

LINC Meeting Notes 2/10/19

A LINC member, Janet Singer, has announced her campaign for the Suffolk County Legislature to unseat Republican Rob Trotta. This district covers E. Northport, part of Commack and Smithtown. Janet has held many leadership positions and shared her agenda which has a big focus on water quality. *How can we help?* On February 28th there will be a meeting of the Town of Huntington Democrats and Janet is looking for volunteers to go door-to-door in order to gather signatures and get on the ballot.

Committee Updates:

-Discussion Group: Today's focus was "What do you do when racism comes up in conversation?" Emily e-mailed a selection from "**The Anti-Racist Cookbook**" which lists strategies to some very common situations that have underlying racist thinking. This will be available on the LINC website. Role-Playing scenarios were used to practice how to deal with this question. In preparation for the next meeting participants are encouraged to reflect on the question: Why do I want to confront racism—what's my motivation?

-Membership: Bev/Steven reported. We now have 300 members which is an increase of about 30 since the last meeting. There are plans to mail a flyer to the 11743 zip-code. We were reminded to invite friends to join using our Facebook pages. David Pinkowitz will send us an e-mail to remind us how to do it.

-Election Committee: A representative from the League of Women Voters will be making a presentation at the March LINC Meeting.

-"Triple C"- Les/Cindy reported about the luncheon held by the Progressive Long Island—some local politicians were in attendance. Purpose is to pull all the grassroots organizations together.

Congressman Tom Suozzi's Presentation

- Rich Rhodes introduced us to Congressman Tom Suozzi and congratulated him on his membership to The House Ways and Means Committee, the oldest and one of the most powerful committees in congress.
- The Congressman said that his focus as a member of this committee would be "The Destruction of the Middle Class in America". The buying power of the average wage in our country has been stagnant since the 70's while the cost of everything else has risen. Our retirement is no longer a secure promise for many Americans. The recent tax cut has hit New York and other blue states quite hard as it caps the deduction for state and local taxes—SALT—at \$10,000. While he thinks that this provision of the bill could be overturned in the House (85% chance), unfortunately, it only has about a 15% chance in the Senate since many red states are not affected and the blue states, given their higher taxes are net donors to the red states (excluding Texas).
- Laura Meyer then shared her experience at the southern border during her week in Tijuana. She was part of humanitarian efforts to assist the people there who are waiting to present themselves for asylum. At this time the system is broken and while there are thousands of people waiting, only about 20—60 per day are being processed. They are given numbers and then must wait until that number is called which could be three months. In addition, people who are admitted are then forced to spend up to a week in a frigid building to "insure" they are not

bringing disease into the country. The fear of separation of families is so acute that mothers are being given sharpies in order to write their names and birthdates on their children to help prevent that from happening. Additionally, the government changes policies day to day which further confuses the process and makes it less efficient.

Congressman Suozzi was asked what his vision is to confront this situation.

Response:

- Improve ports of entry
- Hire more immigration judges
- Does support improved border security, but under the guidance of experts.
- Need to protect Dreamers and TPS recipients and give them a path to citizenship via college, the military or 3 years of full time employment. Currently 1.9 million fall into these categories.

What about the children? Thousands, many more than originally stated, have been separated from their parents. In many cases the government has no idea where their parents are located.

Response: the legislative branch can provide oversight and demand that those responsible are held accountable. The Homeland Security Director Nielsen will be appearing before congress and will be grilled as to what her department is doing and what it will do in the future to address this humanitarian crisis.

What about the Problem Solvers?

Response: this group is working on 5 major issues: Immigration, Health Care, Gun Violence, Budget & Infrastructure and Criminal justice. To date they have revised house rules so that 290 members signing on to a bill will bring it to the floor for a vote.

What is your position on Single Payer Universal Health Care?

Response: My approach is to fix the Affordable Care Act. Mend, not End it. A very large percentage of Americans have health care from their employers and like it. Support for people over the age of 50 to buy into Medicare, which is less costly than private insurance. Also, change the law that was passed under the Bush 43 administration that prevents Medicare and Medicaid, the largest purchasers of prescription medication, to use that leverage to negotiate for lower prices.

What are you doing about the environment?

Response: Signed on to the Green New Deal. Is part of the Long Island Caucus working to get increased funding for the protection of Long Island waterways. My district stretches from Whitestone to Kings Park on the north shore and the biggest threat to the waters within the district is nitrogen. Another serious problem is plastic in the water. The House Democrats are working to offset the administration's campaign to eliminate regulations protecting our air and water by the EPA. We will hold hearings to "Hold Back the Tide" of these changes.

For additional details on all Congressman Suozzi's positions, go to Rep. Tom Suozzi on Facebook. Check out the live stream on the LINC Facebook page if you were unable to attend.

New Business:

- After Congressman Suozzi's presentation we were given a brief overview of the installation of a 5G wireless network in Huntington. This will require antennae to be erected which greatly increase the risk to living organisms. The reason is that earlier versions, 1G to 4G relied on frequencies of 1-5 gigahertz. 5G uses between 24-90 gigahertz frequencies and the higher the frequency, the more dangerous it is. The poles holding the antennae are being erected without adjacent homeowner's approval.

We revisited the immigration situation. Laura Meyer spoke more about her experiences at the border. We ended the meeting by exploring what we can do to affect this horrible situation. One answer is the Huntington Rapid Response Network which helps undocumented individuals navigate the many paths they must travel. There will be a **Rapid Response meeting at St. John's Episcopal Church on Feb. 19th**. Another way to help is through donations: Al Otro Lado, Sanctuary Caravan.

The next LINC meeting will be March 14th. Discussion Group at 2:00. General Meeting at 3:00.

