

Politics and Economics

Local GOP questions Obama's citizenship

by Hannah Abelbeck

In a Harris Poll online survey of 2,320 adults conducted in March 2010, 25 percent of the respondents said they believed that Obama was "not born in the United States and so is not eligible to be president."

Our U.S. Representative, Glenn "GT" Thompson, won't say that President Barack Obama is ineligible, but he has concerns.

"There are no certificates that can be produced, and that concerns people," Thompson told Voices. "The constitution says, 'Only natural born citizens.'"

Voices asked why the fact that Hawaii has produced his birth certificate isn't enough to address these concerns. Thompson replied, "I've not seen any evidence of that."

Thompson said he has asked a supreme court justice about the issue. Thompson said that the question of eligibility is "pretty much a settled issue because it's been to the Supreme Court." The birth announcement about the birth of "Barry Obama" in a Hawaiian newspaper had also eased some of his concerns, but he said "I'm not sure

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--Glenn "GT" Thompson

why [Obama] has not [produced his birth certificate]."

Before he became our representative, Thompson was the Chairman of the Centre County Republican Party.

The Centre County Republican Party promotes local "Featured Activism Organizations" on its website. One is The 9-12 Project of Central PA, an outgrowth of FOX News personality Glenn Beck's "We Surround Them" television specials. The Centre GOP's page directs constituents to the local group's webpage and Glenn Beck's site. While they have chosen to feature the group, they have also posted the disclaimer, "Featured organizations are not affiliated with the Centre County Republican Committee. The CCRC is not responsible for their content and does not necessarily endorse views expressed by these organizations."

Hospital board to eliminate membership

by Suzan Erem

The Mount Nittany Medical Center board of trustees will hold a meeting May 13 expected to eliminate, once and for all, direct community involvement in the management of the hospital.

The board will call for a vote to eliminate members from the bylaws and articles of incorporation, according to a special notice mailed in late April to members of the hospital corporation.

But the board needs the members to vote themselves out of existence. Members who attend will constitute a quorum, according to the notice obtained by Voices.

"There's been a long history of community involvement with members of the corporation voting for the board," said former hospital trustee Susan F. Smith. "This is a drastic change and I think people ought to be aware of it."

Smith was one of a group of residents who led a community mobilization in the late 1970s and early 1980s to demand changes at the hospital. She and three others were voted in as trustees to address community concerns.

Barb Seibel was another resident voted in.

"The intent, it seemed to me, was to bring the hospital and the care it provided into the current decade, because it really wasn't," said Seibel. "One of the plusses of having a community membership—they were a literate membership—was forcing their hand to be more proactive with the current public health sense of the profession."

She said issues at the time included staffing issues, quality of care, and confidentiality. The hospital's relationship with Penn State and Hershey Medical Center was also in flux, as it is today.

"The hospital had a long tradition of com-

Thompson told Voices that 9-12 activists are "fulfilling what our founders had hoped" and that he's attended their events "from time to time," including events in Elk and Bradford County. Then he added, "I'm invited to a lot of different events."

Last year Thompson presented a petition to congress, created by Centre County activists at their 2009 Tea Party on April 15. In his speech on the House floor, Thompson said, "I agree with their message." When asked about this event, Thompson said "I had [the petition] on the house floor and spoke regarding their concerns. That scroll is in my office in Washington."

"I don't think they are [extremists]," said Thompson. "Some of the people in the media are trying to discredit people in these groups. Within any group, and any group that comes to see me, every day, there are people who believe, you name it. Most [tea

party goers] are normal citizens."

9-12 members are supposed to support at least seven of Beck's "Nine Principles," which include "America is good," "I believe in God and He is the Center of my Life," and "The family is sacred. My spouse and I are the ultimate authority, not the government."

Thompson believes that the activism of these citizens is good for America. "I think we've run into problems over the years when citizens fell asleep at the wheel," Thompson said. "Founders expected citizens would be active within the governmental process."

"They are exercising their freedom of speech," Thompson said. It is one of "the freedoms we enjoy being citizens of the United States of America"

Concerns that Thompson said he shares with these groups include concerns about direction of the country, the responsiveness of elected officials to their constituents, and the national debt.

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--Susan F. Smith

munity membership when it was in Bellefonte, and those people were very irate when the hospital was moved to the Penn State campus essentially," Seibel said. "That was beginning of the end of community control."

The hospital, founded in 1902 as Bellefonte Hospital, changed its name in 2003 from Centre Community Hospital to Mount Nittany Medical Center, reflecting a changing vision for the hospital which includes research and teaching in addition to community care.

Smith expressed regret at the proposed changes.

"There were members of the corporation who voted for the board of directors and I think it's a shame to lose that tradition," she said.

The proposed amendments to the bylaws eliminate all mention of members and public meetings, fully the first page and three-quarters of the current bylaws. The articles are replaced with this statement:

"This Corporation shall have no members, as such, but in lieu thereof, shall have a Board of Trustees, in which Board there shall be vested all the power and authority to supervise, control, direct and manage the property, affairs and activities of this Corporation."

Mount Nittany Medical Center was contacted but did not submit comments by press time.

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Tuesday May 18, 2010
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Chet Beiler

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Billy McCue

Jim Cawley

John Kennedy

Jean Craig Pepper

Russ Diamond

PA House

District 5

Democratic

Republican

John R. Evans

District 76

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Last year, Thompson was a co-sponsor of Michelle Bachman's constitutional amendment to forbid the use of a foreign or global currency as the legal tender of the United States.

"I think that our sovereignty is the first and foremost responsibility of my role. I think the US dollar is a great currency," said Thompson.

When asked whether this amendment was a priority, Thompson replied, "We have seen where this has happened with the European Union. There's been discussion of whether the US would be following this direction. This legislation sends a message that this is not a road we want to go down. It's more proactive than reactive."

The 9-12 Project of Central PA is also working with The Articles of Freedom, which designers claim is a new Constitutional Congress held in 2009. Like are similarly interested in both the direction

of U.S. political parties and monetary policy. They also have concerns about Obama's citizenship.

They presented a petition to Thompson's Bellefonte office on April 19 based on documents from the Articles of Freedom website, which Thompson had not seen at the time of our interview.

One of their grievances includes a statement that Obama "refuses every request to provide evidence that he is a Natural Born Citizen, as Article II requires."

They believe the constitution relies on "the common belief that the leader of the executive branch of our Federal government have the breath of life bestowed in the womb of a mother, by a father, both citizens of the United States of America owing no allegiance to any foreign sovereignty, and born on sovereign American soil."

In other words, a parent's biological connection to another country could prevent a U.S. citizen from being "true and faithful, unfettered by foreign ties, attachments and allegiance."

Greens make a scene over energy policy



Photo by Hannah Abelbeck
Gary Thornbloom, Chair of the Moshannon Group of the Sierra Club, discusses energy policy with a passerby. After the climate change legislation was put on hold, protesters organized by the National Wildlife Federation demonstrated at the Allen St. gates on April 27. Other signs read "Honk for Energy Independence."

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