democratic Club Holiday Party - Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at Laclede Groves 6:30-9:00 p.m. Please bring a dish for a pot-luck supper.

No Democratic Club meeting in December.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.