

*In This Issue:*

Success Stories ... 1 Campaign Finance ... 4  
Last Black Senator ... 1 Reregulate ... 5  
Healthcare Rally ... 2 Nuclear Weapons ... 6  
Congress Watch ... 3 Turow at TDU ... 6  
Internships ... 3 What I Learned ... 7

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# Success Stories from the April 7th Election: Tenth Dems Celebrate Candidates and Volunteers

by Carolyn Cerf

The reserved room at the Ram restaurant in Northbrook overflowed the evening of April 21, as Democrats who were candidates on the April 7th ballots attended a reception of thanks. Tenth Dems held the event to recognize all candidates' efforts, win or lose. More than 40 candidates for local office poured in from around the 10th District and the room bustled with public servants of all stripes, not to mention all of us volunteers who supported them. Win or lose, our district's Democrats comprise some of the most proactive and effective leaders in our community.

As several candidates took up the microphone to regale us with their campaign stories, Sharon Narrod's words rang true: "The best candidates aren't always the ones who win." Of course, defeat is never painless, and each loss deprived our district of a potentially outstanding public

servant, but real gains resulted from all of these individuals' efforts.

Among election winners were the Northfield Dems. Five out of seven candidates on the Northfield Democratic slate were successful, turning the Northfield Township Board blue for the first time in 50 years. There can be no doubt that the victory of the five was attributable in part to all seven candidates running together; having a slate made it possible for the group to project a message of change backed up by strength in numbers.

There were also real success stories among the candidates who will not be taking office this election cycle. The Vernon Dems for Change made an especially notable impact. The slate ran eight candidates, who stood as a team and gained a real toehold in an historically red township. One

*continued on page 7*



# Tenth News

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MAY 2009

Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter

Volume 6, Edition 5

## Our Last "Black" Senator *by Aaron Freeman*

Congressman Danny Davis is making noises about running as a "black" candidate for the U.S. Senate seat currently being kept warm by Roland Burris.

I am really hoping that Burris is our last "black" senator. The day Burris was appointed, Congressman Bobby Rush made a moving appeal to racial politics. Rush is a survivor not only of Chicago's brutal attacks on the Black Panther Party, but also of salivary gland cancer. At the press conference announcing Burris' appointment Rush ambled haltingly to the podium, stood shakily between Burris and then Governor Blago, and, his voice quivering, announced that he'd "prayed, fervently" that the Gov would appoint an African American to complete Obama's term. I was moved. When commentators noted that without Burris there would be no Negroes in the U.S. Senate, I was more or less persuaded.

But Oscar Wilde said, "In the end, every hero becomes a bore." Congressman Rush's 2.5 minute speech was about as much skin color politics as I want to hear about this century.

Quiet as it's kept, we haven't had a real racial election in Illinois since Harold Washington ran for Mayor of Chicago the first time. Back then we got the requisite racial symbols: proud black grandmothers, frightened white factory workers, and code-worded TV ads warning white people to vote for Harold's pale opponent, "before it's too late." But by the time of his re-election four years later, Harold was just the Mayor, judged not by the color of his skin but by the content of his snow removal. Carol Moseley Braun was in fact a negress, but she ran in the 1992 "year of the woman" election wherein estrogen had melanin beaten cold. Obama ran for Senate in 2000 against Alan Keyes, a Republican who was himself black though few Illinois blacks

wanted to admit it. But their race was a non-factor in that race. Nor did color count in the 2008 presidential contest. For Obama or any Illinois Democratic senator to have lost this state he'd have to have been caught in bed with John McCain... an image I'm going to work hard to get out of my mind.

Without any particular appeals to race Illinois has elected a world-famous black mayor, two U.S. Senators, and an American President. I think we've established that Illinois is not Mississippi. Heck, in 2009 even Mississippi is not Mississippi. But even as a symbol, how important is it to anyone that Illinois elect its fourth black senator?

I'd rather rally around another flag, just for a change. How 'bout we support an openly gay senator? There aren't any of those. I'm betting the election night victory party would be faaabulous!



*Stand-up comedian, author, cartoonist, blogger, and "Torah Maven," Aaron Freeman*

*continued on page 8*

# Healthcare For Americans. Now.

by Sharon Sanders

Well, the Health Care for America Now (HCAN) Rally finally arrived on Saturday, April 18, and it did not disappoint. I may be overly optimistic, but I put my guesstimate of the total number of people both inside and outside of the auditorium at five to six hundred.

