
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Pat Almonrode◆

The Quality of Life In Manhattan Valley

A Town Hall Meeting

Invited:

Congressman Jerry Nadler (10th District)
State Senator Brian Benjamin (30th District)
State Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell (69th District)
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer*
Councilmember Helen Rosenthal (6th District)
Police Department
Sanitation Department*
New York City Housing Authority

Speakers will make brief presentations and take your questions.

Thursday, October 19

7:45 p.m. Sign-in & Refreshments

Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. sharp!

The Center at Red Oak

135 West 106th Street

(between Amsterdam and Columbus)

(* = confirmed as of Sunday Oct. 15)

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Volume 42, Issue 7

October 2017

NYS Perhaps a Vote Away from Universal Single-Payer Healthcare

James Behr

A healthcare revolution in New York is a mere vote or two away. With S4840 comes an opportunity to give the Trump agenda a smashing blow. The bill provides for universal health care with no premiums, co-pays or deductibles for all NYS residents.

The NYS Assembly passed the “New York Health Act” (A5062) in May by an overwhelming 92-52 margin. The action now shifts to the state Senate. With 31 Senate co-sponsors of the bill (including both Sen. Alcantara and Sen. Benjamin), passage is perhaps a vote away.

The bill has support from the entire Democratic Caucus, including the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) – **except for Sen. Simcha Felder (D-17), the one single Democratic holdout.** If Felder or even one Republican Senator can be brought over, the bill could go to Gov. Cuomo’s desk.

The risk Democrats face is *distraction* – focusing (perhaps obsessing) on issues more the domain of Washington while overlooking a triumph that’s here for the taking in our backyard. Democrats seem strangely oblivious to the closeness of epic change. Little is seen in the press or said by leaders. At a rally this summer against Trump at the Javits Center, Gov. Cuomo, house minority leader Nancy Pelosi, and local leaders spoke. No one mentioned the New York bill for universal healthcare. *This must change.* NY Democrats must focus on getting this bill passed.

Washington is currently obsessing over the president’s efforts to gut the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”), but we Democrats in New York can give Trump a bloody nose. The implications of S4840 are a political earthquake, with headlines and national news coverage once New York passes universal care. Consider the jolt from California to Connecticut in terms of opposing right wing policies from Kentucky to Alabama.

According to an analysis by Gerald Friedman of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 98 percent of New Yorkers would benefit from lower

healthcare costs and some \$70 billion would be saved. We need to share this information to counter the misinformation being spread by Republicans and industry PACs. For instance, a recent New York Post op ed attacked the bill for taxing New Yorkers, even though studies indicate any tax rise would be more than balanced out by reductions in what we currently pay for health insurance. TV news, newspapers, editorials and op eds must present the facts.

What Can We Do?

Here are some things we can do to pass S4840.

1. First, let’s educate ourselves. Read up on the New York Health Act, and consider attending a “teach in “ on October 23, 7-9pm, at Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, 263 W 86th St. More at http://www.nyhcampaign.org/jreiss/teach_in_on_ny_health_act.
2. Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair of the Health Committee, will decide whether the bill dies in committee or goes to the Senate floor for a vote. Call Sen. Hannon (yes, even though you’re *not* a constituent) at **518-455-2200**, and urge him to publicly support the bill and to bring it to the floor.
3. If you have friends in Sen. Felder’s Brooklyn district – Midwood, Flatbush, Borough Park, Kensington, Sunset Park, Madison, or Bensonhurst – urge them to pressure Felder.
4. Join statewide efforts to overwhelm Republican Senators with petitions, emails, phonecalls and letters to demonstrate the overwhelming support for the bill. All NYC Democratic clubs should make this a high priority.
5. NYC clubs should also reach out to upstate clubs to coordinate efforts. Along with Felder, upstate Republican Senators control the fate of S4840, so we should ask upstate clubs how we can best be of help.
6. Help lobby the two NYC Republican Senators – Marty Golden in Brooklyn, and Andrew Lanza in Staten Island. They are currently “no” votes, and are under pressure from PACs and insurance firms to stay that way. But remember, *we need allies, not negative rallies.* We should seek cooperation and not be attack dogs. Our focus should be on their many constituents who are

disappointed with the Trump agenda, to let them know how *they* would benefit from universal health insurance.

