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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

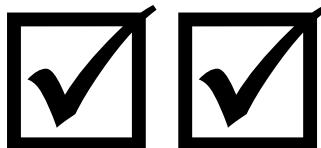
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# A Discussion of Local Issues

*and*

## *Annual Club Elections*



Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>

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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Volume 35, Issue 1

January 2010

## District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

### Time for Democrats to Fight Back

First of all, happy new year! The first year of the Obama Administration has been a vast improvement over the eight year disaster that was the Bush Presidency: the economy has begun to improve, a million jobs have been created or saved, unemployment benefits have been extended, S Chip is law and a landmark health insurance bill soon will be, the bellicose, bullying foreign policy has been abandoned in favor of one based on reason and respect for other countries and their peoples.

*None* of this would have happened had the Republicans kept power. *All* of the domestic initiatives of President Obama and the Congressional Democrats—on foreign policy happily the Republicans can't do much but scream and shout from the sidelines—are threatened by Electionsthis year, by the Republicans, and by the media which suspends all critical faculties in reporting their stupidities and lies. It's time for the Democrats to fight back, mainly with truth and reason, but borrowing one page from the Republican playbook, by not being afraid to accuse their enemies of trying to ruin the country. Here are just some of the points the Democrats must raise over and over again:

—*The Economy*. Republican economic policies ruin the economy, Democratic policies save it. It happened in the thirties, the nineties and the "oughts." Just as things are beginning to improve, they want to go back to the same failed policies that got us into this mess.

—*Jobs*. Every time the Republicans come up with another budget cutting proposal, the Democrats should deconstruct it with how many people will directly lose their jobs as a result of that proposal. Keep a chart, keep a tally. "Ten million jobs lost, can we make it eleven"?

—*Financial Scandals*. Every recent financial scandal: Savings and Loan, Enron, the latest

banking crisis, was caused by the Republicans' opposition to government regulation. Republican philosophy and mismanagement has cost the American taxpayers several *trillion* dollars. While this latest Republican-caused crisis has no easy answers, Obama has brought in the best minds to try to fix it. TARP looks like it's working and will cost the taxpayers very little. Where are the Republicans on this? Throwing bombs from the sidelines, urging a return to the no-regulation policies that have already cost trillions.

—*Balanced Budget*. There is some disagreement in the liberal camp about the importance of this on the Federal level; where unlike NY and most states the budget legally need not be balanced. Many economists like Paul Krugman argue that budget balancing isn't nearly as important as spending money to create jobs. I'm not sure I agree, remembering the last decades, when Clinton raised taxes on the rich, which ended the budget deficits and saved the economy, while his successor Bush undid it all, which exploded the deficits and destroyed the economy. But one thing we all should agree on: if you want to balance the budget, you must raise revenues. The Republicans would have us believe that (not just ten years from now, but *now*), you raise revenues by *cutting* taxes. That is lunacy, and must be called just that—along with hammering home the fact that Clinton and the Democrats brought us budget surpluses and Bush, record deficits.

—*Health Care Bill*. Strengthen it. Be proud of it. This is our legacy!



## President's Corner

### Luis Román

Welcome to 2010! I hope your holiday season was filled with happy memories. 2010 promises to be a major political year, both for New York and the nation. In Washington, opportunities abound for major reforms in immigration and the financial services industry. Recent events have thrust fears over security and terrorism back to the forefront of

the news. We continue to be bogged down in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is much for us to discuss and take action on.

Our first Broadway Dems' forum will take place on January 21, the one year anniversary of President Obama's first full day in office. It's remarkable to think a year has passed since that historic inauguration. What a tumultuous year it has been, filled with highlights and lowlights. Highlights included the passage of major health care reform legislation and the stimulus bill which helped slow the cratering of our economy. Among the lowlights was the continuing quagmire in Afghanistan and the embarrassing display of Republicans, and particularly the conservative fringe "Tea Party" movement, a simmering cauldron of hatred and resentment that should be of concern to all of us who care about the quality of political discourse in our country.

The year has proved frustrating for many of us who had such high hopes last January 20. The idealism of the campaign gave way to the grim realities of governing. The compromises in the stimulus and health care bills and the seemingly half-hearted pursuit of reforms for Wall Street, while the unemployment rate shoots up to double digits for the first time in years. While we all share frustrations with the pace of changes coming out of Washington, we must not falter in our support of the President's agenda. He has been dealing with as many crises as any first year President in memory, and the remarkable persistence and grace he has brought to the job, in the face of foolish, dogmatic and even blatantly racist opposition, is an example of courage for all of us.

In New York, 2010 promises to be an exciting political year. We face the possibility of primaries for all six statewide offices. Yawning budget deficits threaten to bring the wheels of our government to a grinding halt, and endanger many of the services on which we depend. Important issues such as gay marriage still need to be addressed. In short, there is a great deal of work to be done. I look forward to standing in the trenches with all of you and working hard to make our progressive ideals into reality.

¶

## Assembly Member's Report Daniel O'Donnell

The *New York Times* recently featured an article on one of my bills (A5899) which would grant defendants in misdemeanor or felony cases the right to appear before a judge or justice who is trained as a lawyer. The bill confronts lapses in due process and other violations in New York State town and village courts where non-lawyer judges can preside. These non-lawyer judges may be less familiar with legal and ethical rules, especially in criminal cases where liberty interests are at stake. While the bill faces opposition from the status quo, it represents an important criminal justice reform.