Many of us worked very hard for Jessica Palys and John Gaudette, organizers for Citizen Action Illinois and HCAN. They showed incredible leadership and dedication to reforming a broken healthcare system beset by corruption and greed. Jan Schakowsky, Julie Hamos, Kathy Ryg, William McNaray, individuals with their own personal stories, and many others spoke with great passion for change. David Borris, who was planning to testify before Congress the following week on the importance of healthcare reform for small businesses, clearly and succinctly explained to all assembled the ever-increasing dilemma for the uninsured and the underinsured, and the spiraling costs of trying to cover employees in the workplace.

One of the biggest problems, as I see it right now, is trying to get media attention for healthcare reform. At the April 18 rally, the major stations were nowhere to be seen. Univision, C-Span, and some of the local papers were there, but just as with the Out of Iraq rally in the summer of 2007, CBS, NBC, and ABC never showed up. And yet, for the Republican "tea parties," gatherings based on misinformation, anger, and anti-Obama fervor, the major stations, and especially Fox, were blasting video across our screens for days and days. Could it be an intentional move by the corporate media, with their pharmaceutical, insurance, and other healthcare industry sponsors, to intentionally not give us air time? The lack of coverage once again showed the power of the broadcasting giants in determining the message that gets out to us, while protecting their self-interest.

To enable readers to better understand the goals of HCAN (in essence, the Obama plan), I'm quoting in full the Resolution signed by our own Kathy Ryg, which clearly states the problems and the solutions:

## RESOLUTION

Whereas families, large and small businesses, health care providers and state and local government in Illinois are struggling to access the quality, affordable healthcare that they need to promote healthy families and a healthy economy in their state and nationally;

And whereas, as a result of the national health care crisis, health insurance premiums in Illinois increased by 73 percent between 2000 and 2007 while median earnings increased by only 11 percent; And whereas, Illinois median yearly wage in 2007 was \$27,330, while the average health care premium for a family is \$12,153;

And whereas Illinois employers spend an average of \$9,071 per year on family coverage, paying 77 percent of the total cost of premiums for family coverage;

And whereas 700 Illinoisans lose their health insurance every day; Therefore, be it resolved that the time for a national solution to the American health care crisis that threatens the economic and physical health of the people of Illinois and people across the country is now.

Also, be it resolved that Illinois recognizes the urgent need for a national solution to the health care crisis that meets key criteria for comprehensive health care reform set forth by President Obama and Health Care for America Now including the following:

- Affordable coverage and care, with premiums and out-of-pocket costs based on a family's ability to pay and a choice of providers that meet our families needs from preventative care to care for serious illness.



*A crowd estimated at 500 to 600 people gathered in support of healthcare reform at this Health Care for America Now Rally on April 18.*

- A choice of health insurance plans, including the right to keep your current insurance, choose another private plan or to join a public health insurance plan.
- Equity in health care access, treatment, research and resources to people and communities of color and strengthening health services in low-income communities.
- A system in which government sets and enforces rules on insurance company practices and charges, requiring them to put our health care before their profits.
- Coverage that is predictable and affordable for working families, retirees, small businesses, and other employers and that controls costs while improving quality, with measures such as: lowering administrative expenses, investing in preventive care, actively managing disease, setting standards for performance, reducing medical errors, and using the public's purchasing power to lower drug and other prices.

Finally, be it resolved that in 2009, local governments, families, providers, and businesses across Illinois will work together with the newly elected President Obama, the Illinois Congressional Delegation, and the leaders of the New Congress to guarantee quality, affordable health care for everyone in our state and across the country.

We have just over a hundred days to insist on change in Washington. If more Republicans get into Congress in the next go-around, reform will almost assuredly be dead in the water. So we may not get everything we want, and for those who will settle for nothing short of single-payer, universal healthcare, HCAN has given into the Washington powers that be. But for those of us involved in the organization, it's our feeling that it is absolutely unrealistic to expect total change all at once and that, for now, we need to accept the Obama plan (but with a larger chunk of the budget) and get it enacted in this session of Congress. This plan will guarantee that everyone will be able to obtain healthcare, be it private or public. We can then move on to our ultimate goal of universal healthcare.

As we enter the final hundred days of this Congress, we need everyone's support. Many events will follow as we try to reach as many people as possible. We want people with different backgrounds, different ages, different stories. Some of us will be marching to Washington over the summer. Some of us will open our homes for coffees on healthcare to inform friends and neighbors as to what they can do and how they can get involved. For more information, you can go to the HCAN website at <http://www.healthcareforamericanow.org/> and watch the events list at [TenthDems.org](http://TenthDems.org).

