
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Luis Román ♦



The State Budget:



How It Works

How to Advocate Changes

Speakers will discuss the basics of how the state budget works, the governor's and legislators' roles, income vs. spending; and how to advocating for changes in the budget, to emphasize political priorities or get a bigger chunk.

Thursday, February 11th

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

Congregation Ramath Orah

550 West 110th Street (off Broadway)

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District Leader's Report Paula Diamond Román

On Tuesday, January 12th, a 7.0 earthquake hit Haiti, the most powerful to hit Haiti in two centuries, causing death and destruction on a scale hard to imagine. In a country already impoverished, still reeling from Hurricane Gustav in 2008 and years of problematic governments, the devastating loss of basic shelter, water and food supplies, and medical services is only dwarfed by the shocking loss of life, now estimated at 200,000 and still rising. We've all donated something to some organization and we've all watched the news in horror and helplessness as they cover the devastation, as well as the debates over why the aid is taking so long to get to people and what organizations are the best to give to.

The Broadway Democrats have been given an amazing opportunity to feel like we're making a difference. At our January meeting, we were fortunate enough to have a presentation by Arol Buntzman (husband of our own Judge Laura Safer-Espinoza) and Evens Anozine (a local small business owner in Manhattan Valley) who are on the board of a small not-for-profit foundation that does work, primarily around education, in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. (www.we-cant-have-that.org) Evens is from a small town, Leogane, outside of Port-au-Prince. Leogane desperately needs help which hasn't come yet.

The Broadway Democrats have decided to "Adopt Leogane" and passed the following resolution:

"As a specific response to the tragic situation in Haiti, Broadway Democrats adopts the town of Léogâne, at the epicenter of the earthquake, where 95% of the buildings have been destroyed. We urge people to contribute to the "We Can't Have That Foundation", which with its on the ground partners will use 100% of its

contributions to restore Léogâne 's water supply and to help rebuild its hospital, schools and homes."

Now, we're trying to sign on additional partners.

Contributing to "Adopt Leogane" isn't instead of donating money to larger organizations providing aid all over Haiti. This is a small, concrete project where we will be able to see the difference we're making. For those of us watching the anguish on the news and feeling helpless, this is a great way to feel like we're helping.

So why this project? Why Leogane? The first answer is immediate need. For various reasons, including logistics and sheer volume, much of the relief efforts have concentrated in Port-au-Prince. Ninety percent of the buildings in Leogane are destroyed or seriously damaged. Leogane originally had a hundred thousand residents but thousands have died. The remaining residents are living out in the open. Leogane desperately needs relief aid, especially before hurricane season hits.

So why this project? Why such a small organization? The second answer is "eyes on the ground." Members of our community are on the board of the "We Can't Have That Foundation" which has prior experience working in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. (Bypassing Port-au-Prince and bringing goods and materials in through the Dominican Republic has proven very effective.) Not only have they partnered with Service Oequimenique D'Entrante (S.O.E.), an NGO operating in Haiti for thirty-two years, funded in the past by UNICEF and other international organizations, but Evens' surviving family and friends in Leogane will be among the first to let us know about the success of the relief efforts.

So why this project? Why such limited goals? The third answer is concrete and doable. "Adopt Leogane" has four main relief goals with varying levels of immediacy and time needed to accomplish. They are working with a company in

Leogane to increase the availability of free, clean, disease-free drinking water by purchasing a new water pump and repairing pipes. We can see the amount of money raised so far and how close we are to buying a new water pump and we will be able to see the immediate relief of suffering when that water is available. They are putting together plans and budgets to provide to ecological toilets and sanitation technology. We will be able to track this goal as it reaches fruition, we will be able to see reductions in waste-borne disease as well as the introduction of “green” technology desperately needed in Haiti. Once these immediate goals are taken care of, if we continue to receive sufficient donations, “Adopt Leogane” will move on to the longer-term goals of helping to rebuild schools, hospitals and homes and creating a ‘Life Center’ for area children orphaned by the earthquake.

So why this project? Why me? I admit that I’m often one of those “here and now” people. I sometimes get frustrated by discussions about why and when and should that don’t lead to concrete actions and measurable results. I like to see what is going on and what is going to happen. I also admit that I’m one of those people who switch the channel when I’ve reached my limit of watching suffering on news when I can’t do anything about it. I’m a community organizer; I like to do. The Broadway Democrats have been given an amazing opportunity to do. We have been given a wonderful chance to make an immediate, concrete, measurable difference in the suffering on the news. I am asking all of you to donate to “Adopt Leogane,” to join me in organizing to raise money for Leogane, and to spread the word: we have a new sister city, Leogane, Haiti.