On January 7th, I attended a hearing on the future of civil legal services in New York State. Civil legal service programs protect at-risk New Yorkers and their families impacted by foreclosure, eviction, domestic violence, unemployment, disability and other matters. Severe economic conditions increase the demand for these critical services at the same time funding is usually limited. This hearing was the first step towards addressing the pending civil legal services budget crisis.

I will continue to support progressive criminal justice reforms and remain a fierce advocate for the cause of equal protection under the law for all New Yorkers.

¶

## Steering Committee Joe Nunley

### **The Filibuster and Democracy**

As upset as many of us are with our own party right now it cannot compare to the obstructionism of the Republicans in the United States Senate which is unprecedented. They have blocked any meaningful legislation by the mere THREAT of a filibuster or forced it to be severely altered against the interests of the American people. It is outrageous that a couple of senators can eliminate an extension of Medicare and the public option from the Health Care bill. The country is in dire shape, but the Republicans concern for national interests are superseded by their intention to obstruct every single policy proposal under this administration simply because they hate Obama and want to regain power.

The US Constitution said nothing about a 60 vote supermajority for ALL votes.

For most of its long history the Senate has acted as a majoritarian body with the occasional filibuster when a senator's passions were roiled. But then they had to go through the physical exertion of an actual filibuster. Most people don't even realize that actually senators don't have to filibuster today. All they have to do is to inform the majority leader of their intent to filibuster, and the majority leader delays further action unless he has sixty votes. This modern (post 2003) Senate rule has to change. It's destroying our democracy. In other countries like the United Kingdom and New Zealand legislators are required to actually filibuster, rather than just stating their intent. Our present situation requires no real action or sacrifice by senators. They don't even have to show up for a quorum call.

We must insist that our senators, Schumer and Gillibrand, confront Harry Reid to change the rule to require **actual** filibusters. Then the Republicans will have to prioritize what they really care about, rather than just creating gridlock all the time, and they will have to defend their arguments in front of the American people. This path they do not want to take because they will expose their real interest, the continual perpetration of the status quo and the absolute domination of America's elite's interests over the needs and desires of the rest of the American people. If the actual filibuster was restored senators would have to defend their positions on issues in such a way that it became part of the legislative public record. Let's see them defend that at election time.

I'm not for eliminating the filibuster because it allows for principled dissent by the minority party on legislation. But the actual filibuster, as others have suggested, should be restored. And if President Obama goes on national tv to discuss this need, then the Senate could certainly be coerced by the voters into adopting honorable reform.

DK

## NOTE TO COMMUNITY FROM:

**Community Affairs Office, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

### RACCOON RABIES ADVISORY - MANHATTAN

Rabid raccoons were recently found in Central Park and Morningside Park. For current information on rabid animals visit [www.nyc.gov/health/rabies](http://www.nyc.gov/health/rabies)

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene requests that you:

- 1) Get your cat or dog vaccinated for rabies. It's the law.
  - Check with your vet to see if your pet is up to date on its shots.
  - Keep your dog on a leash except for during off leash hours. Always keep a close eye on your dog when outdoors, especially when off leash.
- 2) Stay away from wild or stray animals. Keep children and pets away from them too.
  - Raccoons, skunks, bats, and stray cats are more likely than other animals to have rabies.
    - o Observe and enjoy healthy wildlife from a distance
    - o Do not feed wildlife.
    - o Never approach a wild, stray, sick, or injured animal, no matter how helpless it looks. Instead call 311 or notify a Parks employee.
  - Throw your trash in an appropriate trash container.
- 3) If you are bitten by an animal, wash the wound, consult a doctor, and call 311 to report the bite.
  - First, wash the wound with soap and water IMMEDIATELY.
  - If you are bitten by a pet, get the owners contact information.
  - Talk to a doctor right away to see if you need tetanus or rabies shots. If you don't have a regular doctor, go to a hospital emergency room.
  - Call 311 to report the bite.

Visit [www.nyc.gov/health/rabies](http://www.nyc.gov/health/rabies) for more information and updated facts.

## Club Elections

It's January, time to elect the Broadway Democrats' officers for the next year. Individuals nominated thus far are listed below. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

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

### Steering Committee:

Gretchen Borges

Katherine De Lawter

Martina Garcia

Joyce Goodman

Norm Levine

Carrie Marlin

Alisa Martin

Sarah Martin

Lew Moses

Joe Robins

Richard Siegal

Shane Seger

## Balloting Procedures

To be eligible to vote, you must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. There will be an open ballot box which will stay open until 9:30 p.m. (or until five minutes after the last speaker has finished, if the meeting runs late).

Votes may be cast in person or by proxy, limit one proxy per voting member. A proxy must be written. The proxy giver must state the name of the proxy holder (i.e., the name can't be filled in later by the proxy holder). The proxy must be signed or verifiable, as by electronic transmission stating the person's name.

As per the club constitution, there will be only one ballot. The winner will be selected by "Instant Runoff Voting"; "no endorsement" is still a ballot option.

Interested in local, state, or national issues? Consider running for the Steering Committee.

The Broadway Democrats want you!

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Local Issues and Club Elections

**Thursday, January 21      8:00 p.m.**

Congregation Ramath Orah, 550 West 110<sup>th</sup> Street (off Broadway)