
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Joe Nunley ♦

Profits of War: Why Is the Pentagon Exempt from Budget Cuts?

COME HEAR SPEAKER

WILLIAM HARTUNG

* Director of the Arms and Security Initiative at the New America Foundation

* Author of *Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex* (2010)

Thursday, April 14th

7:30 pm sign in/refreshments * 8:00 forum * 9:30 club business

Bank Street College of Education

(610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive))

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President's Corner

Joe Nunley

WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE?

The most exciting moment for me this week was when Richard Siegel, an exemplary member of our club and former president, spoke out forcefully at the Steering Committee meeting and said that we should not endorse or support any of our elected officials for re-election if they supported the proposed budget of Governor Andrew Cuomo. He said, "We must draw the line somewhere, and enabling the millionaire's tax cut to expire is unacceptable."

This budget will cut 1.5 billion dollars to aid to education in the state, and 2.85 billion dollars in Medicaid, as well as other horrendous cuts in social services, all of which unfairly target the poor and the middle class. I'm happy to report that as of today our electeds, Senator Perkins and Assemblyman O'Donnell are opposing at least part of the budget and Senator Espaillat is opposing the entire budget.

Bad ideas are dominating our national discourse. We have the so-called success of the Tea Party movement and the two party responses to it. If our president accommodates himself 100% to bad ideas, is it like Franklin Roosevelt saying Hitler had good ideas and instituting them himself? The Tea Party is wrong. Government spending has not caused our economic collapse. Dealing with the deficit, as club member David Weyman recently pointed out to us, is not the way out of it. Making drastic cuts will compound the problem. Basic Keynesian economics tells us we must spend our way out of this problem.

Our party is sadly leading the country 180% in the wrong direction in bringing about an economic recovery because our President surrenders to one bad Republican idea after another. He has implicitly conceded to their notion that the stimulus failed (which it didn't), when it wasn't nearly large enough.

I have been told that the Catholic Church believes that a budget is a moral document because it indicates where one's priorities are. The president's budget is an immoral document and the fact that he can brag that this is the lowest percentage of domestic discretionary spending since Dwight D. Eisenhower's budget is something of which he and we in supporting him should be ashamed. The governor's budget is also an immoral document. Am I drawing the line? Not yet.

Now we have the spectrum of corporate tax dodging. Exxon Mobil made \$19 billion in profits in 2009. Exxon not only paid no federal income taxes, it actually received a \$156 million rebate from the IRS. Bank of America received a \$1.9 billion tax refund from the IRS last year, although it made \$4.4 billion in profits and received a bailout from the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department of nearly \$1 trillion. Goldman Sachs in 2008 paid only 1.1 percent of its income in taxes even though it earned a profit of \$2.3 billion and received almost \$800 billion from the Federal Reserve and US Treasury Department. Boeing, which received a \$30 billion contract from the Pentagon to build 179 airborne tankers, got a \$124 million refund from the IRS last year. But after all, these guys have the lobbyists who write the laws. Why should they pay taxes in our plutocracy? Am I drawing the line? Not yet.

Since Bush 1 we have intervened in Panama, Kuwait, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya. Had Senator McCain and Joe Lieberman had their way we would have been fighting Russians in Georgia and bombing Iran.

Add all those we have killed, wounded, widowed, orphaned, or uprooted, and the number runs into the millions. All these wars have helped mightily to bankrupt us.

\$1 trillion per year for the war machine! More than the rest of the world combined! Defense 750 billion, Afghanistan 104 billion, Global War on Terror 145.2 billion, Homeland Security 37.6 billion. Our 2009

expenditure on the military was \$663,55,000,000. The next country on the international list: the UK at 69,000,000,000. (China we don't know, but the estimate is 96 billion.)

This money should be poured into the states rather than into a state of war. As Representative Barney Frank said, "The socially economically responsible way to bring down the deficit is to substantially reduce America's military footprint."

This point is where I have decided to draw the line: I will not support any candidate who will not vote to significantly reduce our military budget or who votes for further funding for the Afghanistan debacle. If we don't stand to end this madness, who will?



State Committeeman Report

Daniel Marks Cohen

I was pleased to attend the Justice Will be Served rally on Saturday, March 19th to protest the mistreatment of the employees at Saigon Grill. In case you missed it, the rally was well attended and got a lot of media and pedestrian attention. This is an important matter—working people at all levels deserve to be treated with dignity, and the sham that Saigon Grill perpetuates needs to be addressed. I urge you to learn more about this issue at www.sweatshopfreeny.tumblr.com. And to learn what businesses ARE treating their workers with respect, go to www.boycottsaigongrill.blogspot.com for more information.

Still no word on the new Democratic State Party chair; resumably all the attention paid to the budget battle has distracted the governor from less pressing matters, but it does mean that the State Committee is in limbo until Cuomo makes a decision to keep Jay Jacobs or replace him.

One matter I want to call the club's attention to is a recent One Percent for Culture campaign that is beginning to get underway (www.oneforculture.org). It is advocating that one percent of the budget be allocated to culture (currently less than one fourth is allocated to cultural activities) in the 2013 cycle, and the organization, while not endorsing, will note which citywide candidates support the idea. This is reminiscent of a similar campaign for parks in the

last big election cycle of 2001. Of course, 9/11 moved everything else off the radar, but the "One Percent" idea was a potent tool for getting people to pay attention. And why should more money go to cultural matters than other areas? According to the campaign, almost \$8 billion and 54,000 jobs are created from the amount currently allocated, certainly paying for itself in tax revenue. If the allocation was increased from the current \$150 million, it could potentially lead to MORE revenue, and MORE jobs, theoretically paying for itself and also covering the shortfall from wherever the money is reallocated from to increase cultural financing.

