

SLO County leans red. So why are Democrats taking a sharp left turn?

By Andrea Seastrand

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The local Democratic Party appears to be in disarray with a left-wing rebellion underway. The chairman of the SLO County Democratic Party's Central Committee stormed out of a June 19 meeting, which was then taken over by a group of SLO Progressives, according to a [recent New Times article](#).

The SLO Progressives celebrated the takeover in a [press release](#): "A new generation of leadership in the San Luis Obispo County Democratic Central Committee was ushered in Monday and immediately united the party around key progressive values of transparency and consensus-building...."

"The SLO County Democratic Party is now one of California's most progressive parties. SLO County Democrats are now unified in leading the way for electoral victory in 2018 on the Central Coast, California, and the United States."

But this leftward lurch by an already liberal party is not only bad policy, it's bad politics. It's bad policy because government control, whether socialism, communism or fascism, has a long history of failure and misery. It's bad politics because San Luis Obispo County is a moderately conservative oasis on the largely liberal Central Coast.

On the policy side, one of the SLO Progressives' top priorities is socialized medicine. After they took over that committee meeting, they passed a resolution in support of California Senate Bill 562. That's the single-payer health care bill that was so poorly written that, four days after the SLO Progressives' endorsement, it was shelved.

"[T]here are potentially fatal flaws in the bill, including the fact it does not address many serious issues, such as financing, delivery of care, cost controls, or the realities of needed action by the Trump Administration and voters to make SB 562 a genuine piece of legislation," said Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, D-Lakewood, in a statement.

Other SLO Progressives policy priorities include equally bad ideas such as:

- Overturning the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, which protects political speech by unions and businesses.
- Providing free college for all, although it would require a massive tax increase.
- Banning fracking, which has been proven safe and has helped lower gas and energy prices.

These proposals are not likely to sway many independents and Republicans in SLO County to support Democratic candidates. And Democratic candidates need

some of that support in a county in which Republican registration outnumbers Democrats 37-35 percent.

A good example of this was the election last November of moderately conservative Republican Jordan Cunningham to the Assembly's 35th District. He trounced progressive Dawn Ortiz-Legg by 10 points.

The SLO Progressives could not have asked for a better candidate to represent their values than Ortiz-Legg, who once led the local Code Pink group. But although she finished first in the primary with 45 percent, she was unable to increase that number in the general election once her views and political history became better known—despite millions of dollars in ads, much of it unfairly smearing Cunningham.

This is the same district that thrice elected Republican Katcho Achadjian to the Assembly until he termed out. Achadjian won a whopping 63 percent of the vote in his last race. Other evidence of the moderately conservative nature of SLO County voters:

Conservative Republicans comprise a majority of the Board of Supervisors. One of them, John Peschong, won easily, 55-45 percent, in November.

In the 24th Congressional District race last November, the Republican candidate, Justin Fareed, actually beat the Democrat, Salud Carbajal, 51-48, with SLO County voters, although Carbajal won with strong support elsewhere.

Although Democrat Bill Monning trounced Republican Palmer Kain 65-35 percent in the state Senate 17th District race, his victory was much closer, 52-48 percent, in SLO County.

All of which bodes well for the re-election next year of Supervisor Lynn Compton, one of the other conservative board members. She won easily, 54-46 percent, in her first race to represent the 4th District by promising to be a tireless advocate for families and taxpayers—a promise she has fulfilled.

Check out the 2014 [campaign site](#) for the other supervisor up for re-election next year, Bruce Gibson. That site features an article touting the county's fiscal conservatism, and yet Gibson is right at home at a recent SLO Progressives' meeting. It will be interesting to see if Gibson will be promoting the progressive viewpoints he expressed at that meeting on his 2018 re-election site.

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