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Mark Kirk: Mr. Republican

by Steve Sheffey

Mark Kirk was an early backer of John McCain. If you are concerned about a John McCain/Sarah Palin victory, please consider whether you want a Republican representing you in Congress. Mark Kirk is not any less of a Republican simply because he leaves his party affiliation off his yard signs and bumper stickers.

Data from *The Washington Post* shows that Mark Kirk voted with the Republican Party on more than 8 out of every 10 votes in Congress. In prior sessions of Congress, he voted with the Republicans more than 9 out of every 10 votes. On the 25 closest votes (decided by 7 or fewer votes) in the most recent session of Congress, when his vote really mattered, he voted with the Republicans 24 out of 25 times.

There's nothing special about Mark Kirk. If you



know a congressman's political party, you can predict with astonishing accuracy how he will vote. Almost every member of Congress votes with his party 8 or more times out of 10. Party labels matter.

What would Kirk say if confronted with these facts? He'd say that he votes with his party less often than most other members of Congress. That was true in the most recent session, when—unlike other sessions—he "only" voted with his party more than 8 out of 10 times. But that's kind of like when your kids say that other kids came home with less mud on their clothes

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Tenth News

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NOVEMBER 2008 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 5, Edition 11

Tenth Dems Honors Volunteers and Reaffirms Goal of Finding and Promoting Candidates Who Share Democratic Values

Nancie Blatt Receives Rosenblit Volunteer Award, Coroner Richard Keller Receives Mikva Leadership Award, Lauren Beth Gash's Leadership Recognized, Dan Seals Speaks



George Rosenblit speaks eloquently of the importance of volunteering.

On Sunday, October 19, following Dan Seals's stellar performance in his debate against incumbent Republican Congressman Mark Kirk, more than 200 Tenth Dems gathered at the Deerfield Hyatt. They were there to support Democrats running for office at all levels throughout

the Illinois 10th Congressional District, to reaffirm their commitment to grassroots politics, and to honor their own.

All present were saddened to learn that Zoe Mikva, wife of former 10th District Congressman, judge, and Democratic elder statesman Abner Mikva, had suffered a stroke and that Judge Mikva was forced at the last minute to cancel his scheduled keynote address. Even so, the general mood was one of celebration as Tenth Dems marked its fifth anniversary.

George Rosenblit, first recipient of the Tenth Dems Volunteer Award that bears his name, began the speechifying. In his remarks, entitled "The Importance of Volunteering," George said:

"If Tenth Dems didn't have over 1500 dedicated volunteers who performed many essential tasks in our grassroots organization, we would not be here today.

"What motivated these volunteers was a desire—and I would say a burning desire—to do something to undo the damage that the Republican administration has consistently perpetrated on our citizens and our country over the last eight years.

"This includes, but is not limited to, leading this country into the Iraq War, which never should have been fought; neglecting to

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Dan Seals Bests Mark Kirk in Sole 10th District Debate

by Ron and Barbara Altman

The long-awaited debate between 10th District candidates Republican incumbent Congressman Mark Kirk and Democratic challenger Dan Seals took place at Deerfield High School on Sunday afternoon, October 19. Despite competition from a Bears game and a beautiful autumn day, a near capacity crowd of 1,000 attended the event, which was organized by the League of Women Voters.



As with most debates between incumbents and their challengers in 2008, each tried to portray himself as a Washington outsider and to tie his opponent to hated "special interests."

The candidates answered questions that covered a wide range of issues. Themes ranged from Representative Kirk's responsibility for the Bush administration's disastrous policies to his ability to bring home the pork for his district. Highlighting differences between them, the candidates could agree only on their strong support for the State of Israel and the responsibility of Gov. Rod Blagojevich for the state of mass transit in Illinois.

Claiming to be "an Independent in a Democrat Congress," the Republican incumbent trumpeted his media endorsements and approval by congressional rating organizations and promised to block Democratic initiatives in the new Congress. In particular, he railed against union organization, trial lawyers, and government benefits for illegal aliens. He alleged himself to be the eighth most independent member of Congress, who supported President Bush "only" 59 percent of the time. According to *Congressional Quarterly*, however, Kirk has

supported the Republican agenda closer to 90 percent of the time.

Kirk's argument centered on claims that he drafted and passed legislation and brought federal funds to the district. At times he sounded more like Alfonse D'Amato than the former "Senator Pothole" ever did. His claimed support for local veterans' programs was a centerpiece of this argument; however, see the discussion of Mark Kirk's record on legislation affecting veterans in "Kirk Unmasked," in this issue.

