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# Meet State Representative Laura Fine (17<sup>th</sup> District)

By Mark DeBofsky

Representative Laura Fine, who has served the 17th Legislative District as its representative since 2013, has long had an interest in politics. Before taking the plunge and running for public office, Representative Fine was teaching political science at Northeastern Illinois University. She then attended the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership, a program started by Loretta Durbin, which teaches the nuts and bolts of running for public office. Other alumni of IWIL include Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (IL-17), three other women who serve in the Illinois General Assembly, and Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering. Representative Fine was energized by her IWIL experience to seek elective office, and she first ran for Clerk of Northfield Township in 2008, a race she won.



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# Tenth News

April 2017 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 14, Edition 5

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 Visit our website: www.TenthDems.org  
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## Tenth Dems Helped Local Democrats Surge Throughout the District



Throughout Illinois' 10th Congressional District, people went to the polls for the April consolidated election and chose Democratic candidates over others. It was another major victory for area Democrats who built on substantial local wins achieved in November 2016 (in spite of the national results).

Democratic slates in West Deerfield Township, Vernon Township, and Moraine Township all swept their races. Voters returned Democrats to office and turned out longstanding Republican incumbents. In addition, voters chose Democrats to be College of Lake County trustees and Democrats won local races across the district.

Equally significant, in areas such as New Trier Township and Lake Forest, right-wing slates were resoundingly defeated.

Democrats ran in traditionally Republican areas and helped make inroads for future elections despite not winning this time, keeping the Democratic momentum moving forward in the 10th District. It was evident that Democrats and progressives recognized that regaining control of the national agenda begins with local elections, and they went out of their way to learn about their local candidates so that they could make meaningful choices.

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The opinions expressed are those of the writers, and not necessarily endorsed by Tenth Dems.

# Meet State Representative Laura Fine (17<sup>th</sup> District)

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What really launched Representative Fine's elective career, though, was a tragedy that hit close to home. Her husband, Michael, was involved in a serious car accident, and the experiences that he and their family had in collecting their insurance following the accident focused Representative Fine's interest in fixing Illinois' broken Insurance Code. When Jeff Schoenberg decided not to seek reelection and Daniel Biss moved to the Illinois Senate, it left an opening in the 17th District, and Laura Fine won the seat. Her goal in seeking the seat was to make changes in legislation regarding insurance and help others so that they did not have to go through the same experience that she and her family had to endure.

Representative Fine has taken on a heavy load in the General Assembly. She chairs the Insurance (Health & Life) Committee in the Illinois House of Representatives, is Vice Chairman of the Mental Health Committee, and serves on the Appropriations, Higher Education, Human Services, and Insurance (Property and Casualty) Committees.

One of Representative Fine's major accomplishments since her election was increasing mandatory automobile insurance liability limits from levels at which they had been frozen since the 1980s. Because of legislation that she spearheaded, Illinois residents are required to have a minimum of \$25,000 in insurance coverage for injury or death of one person in an accident, \$50,000 for injury or death of more than one person in an accident, and \$20,000 for damage to property of another in an accident. Representative Fine has also passed legislation to curb delays in filling prescriptions while health insurers decide whether specific prescribed medications are covered. She has also lowered barriers to obtaining prescriptions that necessitate trials of less expensive pharmaceuticals before a specific prescription is covered by insurance. Another legislative accomplishment of hers is mandating insurance coverage for necessary sedation to allow dentists to treat children with developmental disabilities who are under the age of 19.

Insurance issues remain Representative Fine's principal focus. She is concerned about the absence of support for pro-consumer legislation by the Illinois Department of Insurance, and the power of the insurance lobby to influence legislators to vote against critical legislation. In the current term, Representative Fine plans to work for expanding insurance coverage for treatment of eating disorders. She is also trying to implement meaningful rate review for



proposed health insurance premium increases. Currently, the Illinois Department of Insurance receives notification of proposed premium rate increases but lacks any power to curb excessive increases. Representative Fine is also seeking to incorporate key provisions from the Affordable Care Act that are not already the law in Illinois into the Illinois Insurance Code so that those protections remain even if Congress repeals the ACA.

