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Primary Considerations

by Steve Sheffey

When this article is published, the Illinois primary will be about a month away. Let's hope that we stay true to the Democratic tradition of totally destroying each other so that we will have no hope of beating Mark Kirk in November. As a reminder, here's how to do it.

First, whether you support Dan or Jay, you must see the other side as evil incarnate. Forget that the differences between Jay and Dan pale in comparison to the differences between either of them and Kirk. Instead, magnify the differences as much as possible to make the choice seem as momentous as possible. Justify your decision to support one candidate by ignoring everything good about the other candidate.

Second, if you can't find issues to divide us, focus on style. Think about the other candidate's appearance and manner of speaking. Try to make fun of him or hold him up to ridicule. What are the

chances that anyone from the Kirk team will notice and use these issues in the general?

Third, be sure to demonize supporters of the other candidate. There is no room in our party for friendly disagreements or differences of opinion. There is right and there is wrong. That's it. Never acknowledge that a viewpoint different from yours might have some validity. Instead, point out how supporters of the other candidate just don't get it and are paving the way for defeat in November. Take things personally. Remember: If we lose, it will be their fault, not yours.

Finally, and perhaps most important, make it as hard as possible for the candidate who loses to gracefully support the winner. One way to do this is to forget that sometimes things said in the heat of a campaign don't really represent the true feelings of a candidate or his supporters. Bear grudges. Take quotes out of context. Question the

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Tenth News

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I Support Jay Footlik for Congress

by David Robin

I supported Dan Seals in 2006. I contributed generously to his campaign, I spent many hours working on the campaign, and I was the co-leader of a team of almost 50 lawyers operating out of Seals headquarters on Election Day. But this time I'm supporting Jay Footlik, and here's why: I believe that Jay is much more likely to give us what we all want, a victory over Mark Kirk.

Jay has been active in Democratic politics his whole life, starting in the '70s when he walked door-to-door for Abner Mikva in the 10th District. He left law school to work on Bill Clinton's campaign in 1992, where he learned from the likes of James Carville what it's like to fight an aggressive, winning campaign. (Unfortunately, he later learned as John Kerry's senior advisor on Mideast policy what it's like to fight a losing campaign, one that doesn't know how to fight back against a tough Republican opponent.)

Jay served for five years as a special assistant to President Clinton, working on a wide range of foreign and domestic policy issues. After leaving the White House, he spent the next five years commuting between Vernon Hills and the Middle East. During that time, he worked for a number of organizations, including the State Department,



Jay Footlik

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I Support Dan Seals for Congress

by Karen Fujisawa



Dan Seals

On February 5th, our district has the momentous opportunity to vote for change. We have the opportunity to vote for the man or woman who will be our next president, and we have the chance to finally end the career of one of President Bush's biggest cheerleaders in Congress, Mark Kirk. That's why on February 5th, I will be casting my vote for Dan Seals.

The past seven years in Washington have shown us what happens when we allow our government to be run by the

special interests, for the special interests. Under the Bush administration, our democracy has been sold off to the highest bidder. Whether it's been the never-ending lobbying scandals, the Medicare prescription drug bill that helped the big pharmaceutical companies more than our senior citizens, or the pork-laden energy bills that gave billions of dollars to the big oil companies while America's dependence on foreign oil hasn't waned, it's clear who's behind the wheel in Washington...and it's not us.

No incident in Washington, however, has shown more how misled our leadership has been than the war in Iraq. In 2003, President Bush marched our country to war with the support of Republicans like Mark

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It's Not Over Until November 2008

by Gregory Mysko

For the 2008 election, an unwarranted optimism has developed amongst quite a large number of Democrats. When looking upon the intellectually pitiful field of Republican presidential candidates, many are calling the election already won. Forgotten is the time in 2000 when the Republicans nominated George W. Bush. "How easy it will be for Al Gore to prevail over this buffoon from Texas," they said. We all know how that turned out.