Dan Seals noted how he supports "the values of the 10th District," including support of Barack Obama for president, while stressing his economic conservatism and opposition to the Bush-Kirk war in Iraq. Seals pointed out that this war has cost more than 4,000 American lives and continues to cost American taxpayers more than \$300 million a day.

Seals called for redirecting our priorities toward expanding healthcare, both for the uninsured and for returning veterans. He also called for integrating the 12 million workers who "live in the shadows" because of their immigration status, and setting them on a path toward citizenship.

Kirk claimed to speak Spanish and addressed some remarks to Hispanic voters in that language. He also attacked "illegal aliens" who sought healthcare in our country and called for securing our southern border with a 20-foot high security fence.

Seals countered by predicting that building a 20-foot fence would increase the market for 21-foot ladders.

Although the near capacity crowd largely heeded the moderator's pleas for silent listening, judging from the applause that greeted the candidates' closing remarks, Seals supporters in the auditorium outnumbered Kirk supporters two to one.

Tenth Dems Honors Volunteers *continued from page 1*

provide adequate health benefits to veterans; infringing on our civil liberties; playing havoc with our education system; ignoring the needs of our working class citizens; and abandoning oversight of our financial infrastructure, which resulted in the current financial meltdown and loss of home ownership.

"As individuals, we have a choice—to sit on our hands and do nothing or to pitch in to help regain control of the White House and the Congress.

"By giving of their time and energy in the political arena, our volunteers are shaping history, and at the same time, they are becoming part of history. They set an example for their children and grandchildren, friends and neighbors, that there is more than one way to serve our country. And it is our country."

Ross Nickow, last year's Rosenblit Volunteer Award recipient, presented the 2008 award to Nancie Blatt. One of the founders of Tenth Dems, Nancie has worked tirelessly to further the Tenth Dems' goal of electing Democrats to every office within the Illinois 10th District. Her expertise on questions of campaign finance and the delicious snacks she often brings to meetings demonstrate Nancie's eclectic role in Tenth Dems. Her warmth, intelligence, and tireless dedication affect every aspect of this grassroots organization's operations.

Accepting the award, Nancie introduced family members and then acknowledged George and Ross's accomplishments. She expressed amazement at the number of people who have stayed involved in Tenth Dems from the outset, and stayed involved after each election. She remarked how her mother's work on campaigns constituted her

own introduction to politics. Originally from Michigan, Nancie met Lauren Beth Gash when Lauren was running for state representative, and the rest is history.

Lake County Coroner Dr. Richard Keller wryly attributed his receipt of the Mikva Leadership Award to his receding hairline and gray hair. He



Nancie Blatt accepts the George Rosenblit Volunteer Award.

remarked that politics are action, not just sitting back, not just going to vote, and not just this time of year. He described Democrats as "common people working together for the common good," a phrase he repeated several times during the course of his remarks.

John Hmurovic, who counts among his many accomplishments as a Tenth Dem the co-founding of this newsletter, took us back to October 14, 2003, the birth date of the Tenth Dems. Tenth Dems was begun by

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Kirk Unmasked: A Last Look At a Member of the Republican Congressional Leadership's Full-Bore Effort to Portray Himself to a Majority Democratic District as a Political Independent



This is the eighteenth (and, we hope, last) in an ongoing series.

This summer, Republican Congressman Mark Kirk sent 10th District residents a four-page booklet entitled *Congressman Mark Kirk's 10th District Countdown—District Review*. The mailer has the look and feel of a district update. But not by any stretch of the imagination does it provide one.

The glossy brochure clearly is a public relations piece, published and mailed at taxpayers' expense, and designed specifically to spotlight 10 of the incumbent Republican congressman's accomplishments—regardless of their actual merit.

To be sure, the substance behind many of the accomplishments trumpeted in Kirk's *District Review* is questionable—if not downright bogus. For example, a front page photo shows Congressman Kirk, along with actor Gary Sinise and Apollo 13 commander Captain James A. Lovell, cutting a ceremonial ribbon to unveil a sign for the new Lovell Navy-VA hospital.

The photo, accompanied by the caption "Saving our VA Hospital," clearly is intended to depict Representative Kirk as a great champion of veterans' causes. Nowhere does the brochure disclose that the ceremony was for the unveiling of the parking structure that will serve the hospital. The hospital itself is not expected to be completed until 2010.

