
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

RACE AND JUSTICE

with

JONATHAN MOORE

Attorney
for the Family of Eric Garner
and
Lead Counsel
for the Central Park Five

Thursday, February 12th

Meeting starts at 8:00 PM

Cathedral Park Towers

125 West 109th Street (between Columbus and Amsterdam)

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District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Leaders

This year the only office of any consequence on the ballot will be Democratic District Leader, but I write this month of our higher leaders, who have had an especially eventful couple of months, rated herein with positive or negative stars:

Obama **** Our President gave one of his, and our country's best, State of the Union Addresses, eloquently and forcefully claiming that the credit for our significant economic recovery is due to the economic policies he and the Democrats have pursued. We need more, not less of these policies: more spending for infrastructure and education, more efforts to combat human-caused global warming, more undoing of tax loopholes which favor the rich and produce no jobs. If I quibble with any of the President's speech, it's that he stop talking so much about the deficit—which he has reduced by two thirds—and raising taxes for the rich to pay for middle class tax cuts. This “my tax cuts are better than your tax cuts” approach plays into the hands of the conservatives. We should not be stressing *any* tax cuts; the best way to create jobs is not through tax cuts, but through spending on infrastructure and the environment.

De Blasio ** Our Mayor has successfully pursued many worthwhile initiatives, from Pre-K to affordable housing. Unlike the dreadful PBA head Lynch, he handled the events surrounding the tragic murders of police officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos with intelligence, dignity, and restraint. Bad cops such as Eric Garner's assailant Daniel Pantaleo destroy the lives of families, undermine people's faith in law enforcement, cost the city millions of dollars in legal settlements, and ultimately do a disservice to

the vast majority of good cops who understandably but incorrectly come to the defense of their erring colleagues. My one major criticism of Mayor De Blasio is in his mulish (pardon the pun) attempts to ban carriage horses in Central Park. This policy, fueled by real estate money which funds the unethical organization NYClass, starts from a general premise which is preposterous—it is *not* inhumane for horses to pull carriages, that is what they do!—and follows with a specific untruth: these particular horses are not mistreated, vet after vet has testified how well treated they are. The one legitimate cause for concern, the horses' trip through city streets from the stables to Central Park, is blown way out of proportion. There have been exactly three Central Park carriage horse traffic fatalities in the last 70 years, hardly a reason to destroy something that has employed thousands, brought joy to millions, and is a lasting and positive link from our city's past to its future.

Cuomo + * and -**** The best recent policy taken by any US executive was Governor Cuomo's banning fracking in New York; one of the loveliest speeches of this year or any year was Andrew Cuomo's tribute to his father Mario. But then we have the Governor's cavalier and ultimately erroneous ignoring the Mayor and closing the subways in the face of a storm that produced less than 4” of new snow. Worst are the education policies: even if you think that Charter Schools are great, even if you just love the idea of firing a few hundred more teachers a year, *these are extremely minor aspects of education policy*. When the UFT was supporting a truly outrageous policy, allowing teachers with seniority to “bump” popular established teachers from their classrooms, virtually everyone said this was terrible, and the practice was (mostly) stopped. But on Charters and teacher tenure, the

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Governor is listening only to voices with their own, generally money-driven agendas. Listen before you speak, Governor Cuomo, as you did on fracking and on your beautiful tribute to your father.

Silver -*** The former Speaker ably led one of the most progressive legislative bodies in the country for more than 20 years. But, legally guilty or not, he clearly enriched himself by encouraging people with business before the State to become his and his firm's private law clients. Broadway Democrats was founded in the later part of the New York City reform movement; Franz Leichter is probably our only surviving link to this movement's early days in the 1950's. Sure, reformers, like anybody, can be holier than thou, but the changes they fought for, for openness in government, against the corrosive effects of money on politics, are as important now as they were then. No matter what his legislative accomplishments, Sheldon Silver let us down. His successor has got to do better.

Boehner and Netanyahu -***** Israel has come under attack, most of it I believe unfair, for its attempts to defend itself against the terrorist organizations Hamas and Hezbollah. The Obama Administration, as it should have, has defended Israel every single time it has been attacked, too often being the only country in the world to come to Israel's defense. When your civilians are under attack, when your very survival is threatened, should you seek out more allies, and try to work even more closely with your closest and strongest ally, or should you further alienate potential new allies and at every turn try to undermine and defeat the leaders of the only real ally you have? Should be an easy choice, right? Not for the perverse right wing leader of Israel. He constantly undermines President Obama, preferring to ally with right wing legislators in the U.S. who command no troops, and to pander to right wing religious settlers in Israel who refuse to fight. As for Boehner, there is only one word for someone who attempts to subvert his country's leader, over an issue that could lead to nuclear war. That word is treason.