Now, Democrats are predicting a slam-dunk by the Democratic candidate who eventually wins the 2008 nomination. Happy days will come back once again! While that idea is wonderful to keep in our imaginations, we need to collectively remember that it isn't over yet. Take a look at the GOP "field of fools" and realize that any one of them can possibly become president. These are scary times in America.

Rudy Giuliani is the scariest presidential candidate to have come along since Pat Robertson in 1988. The authoritarian "America's Mayor" would continue to lead the country down the Path of Bush. Learning a few lessons from Bush "public" events, Giuliani's campaign security staffers run his campaign events like mobsters. And stop asking questions about his adulterous past, his first cousin first wife, or his favorite dress color. Questions will not be allowed when Rudy takes charge. You got that? Be very scared if this guy wins the nomination.



While Mitt Romney is pandering to right-wing Christians, consider what the mainstream news media would say if Romney were a Unitarian instead of a Mormon. Imagine these questions raging on Fox News: "Is the Jefferson Bible the true word of God?" "Why are atheists allowed to attend church services?" "What are the secret mysteries of Unitarianism?" (Hint: Unitarians believe in the separation of church and state.) In another attempt at pandering, Romney could suggest he is the son of Billy Graham.

As someone who has no need to pander to right-wing Christians because he already is one, Baptist Minister and former Governor Mike Huckabee wants to lead a transformation of America into a Christian-based republic and, like Romney, wants religion to be a central part of government. So why is he running for president? The answer can be gleaned from this 1998 statement he made as governor: "I got into politics because I knew government didn't have the real answers, that the real answers lie in accepting Jesus Christ into our lives." Yes, Huckabee really is a fundamentalist. "I believe God created the heavens and the earth," he told a questioner who challenged his creationist credentials. (And Charles Darwin is burning in hell.) In defending his role as governor in allowing executions, Huckabee said that Jesus would have approved of capital punishment even while hanging on the cross. Go figure that one out.

And then there is Ron Paul, the onetime Libertarian Party presidential candidate trying it again in the GOP. Unlike the rest of the Republican

field, he is opposed to the Iraq War, to bombing Iran, and to shipping jobs off to China. He can be the least scary of the bunch – until he starts echoing the ghost of Reagan with a call for no taxes and no government. Paul has a following of hardcore devotees who would give Lyndon LaRouche supporters a run for their money.

Republicans have become well known this election cycle for their intolerance of illegal immigration and those who don't "speakada English." Duncan Hunter is an immigrant hater who believes in the Republican principle of "Hey, I got here first!" He suspects that some of the Mexicans sneaking over the border may be terrorist operatives from the Middle East with shaved beards. Since Hunter speaks no Spanish or Arabic, he can't tell which is which. Besides, immigrants tend to vote for Democrats, he says, and that has to stop. With Tom Tancredo recently withdrawing from the presidential race, Hunter has to carry the anti-immigration banner on his own.

In the *Des Moines Register* debate in December, a new face joined the GOP presidential lineup. The powers of the Republican Party decided they needed their own answer to Barack Obama. And

guess what. Alan Keyes is back! How we all miss those witty Keyes-isms from the 2004 Illinois U.S. Senate race. Keyes will provide the GOP debates with sorely needed entertainment for the rest of the primary season. Perhaps the Republicans should have instead chosen Chris Rock to get better ratings. To paraphrase Rock's response to a *Life Magazine* interviewer who asked, "Is this country ready for an African American president?" "What! Why wouldn't America be ready for a black president? America has had a retarded president for the last seven years!" Alan Keyes, top that one, if you can.

Straight talker John McCain is out there somewhere. He was able to reassure at least one South Carolina supporter that he's the man who can "beat the bitch." But, of course, no one should doubt that McCain likes and respects Hillary Clinton.

Fred Thompson believes that if an actor with limited intellectual abilities can become president once, it can happen again. Thompson, you see, believes in America.