Pleased to see former DA candidate and now gun control advocate Richard Borne highlighting many of the challenges and the few successes in the gun control arena at CFD last month. He has done the circuit of clubs, and is a convincing presence on the subject. I know that Vance is doing a fine job as DA, but I would have liked to have seen Borne in that role. I hope there is another opportunity for him in elected public service in the future.



Steering Committee Member

Richard A Siegel

The New York State Budget Agreement

At this moment, the state legislature has started voting on the State budget. The governor and many legislators are expressing pride at having an on time budget agreement. When passed, it will have cut almost 10 billion dollars. There will be dramatic cuts to education, healthcare, services for the elderly, teen homeless shelters and just about every safety net program in the state. What the budget will also include, is a tax break for millionaires like Michael Bloomberg, Jamie Dimon (CEO of JPM Chase) and Donald Trump. By the time you read this article, it is likely this bad budget deal will be passed.

The most well off in this state are getting a tax break because the governor refused to include an extension of the 'millionaire's tax' initially passed to close a gap in the state budget. The Broadway Democrat's steering committee passed the following resolution that was presented to Danny O'Donnell, Adriano Espaillat, and Bill Perkins:

We, the Steering Committee of the Broadway Democrats, strongly urge our elected officials in the state legislature to vote against any state budget which allows the so-called millionaire's tax to expire while cutting services to the lower and middle classes.

We took this exceptional step, even though some of the worst cuts were lessened by strong negotiation from our electeds, to protest the economic unfairness that is dominating the state and the country. For many of us, this was a "The emperor has no clothes" moment. Someone needs to stand up and advocate for economic and social justice.

Cutting taxes for the wealthy does not help the economy—not in New York State and not in the United States. It simply means that the rest of us, the vast majority of the citizens, have to pay more for things and that our government has fewer resources to support needed programs.

In the coming months, when we hear about teacher layoffs in upstate school districts, when we hear about hiring freezes and layoffs in the city and state government, when we hear about cutbacks to senior day care programs, when we hear about students who can no longer afford college tuition, remember that Donald Trump, Michael Bloomberg and Jamie Dimon will be paying less state income tax. According to our Governor, this arrangement should improve the economic condition of our state. This concept simply does not make sense. And this is why we asked our electeds to vote on principle this time instead of taking the pragmatic route.



Letters to the Editor

Lizabeth Sostre

CUTS

A nation can also be judged by how it treats its senior citizens.

With that in mind, we should reexamine the recent call to change the seniority rules for teachers. It is not all about keeping the best and the brightest regardless of years of service. It is pointedly about getting rid of teachers before they become pensionable. It sounds like reasonable financial advice. But what happens to these teachers who have served for so long to suddenly face a future with little or no pensions.

Unfortunately, or so it seems, people are living longer. By putting senior teachers out to pasture with no pensions, by cutting back on Medicare and Social Security, by closing senior centers where some seniors get their only meal of the day, we solve the problem of increased longevity. These measures will surely reduce the senior population. And isn't that what all this is really about? It just costs too much to continue supporting unproductive rapidly deteriorating parasites.

A nation can also be judged by how it treats its senior citizens.

(A note of caution: This grim future awaits new teachers as well.)



Tina Dobsevage, M.D.
Jonathan House, M.D.

We are physicians and have a deep understanding of the harm done by smoking. We are also ex-smokers, life-long democrats, and more or less loyal supporters of Broadway Democrats. Having thus detailed our bone-fides, CVs, and expertise let us now underline our unreserved and unambivalent support for President Nunley's position expressed in his delightful column on "The Smoking Ban". Although some might expand Joe's list in his assertion that "Except for African-Americans, low income drug users, and illegal immigrants, I've never seen any group so exploited and ill-treated as smokers in America today", Joe will henceforth be known in our thoughts as the re-incarnation of Tom Paine for in his clear and vigorous defense of our freedoms.

The distinction between "concern for health and health fascism" may seem like a single issue matter but it is of a piece with so much more that is essential. As Paul Potter, then President of SDS, said at the very first March on Washington against the war in Vietnam, "we must name the system!" that takes away our freedoms. (The very next year at the second such march—Carl Ogelsby, the next President of SDS—spoke aloud the name: imperialism.) In one step, President Nunley has made the call and named the name: "health fascism".

We salute our President and, if Broadway Dems had such a position, we would vote for Joe to be President for Life!

ATTENTION

ALL!

The Broadway Democrats will be out:

WHEN: Saturday April 9, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

WHERE: On Broadway between 108th & 112th

We will be encouraging our neighbors to attend our ***April 14th Forum on the Military Industrial Complex***, getting signatures for our resolution supporting US withdrawal from Afghanistan, and distributing other literature.

PLEASE JOIN US!

(If it rains we will be out on Sunday)

Call Joe Nunley at 212-316-2963 for exact location.

Membership

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$20; senior dues are \$5.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Special Interests: _____

This Month's Speaker:

William D. Hartung is Director of the Arms and Security Initiative at the New America Foundation, a program that serves as a resource for journalists, policymakers, and citizens' organizations on issues of weapons proliferation, the economics of military spending and alternative approaches to national security strategy. Previously, Mr. Hartung served for 15 years as director of the Arms Trade Resource Center at the World Policy Institute at the New School. He is the author of numerous books, reports, and articles, including *Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex* (2010), *How Much Are You Making on the War Daddy?*(2003), *And Weapons For All*(1995), and *Economic Consequences of a Nuclear Freeze* (1984).

COME HEAR HIM SPEAK!

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District Leaders: Curtis Arluck,
Paula Diamond Román
President: Joe Nunley
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

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