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Trump vs. the Constitution

By Dr. Laurence D. Schiller, Dean, Tenth Dems University



On Sunday afternoon, September 17, Tenth Dems University presented Trump vs. the Constitution, a lecture by Martin H. Redish, Louis and Harriet Ancel Professor of Law and Public Policy, Northwestern University School of Law. Hosted by Lake Forest College, the event, which aptly fell on Constitution Day, drew a near capacity crowd of more than 150. Constitution Day commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution 230 years ago, on September 17, 1787.

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Tenth News

September 2017 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 14, Edition 8

Tenth Dems Founding Chair Honored by Statewide Democrats

By Randi Kugler

Attending the annual Illinois Democratic County Chairmen's Association (IDCCA) brunch on Thursday, August 17, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield was truly a wonderful and exhilarating experience. This brunch is usually the year's largest gathering of Illinois Democrats; this year's crowd of more than 1800 set a new record. And the highlight for me was when our Founding Chair and former State Representative Lauren Beth Gash accepted the Party Builder Award. This annual award recognized Lauren's efforts to build Tenth Dems, Democratic township organizations, and other Democratic infrastructure that do grassroots politics, knock on doors, register voters, and get voters to the polls; the types of activities that help Democrats win on Election Day!

Accepting this prestigious honor, Lauren talked about Tenth Dems, and you can watch her give her speech [here](#). Lauren noted that Tenth Dems recruits, energizes,

and empowers volunteers who do the not-always-glamorous but highly consequential work of grassroots politics like organizing phone banks and canvasses, deploying an election protection team of attorneys to polling places, hosting expungement and sealing seminars, presenting knowledgeable speakers on a variety of political issues and also arranging informal discussions of



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Tenth Dems Founding Chair Honored by Statewide Democrats

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such issues, sponsoring training for deputy voter registrars, showcasing local high school student authors in an annual poetry and prose contest, and much, much more.

Along with the rest of the Tenth Dems team, I am so proud of Lauren, a leader who has helped build a solid Democratic infrastructure in a once-red part of Illinois and a person who inspires with her passion and skill.

In addition to Lauren, speakers at the brunch included Keynoter Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota; Illinois Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth; and several Illinois elected officials. All of the Democratic candidates for Governor of Illinois also attended the brunch.

I found the speeches to be inspiring and empowering as speaker after speaker reaffirmed our Democratic values. We are united and dedicated in working together to fight the good fight. All commented on President Trump's failure to provide moral leadership and several said they were sickened by his lack of integrity in not calling what happened in Charlottesville, Virginia, truly what it was—a rally of white nationalists and supremacists with intent to incite and cause havoc.

The Illinois Democratic County Chairs Association, a most important statewide organization for Democrats, was formed over 50 years ago to support the values of the Democratic Party through grassroots organizing at the local level. Their Democrats' To Do List consists of expanding healthcare, investing in public schools, protecting reproductive rights, ensuring a living wage, fighting for organized labor, guarding civil rights, and electing a Democratic Governor of Illinois.

I am so proud to call myself a Democrat! And I am especially proud to be a part of Tenth Dems!

Trump vs. the Constitution

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Professor Redish began with a list of what he termed six “methods of tyranny,” which he reviewed against the actions of President Donald Trump:

1. INTIMIDATION OF THE PRESS
2. INTIMIDATION OF THE JUDICIARY
3. CLOUDING THE TRUTH
4. PORTRAYING THE LEADER AS SAVIOR
5. APPROVAL OF AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS AND INTEREST GROUPS
6. SCAPEGOATING OF VULNERABLE MINORITIES

The professor then turned to the reasons why he is cautiously optimistic that our democracy will survive this presidency as he closely examined the U.S. Constitution's safeguards against tyranny.

As Professor Redish reminded the audience, our Constitution was constructed specifically to prevent the rise of tyranny. The founders understood that an executive is necessary for the practical implementation and enforcement of the laws that the legislature enacts and for overseeing the military, but they also recognized that the history of previous republics shows that the greatest threat of tyranny comes from that branch of government. So they devised a well thought-out governmental structure that would rein in the executive. In addition, they created federalism, our system of



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reserving some powers of government to the states.

With reference to *The Federalist Papers*, Professor Redish ticked off some of the specific characteristics of what he called the American Constitutional structure as tyranny avoidance:

First, unlike the British from whom America's founders had just successfully broken, the founders created a written constitution that could not be interpreted or neglected on the whim of King or Parliament.

