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KNOX COUNTY MAINE DEMOCRATS
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Knox County Democratic Committee

Monthly Newsletter

July 1, 2023 (No. 15)



Maine House District 45 Election Results

Despite having a great candidate in Wendy Pieh, the support of many residents in District 45 and the endorsement of Democratic leaders, including Governor Janet Mills, Wendy Pieh lost the special election to fill the State Legislative seat for District 45 to the Republican candidate.

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Wendy Pieh (D) 1,313
Abden Simons (R) 1,435

The vote was so close! It is a shame that more Democrats did not vote in this election - Wendy's vote total was nearly 1,000 fewer than the total vote for the Democratic candidate in the 2022 election for this seat.

July 11, 2023 Monthly Meeting Details

KCDC will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, July 11, at 6pm, via Zoom.

This month's agenda includes (not necessarily in this order):

- Legislative Update
- KCDC Business, including:
 - Summer/Fall events
- Knox County Town Updates
- Announcements

All Knox County Democrats and unenrolled progressives are welcome to attend KCDC meetings.

Pre-registration is required in order to receive the Zoom login and/or phone-in details. Register at <https://forms.gle/1dB888jKMfJusmGjz> before Noon the day of the meeting to ensure access, or email knoxdems@gmail.com. KCDC will do its best to accommodate last-minute registrations. Participants will be able to join the meeting beginning at 5:45pm.



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A Day at the State Capitol - Update

by Linda Souers, Friendship

As you receive this newsletter, it is likely that the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature will have adjourned. In the May newsletter, I reported on the public hearing for three proposed bills dealing with firearms legislation.

The Maine Democratic Party has included a statement on gun ownership in their Platform: "We believe in preserving our outdoor heritage and in maintaining responsible and accountable gun ownership, including universal background checks, while protecting the safety of all Maine people. We believe that gun safety measures are compatible with Maine's long-standing tradition of hunting and firearm ownership."

Here is an update on the current status of the three bills.

LD 22: Sec. 1. 15 MRSA §394 "An Act to Impede the Transfer of Firearms to Prohibited Persons"

Sponsored by Sen. Anne Carney and co-sponsored by Senators Pinny Beebe-Center and Mark Lawrence, and House Representatives Vicky Doudera and Erin Sheehan.

Passed and signed into law by Governor Janet Mills, June 26, 2023.

It is now a class D crime to "knowingly or intentionally sell or transfer a firearm" to people who should never own or possess guns under the law, with the exception of

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LD 60: "An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm"

Sponsored by Representative Margaret Craven and co-sponsored by Representatives Arford, Crafts, Dodge, Gramlich, and B. White.

LD 60 has been placed in legislative files (DEAD).

This bill would have slowed the transfer of a firearm from seller to buyer. Advocates noted a marked decrease in suicide by gun in states where this waiting period is in effect. Critics pointed to the delay as an infringement on second amendment rights and possible endangerment to individuals needing self defense.

This bill was referred out of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee with a divided report; the majority opinion of "Ought to Pass as Amended" gained 7 votes out of 13. However it failed to pass the House on a vote of 69 Yeas to 73 Nays with 7 absent. On June 15, it failed to pass the Senate with a vote of 11 Yeas to 24 Nays. Of our local Knox County Democrats, Yea votes were cast by Senator Beebe-Center and Representatives Doudera, Geiger, and Zeigler, with Matlack absent. A Nay vote was cast by Senator Cameron Reny.

Link to Actions Report: <https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/dockets.asp?ID=280085184>

LD 168: "An Act Regarding Criminal Background Checks for the Sale, Transfer or Exchange of Firearms"

Sponsored by Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross and co-sponsored by Representative S. Salisbury.

This bill was intended to close a loophole in the law. Currently, commercially licensed firearms dealers are required to secure background checks of buyers. This bill would have also required private sellers (such as those on the internet or at gun shows) to secure a background check.

The bill was referred to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee and

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“Passed to be Engrossed” [This phrase indicates the bill was passed with an amendment] with 2 House amendments. The House vote on June 26 “Ought to Pass as Amended” was extremely close, 69 Yeas to 68 Nays. All four Democratic House Representatives from Knox County voted Yea.

The Senate acted on June 27 voting to reject the motion to pass as amended by a vote of 13 Yeas to 21 Nays. Of our two Democratic Senators representing districts in Knox County, Senator Beebe-Center voted Yea and Senator Reny voted Nay. The House subsequently voted not to concur with the Senate. It is unclear if any further action will be taken by House or Senate.

Link to Actions report: <https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/dockets.asp?ID=280085387>

Link to LD 168: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?ld=168&PID=1456&snum=131



KCDC Returns to the Union Fair

We were thrilled with the positive reception to KCDC's hosting a booth at the Union Fair in July 2022. It was a great opportunity for us to interact with members of the community and for many of our 2022 candidates to discuss the important issues with voters.

KCDC will again host a booth at the [Union Fair](#) July 26 - 30. We invite you to stop and visit. We will share details, including the exact location of the booth, in the near future. We need a few more volunteers; if you can work a shift from 12-4pm or 4-8pm any day during the Fair, please email knoxdems@gmail.com.

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KCDC recently launched our YouTube channel. If you missed the presentation at our May meeting by representatives of the Midcoast Housing Trust who described their mission to create workforce housing in Knox County and surrounding towns, you can find the video on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@knoxdemocrats4026>, where you can also subscribe and be alerted to future content additions.

Focus on the November Election: Pine Tree Power

In our March 2023 issue, we focused on the citizen's initiative entitled "An Act To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit, Customer-owned Utility", which aims to establish a consumer-owned utility and buy out Central Maine Power (CMP) and Versant Power.

Since that time, the Portland Press Herald published an article reviewing the campaign spending and its sources on both sides of the issue.

Unless you're living under a rock, you're probably already experiencing ad fatigue related to the ballot proposal. On September 12, KCDC will host an event devoted to this initiative. Plans are still being developed - stay tuned for further details in next month's issue!

Seeking DEI Committee Representative

The Maine Democratic Party is seeking a representative from Knox County to serve on its newly-established Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. If you are interested in this role, please email us at knoxdems@gmail.com



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Upcoming Events

July 26 - July 30	KCDC at Union Fair (Come visit our booth!)
August 8	KCDC General Meeting
September 12	Pine Tree Power Forum (Details soon!)
September 23	Community Picnic sponsored by KCDC*

* At the Rockport Masonic Center 12-3pm (Event information and online reservations will open soon!)



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