

GOOD NEWS FOR DISABILITIES CAUCUS



I have been going to Disability Caucus meetings of the State Democratic Party of and on for 16 years, and something happened this August 26th in Anaheim at the Sheraton Hotel that I have never seen before. Our new Chair, Eric Bauman, came to the meeting, ready to discuss accessibility for attendees to Executive Board meetings and hotels, accessibility to local Democratic events, and legislation affecting people with disabilities. That does not sound like a big deal, but as much as I respected Art Torres as Chair, and loved John Burton as he led the party to the left, both did not really understand our issues and were somewhat afraid of our caucus. We can be rather loud.

Bauman participated in a discussion with Chair Hene Kelly and the caucus, calling forward our own Ruthee Goldkorn to join in the discussion. Ruthee had been asked by Bauman to submit a report on the state of our community for him to review. In the hour-long back and forth Bauman said, "These hotels all proprot to be accessible, but really are not." By working to make these hotels more accessible for our people, "we will make it better for the public outside the Democratic Party."

The discussion ranged into the area I am always raving about, "The ADA must be part of campaigns and fundraisers," Eric said. I say how can we woo voters when we keep some out, and Bauman agrees. He also adds, "We also must do it because it is right. We are a core value of the Democratic Party. Our Party stands for helping people of all kinds." And the discussion finally led to legislation and the desire of the Caucus and the Chair to fight dilution of the ADA in bills in Congress.

Bauman said in conclusion, "It will take some time to get things right, but we will." I was just very happy this Chair understands the problem and really wants to help the caucus. The last election for Chair was very close, and I like most people had problems making up my mind who to vote for. I was surprised when this Chair appeared at this Caucus and was so good. In hind-sight I should not

have been because by trade he was a Registered Nurse, and my professional experience with RNs has been very positive.

Also, our first Executive Board meeting of this term went well, too. Everyone seemed to work well together. Now let's elect Democrats.

---Bob Warburton