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## Republicans, Democrats turn out for annual Lincoln Day

By Ariel Cooley [acooley@joplinglobe.com](mailto:acooley@joplinglobe.com) Mar 4, 2017



Representatives of both parties made their way to Joplin's Lincoln Day event on Saturday — Republicans to celebrate what they saw as a successful year and Democrats to request a town hall meeting from U.S. Rep. Billy Long.

Joplin Lincoln Day, an annual fundraising event for local Republican Party committees, featured speakers including Lt. Gov. Mike Parson, Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, Missouri GOP Chairman Todd Graves, Long and U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt. The contributions received are used to help fund local Republican offices and get-out-the-vote efforts during each election cycle.

With the party having just earned a presidential win, state Rep. Charlie Davis, R-Webb City, said the atmosphere of the event was different than it had been in years.

"Now we have seen the tides turn," said Davis. "We have Republicans controlling the entire General Assembly in Missouri and nationwide, and it's a totally different atmosphere. Where much power is given, there is much responsibility, also."

Blunt said he is always happy to attend the Joplin event.

"I'm glad to have the tremendous support we had in the election last year from Jasper County and from Southwest Missouri," he said.

Long said he was excited to be at a Lincoln Day event where the Republicans were finally in control both on a state and a national level.

"It's great to have a Republican majority, a Republican in the White House," he said. "I feel like a man for six years that has turned into a rock wall everywhere I turned, and now everything has opened up."

About 50 people from two Southwest Missouri groups joined together to protest outside the event, with the main complaint being Long's lack of accessibility. The Joplin chapter of Indivisible, a group formed after the election to protest President Donald Trump's agenda, and members of Southwest Missouri Democrats said they want Long to stand for a town hall meeting.

"It's just time," said Nanda Nunnally-Sparks, the founder of Joplin's chapter of Indivisible. "We want to talk to him. There are some things that are going on that we are really concerned about as citizens. We are a little discouraged by some of the policies that we feel are hurting our communities, and we would like to talk to him."

Krista Stark, executive director of the Southwest Missouri Democrats, said she and other Democrats have sent in official scheduling requests, gone directly to his office and made phone calls. The final straw for her, she said, was being told that a town hall meeting wouldn't be productive.

"At that point, we decided we needed to do something a little more visible," she said.

The name of the protest was "Where in the World is Billy Long?" The social media hashtag #WheresBilly has been used since last year by some to complain about what they perceive as Long's absence from Southwest Missouri.

"We promise to ask our questions in a respectful manner, but we want to have face-to-face interaction with our congressman," Stark said. "We feel like that's half of his job — collecting input from his constituents and then going back and trying to pass legislation that is consistent with what his constituents want."

The No. 1 issue both Stark and Nunnally-Sparks said was important to them is the proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

"I have Obamacare, and I don't want to lose it," Nunnally-Sparks said. "They (lawmakers) keep talking about what they are going to do about it — well, come talk to us. Explain what you want to see happen."

When asked for comment about the protesters' request for a town hall meeting, Long said he doesn't hold such events.

"I never have," he said in a media interview. "I guess it took them six years to find out I've never had one, and they were never part of my program."

Long said he prefers to meet with people individually or in small groups. When people have legitimate concerns, he said he and his assistants always try to get them to the right person.

"I'm not a politician — I never was — and town halls are the kind of things that politicians do," he said. "I just never even thought about having one and no reason to have one now whatsoever."

Long said he is constantly reaching out to people to discuss any issues they have.

"Sure, we care about everybody's concerns, but like I say, when you represent 751,000 (people), each congressman has to do what they think is best to reach those people," he said.

Long acknowledges that he won't be able to keep everyone happy but said he would do the best he could. When it comes to health care, he said people won't have the "rug jerked out from under them."

"The president has said everyone that is covered will stay covered," he said. "I take him at his word. Anything that happens is going to be slow. People are not going to get thrown off of coverage."

### Right to protest

Both state Rep. Charlie Davis, R-Webb City, and U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt said they supported the protesters' right to assemble Saturday at Joplin's Lincoln Day event.

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 **Cat Lockwood** from Facebook 3 days ago  
 I was there. And frankly, no rep should ignore his constituents Republican or Democrat. Many of his Republican constituents are upset too. It's damn time our reps actually represent us.