President's Corner

Luis Román

Welcome to 2015, a year that already promises major changes to New York state politics, as well as many challenges for President Obama and Democrats in Congress. Locally, we've already weathered a slightly less major than advertised snowstorm. All in all, 2015 has already been an exciting year, and we aren't even a month in yet!

I am proud to have been elected President of Broadway Democrats. This term is my third opportunity to serve as President and I am looking forward to working with all of you on many of the issues that will be affecting our lives in the coming months.

Locally, protests are continuing over police misconduct, particularly with regard to the death of Eric Garner, and the failure of the Staten Island District Attorney to secure an indictment against the officer who caused Mr. Garner's death. It appears likely that the D.A., Daniel Donovan, will be the Republican candidate in the special election to replace recently resigned Congressman Michael Grimm. Donovan's failure to achieve justice in the Garner case will surely be an important issue in the contest.

This month, Broadway Democrats presents a forum on the subject of Race and Justice, featuring Jonathan Moore, noted civil rights attorney who represented members of the Central Park Five in their lawsuit against the City as well as plaintiffs in the lawsuit which ended the NYPD's stop and frisk policy. Jonathan will present his informed perspective on the continuing issues of race and racism in the justice system. I look forward to a vigorous exchange of ideas on how we as citizens can have a positive impact on New York's justice system.

At the state level, the recent arrest of former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver is going to have a substantial impact on the business of the State Legislature. With Republicans once

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again in control of the State Senate, a strong progressive voice is needed in the Assembly to counteract the conservatives in the Senate and the centrist tendencies of the Governor. As always, we can rely on our Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell to be a stalwart force on behalf of progressive values in Albany. We can only hope the new leadership in the Assembly will follow Danny's example.

In Washington, Democrats must be prepared for a long two years. With Republicans firmly in control of both houses of Congress, there is very little chance of any legislation being passed that will actually produce positive benefits for the country. Instead, we can expect Republicans to seize every opportunity to attempt to undo the accomplishments of the last six years. Despite the differences we have had with President Obama on policy matters during his administration, he has been successful in effecting enormous changes in the U.S. health care system and he has overseen the country's economic rebound from the disaster of the Bush years. He will be fighting Republicans on many fronts, and we must do whatever we can to support him.

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to have been elected President of Broadway Democrats for 2015. Together, let's make this a great year for New York.



Steering Committee

Rachelle Bradt

Real Rent Reform 2015 - our last best chance to preserve rent stabilization in New York City

City Councilman Mark Levine's Housing Forum on January 28 was packed. "Housing is the number one issue in District 7", said Levine. "Last year the city had 30,000 evictions and up to 60,000 homeless people per night. Of these, two thirds are families and 25,000 are children."

Many of the attendees, myself included, are currently experiencing the phase-out of rent- and eviction protections. And yet, 2015 presents a real opportunity to demand the reversal of the law that brought on this tide of destabilization.

As we all know, when the lease for a rent stabilized apartments reaches the threshold of \$2500, the apartment is considered "luxury" and no longer subject to rent regulations. It provides an irresistible incentive for landlords to push long-time tenants out of their properties. There are renters who are able to pay two and three fold the amount of rent. Public Advocate Letitia "Tish" James assured the attendees that she is "all lawyered up" and ready to fight for rent laws that secure affordable housing. Ironically, our City elected officials do not have the power to legislate City rent laws. They are decided in Albany.

So what is the opportunity? Number one: On June 15 the current rent laws will expire. Number two: After many years, we have elected City officials who are willing to fight for tenants' rights. According to the website of R3/Real Rent Reform, "Bill de Blasio...has promised to fight for home rule and repeal of vacancy destabilization, and to go to Albany with tenants to press that agenda."

The day to go to Albany is February 10. Buses will be available for a day of lobbying. For details on this event and other related events go to: www.realrentreform.org. The website lists upcoming local events. There will be more. The moment is ours to seize!



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The Broadway Democrats Newly Elected Steering Committee

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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 \$25; senior dues are \$10.

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

FIRST
CLASS

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Paula Diamond Román
President: Luis Román
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

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