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MEET 9th DISTRICT STATE SENATOR DANIEL BISS



By Mark D. DeBofsky

Senator Daniel Biss has been a member of the Illinois General Assembly for six years and has served as State Senator for the 9th District for four of those years. Throughout his terms in the General Assembly, Senator Biss's commitment to what he believes the State of Illinois needs and the role he can play has remained constant.

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Tenth News

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Brad Schneider Earns Standing Ovation at Overflow Town Hall

By Laurence D. Schiller

Our 10th District Congressman, Brad Schneider, is not afraid to open the doors wide and answer the tough questions. On Saturday, February 18th, Brad hosted a crowd of more than 400 people who filled the auditorium, hallways, and an overflow meeting room at the Northbrook Public Library.

During the 90-minute town hall, people expressed their concerns about everything ranging from health insurance and the Affordable Care Act, to immigration, to the prospect of impeachment of President Trump. Described by the *Chicago Tribune* as a "high octane crowd," attendees began by giving their Congressman a standing ovation when he entered the auditorium for this Congress on Your Corner event. During the ensuing 90 minutes, Brad answered question upon question, many shouted out before a raised hand could be acknowledged.

"I will tell you the last four weeks have been the longest year of my life," Schneider said. "We have to brace ourselves for a very long struggle, a long resistance, a long battle."



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Senator Biss has made it his top priority to work on fixing the economic and financial problems this state faces – without a budget, the State of Illinois is unable to provide the services it needs to offer to its citizens. He is working to fix a broken Springfield in a way that is fair and reasonable, but to do so, the political culture needs to change. Corporations and special interest groups have too much influence over politics – Senator Biss is working on building a movement to establish a political process “that people want and need, and that serves the people.”

The current political moment, which has produced tremendous fear and anger about President Trump, has created an opportunity for change in Illinois. “People are ready for something meaningful to organize around. We need to encourage resistance movements building around the state and partner with them to change politics in a productive way,” Biss said.

One issue that will undoubtedly motivate discussion is the need to protect women from reckless policy. If the Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that legalized abortion, such a ruling would automatically make abortions illegal in Illinois under existing state law. Currently pending before the General Assembly is a bill, HB 40, that would prevent such an occurrence. Senator Biss believes that HB 40 is something to rally around and presents a “concrete opportunity to make good public policy.”

Senator Biss also recently introduced a bill requiring that a candidate for President of the United States not be allowed to appear on a ballot in Illinois without releasing his or her tax returns. This is another issue he believes creates a meaningful opportunity to organize for change. As Biss remarked, “Every step forward strengthens our ability to take substantive steps.”

Senator Biss also expressed tremendous concern about Illinois’ regressive income tax. The Illinois Constitution mandates a flat income tax, which Biss feels we need to replace with a fair tax code, because the current system has hamstrung budgeting.

On the pension issue, Senator Biss pointed out that Illinois’ pension debt is the worst in the country by wide margin. “We need to stop political grandstanding and be realistic about what the Illinois Supreme Court will uphold consistent with the state constitution,” he said. He criticized the Rauner administration for pushing draconian steps that are clearly unconstitutional and which delays taking constructive steps to fix problems.



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MEET 9th DISTRICT STATE SENATOR DANIEL BISS

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Senator Biss still wants to work with the Rauner administration, though. He believes that the governor and Democrats share many of the same goals and need to find common ground on the way to achieve what the citizens of Illinois need. However, Biss asks whether Governor Rauner places his priorities on achieving his political agenda over realizing his stated goals. He gave the example of Rauner's desire to cut the cost of workers' compensation for employers. Governor Rauner has tried to justify cutting benefits for injured workers by saying he wants to lower employers' costs of doing business, but Biss points to premium revenues and rising profits by insurance companies as suggesting that the problem would be better addressed by lowering employers' insurance rates.

Senator Biss views his job as "do[ing] his best to create opportunities to work together on shared goals," but he worries that the Governor seems uninterested in working together and is focused more on finger-pointing. He added, though, "There is too much at stake to give up."

