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Is There Any Reform in the Healthcare Reform Bill?



by Sharon Sanders

Is there any reform in the healthcare reform bill?



Well, that depends on whom you talk to. It's sort of the glass half full vs. half empty argument. As confusion reigns, the question we, as individuals, have to ask ourselves is this: Are we better off getting something rather than nothing in the hope we can build a base from which to improve reform? Or should we just start from scratch? And, if we start from scratch, when? The last time we did that, we had to wait another 15 years for the opportunity.

Certainly, each approach has its inherent problems. To many, endorsement and support of the bill means we are caving in to the healthcare industry. They say that the weak bill out of the House further expands the base of the insurance industry and allows insurance companies to proceed with ever-increasing premiums. And then we have the Stupak Amendment. There is a great deal of angst, and rightfully so, with the Religious Right's further encroachment of government into our private lives – the

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Tenth News

DECEMBER 2009 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 6, Edition 12

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Tenth Dems Fundraiser a Halloween to Remember

by Ellen Beth Gill

On Halloween night, Tenth Dems hosted its annual fundraising event, this year featuring guest speaker, former Vermont Governor, 2004 presidential candidate, and former DNC Chairman, Dr. Howard Dean. Countless vampires, zombies, ghosts, and goblins interrupted their annual night on the town to attend, along with more than 250 live human beings.

It was treats all around as waiters tempted guests with appetizers and sweets. Then the speeches began, with 10th District congressional candidates Julie Hamos and Dan Seals first at the podium. Hamos gave some personal thoughts about her campaign and described her accomplishments in the Illinois statehouse. Seals talked about the economy, particularly jobs, and his hope of making the world a better place for posterity.

Next, the Tenth Dems presented its annual awards. The Abner Mikva Leadership Award, for a local elected official who has shown outstanding leadership in office, was presented to State Representative Mark Walker for his work on alternative energy, veterans' healthcare, and other tax and business issues. The Rosenblit Volunteer of the Year



For more photos of this exciting event, please see pages 9 & 10.

Award, named after George Rosenblit, its first recipient, was presented to Hon. Karen McCormick. Recently elected as a trustee of Northfield Township, McCormick is a member of the Tenth Dems Executive Committee and the chairperson of the Tenth Dems Fundraising Committee. Tenth Dems Vice-Chair, John Hmurovic, received the Founders' Award for outstanding leadership and grassroots organizing. One of the original founders of Tenth Dems, Hmurovic credited his fellow Tenth Dems for the successes of the past six years.

Governor Dean began the keynote speech by congratulating Tenth Dems on its mission and success, and on its accomplishments, stressing the importance of the grassroots in American government because they are "always ahead of Congress." He described Tenth Dems as an exceptionally effective grassroots organization. He then talked about the importance of the new youth voting bloc, pointing to the large youth turnout for the last presidential election. Dean said that this new youth vote will change our political dialogue because people under 35 have less patience for Republican Party anger and are more tolerant of the differences among Americans.

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Mark Kirk: The Human Weather Vane



by Steve Sheffey

State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias said that “like a weather vane, Mr. Kirk’s votes on the issues can be predicted by the direction the political winds are blowing at this time. We will never move this state forward with the same old politicians who put political expediency before principle.” How right Alexi is.

On November 7, Mark Kirk voted in favor of the Stupak-Pitts Amendment to the Affordable Health Care for America Act. This amendment bars any insurance plan that is purchased with government subsidies from covering abortions, and, with Kirk’s help, it passed.

Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) said that the Stupak-Pitts Amendment was “the greatest restriction of a woman’s right to choose to pass in our careers.” Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) said that “abortion is a matter of conscience on both sides of the debate. This amendment takes away that same freedom of conscience from America’s women. It prohibits them from access to an abortion even if they pay for it with their own money. It invades women’s personal decisions.”



Representative Bart Stupak (D-MI)

None of that mattered to Kirk. He voted for the Stupak-Pitts Amendment. After narrowly winning re-election by misleading his constituents into believing he was pro-choice, Kirk said in late September, “I strongly support the current U.S. law, sometimes called the ‘Hyde Amendment,’ which prohibits taxpayer funds from being used to subsidize abortions.” On July 7, 2009, Kirk voted in favor of an amendment that would extend the prohibition on the use of federal funds for abortion to the District of Columbia. Fortunately, that amendment was rejected in committee. I wonder if Kirk would have been reelected if had he taken those positions last year.

