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This Issue of the Tenth Dems Newsletter May Be Your Last

We are cleaning and updating our e-mail list and need your help. If you want to continue (or begin) receiving our **free** newsletter via your e-mail address, here are two ways for you to do so:

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Thank you for reading the Tenth Dems Newsletter in 2004.

We look forward to bringing you news, opinion and other items of interest from the 10th Congressional District throughout 2005.

Join us!

Tenth News

www.tenthdems.org

January 2005 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 2, Edition 1

Progressive Editor Speaks to Tenth

by Ron Weiner

The editor of the National magazine *The Progressive* says America's involvement in the Iraq War is the outgrowth of two blatant lies on the part of the Bush administration. Matthew Rothschild, a native of Highland Park, spoke to a crowd of about 60 people in the Highland Park Community House in an appearance sponsored by Tenth Dems. He said the first of those lies was tying Saddam Hussein to the 9/11 attacks. The second was insisting that Hussein posed an immediate threat to the United States through possession of weapons of mass destruction, an allegation since disproved by inspectors' reports and the failure by invading U.S. troops to find any such weapons. Both falsehoods, Rothschild said, became the rallying cry for the overthrow of Iraq, a priority for President Bush long before 9/11, and were seized upon by the administration as reasons to go to war within days after the attacks.

Among other reasons for George W. Bush to seek the war was his need to prove he was stronger than his father by correcting his father's failure to overthrow Saddam in the Gulf War, Rothschild said, and to control the flow and price of oil before China, a geopolitical rival in the future, could do so. "As a result of this megalomania more than 1,000 American soldiers and as many as 17,000 Iraqis have died. And as of this moment more than 48% of Americans don't believe it was worth it."

Rothschild also said the war was clearly illegal. A United Nations treaty, signed by the United States, declared that no nation could attack another unless in self-defense or without the approval of the UN



Matthew Rothschild speaks at the Highland Park Community House, December 17.

Security Council. The U.S. Constitution clearly states that any treaty signed by this nation also becomes the law of the land. The Bush administration, by its unilateral decision to invade Iraq, put us in obvious violation of our own Constitution, Rothschild said. "Our moral conscience requires that we must demand our immediate withdrawal from Iraq."

On the subject of civil liberties, Rothschild called for Democrats in Congress to diligently oppose any further infringement on our civil rights, and added that if Democratic legislators allowed the confirmation of Alberto Gonzales, Bush's nominee for Attorney General, "it would be a betrayal of the American people."

In response to questions from the audience as to what Democrats must do to retake the Congress, Rothschild urged them to support and take part in grass-roots movements to elect Democrats and Progressives to every possible office, no matter how small or insignificant it might appear, and that, in his opinion, it was more important to protest locally than nationally. "Democrats and Progressives," he declared, "must get together to take back our country!"

Kirk Gives Generously to Right-Wing Colleagues

by Ellen Beth Gill

What is stunning about Congressman Mark Kirk's recent re-election is the number of 10th District voters who voted for John Kerry over George Bush, and Barack Obama over Alan Keyes, but voted for Kirk. This means that many who were concerned about the Iraq War, the ideological makeup of the Supreme Court, tax cuts to the wealthiest of Americans, dangers to our environment and the largest deficit in American history, voted for Mark Kirk.

Many district voters are moderate and party-independent, and believe Mark Kirk to be a Republican for whom they can vote without compromising their moderate values. However, a thorough examination of the political contributions from Kirk's campaign fund indicate that these moderate voters may not be getting exactly what they are buying from Rep. Kirk.

A search on the Federal Election Commission website (www.fec.gov) shows that Kirk made several contributions to congressional incumbents with voting records that are far from moderate, especially on key district issues.

To limit the size of this article, I examined two key issues, choice and the environment, and limited the discussion to the ten congressional incumbents who received \$1000 or more from Kirk for the 2004 election: Kevin Brady of Texas, Ginny Brown-Waite of Florida, Richard Burr of North Carolina, Phil Crane of Illinois, Ernest Istook of Oklahoma, Todd Platts of Pennsylvania, Richard Renzi of Arizona, Pete Sessions of Texas, Chris Shays of Connecticut, and Wilbert Tauzin of Louisiana.