Second, because they basically did not trust anyone not to seek absolute power, the founders created three co-equal and separate branches of government. Each branch would have defined functions that would act as a check on one another: Congress legislates and controls appropriations; the President executes and enforces the laws passed by Congress, spending the funds Congress appropriates. The President also manages foreign policy but only Congress can declare war. And the ultimate check on presidential power is the independent federal judiciary. Insulated from politics by lifetime tenure, federal judges can nullify laws or executive actions that violate the Constitution. As Chief Justice John Marshall wrote in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), the Constitution is a check on the political branches, without which there would be no stopping their accumulation of power. Ever.

Third, Article 5 of the Constitution allows for the amendment of the Constitution but only by means that require super majorities. This prevents tyranny by the simple majority. Neither the President, the Congress, the states, nor the people by themselves can change the Constitution and the protections it gives.

Fourth, protections for individuals are written into the first eight amendments to the Constitution, which, with the next two, we call the Bill of Rights. Unlike the British unwritten constitution, these rights are stipulated in black and white. And our independent judiciary protects these individual rights from the executive and legislative branches' excesses.

Fifth, while the states are subordinate to the federal government, they are yet autonomous in that they have rights that may not be overridden nor subsumed by the power of the federal government. This provides yet another check on the potential tyranny of the center of power. So, for example, the Trump Election Commission could not constitutionally control the process of elections because this power resides with the states. Still, the federal government, as it did in 1964 with the Voting Rights Act, may legislate to ensure that no state deprives anyone of the right to vote on the basis of race.

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Trump vs. the Constitution

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Professor Redish concluded his talk with more specific examples of Trumpian threats to these constitutional protections, including the Muslim ban and disrespect of the judiciary. For example, in Professor Redish's view the pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio threatens the power of the judiciary, because Arpaio's crime, that Trump's pardon excused, was to defy a court order that he cease engaging in specific unconstitutional activities. Professor Redish's *New York Times* op-ed on this topic can be accessed at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/opinion/trump-arpaio-pardon-arizona-sheriff.html?mcubz=0&r=0>



Professor Redish with several Tenth Dems officers and other members of the Leadership Committee.

Summer Interns Bring Talent, Energy, and Enthusiasm to Tenth Dems

By Orli Sheffey



Several of the 2017 summer interns with Jason Kander, former Missouri Secretary of State and founder of Let America Vote, following a dinner at which Kander was the Keynote Speaker.

This summer, nearly 20 energetic young Democrats joined Tenth Dems' 2017 intern class. As the 10th District is one of the most closely watched districts in the nation, our interns enjoy an exceptionally hands-on political experience at the grassroots level and can immerse themselves in the endless opportunities Tenth Dems has to offer. Tenth Dems' educational and fast-paced environment allows the interns to connect and familiarize themselves with the real climate of today's politics. By helping coordinate and staff events, analyzing political data, conducting research, and working closely with elected officials and candidates, interns learn the necessary skills to excel in a wide variety of fields. Specialized assignments allow the interns to personalize their experiences to cater to their career interests and ambitions.

Following their time at Tenth Dems, numerous former interns have pursued advanced degrees in politics-related fields and obtained major positions working for elected officials in both Springfield and Washington D.C., in the hopes of making positive change in people's lives. And some have gone on to hold elective office. As the 2017 interns engage in meaningful work to promote Democrats and Democratic values, the skills learned from this internship will allow them to leave a lasting impact on the world for future generations.

Meet some of the 2017 intern class! <https://tenthdems.org/category/updates/>

A Night of Social Justice Songs

By Kasia Kondracki

This has been a year of resisting and persisting for us all. A great deal of what is needed to be an activist and a change agent is to keep going, keep pushing yourself to give more and do more for the greater good. Many of us around the 10th Congressional District are resisting by supporting the local domestic violence shelter or homeless shelter, growing fresh produce for the local food bank, volunteering in an environmental rights campaign, collecting school supplies for a drive, rescuing animals from abuse, petitioning our government, even testifying before the EPA.

But another part of the giving is to never give up hope. And that's when self-care is needed. Sometimes, self-care comes in the form of taking a break to put on music that speaks to you and to sing and dance and be joyfully surrounded by others who, like you, are resisting and persisting.