There is nothing redeeming in this 2008 Republican presidential lineup, nothing at all. While all of them provide plenty of comical material, it is frightening to know that one of them will get the nomination and perhaps another one, following GOP tradition, will be his running mate. We Democrats view every one of these men as a threat to America's future. They offer nothing but a continuation of Bushevism, if not worse. But, we must also remember that every one of these guys has legions of supporters. Democrats, it's not over until November 2008.

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the Peres Center for Peace, and Seeds for Peace, helping to promote security and peace in the region. With the kind of expertise that Jay has developed in foreign policy, it's no wonder that he has been endorsed by Dennis Ross, President Clinton's chief Middle East negotiator, and Richard Holbrooke, former Assistant Secretary of State and U.N. Ambassador, or that he was asked for, and happily provided, help to the Seals campaign in 2006 by helping to formulate foreign policy positions related to the Middle East.

In addition to foreign policy, another area that Jay has been passionately involved in is energy security. Jay is a founding board member of SAFE – Securing America's Future Energy – a bipartisan group devoted to encouraging development of alternative energy sources and reducing our dependence on oil. SAFE was recently instrumental in helping to persuade Congress to vote for the first increase in fuel efficiency standards in more than 30 years.

What it all adds up to is this: Jay has the solid experience in both domestic and foreign policy that is essential to neutralize Mark Kirk and to force the debate to issues like the war in Iraq and healthcare, which are winning Democratic issues in the 10th District.

In early December, the Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504, which is the largest union in the district, made its endorsement decision. The union had supported Dan last time and was fully prepared to endorse him again but, instead, decided to endorse Jay. Its president, Mike McGue, said, "After meeting with both candidates, it was clear to me that Jay Footlik has the experience, commitment, and political savvy necessary to beat Mark Kirk. We endorsed Dan Seals last time, but this time we are proud to stand with Jay Footlik."

A 10th District resident, after attending a meet-and-greet for Jay, wrote, "Feeling like a traitor, I was reluctant to go to a coffee for Jay, but I agreed, and to my surprise found a candidate who is not only as likeable as Dan, but in my opinion, a more qualified candidate, and a candidate who, if given the opportunity to run, can and will unseat Kirk."

So I urge you all, as intelligent, progressive people who want a Democrat representing us in Congress: keep an open mind, don't just go by what you've heard, meet both candidates, and decide for yourselves who you really think will be the stronger candidate against Mark Kirk in November of 2008.



Above: Tenth Dems volunteers sell Bush's Last Day hats and other Democratic merchandise at the annual winter membership party at The Silo in Lake Bluff on December 18th.

Right: Karen and Michael McCormick win the raffle.

Seals *continued from page 1*

Kirk. Even as thousands of young American men and women have lost their lives fighting and our government has spent hundreds of billions of dollars, our nation has become less safe.

It's time for a real change and new ideas. Dan Seals is the only candidate in this race – either Democratic or Republican – who can credibly bring this change to Washington. On issue after issue, Dan is offering the bold, new ideas that our country needs to change course. Whether it is his unwavering support for a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq, his commitment to providing every American with health insurance, or his resolve to end once and for all the stranglehold that the big special interests have over Congress, he will go to Washington to fight for the people of the 10th District.

I, like many of the 10th District residents, worked tirelessly for Dan in 2006 and continue to do so today. Thanks to many readers of this newsletter, we collected 4,416 signatures to get his name on the ballot, and he continues to receive numerous endorsements from elected officials, Democratic organizations, and district residents. To date, Dan has been endorsed by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, Congressman Jim Clyburn, former Congressman Abner Mikva, state senators Terry Link, Susan Garrett, and Jeffrey Schoenberg, state representatives Julie Hamos, Elaine Nekritz, Kathy Ryg, and Eddie Washington, and State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias. He has also received the endorsements of the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Citizen Action-Illinois, the International Association of Machinists, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, the Illinois Federation of Teachers-Northwest Suburban Teachers Union Local 1211, the Independent Voters of Illinois-IPO, the International Longshoreman's Association, the New Trier Township Democratic Organization, the Northfield Township Democrats, the Service Employees International Union, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and the United Transportation Union.