The caption also conveniently doesn't say that Representative Kirk—despite his knack for seizing, if not staging, photo ops that align his image with veterans' causes—has not been a dependable advocate for veterans' rights. To the contrary, our incumbent congressman has frequently turned his back on the men and women serving our country, choosing instead to support Bush administration policies that hurt veterans and members of the military. To wit: Kirk voted for every Bush budget that slashed funding for veterans' benefits. He also voted against countless legislative proposals designed to provide tangible assistance to veterans, including:

- Amendments to increase veterans' health benefits
- Opening the military's TRICARE health plan to members of the National Guard and Reserve who served in Iraq
- Giving members of the military in Iraq and Afghanistan a bonus
- Creating mandatory rest and recuperation periods between deployments to Iraq

The Pioneer Press reported that "Mark Kirk opposed the \$6.6 billion increase that was vitally needed by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs in 2007. He's voted against benefits for widows and orphans. He's voted against debt relief for returning guards and reservists at a time when National Guardsmen and reservists make up almost 50 percent of the troops that have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan." And even when Congressman Kirk supported veterans' interests in final votes on bills, he often opposed those interests in procedural votes designed to defeat or table the bill before it could come to a final vote. (See "Symbolic Support for Veterans Is No Substitute for Tangible Benefits," *Tenth News*, September 2007.)

According to Disabled American Veterans, Kirk voted against the interests of veterans and members of the U.S. armed forces on 10 of the 15 most important legislative proposals to come to the House

floor between 2002 and 2008 (for more information, go to <http://capwiz.com/dav/bio/keyvotes/?id=40130&lvl=C&azip=60093&bzip=>). And if you do go to this website, you will find that every one of the five pro-veterans votes listed was cast by Kirk after May 2006, that is, after Dan Seals launched his first challenge to this incumbent Republican.

Most of the other accomplishments spotlighted in Kirk's *District Review* smack of the same hypocrisy and lack of merit. The Congressional Integrity and Pensions Forfeiture Act of 2007 is a case in point. The bill proposes to deny a congressional pension to any member of Congress convicted of a felony. Kirk introduced the bill on July 31, 2007. But like most of Kirk's legislative proposals, it's gone nowhere.

While sponsoring this doomed legislation, our congressman has forfeited far more meaningful opportunities to uphold high ethical standards among members of Congress. To wit: Representative Kirk voted against holding Joshua Bolton and Harriet Miers in contempt of Congress for failing to comply with subpoenas issued by the House Judiciary Committee. He also voted to weaken House ethics rules for the sake of protecting Tom DeLay. And he voted against Dennis Kucinich's article of impeachment against George W. Bush for deceiving Congress with fabricated threats of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and role in the September 11, 2001 Al Qaeda attacks in order to gain authorization to invade Iraq.

District Review also highlights The Health Insurance for Life Act—a bill that Congressman Kirk cosponsored with Democratic Congressman Daniel Lipinski that proposes to remove the 18-month COBRA time limit and allow individuals to continue their health insurance until they are eligible for Medicare. As is true of most legislation our congressman has sponsored, this bill hasn't moved an inch since it was introduced on April 7, 2007. COBRA, of course, allows people who leave or lose their jobs to continue under their employer's health plan for 18 months, as long as they continue to pay the premium—the complete premium formerly shared by the employer and the employee. If Kirk intended his sponsorship of an extension of COBRA to demonstrate that he is an advocate for healthcare reform, he seriously misses the mark.

The fact is, extending the 18-month COBRA limitation would do nothing to solve the major healthcare crisis facing most Americans: health insurance has become unaffordable. It is unlikely that a newly retired or unemployed citizen could afford to pay the full premium for health insurance that formerly was funded from 40 percent to 65 percent by an employer.

For a real solution to this problem, voters in the 10th Congressional District should know better than to turn to Mark Kirk. He's made it perfectly clear that he vehemently opposes universal healthcare and will go to great lengths to support the pharmaceutical industry at the expense of American healthcare consumers. To wit: He voted for the overly complex Medicare Prescription Drug Plan and he failed to vote on an amendment to require the government to negotiate lower prices under the plan.

Suffice it to say, *District Review* is a last ditch attempt by

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Tenth Dems Volunteers Honored

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common people working together for the common good who were sick and tired of three years of the Bush administration. They were not a bunch of elected officials looking for supporters but a group of people looking for candidates to represent them. They drew in volunteers and brought people into the political process. The first keynote speaker at a Tenth Dems fundraiser was an Illinois state senator who recognized the critical importance of grassroots politics, Barack Obama. Later that year, Michelle Obama spoke to young Tenth Dems volunteers.

