
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

The Annual Broadway Democrats' Harlem Town Meeting:

For All Residents of West Harlem & Morningside Heights

Invited:

- US Congressman Charles Rangel
- State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell
- City Council Member Inez Dickens
- City Councilmember Robert Jackson
- Police, 28th Precinct

**Please note the time
and location for this
meeting:**

Thursday, June 14th

7:00-9:00

Jackie Robinson Senior Center

1301 Amsterdam Ave (between West 123rd and La Salle)

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Volume 37, Issue 5

June 2012

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Petitioning Begins June 5

2012, Round 3; this time for our endorsed candidates:

State Senators Bill Perkins and Mark Levine

Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell

Surrogate Rita Mella

Civil Court Judges Anil Singh, Verna Saunders, Melissa Crane

State Committee Members Dan Cohen and Lynn Thomas

Judicial Convention Delegates and Alternates

The last day to file petitions is Thursday, July 12, but we need them back by Monday, July 9.

Petitions will be available at the June 14 club meeting, or contact me at 212-662-4057 or CurtisDems@aol.com.

Political Calendar

The "regular" Democratic primary for the candidates listed above has been moved to Thursday, September 13 so as not to conflict with 9/11. Everyone who supported this maneuver should be ashamed of themselves: 9/11 is not a holiday; this year is not a major-numbered anniversary. How are we commemorating this tragic event—which you may remember occurred on the day of the primary election—by holding an election on a non-traditional election day, for the third time this year, once again suppressing voter turnout? Last year's 10th year commemoration, especially Paul Simon singing "The Sound of Silence", was one of the most moving ceremonies I have ever witnessed. That, and the upcoming dedication of the new Freedom Tower, is how we New Yorkers should commemorate 9/11.

This month, while we are petitioning for the September primary, those of us who live in the new 13th CD (Morningside Heights above 122nd, Manhattan Valley east of Amsterdam, and south central Harlem in our area) will also be voting in the June 26 Congressional Primary. Whatever we think of the various candidates, it is imperative to note that they have every right to run, and the

convoluted political calendar that has everyone in limbo as to who will actually be on the ballot in September is not their fault. It is the fault, entirely, of the State Senate Republicans, who insisted on this wasteful dual primary calendar, and of our Governor, who could have stopped it but didn't. The 13th Congressional District lines, drawn by the courts because the legislature was unable to do so, are actually pretty good: compact, contiguous, and far superior to the convoluted monstrosities that advocates for both an "African-American" and a "Latino" district would have implemented.

Vote for Charlie Rangel!

Senator Espaillat would be a good Congressman, but *there is no good reason to replace Charlie Rangel*. Charlie knows how Congress works; he knows how to get the city the money from Washington that it deserves. These skills are not that acquired overnight. Most important, for me, is that Charlie Rangel is one of the few Members of Congress who, when he opens his mouth, not only says the right things, but says them in a way that persuades others. Opposing wars from Viet Nam to Afghanistan, fighting injustice here and abroad, articulating the Democratic argument that we need government to help our country through action, not destroy it through indifference—that is the legacy of Charlie Rangel. Let's keep him in Congress working for us, and for the causes we believe in.

✎

President's Corner

Joe Nunley

THE NEW JIM CROW

The NAACP has presented evidence to the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights of what it contends is a conscious attempt to "block the vote" on the part of state legislatures across the US. The NAACP contends that America is in the throes of a consciously conceived and orchestrated move to strip Black and other ethnic minority groups of the right to vote.

Fourteen states have passed 25 measures that will unfairly restrict the right to vote, affecting Black and

Hispanic voters in particular. The Brennan Center for Justice, based at NYU, estimates that the new measures could bar as many as 5 million eligible voters from taking part in choosing the next occupant of the White House this fall.

Upon passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, giving non-whites the right to vote, Southern states began to implement seemingly neutral voting guidelines, e.g., literacy tests, property requirements, grandfather clauses, tests for good moral character, and criminal disenfranchisement, to deny the vote to Black people but also to undesirable (poor) Whites.