On the non-insurance front, Representative Fine is working on changing laws that regulate condominium associations. She is also an environmental advocate and is seeking a statewide ban on the use of coal tar sealants because of very high levels of carcinogens in those products. Coal tar has damaged our lakes and streams and exposure to this substance

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# Meet State Representative Laura Fine (17<sup>th</sup> District)

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has caused deaths. While several municipalities such as Highland Park, Wilmette, and even Milwaukee have banned coal tar sealants, a statewide ban is the only effective way of protecting the environment. The American Medical Association has listed banning coal tar sealants as a priority, along with underage drinking and distracted driving.

With respect to Illinois' budgetary problems, Representative Fine pointed to a "lack of trust." She believes that the House and Speaker Madigan have been wrongfully blamed since they have passed budgets that Governor Rauner has vetoed. While Governor Rauner publicly expressed his support for a "grand bargain" that would enable the passage of a budget, he blocked a vote to pass it. Representative Fine also criticized Governor Rauner for claiming that he wants to work with the Democrats while he repeatedly refuses to do so; instead, he's "all or nothing and the state is suffering as a result." Representative Fine added, "His [Rauner's] two years of inaction have done more damage than the past 40 years to the state." She also observed that Governor Rauner fails to understand that "government and business are different things." The General Assembly "doesn't work for him [Rauner]; they work with him" and serve as coequal branches of government.

Focusing on the future, Representative Fine is trying to make a positive difference. Her philosophy is you "hang your hat on any progress you can make and hope that what you're doing is going to help other people."

Representative Fine is proud to serve her constituents and applauds other hard-working elected officials who represent constituents within the 10th Congressional District. She also expressed her support for and gratitude to grassroots organizations like the Tenth Dems that help office-holders deliver "what's best for our community."

## Congress Watch: The GOP's War on the Environment

By Dr. Laurence D. Schiller

With the torrent of jaw-dropping stories coming out of Washington and touching such topics as FBI investigations into the Trump campaign's alleged collaboration with Russian Intelligence during and after the 2016 election, the confirmation hearings of a right-wing nominee for the Supreme Court (followed by the exercise of the nuclear option, his partisan confirmation, and his swearing-in), the failed GOP "Trump anti-care" bill, and the unconstitutional Muslim ban, it is easy to see how the GOP's war on the environment for greed and profit might be overlooked. But it is vitally important to understand that Trump and his GOP collaborators in Congress are orchestrating a sweeping demolition of Obama-era policies on coal mining, fracking, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change. Indeed, this campaign, backed by big corporations that want to exploit our public resources while being free to pollute our air and water, is attacking 40 years of laws and regulations designed to protect national forests,



national parks, endangered wildlife, and our right to clean air and water.

Our own 10th District Congressman, Brad Schneider, is one of four leaders of a group of 36 House Democrats who, at the end of March, introduced legislation to prevent the implementation of President Trump's recent executive order that rolls back environmental protections and severely weakens efforts to address global climate change.

H.R. 1812, the "Congressional



# Congress Watch: The GOP's War on the Environment

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Leadership in Mitigating Administration Threats to the Earth” or CLIMATE Act, declares the anti-environment executive order null and void and prohibits federal funds from implementing, administering, or enforcing the order.

“This executive order ignores both the science and the impacts of global climate change, and jeopardizes our children’s future by reorienting our policies backwards toward higher-emission sources of energy,” Brad said. “The United States must continue to play a leadership role in the international effort to confront climate change, or risk losing that role to other countries. We need to lead not just to protect our environment and national security, but to also ensure that the green energy jobs of tomorrow are created here at home.”

Signed by President Trump on March 28, the executive order “Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth” makes it harder for the United States to comply with the international targets set under the Paris Agreement and effectively cedes American leadership on climate policy by instructing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to begin withdrawing and undermining the Clean Power Plan enacted by the Obama Administration to reduce carbon emissions. The order also lifts the moratorium on federal coal leasing, undercuts regulations on methane emissions, and reconsiders standards on the construction of new power plants.

The executive order Brad Schneider is working to nullify is part of a three-front Republican attack on the environment:

First, in Congress where, in stark contrast to the work of Congressman Schneider and his fellow Democrats, the GOP has introduced legislation to roll back laws protecting the environment, including a bill introduced by Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz to abolish the EPA (H.R. 861). Republicans have already passed a rule allowing the House to value our national lands at zero dollars and cede them to a state.

