

MINUTES OF THE ITAA GENERAL MEETING

MAY 1, 2023

PRESENT: Eileen Hollowell, Dawn Penish-Thacker, Cindy Doklan, Bobbi Zimmer, Kitty Kennedy, Jeanne Hardie, Michael Bryan, Beth Smith, Joe Smith, Bets Craig, Sara Hammond, Margo Nichols, Tricia Sauer, Kathleen Mayer, Jacolyn Marshall, Joe Alexander, Di Alexander, Margaret Scott, Judith Randall, Tina Whitley, Karen Harris, William Yohey, Jan Counts, Cheryl Whited, Devon Sloan, Fred Markussen, Thea Chalow, Misty Atkins

CALL TO ORDER

Jan Counts called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM. We were excited to welcome several new attendees: Kitty Kennedy, who has long followed ITAA but not previously attended, Margaret Scott who will be joining us for the Ciscomani Event this Wednesday, and Jeanne Hardie who is coming on to assist in the Treasurer's duties.

STATE NEWS FROM TRICIA SAUER

Jan then introduced Tricia Sauer to bring us up to date on activities and events that are coming up over the next weeks and months.

Tricia Sauer is our Indivisible State Leader. She explained that Arizona is (so far) the only "battleground state" designated by Indivisible National, though there are other state designations in the works. What being a battleground state means is that there will be significant resources coming to Arizona because it is believed that there is a decent chance to elect progressive candidates to take back the US House and secure an even stronger lead in the US Senate. There was a kickoff call on April 19th with Ezra Levin, Co-Founder of Indivisible, in which he and others outlined what will be coming to Arizona. Several state level teams will be working including Group Growth, focused on outreach and recruiting new active members to the effort to unseat MAGA Republicans and elect progressives. Another focus will be on messaging about Kyrsten Sinema who claims she is an independent but who really works for and votes for powerful corporate interests, not the people of Arizona.

Arizona's 1st and 6th Congressional Districts also will be areas of battleground focus as winnable districts. Our area is AZ 6 where there will be an opening event to hold Juan Ciscomani accountable for his votes with McCarthy and the MAGA Republicans and against working people. Members are encouraged to call his office to request he support raising the debt limit, noting as you do so that the House Republican proposal includes shameful funding cuts for such constituent social supports as Meals on Wheels, for instance.

The rally will be Wednesday, May 3rd at 11AM – Outside the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Taxpayer Assistance Center - 300 W Congress St, Tucson, AZ 85701. Speakers will include Congressman Grijalva and Tucson Mayor Romero. Attendees are encouraged to wear their ITAA t-shirt. *If you would like to purchase a t-shirt at the event, contact Karen Harris at kwharris1979@gmail.com prior to May 3.*

Tricia also mentioned that state leaders believe that Arizona's state legislative district 16 is also flippable. It encompasses Pinal County. There will be a retreat on June 3rd to kick off that effort.

Tricia introduced Dawn Perrick-Thacker who will be focused on media amplification of Arizona Indivisible priorities and events. She will be advertising the work of ITAA. Dawn would like anyone taking photos or

video at the Ciscomani event to send their information, maybe with a quotable statement, to her: dawn@agavestrategy.com

State Teams in addition to the Group Growth team are texting team, messaging, advertising, opinion campaigns, a Sinema accountability team, a state legislative focus on Pinal county, with kickoff on June 3rd. There will be increased group recognition including ITAA, and generally increasing Indivisible visibility. **The link to sign up for a team is <https://forms.gle/FUu1KzAyF5U9ZA7p6>**

Questions were raised about whether Indivisible members might be encouraged to be involved in the recall effort for State Senator Justine Wadsack. Tricia said that this effort as well as the effort to recall the Cochise County Supervisor, Tom Crosby, are beyond Indivisible's capacity to support, though it would be good if both efforts succeeded. Some worry that the effort will give recognition to these extremists which might not be in the best interests of Indivisible.

Other campaigns coming up this summer and early fall will include a state constitutional amendment to support reproductive rights, which should launch in August or September.