The practice continues in the entire country by way of criminal disenfranchisement. Felony disenfranchisement is the term used to prohibit people from voting based on their having been convicted of a felony or other criminal offense. Forty-eight states prohibit prisoners from voting—only 2, Vermont and Maine, allow inmates to vote. Currently over 5.3 million people in the US are denied the right to vote because of felony disenfranchisement. In 2003, 44 percent of inmates sentenced to more than one year were Black, 19 percent Hispanic. So felony disenfranchisement is minority disenfranchisement.

The United States has 5% of the world's population and 25% of the world's prison population. We have more prisoners than any other country for no reason. Are we essentially a criminal population? How often is protecting life, liberty, and property indeed the reason for so many arrests and how often is it about feeding a mass incarceration system (which is highly profitable today with the increasing dominance of private prisons). Mass imprisonment is also frequently politically expedient, as it involves an extraordinary suppression of voters rights, overwhelmingly of minorities. Since prisoners lose their voting rights, felony disenfranchisement is one of the best ways concocted to suppress democratic voting.

One should go to 110 Centre Street as I did last week and sit in room 206 and watch the defendants, many in hand cuffs, all Black and Hispanic, stand before the judge and be sentenced for penny ante crimes like "possession of a controlled substance". And where does this process begin? Stop and Frisk.

In the world of young Black and Brown New York City it happens so frequently that it has become an anticipated, unavoidable fact of life, this practice of

the New York City Police Department's stopping young people by the thousands in the off-chance that they may find something. It is a fishing expedition that humiliates and dehumanizes these New Yorkers. The documentary, "The War on Weed", shows how the NYPD illegally searches those they stop under the pretense of patting them down for weapons. The police tell those stopped to empty their pockets (which they aren't supposed to do). If a person has marijuana he is then arrested for displaying a controlled substance. It is legal to carry small amounts of weed but once you display it, it's illegal. That's how the police get away with their illegal behavior.

The NYPD stopped and frisked over 700,000 people officially in 2011. Civil rights activists believe the actual figure to be closer to 2 million. 87% were Black or Hispanic and 90% were doing nothing wrong when the police stopped them. This procedure is the first step in a pipeline that has locked 2.3 million in prison.

The New York Civil Liberties Union points out that one of the justifications behind the rise in street interrogations is to get guns off the street. But no gun was retrieved in 99.9% of the stops. While Black and Latino young men ages 14-24 are only 4.7 percent of the city's population, they made up 41.6 percent of the stops by police in 2011. The number of stops of young Black men actually exceeded the total number of young Black men in the entire city population.

The Fourth Amendment prohibition of unreasonable search and seizure should render Stop and Frisk unconstitutional. The FBI needs to investigate.

On Sunday, June 17th at 3:00 pm there will be a silent march in protest. It will begin at 110th Street between 5th Avenue and Lenox Avenue at the northern edge of Central Park. Congressman Rangel is slated to be there. I hope you will be there, too. Join a new generation of Freedom Fighters, from all walks of life, stepping forward to take on the New Jim Crow.



State Committeeman
Daniel Marks Cohen, 69th AD

Well, alas, "my" lawsuit of Cohen v. Cuomo went before the NYS Court of Appeals, which is the highest court in the state, and unfortunately was denied appeal. This is the last stand, as it is a state

issue; there is no appeal to federal courts. It is unfortunate, but the Courts said that as abysmal as the lines were drawn there was no compelling reason to override the legislature and redraw them. My fellow plaintiffs and I disagreed, feeling that the method of using two different rationales for adding a 63rd seat in the State Senate was flawed, but it was not enough to warrant a Constitutional review by the Court. I am disappointed, as it means that the new lines remain in place until 2020. The most egregious of these is the 31st (formerly the Eric Schneiderman district and now occupied by Adriano Espaillat). The district runs from 224th Street to 24th Street, in some areas it is only a single block wide, looks like the country of Chile, and with a lack of compactness and virtually no common interest among its geographically diverse neighbors, it is an absurd district that flies in the face of good government and equal representation. But we are stuck with it for a decade. Let's not forget this experience, and hopefully, under new leadership in a DEMOCRATIC State Senate in 2020 we can right this ridiculous wrong.