Tenth Dems chair Lauren Beth Gash also was honored on the organization's fifth anniversary with both a necklace and a framed montage of campaign buttons that with the complicity of husband Gregg were spirited out of storage in her basement. She then introduced Dan Seals, whose candidacy has been nurtured, encouraged, and supported by the Tenth Dems.

Acknowledging the crucial role of Tenth Dems in his candidacy, Dan talked about his journey from someone who could not get his calls answered to the Democratic candidate in one of the key congressional races in the country. Noting that the polls are "all over the place," Dan judged that the race was most likely a statistical dead heat, one that will be decided in large part by the efforts of the thousands of grassroots volunteers Tenth Dems has brought to 10th District politics.

Portions of this article are based on Ellen Beth Gill's live blogging from the event.





The “Palin Effect”

by *Carmen A. Corbett*

As the presidential race winds down, there has been much discussion of the “Bradley Effect.” Some have predicted that this perceived historic tendency of white voters to abandon black candidates once in the voting booth could account for between two and six points, giving Obama a distinct disadvantage on Election Day.

The conventional wisdom is that race will play a large role in the outcome of this presidential election and that on Election Day a significant number of voters who said they would vote for Obama will vote for McCain in the privacy of the voting booth.

To the contrary, there is evidence that the “Bradley Effect” has been grossly overstated.

According to Blair Levin, who worked on Tom Bradley’s 1982 California governor’s race, there were other factors that contributed more to Bradley’s defeat than the insidious racism that conventional wisdom blamed, i.e., an unpopular gun control initiative and an aggressive Republican absentee ballot program that generated hundreds of thousands of Republican votes no pollster anticipated. Levin says, “This is not to say that race wasn’t an issue; it was in 1982 and it has been since. But to those who keep citing the Bradley effect—not so fast. It’s more complicated than you think.”

It has been noted that during the 2008 Democratic primary Barack Obama generally outperformed the polls predicting the outcome of many primary races across the country. This runs counter to the notion of the Bradley effect.

Instead, I submit for your consideration the very real possibility of the “Palin Effect” on Election Day. There is already evidence that it exists.

The “Palin Effect” posits that many, Republicans and others, who have said that they will vote for the McCain/Palin ticket, will actually vote for

Obama/Biden in the privacy of the voting booth. Let’s call it buyer’s remorse as voters have had more exposure to Gov. Sarah Palin. It has become clear that she knows little, and she is not qualified to be President of the United States. This is particularly frightening when you take into account the age, and more important, the health history, of the top of the ticket, John McCain. As Colin Powell said, the job of the vice president is to be ready to step into the role of president— at a moment’s notice. Gov. Palin is NOT ready.



And, McCain’s choice of Gov. Palin as his running mate is proof positive of his abject lack of judgment. Therefore, HE is not ready to be president.

One clear measure of the “Palin Effect” is the number of newspaper endorsements that Obama has captured over McCain. As of mid-October, the ratio is 3:1. Many of these newspapers have switched their allegiance to Obama in 2008 after supporting Bush in 2000 and 2004 and McCain in the Republican primary. In endorsing Obama, the *Chicago Tribune* supported a Democratic presidential candidate for the first time in its nearly 150-year history.

One editorial board after another cites Gov. Sarah Palin as clearly unqualified to be president. This has been a major driver in why so many newspapers have endorsed Obama. Although many of the pundits of those same newspapers have not had the courage to

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The Irony of It All

by *Sharon Sanders*

Once again, Congressman Mark Kirk is attempting to magnify his elusive accomplishments. Our economy, which is spiraling out of control, is a direct— yes, a direct— result of the votes and policies of Mr. Kirk and the Republican administration during the years in which they were the majority in Congress.

There are those who will argue that our problems began with the dissolution of the Glass-Steagall Act, a bill from the post-depression years that kept the banks separate from investment firms; but, in fact, it was not until Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan was joined by Mr. Bush and the likes of Mr. Kirk that a wink and a nod was given to let our financial institutions know that anything goes in the name of a home ownership society designed to artificially prop up our economy. How ironic that Mr. Kirk and other Republicans talk about fiscal responsibility and cutting entitlements while encouraging Americans to amass debt they never could be expected to pay back.