As a result of Kirk’s flip-flops on reproductive rights, Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, said on November 11 that “it is obvious from his recent votes, including the indefensible vote for the Stupak-Pitts abortion ban amendment, that Mark Kirk would

rather have the endorsement of Sarah Palin than the support of millions of pro-choice voters in Illinois.”

Keenan said that “Rep. Kirk is clearly abandoning the moderate positions that afforded him re-election to the House in favor of radically conservative views that he hopes will bolster support for his Senate campaign. His move to the radical right is not what we expect from a moderate member of Congress. Women’s freedom and privacy are at stake, and I am committed to working with NARAL Pro-Choice America’s 98,000 Illinois activists, members, and supporters to defeat Mark Kirk’s Senate campaign.”

For those keeping score at home, Kirk’s vote for the Stupak-Pitts amendment was only his most recent flip-flop. After supporting the selection of Sarah Palin for Vice President, Kirk received letters from constituents objecting to Palin’s extreme right-wing views. Kirk then said that he would not have picked her for Vice President. But now Kirk is asking for Palin’s support. If you have a minute—literally one minute—watch this informative video:

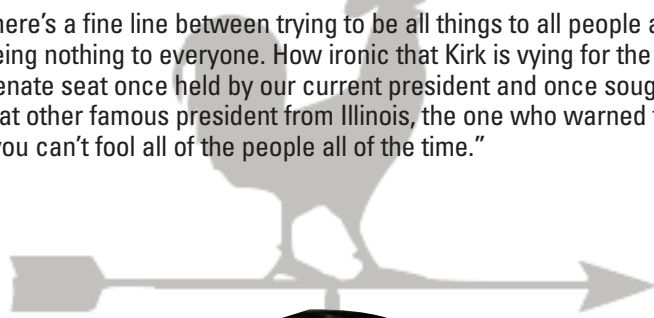
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syJ8BkR8yUI&feature=player_embedded

After leading people to believe that he supported gay rights, Kirk came out against gay marriage, in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act, and in favor of the military’s “don’t ask don’t tell” policy.

After telling people to vote the person rather than the party and touting himself as an independent, Kirk went on to take the Republican position on EVERY major issue this Congress has faced. Says who? Says Kirk for Senate. (See <http://thecapitolfaxblog.com/sidebysideGOPDem.jpg>.)

After voting for cap-and-trade because, according to Kirk, “national security” required it, Kirk announced that he had a different reason altogether – that he was only voting “the narrow interests of my district” and that he’d vote against it the next time. If you have half a minute—literally 30 seconds—watch an amazing flip-flop: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpL0dIL2BD8>

There’s a fine line between trying to be all things to all people and being nothing to everyone. How ironic that Kirk is vying for the Senate seat once held by our current president and once sought by that other famous president from Illinois, the one who warned that “you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.”



A New Year's Resolution – “Let it Bleed”

by Ron Levitsky

As a junior high social studies teacher, I was bombarded daily with questions from my eighth graders. One of the most perplexing was the inevitable – “What’s the difference between a Republican and a Democrat?” In the Manichean world of adolescence – Bears or Packers, Batman or Joker, Big Mac or big salad – my students expected an easy answer. Of course, the answer wasn’t easy, although the Republican spirit seemed to be captured by President Ronald Reagan in his first inaugural address: “In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.” Like a black hole the size of Rush Limbaugh’s mouth, Republicans became a vortex of conservatism and increasingly anti-government.

In contrast, as evidenced by the infighting over healthcare reform, Democrats could be called a big tent party, if their members could only agree how to raise the tent. Traditionally liberal, the party suffered a major schism after losing three successive elections to Reagan and Bush 41. The Democratic Leadership Council, or New Democrats, took a center-right position on economic, social, and foreign policy issues. Led by President Bill Clinton, it did some good things, such as emphasizing the importance of balancing the budget (I know other Liberals will take issue with this). Unfortunately, the New Democrats gave their whole-hearted support to the Gulf War. They also supported welfare “reform,” free trade (NAFTA), and deregulation of the banking industry. The efficacy of all three is hotly debated today, and being “newer” isn’t always better (for proof watch Steve Martin’s remake of *The Pink Panther*). Working people are suffering as the gap between rich and poor is growing.

In a recent article, “The Problem With Capitalism,” Bob Burnett, one of the founders of Cisco Systems, identifies various forms of capitalism throughout the world. At one end is undemocratic or “gangster” capitalism, in which rich and powerful people control the economy, as in Russia. At the other end is democratic capitalism, in which the economic system is “restricted by democracies for the benefit of the common good.” Examples are Scandinavian nations, with “...strong judicial systems, robust civil rights, a comprehensive safety net, and a progressive tax system.” He considers the United States to be partially democratic.