7. We need to do all we can to get Gov. Cuomo to commit to getting this bill passed.
8. As mentioned, the bill has the support of IDC senators, including Senators Klein and Alcantara. Let's keep them on board and avoid alienating them while we work *together* to get this bill passed.

If opposing the Trump agenda is your priority, passage of S4840 will be a steroid-like boost. New York can provide the national Democratic Party with a path for regaining a nation's trust and, ultimately, help Democrats regain control of Congress in 2018.

Let's give Democrats throughout the nation something cheer about and promote in the other 49 states. We can win the battle for healthcare state by state. It starts with New York and S4840.



Disclaimer: items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club's commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.



An Exciting New Direction for the Democratic Party

Joe Nunley

September 13, 2017 was a pivotal day in American history, the most extraordinary moment for our democracy since the signing of the Iran Nuclear Deal and a very positive sign regarding the future of the Democratic Party.

On that day, Bernie Sanders introduced the "Medicare for All Act," a bill to provide healthcare for all Americans. He's introduced the bill several times in the past but with no co-sponsors. This time he has sixteen (at this writing) fervent and determined co-sponsors including Kirsten Gillibrand, Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Jeff Merkley, Cory Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy, Brian Schatz, Sheldon Whitehouse, Al Franken, Mazie Hirono, Ed Merkey, and Tammy Baldwin.

The leadership, Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, have not come on board yet but it's very hard for them to say no to insurance company and Big Pharma money – and it's a lot of money. Other Democrats who have received significant amounts from these sources have now stood up. Kamala Harris's explanation was simple; "Let's just do what's right."

Health care *is* a human right, from birth to death, for every American. It should not be a partisan issue but the Republicans continue to want to make it one. Well, we have an issue we can run on and that can bring a million working people back into the fold and a position that will make millions of unaffiliated progressives start to seriously consider the possibility of joining the party which they so far have steadfastly refused to do (as we know from our own club).

This has all been generated from grassroots activism. The outcry and protests of citizens around the country has motivated this new direction within the U.S. Senate. The Republican effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and now the president's efforts to undermine it by fiat, are utterly unacceptable. As Bernie Sanders has said, the Republican Party has "no credibility on the issue of health care."

The corporate controlled mainstream media is, as of now, ignoring this event. The corporate Democrats' favorite station, MSNBC, isn't touching it at all, which is not surprising. Who are their advertisers? They might get several hundred million dollars of revenue from pharmaceuticals alone. CNN, to their credit, however, sponsored a one-hour debate on the latest Republican repeal and replace bill on September 25 with Bernie Sanders and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota taking on Republicans Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy. In my biased opinion, our team shredded them.

I chose not to consider Sen. Sanders's bill a political stunt. I believe most of the Democrats are sincere and are not on board because they believe it can't pass right now. Democrats like Cory Booker, who has voted against re-importing cheaper drugs from Canada and has had Big Pharma backing, stood on the platform. Forcing these corporatists to support this bill is EXACTLY what needs to be done.

This is a trial run for Democrats and it addresses the question, "Can we go against Wall Street and succeed?" Our alignment with Wall Street, in my opinion, has imprisoned us. It had a great deal to do with Hillary Clinton's defeat and a great deal to do with a bad image problem for the party. Goldman Sachs ran the economy under President Obama. Goldman Sachs runs the

economy under President Trump. Clinton received \$650,000 in fees for three speeches to Goldman Sachs. Obama's first speech after leaving the White House is a \$400,000 pay day for him from Goldman Sachs. All of this is exceedingly damaging to our brand and makes us easy targets for charges of hypocrisy. The Medicare for All Act could mark the beginning of a whole series of events and choices that may move our party from some of our own addictions to big money. Let's get behind it.

