

Board meeting -- March 1, 4:00 - 5:30pm at La Mancha restaurant

In attendance: Joanne, Stewart, Dave, Diane, Teresa, Dan.

Most of the discussion focused on our April event in Lago Vista, which Dave has been working on with his local connections. The moderator of the "round table" discussion on Saturday, April 5th will be Terri Frazier.

Participants lined up so far are Nikki Berry (D), Lily Vela (D) and hopefully, Monica Cline (R) along with another Republican TBD. Ms. Cline may need some coaxing, though, since apparently she only agreed to listen but not necessarily be a panelist. We hope by using the term "round table" instead of "panel" it will convince her that not much special preparation will be required.

A rough outline of the event is included below.

There was debate over whether we should do another event at our usual Yarborough location on the same day. Stewart and Joanne seemed most keen on this, since we expect most of our usual crowd not to be able to make it to Lago Vista, and they were concerned we might lose some momentum. However, Dan, Diane and Teresa doubted whether we had enough bandwidth to be able to make two events successful. Dan suggested that there would be no perceived loss of momentum, since we'll be inviting everyone to the Lago Vista event and doing all our usual messaging online.

We discussed two possible topics for an April meeting:

- (1) Discuss the implications of the McCutcheon v FEC decision if announced in March
- (2) Report on the MoveOn Conference - strategy for 84th legislative session.

We discussed what would be the main topics of the round table in Lago Vista, and what we'd like to hand out. We hope to have our new rack card ready for distribution by then. We decided we'll also pass out the TUTA handout on the 28th Amendment. Of course, we will introduce ourselves and what the goals of CG4TX are. We might want to present our electoral reforms package, although it's a work in progress, or key parts of it. Dan expressed that this would be a golden opportunity to find out how conservatives feel about ending the two-party system. (Others had a chuckle at his predictable single-mindedness.)

Work continues on policy papers for our electoral reforms package. Dan is more than halfway done writing a paper about IRV. Stewart's top priority is finishing the rack card. He did mention his thought that recusal could be a good entry to the topic of judicial selection reform. Using disclosure as an entry to the topic of campaign finance reform might also be advisable, to steer clear of being too partisan.

Also, Joanne and Ham will be attending the MoveOn conference in Dallas in mid-March. Stewart might also attend. They will speak on issues of money in politics and explain what CG4TX has

been working on. Below is Joanne's handout with more details.

Supplements:

1. Joanne's handout for board members:

Ideas from 2014 Annual Retreat for Community Conversations:

- Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v FEC*. The perceived or real influence of money in our political system – elections and decision making by legislators.
- Election reforms package – [Dan](#) took the lead (see blog post)
Three reforms we support and would like to develop for a community conversation – policy paper; alternatives to generate conversation and action (next) steps:
 - Methods of drawing district without gerrymandering (by algorithm; by Independent Redistricting Commission, others..... [Stewart will take the lead](#))
 - Disclosure of BIG money political contributions and expenditures (see SB 346 that passed the Texas House and Senate but was vetoed by Governor) [Joanne will take the lead.](#)
 - Explore Instant Run-off Voting (IRV) with other electoral systems like plurality voting; proportional voting, others... [Dan will take the lead](#)

Other reforms we would support and would like to develop for community conversations – policy paper; alternatives to generate conversation and action (next) steps:

- Encourage voter participation
- Consider reasonable requirements for ballot access
- Fair Elections initiatives see Grassroots Democracy Act. End dial for dollars.
- Judicial Reform – Select Interim Study Committee on judicial reform *policy paper; alternatives to generate conversation and action (next) steps are ready to roll.*

Promote transparent and verifiable voting systems – STAR system

Ideas for MoveOn Conference info:

1. TUTA handout and Austin City Council/Travis County CC resolutions
2. Handout describing 2014 legislative committees interim charges:
 - House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence ??
Examine the constitutional qualifications and term lengths for appellate court judges, and consider whether changes would benefit the public and the judiciary.
 - House Committee on State Affairs
Study Title 15 of the Election Code, which regulates political funds and campaigns, including requirements for financial reports by campaigns, candidates, officeholders, and political committees. Specifically, study what types of groups are exempt from reporting requirements in the Election Code and make recommendations on how to make the political process more transparent.
 - Special Interim Committee on Judicial Selection
In 1995, the Texas legislature made its first (and only) reform to the judicial selection process when it passed The Judicial Campaign Fairness Act (JCFA) thanks to the effort of two Senators, Rodney Ellis (D-Houston) and Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock) and State Rep. Jerry Madden (R-Plano). The law limited individual contributions to statewide candidates, and aggregate contributions from law firms and PACs. It was described by then Chief Justice Tom Phillips as “an excellent first step in comprehensive campaign finance reform”. *Nineteen years later, it is time for the second step.*
State Rep. Justin Rodriguez (D-San Antonio) authored House Bill 2722, establishing a select committee to study opportunities for reforming judicial selection in Texas. Committee members will

be announced in 2014; committee report is due January 2015.

3. Handout that includes the definition of the various political organizations recognized by the IRS.
4. S.B. 346: Texas Disclose Act authored by State Rep. Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo) and State Rep. Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) relating to reporting requirements of certain persons who do not meet the definition of political committee. S.B. 346 was passed by the Texas House, the Texas Senate but vetoed by the Governor.

2. Dave's emailed outline for our Lago Vista round table:

Introduction of Common Ground for Texans cg4tx.org

State the civil conversation principles for all participants

Introduction of Facilitator and Round-table participants

Open with a comment from each on why we should have more civil discussions

Introduction of today's topic: Is there too much money in politics?

Flip chart(s) for brainstorming of:

Definition of problem

Suggested solution alternatives

Involve audience participants

Develop criteria for ranking

Rank alternatives

Propose steps to accomplish solution(s)

Critique today's meeting