On Saturday, August 5th, I pulled into the parking lot down a winding road in Gurnee lined with midwestern wildflowers. The glass entrance of the Lake County Federation of Teachers building framed a warmly lit room of people standing and clapping and dancing on a starry summer night singing Social Justice songs together.

“What are Social Justice Songs?” I had emailed back in confusion at the initial invitation. Well, Tenth Dems had created a playlist of songs—inspired by Bernie and Hillary delegates who came together during the 2016 convention to sing these kinds of songs--that express Democratic values and have resonated over the years. --“Give Peace a Chance” by John Lennon, “Every Praise” by Hezekiah Walker, “Lean on Me” by Bill Withers, songs about Rosa Parks, songs of the labor movement, folk songs from the early and mid-20th century--songs that have shaped our character as a country and which remind us all that we are in this together. Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, gospel, Peter, Paul, & Mary, Broadway—all reflecting Democratic values of inclusiveness and social justice.

The crowd was diverse in race, religious background, income level, physical abilities, age, and richness of vocal tone. When I walked in, three preschoolers were dancing with youthful abandon alongside women who had seen the feminist movement of the sixties. Some people were relaxing over pizza together, listening to a group of gospel singers, and reading the song lyrics projected onto a screen at the front of the room.



A Night of Social Justice Songs

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This was a night of solidarity, and I'm thankful to all those who organized it.

Tenth Dems is grateful to Andy Chusid, who organized this event, and to Olivia Love, a 2016 Bernie delegate, and Lauren Beth Gash, a 2016 Hillary delegate, who inspired it.

See photos from this event by Steve Rosenzweig at https://www.facebook.com/pg/TenthDems/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1539016309454518



Brad Schneider Kicks Off His 2018 Campaign

By Barbara Altman

On September 9, a sunny, late summer Saturday morning, some 140 enthusiastic 10th Congressional District voters gathered on the rooftop of The Warehouse Eatery in Deerfield to help Congressman Brad Schneider kick off his 2018 reelection campaign. The diverse crowd was united by the common belief that we're here to help one another and that government is a primary vehicle for accomplishing that goal.

Before the program began, Brad's supporters had the opportunity to socialize, enjoy a spread of bagels and cream cheese, and sign nominating petitions. Volunteers circulated petitions not only for Congressman Schneider, but also for State Senators Julie Morrison and Terry Link, whose districts are within the 10th Congressional District. Nominating petitions for statewide officials seeking reelection—Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza and Treasurer Mike Frerichs—also were circulated.

Opening speaker Toby Aronstam told a moving personal story that underscores the exceptional constituent services 10th District residents receive from Brad Schneider. A retired teacher, Ms. Aronstam recounted her recent diagnosis with a painful and debilitating medical condition for which her doctors prescribed a medication that she discovered was beyond her means to purchase. Ms. Aronstam then found an affordable source for her medication in Canada, only to be told by the Food and Drug Administration that importation of prescription drugs that are available in the United States is impermissible, regardless of the fact that the "available" medication was unaffordable. Brad's office came to the rescue; thanks to the Congressman's efforts, Ms. Aronstam now is able to obtain this medication at a price she can afford and to enjoy the quality of life her condition otherwise would preclude.

Brad began his remarks by acknowledging the losses of Houstonians affected by Hurricane Harvey and the dangers facing Floridians that very morning as Hurricane Irma came ashore. He decried the President's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord. Brad then turned to immigration and called for protection for Dreamers,



Brad Schneider Kicks Off His 2018 Campaign

citing his co-sponsorship of DREAM Act legislation both in 2013 and again today. Brad spoke up for healthcare for all Americans as a right, not a privilege. Acknowledging the orange-shirted union members present, Brad praised the labor movement for its historical role in securing conditions we now take for granted such as the 40-hour work week, paid vacations, and safe working conditions. Referencing the fight for a hike in the minimum wage, Brad expressed his conviction that no one who works full time should have to live in poverty.

All present enthusiastically applauded the Democratic values that Brad not only espouses, but also fights for in Congress. The Democrats and progressives of the 10th District are ready to do all we can to return Brad Schneider to Congress in 2018.



“Run For Office Yourself”

by Tom Recht

When President Obama gave his thoughtful farewell address last January, one crucial point he made was this: “If you’re disappointed by your elected officials, grab a clipboard, get some signatures, and run for office yourself.”

