

Becoming A Chiropractic Political Activist

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Right now, you are probably thinking something like: "Oh sure, he's the editor of Dynamic Chiropractic and now he's going to tell me how he has become a political activist." If this is what you are thinking, you are basically incorrect.

Because Dynamic Chiropractic is the solely owned publication of the non-profit Motion Palpation Institute, no employee of "DC" or MPI may endorse or in anyway use their position for political support. In essence, this puts me on the same level that you are on, not as editor of "DC," but as a concerned citizen/voter.

This picture is not an endorsement for Congressman Dana Rohrabacher or for Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp. It was not taken because they talked to the editor of "DC." It is a picture that was taken of a person who cared enough to be present and make it perfectly clear that the chiropractic profession was concerned that these two politicians understood our needs.

There were a number of chiropractors in attendance. This fact was recognized by one of the men running for office as he "thanked special people and groups for coming." There were a number of MDs there. Imagine how they felt when they were told by the candidate they supported that he was a regular chiropractic patient (in his opening speech).

Sometimes A Little Is All It Takes

When I was on the swim team in high school, there were two individuals in our state from different schools who had raced against each other their entire high school careers. Each time they raced, one would beat the other by a fraction of a second and in their senior year they met twice, each having been victorious once. They were to swim against each other one more time at the state championship.

Their race turned out to be the highlight of the championship. Who would win? This was the final test.

The race was four pool-lengths long. The entire crowd was standing for the start. The sound of the cheering was deafening.

After the first length, they were even. After the second length, one pulled out a little, but not enough to make a difference. By the end of the third, everyone was going crazy; they were still tied.

The swimmers hit the wall on the third and last turn. They pushed off of the wall underwater. Suddenly, there was a sound that you could only hear if you were on the pool deck -- something like a muffled scream. One of the swimmers hesitated while the other swam on to victory.

As the crowd died down, the rest of the swimmers realized what had happened. One of the swimmers had screamed underwater. This had distracted the other just enough to cause hesitation

and loss of the race.

To this day, the scream was credited for the victory. It didn't matter how long each had practiced, the number of miles swam or the past victories. Everyone remembered the scream.

As the chiropractic profession continues to establish itself in the political arena, it has the opportunity to be the "winning power." Many races are evenly matched, the candidates are looking for one more group to give them the additional funds and votes they need for victory. Quite often, the "winning votes" are given more recognition than those votes that were "in the bag."

You should have been in this picture!

This is election time. A time when all political candidates make two lists:

1. What issues they plan to support when they are elected.
2. What issues they will agree to support if a group (such as chiropractic) will help them get elected.

They have their agenda; you should have yours.

This is the time to support those politicians who have supported chiropractic, and defeat those who have opposed us.

From Rodney Dangerfield To Clint Eastwood

Sometimes, legislators refuse to consider the needs of the chiropractic profession. They vote the organized medicine line. We just don't seem to get any respect.

In California, we have a very effective way of dealing with our political opponents. We pick one of the worst offenders. Then we do everything in our power (and pocket books) to defeat that person. When you wipe out an incumbent and replace that person with someone who is willing to work with the chiropractic profession, you get a lot of attention.

Other legislators who would normally vote against you either "take a walk" or abstain when it comes time to vote. They don't want to be the next target. They decide not to "make our day."*

Ultimately, one of the biggest advantages of being your own political activist is that you don't have to trust someone else's idea of what you want. You get to talk directly to the legislators who will affect your practice.

To reinforce their understanding of chiropractic and to supply them with the ammunition to defend us, all politicians should get copies of important chiropractic research. As you might have guessed, the Meade and Cherkin studies (please see "Chiropractic's Best Defense" on page XX of this issue) should be included.

It's easy to become a chiropractic political activist: Spend a little money, spend a little time, and give a damn.

It is much more difficult to suffer from the results of not becoming a chiropractic political activist.

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* For more information on how to be a chiropractic political "enforcer" in your area, contact Gary Cuneo, executive director, California Chiropractic Association, (916) 387-0177.

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