Rep. Brad Schneider  
hosts  
CLIMATE  
CHANGE PANEL  
Earth Day - April 22, 2017  
1:00 p.m.  
Chicago Botanic Garden  
Alsdorf Auditorium

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/01/03/house-gop-rules-change-would-make-it-easier-to-sell-off-federal-land/?utm\\_term=.0c7d7fd53fda](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/01/03/house-gop-rules-change-would-make-it-easier-to-sell-off-federal-land/?utm_term=.0c7d7fd53fda)

If Republicans have their way, there will be no bar against a state’s auctioning off formerly federal lands to developers. Imagine a Trump golf course at Yellowstone.

And not content with endangering public lands, the Republican Congress also has passed legislation removing rules for protecting animals on national wildlife refuges. Here’s what the Humane Society had to say about the bill that passed the Senate on March 21 on a pure party-line vote:

“The U.S. Senate overturned a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule that stopped a set of appalling and unsporting hunting methods on national wildlife refuges in Alaska. These cruel and unsporting practices include shooting or trapping whole families of wolves while at their dens with pups, using airplanes to scout for brown and black bears to shoot, trapping bears with steel-jawed leghold traps and wire snares and luring grizzly bears with food to get a point blank kill.”

According to a Humane Society official, this legislation “should outrage the conscience of every animal lover in

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# Congress Watch: The GOP's War on the Environment

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America.” He continued, “The passage of this bill means that we’ll see wolf families killed at their dens, bears chased down by planes or suffering for hours in barbaric steel-jawed traps or snares.”

[http://www.hslf.org/news/press-releases/senate-overturms-fws-rule.html?credit=web\\_id421779758#](http://www.hslf.org/news/press-releases/senate-overturms-fws-rule.html?credit=web_id421779758#)  
WOpRYfkrI2w

Second, the Republican attack on the environment is advancing through unilateral executive action, like the aforementioned Trump executive order announcing the rollback of Obama’s regulations on clean water, auto emissions, clean power, and mining on public and tribal lands. In addition, Trump’s approval of the Keystone XL and Dakota pipelines will threaten environmentally sensitive and Native American sacred areas respectively, while benefitting only big oil, and in the former case, a foreign—Canadian—oil giant that won’t even use American made steel in the pipeline. The claim that “thousands of America jobs will be created” is a false one, for once the pipelines are built, only a few hundred jobs for pipeline maintenance will remain. Tar sands oil (Keystone) is a result of one of the dirtiest production methods for oil, and fracking has proven to be one of the most dangerous, making Oklahoma a man-made earthquake center with dozens more quakes reported every year. Major pipeline spills are not uncommon; one, ironically, happened in South Dakota just at the end of March.

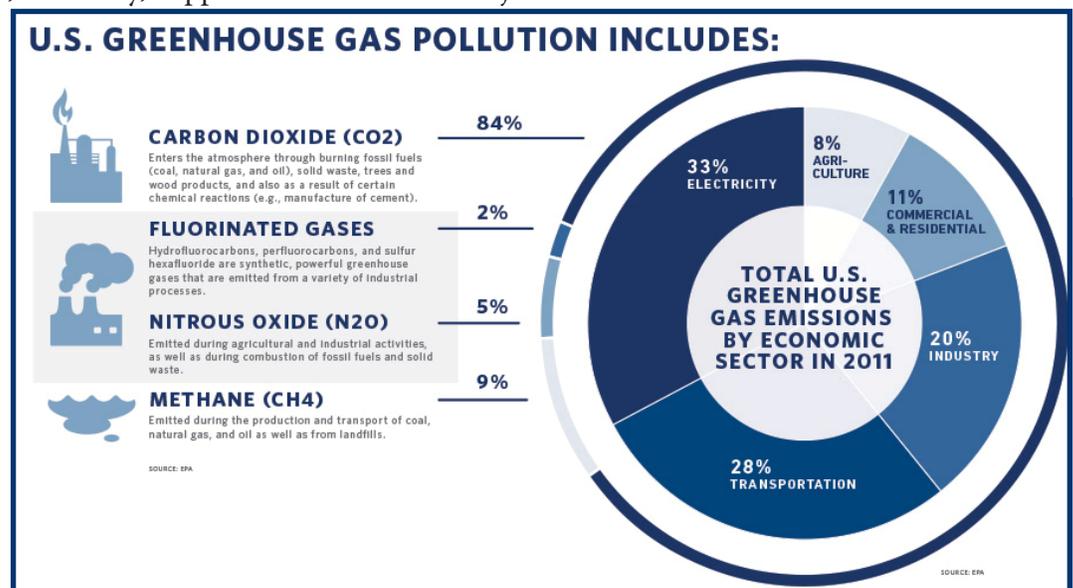
And, third, Republicans are attacking the environment from within the EPA itself. Trump’s proposed budget would cut funding for the already strapped EPA by 31 percent, which would mean firing one of every five EPA employees and virtually defunding the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. In his effort to starve the EPA of needed operating funds, Trump is assisted by his climate change denying EPA