Like Reply

 **Andy Wofford** from Facebook 3 days ago  
 He's the worst. Why does he keep getting voted in.

Like Reply

 **Susan Fuller** from Facebook 3 days ago  
 Question of the day... For Missouri anyway \U0001f60a

Like Reply

**Susan Fuller** from Facebook 3 days ago  
 Republican Rep not showing up speaks volumes.



Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

3 days ago

Dumbocrat not having Town Hall says more.

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

3 days ago

Anybody heard anything from cLIAR McCaskill??

Like Reply



**Cat Lockwood** from Facebook

3 days ago

Where's Roy? Claire just did a streaming Town Hall

Like Reply



**John Jackson** from Facebook

3 days ago

Goober Billy LOng - 2 Chicken 2 Debate - - 2 Chicken to have a Town Hall. Votes to crash the economy every time but this time with a White "President" in power - we'll soon learn how much of a hypocrite he is. Taking Food Stamps from poor kids to feed himself seems to be working well. Waist size 100??

Like Reply



**jumpinjezabel**

3 days ago

Goober Billy Long - 2 Chicken 2 Debate - - 2 Chicken to have a town hall.

Like Reply



**Georgianna Waters Diener** from Facebook

4 days ago

We the people of Missouri need to talk to you about our public schools.. Since Missouri is pushing for school choice .... How much tax money will public, schools lose to private schools ? How much of the cost for private school will be covered by the voucher program ?

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

4 days ago

Democrat protesting - who'd a thank it.

Like Reply



**Brandy Raney** from Facebook

4 days ago

Demanding that the coward hold a town hall and face the people he represents..

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

4 days ago

Coward - ain't you the special snowflake. Bet you are one of the mightiest keyboard warriors around.

Like Reply



**Colby Merriman** from Facebook

4 days ago

Donald Ward, snowflakes shut down schools and cause public panic. They make the roads where they can't be driven on. Wait.... i think you just described republicans

Like Reply



**Austin Barnes** from Facebook

4 days ago

\*calls liberals special snowflakes for being keyboard warriors, on a post about liberals getting out and protesting in person, after suggesting it's typical of them to be the ones out protesting\* loooooool

Like Reply



**Brandy Raney** from Facebook

4 days ago

Donald, all you have to say is that you are intimidated by people with enough determination to demand what is right.

Like Reply



**Justin Pittman** from Facebook

3 days ago

So the last democrat in office had town hall meetings on he reg right? A couple hundred people out of the hundreds of thousands he represents cry and expect him to talk to them personally . what , do you think he would base decisions on what a handful of people from the other party think? Good luck with that!

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

Brandy Raney. Snowflakes cause mostly minor irritation and then melt down- like liberals.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

When was cLIAR McCaskills last Town Hall.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Susan Fuller** from Facebook

Just FYI: the term "snowflakes" has been uttered by bullies so much it is now laughable. Also, as I'm sure that you don't know... Each snowflake is like a human fingerprint....no 2 are alike. I urge all of you to expand your vocabulary, if it is even possible. Name calling is neither attractive nor does it show your IQ. You choose to call people these names so I guess you also bully your neighbors, family members, friends, coworkers and whoever else doesn't have the same belief as you.  
\*smh #ABullyWillAlwaysJoinInWithOtherBullies

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

The irony of someone calling out somebody for name calling - by calling someone names. Real special there, snowflake. And yes, it is derogatory toward liberal paid protesters like this thread.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Cassie McClendon** from Facebook

Paid? Bawwhaha. That's rich.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

Brandy Raney Intimidated? Me? You are really special.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Cat Lockwood** from Facebook

Claire just had a streaming Town Hall. Where is Roy? or Charlie Davis? Or Bill White? Or Ron Richards?

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Susan Fuller** from Facebook

Donald Ward what "name" did I call you? Are you offended by the word "bully"? Get some help and find out why you are a bully.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Cat Lockwood** from Facebook

There you go. Republican calling people snowflake cause he ain't got an answer. Clair did a streaming Town Hall. I doubt there has been a Dem rep in this town for a long time. So that point is moot. Stop repeating rhetoric. Not having a town hall isn't answering any one's questions. Of either political affiliation.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Brandon Doss** from Facebook

Donald Ward get out of here. We've all seen you and your kind lose your minds when you dont get your way. Go crawl back under your little bridge.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

Ooooooh, a tough guy. Bet you look great in your pink tutu.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Donald Ward** from Facebook

Stream because Liar McCaskill is too afraid to come out in public.

3 days ago

Like Reply



**Brandon Doss** from Facebook

Donald Ward I dont wear a tutu, please keep your fetishes to yourself.

2 days ago

Like Reply

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Ariel Cooley

