
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

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President's Corner

Joe Nunley

The Debt Ceiling Crisis

Well, Obama's deadline for dealing with this extension of the debt ceiling was today and as of this moment it has not been resolved. He has said that if it is not resolved he will take it before the American people. "Well, we're waiting, Mr. President. You should have done that on day one."

On day one the President should have gone before the American people and said, "The Republicans are extorting America. The GOP leaders don't actually care about the level of debt. They're using the threat of a debt crisis to impose their ideological agenda. If we default on our debt we will be plunged into a worst recession than we presently have and a US default would negatively impact on the entire world's financial system." If ever there was a time to draw a line in the sand, it was then and now, against the extremism of the modern GOP. Maybe now Obama will be forced to act like a Democrat.

Republicans believed and they still believe that it will work. Mr. Obama caved in over tax cuts and they expected him to cave again. So what did Obama do? Obama moved so far from the base position which is to raise the debt ceiling without a debt reduction deal and try to focus on jobs, yet Boehner and McConnell still rejected it. Obama was generous in negotiations offering a \$4 trillion dollar spending cut instead of the \$2 trillion they had asked for. But he did one smart thing. He concurrently included ending tax cuts for the wealthy and tax loopholes for the corporations. Did Obama know that they would reject it? If he did, he played this part of the negotiations masterfully. He intentionally or inadvertently highlighted the differences between the two parties to the Democrat's advantage. Obama can

put anything on the table as long as at the same time he puts something down the Republicans cannot accept at the same time. In today's environment, he could put the Dept of Energy on the table and as long as he put closing the oil companies' tax loopholes on the table with it, the Republicans cannot agree.

Obama was certainly willing to compromise for better or worse and the GOP still rejected the deal. They clearly showed their real interests—their sole preoccupation in promoting the interests of less than 1% of the nation over those of everyone else. They have moved so far to the right that they're somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Then Obama did something that I still can't figure out. He said he would put Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid on the table. This, for a Democrat, is like putting Freedom of Religion on the table! Well, this got *our* attention. Would Barack Obama become the first Democratic President to preside over cutting the essential programs that provide a safety net for the middle class? And if Senate Democrats could not and would not filibuster over these kinds of cuts then is there a reason to even have a Democratic Party? Hopefully, this proposal was smoke and mirrors.

Obama should end bipartisanship. He should treat Republicans with the same attitude of irrelevance and disdain that he presently reserves for progressives. By doing this, he would suck the energy out of Republicans the same way that he sucks the energy out of us.

The bottom line is this: We are going 180% in the wrong direction! Debt is meaningless in the short term. If you get people employed, the debt takes care of itself. If you don't create jobs, the debt never gets fixed.

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The debt isn't our problem right now. It's jobs. In order to eliminate the debt you have to *double the debt now if necessary!* I believe what Paul Krugman has written: "Slashing spending at a time when the economy is deeply oppressed would destroy hundreds of thousands and quite possibly millions of jobs."

It comes down to the strength of one's principles. Franklin Roosevelt would talk to the public on the radio every week, explaining what he was doing and why he was doing it, educating America. Obama doesn't take on the Republicans as a party and this sucks the energy out of Democrats. By conceding to Republicans and accepting their premises, he reinforces their version of reality. We're stuck. We can't run against him and we can't run against Republicans successfully because he will not go for their throats. That's what happened in 2010. Will Obama run as an individual or will he run as the head of a party? *The Democrats.* We should get a clue on that pretty soon.

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District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Petitioning Ends; No Primary Election Here

I am pleased to report that Paula and I filed 1,482 signatures for our re-election as your Democratic District Leaders, nearly three times the required number. Since nobody filed against us, our local Judicial Convention and County Committee slates, or our judicial candidates Erika Edwards, Franc Perry (5th District) and Raymond Bruce (7th District), there will be no primary election in any of our ED's September 13th; the polls will not open. The closest we will get to an open area poll will be at 3150 Broadway in Grant Houses, where we have two (closed-for-September) ED's, but the poll site will open because the Tiemann Place/560 Riverside Drive ED, which is in the 70th AD—something we hope to change in the upcoming redistricting—there has a primary. There are contests there for both District Leader positions. Incumbent April Tyler is challenged by Marisol Alcantara; the open male slot features a three way race between (I think I have this right):

Michael Henry Adams (supported by Bill Perkins), Brian Benjamin (supported by the West Harlem Dems and Keith Wright), and Jamaal Nelson (supported by David Dinkins.)