# Kirk's Support of Republican Legislative Agenda Appears Steadier than Ever

It's no secret that Republican Congressman Mark Kirk has his eye on the Senate seat now held by Blagojevich appointee Roland Burris. This might explain, at least partially, why Kirk isn't trying as hard as he has in the past to straddle the fine line between his fierce loyalty to his party and the need to convince the 10th District's Democratic voters that he represents their values, too. Since the start of the 111th Congress, Kirk's support of the Republican legislative agenda, and the ultraconservative ideals driving it, appears to be steadier than ever.

In his most recent demonstration of partisanship at all costs, Kirk voted on April 1 against an amendment to the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (EESA) that curtails bonuses of executives at financial institutions receiving money from the Troubled Asset Relief Program. Dubbed the "Pay for Performance Act of 2009," the amendment prohibits the payment of "unreasonable or excessive" compensation by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the federal home loan banks, and firms that have received funds under the Economic Stabilization Act.

The Pay for Performance Act corrects the EESA's glaring omission of meaningful restrictions on compensation. In the process, it protects taxpayers by insisting that bailout funds are used exclusively for their intended purpose: to prevent a collapse of the financial system and to make that system work for most Americans by addressing the housing crisis and increasing the availability of loans. (See "Pay for Performance Act of 2009," <http://www.themiddleclass.org/bill/pay-performance-act-2009>.)

Unfortunately, Mark Kirk is more interested in protecting the ability of the executives who created the financial crisis to continue to reap multi-million-dollar bonuses at the taxpayers' expense.

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Just a day after opposing the Pay for Performance Act, Kirk demonstrated yet again his willingness to support the banking and insurance industries at the expense of the American taxpayer by voting against the House version of the FY 2010 Budget Bill. The bill passed the House anyway—in a near straight party-line vote. Only 20 House Democrats voted against the bill; no Republicans voted for it.

In the Senate, Richard Durbin and Roland Burris supported the Democrats' FY 2010 Budget.

Both the House- and Senate-passed budget bills pare down the President's blueprint in order to reduce the annual deficit to less than



\$600 billion within five years. Still, both bills pave the way for the President's agenda to reform healthcare, energy, and education. For the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget bill see "Senate Follows House, Passes Obama Budget Plan," CNN Politics.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/04/03/us.house.senate.budget.passes/#cnnSTCtext>.

Republicans in both Houses fiercely opposed the Democratic budget on the grounds that it expands government, encourages excessive spending, and adds to the current national debt. But as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has observed, "Many of the same Senators and House members who launched the sharpest verbal attacks on the President's budget or the congressional budget plans — on the ground that the deficits and debt projected under those plans are much too high — then opposed a number of the tough choices the President's budget makes to start reducing deficits. Those tough choices include allowing many of the generous tax cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003 to expire for people at the top of the income scale, making the 2009 estate tax rules permanent rather than eliminating still more of that tax, and limiting itemized deductions for families making over \$250,000 to help finance health care reform that is intended to reduce costs over the long term." (See Policy Points: Congressional Budgets Pass Early Tests on Deficits and Economy, but Questions Remain, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=2764>)

What's more, by most estimates, the House and Senate budget proposals are fiscally responsible. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities concluded on April 3, "The budget plans that the House and Senate approved... pass the twin tests of 1) beginning to address long-term deficits, or at least not making these deficits worse; and (2) not undermining the fiscal stimulus Congress recently passed."

The House and Senate budget bills will be reconciled when Congress reconvenes after a two-week spring recess.

## Calling All Students: Progressing Toward a Summer Internship That Matters

If you have progressive values and are looking for a summer internship that will make a difference, have we got a deal for you.

Tenth Dems is accepting applications for summer internships. Several interns have gone on to internships in Washington, to college majors in political science or law, or paid political and nonprofit positions locally and in Washington.

Interns may do research, walk door-to-door with candidates, work in campaign offices, staff events and issue forums, and get to meet many political figures. In the past, they've helped at Tenth Dems events featuring former presidential nominee George McGovern, presidential hopefuls Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana and Sen. Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, and, when he was still an Illinois State Senator, President Barack Obama.

Internship applicants should be high school juniors or seniors, college students, or graduate or law students with a desire to help the Democratic Party. Computer skills are desired, and summer interns are expected to work a minimum of 16 hours per week. We are looking especially for interns with Web administration and/or data skills.

Course credit is available with cooperating high schools and colleges. Acceptance into the Internship Program is selective and contingent upon an interview. Applicants are asked to submit a paragraph explaining why they want this internship, and a resume of their educational background and activities. The resume need not be formal.