In a related article, “Bleeding Heart Liberals Proven Right: Too Much Inequality Harms a Society,” Robert Fuller and Thomas Scheff refer to a book by Richard Wilkerson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level- Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. This book argues that social well-being relates to the disparity of income between the top 20 percent of a nation’s population and its bottom 20 percent. A nation like Sweden (with a relatively low 4-1 ratio) has far fewer problems with its citizens’ physical and mental health, safety, and education than does the United States (with nearly an 8-1 ratio). The authors use the term “rankism” to identify the abuse of power attached to rank—“what somebodies may do to nobodies.” The greater the income disparity, the more indignities suffered by poorer members of society. “More than either liberty or equality, people need dignity.” As seen previously, a government that actively works for the common good will help its neediest citizens and, therefore,

build a better society for all.

The purpose of the New Democrats becoming “Republican Lite” was to win elections, and it had some success. Bill Clinton became the first Democratic president since F.D.R. to win two terms of office. But at what price? Politics may well be the art of compromise, but that assumes one actually has principles to compromise rather than triangulating one’s positions in order to absorb an opponent’s beliefs.

Yet, there are still Democrats whose beliefs come from something deeper than a public opinion poll.

Sally Pia lives in a small town in southern Wisconsin. By her own account, she is a Democrat living in “...a district that votes just about 90 percent Republican in every election.” Shortly before the last

presidential election, she wrote a piece in her local newspaper in which she announced, “I feel that in my own heart, I cannot call myself a Christian WITHOUT being a Bleeding Heart Liberal. Liberalism is inevitably where MY interpretation of MY Christian values leads me.” She calls herself her brother’s keeper when it comes to issues like poverty, lack of affordable healthcare, and war. At the time, Ms. Pia was an elected official – a school board president, the kind of office one usually campaigns for on a platform of fiscal responsibility. Although she believes in carefully stretching each dollar, she affirms – “But always, always, people first.”

In March, 2009 President Obama declared, “I am a New Democrat.” For many of us bleeding heart Liberals, Obama’s presidency has been a mixed bag. The President gave lackluster support to the public option for healthcare reform; he has kept the U.S. in Iraq and may increase our military presence in Afghanistan; he not only has failed to end the

worst abuses of the Patriot Act but also has endorsed the use of extraordinary rendition; he has issued signing statements, which calls into question respect for separation of powers; and he has been slow to assume a leadership role in combating genocide in Darfur. We certainly hope that the stimulus package will make a positive impact on the lives of working Americans, but how will the President’s administration deal with long-term problems like deregulation, bringing the budget under control, providing a safety net for poor Americans, and forging a foreign policy that matches overwhelming might with diplomacy, empathy, and cost-effectiveness?

For those of us not ashamed to be known as bleeding heart Liberals, I propose a New Year’s Resolution. Let our hearts bleed openly. Yes, I’ll see you at the supermarket buying fair trade and organic chocolate and coffee, at the jewelry store making sure an engagement ring is free of blood diamonds, and at the post office sending contributions to Amnesty International, Oxfam America, and other worthy advocacy groups.

But let’s become greater advocates ourselves. At the state level, let’s endorse the proposed income tax increase, painful as it is, and support state legislators brave enough to acknowledge its need. It’s shameful how our most vulnerable citizens, those with mental and physical disabilities, have faced Draconian cuts in services that



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Alexi Giannoulias for Senate

by Steve Sheffey

I support Alexi Giannoulias for Senate because he shares our values and because he can beat Mark Kirk.

Illinois can be proud of Alexi's accomplishments as Illinois Treasurer. On day one, he ended pay-to-play politics in his office by issuing an executive order that enacted the most sweeping ethics reforms in the history of the Treasurer's office by banning contributions to his



campaign from office employees, contractors, and banks. He revamped the Illinois' Bright Start college savings program from one of the worst in the nation to one of the best. *Money Magazine* and *Consumer Reports* highlighted it as one of the top programs in the country in 2009.

As a senate candidate, he continues to blaze trails. He was the first senate candidate in Illinois history to refuse contributions from corporate PACs and federal lobbyists—quite a contrast to Mark Kirk. And yet, as of the last reporting period, Alexi had more cash on hand than Kirk.

He was the first candidate to announce his position on marriage equality for the LGBT community. And he's the first candidate to unveil a detailed economic plan to set our country back on track and rein in the corporate practices that got us into this mess. He believes that all Americans deserve access to affordable healthcare, and he supports a public option.