This is the year to defeat Mark Kirk, and with your continued support of Dan Seals, we can.

Considerations *continued from page 1*

motives of those who support the other candidate and never, ever give them the benefit of the doubt. You don't need those other people to beat Kirk anyway, and your victory will be sweeter if it is purer. Let those dummies who supported the losing candidate vote for Kirk or sit this one out. We know what we're doing and we don't need help from anyone. After all, we know more than they do.

We Democrats have lost every Congressional election in the 10th District for nearly 30 years now. Let's not blow it this time.



To Protect These Rights

by Ronald Altman

The first in an occasional series of musings on the Bill of Rights

Recently, Willard (Mitt) Romney gave a speech at the George (H. W.) Bush Presidential Library outlining his views on freedom and religion. He opined that everyone should be free to practice his own religion but that there is no freedom not to practice a religion. He included quotations from the founding fathers that he interprets as supporting his contention that freedom and religion are codependent. Many of these quotations could just as easily (and more fairly) be interpreted as arguing against established religions and in favor of a pantheistic view of American culture that allows everyone to decide for herself which religion to practice – or whether to embrace any religion at all. At least that's how I view it.

Freedom of religion has two components according to the First Amendment: the Establishment Clause, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," and the Free Exercise Clause, "Congress shall make no law...prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The Free Exercise Clause is the bedrock of our religious freedom because it prohibits Congress (and the states through the 14th Amendment) from unreasonably preventing any person from practicing religion as he wishes. Nearly all non-economic migrants to this country since the 17th century have been impelled to leave their homelands because they were denied the right to practice the religion of their choosing. Whether they were Puritans leaving Anglican England's religious intolerance or Russian Jews fleeing pogroms of the Romanovs, Americans have voted with their feet for freedom to practice religion.

The Establishment Clause is similarly related to our English heritage. When people dissented from orthodox Anglican doctrine, they were allowed to exercise their religion only at the cost of persecution, fines, and Test Acts (loss of political rights). The official religion was supported by the state through taxes paid by all, regardless of religious affiliation. As Romney pointed out, religious exiles in

colonial and post-colonial America, from Congregationalist Roger Williams to Mormon Joseph Smith, left their communities because of the restrictions placed on their religious freedom by established churches. They fled to places as diverse as Rhode Island and Utah to found new communities.

There has always been a conflict between orthodoxy and dissent, whether religious or political. Orthodoxy requires control and submission because it views itself as the one true way. If many faiths coexist, then many views of the "One True Faith" also must coexist. Because the dogmas and requirements of religions vary and conflict, one answer would be to limit religious freedom that varies from the established religion. This is the model of pre-19th Century Europe and present day China and Wahabi Islam. The United States instead has chosen to allow religions to coexist and to require that they respect each other's differences.

Justice Holmes wrote regarding freedom of speech that "the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market." Thus, the cure for bad speech is more speech. By analogy, religious freedom for all is protected in proportion to the right of all to worship in their own way. The cure for religious intolerance is exposure to all religious views. Should this tolerance include allowing people not to worship at all, so be it. The Christian, Moslem, Jew, or atheist has no pipeline to certainty, even if each believes he does. A believer has no more right to demand the participation of all citizens than a non-believer has to reject all public displays of religion.

Here Romney errs in his formulation. Freedom does not require religion any more than religion requires freedom. People have been coerced in their beliefs for thousands of years, and one of the reasons our country was founded was to eliminate this coercion. Likewise freedom does not demand "a moral and religious people," as Mitt Romney, paraphrasing John Adams, contends. Rather it requires that those who love liberty respect all their fellow citizens and be willing to devote their lives to protecting the liberty of all citizens. Freedom of religion must embrace freedom from religion as well, if it is to mean anything.

Voting to Continue Waterboarding, Mark Kirk Stands With Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld

by Paul Kelly

Mark Kirk voted against banning waterboarding by U.S. intelligence agencies.