ITAA TEAM REPORTS

Joe Alexander, ITAA State Team Co-chair with Eileen Hollowell, reported that the team was taking a bit of a break until the legislature makes some progress on the budget. The team wrote to local legislators in the majority party to ask about their plans to address education and water issues in Arizona. With one exception, none replied. Joe mentioned that Kathleen Mayer had provided an excellent analysis of the bills focused on water issues, some of which have some chance of getting through the process. She will share her research with anyone who wants to read it. Contact her at kmayer17@gmail.com.

There does not seem to be bipartisan energy to reach the big compromises that will be needed to address the looming water crisis; most proposals are piecemeal and largely unsatisfactory to the minority legislators.

Eileen expressed her frustration with the lack of responses about pressing issues but that we are keeping our hopes up for a reasonable budget. Eileen also mentioned that State Team members continue to use RTS, as do other members of ITAA who are not on the team.

Eileen Hollowell gave the Treasurer's report, noting the two categories of funds available. Unrestricted funds are raised directly within ITAA; that account stands at \$314. Restricted funds, she explained, come to National ITAA and are "distributed" to ITAA, subject to restrictions. That balance is \$1,823. Eileen explained the restrictions limit the use of these funds to non-partisan efforts such as get out the vote and voter registration, and to support of candidates for national offices (President, Congress). Further, these efforts cannot be coordinated with a political party, e.g., the Democratic Party. National Indivisible is currently matching gifts through ActBlue to ITAA up to \$500 through the end of May. Eileen encouraged members to donate even \$10 to \$25 toward this effort. We will certainly have work to do beginning in September and on into the 2024 election cycle! Access the donation link on the ITAA website. <https://www.indivisibleucson.org/>

Joe Smith, head of the Texting Team, expressed gratitude that National will be supporting texting in the next legislative push. He emphasized that the program is simple to use, does not involve members having to do any typing as messages are pretty much canned for participants, though you can, if you want to, add to the messages. He stressed that your phone number does not show up to recipients of the texts and that texting is a great program to get our message out to hundreds of people with a few

strokes of the keyboard. Joe said training would be forthcoming. If you would like to join the texting team, contact Joe at jocko3484@gmail.com

Tricia said that the texting program from Indivisible National will be used to enhance Group Growth, too. E.g., to let people know about a happy hour or other community building event.

Jan Counts, Post-carding Coordinator, said that her team's work, as well as the texting team's work, were in conjunction with Field Team Six (FT6). An impact report that FT6 recently published showed some statistics demonstrating how super effective all the various strategies were in the last election cycle, proving the efficacy of their method, which involves multiple contacts with prospective voters. In order of efficacy, those contacts are by text, emails, postcard, and phone. FT6 helped to register 2.1 million new progressive leaning independent and Democratic voters in the 2021-2022 election cycle. In Arizona they registered over 90,000 new progressives, providing 72% of Sen. Kelly's winning margin and 527% of Governor Hobbs's margin of victory. Another salient impact statement was that, in the Nevada election, the FT6 number of progressives they registered nearly matched the vote margin that elected Catherine Cortez Masto, thus gaining the majority in the US Senate. Jan pointed out that FT6 has also declared Arizona a battleground state which means local voters will be seeing a lot of action in the next election.

If you are interested in post carding to register voters or other election activities, contact Misty Atkins at mistymellor@gmail.com.

HAPPY HOUR

Before ITAA winds down for the summer, members are invited to gather at **Westward Look on May 19th between 4 pm and 6 pm**. 245 East Ina Road. ITAA will provide appetizers. As you likely recall, ITAA cannot expend money on alcohol so you will need to order and pay for any alcoholic drinks on your own tab.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be September 11, 2023, following the summer break and allowing that our usual first Monday meeting date is Labor Day.

Jan offered a lovely message of farewell on behalf of ITAA to Margo Nichols who is moving to Western Pennsylvania soon. Tricia offered to assist her in getting together with an Indivisible group near Pittsburgh or even to help her set up a new one in her community.