

FDR'S ECONOMIC POLICIES ENDORSED

Massachusetts Dems Call For Double Impeachment

by Matthew Ogden, LaRouche Youth Movement

Most delegates who attended the May 18-19 Massachusetts Democratic Convention came expecting this to be an ordinary off-season convention, a so-called “issues” convention where no important issues are discussed, expecting to see the usual faces, with maybe a few more gray hairs. The delegates were giddy about the recent election victory of Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick, but perhaps didn't expect the outcome of the convention to be explosive or necessarily historic. But, that mood changed when the delegates arrived, and met dozens of petitioners asking them to sign onto resolutions on both impeachment and the housing bubble's collapse and the global economic breakdown crisis.

At the May 18 pre-convention party, and in the early morning hours the next day, the LaRouche Youth Movement worked to collect the 50 signatures of delegates necessary to submit resolutions to be debated and voted on during the convention proceedings. The LYM had composed two resolutions: one, calling for the impeachment of Vice President Cheney, and the other, calling for an emergency FDR-style freezing and reorganization of the banking system, to protect families from the collapsing mortgage and real-estate bubble. The Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) also had several petitioners collecting signatures for a resolution calling for double impeachment of both Bush and Cheney.

When the delegates heard that there would be debate during the convention on impeachment, their eyes got wide and they grabbed the clipboards, eager to sign, urging their friends to sign as well. The response was similar on the housing resolution, not because every delegate understood what the solution was, but because this crisis has touched every citizen of Massachusetts; many people are very anxious about the current crisis, and the magnitude of what they sense is soon to come.

By 9:00 a.m., the three resolutions were ready to be turned in, with sufficient signators; the Impeach Cheney resolution had 98 signatures, and the housing one had 78. Even this preliminary petitioning shaped the discussion among delegates. Many were excited to see young people pushing hard to submit the resolutions that we had composed, and the degree to which we were clearly organizing around not only getting Cheney out, but having a positive policy agenda to contribute to the Democratic Party. As soon as some of the delegates heard that the resolution was calling for the impeachment of Cheney, they exclaimed—this must be LaRouche! Some of these delegates had seen the LYM at previous conventions, and were glad to see that we were pushing in a bigger way than they had ever seen us do before.

Word of our organizing spread rapidly. When newly elected chairman John Walsh was approached about the resolutions that the LYM was submitting, he replied that he had already read both resolutions. We ran into only a few delegates who refused to sign because they were decidedly against both Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon LaRouche. But, the name of FDR began to spread; later in the day, many elected officials, including Governor Patrick, felt compelled to make speeches passionately referencing Franklin Roosevelt. And, as the Progressive Dems submitted their petitions, stickers that said “Impeach” could be spotted on lapels everywhere one looked.

The formal proceedings began with the chairman speaking to 2,000 delegates, telling them that, in the last year, the Massachusetts Democrats had made history, electing their first African-American governor, but that electing Democrats wasn't enough. He called on the party to change from a culture of talking and complaining, to a culture of action—get off your comfortable seats and do something! After Walsh,



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The 2,000 delegates at the Massachusetts Democratic Convention debated two resolutions brought by LYM delegates, for the impeachment of Cheney and the implementation of an FDR-style reorganization of the economy to prevent housing foreclosures. The excited delegates adopted resolutions calling for the impeachment of Cheney and Bush, and the FDR-style reorganization.

the speakers included Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin and the new Attorney General, Martha Coakley. It must have seemed to many of the delegates that these party leaders were speaking in support of the resolutions they had just heard the LYM petitioning for outside! Galvin emphasized something he identified as not just being a “good cause,” but as being a *reality* that must be dealt with: the serious problem of looming foreclosures, and thousands at risk of being homeless. He called for emergency measures to protect people, including a change in the antiquated laws governing foreclosures that have been on the books since the 1850s! He then passionately denounced the Bush Administration as being incompetent and disastrous, calling Bush a perpetual petulant child, unwilling to accept the fact that he’s been wrong. Applause began to greet his words as he called for the Iraq War to be ended, to send a message to the Democrats in Washington not to accept any delay!

Next, Attorney General Coakley spoke. Her speech resonated with Galvin’s, identifying the problem of predatory lending and investments that hurt people who are also trying to deal with collapsing infrastructure. She denounced Bush, Cheney, Karl Rove, Alberto Gonzales, the war in Iraq, the scandal at Walter Reed Medical Center, and demanded a

change in national policy about this war.

And finally, the president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO promised that he would knock on hundreds of thousands of doors with the message—”Bush and Cheney, *They gotta go!* We’re going to run them out of town!”—which he repeated again and again. He received a standing ovation.