District voters often say that they vote for Kirk because he is pro-choice. One example of a pro-choice vote but anti-choice contributions is the vote on Bush's global gag rule withholding U.S. aid to clinics overseas that provide family planning counseling. U.S. health care aid is important to women in developing countries and often provides the only available health and AIDS prevention counseling. Recognizing this, Congress reversed the gag rule, but House Bill 1646 removed the reversal language. Mark Kirk voted against House Bill 1646 and consistently holds himself out as a pro-choice candidate.

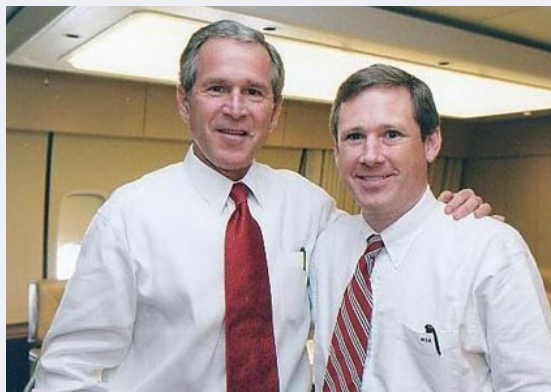
In a July 2004 interview with Planned Parenthood, Mark Kirk made the following comment: "Republicans stand for freedom and for a person to control their own destiny. We should look for win-win solutions, like voluntary family planning, so that women are educated, have better health, and space their births farther apart, which is particularly important in the developing world. When children are planned, there is no need for abortions."

Despite his words and endorsement by Planned Parenthood, seven of the ten incumbent contribution recipients voted in favor of the gag rule. Two of the three others, Ginny Brown-Waite and Richard Renzi, were elected to Congress after the vote. Their position on choice issues are not unclear, however, as both have voted anti-choice on every choice vote that has come up

during their terms, both earning a 0% rating from NARAL. Chris Shays, who voted against the gag rule with Kirk, has a 30% rating from NARAL. So, Mark Kirk cancelled out his vote and cancelled out Chris Shays' vote against the global gag rule and supported nine strong anti-choice candidates who will be available to cancel out their future pro-choice votes.

The Bush Administration National Energy policy contained within House Bill 4503 grants tax breaks for oil and gas production and guarantees loans for oil drilling in Alaska. The League of Conservation Voters, an organization that endorsed Kirk based upon his efforts to protect families from the harmful effects of toxic pollution and his defense of America's wilderness, called the bill, "a collection of subsidies, tax breaks, and loopholes that would threaten our air, drinking water, and public lands and cost ratepayers and taxpayers billions of dollars." They went on to say, "**This bill may be the most anti-environment piece of legislation in modern history**" (*emphasis theirs*). Mark Kirk and Chris Shays voted against House Bill 4503, but nine of the ten recipients of Kirk campaign money voted for it.

Thirty-three Republican Congressmen voted with Kirk against the global gag rule and twenty-five voted with him against the Bush energy bill, but for some reason, he contributed to the campaign of only one of them. So, district residents are left wondering if Rep. Kirk is as moderate as he portrays himself, or just casts votes that will keep him in office while spreading his wealth around to ensure neutralization of his moderate votes. As district voters have re-elected Kirk for the second time, they need to understand that the safer Rep. Kirk's congressional seat becomes, the freer he is to spread around campaign contributions to other candidates who do not share the values of the district.



Mark Kirk talks about his moderate votes when he's home in the 10th District, but doesn't talk about the thousands of dollars he has donated to right-wing congressional colleagues who support President Bush's extreme conservative agenda.

Ellen Beth Gill was a delegate to the 2004 Democratic National Convention and headed up the Kerry campaign's volunteer efforts in the 10th Congressional District

	NARAL (2003)	LCV (2004)
Brady <i>Texas</i>	0%	0%
Brown-Waite <i>Florida</i>	0%	0%
Burr <i>North Carolina</i>	0%	0%
Crane <i>Illinois</i>	0%	0%
Istook <i>Oklahoma</i>	0%	9%
Platts <i>Pennsylvania</i>	0%	9%
Renzi <i>Arizona</i>	0%	18%
Sessions <i>Texas</i>	0%	0%
Shays <i>Connecticut</i>	30%	87%
Tauzin <i>Louisiana</i>	0%	0%

These are the congressional candidates who received money from the Mark Kirk campaign, and the percentage of times they voted pro-choice and pro-environment in the most recent ratings issued by the pro-choice group NARAL, and the League of Conservation Voters.

Fix Social Security—Don't Destroy It

by George Rosenblit

The Social Security program is not broke!