Alexi shares our commitment to the safety and security of Israel. This past January, he purchased \$10 million in Israel bonds for Illinois. Alexi has an emotional and intellectual understanding of Israel's challenges and believes that "our first commitment in the Middle East must be the security of Israel, our strongest ally in the region. Our governments are similarly based on beliefs in democracy and freedom — values that continue to be threatened by extremism and hate."

Alexi has run and won statewide and built the organization to win. Polling in late October shows him as the only Democrat who can beat Kirk. He is known statewide and can raise the money it takes to win.

We must keep Obama's seat. Please vote for Alexi Giannoulias.

David Hoffman for Senate

by George Rosenblit

David Hoffman doesn't owe political favors to anyone and won't take money from PACs or lobbyists. He believes in and has demonstrated his adherence to social justice. This is just for starters. Let's examine Hoffman's record and his beliefs more closely.

HIS RECORD: After graduating from Yale and receiving his law degree from the University of Chicago, he served as Federal and U.S. Supreme Court Clerk and as a senatorial aide, a prelude to his experience in public service.

Hoffman served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney to Patrick Fitzgerald in Chicago for five years. He became Deputy Chief of the Narcotics and Gangs Section. In this assignment, he supervised all gang investigations and prosecutions, including drug trafficking and money laundering cases against street gangs and international drug cartels, as well as white collar crimes, including healthcare fraud, bank fraud, and tax fraud.

While Inspector General for the City of Chicago, Hoffman directed a 55-person staff of attorneys, investigators, and auditors who exposed bribery, fraud, and theft schemes, contracting corruption, illegal employment practices, ethics violations, and waste.

HIS BELIEFS: On domestic issues, Hoffman shows a passion for progressive Democratic policies. He cares deeply about universal



healthcare, education, energy reform, and sensible banking regulation with oversight.

On foreign policy, Hoffman believes we must retain world leadership and work with our allies to use negotiation and military strength to keep us safe from terrorists. Our greatest security challenge is in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We must defeat al-Qaeda, and striking back at the Taliban that shelter them is appropriate. We must also help stabilize Pakistan to prevent nuclear proliferation.

Hoffman believes that only the U.S. can provide leadership for peace in the Middle East, and he pledges to support those efforts.

Before David Hoffman sponsors or votes on a bill, he will consider who will get hurt as well as who will benefit. He will do his utmost to right any wrongs.

I trust that his sense of fairness and social justice will prevail. He is truly a breath of fresh air.

Cheryle Robinson Jackson for Senate

by Ann Breen-Greco

Cheryle Robinson Jackson is a proven leader who will represent the people of Illinois with commitment and integrity, based on a background focused on improving the lives of people and ensuring their rights to economic opportunity, quality healthcare, and a good



education. She knows the struggles people face when they are locked out of the privilege enjoyed by the economic elite and will work to open doors of opportunity for entrepreneurs, the unemployed and underemployed, and families struggling with credit, debt and inadequate education. Bringing jobs to Illinois will be on the top of her economic agenda in the Senate.

Her own life experience of being without health insurance when she became ill gave Cheryle a deep understanding of what it's like for people who are denied the basic human right of quality and affordable healthcare. That is why she believes high-quality healthcare should be available for every American family. She strongly advocates for a public option but one which does not exclude any woman from exercising her right to choose—a decision which should be made between a woman and her doctor, not politicians. In the Senate, she will always fight to protect the right of a woman to choose, while also working to prevent unintended pregnancies.

As one way to work on preventing such pregnancies, her Senate agenda will also focus on education, including after-school programs. Some 60 percent of teenage crime and pregnancy occurs between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. when parents aren't home. Cheryle will advocate for after-school programs where kids can be safe and productive. Her education agenda also will focus on early learning programs, programs for children with special needs, and the right to a college education for any student who applies him or herself.

Cheryle has worked at National Public Radio in Washington, D.C., as Vice President of Corporate Communications. After moving back to Chicago she worked for AMTRAK as Regional Vice President of State and Local Affairs. On September 11, 2001, the Chicago AMTRAK operation was the only place in the country moving passengers, and Cheryle stepped up to lead, handling communications across the nation and the world during those days of crisis and pain.

She served as press secretary to former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich but left before the completion of his first term to become the President and CEO of the Chicago Urban League. The Chicago Tribune summed up her service there in an editorial: “[She] has remade the group and given it an urgent mission – economic empowerment.”

Cheryle Robinson Jackson is a committed public servant, ready to serve the people of Illinois in the U.S. Senate.