Biss has not yet made up his mind about his own political future but believes the next governor needs to be someone who has "a positive economic vision for the State." A Democrat cannot get elected solely by running a negative campaign against Bruce Rauner. In order to win, Biss believes it is necessary to "lay out a clear, inspiring economic vision and agenda to fix the budget and make those best able to pay to pay their share." A successful candidate also needs to build a statewide movement to transform Illinois politics.

Senator Biss is confident that the politics in Illinois can change. Independent, progressive, ethical legislators such as Dawn Clark Netsch, Abner Mikva, and Adlai Stevenson III changed Illinois, and Daniel Biss believes "it can happen again if we put our minds to it."

Brad Schneider Meets with Constituents in Lake Forest

By Dottie Palombo

On Sunday, February 19th, a group of residents at Lake Forest Place hosted a "Meet Your Congressman" event at which 10th District Congressman Brad Schneider provided a "State of the House" report. Brad followed his report with a lengthy question and answer session, which provided an opportunity for an informal dialogue between the Congressman and his constituents.



The overflow audience reflected diverse political affiliations and a wide range of concerns. The format made it possible to explore a number of those concerns including tax, revenue, and regulatory reform; security and immigration policies; possible changes to the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid; and the impact of inadequate infrastructure on trade (for example, we have no eastern seaboard port that can accommodate the super-sized cargo ships coming through the Panama Canal).

Throughout, I was impressed by Brad's candor, his willingness to address complex issues, and his ability to listen to multiple viewpoints.

Brad Schneider Earns Standing Ovation at Overflow Town Hall

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During the House's February recess, Brad has been out and about the 10th District, meeting with constituent groups in forums large and small. Earlier on the Saturday of the town hall he met with DREAMers and representatives of the immigrant community at the Waukegan office of HACES, the Hispanic American Community and Education Services. Responding to their concerns, Schneider has introduced an amendment in the House Judiciary Committee to require the committee to investigate deportations of anyone eligible for DACA (Delayed Action for Childhood Arrivals), the Obama administration program that offered legal status to certain immigrants who entered the United States without documentation when they were under 15 years of age.

Two days later, on February 20, Brad met in Glenview with local leaders of organizations working to reduce gun violence. "Across our country, senseless gun violence is an epidemic that is threatening our communities and claiming the lives of far too many," he said. "It is long past time for Congress to directly address this issue as the critical public health crisis that it is, and begin to work in a bipartisan way toward commonsense gun safety measures. I am committed to partnering with anyone serious about confronting gun violence to find common ground to make our communities safer," Brad declared.

Congressman Schneider's Congress on Your Corner initiative, pure democracy in action, contrasts sharply with how some of Brad's Republican House colleagues have spent their time during the February recess. Take, for example, Peter Roskam, representing the Illinois 6th District here in Lake County. Roskam has refused multiple requests to meet with his constituents in open town hall meetings, and he even turned down a request by the Illinois League of Women Voters for a public forum.

At a time when Republicans are abandoning democratic norms, hiding from, and in some cases literally running away from, their constituents, we are fortunate to be represented by Democrat Brad Schneider, who stands with the people of the 10th District.

Legislative Update: State Representative Robyn Gabel



So far this session, Illinois State Representative Robyn Gabel of the 18th District has filed 28 bills on topics ranging from equality of healthcare access for women regardless of income to ensuring a fair and nonburdensome system of voter registration across Illinois. She hopes to bring about fair compensation for home healthcare workers, protect students on buses, guarantee juveniles are given a speedy hearing, and create a Children's Savings Account program for higher education so that families can receive tax benefits for responsibly saving to put their kids through college, among other pieces of legislation.

Rep. Gabel has been named the chair of the bipartisan Illinois Legislative Green Caucus, which focuses on the intersection of our Illinois economy, Illinois' energy demands, and protecting and conserving our environment. The caucus consists of both State Representatives and State Senators who have worked together on a number of pieces of legislation over the past few years. Rep. Gabel looks forward to working with the caucus during the coming session and would be interested in hearing suggestions from her constituents on potential green legislation.



Community Connection Sponsors 7th Annual Poetry and Prose Contest for High Schoolers

By Gundula Miethke



For the 7th year in a row the Tenth Dems are holding their Community Connection Poetry and Prose Contest this spring. The contest is open to high school students from Zion, Waukegan and North Chicago. This year's topic is "service," a word with many different meanings that we hope will inspire students to write original stories, essays, and poems.