For more information on the Intern Program, or to apply, contact Lauren Beth Gash, Chair, or Allen Wagner, Intern Coordinator, at [info@tenthdems.org](mailto:info@tenthdems.org) or call 847-266-VOTE (8683).

# Crowd of 150 Gathers in Winnetka for Forum on Campaign Finance Reform

by Laurie Kaplan Singh and Nels Howard

Illinois is expected to pass new campaign finance reforms in the May legislative session, but not necessarily the much hoped-for limits on campaign contributions. This was the consensus of a panel of political and reform leaders who spoke at a forum at the Winnetka Community House on Sunday, April 19.

The forum, "Now is the Time for Illinois Campaign Finance Reform and Transparency in Government," was hosted by the New Trier Democratic Organization. It featured the Honorable Abner Mikva, former U.S.

Representative, federal appellate court judge, and White House counsel, and Cindi Canary, Executive Director of the Illinois Campaign on Political Reform (ICPR)—a non-partisan public interest organization formed by the late Illinois Senator Paul Simon to advocate for reforms that address the role of money in politics and encourage integrity in government. The forum was accompanied by a photo exhibit celebrating the life of Senator Simon and his wife, Jeanne Hurley Simon.

Judge Mikva spoke about Illinois' long history of political corruption and efforts to combat it. "I wish we were talking about only two governors," he said. He reminded the audience that back in 2002, when Rod Blagojevich first became governor, he organized a task force on ethics reform, which succeeded in passing many reforms but not the legislation that proposed to curtail pay-to-play politics. Mikva also recalled the late Illinois politician Paul Powell's statement on the Illinois House floor after Paul Simon had successfully passed an ethics bill. Powell famously said, "You can't pass an ethics bill that I can't beat."

Nevertheless, in the wake of the Blagojevich scandal, Illinois legislators are under significant pressure to enact meaningful pay-to-play reforms. Recent months have seen a proliferation of commissions, task forces, and advocacy groups formed to achieve action before the current legislative session adjourns on May 31.

With the notable exception of Ms. Canary, the speakers at the NTDO forum weren't overly optimistic about the prospects for campaign finance limits in Illinois any time soon. Judge Mikva said he expects some proposed reforms, including stricter freedom of information laws, new disclosure rules, and tougher lobbyist limits, to pass. He referred to these reforms as "low hanging fruit," with the potential to make it through the legislature without too much resistance. He expects proposals to address problems associated with the flow of money to meet tougher resistance. "If ever

we succeed [in cleaning up Illinois politics] it will be because of a group formed by Paul Simon [the ICPR] and because of Cindy Canary," Judge Mikva said.

Ms. Canary spoke to the Winnetka audience about political corruption as a social injustice issue. "It reinforces inequities in society, shortchanging the quality of education—by leading to bad schools—and allowing our infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, to crumble," she said. Ms. Canary noted that University of Chicago Professor Dick Simpson calculated the cost of political corruption, or the "corruption tax," in Illinois at \$300 million dollars a year.

The heart of the problem, according to Ms. Canary, is the role of money in politics. Illinois is one of very few states that have no limits on campaign contributions. "Our state is one of only four states that allow unlimited campaign contributions," she said. Illinois law only requires disclosure. "The purposes of [the ICPR] is to shape the dynamics of reform in Springfield. We need to set up rules that recognize the people, not the needs of Springfield's status quo," she said.

Peggy Slater, chair of the New Trier Democratic organization's political reform committee and co-chair of the April 19 forum—along with NTDO executive committee member Barbara Cornew—encouraged attendees to call their representatives and to circulate a petition urging political leaders to help get serious reform initiatives on Speaker Michael Madigan's calendar this year. "The focus must be on campaign finance reform," Slater said. She also told the crowd about a number of upcoming district events on campaign finance reform. (See box on page 5.)

The conference concluded with a question and answer period, during which State Representative Julie Hamos and State Senator Jeff Schoenberg joined Judge Mikva and Ms. Canary on the panel. Responding to constituents' questions about the feasibility of limits on campaign contributions, Representative Hamos talked about the challenge it presents to reform-minded leaders like herself who require funds for their election campaigns. She also said that even if Illinois succeeds in setting campaign contribution limits, people will find ways around it, such as bundling.

"I don't think we can make [our system] perfect," she said. "We have one of the better disclosure systems in the country." According to Hamos, disclosure is likely to prove the best way to combat pay-to-play politics. "We need to limit the ability of leadership to dole out large amounts of money unfettered," she said. Senator Schoenberg also seemed skeptical about

*continued on page 5*



## Leading the Charge for Campaign Finance Reform

For more information about ongoing efforts to reform Illinois politics, visit the following organizations on the web.