How ironic that they blame the very people who were given 5-year interest only and no-documentation loans instead of those who issued these mortgages in the first place. How ironic that these same Republicans, the anti-government anti-regulatory party, now think it’s just fine to bail out these institutions with taxpayer money. Yet, you’ll be hard-pressed to find any mandates for these same financial institutions with their new-found injection of capital to directly help the homeowners on the brink of bankruptcy, or to cut to zero the exorbitant salaries of those failing executives who allowed this

dangerous and exotic manipulation of the financial markets to go on, and even encouraged it. Unfortunately, with corporate control of the media, they have led us to believe that if we didn’t bail out the likes of Bear Stearns or AIG the earth would fall from under our feet. Yet, how ironic that in spite of these obscene bailouts, the markets still have failed.

In order to pay for this mess, since we certainly don’t have enough money left in the U.S. Treasury’s coffers, these ardent anti-communist Republicans are willing to sell their souls to the very countries whose philosophies they allegedly despise— Communist China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Viet Nam, for example.

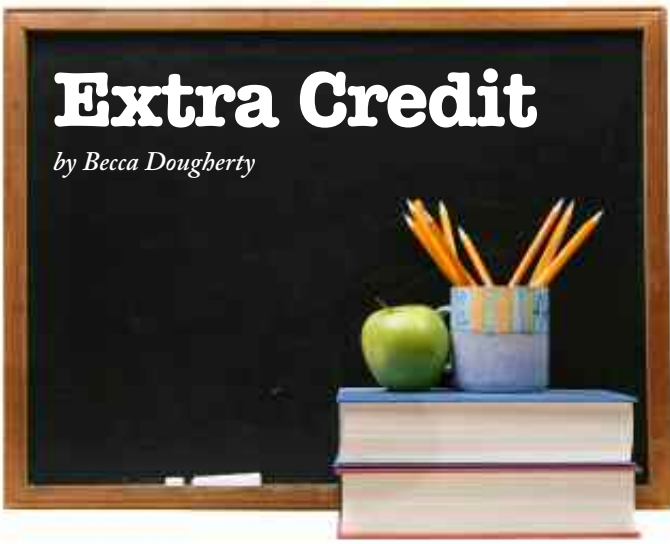
And yet, how ironic that according to Mr. Kirk and the Republicans, all taxes are bad. Forget paving streets or supporting schools, libraries, and police and fire departments— let’s just privatize everything.

Can you just imagine how much worse the situation would have been had we listened to Mr. Kirk, Mr. Bush, et al and privatized Social Security? Our citizens were doing exactly what Mr. Kirk and the Republicans wanted them to do— feed the coffers of American corporate greed and their lobbyists, the credit card companies, the financial institutions, the homebuilders, and the automobile industry. They had such disdain for any type of regulation for Wall Street that they turned a blind eye to the subprime mortgages that were sold and packaged as Triple A investments all over the globe and which are now sitting in our money markets and mutual funds. It was absolutely inevitable that these policies and short-sightedness would backfire. The carnage is all around us— diminishing home values, lay-offs, foreclosures, the collapse of the stock market, the disappearance of what were called safe investments, retirement savings cut in half,

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Extra Credit

by Becca Dougherty



On October 11, I turned 18. One of the most exciting things about turning 18 is that I get to vote for the first time. I'm pretty excited about that so I've been watching the debates on television, watching the news, and paying attention to the issues.

I'm a senior at Stevenson High School. Last Friday, my English teacher assigned us our usual weekend homework. Then she gave us an extra credit opportunity. We could attend a debate at Deerfield High School between Mark Kirk and Dan Seals. I planned to go because I had never been to a debate, and I wanted the extra credit.

Sunday morning, I called my best friend, who's in my class. She said she wasn't going. I called my other friends in class, and no one would go with me. My mom didn't want me to have to go alone, so she came with me.

Sitting in the big auditorium made me feel very grown up. I was

interested in hearing what the candidates had to say because I had to decide who I was going to vote for. But I still wasn't sure after hearing their answers to the first few questions. I asked my mom if I could write a question on a card that would be passed up to the moderator on stage.

I got a card, wrote a question, and passed it up to the stage.

I started getting a little restless after sitting for an hour. I felt like leaving. Then, after a few more questions, answers, and rebuttals, the moderator said, "We have time for only one more question, and I saved this one because it's such a great question."

The question she read was mine: "I am 18 years old and voting for the first time. Tell me why I should vote for you, and what will you do to give teens a voice in the community?" Hearing the moderator ask my question was so thrilling that I almost forgot to listen to the candidates' answers.

