



**Vol. 1.1**

**August 27  
2004**

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[www.pdamerica.org](http://www.pdamerica.org)

## Progressive Vote and Progressive Democrats of America Merge!

Following successful joint events at the National Democratic Convention in Boston, board members of the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) and key representatives of Progressive Vote (PV) agreed to formally merge efforts.

We did so out of a conviction that the Democratic Party needs to be transformed, and that to accomplish this end we need a "movement." We believe our merger is a step in that direction. [Progressive Vote](#) (PV) is a grassroots coalition that combines electoral work with community organizing. Its' goal is to form Progressive Democratic caucuses in every one of the 435 congressional districts (CDs) in America. [Progressive Democrats of America](#) (PDA) also believes we must combine electoral politics with local organizing in order to redirect obscene levels of U.S. military spending toward full and meaningful employment and to put an end to poverty and war. ..

What makes the merged organization unique is our ability to work inside the beltway while simultaneously building a strong federation of state and CD based progressive caucuses. This is our country, not Exxon's, Bush's, nor any corporate Board's. America belongs to the people. The highest office in a democracy is that of citizen.

In order to meet these goals, a small combined Board was created to guide the work of staff and volunteers. The Board is composed of Sherry Bohlen, Co-Chair of the PV State Progressive Democratic Caucus Council and Co-Chair of the Arizona Progressive Democratic Caucus; Lu Bauer, Maine Progressive Caucus Co-Chair and PDA Treasurer, and Bruce Taub, former Massachusetts Kucinich State Co-coordinator. →

### PDA to Tour with Ani DiFranco!

PDA is proud to announce that it will be joining other progressive groups with Ani on her upcoming tour into the "Swing States" to help encourage her audience to **VOTE DAMMIT!** We invite you to join us.

Please contact us so we can include your state progressive democratic organization to be a part of this effort.



To volunteer at a PDA table on Ani's tour or to get your groups literature on the table, send an e-mail to [michele@pdamerica.org](mailto:michele@pdamerica.org).

[Click here to find out more about the VOTE DAMMIT! Tour.](#) ♦

[MERGER](#) - Continued on page 3

**Eight Thousand Dollar Fund Raising Challenge**  
[Details on page 2](#)

## Eight Thousand Dollar Fund Raising Challenge

**PDA**, as a start up operation, is cash-starved. And while we have numerous fundraising projects in the works that will help to sustain us in the near future, these efforts will all take time to bear fruit. In the meantime, we have modest office expenses and our staff members - Kevin Spidel, Michele White, and Tim Carpenter - all of who have agreed to work for incredibly modest salaries - need to be paid! So, in addition to their past support, several PDA Board members and friends have committed \$8,000 to PDA in the form of a challenge grant. The condition is this, when and if we raise \$8,000 from our membership base and their friends (that's you) the committed funds will be made available, bringing us to \$16,000. PLEASE DON'T LET THIS CHALLENGE GO TO WASTE! Without your donation, PDA will not get these desperately needed funds!

We have over 20,000 members who are receiving this donation request. If only 2% of our supporters gave only \$20 each we will have succeed. (Naturally, don't be shy about giving more.) Want to transform the Democratic Party into a force for social justice, environmental sanity, and true democracy? Want to defeat the military industrial complex and turn weapons of mass destruction into plowshares? If you do, please help us meet this challenge!

Go to [www.pdamerica.org](http://www.pdamerica.org) and use the donate button. Use the comments button to write "challenge grant."

Or write "challenge grant" on your check or money order. "Vote" early and vote often. We must back our longing for social and economic justice and peace with pragmatic volunteerism and well targeted financial backing.

Thank you for your confidence and support. ♦

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### Everything You (and Your Friends) Need to Vote

**Only half the people who agree with us on the issues voted the last time around.** We have to make sure we do better this time. That's why, with these simple online tools, True Majority is making it easy for you and your friends to vote. [Just click this link to get to their online toolkit](#)

Here's what you'll find:

- ✓ **Register to Vote** You can fill out all the paperwork online. It's fast, free, and easy.
- ✓ **Vote by Mail** Most states now also let you vote by mail (also called absentee ballot). This is definitely the best way to go. If your state allows it, you can fill out all the paperwork online. ↗

**Help Register Others** If you would like to get more involved registering people to vote in this crucial election year, we can help you find the groups doing the best work. We link to our friends at National Voice who have set up Election Match. Just type in your zip code and they'll tell you who near you is hitting the streets to register folks. ♦

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*In a democracy, the individual enjoys not only the ultimate power but carries the ultimate responsibility.*  
Norman Cousins

## MERGER

[continued from page 1]

Former PDA Board Chair, actress Mimi Kennedy will chair a new Advisory Council composed of other former PDA Board members and key endorsers who want to actively support PDA's effort, especially with regard to fundraising and networking.

