

Meeting Minutes  
**Progressive Democrats of Genesee Valley**

Brookside School  
Arts and Crafts Room  
220 Idlewood Road, Rochester, NY 14618  
14 May 2008  
7:00pm – 9:00pm

Taken by Nicholas Wilt

Attendees:

Nicholas Wilt  
Robin Wilt  
David and Angelika Marcus  
George Pixley  
Bruce Pollock  
Ann Diehl  
James Swarts  
Tom Wega  
Bill Benet  
Jared Smith  
Eric Massa  
Matt Stepp  
Will Dube

Summary: Eric Massa (NY-29) roundtable in person; presentation by Jon Powers (NY-26) campaign; discussion; endorsement.

**7:00-7:45 Eric Massa roundtable discussion**

The below summary was transcribed from handwritten notes taken during a free-form discussion.

- Top 3 issues: Out of Iraq; universal healthcare; fair trade not free trade
- Advocated for a New Deal for American infrastructure – money being spent on war would be better spent on rebuilding bridges, highways, sewers, water systems, electrical grid, etc.
- Does not favor a gas tax holiday – said it wouldn't have the intended effect.
- Would roll back the Bush tax cuts
- Favors changes to tax code, education and universal healthcare as ways to help the poor
- Asked about free college tuition, said he has not been asked about it so hasn't given it a lot of thought. But "nothing's off the table."
- Supports the GI Bill currently before Congress

- Supports HR676 but there are compromises he would be willing to make to get it passed. As an example of a compromise, said that the ultra-wealthy probably would have the right to buy whatever healthcare they want.

Eric is a co-signer of the Responsible Plan To End The War In Iraq (<http://www.responsibleplan.com>) and emphasized that the absence of incumbent legislators as co-sponsors of the plan is deliberate, to avoid the polarized character of Congressional deliberations to date (“cut and run” versus “stay forever.”)

### **7:45-8:00 Representatives from the campaign of Jon Powers (NY-26)**

Will Dube spoke for ~10 minutes on why he was supporting Powers’s candidacy. Powers is an Iraq War veteran who was featured in the documentary *Gunner Palace*. His impressive resume includes founding War Kids Relief to help orphaned Iraqi children. Will had worked on political campaigns in the past, but had not planned to help with Powers’s campaign until he met Powers in person and was inspired to rejoin the fray.

Will had attended the Massa roundtable and said that Powers substantially agreed with the answers given in Eric Massa’s questionnaire. When asked if Powers had any substantive policy differences from Massa, Will said that Powers favored the Clinton healthcare plan as opposed to HR 676. Otherwise, he said that Powers substantially agreed with Massa’s positions on the war,

Will did not know if Powers was a co-sponsor of the Responsible Plan To End The War In Iraq. A subsequent check of the Web site (<http://www.responsibleplan.com>) shows that Powers is not yet an endorser of the plan.

### **8:00-8:45 Discussion**

Some exposition on PDA history, but mostly the group discussed how PDA can best complement existing issues-based progressive groups. The consensus was that PDA’s emphasis on developing and supporting “better Democrats” was the most complementary role it could play. There was a good suggestion that we engage the community on a number of different levels – youth groups, faith groups, etc. We did not formally designate volunteers for any of the available positions. Robin Reynolds Wilt is the acting Congressional District Point Person and Nicholas Wilt is the acting Database Manager.

### **8:47 Endorsement**

Upon reviewing the questionnaire and in light of the roundtable discussion, attendees voted unanimously in favor of Eric Massa’s endorsement.

### **9:00 Scheduled Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held from 6:30-9:00 PM on June 11, location tbd.