By aligning himself with the failed Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld view of torture and against the view of the collective wisdom of the United States Armed Services, Mark Kirk again showed his true colors – that of a Bush Republican out of touch with the values of the voters in the 10th Congressional District.

The House voted to require U.S. intelligence agencies to follow Army rules adopted last year that explicitly forbid waterboarding, sexual humiliation, "mock" executions, the use of attack dogs, and the withholding of food and medical care. The legislation also would require interrogators to adhere to the long-established protocols of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war.

True to form, President Bush has promised to veto the bill. And, true to form, Kirk when called upon does what the Republican leaders direct him to do. Bush promises this veto despite the fact that 30 retired generals and admirals wrote a letter to Congress urging passage of the bill.

"We believe it is vital to the safety of our men and women in uniform that the United States not sanction the use of interrogation methods

it would find unacceptable if inflicted by the enemy against captured Americans," the military leaders' letter states. "That principle, embedded in the Army Field Manual, has guided generations of American military personnel in combat. The current situation, in which the military operates under one set of interrogation rules that are public and the CIA operates under a separate, secret set of rules, is unwise and impractical."

Despite the near-universal acceptance that waterboarding is torture, Kirk recently told WGN's Wes Bleed that such tactics were just fine. Kirk also supports the destruction of three-year-old video tapes documenting the CIA's interrogation of two high-level al Qaeda operatives.

Kirk supports the destruction of the tapes despite the fact that destroying the tapes went against the advice in 2003 of the CIA's general counsel; the advice in 2003 of Republican Porter Goss, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee; and even the advice in 2003 of deputy White House chief of staff Harriet Miers and Justice Department lawyers.

The voters of the 10th Congressional District deserve a representative who will stand with their values, not one who will do only as he's told.

Democrats' New Year's Resolutions



My resolution in 2008 is that we change our country and change Washington, D.C.

*Dan Seals, Candidate,
U.S. Congress, 10th District,*

I resolve to give thanks, every day, for the gifts of nature – for air, water, birdsong, and flowers. For blue-spotted salamanders and for my partner, Kath, a gracious and beautiful example of the human species. For the wonders of creation, those I can fathom and the many more I cannot. I resolve to listen more, talk less, and get outside my comfort zone at least once a week. I resolve to try commuting by bicycle at least part of the way to work as often as I can. I resolve to help progressive candidates and elected officials with my money and my time. The health of our community – our polity and our ecosystems – depends on active and wise stewardship. I stand ready to work.



*Debra Shore, Commissioner,
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago*



My hope is that 2008 will see Democrats win their races, including me, and that we can reverse the damage that has been done to our country.

*Michelle Feldman, Candidate,
Lake County Board, District 22*

To be more open, direct, and kind with those who might aggravate me. (In memory of Joy Fisher.)

*Mark Walker, Candidate,
State Representative, 66th District*



I have two 2008 New Year's Resolutions: 1) To begin the year with hope that our country will regain its international stature and leadership, that we will once again be respected, and that we will have the ability to create solutions to world problems; and 2) That we regain our focus on our national needs, especially by providing more accessible healthcare and more meaningful job opportunities here in the United States, and by making a commitment to end global warming.



Susan Garrett, State Senator, 29th District



I resolve to do all I can to create and support new ways for people to participate in politics, to strengthen our community, and to empower the progressive movement.

I resolve to work hard to improve our education system and our environment here in Illinois, and to steer clear of small-minded conventional wisdom when envisioning how we can build a better future.

I resolve to bring problem-solving and accountability to Springfield – or, barring that, at least some sanity.

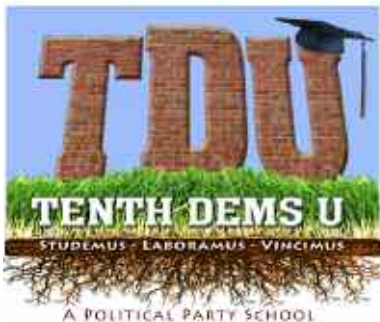
*Daniel Biss, Candidate,
State Representative, 17th District*

My resolution is to do my part to help put our country back on track. Win or lose this election, I will continue to be an advocate for change. I hope 2008 ushers in a new chapter for my children and all American children. My two-year-old daughter has only lived in a time of war. I'm ready to return to an America that's more focused on toleration than isolation, more interested in peace than war, more committed to solving problems than scoring points.