This year, for the first time, entries are being accepted online. Go to <http://tenthdems.org/contest>. The deadline for submissions is March 21, 2017.

Entries will be judged anonymously by a panel of judges, all of whom are themselves published writers. Judges will select the best poems and prose pieces for recognition. First, second, and third place awardees in each category will receive awards of \$100, \$75, and \$50, respectively; three students in each category will receive honorable mention. All 12 award-winning pieces will be published in a special edition of the Tenth Dems online publication, *Tenth News*.

In addition, every entrant will receive a certificate of participation and be invited to read his or her work at Awards Night, on April 18, at the Waukegan Ramada Inn. Awards night will be emceed by Dulce Ortiz and Marc Jones, Waukegan notables who presided over last year's Awards Ceremony with charm, sensitivity, and good humor.

Opportunity for Lawyers: Do Good AND Earn CLE Credit

Community Connection and the Waukegan-based Coalition to Reduce Recidivism will be holding regular events to assist with expunging and sealing criminal records.

For those interested in helping with this project, Jed Stone, renowned Waukegan criminal defense attorney (and member of the Tenth Dems Election Protection Team) will provide a brief training on Saturday, March 11, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., at the Highland Park Democratic Headquarters (Moraine Democrats), 474 Central Avenue, 2nd floor (above Mizuki Grill).

The course is pending approval for 1.5 hours CLE credit for lawyers.

To RSVP for this training, email laurenbethgash@gmail.com or call 847-702-6635.

A Press Conference or a Side Show?

by Sheila Nielsen



The King of Con had a press conference on February 16, and it was so nuts that even Fox News said it was crazy. I want to repeat that. Fox News called the President out for his unhinged press conference.

The curtain was pulled back and we got to see what Trump is like, with his chaotic, unfocused, roving mind hell-bent on proving he is the best, the greatest, the smartest, the biggest, etc. THAT is what he cares about and what he is focused on in the press conference and behind the scenes. Not policy! Not at all. This is what his staff has to deal with. The man has, at best, a tangential relationship with reality. He seems to believe the lies he tells. Think about that. He believes the fake stuff he is spouting and he calls the press crazy.

I used to be a criminal prosecutor, first in state court and then in federal court. My job was to understand the evidence and put on a trial with the goal of making sure justice was done. I knew the evidence and had listened to witness accounts in the preparation of the case. Then I would present the evidence in court. But on February 16, 2017, the 45th President of the United States held a 77-minute press conference in which he reconstructed reality to fit his own goals and purposes.

This man desperately wants to be applauded and loved and be the guy who works miracles. Notice that he has to go on the campaign trail again to have a rally and get people cheering for him. Notice that he asked the reporters to ask him a “nice” question.

When things do not turn out as he wants them to, he recreates reality, and he seems to believe the reality he has fabricated. He says the leaks are real and the news reports about the leaks are fake news, two propositions that can't be true at the same time. He says he has no connection to Russia, but his son already said that there

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was a lot of money “pouring” into the Trump empire from Russia. He says he does not know of anyone on his staff interacting with Russian operatives, but we know that Flynn and Manafort were doing just that, and an investigation likely will uncover more connections with his campaign team.

When the truth is not to his liking, he creates his own truth, the alternative universe, and insists that everyone believe that instead of reality. Then he unleashes Kellyanne Conway and Sean Spicer and others out into the world with the order to tell the truth (lies) he believes in.

OK. This is nuts. It is not just nuts. It is scary crazy. We have a President who is not capable of knowing truth from lies. This man has got to go. He is a clear and present danger to our country. It is crucial that we have a



9/11-type investigation divorced from politics to find out if he and his campaign team collaborated with Russian intelligence agents to disrupt our democracy. We have to see his tax returns to understand his bromance with Putin.

Even Republicans have to realize that this guy is so fundamentally impaired that they will not be able to get their agenda accomplished as long as he is the President. I guess that is good news for progressives. Trump is so psychologically impaired, he cannot lead. However, this is bad news for our foreign policy, and terrible news for our country.

