



GRAND
Democrats

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GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2025

6:15 – 8:05 pm

Seating was at round tables with the question: What issues concern you most?

Call to Order

President Bob Walling opened the meeting with the *Pledge of Allegiance* and the *National Anthem*.

Program

- Bob introduced the first speaker, Maria Ortega.
 - ▶ She is the mother of two special needs children who gave up her career as an architect in order to train as a paid caregiver under the Division of Developmental Disabilities.
 - ▶ She had no choice because there simply aren't enough trained caregivers available to care for the increasing number of children like hers who are diagnosed with disabilities that require care 24/7. This training qualifies her to be paid for 40 hours of her time under a program which is 70% funded by Medicaid and 30% by the State of Arizona.
 - ▶ However, on May 1st, the money will run out for this program 2 months before the end of the fiscal year, leaving 60,000 Arizonans without care including group homes and children in foster care.
 - ▶ State Representatives David Livingston and Steve Montenegro have held up the appropriation of additional funds to finish the year in order to force passage of their proposed HB2945, which would reduce the number of paid hours to 20 and force many parents to find alternative ways to pay for their child's care or to put them in state institutions.
 - ▶ This makes no economic sense since the annual cost of the home care program per child is \$40,000 and the cost of institutionalizing a child is \$200,000! It may also jeopardize funding from Medicare which mandates pay for 40 hours.
 - ▶ Ortega, along with other parents, has formed ROAR (Recall Our Arizona Representative), an advocacy group that is circulating petitions for the recall of LD29 Representative Steve Montenegro and she asks for help in getting the thousands of signatures necessary to advance this recall initiative.

- Clay Lattimer introduced three speakers, Director Bonnita Jackson, Co-Presidents Tina Mollica and Cathy Noga from the League of Women Voters, who explained the facts and myths of the Electoral College.
 - ▶ Although many countries have copied our US Constitution, none have adopted the Electoral College system of electing the President and Vice President. This system gives a state one electoral vote for each Senator (2) and one for each Representative (varies according to the state population).
 - ▶ Our votes in a Presidential Election are actually for a slate of electors who promise to vote for the candidate of our choice. The electoral slate for the candidate who wins the majority in the state then casts its votes in the Electoral College in January. This system was disrupted in 2020 when “fake electors” challenged the authorized slates in several “swing states” including Arizona and demanded a recount in order to find enough votes to overturn the election.
 - ▶ The inequity in the system derives from the difference in population from one state to another so that some people’s votes count more than others. For example, Wyoming, with a population of 576,00, has 3 electoral votes or 1 for every 192,000 voters. But Florida, with 21,538,000 residents and 29 electoral votes, only has 1 for every 743,000 people. This violates the principle of one citizen, one vote. And it means that the candidate who gets the majority of the vote can still lose the election as happened in 2000 with Al Gore and 2016 with Hillary Clinton.
 - ▶ The argument in favor of the Electoral College is that it protects the less populated areas of the country from domination by the urban populations of the larger states. But, for example in 2012, it would have taken the popular vote cast for Barack Obama from 39 states to get a majority and there are not enough people in even the 50 largest cities to win a majority of the vote.
 - ▶ It would take an amendment to the Constitution to institute direct election of the President and Vice President but the way our president is chosen has already been changed six times and another amendment allows for direct election of senators. It can be done.
 - ▶ In the meantime, there is the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPV) by which a state can agree to award all its electoral votes to whichever candidate wins the national popular vote. Several states have already signed on and only 65 of the necessary 270 electoral votes to win the election are needed from states that have yet to join.
 - ▶ Polls since 2000 show that a majority of Americans want a popular vote to elect the president. In Arizona, between 2007 and 2016, the NPV received bipartisan support and almost passed in 2016. However, since 2016, it has been supported only by Democrats.
 - ▶ What can you do?
 - Share your informed opinion with others
 - Post on Social Media your own statement or one from the League (lwv.org/opov)
 - Schedule a League presentation to your group (lwvnwmc1981@gmail.com)
 - Write your state representatives
 - State Senator Janae Shamp (JShamp@azleg.gov)
 - State Representative David Livingston (DLivingston@azleg.gov)
 - State Representative Steve Montenegro (SMontenegro@azleg.gov)

Business Meeting

- The *Minutes* of the March General Meeting are posted on the website.
- The *Treasurer's Report* for March is on the website.
- Bob Walling moved, Ron Beldner seconded and the membership approved the following amendment to the **Bylaws, Article III, Section B**:
Any Board position other than Member-at-Large may be held by two members as long as at least one member is a Resident member.
- The Elections Committee headed by Sherry Douglas and Kathy Wyse continues to send out Advocacy Calls every Monday. Sign up to help.
- Bernadette Greene-Placentia is looking for signatures on her petition to run for Representative to Congress in 2026. Her target group is independents who supported Trump to victory and may now have second thoughts. It would have taken only 19,000 of those independents switching their vote to have defeated Abe Hamedeh. She supports demonstrations highlighting specific threats to social services, veterans, schools, etc. taking place where those most concerned are to be found rather than mass gatherings in the streets.
- Report from LD29: Granite Falls and Grand Precincts still need Precinct Committee members. Manny is looking for a replacement to fill the 2nd Vice Chair vacated by Bob Walling. The May 21st Meeting in Goodyear will feature Maricopa County Recorder Justin Heap (R) with an update on elections.
- The next General Meeting of the Grand Dems is May 28th with speakers on *Save Our Schools*. There will be no general meetings in June, July and August.
- Reserve your place for the Blue Breakfast 5/6 at Maple & Rye and the Blue Dinner 5/15 at Angela's on the website.
- The meeting adjourned following the drawings for 50/50 and Wine.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Parnell, Secretary