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Democratic Party of Contra Costa County honors Local 1230 president

By Nick Marnell



Vince Wells, center, surrounded by firefighters as he receives the Robert Reich Award. Photo provided

Vince Wells, president of Local 1230 of the firefighters union, received the inaugural Robert Reich Award from the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County at the 2018 Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt President's Award Dinner April 21 in Concord.

The Robert Reich Award, named after the former U.S. Secretary of Labor during the Clinton administration, recognizes an individual "who is a tireless advocate for union labor and strengthens the partnership with the Democratic Party," according to party chair Maria Alegria.

"I am honored to receive this award and to represent the members of a well respected profession," Wells said. "I have been the union president for the last 10 years and it has allowed me to build relationships throughout the county and state. These relationships have helped me help our members as we fight for adequate staffing as well as pay and benefits."

Wells, a Contra Costa County Fire Protection District captain, has had to walk a fine leadership line throughout his representation of firefighters from both Lamorinda fire agencies. During the economic downturn after the Great Recession, Wells struggled with seven ConFire station closures and the precarious financial situation of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. By agreeing to defer wage increases for the rank and file, Wells attempted to not only maintain a high level of service to the community but also help the agencies stay afloat.

The party also recognized Wells' support of political campaigns, ballot measures and other legislative initiatives that impact working families across the state of California.

Reich, Professor of Public Policy at UC Berkeley, congratulated Wells on receiving the eponymous award. "May we all be inspired by his work and leadership and continue striving to fulfill the vision of our nation - as one that allows for the achievement of the American Dream - no matter your background or history," Reich wrote in a letter to the party.

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