Dan Seals answered my question first. He said that Kirk voted to raid Social Security and against funding college loans. He promised that he would vote to support Social Security. He also said that he supported jobs to build our infrastructure and wanted to shift money from oil to green collar jobs.

Then Mark Kirk answered my question. He said that he would not vote for another stimulus package. He also said that he'd supported the Teacher Safety Act, the Deleting Online Predators Act, and the 401 Kids Act.

After the debate, I went down to the stage and shook Dan Seals's hand. I told him that I was the 18-year-old who was voting for the first time, and that he would be getting my vote.

On Monday, I told my teacher about my experience. She was also at the debate and heard my question. She said she was proud of me. I was proud of me too. I learned how important it is to hear the candidates first hand.

Mr. Republican *continued from page 1*

than they did. To call yourself independent when you follow the Republican party line 8 or 9 times out of 10 and 24 times out of 25 is a good working definition of chutzpah.

What does that mean for us? It means that if you are a Republican, Kirk won't disappoint—he followed Bush and the Republicans for eight years and there's no reason to think he'll change. But if you've had enough of what Bush, Cheney, McCain, and Palin represent, you should vote for Dan Seals.

Kirk is part of the Republican problem. He might talk like a moderate, but he's voting Republican too often.

The single most important vote a congressman casts is for Speaker of the House, and Kirk will vote Republican, which most likely means current House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH). That's not good if you care about reproductive choice, gun control, or separation of church and state. The speaker sets the agenda, and Boehner has received zero ratings from NARAL Pro-Choice America, Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the League of Conservation Voters. The National Education Association gave Boehner an F. The National Right to Life Committee gave Boehner a rating of 100, the Gun Owners of America gave Boehner a rating of 100, and the National Rifle Association gave Boehner a rating of A. That's the Republican agenda, and while Kirk claims not to support all of it, he votes for people like Boehner, Bush, Cheney, McCain, and Palin, all of whom are behind it 100 percent.

Depending on who is elected, Mark Kirk will either back the McCain agenda or oppose the Obama agenda. We need Obama in the White House and Dan Seals representing us in Congress.

Irony *continued from page 6*

maxed-out home equity loans, and the resulting stress on the American family.

Mark Kirk has voted with the administration and its protection of corporations time and time again.

Look closely at his record. Don't look at his recent votes, but look at his past policies, which more accurately reflect his views. He's voted against allowing homeowners to renegotiate their mortgages and other debt in bankruptcy court. He has voted against transparency for the financial industry while voting for tougher rules on the individual. The Hope Now bill, with no mandatory rules for renegotiating mortgages, and the federal bailout which first and foremost bails out the same corporations that caused this financial mess in the first place, the push to privatize Social Security, and so much more, all reflect his views of protecting corporations over individuals. He has voted against the Overtime Compensation Act (HR 5006), against the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act and Foreclosure Prevention Act (HR 2895), against the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 and 2005, against the Paycheck Fairness Act of 2008 (HR 1338), against the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (HR 5749), against the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act (HR 3915), against the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008.

His record is right there for you to look at. It shows a complete and utter disregard for the rights of the individuals and workers over corporations. Mr. Kirk talks a good game but his record says something entirely different. We desperately need change before we lose everything we've worked so hard for. It's time to bring this country back to some degree of sanity.

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Kirk Unmasked *continued from page 3*

Congressman Mark Kirk to deceive 10th District voters into believing that he embraces causes that he's repeatedly undermined during his eight years as our district's representative in Congress. Mark Kirk's four terms in Congress coincided with George W. Bush's two terms in the White House, and like the assistant Republican Party whip that he is, Kirk has supported his party's agenda nearly 90 percent of the time.

The 10th District has had enough of Mark Kirk's smoke and mirrors. We think it's time to elect a representative to Congress whom we can depend on to support Barack Obama in restoring integrity to our government and putting it back to working for the American people. That representative is Dan Seals.

Palin *continued from page 6*

openly admit this fact, numerous conservatives have spoken out, including Andrew Sullivan, George Will, Kathleen Parker, Peggy Noonan, David Brooks, Susan Eisenhower, Christopher Buckley, and, of course, Colin Powell. These prominent conservatives have all acknowledged that Gov. Palin has been a drag on the McCain campaign.

The voters' generally unfavorable assessment of Gov. Palin's readiness, and of McCain's attendant lack of judgment, as well as the many newspaper endorsements of Obama and conservative denouncements of Palin, will certainly be factored in when citizens are faced with decision on Election Day, in the privacy of the voting booth. It is likely that the Palin effect will trump any Bradley effect.