Nancy Pelosi’s summer vacation

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US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will spend the early days of the August legislative recess wining and dining powerful corporate and political figures.

Pelosi will host a two-day “issues conference” for 170 elite guests, starting Friday at her multi-million dollar mansion in San Francisco’s exclusive Pacific Heights neighborhood, *Politico's* John Bresnahan reports. “The following day, Pelosi will shepherd her guests to a Napa Valley winery with buildings designed by world-famous architect Frank Gehry; the speaker and her husband, investor Paul Pelosi, own a nearby vineyard worth between $5 million and $25 million, according to her annual financial disclosure report,” he writes.

Bresnahan notes that the event is not a fundraiser, but a “donor maintenance” event, in which top contributors to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) will be given the chance to rub elbows with leading Democratic Party insiders. These include top Obama adviser David Axelrod; Obama economic adviser Mark Zandi (who served as economic adviser to John McCain in the 2008 elections); media pundit and former Clinton adviser James Carville; Rep. George Miller of California, who chairs the Education and Labor Committee; Massachusetts Representative Ed Markey, of the Energy and Commerce Committee; and Rep. Xavier Becerra of California, vice chairman of the Democratic Caucus.

To receive an invitation to the event, it is enough to have donated $30,400 to the DCCC during the last election cycle, a figure that also happens to be the maximum allowable contribution to a national party committee.

“A donation to the DCCC of that size qualifies a donor to be part of the ‘Speaker’s Cabinet,’ a fundraising program that gives supporters expanded access to Pelosi,” Bresnahan says.

Among those with such access are “Ann Getty Earhart, an heiress to the Getty oil fortune; Elizabeth Fisher, whose in-laws founded The Gap, the retail clothing giant; and Eugene Eidenberg, a former Carter White House staffer who is now a San Francisco venture capitalist,” according to Bresnahan. Paul Pelosi, the speaker’s husband, has as much as $50,000 in stock invested in one of Eidenberg’s firms, Granite Ventures.

Nancy Pelosi, who belongs to the “liberal” wing of the Democratic Party, recently launched a bit of moralistic criticism in the direction of the health insurance industry in relationship to President Obama’s stalled health care “overhaul.”

“It's almost immoral what (insurance companies) are doing,” Pelosi said. “Of course they've been immoral all along in how they have treated the people they insure. They are the villains. They have been part of the problem in a major way.”

This serves as nothing more than a rhetorical smokescreen for the Obama health care counterrevolution, which seeks to ration coverage and gut Medicare assistance for the elderly. Every component of the plan championed by Obama and Pelosi aims to buffet the profit margins of the major players in the health care industry: the HMOs, the pharmaceuticals, and, of course, the insurers. (See: “The drug lobby demands, and gets, Obama pledge to protect health care profits”).

Pelosi’s professed outrage at the insurance industry does not hold up to even cursory examination. In the current election cycle, the insurance industry has been Pelosi’s third-largest donor, giving her $31,000. HMOs and pharmaceuticals contributed generously as well, handing over $17,500 and $15,000 respectively. The finance/insurance/real estate sector has been by far the largest donor to Pelosi’s DCCC, giving it so far $3.4 million in the current cycle.

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Pelosi is in fact playing a protagonist's role in the most far-reaching attack on the social position of the working class in US history. Collaborating closely with the Bush administration, Pelosi helped pushed through congress the bailout of Wall Street last fall. The trillions extended to the financial aristocracy must now be paid through cuts to the jobs, wages, health care, and retirement of workers.

Pelosi's cultivation of the Democratic Party's elite donors—over two days at two of her multi-million dollar residences—takes place amidst the greatest level of social misery the US has seen since the Great Depression. It also takes place in a state, California, whose near-bankruptcy has been used as a sledgehammer against social spending and the pay of state workers.

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