Petitioning this year was pleasant but still difficult. Since it was an off year election no well known candidates were running. Paula has never had a primary, the last time I had one was 1983. (I note the recent death of one of the people behind that primary, the New Alliance/later Independence Party's Dr. Fred Newman.) The only time there was any excitement was June 25th, the day after Marriage Equality passed the NY Legislature. Then, the response on the street was rapturous. Thank you, Danny O'Donnell, Tom Duane, Governor Cuomo, and all of those who worked so hard to make this happen!

We couldn't have gotten on (or, technically, not on) the ballot without you, so thank you to all of our witnesses: Linda Schoener, Gretchen Borges, Chris McGuire, Joe Nunley, Bill Hartung, Audrey Waysse, Martina Garcia, Carrie Marlin, Katie Hanner, Curtis Arluck, Luis Roman, Lolita Lowe, Tom Martin, Maxine Phillips, John Lipsett, Paul Shneyer, Noah Kaufman, Carlin Good, Nick O'Neill, Mary Hines, Tim Abraham, Marcy Bell, Mary Outlaw, Gerard Powell, Darrell Green, Sharon Campbell, Anna Williams, Maxine Spann, Ruth Joyner, Norman Levine, Joan Levine, Gloria Allen, Joyce Hopper and Sarah Martin. Special thanks to our "Petition Superstars" who got at least 40 signatures: Linda Schoener, Gretchen Borges, Joe Nunley, Katie Hanner, Lolita Lowe, Marcy Bell, Mary Outlaw, Sharon Campbell, Anna Williams, Maxine Spann, Gloria Allen and Joyce Hopper. And, finally, thanks to our "Valorous Petitioners" who got at least 20 signatures without having the benefit of living in a large building to mine: Martina Garcia, Carrie Marlin, Maxine Phillips, Noah Kaufman, Nick O'Neill, Mary Hines and Tim Abraham.

The Debt Ceiling Fiasco: No Sanity Anywhere

I am well aware that this "crisis" is caused almost entirely by the Republicans, especially in the House: the worst U.S. legislative chamber since the 1850's (with whom they have much in common.) Nevertheless, two points must be made, in criticism of our President:

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1) Not only does the deficit not contribute to unemployment, the budget cuts demanded by the Republicans cause *more* unemployment;

2) It is unacceptable to cut Social Security and Medicare in response to Republican demands around the debt ceiling; these are long term issues which require long term solutions.

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From the Steering Committee

Richard A. Siegel

Doing something progressive

The best way that we can make a difference these days is to do things that move our progressive ideals forward. A very special thank you to everyone who did something that led to marriage equality becoming a reality in New York.

The next opportunity that presents itself is in the recall elections in Wisconsin. There are 6 districts where Republican state senators are facing recall votes. Helping the democrats defeat at least 3 of these senators can shift the balance of power in that state senate.

The easiest way to help is to contribute money. Act Blue is one organization that gathers and distributes contributions in this election. They are be seen on the web:

<https://secure.actblue.com/contribute>

If you can do more – write a letter, assist in phone banks, etc. that would be fantastic. Let's all do something that move the needle closer to progressive values.

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From the Steering Committee

Gretchen Borges

Impeding the Vote?

A number of states are in the process of enacting increasingly rigorous requirements for voter identification. In response, as AP recently reported, 16 Democratic senators, including both Senators from New York, wrote Attorney General

Eric Holder, "We urge you to protect the voting rights of Americans by using the full power of the Department of Justice to review these voter identification laws and scrutinize their implementation."

Currently, 30 states require all voters to show ID before voting at the polls with 14 requiring photo ID. The only type of voter fraud averted by such requirements is identification fraud. How prevalent is voter identification fraud? As reported by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School Of Law, "The closely-analyzed 2004 election in Ohio revealed a voter fraud rate of 0.00004%. National Weather Service data shows that Americans are struck and killed by lightning about as often."

If individual voter fraud is so rare, why the rush to enact legislation requiring photo ID? Consider the political motivation. Changing voting regulations will undoubtedly make both registration and voting more difficult for the traditionally disenfranchised: the poor and minorities, populations who have leaned more toward the Democrats than the Republicans. Minorities, students, immigrants, are all likely to experience more difficulties at the polls.

This issue is one that should be energizing the Democratic base. Policy needs to be driven by more honorable motivations than disenfranchising political opponents. If all the proposed restrictions are successfully passed, Democrats should consider how to advertize broadly the new requirements, so that voters can make the necessary arrangements to ease their experience at the polls.

A democracy requires participation from its population. Discouraging that participation is a throwback to less enlightened times. Let's move forward and encourage active political involvement rather than purposefully create obstructions to it.

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We wish you all a good summer and look forward to seeing you in September.

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: _____

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Special Interests: _____

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