Jay Footlik, Candidate, U.S. Congress, 10th District

Tenth Dems University Reconvenes February 7th with a Post-Primary Analysis



Tenth Dems University will usher in its spring semester with an analysis of the results of the February 5th Illinois primary election. State Representative Lou Lang will preside over this session on Thursday evening, February 7th, at 7:00 p.m., at the Highland Park Community House. Other upcoming offerings include a March 4th course on the effect

of religion on the 2008 elections taught by Ron Miller, chair of the Religion Department, Lake Forest College. For more details, and to register, go to www.tdu.tenthdems.org.



Some of the nearly 150 Tenth Dems who gathered at The Silo for pizza and conversation on a snowy December evening discuss plans to take back our country

To Thine Own Self Be True

by Carol Hillsberg

In William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Polonius offers advice to his son Laertes who is about to go abroad. The last admonition is:

*This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

These words echo not only one of the most important themes in *Hamlet*, but also an important measure of the somewhat dazzling array of candidates for the presidency in 2008. To attempt to live by this adage is to set the bar very high. To be in politics and adhere to this principle sets the bar at Everest height.

An example of being untrue to oneself, I believe, is the flip-flop phenomenon made famous by John Kerry's "I was for it before I was against it" line. In *Newsweek*, December 10, 2007, Anna Quindlen describes a similar "bipolar attitude" expressed by Rudy Giuliani, claiming, "He has created a virtual Rudy to run alongside the actual – or at least the historical – version." This Republican candidate has contradicted himself on abortion, gay marriage, gun control, and even whom he voted for in 1972, claiming that when he voted for George McGovern, he was thinking that he really should be voting for Richard Nixon. Ms. Quindlen closes her essay with the thought that you can't be seen as flip-flopping if you're always of two minds. In other words, is the "own self" that Giuliani and others are true to actually a mass of contradictions?

It seems to me that this question is at the heart of decision-making in 2007-08. The task of concerned citizens is to discern what the "true self" of each of the candidates is, to decide if he or she has been faithful to those principles, and finally to decide if the candidate's core beliefs approximate their own. It can be a daunting task.

Accordingly, I was interested in Katie Couric's quest for

straightforward answers to some straightforward questions. She asked each of the major candidates when he or she was last angry. My favorite reply was from Bill Richardson who said that he experienced some inner rage when he could not find the light in the bathroom in his hotel room. Now that is something many can relate to. I also appreciated John Edwards' reply that he probably lost his temper yesterday over something meaningless. I found disingenuous Rudy Giuliani's response that the last time he became angry was when the Yankees lost. Nor did I quite buy the fact that the last time Hillary Clinton was angry was when her dog woke her up at 5:00 a.m. Barack Obama stated that he does not become angry often, but the last time was when President Bush vetoed the bill to continue healthcare for children.

On a subsequent broadcast Katie queried the candidates about the following statement made by President Harry Truman, "A man not honorable in his marital relations is not usually honorable in any other." The reactions ranged from Senator Joe Biden, who stated that integrity is a habit of mind and can't be compartmentalized, to Senator John McCain, who stated that it's up to each person's view of the individual, and everyone has a different view. Interestingly, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton expressed similar views, stating that there are many example of individuals in American history who have made great contributions and who have had challenges in their personal life, but there has to be some space for privacy. I do think Rudy Giuliani was being true to himself in his reply. He claimed not to be perfect, in the area of marital fidelity and other areas. But, he said, he tries to learn from his mistakes.