Illinois Campaign for Political Reform: [www.ilcampaign.org](http://www.ilcampaign.org)

Citizen Action Illinois: [www.citizenaction-il.org](http://www.citizenaction-il.org)

Governor Quinn's Illinois Reform Commission: [www.reformillinoisnow.org](http://www.reformillinoisnow.org)

Madigan-Cullerton Joint Committee on Government Reform: [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov)

Change Illinois: [www.changeil.org](http://www.changeil.org)

Progress Illinois: [www.progressillinois.com](http://www.progressillinois.com)

# Turn Back the Clock! Reregulate!

by George Rosenblit

## Early Warning of Potential Toxic Assets

In 1994, five years before the deregulation bill of 1999 was enacted, Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) sounded the alarm about the unbelievable risk of exotic new derivatives instigated by banks called "swaps." He sponsored several pieces of regulatory legislation, but his warnings were widely ignored. Where were the members of the House and Senate Banking Committees and the SEC who were supposed to exercise oversight? Even though they did not initially perceive the risks, they certainly should have heeded Dorgan's warning and backed his legislation to the hilt. Who were they working for if not the citizens of this country? Wall Street? Or maybe they were just asleep at the switch. (See "The Senator Who Saw This Coming," Newsweek, Apr. 13, 2009.)

There are many types of swaps. Credit swaps are discussed below. The risk of loss from credit swaps can be covered by insurance, and that's why AIG was on the hook for potentially \$2.7 trillion worth of derivative contracts to investment bankers. So far, AIG has obtained \$170 billion from the government to partially meet these obligations.

## The Need for Regulation

In 1933, soon after the 1929 stock market crash, Congress passed the Glass-Steagall Act to regulate banks. This Act kept commercial banks that service consumers separate from investment banks, which deal with speculative trading and mergers. It protected bank depositors from the additional risks associated with security transactions. Note that this Act was designed to protect "Main Street." (See [http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/glass\\_steagall\\_act.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/glass_steagall_act.asp))

## The Horrific Acts of Deregulation

Then, in 1999, deregulation hit and oversight fell by the wayside. Congress passed the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, which repealed the Glass-Steagall Act. It allowed commercial banks, investment banks, and insurers to merge. Senator Phil Gramm was the driving force behind this deregulation. (Was it a coincidence that Gramm had received over \$4.6 million in donations from the finance, insurance and real estate industries over the course of a decade?) After Gramm-Leach-Bliley passed, many mergers took place among banks and insurance and securities companies.



Gramm stirred the deregulation pot again when he surreptitiously added a 262-page amendment to the Commodity Futures Modernization Act that President Clinton and Congress were trying to pass in 2000, right after the election, as part of a \$384 billion Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The amendment exempted energy trading from oversight, leading to Enron's collapse. It also deregulated derivatives trading.

Without regulation of our financial markets, many lending institutions became greedy and enticed people to buy homes that they could not afford. The carrot was zero or very low down payments and interest-free periods. Then the demand for accelerated (high) monthly payments in accordance with the fine print in the mortgage documents took over.

## Our Current Kettle of Fish

Companies have a profit motive for themselves and for their stockholders, which is a fair and perfectly acceptable goal. However, it has been amply demonstrated over the past decade that management

*continued on page 7*

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## Campaign Finance Reform *continued from page 4*

ongoing efforts to mitigate the influence of money by limiting campaign contributions. He said limits on campaign contributions would leave candidates like him defenseless against wealthy, self-funded opponents. But his greatest concern about making campaign finance limits the highest priority is that "it would cause Illinois to miss other opportunities to control the flow of resources that fuel corruption." Schoenberg noted that many of the individuals involved in the Blagojevich scandal were not elected officials. "Money will always be spent by unelected people to gain favored treatment," he said. Schoenberg also stressed that heightened scrutiny and controls in pension fund investment decisions and the award of government contracts has great potential to curtail corruption in Illinois government.

But ICPR's Canary and NTDO's Slater were adamant that ending corruption in Illinois politics must start with limits on campaign contributions. "We are representing the will of the people," Slater said. "We need to use our voices, circulate the petition, and ask our representative to help us get on the calendar of speaker Madigan."

Slater and Canary are hardly alone in pushing for limits on campaign contributions. They are joined by numerous, recently formed commissions, task forces, and advocacy groups, including Governor Quinn's Illinois Reform Commission, CHANGE Illinois, Citizen Action, and AARP. (See sidebar at bottom of page 4.)