Activities of the new organization include mobilizing to publicize PDA efforts at the RNC in NYC and touring and tabling with Ani DiFranco who has touted PDA on her swing-state-focused Vote Dammit! Tour.

Throughout it all PDA will be building upon the drumbeat of national publicity for the "inside-the-Party" strategy pioneered by Progressive Vote and amplified by PV/PDA activities at the Democratic National Convention.

Between now and November, PDA will be organizing high visibility Teach Ins similar to that done in Boston in several swing states including Ohio and Minnesota. PDA endorser Tom Hayden has already indicated he will be part of that effort.

Plans are already afoot to build critically needed financial support for this effort. ➔

In addition, Advisory Board Chair Mimi Kennedy and Los Angeles progressive Democratic activist and Pacifica radio talk show host Lila Garrett have teamed up with Democratic fundraiser Bronwyn Ingram to send an e-mail to more than 10,000 progressive-leaning Democratic Party funders. That letter specifically calls for support to build PDA as a counterbalance to the conservative Democratic Leadership Council!

PDA will also be working with existing progressive democratic state caucuses that were part of the PV organizing network, organizing new caucuses, and spawning PDA chapters across the nation. The "Chapters" will be organized by Congressional District and state.

The first two CD based chapters are already under way in Western Massachusetts CD 1 and 2. (See State News in this issue.)

In summary, while the immediate goal is to support of John Kerry, the long-term goal is the actual transformation of the Democratic Party into a progressive party of "We the People."

The combined organization now has over 26,000 members - including two or more members in 48 states.

The two web sites will be merged in the near future. ♦

**Democracy is not a spectator sport! We need your ACTIVE help.**

**Please**

1. Read the rest of this newsletter!
2. Share this newsletter with your friends, colleagues, family members
3. Send us progressive Democratic news with links for our web site and future newsletters,
4. Solicit PDA endorsements from elected officials
5. Join us for tabling at one of the forthcoming Ani DiFranco concerts
6. Assist us at a regional Teach In
7. Donate to help us reach our matching goal of \$8,000
8. Start a local PDA chapter for your Congressional District
9. Support your state progressive Democratic Caucus
10. Organize a state progressive Democratic caucus!

♦

**Don't Take "Back" the Democratic Party...**

**TAKE IT OVER!**

Sign up at

[www.pdamerica.org/](http://www.pdamerica.org/)

## Inside PDA

**What do you do when you have a few spare minutes of time and want to take over the Democratic Party,** reduce the military budget, take on the Pentagon, the CIA, and the State Department, revive a stagnant Congress, improve the economy, teach peace, and diminish the power of the military industrial complex? Why join PDA of course, because that's precisely what we intend to do.

Thanks to great volunteer help and financial support, PDA had a very successful launch in Boston. Representatives Barbara Lee, John Conyers, and Dennis Kucinich, Granny D, Medea Benjamin, Tom Hayden, former presidential candidate Howard Dean, and many other great progressive activists were on stage during the founding program. You can see some pictures on the PDA site. We will soon have videos and on line transcripts up and running on the web site as well.

We have already established a series of internal committees that report to the board and the Executive Director, Tim Carpenter, that are looking for volunteers. These include: database development, communication, newsletter, chapter development, fund raising, building local caucuses, political coalition-building, messaging, fieldwork, administrative/finance, communications/media. Our goal is to integrate all of the work we do into a cooperative volunteer intensive committee structure. If you want to get involved - please send a note to our Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@pdamerica.org](mailto:volunteer@pdamerica.org) mentioning what your interests are and what contribution or skills you offer. Together we can make a change.