There is no crisis! It is still creating a surplus! The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that Social Security benefits paid out in 2019 will exceed the payroll tax income. But it is important to note that the Social Security Trust Fund is projected to have more than \$6 trillion in government bonds at that time. This surplus is projected to provide full benefits until 2052. After that, Social Security payments could be continued at a reduced rate of about 80% of scheduled benefits, funded with annual revenues.

There is no need for drastic changes unless the objective is to degrade Social Security.

The privatization of Social Security is on the agenda of President Bush and the Congress. The entire Social Security program will be degraded if any money is taken from the payroll tax to fund privatized investment accounts. Read on.

Social Security covers retirement income plus disability and survivor income!

If money is taken from Social Security funding to pay for privatization, do 12 million recipients of disability and survivor income (CBO data, Dec. 2000) fall through the cracks?

The Administration is emphasizing retirement income when they speak out about privatization. The fact is that only 63% of Social Security outlays is for retirement income. The balance, 37%, is used to pay monthly benefits to 5 million disabled workers, 5.1 million surviving spouses of deceased workers, 3 million spouses of retired or disabled workers, and 3.8 million children of retired, disabled, or deceased workers.

The money must be there at retirement!

Privatizing part of Social Security premiums for personal investment, will put all facets of the Social Security program at risk. Privatization will leave less money in the system to sustain the disability and survivor program and the safety net for those who opt out of privatization.



The promise of great financial rewards in the stock market for retirement income can be misleading and possibly disastrous. There are winners and losers every day in both securities and funds. If the market is down at retirement, then retirement income will be down.

The cost to manage Social Security in its present form is about 1%. Under privatization, the fees charged by financial institutions to give advice, manage and/or process the privatized funds could take a big bite out of the money available to invest. The greedier the institution, the less money will be left for investment. And the greed factor is there as evidenced by New York Attorney General Elliott Spitzer's revelations and negotiated settlements with financial institutions.

When a person retires, the money must be there! Social Security was intended as a safety net, important enough to be preserved, not degraded or dismantled.

Here's what you can do now to protect Social Security, and why!

Several recent headlines ("Bush Seeks Bipartisan Backing For His Social Security Plan." *Wall Street Journal* December 17, 2004) and articles speak to the need for strong bipartisan support to pass Social Security privatization. As stated by columnist David Brooks in the December 12, 2004 issue of the *New York Times*, after speaking with Republican Senator Lindsey

Graham: "...Graham realizes that you can't pass a major entitlement reform without significant Democratic support... he knows that most Republicans will never agree to a bill that balloons the deficit and transforms a beloved program if it doesn't have bipartisan backing to give them political cover." (Rosenblit note: the transition cost will be \$2 trillion over 10 years)

Write, fax or call now, to Republicans and Democrats in both the House and the Senate to vote against privatization.

Mr. Rosenblit, a Highland Park resident, has been involved in educating the public on political issues since his retirement in 1990. He was AARP's 10th Congressional District Coordinator and liaison to Congressman John Porter, and a speaker for the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform.

It's a Tough Job, But First-Time Candidates Can Succeed

by Ben Struhl

Running a political campaign can be very difficult in any circumstance, but running as a first-time candidate is a doubly daunting challenge. To add to this, first-time candidates often have the task of defeating an incumbent.

With these challenges, it is no wonder that so many first-time candidates don't succeed. What is surprising is that many do, and in races as varied as the U.S. Senate or local school board.

Those first time candidates who win, do so because of hard work and careful planning. New Trier Democratic Organization Chair Bill Crowley, who is also vice-chair of Tenth Dems, says that campaigning is "all about getting the message out." Money to spend on advertising helps, but grassroots campaigning is also effective. Crowley also emphasized the importance of starting early. He says that hard work and door-to-door canvassing have swung many local races.

Nick Chrisos learned what happens when you don't start early. In his unsuccessful run for state Representative, the Arlington Heights

Democrat found organization very difficult because he entered the race late. Getting a jump-start on your campaign can mean the difference between victory and defeat. Melissa Bean defeated longtime incumbent Phil Crane in the 8th Congressional District by waging a four-year campaign, immediately preparing for the 2004 election after her initial loss in 2002.

Despite the outcome of his race, Chrisos is still convinced that an early start, the right message, and the right tactics are a winning combination, even for a first-time candidate. "You've got to trust your gut. Decide early, start early, and start raising money. If you can get your name out, you have a decent chance of winning."



Nick Chrisos with Barack Obama on the campaign trail.