Rise up and tell Mitch McConnell (who is the key to an independent investigation) to grow a spine!! He needs to do his job. Even if we get a 9/11-type commission going, it will take time to do the investigation. Meanwhile, our country is in the hands of a man who is unhinged, unmoored, and unconnected to reality, and we will get nothing but continued craziness as long as he is the President.

U.S. Postal Service Performing Well, Despite Obstacles Imposed by Congress

By Brian Dupuis, Financial Secretary-Treasurer of the Northeastern Illinois Federation of Labor AFL-CIO

On February 9, the President of the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) issued a press release about the U.S. Postal Service’s financial statement for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017, covering the months of October, November and December of 2016:

“Today’s Postal Service financial report shows a \$522 million operating profit for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017, demonstrating the strength of the postal turnaround. USPS now has a total operating profit of \$3.7 billion since the start of FY 2014.

“That’s impressive for a government entity that gets no taxpayer money—earning its revenue instead by selling stamps—while enjoying strong public support and providing Americans and their businesses with the industrial world’s most-affordable delivery network. The continuing financial upswing shows the importance of maintaining and strengthening the unparalleled—and profitable—postal network.

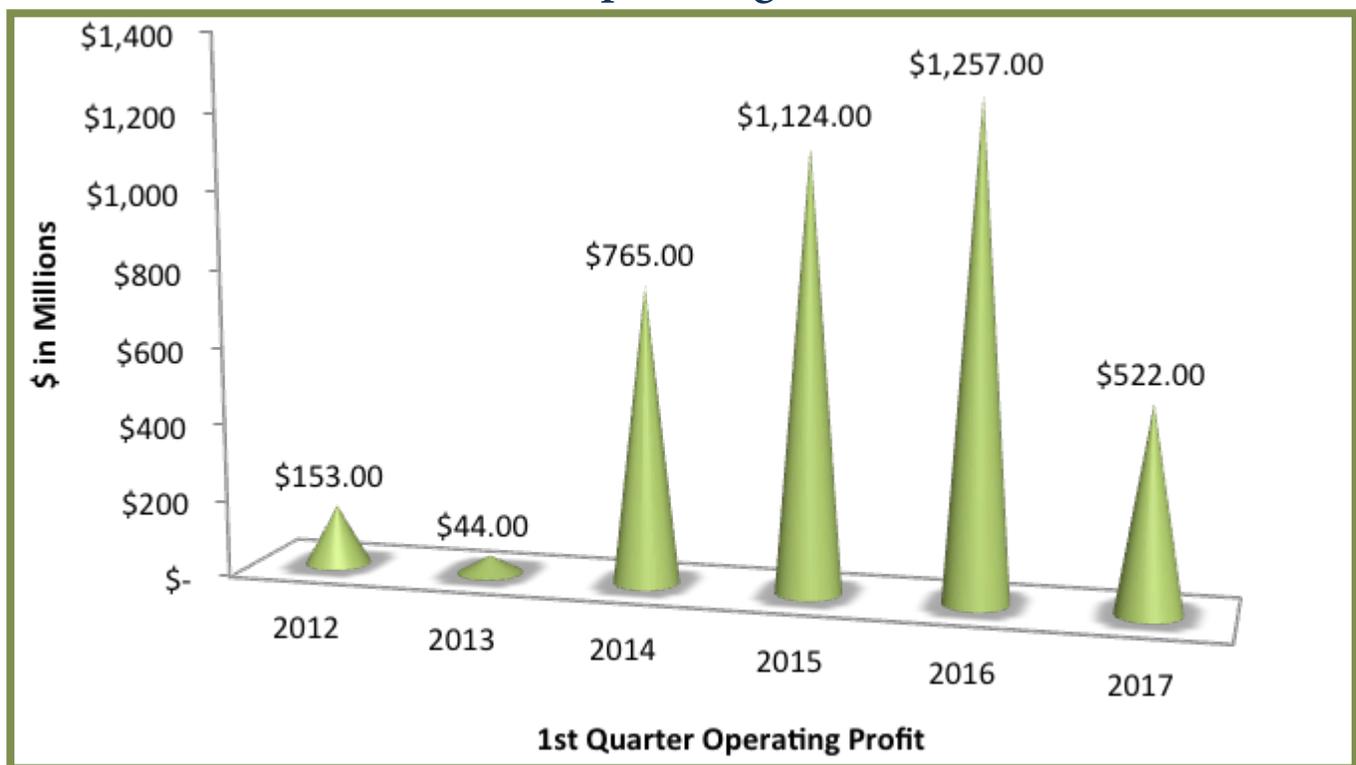
“These results reflect ongoing trends: stabilizing letter revenue as the economy gradually improves from the worst recession in 80 years and rising package revenue driven by online shopping.