Our strategy is to build the "progressive wing of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party" and invite the other progressives to join our efforts. We are developing our longer-term work plan, garnering more endorsers and activists, and will be consulting with Congressional and progressive organizational allies to identify key legislative issues we will support. What makes us unique is our commitment to build progressive democratic caucuses in all 50 states and all 435 congressional districts.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Volunteer on a Committee
2. Help establish local PDA chapters and progressive democratic caucuses
3. Volunteer to distribute PDA leaflets at peace rallies, union meetings, the Ani DiFranco tour, etc.
4. Tell others about PDA - urge them to "endorse"
5. Donate time and money - and urge your friends to do the same. ♦

### PDA Chatter:

1. Before speaking at the Progressive Democratic Convention in Boston, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) the "Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus" actually called Arianna Huffington and urged her to help us! He later told the crowd, "This is the most exciting convention I've ever been to in my life!" He's quoted saying so in an [In These Times](#) article.

2. After speaking at our event, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, touted PDA at her Cambridge fundraiser - when she had no idea PDA staff were there supporting her.

3. At our Thursday event, actor Jaime Cromwell (the farmer in Babe) kicked off our fundraising drive by pitching in \$1,000.00. → [CHATTER](#) - Continued on page 5

### Chatter

[continued from page 4]

4. PDA's Tuesday Peace Conference featuring Tom Hayden and Medea Benjamin was covered by the [New York Times](#)
5. William Rivers Pitt urged progressives to fund PDA in the section of his article on the Democratic National Convention entitled [Killing the Buddha](#) in *Truth Out*.
6. [Utne.com](#) covered us, though not by name.
7. We had 1,200 supporters at our kick off Progressive Democratic Convention in Boston.
8. Progressive Vote, with whom we have just merged, has been networking among and organizing new state level Progressive Democratic Caucuses for several months and has caucuses in about a dozen states. [Note – if you get this in a printed form, the news links are live on the web site.] ♦

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## News from the State Chapters

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### Utah

The Utah Democratic Progressive Caucus with support from the Catalyst Magazine and Equality Utah is sponsoring the Freedom Fair on September 11. The event will be held at the Gallivan Center in downtown Salt Lake City and its theme is "Fear Ends and Hope Begins".

The program will start at 4:00 PM with a memorial to the fallen on 9-11-2001 with the Salt Lake City Fire Honor Guard and a eulogy from AJ Barto, firefighter and HAZMAT specialist, and comments from Mayor Rocky Anderson. Actress, author and activist, Mimi Kennedy will be among the featured guests along with Tom English, the next Mark Russell. The program will move on to local speakers, officials and candidates who will discuss labor issues, human and civil rights, peace, and environmental issues. Music and entertainment will be interspersed throughout the event.

Participants include the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, ACLU, People for Peace and Justice, Utahans for a Just Peace in the Holy Land, Hispanic Caucus, Stonewall Caucus, Young Democrats of Utah, Save Our Canyons, Utah Health Alliance, and a number of Union representatives. Candidates endorsed by the UDPC speaking on issues of importance in their districts include Peter Corroon, Paul VanDam, Jackie Biskupski, and others.

A supervised children's corner with art and games is provided. Food, beverages, and Uinta brews will be available for purchase. This promises to be an informative event and we expect to turn out aprox. 1,000 people. Our hope is to remember the calamitous events on 9-11-2001- to pay respect to those who fell, while shining a ray of hope on our future as we turn our backs on fear, and embrace the possibilities. ♦

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### Nevada

We had a great Candidate Forum/Music Fest Aug.14th where four progressive candidates we support spoke. A fantastic bluegrass band played for an hour and then we showed the video from Democracy Now of Kerry addressing Congress after he came back from Viet Nam.

It was a wonderful night with like-minded people. The energy was so much better than the usual political gathering...very harmonious. We had about fifty people show up. → [NEVADA *continued*]

Since then we have been dressing up our van with our candidate's posters and gathering

## PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS of AMERICA :: SUPPORTING THE PROGRESSIVE VOTE

in front of Trader Joe's and Wild Oats type places passing out our information about the candidates until they chase us away. We are making plans to have dialogues and movie nights after the primary Sept. 7th.

