
NEXT KCDW MEETING JAN 22

Hale's Alehouse will be our home for now. As done in previous January meetings, this one will be a discussion among ourselves. The topic will be "Why are you a Democrat?". NO RSVP required.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

by Jo Fox Burr

When people are raised in one religion, some stray, but many stay with what they were taught as children. I was raised a Democrat, and I have remained one, so I understand the stayers. However, to misquote Will Rogers, I was not raised in any organized religion. I am a Unitarian/Universalist. In essence my parents let me sort out my own religious beliefs. During my youth, I did focus on it. Even read the bible under the tutelage of a very scholarly, but cynical, Universalist Minister. Ultimately, I gave up trying to figure it out and became agnostic. I take my values from the general Judeo-Christian society in which I grew up, added a bit of Buddhism, and decided to focus instead on making the best of the world I lived in. I am grateful that the freedom from religion allowed by our constitution gave me the space to do this. While my views about religion made it easier for me to make this decision, it is not the main reason I do not say "under God" while reciting the pledge of allegiance.

The main reason is that I strongly feel the separation of church and state is a crucial element in the strength of our country. Saying "under God" to me bridges this separation. Last July 4th, the Freedom From Religion Foundation placed an ad in the Seattle Times featuring quotes from six of our most prominent founding fathers - Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. All of these quotes clearly demonstrated that contrary to what the far right religious revisionists say, the Christian religion was never intended to be a cornerstone of the constitution. As John Adams said, "The Government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion."

While Henry VIII is most famous for his six wives, the important backdrop of his reign was the struggle between church and state. Prior to this, the Catholic Church dictated certain tenets to the state. When these tenets got in his way, Henry VIII created a new church with himself as its head. Thus he reversed the order of power, but the conflict between the two powers continued. After his death, his daughters fought to determine which religion would dominate the state run Church of England with Elizabeth as its head, or the Catholic Church with Mary as its ordained Queen. Whether it was a state run church or a church dominated state, though, as long as these powers stayed combined, religious persecutions persisted. Before our country was born, religion frequently caused wars between or within states. To quote George Washington, "Religious controversies are always productive of more acrimony & irreconcilable hatreds than those which spring from any other cause." Many early settlers came to America seeking religious freedom, but in some cases they ended up trying to enforce their own. To ensure religious freedom endured, our founding fathers deliberately created the concept of separation of church and state. The model state they created was copied by many, because it worked.

U.S. minority populations are becoming more powerful. Obama's election served as a clarion call to resistance for certain elements of the white population. They use the cover of their religious convictions to justify their actions. The Koch brothers and their ilk use their money to enflame this religious fervor to try to capture control of the state for their own purposes. As Fox News attacks the left for what they call a war on Christmas to incite this fervor, I feel my right to agnosticism to be under attack. While this religiously enflamed conflict continues, our country has stagnated and even regressed - particularly concerning women's health. This fight to religiously control the state only divides us and takes our focus away from the common good. So you see, I'm more than willing to pause for those who wish to say "under God" - but it is my political, not religious, belief that this and all other religious choices must be an individual choice.

Support

Contact site support at support@kitsapdemocraticwomen.org

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Kitsap County Democratic Women

Date: Jan. 22nd (Wednesday)

Time: 11:30 a.m. lunch; 12:30 meeting.

Place: Hale\92s Alehouse

Topic: Why are you a Democrat?

Kitsap County Dem. Central Com.

Date: Jan. 21st (Tuesday)

Time: 6:30 p.m. Desserts; 7:00 p.m. mtg

Place: Eagles Nest

23rd Legislative District Democrats

Date: Jan. 28th (Tuesday)

Time: 6:30 social; 7:00 p.m. mtg.

Place: Poulsbo Library

26th Legislative District Democrats

Date: Feb. 4th (Tuesday)

Time: 7-9 p.m.

Place: Kitsap Rm, Givens Center, 1026 Sidney Rd, Pt. Orchard

35th Legislative District Democrats

Date: Jan. 25th (Saturday)

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Place: North Mason School District Office, 71 E. Campus Dr, Belfair

NEW COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Linda Streissguth was selected by Commissioners Rob Gelder and Charlotte Garrido to complete Josh Brown's term. You can contact her by phone through the County Commissioners' Office at 360-337-7146 or by emailing her at lstreissguth@co.kitsap.wa.us [1].

"When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself, and professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend of its being a bad one." - Benjamin Franklin

Newsletter:

- [KCDW Newsletter](#) [2]

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Contact site support at support@kitsapdemocraticwomen.org

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Links

[1] <mailto:lstreissguth@co.kitsap.wa.us> [2] <https://kitsapdemocraticwomen.org/newsletter/kcdw-newsletter>

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