“The red ink you hear about has nothing to do with the mail but rather with congressional politics—the 2006 decision by a lame-duck Congress to compel the Postal Service to pre-fund future retiree health benefits. No other public agency or private company has to do this even one year in advance; USPS must pre-fund these benefits decades into the future. That multi-billion annual charge is not only the “red ink,” it actually disguises the operating profits USPS is earning.

“The pre-funding issue can be readily addressed if Congress acts on practical, targeted postal reform. There is a strong consensus within a coalition consisting of the Postal Service, postal unions, business groups and key legislators for a reform package that all stakeholders can buy into.

“It’s worth noting that the quarter’s operating profit would have been \$1.1 billion had it not been for the first annual stamp price rollback since 1919. That rollback, which took place in April 2016, makes little financial sense, because USPS already has the industrial world’s lowest rates. The Postal Regulatory Commission is now engaged in a review of the postage rate-setting system.”

1st Quarter USPS Operating Profit in \$ Millions



USPS reported a \$522 million operating profit for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017. This profit reflects the growth of the Postal Service into the No. 1 e-commerce delivery provider. The agency provides more last-mile deliveries than any private carrier. The financial results also have been supported by growth in marketing letter mail and by a slowing rate of decline in First-Class letter mail. During the first quarter, USPS benefited from an influx of election-related mail, and a large volume of packages and other holiday mail (cards, catalogs, etc.). It continued its operating profitability despite the loss of revenue from a 2016 stamp price cut, which reduced quarterly revenue and operating profit by \$570 million.

SOURCE: Actual results from USPS 10-Q reports for 1Q 2012-1Q 2017

Appeals Court Hands Victory to Pediatricians and Gun Safety

By Mark Rosenberg, M.D.

Pediatricians have long stressed safety in counseling families during preventive care visits. One of the saddest encounters that I had as a pediatrician was when a child in my practice was shot with a gun that he found in his home. That reinforced my routine question to parents about whether they had a gun in their home. If they did, I recommended that they store it unloaded in a secure location.

A gun in the home is more likely to cause the death of a family member than provide defense against an intruder. Here are the facts:

- One-third of all households in the United States with children younger than 18 have a firearm.
- More than 40 percent of these households with children store their guns unlocked.
- One-fourth of the homes with children and guns have a loaded firearm.
- Between six and 14 percent of firearm-owning households with a child under 18 have an unlocked and loaded firearm.
- In virtually all accidental shooting deaths where the wound is not self-inflicted, the shooter and victim knew each other.

Despite these statistics, in 2011, the Republican-controlled Florida legislature, with the support of the state's Republican Governor Rick Scott, passed a restrictive law aimed primarily at pediatricians. Under the law, doctors could lose their licenses or risk large fines for asking patients or their families about gun ownership and gun habits.

On February 16, a federal appeals court cleared the way for Florida doctors to talk to their patients about gun safety, overturning this law that pitted medical providers against the state's powerful gun lobby. In its 10 to 1 ruling, the full panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit concluded that doctors could not be threatened with losing their license for asking patients if they owned guns and discussing gun safety because to do so would violate the physicians' free speech.

In the lawsuit challenging the 2011 law, the medical community argued that questions about gun storage were crucial to public health because of the relationship between firearms and suicide and the high rate of gun-related deaths of children. The court held that "Florida does not have *carte blanche* to restrict the speech of doctors and medical professionals on a certain subject without satisfying the demands of heightened scrutiny."



This Florida law was the first in the country to try to restrict the First Amendment rights of medical providers to discuss the safe storage of guns with patients. This decisive ruling will probably make it more difficult for other Republican-controlled states to enact similar legislation.