## Monday Night Discussion Series on Campaign Finance Reform in Illinois

### Monday, May 4

Commissioner Larry Suffredin will lead a discussion on campaign transparency and Mary Lou Aagard of the Illinois League of Women Voters will speak about the present condition of the Illinois State Board of Elections.

### Monday, May 11

Patrick Keenan Devlin of Citizen Action - Illinois will field questions about public financing of campaigns.

# Ridding the World of Nuclear Weapons

by Steve Sheffey

*"I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." ~ Albert Einstein*

Do you know what time it is? It is five minutes to midnight according to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Doomsday Clock*, which "conveys how close humanity is to catastrophic destruction—the figurative midnight—and monitors the means humankind could use to obliterate itself."

Yet the threat of nuclear destruction was not an issue in the last presidential election, and it receives far less attention than more mundane issues. Perhaps that's because the problem seems insoluble and the subject is too unpleasant to contemplate. Yet nothing is more important.

The United States, Britain, Russia, China, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea possess nuclear weapons, and Iran—a theocratic sponsor of terrorism whose leaders have vowed to obliterate Israel—is on the verge of becoming a nuclear power. If it does, other Arab states are likely to follow suit, and it will be a matter of when, not if, nuclear weapons fall into the hands of terrorists.

Fortunately, President Obama recognizes this problem and is committed to solving it. Speaking in Prague on April 5, President Obama said, "Today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. I'm not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly—perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, 'Yes, we can.'"

Obama addressed those who worry that the problem cannot be solved: "Some argue that the spread of these weapons cannot be stopped, cannot be checked—that we are destined to live in a world where more nations and more people possess the ultimate tools of destruction. Such fatalism is a deadly adversary, for if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some way we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable."

The United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan only 65 years ago, and many of us have lived our entire lives knowing the reality of nuclear weapons and yet never witnessing their use. But "out of sight, out of mind" will lead to disaster. As hard as it is to control the spread of nuclear weapons, we must try.

The immediate threat is Iran. President Obama said it best in Prague: "Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile activity poses a real threat, not just to the United States, but to Iran's neighbors and our allies."

Leading House Democrats, including House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, recently urged President Obama to impose new sanctions against Iran if Iran does not soon suspend its uranium enrichment efforts. They emphasized their agreement with President Obama that Iran cannot be allowed to possess a nuclear weapon.

Tip O'Neill said that all politics is local. We Tenth Dems need to make nuclear weapons and the threat from Iran a local issue, and we need to support President Obama and congressional Democrats not only in their efforts to stop Iran's march toward nuclear weapons, but also in their efforts to ultimately rid the world of nuclear weapons.



## *Scott Turow Deliberates on the State of Politics in Illinois*

On Thursday evening, May 14, best-selling author Scott Turow will teach a Tenth Dems University class about the state of politics and ethics in Illinois entitled, "Ethics Reform in Illinois: An Oxymoron?" This special class will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Highland Park Country Club, 1201 Park Avenue West, Highland Park. A longtime writer as well as a practicing attorney, and now a Tenth Dems U professor, Scott Turow is the author of seven best-selling novels, including *Presumed Innocent* (1987), *The Burden of Proof* (1990), and *Reversible Errors* (2002). Also of note is his nonfiction book, *Ultimate Punishment* (2003), a reflection on the death penalty.

Professor Turow has been a partner in the Chicago office of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal since 1986, concentrating on white-collar criminal defense. From 1978 to 1986, he was an Assistant United States Attorney in Chicago. He was a prosecutor in the trial of Illinois Attorney General William J. Scott, who was convicted of tax fraud. Prof. Turow was also lead government counsel in a number of the trials connected to Operation Greylord, a federal investigation of corruption into the Illinois judiciary. This experience, and more, uniquely qualifies Scott Turow to teach about the state of ethics in Illinois.

Prof. Turow is currently a member of Illinois' Executive Ethics Commission, and he served as the Commission's first chair in 2004-2005. From 2002 to 2004, he served as chair of the Illinois State

Appellate Defender's Commission, which oversees the state agency that represents indigent criminal defendants in their appeals. He served as one of the 14 members of the commission appointed in March 2000 by Illinois Governor George Ryan to consider reform of the capital punishment system. Turow was a member of the Illinois State Police Merit Board, which determines matters of hiring, promotion, and discipline for members of the Illinois State Police.