head, Scott Pruitt, who as Attorney General of Oklahoma sued the EPA repeatedly to block regulations intended to protect the environment. Pruitt has made it clear that he opposes the mission of the EPA and thus will do everything in his power to prevent it from doing its job. Documents from his time as AG in Oklahoma show that he takes his marching orders from big oil, even to the extent of cutting and pasting their “suggestions” into state government documents. The fox is indeed guarding the hen house.

The sad thing is that Republicans are wrong when they paint environmental regulation as bad for the economy. On the contrary, exploiting alternative energy sources would boost the economy. Coal jobs aren’t coming back, and to give false hope to unemployed miners is beyond cruel when we could be offering them retraining in other fields, such as alternative power.

The dangerous thing is that by reorienting the United States’ energy policy away from attacking the problem of climate change, we risk pushing the planet past the point of recovery. Trump and the Republican war on science will leave the U.S. far behind the rest of the world and ultimately result in brain drain and dampen our economic development.

This is not the America that Americans want, owned by corporations and run by their surrogates for their pleasure and profit, clean air and water, climate and wildlife be damned. But this is the party the GOP has become, and we must unite to throw it out of office at every level, beginning now.



# Post-Election Thank You from Moraine Township Democratic Slate

It is with sincere gratitude that we thank Moraine Township voters for allowing us to continue to serve our residents for the next four years. We pledge to continue to provide needed services to Township residents, using all available resources and volunteers in our community to provide a safety net for residents going through difficult times.

During our campaign we provided voters with the positive, grassroots campaign they have a right to expect from people asking to serve them, and our overwhelming success confirms that voters appreciated it.

The highlight of campaigning for us is personal — so many new connections and reconnections. We appreciate the outpouring of support and friendship residents extended to us and promise to continue to provide the best service possible for residents needing Township resources.

We will continue our work with the schools, sister governments and area human service agencies to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts to provide critical services for residents going through difficult times.

We are looking forward to moving into our new facility sometime next year and will be visiting other Food Pantries to borrow best practices and new ideas to serve our clients. Our goal is to ensure that improvements to the facility provide efficiency for both clients and employees in the most cost-effective and environmentally sensitive way possible.

As we look forward to the next four years, we will continue our work to do more with less, leveraging the skills, resources and generosity of this amazing community, and we welcome the community's involvement and help. Please stop by our office to see how we put your tax dollars and contributions to work to help our neighbors, and to find out how you can help!



L to R., Trustees Cindy Wolfson, Amy Zisook, Dwayne Douglas; Supervisor Anne Flanigan Bassi; Trustee Pablo Alvarez; Assessor Cynthia Plouché; Clerk Gail Feiger Brown.

# Democrats Turn Vernon Township Blue!

By Mark Rosenberg

## VERNON — TOWNSHIP — DEMOCRATIC SLATE



In a Township that favored both Clinton and Obama by significant margins in 2016 and 2012 and narrowly supported Brad Schneider in 2016 by just over 50 percent, Democrats put together a winning slate of township officials. Daniel Didech, Vernon Township Supervisor-elect, led the way with 64 percent of the vote, and Trustees-elect Jonathan Altenberg, Roger Addelson, Adam Broad, and Philip Hirsch also prevailed. This is a remarkable achievement for political neophytes who have never served in public office, especially given the previous dominance of Republicans in Township government.

Vernon Township has been governed by Republicans, running under various local party labels, for over 40 years. Although Vernon Township residents pay some of the highest property taxes in Illinois, the incumbent leadership had voted themselves healthy raises.

According to Roger Addelson, given “the dystopic federal government and dysfunctional state government, township government needs more than ever to provide an additional safety net for our citizens. President Obama said that to effect change, ‘pick up a clipboard and run.’ So we did! We have built a strong Democratic organization in Vernon Township that hopefully can be leveraged for 2018 and beyond.”

This was a truly grassroots victory. Congressman Brad Schneider helped kick off the campaign. By Election Day, dozens of volunteers, including Stevenson High School students, members of Tenth Dems, the Vernon Township Democrats, and other Democratic groups, had stuffed envelopes, knocked on more than 8,000 doors, and made more than 15,000 phone calls across the township.

