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## **NEXT KCDW MEETING APR 23**

Location: Hale's Alehouse.

Our speakers will be the Democratic Candidate for County Commissioner, Linda Streissguth. NO RSVP required.

## **NO ANGEL HERE**

by Jo Fox Burr

There are many humanitarian reasons to help finance housing for the homeless and those close to becoming homeless. While some blame the homeless themselves for their predicament and would deny them any government subsidies, my proud liberal bleeding heart feels differently. I find it hard to blame domestic violence victims, or the seriously disabled, or those jobless due to the Bush recession, or those bankrupt as a result of major medical crises. I certainly cannot blame those minimum wage workers who do not earn enough to pay for housing as well as other basic needs. But my heart also bleeds for the alcoholics, drug addicts and mentally ill. And how could anyone blame a child whose parents are homeless for whatever reason? According to a recent survey by our state's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction more than 30,000 students in our state were homeless last year.

To those without the benefit of a bleeding heart, let's talk finances. It happens helping people with housing and other basic needs saves taxpayer money. In 2012 in Los Angeles County, it was determined that a multiple years-long initiative which housed chronically homeless people netted a gain of \$238,700. It cost \$3.045 million to implement, but saved \$3.284 million through lower incarceration rates and reduced medical costs. In 2009 a study by the University of Southern California of four previously homeless people put in permanent supportive housing saved public services costs for each of them by more than \$20,000 a year. In Seattle providing housing for 95 homeless alcoholics resulted in a 50% savings. Prior to housing them, the combined taxpayer cost for this group through incarceration, shelter use, and medical and detoxification services was \$8 million. After being housed, the taxpayer cost was only \$4 million.

Recently, Jan Angel, the new co-chair of the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing, and Insurance Committee, played bad cop/good cop on this issue of homeless housing subsidies all by herself. The good cop part, though, was disingenuous at best. On February 27th she ended a hearing abruptly before consideration of a bill that would have extended to 2020 the collection of a \$40 fee from real-estate transactions used to help fund homeless housing. Without its passage, the fee would have gradually sun-setted much sooner. This fee funds more than half of all state-funded homeless prevention projects. Sequestration and other Federal cuts had already seriously decreased funds for these programs. This bill had bipartisan/bicameral support. Had it been considered in Angel's committee it would have passed. Her arbitrary action prevented this from happening in time for it to be brought up through the usual course of action for full consideration of the Senate.

While it was a surprise to her fellow committee members that she did this, I think she was even more surprised by the negative press she consequently received. Caught in the headlights, she and the Senate leadership were left scrambling to save face and find a way to bring forward a substitute bill by gaining an exemption from the March 7th cutoff date. Angel was allowed to spearhead this substitute bill in her false attempt to look like the good cop. The theoretical improvements she claims in this new bill include sun-setting the \$40 fee one year earlier than the original bill and the requirement that 45% of the funds be allocated to for-profit housing. Further so called improvements set up a third party performance audit and a task force to analyze the audit and look for new funding sources. I don't see the improvements.

Why did Jan Angel attempt to kill this funding for the homeless initially? Certainly it was not to save taxpayer money as it is clear this kind of funding is a net gain for the state budget. Some claim Senate Majority leader Rodney Tom put her up to it. Given her long standing relationship with the real estate industry which strongly opposed the initial bill, I suspect its influence was greater. After all, the final bill passed under her guidance diverts 45% of the funding their way, decreases the number of years they have to pay the fee, and searches for other non-real estate sources of funding. I see no angel here. This is pure avarice for her prime supporters.

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

#### **Kitsap County Democratic Women**

Date: May 28th (Wednesday)

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

Place: Hale's Alehouse

Speaker: Democratic Candidate for  
County Commissioner

#### **Kitsap County Democratic Central Committee**

Date: May 19th (Monday)

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

Place: Eagles Nest

#### **23rd Legislative District Democrats**

Date: May 27th (Tuesday)

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

Place: Poulsbo Library

#### **26th Legislative District Democrats**

Date: June 5th (Thursday)

Time: 7-9 p.m.

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

#### **35th Legislative District Democrats**

Date: Aug 3rd (Sunday)

Time: 3:00 pm

Place: Waterfront Park in Allyn

This will also be their annual picnic

### **OTHER FUTURE EVENTS**

#### **Kitsap County Democratic Women's Picnic**

July 12th (Sat.) at Jo Fox Burr's House

#### **Kitsap County Democratic Central Committee Picnic**

August 17th (Sun.) Jarstad Park, Gorst

**Kitsap County Democrats Annual Dinner & Auction** *formerly the Jefferson Jackson Dinner*  
May 31st (Sat.) Olympic College, Bremer Center

More information on all these events will be provided separately.

*"I mean, I don't think I'm alone when I look at the homeless person or the bum or the psychotic or the drunk or the drug addict or the criminal and see their baby pictures in my mind's eye. You don't think they were cute like every other baby?" -- Dustin Hoffman*

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