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**What:** "Ethics Reform in Illinois: an Oxymoron?"—A TDU Class

**Date:** Thursday, May 14, 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Highland Park Country Club, 1201 Park Ave. West, Highland Park

**Instructor:** Scott Turow, a writer and attorney

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Those who are interested in more information or who wish to register for this special Tenth Dems U class are urged to call 847-266-VOTE (8683) or email [events@TenthDems.org](mailto:events@TenthDems.org). Light snacks and refreshments will be provided. Preregistration is strongly recommended to reserve a seat. Several of our recent events have filled up and we've had to turn people away.

**To register in advance, go online to [www.TenthDemsU.org](http://www.TenthDemsU.org).**

## Reregulate! *continued from page 5*

is easily seduced by paths to greed until it has become an addictive culture. The harmful effects on competition and consumers have been purposefully ignored. This situation is not compatible with self-regulation. To allow companies to police themselves is no different than having the fox guard the chicken coop.

Bennet Sedacca, CEO of Atlantic Advisors, a \$3.5 billion investment management company and hedge fund, had been watching his Bloomberg screens on a daily basis as the cost of insuring short-term obligations—credit default swaps—which for both Lehman and Bear Stearns had increased steadily since the summer of 2007 and then more rapidly in February 2008. This was a red warning flag, because “[t]he buyer of a credit swap receives credit protection, whereas the seller of the swap guarantees the credit worthiness of the product. By doing this, the risk of default is transferred from the holder of the fixed income security to the seller of the swap. For example, the buyer of a credit swap will be entitled to the par value of the bond by the seller of the swap, should the bond default in its coupon payments.” (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/creditdefaultswap.asp>) What Sedacca saw was Bear Stearns and Lehman becoming more leveraged at a time when it should have cut dividends, raised equity, and shrunk its balance sheet. In March 2008, Sedacca was one of the first to announce to his clients, to investors, and to the world, on [www.minyanville.com](http://www.minyanville.com), that the venerable Bear Stearns, the nation's fifth largest investment bank, was in deep trouble, with what Sedacca called “nuclear waste” on its balance sheet. Instead of taking the prudent course of cutting dividends, raising equity, and shrinking its balance sheet, Bear Stearns instead continued blindly on the disastrous greedy path. Sedacca observed that Bear Stearns and Lehman also had huge inventories on their balance sheets of securities backed by home mortgages. The underlying collateral for the mortgages, people's homes, was falling in value rapidly. Sedacca called these two situations a “Double Whammy.” (See *House of Cards*, William D. Cohan, Doubleday, Chapter 1.)

Congress was asleep at the switch once again. Wasn't there anyone in the Banking Committees of Congress or the SEC monitoring the same sources as Mr. Sedacca? If not, why not? It seems like a simple thing to do that might have averted the crisis that we're in today. What if Congress or the SEC had taken appropriate timely action at the earliest possible moment?

### How to Come Out Smelling Like a Rose

How often have you wished that you could turn back the clock after you have experienced an actual or perceived horrible event? Well, our economic crisis is just about the most horrible event I can think of, and it affects all of us. Over two million jobs have been lost. For many of us our life savings have shrunk 25 to 50 percent, or more. Savings for college are either insufficient or non-existent, and our dream of a home of our own is now out of reach. We are in a deep recession.

What if we could turn the clock back to a time before deregulation started? Just think—it would be a fresh start! To do this, financial institutions would need to identify the core business that they would like to keep and divest themselves of all other business activities.

Corporations are very familiar with voluntary divestitures—spinning off product business assets and selling divisions that are not compatible with their core business—to operate more efficiently and to raise capital. So, it should not be too much of a shock to be asked to participate in divestiture, although financial institutions may object to being forced to do so. Congress has mandated divestiture before, via the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 and a host of other succeeding legislation like the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914, the Robinson-Patman Act of 1937, the Miller-Tydings Fair Trade Act of 1937, the Celler-Kefauver Act of 1950, and the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976—legislation spanning 86 years! So, although the initial divestitures by financial institutions may not be a perfect process, they can be improved over time.

But this major initial step must be concurrent with adequate oversight

*continued on page 8*

## Success Stories *continued from page 1*

candidate was elected, Vernon Township Trustee Phil Hirsh.

I volunteered time for Marla Sundh for Vernon Township Trustee. In her speech to supporters, Marla, who had run for the first time, noted that after their campaigns against 30-year incumbents, Vernon Dems for Change “created a Democratic group identity and a group we can use to do grassroots work to promote progressive issues.” Other speakers included Northfield Township Trustee Karen McCormick, Buffalo Grove Mayor Elliot Hartstein, and Palatine Township Democratic Committeewoman Sue Walton.

