

New Mexicans for Money Out of Politics (NM MOP)

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General Meeting and AP Follow-up Training #4 of 4, May 23, 2017
LaFarge Library
Meeting attended by 15 people, including Miguelangel Skyping in

Rebecca opened meeting with welcome. Bruce Berlin gave brief report on his visits with staffers in the Washington DC offices of Udall, Heinrich and Lujan. American Promise staffperson Jeff Clements accompanied Bruce on these meetings.

Bruce is participating in American Promise's 18-month Consensus Amendment Project, which is crafting language for an eventual 28th Amendment. A large number of people are involved, nationally.

- Ben Gubits connected via Skype for the last of the scheduled follow-up trainings.
- There were several questions discussed:

Q. Why will the Consensus Amendment Project take so long (18 months)? A: Because there are so many people of different persuasions involved, it is expected to take some time to come to agreement. Also, it's important to "get it right" and have it be agreed to and supported by a large and varied group, so that it can be successfully defended, passed and ratified.

Q: Are we only trying to overturn Citizen's United? A: No, there are several laws that do similar things, so we are working to overturn CU "and related cases" (McCutcheon, etc.).

Q: What was the strongly-languaged bill mentioned at the April 1 training? A: SJR 20, (sponsored by Tester)

Q: Is it suggested that we invite our Congresspeople to join or sponsor American Promise? A: No, AP doesn't have sitting members of Congress on their advisory board, as they are partisan. Once they are no longer in office, they then are more likely to be appropriate for AP.

- Discussion about the recent Lujan Townhall in Santa Fe. Lujan focused on local issues and the current GOP Healthcare bill. He did not seem to be familiar with HJR 48, which is the current 28th Amendment bill we are supporting (Nolan – We The People). Lujan stated that all the Republican members of the House have already voiced support for Citizens United, so the battle is uphill. He did say he would look at the bill and get back to the questioner.
- Ben asked for reports from the NM MOP small groups.

Lujan: Charlotte reported: The Lujan group (6 people) met with Nick Maestas, Lujan's staffer, which went well. They will not be able to set an appt. to meet directly with Lujan until August. Maestas said he'd give the HJR 48 info to Lujan, which seems to not have happened yet, because Lujan was not aware of it at the Townhall. Charlotte reported that the roles, tools, and practice sessions helped to have a good and empowering experience with the staffer. She offered advice to be prepared and have "points" worked out ahead of time, so the group can be sure to cover them all. Comments were offered by Gabe H., a member who is a former AARP lobbyist, that Lujan may take after his father, Ben Lujan, who was cautious and not quick to act.

Grisham: Anna reported: this group will also meet with staffer first. Still working on a date.

Discussion of how, since Grisham is running for Governor soon, we might want to also reach out to the folks who are running for her seat. (Same applies to Pearce, who may be running for Governor.)

Heinrich: Eric reports that this group has met to discuss roles and are working on scripts for the eventual meeting with staff; no date set yet.

- Bruce suggested another viable “track.” working to make the 28th Amendment issue a campaign issue in upcoming elections.
- Discussion of the content of our small group meetings with Congresspeople or staffers: Ben emphasizes it is building relationships, taking steps, tailoring the actual “ask” to the situation – doing research beforehand. There is no precise recipe for what we are asking them for.
- Ben switches topic to what he calls “good action.” Other actions we can be taking in addition to the meetings we are trying to have with Congresspersons. One focus is writing and submitting Letters to the Editor. Creating champions in the media, building relationships with editorial boards, getting our letters and op-eds in the paper(s), to inform people, build awareness of 28th Amendment.

LTE’s are written in response to an article already published; op-eds are more like articles or opinions. Either way, start by finding out exactly what the paper’s parameters are. Google the paper’s name and letterstotheeditorsubmissioncriteria. Then, find an article that can be pivoted to the issue of money in politics and the 28th Amendment. More detailed training on ltes is available at Americanpromise.org. More available at www.cvnm.org.

- A suggestion was made to send an op-ed to the SF New Mexican, introducing our group to the community and describing our successes so far with the trainings, etc.
- Going forward, Ben is willing to continue trainings in any capacity we want. NM MOP will discuss this in the next Steering Committee meeting (early June), and we will have an NM MOP General Meeting (not focused solely on the 28th Amendment, as the past few meetings have been) later in June. We will then get back with Ben to let him know how we want to proceed.
- Ben also encourages us all to join in the monthly 2nd Saturday AP conference calls, in groups or individually.
- Question came up about possibly using Facebook Live to attend the conference calls. Ben will look into that possibility. Miguelangel feels that the more we offer technologically-convenient access to our work, the more we will be likely to realistically attract and include younger people in the efforts.

Next General Meeting will be scheduled for June and an email announcement will go out. Maybe June 21, or 19. Bruce will set this up.