As the candidates discussed these personal issues with Katie Couric, I felt I had better insight into the content of their characters. I felt that some were more truthful than others, and I could discern whose ideas approximated mine. I had yet another factor to consider as we determine who will be the next man or woman to lead our country.

Kirk Unmasked: Mark Kirk is No Champion of Human Rights and Civil Liberties

This is the eighth in an ongoing series.

In an effort to lure Democratic voters, Mark Kirk has used all sorts of smoke and mirrors to depict himself as a champion of human rights and civil liberties. At a rare Town Hall appearance in October, for example, he devoted roughly half of his presentation to the story of Bangladeshi journalist Shoab Choudhury. (See "Kirk Unmasked," *Tenth News*, December 2007). His motivation clearly was to use Mr. Choudhury's unfair imprisonment and abuse to portray himself as a leader who is willing to fight against such violations of human rights.

But given a real opportunity to protect human rights and civil liberties, Kirk almost always chooses to support the Bush administration's assault on these critical elements of democracy.

In recent sessions of Congress, Kirk has helped to pass numerous pieces of legislation that have undermined individual liberties and enabled the Bush administration to violate the Constitution. Kirk has also voted against numerous Democratic proposals to restore lost liberties, including the right to privacy and the right to a fair trial.

Most recently, Kirk voted against the 2008 Intelligence Authorization Act, which included provisions that would prevent the CIA from using waterboarding and other harsh interrogation methods.

In another striking example of Kirk's support of the Bush administration's assault on freedom and human rights, he voted on

September 29, 2006 for the passage of the Military Commissions Act (MCA)—the law that is enabling the indefinite detention of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. The MCA gives the president the power to decide who is an enemy of our country and to imprison such persons indefinitely without charging them with a crime. It also removes the Constitutional due process right of habeas corpus (the basic right to have a court decide if the imprisonment is lawful); diminishes protections against horrific abuse; allows the government to put people on trial based on hearsay evidence, and authorizes trials that can sentence people to death based on testimony that is literally beaten out of witnesses. (See press release issued 10/17/2006 by the ACLU, available at <http://www.aclu.org/safefree/detention/27091prs20061017.html>)

Kirk took another major step in supporting Bush administration efforts to undermine Americans' civil liberties when he voted last August for the passage of the Protect America Act (PAA) — a law that gives the government the authority to wiretap anyone, including U.S. citizens, without court approval, as long as the target is reasonably believed to be located outside the U.S. (See "Congress Reforming Government Surveillance Authority," OMB Watch, 11/20/07)

And just last month, Kirk forfeited the opportunity to reverse this



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The Sub-Prime Mess: Who's To Blame?

by Sharon Sanders

There's not even a doubt in my mind where the sub-prime debacle emanated from: Mr. Kirk, Mr. Bush, Mr. Greenspan, and all the anti-regulator, free-traders in the administration and corporate America.

This group forever thinks that all government is bad. They despise any regulation. It's a nuisance. They don't want anyone looking over their expansive shoulders to see who's watching their misdeeds. They so often forget that privatizing everything leads to as much corruption and mismanagement as poorly run government. They also forget that they eat the same foods, breathe the same air, drink the same water, and buy the same toys as you and I, albeit a little more extravagantly.

So regulation has its place in society, government has its place, and without the balance, there can be no democracy. The mortgage mess is a prime example of what happens when there's little or no oversight. It's also a precursor of everything else that will negatively affect us in the future if we don't go back to a balance between government and the markets.

When my husband and I bought our first house, there was absolutely no doubt as to how we would qualify: 20 percent down, income verified, and we were fairly certain that the same company would hold the lien for the length of the mortgage.

Things have drastically changed. Mr. Greenspan advocated home ownership for all, certainly a good idea, but very unrealistic. He brought the interest rates down so low that mortgages became very affordable to many who were previously priced out of the market. Then the vultures stepped in: teaser rates (which are now resetting), jumbo mortgages with no stated income (how insane is that?), houses flipped for quick profits, prices inflated, a bubble just waiting to burst. And it has.