In other news, Jay Jacobs has announced his resignation as Chairman, effective June 5th when the new State Party leadership will be co-chaired by Assemblyman Keith Wright (following in his predecessor Denny Farrell's footsteps of being NY County Chair while also NY State Chair simultaneously) and Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner. It has also been reported that Charlie King is stepping down as Executive Director. This is all fascinating—perhaps Cuomo wanted to wait until the end of the budget negotiations before he moved ahead with his changing of the guard. Jacobs' departure had been anticipated for months, and then delayed, considering how poorly he treated the reformers in the State Party (while personally being a nice guy) I am glad to see him go, and hope we get treated better by our co-chair neighbor. To that end, the Reform Caucus submitted new rules to prevent the State Party leadership from endlessly tabling resolutions they found embarrassing, Jacobs said he supported it, and at the next meeting on June 5th, hopefully they will pass the State Committee so that it will become binding.

And lastly but most proudly, I am thrilled to announce that I am the father of a new Democrat! Caleb Marks Cohen was born to my wife Jill and me on Saturday, May 12th at 4:47 pm, an early Mother's Day present. Seven pounds even, 20 inches long. Everyone is tired, but doing great.

Thanks for the many well-wishes and I look forward to introducing him to everyone soon.



From the Steering Committee

Richard A. Siegel

So many forces are trying to promote an 'anti-progressive' agenda.

Those of us committed to fairness and social justice need to continue to act on a daily basis to control these forces. By the time this newsletter is written, the recall election in Wisconsin will have been decided. Kudos to our Vice President—Gretchen Borges—for making calls and for urging others to do the same. Let's hope the recall is successful. Let's continue to support progressive causes. We can work to elect progressives to Congress. Kathy Hochul and Tim Bishop are two progressive democrats in NY State who won special elections. Please support them. Please go to Emily's List to identify progressive women running throughout the country and learn how to work for their campaigns.

Closer to home, our council member—Melissa Mark-Viverto—is leading the opposition to the mayor's budget, on that proposes cutting funds to senior centers, day care, and after school programs. She states, *"In our Council District alone, 12 after school and 8 child care programs are at stake."* This makes no sense at all. After school programs are one of the city's best solutions to the increasing violence and gang activity amongst teenagers. Pre-school programs are essential to developing the next generation of citizens. Senior centers provide care and socialization that keeps the elderly active and in some cases, alive. Let's join Melissa in this effort.

In health care, the Medicaid Redesign Team is working very hard to reign in the cost of Medicaid in NY State. Some of the reforms address key issues. Some of the reforms just blame the patients and their providers for a state wide lack of resources. The state is now focusing on behavioral health (psychiatric) inpatient care. However, instead of expanding substance abuse and mental health programs, all of the money is being spent to have a Behavioral Health Organization second guess the treatment and discharge planning in the hospitals.

For every available slot in a substance abuse community residence, there are at least 3 people currently in an inpatient psychiatric bed competing for that slot. After waiting for several months for one of these valuable slots, many people insist on being discharged without this service. They are at high risk for returning to the life style and bad choices that exacerbate their problems. If patients are re-admitted, the hospital is told it might not be paid— as the discharge plan was inadequate. We need to work so that the treatment available meets the demand for treatment. Let's not blame the victim but work to finally provide care to people in need.



From the Steering Committee

Gretchen Borges

A 28th Amendment

If nothing else, Scott Walker's victory in Wisconsin provides progressives with a clear purpose: pass a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United decision. This time the decision must stick. The Citizens United decision itself overturned both *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* (1990) and parts of *McConnell v. Federal Election Commission* (2003). The American people must ensure that any future actions taken to overturn Citizens United be more permanent.

Petitions, movements, amendment proposals have all sprung up in abundance in reaction to the 2010 decision. These activities and many others are being tracked at United4thePeople.org, a site I encourage you to explore.

From the Steering Committee

Luis Román

Proposed Amendment to the Club Constitution:

"Any person who does not qualify to be a voting member of the Club solely based on not residing within the area of the Club may be designated a voting member by a vote of the Steering Committee, based upon service on behalf of the Club, including chairing a Committee of the Club or other outstanding acts which assist the Club in achieving its goals."

Book by a Broadway Dem Celebrates the Grandeur of the Hudson River

Check out the beautiful new book by Cy A Adler, *Walking the Hudson: From the Battery to Bear Mountain*, with introductions by Pete Seeger and Adrian Benepe.

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
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FIRST
CLASS

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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