Tenth Dems is thoroughly behind our former President on this. We’re here to support progressive candidates at any level and help them succeed. The best grassroots election campaigns are conducted on many layers—legal, financial, organizational and more. Each of the layers has both best practices and gotchas and no candidate can be expected to figure them out on the fly.

That’s why Tenth Dems University (TDU) sponsors How to Run for Office forums given by experienced consultants and elected officials and open to progressives interested in being candidates. The first took place on September 9th at Cook Memorial Library in Libertyville. Fifty announced and potential progressive candidates came out for an overview of what it takes to run a successful campaign.

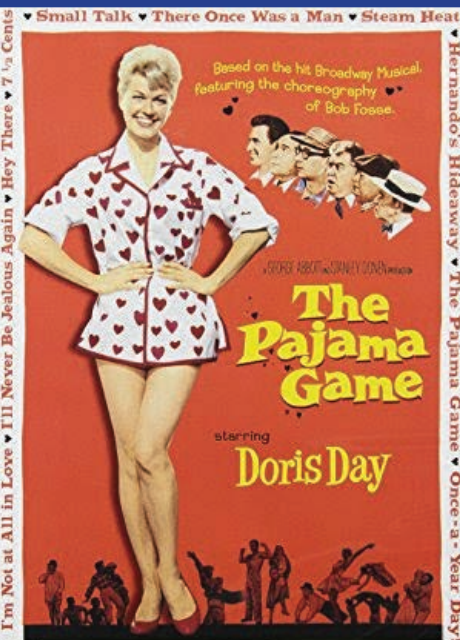
Zach Koutsy, who managed Mike Frerichs’ winning 2014 campaign for Illinois Treasurer and is now Legislative and Political Director for Local 881 United Food and Commercial Workers, spoke on a wide range of topics that he broke into two groups, one the importance of preparing to answer a single question, “Why are you running?” Ted Kennedy famously was unprepared to answer this question when he challenged Jimmy Carter for the 1980 Democratic nomination for President. Koutsy said that the “Kennedy question” requires a clear and purposeful answer. A candidate must first ask it of herself, and then be prepared to deliver it confidently and concisely when asked. Koutsy’s second group of topics, “Nuts and Bolts,” was just that: everything from campaign planning and organization to finance and voter contact.



Erin Cartwright Weinstein, Lake County Clerk of the Circuit Court, talked about her campaign for office last November. It was her first time running for public office, and she was running against the Republican incumbent. In the end, though few expected it, she won handily with nearly 54 percent of the vote. She talked about the importance of holding regular, focused campaign planning meetings with her team, which included several Tenth Dems leaders.

Ross D. Secler, Chair of the Election Law Committee of the Chicago Bar Association, and a member of the Tenth Dems Election Protection Team, spoke on the many legal aspects of running an election campaign in Illinois. Like Koutsky, he called his talk a “Nuts and Bolts” primer, yet the topics on which they spoke were quite different. As an election attorney, Secler’s expertise is in the complicated and often confusing details in state, county and municipality election laws. Although he shared useful general tips on such things as collecting signatures and filing nomination petitions, the point he stressed most strongly was that the legal requirements when running for office are too many, too varied and too important to try to figure out on one’s own. Even publications and forms distributed by governmental agencies are often out of date. Although it’s important to be aware of the various legal requirements, he advised, a candidate should seek legal advice ... and do it early!

How to Run for Office had been scheduled to run two hours. With the many questions and comments from attendees, presenters stayed to answer questions even after the program adjourned. The informal conversation continued until the library personnel, with apologies, had to close the room. All agreed that the session had been extremely worthwhile.



On Sunday, October 22, join Tenth Dems at the Highland Park Players’ production of *The Pajama Game*, winner of Tony Awards for Best Musical and, 50 years later, Best Musical Revival. Set in the 1950s, *The Pajama Game* depicts the battle between a pajama factory’s management and the employees and their union over a 7 1/2 cent raise. The subject is as relevant as ever in the current national debate over workers’ rights and wages. Classic Broadway songs include “Steam Heat,” “Hernando’s Hideaway,” and “Hey There, You with the Stars in Your Eyes.”

When: Sunday, October 22, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.

Where: Northbrook Theater, 3323 Walters Ave., Northbrook

In honor of next year’s election, ticket price is \$20.18, which less than the box office price. Host committee levels are also available. There will be a moderated “talk back” after the show with the director.

This will be a great time! To RSVP, click here, email events@tenthdems.org, or call (847) 266-VOTE (8683).