Jacob Meister for Senate

by Wendy Meister

Let us bid farewell to the status quo. For too long Illinois has seen its credibility in political circles muddied by its pervasive corruption. The new low came nearly a year ago when our now indicted governor was accused of attempting to sell the United States Senate seat to the highest bidder. Instead of focusing on moving Illinois and the country forward, as voters we have come in second to the personal agendas of career politicians.

I share the sentiment that enough is enough and have joined a growing number of Illinoisans and people across the country that are supporting a real outsider who will be able to effect real change in Washington: Jacob Meister.

Jacob Meister is a candidate whose knowledge and experience will enable him to take our priorities and make them real policies, poised to solve the problems of today and ensure prosperity and stability for tomorrow.

Jacob Meister is the only U.S. Senate candidate who has the vision, legislative experience, and real world knowledge to serve as an agent of economic change for the people of Illinois. His 20/20 Vision is evidence of that. As United States Senator, Jacob will pursue his 20/20 Vision to build a new educational infrastructure and create jobs – including “green” jobs; and he will promote research and development that will enable the United States to be a domestic producer of infrastructure systems such as high-speed rail and a leading global competitor in scientific fields such as biotechnology.

When you review Jacob's 20/20 Vision you will agree.

Only by re-infusing our economy through the production of tangible goods can we secure our position as a leading nation whose strength and prosperity are certain. With Jacob Meister as our voice in Washington we can make that happen again.

Not only is Jacob the right candidate because of his experience, but I'm proud to say he is my brother. Please join me and others in our support of Jacob. You can learn more about Jacob at www.meisterforsenate.com



Any Reform in Healthcare Bill? *continued from page 1*

same Right that hates government when it comes to entitlements of any sort.

Even if we like what we see in the House bill, it's likely to be watered down even further in the Senate. Until we really know what's in the fine print and what was worked out behind closed doors, we can't rejoice. We must call our senators and tell them what we want. It's not too late.

I've compiled a list of the major features to simplify what the bill is all about, but obviously, it's much more complicated than these bullet points. Each and every one of the good points comes with some backroom deal obtained by the insurance lobbyists, at a cost of \$1.4 million a day. The fact that the bill has co-ops along with the insurance exchanges complicates things even further. So it may sound good, but be skeptical:

- No lifetime or annual limits on benefits—no more medical bankruptcy
- Insurance companies prohibited from charging higher rates due to health status or gender
- Young adults allowed to remain on their families' policies through age 26
- Starting in 2013, a Health Insurance Exchange at which individuals and small employers will be able to shop among private and public insurers, including new health insurance co-ops that within three more years will be open to employers with 100 employees and, eventually, over time, to all employers
- Several levels of competitive basic insurance packages offered on the Exchange via private insurance companies or the public option
- A requirement that all individuals, except those under Medicare or Medicaid, obtain and maintain health insurance coverage or pay up to 2.5 percent of modified adjusted gross income above a specified level in a penalty surtax
- Four tiers of coverage, from basic to premium, with a \$5,000 out-of-pocket limit per year
- A public plan that must survive fiscally on its premiums
- Optional state insurance co-ops which, if state legislatures approve, will be allowed to sell their insurance across state lines
- Employers required to choose whether to provide health insurance coverage for their workers or contribute funds on their behalf, except for companies with payrolls under \$500,000, which are exempt from this requirement
- A scaled marginal tax rate on taxpayers with adjusted annual gross income in excess of \$500,000
- An end to the insurance industry's monopolizing or price-fixing particular markets
- Availability of a public long-term care insurance program
- Repeal of the insurance industry's antitrust exemption
- A sliding scale of credits for low and moderate income individuals and families, starting at 400 percent of the federal poverty level (\$43,000 for an individual or \$88,000 for a family of four)
- Grants to small and mid-sized employers to fund or subsidize wellness programs
- \$100 million annually to fight Medicare and Medicaid fraud
- Individuals and families with incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level eligible for an expanded and improved Medicaid program to be federally funded at first
- Closing, over time, the Medicare Part D drug program's "doughnut hole"
- Prohibitions on Medicaid and CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) payments for undocumented immigrants

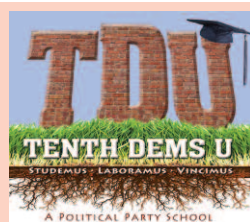
- Increased federal Medicaid payments to states with high unemployment and reduced payments to states with the lowest number of uninsured
- Incentives for Medicaid and CHIP-funded facilities that provide quality care
- Increased funding for community health centers
- A new grant program for primary care residency programs and training programs designed to increase the number of primary care physicians, nurses, and public health professionals, and other incentives
- Grants for school-based health clinics