Mortgage brokers, investment houses, and banks packaged the prime and sub-prime mortgages and sold them as AAA products to everyone and their uncle, both globally and here at home. Brokers had no vested interest in assuring that the mortgages were safe or of good quality. They got their huge fees, they sold the mortgages, and they were gone.

As always, but even more so in this case, the results are proving to be disastrous. We may not feel it so much here in the 10th District, at least, not yet, but it's out there. And just as in the case of the Iraq War, the administration, along with its controlled press, is trying desperately and in vain to assure us that everything is just wonderful.

Henry Paulson, Secretary of the Treasury and part of the Carlyle cabal, has told us repeatedly over the past year that the situation is contained. He's dead wrong, and he's had to backtrack quite a bit. Mr. Bush has stepped to the plate to save his party and has now said he will try to freeze interest rates for qualified homeowners. Let's see how that will play out.

Republicans would argue that it's "buyer beware." And yes, we should all be diligent in what we buy or sign on to, but that will never happen and oftentimes can't. How many of us really understand the fine print and all its gibberish? The administration refuses to address the real problem: no oversight, no regulation, and no reasonable guidelines.

Bush's is a free market party, except that it's not free and it's extremely destructive to our society. The fallout is massive: home values dropping, diminished home equity, people with two homes, people without homes, hundreds of thousands of foreclosures, cancelled contracts, renters evicted by banks and holding companies, dependence on credit cards with increasing interest rates, unemployment, broken and displaced families, an inability to consume to keep the economy rolling along, and, eventually, an increase in crime.

This is the inevitable outcome of deregulation, the Republican mantra and the belief of Mark Kirk and the Bush administration that, above all, we must protect corporate America first.

Kirk Unmasked *continued from page 6*

damage and to help restore Constitutional checks and balances to the government's electronic surveillance program. In November, when the House considered the Responsible Electronic Surveillance That is Overseen, Reviewed, and Effective Act of 2007 (RESTORE), Kirk voted against it, choosing instead to protect the Bush administration's ability to continue to invade the privacy of innocent Americans.

Sponsored by Representative John Conyers, the RESTORE Act would provide the intelligence community with effective tools to conduct surveillance of foreign targets outside the U.S. But it also would require the FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) court to ensure that targets are, in fact, outside the United States and that warrants are obtained for targets inside the United States. RESTORE also would clarify and eliminate ambiguous language in the Protect America Act that appeared to authorize warrantless searches inside the United States, including physical searches of American homes, offices, computers, and medical records. (See Think Progress summary of RESTORE Act)

This critical bill passed the House on November 15 – without support from Congressman Kirk – but it is still being debated in the Senate, where it faces tough opposition from Republicans who are insisting that it include a provision granting immunity to the telecommunications companies that participated in the administration's warrantless surveillance program. And President Bush has said he will veto the bill without this provision.

Whatever may be garnered from Kirk's role in the story of Shoab Choudhury, as he told it at his October Town Hall meeting, it could not be that Kirk is a supporter of human rights. A review of Kirk's voting record makes it all too clear that human rights are not among his priorities.



Mark Walker, candidate for state representative, talks campaign strategy with State Senator Susan Garrett, Carol Blustein, and Doug Gerleman at the Winter Membership Party.

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Sunday, January 20th, 2:00 p.m.

Hyatt Deerfield Hotel, 1750 Lake Cook Road (Lake Cook Road at I-294)

Meet and talk to federal, state, and local Democratic candidates. Decide for yourself:

~ Who can WIN?

~ Who will bring positive change?

~ Who has the best understanding of our problems, needs, and desires?

~ Who has the ability to deliver workable solutions?

Dan Seals and Jay Footlik, Democratic contenders in the race for U.S. Congress, will speak about their candidacies. All Democrats running for federal, state, and local offices within the 10th District have been invited. Tenth Dems members will have the opportunity to participate in a straw poll.

★ Admission is FREE ★ Non-members are welcome to attend ★ For more information call 847-266-VOTE (8683) ★