We Can Move Mountains!

By Steven Gan

As the designated (amateur) photographer and scribe for the January 30 *Let's Talk Politics* session at the Marvin S. Weiss Community Center in Mount Prospect, I was delighted to take down the thoughts, comments, and suggestions from this standing-room-only crowd.

The first thing I noticed was that many people were wearing expressions of gloom and doom, all conveying the same concerns: "How did this happen?" "Where did we go wrong?" "I can't continue to bear the outrageous and obnoxious lies and actions of our new President." So when at the start attendees were asked to voice their ideas, opinions, and concerns, I thought this was not only a very cathartic opportunity but clearly showed how resilient we as a group are in trying to funnel our loss, frustration, and anger into a productive movement for change.

Allow me to share some of the more notable comments that were expressed during this wonderful Tenth Dems event.

Kathy Waggoner, Mt. Prospect - "Subsequent to participating in the Women's March in Washington, D.C., I started a Facebook page which already has 250 people involved. Our page starts out with the questions, 'What can we do and how can we do it?'" Kathy emphasized how important it is to continue to stay tuned in to social media and get involved.

Karen Singer, Vernon Hills - "I always care about our passion and we must direct that passion into constructive and effective action. For example, every time Trump and the GOP come out with something that defies common sense, we can't be running around frantically trying to respond to these things. It's their strategy to make us panic at every move and we need to be insightful, careful, and shrewd in our responses."

Tobin Fraley, Mundelein - "We need to form a single voice, not only from the Tenth Dems, but from all the other Democratic Party supporting groups and organizations. I believe that creating a single voice will require





organizing as many groups at the state and national level to come together on a regular basis, meet each other and know each other, and combine all of our efforts in a coherent and coordinated fashion.”

Maxine Gan, Northbrook - “The reason we are all here is because we are concerned. And on that note, there’s no reason for anyone to walk out of this room tonight without putting their names on the volunteer signup sheet.”

Lauren Beth Gash, Tenth Dems Founding Chair - “We have a gazillion projects but not enough volunteers to manage them. With all the people in

this room, even if you spent just one hour a month helping out, together we can move mountains.”

Kerry Martin, Trustee for the Village for Bannockburn - “We have to go after Trump’s henchmen and always bring to light the repugnant hypocrisy of this President and his people. Whenever you use Steve Bannon’s name, always include ‘White Supremacist’ after it. If it sounds like we’re playing dirty, that’s what we need to do. We can’t sit by drinking tea and being polite while Trump, his cohorts, and the GOP at large continue to hit us below the belt.”

Susan Burrows, Prospect Heights - “It’s imperative that we all subscribe to the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and other major publications. We need them to do their investigative reporting. Trump definitely reads what they write, and the more they uncover his hypocrisies and lies, the more frustrated and angry he becomes. This mental wear and tear against him has to be part of our strategy.”

Cheryl Russell - “We need to concentrate on the midterms! We have 48 Senators and we need 51. What this means is that we need to focus our efforts in the very short term so that not only do we reelect Senators in states where Trump won and where they’re vulnerable, but we need to also elect Democratic Senators to give us a majority where we can put a stop to Trump’s insanity.”

Elliott Hartstein, former mayor of Buffalo Grove - “You have to volunteer and support the people who are going to work for us. You must get involved with the candidates. You must stay focused. You must stay positive. You must not only understand what we are we against, but what are we for!”

Mark Walker, Arlington Heights - “Going back to trying to create a single voice, at a minimum we should be aligning ourselves with the Wheeling Democrats (Wheelingdems.com) and the Greater Palatine Area Democrats (<http://www.gpadems.org>).”

Laurie Schiller, “Tenth Dems Leader” - “At the end of the day, we need to get people to vote. As we had a very poor turnout in the last election, we can never let that happen again.”

The meeting went way over its designated time and by the end there was a sense of renewed vigor and energy to pick ourselves up and go forward. The time for mourning is over and the time for rebuilding is now.

The next *Let’s Talk Politics* session is scheduled for Tuesday evening, March 14, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the UAW Building, 680 Barclay Boulevard, Lincolnshire.