Thanks! Diana Smith in Vegas

[Click here for an article about the Nevada Group's event.](#) ♦

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### Massachusetts

#### Progressive Democrats of America continue work after the July 29 Convention in Western MA

by Carl Doerner - <mailto:cdoerner@surfglobal.net>

A formative and exploratory meeting was held on August 18.

(1) We agreed to form a chapter - **Western Mass PDA**. A chapter is nationally recognized upon gaining 15 members who pledge \$25 each to PDA. In Western MA PDA is an evolution from the Kucinich campaign, so we will be encouraging all who participated in our very successful organizing in this region to join us. Although joining in solidarity with us advances a political agenda (see below) and helps us stay in touch, it does not necessitate attending our monthly meetings.

(2) Next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday September 14, 7-9, @ home of Susan Lantz, 74 Lyman Rd., Northampton**. As we remain in a formative stage, this is still a good opportunity to help shape our goals and procedures.

(3) Susan Tricolo of Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts (an offshoot of the Reich gubernatorial campaign) joined us for the meeting and shared the aspirations of that well-established group. Their focus is in-state issues. All acknowledged our differences, common goals, and the likelihood of our moving forward in harmony.

(4) For ourselves, we discussed the importance of a non-hierarchical organization with rotating facilitators and note-keepers.

(5) What should a PDA agenda look like? This is an ongoing discussion, but here is what is evident:

- a. Internationalize the conflict and occupation of Iraq by withdrawing US forces and replacing US economic involvement with UN supervision and assistance;
- b. Establish a cabinet level Department of Peace and Non-violence;
- c. Create a system of universal single-payer health insurance for this country;
- d. Withdraw from NAFTA and the WTO and establish fair trade policies;
- e. Work to repeal the Patriot Act;
- f. Invest military dollars in human needs;
- g. Begin full public funding for state and national political campaigns (remove money from politics);
- h. Begin instant runoff voting (IRV). (These were the Kucinich issues.)

(6) We should also contemplate such PDA agenda issues as:

- a. Means of addressing growing corporate power and economic control;
- b. Raising public awareness and meeting failures of the media;
- c. Opposing privatization (education, water, public services, etc.). →

[MASSACHUSETTS *continued*]

- (7) We contemplate growing our movement regionally with an activist agenda:
  - a. Help establish membership and other chapters;
  - b. Have every member of the MA congressional delegation be a co-signer of the Department of Peace legislation Dennis will re-introduce in 2005, and urge groups in other states to replicate;
  - c. Engage in active regional outreach, e.g., with remnants of the Dean campaign, with the Vermont Progressive Party, etc;
  - d. Establish an on-going program of social issue films;
  - e. With local colleges, initiate a speakers series (Tom Hayden, Chalmers Johnson, and many others). ♦

~ End of State Chapter Reports ~

**Out on the Web**

**Articles worth reading on-line**

**Conventional Change**

By Ruth Conniff - Published in [The Progressive](#), and reprinted in [AlterNet](#).  
"The Democrats are not poised to address long-term problems like the War Powers Act, or the drift from democracy to empire. For almost everyone under their big tent, beating Bush is the only issue." [www.alternet.org](http://www.alternet.org)

**Dissent Must Come Alive in New York**

**Protesters need not Fear that they will be Playing into the Hands of Bush's Campaign Strategy**

by Tom Hayden – Published in Common Dreams, [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org)

And if you need a giggle, read the rest of this one from the "The Union Leader"  
<http://www.theunionleader.com>

["NEXT WEEK, people who hate Republicans plan to release swarms of mice in New York City to terrorize delegates to the National Republican Convention.](#)

[Republican-haters plan on dressing up as RNC volunteers, and giving false directions to little blue hair ladies from Kansas, sending them into the sectors of New York City that are unfit for human habitation.](#) ♦

**Breaking News -**

**Progressive Kucinich DNC Convention Delegate wins Primary"**

Kucinich Presidential Convention delegate Thomas Higgins has just won the Democratic Primary in Alaska for a U.S. Congressional seat.

Congratulations, Thomas! It can be done. Progressive Democratic supporters are now raising money for the rest of his campaign. ♦

**Got News?**

Send your suggestions for the newsletter and news of your state's progressive events and progress to:

[newsletter@pdamerica.org](mailto:newsletter@pdamerica.org)

Thanks for reading! ♦  
Bruce Taub  
Editor