So what are we to make of all of this? Let me quote someone who has gone through it all before. Paul Begala, political commentator and former advisor to President Clinton, wrote in *The Washington Post* this month:

"It would be a bitter disappointment if health reform did not include a public option. A public plan that keeps the insurance companies honest is, I believe, the right policy and the right politics. I believe subsidies should extend to as many Americans as need help and that the hard-earned health benefits of middle-class Americans should not be taxed. I believe insurer abuses like the preexisting-condition rule should be outlawed... I was one of the people who advised President Bill Clinton to wave his pen at Congress in 1994 and declare: "If you send me legislation that does not guarantee every American private health insurance that can never be taken away, you will force me to take this pen, veto the legislation, and we'll come right back here and start all over again." ... I helped set the bar at 100 percent -- guarantee for every American -- and after our failure it's taken us 15 years to start all over again... So I am trying to find the right blend of principle and pragmatism -- ever mindful that, aside from race, health care is the most difficult domestic issue of the past century. FDR couldn't pass it. Nor could Truman, nor Nixon nor Carter nor Clinton. Lesser presidents like George W. Bush didn't even try... Let's hope those writing the new health-reform bill can give us something that represents historic progress -- and that those of us most passionately committed to fundamental reform can celebrate progress, not lament a lack of perfection."

So, yes, I'm not happy with several parts of this bill. It lacks strength. It does not move us toward a single-payer system. And I'm terrified by the possibility that the Stupak Amendment could be in the final bill.

But, I'll keep on fighting for a strong reform bill until there's no more to fight for. And it's not about me, but it is about our children and grandchildren and what kind of society we want to leave them.



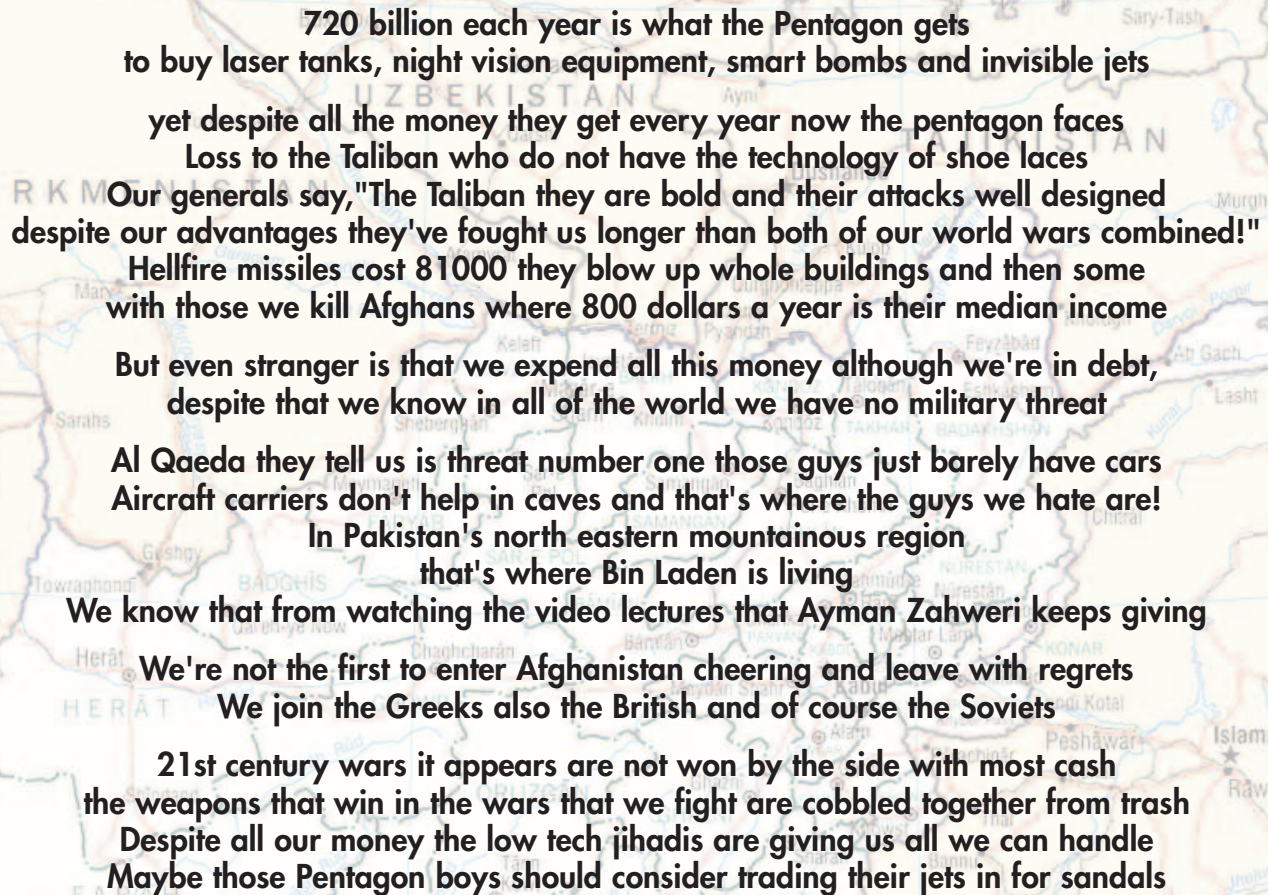
Meet the Candidates with Tenth Dems University