By the time the debate on the resolutions began, many of the delegates had recognized that this wasn’t an ordinary convention. Jim Roosevelt, chair of the rules committee and grandson of Franklin D. Roosevelt, introduced the first resolution, the LYM’s resolution on the housing crisis, which was distributed to every delegate in the room while he read the text out loud from the podium. The text of the resolution follows:

Resolution on the Housing Crisis

“*Whereas*, there are projections of up to two million families in danger of losing their homes in the near term because of foreclosure, with thousands of these in Massachusetts, due to false over-inflation of housing prices, and predatory loan practices which saddled families with

unpayable mortgages,

“*Whereas*, because of changes in law in the 1970s and 1980s, mortgage loans were allowed to become a financial instrument (Mortgage Backed Securities—MBSs) to be sold and traded on the markets, and the current popping of the speculative bubble of MBSs is rapidly bankrupting hedge funds and companies such as New Century Financial and GMAC,

“*Whereas*, because of these bankruptcies, pensions and municipal health-care funds, which have been invested into these financial corporations are threatened with being wiped out, as well as the assets of major U.S. banks which have up to 50% of their assets tied up in these MBSs, putting the entire banking system at risk,

“*Whereas*, the Preamble of the Constitution demands that the government put the General Welfare of the population before the rights of financial entities to collect debt,

“*Therefore, be it resolved*, that the Democratic Party of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts calls on our delegation to the federal Congress to act as Franklin D. Roosevelt did in dealing with the housing crisis in the 1930s. We call on our Congressional Delegation to introduce emergency measures which would immediately freeze the current debt and mort-

gage obligations, as well as the chain of financial instruments built upon them, until such obligations can be sorted out and reorganized in the context of a larger bankruptcy reorganization of the U.S. banking system, while placing a moratorium on foreclosures to keep the homeowners in their houses and prevent mass homelessness of thousands of American families in the near term.”

‘The Popping of the Speculative Bubble’

As Jim Roosevelt read, the delegates intently followed the written text. There was a sense that the resolution was a real moment of education for the crowd, an opportunity to use a crisis, whose effects had been felt by all of the delegates, to allow them to understand the causes, on a higher level. Roosevelt interjected while he was reading—“I bet you didn’t think you would get an education on finance when you came to this convention”—and his surprise was clear in his voice when he read “the current popping of the speculative bubble” (in addition to his relishing the phrase which calls for Congress to act as his grandfather did).

Discussion was opened to debate the resolution, and LYM member Megan Beets came to the podium to testify in favor. She introduced herself as the author of the resolution, and continued to teach the audience: “Houses used to be places where people lived, now they are being used as gambling chips. Because of the collapse of this speculative bubble, millions of families in Massachusetts and the nation are now at risk of becoming homeless, and the whole banking system is at risk of collapsing. I want to emphasize that we must be focussed on protecting the general welfare, instead of propping up the financial system. Franklin Delano Roosevelt never would have tolerated throwing our people out onto the streets just to save a bankrupt financial system.”

A middle-aged delegate then spoke in opposition. “This resolution mentions Franklin Roosevelt’s bank holiday, in his First 100 Days. But in Roosevelt’s day, the banks were bankrupt. That’s not the case today; the banks in this country are doing very well. I agree that Congress needs to protect the unsuspecting people who will have their houses foreclosed on, but to protect those people, we don’t have to reorganize the banks. I think this resolution goes way beyond what’s needed.”

The resolution was then brought to a vote. The first voice vote was not clear, but the standing vote showed a clear two-thirds majority. This vote was followed by spreading applause; the delegates realized that a significant discussion had just occurred. The man sitting next to Beets told her, before the convention started, that he didn’t think that the banking reorganization clause was necessary, but, after hearing both Galvin and Coakley speak about the urgency and magnitude of this crisis, and then hearing Megan speak in support of the resolution, when the voice vote came, he shouted an enthusiastic “Aye”!

The next resolution was then introduced by Roosevelt, “A Resolution To Impeach Vice President Cheney,” and copies were passed out to the delegates, while Roosevelt read the text aloud:

Resolution on the Impeachment of Vice President Cheney

“Whereas, President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard B. Cheney have consistently and knowingly rejected the will of the people of the United States of America, who expressed their voice in the mid-term Congressional elections of November 7th, 2006. At the command of Vice President Cheney, President Bush chose to veto (only his second veto in six years as President) the Supplemental Appropriations Bill, in which that new Congress calls for a timetable on Iraq troop withdrawal, demonstrating his commitment to a failed war, and to his surge policy of escalation;

“Whereas, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), has introduced Articles of Impeachment against Vice President Cheney in H.R. 333, calling for impeachment based on high crimes and misdemeanors, for 1) deceiving the people and Congress of the U.S. about alleged Iraqi WMD; 2) deceiving the people and Congress of the U.S. about an alleged relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda; and 3) openly threatening aggression against the Republic of Iran absent any real threat to the United States;