Bernie Sanders's sane ideas regarding government and the purity of his means galvanized the nation in 2016 and won him 22 states in the primary. He should become the model for our party and disparagement towards him should cease. The actions of his co-sponsors indicate that for them it certainly has. Real progressivism is the only way to beat the Republicans. For the first time in years, nationwide, the energy is on the Left, not in the Center and not on the Right. Let's hope the 25 year nightmare strategy of triangulation is over.

RL

Letter to the Editor:

2017 Judicial Convention – 1st Judicial District (Manhattan)

Alan Flacks, Judicial Convention
Delegate

Here are the results of the Democratic Party First Judicial District's convention, held on Sept. 24, 2017, to designate candidates for the November General Election for N.Y. State Supreme Court. All contenders were lower court judges except one (Lynne Uniman, a litigator at her firm).

The following candidates were designated:

Lori Susan Sattler
Verna Saunders
William Franc Perry
Nancy Marie Bannon
Anthony Cannataro
Adam Silvera

The convention went as usual with a "dog and pony show." Every candidate was nominated with a short speech, and then seconded; the candidate then spoke, and those who didn't have the necessary support among the delegates declined

with a vow to be back for consideration next year. All received heartfelt applause.

Here, too, is a list of the also-rans (in no particular order):

Margaret Anne Pui Yee Chan
David Benjamin Cohen
Melissa Crane
Althea Drysdale
Paul Allan Goetz
Ta-Tanisha D. James
Dakota Daneen Ramseur
Carol Sharpe
Lisa Sokoloff
J. Mabelle Sweeting
Alexander Tisch
Lynne M. Fischman Uniman
Shawn T. Kelly
Lynn Robin Kotler
Gerald Lebowits
Jennifer Schechter

Even up to the day of the convention, it wasn't absolutely clear who the six candidates for the vacancies would be. There was some drama with an anti-Sattler movement based on a case she had decided. For the final vacancy, the three main contenders were Kotler, Kelly, and Silvera. Kelly and Kotler then ceded, leaving a clear sailing for Silvera.

Again, the County Leader was not a "player." His attempt to get three of his picks selected was rebuffed by district leaders, and he got only two, Saunders and Perry.

2018 Manhattan Civil Court Vacancies

As of this writing, there will be eight open Manhattan Civil Court seats next year, plus one incumbent who would stand for re-election, Frank Nervo in the 1st Civil Court District – enough to accommodate all wannabes.

The "open" seats are: two County-wide, one in the 2nd Civil Court District, one in the 3rd, one in the 5th, one in the 6th [Harold Adler reaches the constitutional age limit], one in the 9th, and one in the 10th [Geoffrey D.S. Wright reaches the constitutional age limit].

RL

“Con Con”: is NY Ready for a Constitutional Convention?

Pat Almonrode

Many of us are unaware that every twenty years, NY voters are asked whether to hold a convention to amend the state constitution. This question will be on the **back** of the ballot on November 7.

If a majority statewide votes “yes,” a convention will be set for the spring of 2019. Three delegates would be elected from each of the state’s 63 senatorial districts, plus fifteen statewide delegates. Elections would occur next year, and anyone can run to be a delegate.

“Con Con,” as it’s known, is controversial, and neither our club as a whole nor the Steering Committee has yet taken a position.

According to Ross Barkan of the Village Voice, “Backers of a constitutional convention are largely liberal, though the Republican minority leader of the state assembly, Brian Kolb, also favors holding one.” Supporters have spoken about “adding a new bill of rights to the constitution — rights to affordable higher education, clean air and water, healthcare, equitable funding for schools — that would make New York a much more progressive place.” Supporters also tout the possibility of closing the “LLC loophole” and allowing early voting, enacting term limits for all lawmakers, and even establishing “home rule” for the City.

Some good-government groups see a convention as a danger, however, and are urging a “no” vote. According to Citizen Action New York, “If voters approve moving ahead with a convention, a small group of elected delegates would have unlimited power to propose amendments to our state

constitution. It’s an easy way for the super-rich and the radical right to use their money and power to make huge changes to the rules of our democracy.” It’s important to remember, however, that any proposed changes would then have to be approved by the voters in order to take effect.