L'Equisitus Cafe
153 Manhattan Ave. (at 107th Street)

Evens is putting together a special Creole dinner menu of foods from Haiti where a portion of the proceeds will go to “Adopt Leogane.” He is also accepting donations of water, medicines, and especially tents. Call 212-280-1145 for more information about the dinner menu, the collection schedule and other fundraising efforts.

District Leader’s Report Curtis Arluck

For the next three months I’ll be in tax season and so not able to write a full column, let alone the economic treatise that **I’d like to**. So I will confine myself to a continuation of what I wrote last month, which is that while President Obama, as he showed again in his State of the Union address, is doing a fairly good job in both explaining and implementing his economic policies, he is losing traction because he is failing to confront the Republicans on the three principles of their philosophy that got us into this mess, and will keep us there unless they are thoroughly repudiated:

- 1) Generalized tax and spending cuts do not stimulate the economy and create jobs, they depress the economy and lose jobs. Specific tax credits, such as for employers who create specific jobs, may be beneficial; cutting rates for everybody, especially the rich, is not.
- 2) Even if you accept that the deficit must be cut for the overall economic prosperity of the country—and the actions of the last two Republican administrations, which ballooned the deficit and destroyed the economy render ridiculous the Republicans’ claims to sagacity on this score—deficit reduction is a long term benefit which will have the opposite effects short term. The most valid criticism of Obama’s economic policies is that they have not created enough new jobs, even though most other economic indicators are looking significantly better. The short term effects of the spending freeze that Obama is proposing is that job creation will be reduced, as he acknowledges when he says we can’t do this until next year. So the Democrats mantra needs to be that spending cuts will cut jobs now, which we cannot afford to do, now.
- 3) Budgeting 101. When you cut taxes you reduce the amount of money you have available, therefore increasing your deficit. The Republicans’ claim that the opposite is true is like something out of Alice in Wonderland—but the Democrats never say so.

Most vexing to me about Obama’s proposed deficit reduction plan is that defense spending will not be cut. There is no waste here? There are no opportunities for belt-tightening here?

Everything that the military does is more important than everything the government departments in charge of education, health care, housing, transportation and job creation do? This is a Democrat talking?



President's Corner Luis Román

Thanks to everyone who came out for our January meeting, kicking off what promises to be an exciting 2010 for Broadway Dems. In addition to hearing from our Assembly member, Danny O'Donnell, update us on important local issues, we got an update on conditions in Haiti, in the tragic aftermath of the earthquake. Broadway Democrats approved a resolution (which you can read in this newsletter) to adopt the town of Léogâne, which was devastated by the disaster. You will hear more about what Broadway Dems will be doing in support of Léogâne in the coming weeks.

Events in the political world have transpired in rapid-fire succession over the past several weeks. Angry voters in Massachusetts signaled their discontent with the status quo by electing Republican Scott Brown to assume the seat of the late Ted Kennedy in the U.S. Senate. The U.S. Supreme Court declared corporations to be endowed with free speech rights under the First Amendment. President Obama delivered his first State of the Union Address, considered by some to be a crossroads in his year-old administration. The President followed the address up with an unprecedented televised Q & A session with House Republicans. What significance do all these events hold for us as Broadway Democrats?

It would be naive for us to write off Scott Brown's victory in Massachusetts as some kind of electoral quirk. There is clearly an undercurrent of anger in many states over the current state of the economy, the seemingly nonexistent job market and the apparent paralysis in Washington, where a year was not enough time to complete health care reform legislation. It is both true and fair to recognize that President Obama inherited more urgent problems than any new President since FDR. However, in our "what have you done for me lately?" culture, the

President does not get the benefit of the doubt, nor can he expect people to have long memories. People expect results, and will look elsewhere for them if they don't see what they want soon. President Obama and congressional Democrats must resolve the health care logjam and produce a jobs bill by the spring, or face the prospect of substantial electoral losses in November.