“Whereas, over 90 cities across the United States, have passed resolutions supporting the Impeachment of Vice President Cheney, including one by unanimous vote in the Detroit City Council on May 16th, 2007, as well as a resolution supporting impeachment of Dick Cheney from the California State Democratic Convention on May 1, 2007;

“Therefore, be it resolved, that the Massachusetts State Democratic Party calls on our party leadership, our party’s presidential pre-candidates, and our United States Congress, to support Rep. Kucinich’s call for the immediate impeachment and removal from office of Vice President Richard B. Cheney. We ardently hope that this resolution becomes the policy of the national Democratic Party; and that our party focus on the issues that our esteemed Governor Deval Patrick called attention to, in a recent speech, stating that rising mortgage foreclosures is not okay, collapsing infrastructure is not okay, rising violence in neighborhoods is not okay, and to deal with these crises, we as a party must be bold, as bold as Franklin Roosevelt: FDR’s approach saved the Country; Democrats can save the Commonwealth and the Nation again.”

This resolution was greeted by applause and cheers. The reference to the Kucinich bill received an excited response from the crowd; as Roosevelt finished reading, he emphasized that the party must be bold, as bold as Franklin Roosevelt. The first delegate to testify rushed up to the microphone; he was the organizer of the resolution submitted by the Progressive



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Many excited delegates congratulated the LYM organizers on their resolutions and their activity, after the convention.

Democrats, whose resolution was similar to the resolution the PDA submitted in California, calling for double impeachment. He testified, moving to substitute the Progressive Dems' resolution calling for the impeachment of both Bush and Cheney, in place of the resolution calling for only the impeachment of Cheney.

LYM member Matthew Ogden then spoke to the convention, in reply. He introduced himself as the author of the Impeach Cheney First resolution: "I don't oppose double impeachment, but I want to emphasize three elements of the resolution which have to be highlighted: First, Cheney must be impeached first. We don't want to impeach Bush and then find ourselves with a President Cheney. Second, the first resolution explicitly supports the Kucinich bill, H.R. 333, articles of impeachment he has already submitted to the House of Representatives, which is already in motion. If we support this, we will be joining the California Democrats and the Louisiana Democratic Committee. And, finally, impeaching Cheney is not only for his lying about WMDs and al-Qaeda, but most importantly, because he is threatening aggressive war against Iran. Impeaching him is the only way to stop this war, which could turn into World War III."

This began a period of extended debate on the floor of the convention. Two delegates came forward to support the original resolution, one of them introduced himself as a veteran, telling the crowd: "Now believe me, I despise George Bush and Dick Cheney as much as everybody else here does. I'm a veteran, and I understand when Eisenhower warned us about the 'military-industrial complex.' I want to say, that we have

to get rid of Cheney. And I know, once you get Cheney, Bush will go!"

A woman then spoke in support of the substitution, introducing herself as a representative of the Democratic National Committee, calling on the delegates to vote for the double-impeachment resolution, because it would send the clearest message.

First, there was a voice vote for whether or not to substitute the double impeachment for the Cheney First resolution. This vote was very close, but a very narrow majority voted for the substitution. But, when the final vote was called for support for the final resolution on double-impeachment, the voice vote was a nearly unanimous, deafening "Aye!" There was cheering and applause, people standing up, chanting "Impeach! Impeach!!"

One final resolution was then distributed, and read, calling for troop withdrawal and ending the Iraq War, which calls on Congress to support Kucinich's bill H.R. 1234, which specified withdrawal within three months, and ended by emphasizing the immorality of allowing U.S. troops and innocent Iraqis to die and be maimed in a war that is harming rather than enhancing U.S. national security and honor. After short debate over an amendment to support the troops, this resolution passed on a voice vote as well.

As the convention broke, the delegates were excitedly telling each other they had never seen a real debate like that in one of these conventions. People were saying, "That was fun! That was exciting!" And numerous delegates were coming up to both Beets and Ogden, giving their congratulations, several of them saying that they thought the Cheney impeachment resolution was the more hard-hitting of the two.

The passage of these two resolutions will have a national impact. The impeachment call will resonate with what has already been passed in Louisiana and California, and the housing resolution will especially resonate in Washington, with a lot of cross-fire between state officials such as Galvin, Coakley, and Governor Patrick, and members of the Congressional delegation, such as Rep. John Olver (D), the chair of the Subcommittee on Affordable Housing, and especially Rep. Barney Frank (D), chair of the House Financial Services and Banking Committee. These Congressman in the past have claimed that the popular support is not there for such dramatic emergency measures described in this resolution; but, the passage of this resolution and the response from the community leaders of the Democratic Party proves that, in fact, the popular support exists.