Most elected officials oppose Con Con, including the Republican Majority Leader of the Senate, John Flanagan; the Democratic Speaker of the Assembly, Carl Heastie; Mayor de Blasio; *and* Sen. Jeff Klein, the leader of the IDC. Again, according to Barkan, the politicians’ opposition is driven in part by the “strenuous and united front against a convention led by the state’s major unions, who fear the loss of state protections for labor rights. [The unions] are set to outspend and possibly outmaneuver Con Con. They have formed a group, New Yorkers Against Corruption, to harness this energy and money.”

The New York State Constitution is an old, unwieldy document — the length of a short novel — and it hasn’t been updated since 1938. The last convention was held in 1967, but all changes approved at that convention were eventually voted down, in part because they were packaged together at the ballot box, and one proposed change — allowing the state to provide funding for religious schools — ultimately sunk the others. Voters turned down a convention in 1997. If the vote is “no” in November, there won’t be another chance to try for one until 2037.

Would a convention allow us to usher in a new era of real progressivism – or would it allow the rich and powerful to further consolidate their grip on our democracy? Educate yourselves on this topic, and remember to **turn your ballot over** on November 7.



Submissions are Encouraged!

Have a comment about something you read here? Have something else you want to bring to the club’s attention? Please share your thoughts on topics that may be of interest to our readers. Send submissions (in MS Word format, please) to Pat Almonrode at palmonrode@gmail.com. Take part in the conversation – and thanks!

March to Commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and to Urge a Transition to a Clean Energy Economy

October 28, 11 am Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn

At 11 am on Saturday, Oct. 28, a broad coalition will gather in Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, to march across the Brooklyn Bridge in commemoration of the devastation wrought five years ago by Superstorm Sandy, and to demand that our elected officials work for a just transition to a renewable energy economy. All are encouraged to wear blue...as a sign of the water issues we face and the ways we rise together as a wave of humanity.

The very front of our march will be led by young people of color from many of our frontline and hardest hit communities. They'll be followed by Sandy survivors, followed by Sandy first responders, followed by everyone else from every neighborhood of NYC! When we leave the bridge we'll have a closing gathering at the Smith Houses, where tenants are still dealing with problems caused by Sandy.

more at sandy5.org



sandy5.org

SANDY 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
WE REMEMBER. WE RESIST. WE RISE.
RECORDAMOS. RESISTIMOS. NOS LEVANTAMOS.

WE MARCH! / MARCHAMOS!

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28 AT 11 AM
CADMAN PLAZA, BROOKLYN**

WE REMEMBER. WE RESIST. WE RISE.

March in remembrance of the devastation of Superstorm Sandy. Demand our elected officials urgently take bold steps to fight the climate crisis.

Saturday, October 28th
11 am - Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn
March across the Brooklyn Bridge

From Sandy to Maria, climate disasters threaten communities nationally and globally, but the Trump administration denies climate science.

New York must be a model of a just transition away from fossil fuels to a 100% renewable energy economy. We want to live in a city where we breathe clean air, where our economy is powered by good jobs and renewable energy, and where our families are safe from dangerous floods and heat waves.

For the full list of demands and participating organizations, visit sandy5.org.

RECORDAMOS. RESISTIMOS. NOS LEVANTAMOS.

Marchamos en recuerdo de la devastación de la Superstorm Sandy. Exija que nuestros funcionarios electos tomen medidas audaces para luchar contra la crisis climática.

Sábado, October 28th
11 am - Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn
Marchamos por el puente Brooklyn

De Sandy a María, los desastres climáticos amenazan a las comunidades a nivel nacional y mundial, pero el gobierno de Trump niega la ciencia climática.

Nueva York debe ser un modelo de transición justa de los combustibles fósiles a una economía de energía 100% renovable. Queremos vivir en una ciudad donde respiramos aire limpio, donde nuestra economía está impulsada por buenos empleos y energía renovable, y donde nuestras familias están a salvo de inundaciones peligrosas y olas de calor.

Para la lista completa de demandas y organizaciones participantes visita sandy5.org.