In December, Tenth Dems University continues its "Meet the Democratic

Candidates" series, which began on November 17 with a session at the Highland Park Country Club featuring U.S. Senate candidate David Hoffman. Senate candidate Jacob Meister will be featured at the next session, also at HPCC, on December 8 at 7:00 p.m. On December 14, at the same venue, meet Dan Hynes, candidate for Governor of Illinois. Upcoming sessions will feature Alexi Giannoulias and Cheryle Robinson Jackson, candidates for Senate, and Pat Quinn, candidate for Governor. These events are free of charge but may fill. Register at www.TenthDemsU.org and check that site for upcoming dates and times.

What the Pentagon Needs

by Aaron Freeman



720 billion each year is what the Pentagon gets to buy laser tanks, night vision equipment, smart bombs and invisible jets yet despite all the money they get every year now the pentagon faces loss to the Taliban who do not have the technology of shoe laces Our generals say, "The Taliban they are bold and their attacks well designed despite our advantages they've fought us longer than both of our world wars combined!" Hellfire missiles cost 81000 they blow up whole buildings and then some with those we kill Afghans where 800 dollars a year is their median income But even stranger is that we expend all this money although we're in debt, despite that we know in all of the world we have no military threat Al Qaeda they tell us is threat number one those guys just barely have cars Aircraft carriers don't help in caves and that's where the guys we hate are! In Pakistan's north eastern mountainous region that's where Bin Laden is living We know that from watching the video lectures that Ayman Zahweri keeps giving We're not the first to enter Afghanistan cheering and leave with regrets We join the Greeks also the British and of course the Soviets 21st century wars it appears are not won by the side with most cash the weapons that win in the wars that we fight are cobbled together from trash Despite all our money the low tech jihadis are giving us all we can handle Maybe those Pentagon boys should consider trading their jets in for sandals

TDU's "Meet the Candidates" Presents David Hoffman

by Adrienne Kirshbaum

Tenth Dems University presented the latest edition of its series, "Meet the Candidates," on Tuesday evening, November 17, at the Highland Park Country Club. Judging by the large and enthusiastic turnout, it would seem that voters in the 10th District are eager to learn about the candidates running for major offices in the February 2nd primary elections so they can make informed decisions. That is our aim. Tenth Dems is not endorsing anyone in this primary season but is committed to helping our constituents make the best choices.

The latest candidate to appear in our series was David Hoffman, who is running to be the Democratic nominee for Barack Obama's old U.S. Senate seat. The seat is currently being held by Roland Burris, who is not running for election. Other contenders for this U.S. Senate seat will be our guests in future "Meet the Candidates" sessions.

David Hoffman was a very appealing guest professor. He spoke about his education, his early career, and his years of public service in Illinois. He was born and raised on the North Shore and graduated from New Trier High School, Yale University, and the University of Chicago Law School. He feels his varied professional experiences make him an excellent candidate for the U.S. Senate.

After graduating from law school, Hoffman clerked for Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist and for Federal Judge Dennis Jacobs. He was then Press Secretary and legislative assistant for foreign policy to U.S. Senator David Boren, Democrat of Oklahoma, who was then Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Hoffman's service in Illinois began in 1998, when he served as Assistant U.S. Attorney General under Patrick Fitzgerald. He was appointed Deputy Chief of the Narcotics and Gangs Section, and investigated and prosecuted federal crimes until 2005, when he became Inspector General for the City of Chicago. His office exposed widespread corruption in city government. In January of this year, Governor Pat Quinn appointed Hoffman to the 15-member Illinois Reform Commission.

After his remarks, Hoffman took questions from the audience. The intelligence and thoughtfulness of the questions were impressive as were Hoffman's answers. He responded to the questioners with complete and complex answers that gave real insight into his views as a candidate. When the session closed, those in attendance could truly say that they had a fuller understanding and knowledge of David Hoffman and a better idea of the kind of senator he would be.