The evening was rounded out by State Representative Mark Walker, who joined us via cell phone from Springfield. Rep. Walker reminded the room full of candidates that he lost his 2005 race for Wheeling Township Supervisor. “I got beat, and it hurt,” he said, “but I started looking for other candidates to help in the meantime and ran again. You can build a base from a loss because you established a name and a face.”

I, for one, could tell from the tenor of Vernon Dems for Change campaign events and the phone calls we made that the group had indeed made an impact on Vernon's citizens. Similarly, although Bob Jostas delivered a lighthearted poem on the “fall of the Dems” in Wheeling Township, their slate also made progress, and as Bob said, “We'll be back.”

Ellie Sylvan spoke for many of us when she said, “I'm here as a volunteer to speak about the importance of Tenth Dems to these campaigns.” I would also echo the sentiments of Sharon Narrod, who

said, “There's nothing like supporting a candidate—it's sort of like running itself.”

As the reception concluded, with awards and thanks given to all the candidates in attendance, I thought it remarkable how many speakers had chosen to talk about their supporters and their own history supporting other campaigns. It was clear to me that the gratitude flowed both ways. For the Tenth Dems, the hard work of both candidates and volunteers results in success stories; and there was no shortage of success on April 7th.

## What I Learned from Losing

*by Marla Sundh*

*In the April edition of the Tenth News, Marla Sundh told us what it's like to be a first-time candidate. Now, she relates some lessons learned from her campaign.*

I think it was Vince Lombardi who uttered the famous words: “Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing.” I'm here to tell you that's not entirely true. Winning is NOT the only thing.

Our slate, the Vernon Democrats for Change, was created to try to bring Democratic leadership to township government in the Buffalo Grove, Riverwoods, Vernon Hills, Long Grove, Lincolnshire area. Our team of eight well-qualified candidates and volunteers worked vigorously to try to unseat a team that has run the township for the past 32 years.

*continued on page 8*

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## What I Learned *continued from page 7*

The outcome? We won one seat out of eight—new Vernon Township Trustee Phil Hirsh. And the rest of us garnered almost half of the vote—coming much closer than expected. Our slate spent plenty of time analyzing what went wrong, what went right, what could have been done differently... After the disappointment passed, we thought about what we had accomplished, and here it is:

We established an identity. Now people in Vernon Township know there is a Democratic group in their midst. Maybe in four years we'll be able to win additional positions.

We may not be in elected positions, but we can use our brand name to do grassroots work for the community. Whether it is pushing for more and better social services, or for better use of reserves, we can do it from our seat in the bleachers and still have an impact.

We have learned quite a bit about campaigning, which is a lot different when you're the ones on the front lines making the strategy decisions, looking for money and support. We can carry that knowledge forward if we decide individually or together to run for office again, work for other candidates, or participate in issues-oriented programs.

Far from having dampened spirits, we are still an optimistic team who will work in whatever way we can to promote progressive values in government.

## Reregulate! *continued from page 7*

by Congress to ensure that "Main Street," the middle class and less fortunate people, are treated fairly and not trod upon.

Another major problem is the overwhelming effect that lobbyists have

on legislation that could scuttle this approach. Everyone should have access to their representative in Congress, but limits to lobbyists' activity must be established. Lobbyists should not be allowed to write legislation—that's the job for our elected representatives and their staffs. And lobbyists must stop bribing Congresspersons with campaign money; that's against the law. *Quid pro quo* may be obvious to the electorate, but proving it can be difficult. So, strict limits must be established along with proper oversight and severe sanctions. The loopholes must be shut tight!

Likewise, we need to stop the revolving door, wherein government officials leave to become lobbyists or take lucrative positions in companies or trade groups doing business with the government. Again, the regulations need to be stricter, with proper oversight and severe sanctions.

Adequate oversight, limits on lobbyists, and a stop to the revolving door are the ingredients that could have us emerge from the current financial crisis smelling like a rose.

## Last "Black" Senator *continued from page 1*

I am praying fervently not to hear any more about anyone's ethnicity. Like most Illinoisians I'd like a senator who was reasonably competent and not corrupt, or at least not egregiously so. But in a pinch I'd settle for anybody who didn't look like they were going to be indicted this year.

*On April 30, as this issue of the Tenth News went to press, the author presented the Tenth Dems University course, "Political Humor—How to Be Funny, Get Attention, and Vice Versa." If you missed Prof. Freeman's class, you will be able to read about it in the June issue of the Tenth News.*