Where To Find Progressive Ideas In Today's Media

by Ross Nickow

Finding truly "fair and balanced" political news coverage and commentary in the 10th Congressional District can be a daunting task for progressive and liberal Democrats and Independents. It's even more difficult if you prefer news tilted to the left. Republicans can holler all they want about the so-called "liberal" media, but actually it's very difficult to find news sources that are honest, intelligent, raise the right questions and aggressively cover the news that the White House is either spinning to its advantage or burying with the media establishment's cooperation. Most traditional media sources parrot Karl Rove's "talking points" as the Bush administration continues to demolish our environment, economy, courts, civil liberties, women's rights, stature in the world, etc., and subject our soldiers to death and injury in an ill-advised and poorly planned war.

You won't find the answers (or the right questions) in Chicago's conventional media—the *Chicago Tribune* editorial staff only occasionally endorses a Democrat (enthusiastically if they're running unopposed); the *Chicago Sun-Times'* star op-ed writers are Robert (The Leak) Novak and Bill (Falafel) O'Reilly, two bullies whose main appeal is bigotry combined with a lack of ethics; and our local television news productions only give political coverage a minute or two after they finish with any local fires or auto crashes.

A great outlet for the buried news we crave is the Internet. There are many comprehensive and politically stimulating websites to provide the news and analysis missing from our local coverage. Most are continually updated, and many offer daily e-mails and newsletters with links to articles, commentaries and political cartoons from a myriad of news sources.

Begin your daily quest by turning on your computer speakers, opening your web browser and heading straight to **AirAmericaRadio.com**. Besides offering you a great web page full of news, blogs and links, you can click on "Listen Live" and hear *Air America* live through one of the media players offered. It's easy and the only free way to hear great left-wing talk radio in the Chicago area.

With left-wing gurus Al Franken or Randi Rhodes ranting in the background, check your e-mail for alerts from **Buzzflash.com**, **Truthout.org**, or **CommonDreams.org**. Once you sign up, you'll get daily notices. A click on one of the e-mailed headlines will send you to an article printed in a newspaper from almost anywhere in the U.S., with the story that's being ignored or underplayed by the mainstream media.

Topic-specific websites are abundant no matter what your interest. **AmericanProgressAction.org** (a must) dissects every bit of distorted news and spin coming out of Washington daily and backs up its assertions with footnotes and links to official and nonpartisan sources.

WorkingForChange.com has the best of progressive columnists and political cartoonists daily. **MediaMatters.org** and **Fair.org** keep tabs on the lies told by the Rush Limbaughs and Sean Hannitys as they distort the truth to bolster the administration line. Magazines like **Slate.com**, **Progressive.org** and **TheNation.com** cover a variety of topical issues written by some of the best political minds in the country.

Knowledge is power, and these sources will give you ammunition. Also, we'll be more prepared as we set our sights on taking back Congress and fighting for real political change.

A sampling of progressive news websites (add www.)

Blogs:

TalkingPointsMemo.com

AmericaBlog.org

DailyKos.com

BlogPac.org

Newslink sites:

Buzzflash.com

Truthout.org

TomPaine.com

CommonDreams.org

MakeThemAccountable.com

News Analysis and Op-Ed articles:

AirAmericaRadio.com

AmericanProgressAction.org

ZMag.org

(The American) Prospect.org

WorkingForChange.com

Media Watchdogs:

MediaMatters.org

MediaWatch.com

FAIR.org

On-line Magazines

Slate.com

Salon.com (charges small fee)

TNR.com (The New Republic – charges small fee)

TheNation.com

Progressive.org

InTheseTimes.com

MotherJones.com

Fact-Checking:

Factcheck.org

Snoopes.com

Caution: Fragile Documents Handle with Care

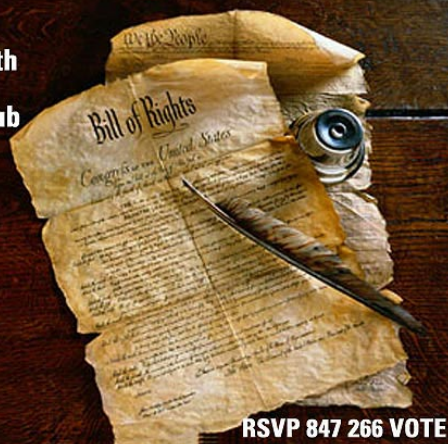
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Thursday, January 20th
7pm - 9pm
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We will discuss the
future of the Constitution
under the current
administration



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