Tenth Dems has scheduled sessions with U.S. Senate candidate Jacob Meister on Tuesday evening, December 8, and with Dan Hynes, a contender for Governor of Illinois, on Monday evening, December 14. Both of these events will be held at the Highland Park Country Club. Be an informed voter – Meet the Candidates at Tenth Dems University!

Tenth Dems Fundraiser *continued from page 1*

Dean also talked about his time at the DNC and the 50-state strategy that allowed Democrats to introduce themselves into areas where they had not been active for decades. He knew that moving into all 50 states was the right thing to do when new DNC polls showed that the top three issues for younger Evangelical Christians were poverty, the



environment, and Darfur. Dean believes that Democrats must bring their own message to places where their message has lately been brought (and distorted) by Rush Limbaugh and other media figures of the Far Right.

The Governor then turned his attention to healthcare. He believes that Democrats gave too much away too early on in the campaign for reform and never should have taken singlepayer off the table. He also said that he thinks the public option — which should have been the compromise position — should be Medicare for all, administered by the same agencies and under the same rules as the current Medicare program, and that Democrats cannot give up much more before the bills become worthless. He'd still be comfortable with a state opt-out provision, but an opt-in or trigger will set the public option up for failure.

Upon concluding his comments, Dean took questions. One audience member asked about the President's desire for bipartisanship and the importance of Olympia Snowe in the negotiations. Dean responded by stating that Harry Reid did well in not allowing Snowe to control the ultimate Senate bill, as it is important not to let one senator overshadow the many who are already signed on to reform.

Dean was asked about the impact of the Blue Dogs on the healthcare legislation. He answered that he didn't think they have had as much negative effect as many believe. He feels that they took the place of the Republicans by adding the conservative voice when the Republicans failed to engage in any meaningful debate. He also pointed out that the Blue Dogs pushed for changes that will help the smallest of small businesses by taking them out of the insurance business completely. He also noted that had Blue Dog Democrats not been elected, their districts would have sent to Congress Republicans who not only would have voted against healthcare but also would have supported John Boehner over Nancy Pelosi for Speaker.

I asked Dr. Dean what the next steps to reform are. Democratic congressional leaders have told those of us who are disappointed with this legislation that it is only the first step, so what comes next? Dean said that the next steps are not congressional, but are for the grassroots. It will be important to push for expansion of the public option. He also said that the insurance companies have to show that

they can do better. Their profits show their inefficiencies because those are dollars not spent on healthcare. If they don't do better, their inefficiencies will cause them problems down the line.

Another audience member asked about the money that affects legislation. Dean closed by reminding us of his campaign where small Internet donations from average Americans challenged traditional money sources for the first time, but reminded us that we are going to have to make campaign finance reform an issue in the next election or it will never get done.

Even though the event was scheduled to end at 9:00 p.m., many, including Governor Dean, lingered to continue the political discussion. For the numerous Tenth Dems supporters who saved their costumes for another year and opted to spend their Halloween with fellow Democrats, the evening was an extraordinary treat.

The debate rages on, but one thing is indisputable. Healthcare reform is one of the most important issues of our time, and an unprecedented number of Americans are thirsting for information.

A New Year's Resolution *continued from page 3*

deeply impact their quality of life. (Recently, the National Alliance on Mental Illness gave Illinois an "F" for its treatment of the mentally ill).

On the national level, let's support human rights, both at home and abroad. Regarding economics, let's not advocate simply to "tax and spend" but rather to spend tax dollars more wisely. Why should the United States incur a military budget larger than the rest of the world combined? As reported by a recent Friends Committee on National Legislation newsletter, why is it that "...94 percent of spending for U.S. engagement with the world goes to the military, leaving just 6 percent for all diplomatic engagement, development assistance, and participation in international organizations?" Besides saving countless lives, withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan would divert billions of dollars to domestic needs.

In 1946, the great Progressive Robert La Follette, Junior, advocated a far different role for government than did President Reagan. "Freedom does not mean the freedom to starve in the midst of plenty. ... It does not mean freedom to die of a curable disease because of lack of funds. ... Freedom is the preservation by the people of their individual liberties — civil, political and religious — while banding together to elect a government of their own choosing for the purpose of providing for the general welfare."

Whether your values are religiously motivated, like Sally Pia's, or based on humanistic tenets, make 2010 the year of the Liberal. As La Follette, F.D.R., and Mick Jagger would say, "Let it bleed."

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