The ultimate legacy of the Reagan revolution was visited upon us in the Supreme Court's decision in the *Citizens United* case. A thirty year campaign to saturate the federal judiciary with conservative ideologues has resulted in a decision which will live in infamy, alongside the *Dred Scott* decision and *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This decision essentially removes any restriction on the ability of corporation to contribute to political campaigns. The obscene profits of corporate America, and foreign corporations, can now be driven into buying seats in Congress, state governments and even the judiciary of the many states the have direct elections for their judges. Congress must devote itself to finding a solution that limits the impact of this monstrous decision. I have one suggestion: a law requiring that all political advertisements, on radio, television and newspapers, be required to disclose the identities of every individual and corporation making donations to the committee which produced the ad. Don't allow anyone to hide behind the "Committee to Elect Candidate X" label. If corporations want to pour money into the system in order to exercise their outsized influence, force them to declare what side they stand on, so that voters can consider that information before they make their choices.

In confess to being of two minds as I watched President Obama deliver the State of the Union address last week. I was both stirred and inspired by the President's eloquence. He has a rare gift for distilling complex issues, and presenting them in language we can all understand. Still, I couldn't shake the sense I was watching a great point guard being boxed in by a full-court press, with defenders surrounding him, desperately looking for a teammate to whom he could pass the ball. The President needs his teammates in Congress to step up and start playing together if he hopes to start racking up legislative victories on behalf of the American people.

I suspect many of us were more heartened by the President's performance in front of a hostile

crowd of House Republicans at the end of the week. This was the President in professor mode, patiently answering the impertinent questions of insurgent House Republicans in a remarkable Socratic dialogue. Watching the President's command of the issues, his mastery of the hostile setting, I harkened back to the 2008 campaign, feeling some of the same inspiration and hope that was stirred in so many of us. The President needs to maintain this aggressive posture, challenging Republicans to either work with him or stand up for their ridiculous, retrograde positions, so that clear distinctions can be drawn between the parties. The President also needs to challenge fellow Democrats to remember the principles that helped restore our party to power in Washington, and to not forsake those principles out of fear.

As I said, it's been a busy month, and the coming months promise to be even busier. Come join us on February 11th, to talk about the serious budget issues facing us in New York.



Assembly Member's Report Daniel O'Donnell

New York State is currently reviewing the issue of natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale Formation, deep sedimentary rock that extends from the Southern Tier into Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Since 2008, I have attended multiple public hearings on this topic as a member of the Assembly's Environmental Conservation Committee. At those hearings I aggressively questioned drilling company officials about their refusal to disclose chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process. I have subsequently called for a complete ban on drilling in the city's watershed.

Most recently, on January 13, 2010, I wrote Governor Paterson to advocate for the withdrawal of the current Environmental Impact Statement regarding drilling in the Marcellus Shale. The statement, released by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation in September 2009, fails to acknowledge the real risk of contamination in the watershed that serves New York City and the surrounding

counties. With this glaring omission, New York State should not use the report as a basis for the granting of drilling permits.

On that same day, I sent a letter to Majority Leader Harry Reid and Speaker Nancy Pelosi urging the Senate and the House to pass S.1215/H.R.2766 which would increase federal oversight of hydraulic fracturing. Any proposed drilling sites should be reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency, under the regulations of the Safe Water Drinking Act, to ascertain any impact on our drinking water.

In light of the potentially irreversible environmental and public health repercussions, I will continue to work with my Assembly colleagues, including those who represent upstate districts, to ensure the safety of all New Yorkers. We must ensure the strictest possible review and the implementation of stringent safeguards before granting drilling permits.



Results of Club Elections

In January, we elected the Broadway Democrats' officers and Steering Committee members for 2010. There are still many opportunities for you to get more involved. You can help put together forums, especially if there's a specific topic you're very involved with, you can help "publish" the newsletter or plan the fundraiser and you can join the Campaign, Technology, and Membership committees. Talk to one of us at the next meeting!

President:	Luis Román
Vice President:	Joe Nunley
Treasurer:	Alisa Martin
Secretary:	Gretchen Borges

Steering Committee:

Kennis Davis
Katherine De Lawter
Martina Garcia
Joyce Goodman
Katie Hanner
Norm Levine
Sarah Martin
Joe Robins
Carrie Schmitz-Marlin
Richard Siegal
Shane Seger
David Weiman

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: _____

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Telephone:

E-mail:

Special Interests: _____

The Broadway Democrats
P.O. Box 1099
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

FIRST
CLASS

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell
District Leaders: Curtis Arluck,
Paula Diamond Román
President: Luis Román
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The State Budget: Facts and Advocacy

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