Hopefully, this example will encourage other local Democrats to run for public office in order to bring effective leadership to this part of Illinois, leadership that will provide fair taxation and equitable services to the local community.

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## We Must Work Harder

By John Idleburg

We as Democrats are on the front lines against a federal government whose three branches, the executive, legislative, and judicial, are poised and ready to roll back all the stunning progress we have made in the last eight years. We cannot resist with low voter turnout. We cannot resist without the support of the people.

This past municipal election showed how much work we have left to do as Democrats in parts of the 10th Congressional District. Voter turnout was dismal — just under fifteen percent. In Zion, only 1,466 people voted in my race — the Zion Township Supervisor race. That is shameful. We cannot win and resist with this continued turnout.

We cannot just wait for midterm elections or presidential elections to gain seats. There is so much uncertainty at the federal level that the fight, the resistance, is in Zion, it's in Waukegan, it's all over Lake County—it's at the local level.

We have to work hard to win local races so we can be equipped to fight back against a Trump administration whose appointed executives' mandate seems to be the complete dismantling of the agencies they were chosen to lead.

We must engage with residents and keep them active in local politics. We must identify young new leaders who can inspire and energize our communities. And when these young leaders decide to run for elected office, we must help them get into office.



We cannot afford to lose to an opponent who is hellbent on rolling back civil protections, whose platform is based on alternative facts, fearmongering, and just plain racism. We cannot let them win. We have already sacrificed too much in our history to make the progress we have made for us to allow it to be rolled back.

We must work with our allies, energize our base, get our supporters to the polls, identify leaders, and keep the fight going strong every day, week, month, and year to ensure that the America we love serves and protects ALL and not just the privileged few.

I may not have been successful on April 4th, but I have hope and confidence that the people of Zion will be on heightened alert and will demand more transparency and accountability from elected representatives. Progress does not happen overnight; it happens slowly, but we must fight for it. For that, I thank all those who supported these values, and I look forward to our building together an even stronger Democratic organization in Zion.

## West Deerfield Dems Score Historic Sweep



As reported in *Capitol Fax*, “Following the Democratic slate’s victory on April 4, West Deerfield Township will be led entirely by Democrats for the first time.” Pictured are the victorious candidates.

<https://capitolfax.com/2017/04/05/repubs-dems-crow-about-local-victories/>

L. to R., Ron Schwartz, Trustee; Paras Parekh, Trustee; Alison Feiger, Supervisor; Ron Levitsky, Trustee; Kay Kharasch, Trustee; Tom Healy, Assessor; Kristen Scott, Clerk.

## Pre-Election *Let’s Talk Politics* in Deerfield Builds Enthusiasm for Local Candidates

By Laurie Schiller

The most recent edition of *Let’s Talk Politics* (LTP), Tenth Dems University’s series of moderated discussions, took place at the Deerfield Public Library on March 27, and was attended by more than 80 spirited and enthusiastic people who filled the room to capacity. The purpose of LTP is to reach out to different areas of our district and provide a forum for Democrats and independents to come together and discuss the issues of the day — encouraging participants to translate talk into action.

Deerfield resident Matt Field helped moderate the discussion. Attendees got to meet members of the West Deerfield Township Democratic slate, including Ron Schwartz, Paras Parekh, Ron Levitsky, and Kay Kharasch, all of whom



Photo Caption:  
Four members of the West Deerfield Township Democratic Slate introduce themselves as moderator Matt Field stands by. L. to R., Ron Schwartz, Ron Levitsky, Kay Kharasch, Paras Parekh, Matt Field.

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prevailed on Election Day. College of Lake County Board candidate Matt Stanton, who also was elected, and Gerry Songer, another CLC Board candidate.

The topics of discussion ranged from local issues, like the April 4 elections, to the national issues facing Democrats. LTP Chair Laurie Schiller commented that this was exactly the kind of conversation Democrats need to have — to define our message and how to get it out.

Tenth Dems plans to continue to hold LTP events across the 10th District. If you are interested in helping host or organize a Let's Talk Politics in your community, please contact Tenth Dems at [info@tenthdems.org](mailto:info@tenthdems.org).



Above, Ellie Sylvan, Chair, West Deerfield Township Democratic Organization; bottom, Gundula Miethke, Tenth Dems leadership team.

Photography: Andrew Chusid



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