

Gov. Pritzker Is On the Job

By Amy Burke Shriberg

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our nation's governors to respond to a crisis the likes of which many of them, like us, hardly could have imagined ever having to confront. Thankfully for Illinois, 2018's Blue Wave placed JB Pritzker at our state's helm, and he has earned high marks thus far for the prompt and decisive action he's taking to ensure the safety and well-being of all of us in Illinois.

Pritzker, along with several other mainly Democratic governors, is modeling leadership for the nation. While we are deeply in the midst of this crisis and know not yet when it ends or how many will perish, governors like Pritzker are doing all they can to minimize both the loss of life and economic hardships. For instance, Illinois was one of the first states able to conduct testing, and on March 9th, Gov. Pritzker moved quickly to declare a state of emergency in Illinois, thereby opening up new funding lines and more assistance.



In the days since, he has issued numerous orders, including those requiring Illinoisans to stay home (except for essential purposes) and to practice social distancing. He also has made it easier for inactive health care workers to join the fight against the virus, halted evictions, mobilized National Guard members to help, and made unemployment benefits available to those residents unable to work because of the quarantine (for more information, go to the Illinois Coronavirus Response Site). With daily briefings in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Public Health, mayors,

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especially Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, medical experts, and others involved in responding to the pandemic, Pritzker continues to make good on his promise to fight the virus's spread using all means available to him. And yet, we know governors cannot fight this successfully on their own.

While we are, indeed, one nation, we are also 50 states, connected together by a Constitution that places a premium both on federal power and states' authority. Watching this crisis unfold is giving Americans a real-time lesson about how our government functions. Governors, mayors, and state health departments have taken the lead to handle the COVID crisis even though this is a global pandemic that will require a coordinated, consistent, and significant national response to overcome. In the age of Trump, that often means begging the federal government for help. As Talking Points Memo reported, "Facing an unprecedented public health crisis, governors are trying to get what they need from Washington, and fast. But often that means navigating the disorienting politics of dealing with Trump, an unpredictable president with a love for cable news and a penchant for retribution."

In a Twitter exchange that garnered national media attention, Gov. Pritzker confronted President Trump's inept and irresponsible response to COVID-19. The two exchanged tweets after the governor criticized Trump for causing overwhelming crowds at O'Hare International Airport soon after he announced that travel to and from most European countries would soon be banned. Trump did this without any planning and without even increasing the number of Transportation Security Administration agents on hand to deal with the surging crowds. Travelers were stuck for hours at O'Hare and other airports, creating a veritable breeding ground for the virus to spread. Trump tweeted back at Gov. Pritzker and others critical of his performance: "@JBPritzker, Governor of Illinois, and a very small group of certain other Governors, together with Fake News @CNN & Comcast (MSDNC), shouldn't

be blaming the Federal Government for their own shortcomings," Trump said on Twitter.

In a series of tweets, Gov. Pritzker pointed out that Trump has "wasted precious months when you could've taken action to protect Americans & Illinoisans. You should be leading a national response instead of throwing tantrums from the back seat. Where were the tests when we needed them? Where's the PPE [personal protective equipment]? Get off Twitter & do your job." Highlighting the chaos endemic to Trump's response, Pritzker also described the competition between states for resources as the "Wild West." And he's not exaggerating. States have had to bid against each other, and at times, against FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency), often paying outrageous prices for life-saving supplies.

Pritzker's not alone in his dealings with the president. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has been pleading via the media with Trump for additional resources to battle the virus. In a Fox News interview, Trump said he doesn't "know if she knows what's going on" but "all she does is sit there and blame the federal government." And New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has confronted Trump on a near daily basis as his state and region became a COVID global hotspot while the president tweeted.

What's going on here? Why is the U.S. response to COVID so chaotic? The answer is complicated. Tension between states and the federal government has been a hallmark feature of our government since its creation. In our federal system, states and localities share power with the national government. However, significant discretion and power is left to the states, especially regarding police powers and regulating public health and safety. The Tenth Amendment, after all, declares that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to

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the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Our system makes national coordination challenging in the best of times---and these are not such times.

What does this mean in practice? Well, for starters, nationwide decisions that many countries can make quickly are decided piecemeal by our states. For example, while French President Emmanuel Macron closed all of France’s schools in one fell swoop, school closures happened here incrementally, first by districts within states, and then statewide, as many governors finally decided to close all their state’s schools. This dynamic really shapes just about all we do as a nation. However, its limitations are most glaring in times of crisis. Even shelter-in-place orders, so essential to flattening the curve so as not to overwhelm our healthcare systems, are being issued state-by-state (sometimes even by cities and towns), which is why we are living in the midst of a confusing, inconsistent, and potentially divisive response to COVID-19.

Since Election Day 2016, we have been keenly aware of all that divides us, but it’s important to remember that our divisions aren’t all new. In many ways, we have been more divided than united from our founding moment onward. After all, we first came together as parts to forge a whole, and arguably, we’ve been coming apart at the seams ever since. Indeed, figuring out how best to stitch together the seams between the colonies (and later between the states) tested the mettle of our founders, and keeping those seams from unraveling has remained our enduring national challenge. Whether the Constitution created a strong national government meant to be the predominant force in American government or whether it created a limited national government meant to defer to the states has been up for debate ever since its ratification in 1787.

What fomented such early disagreements? From

a contemporary perspective, we think of colonial America as homogeneous--overwhelmingly white (except for about 500,000 slaves), European, and Christian. In reality, their differences were far greater than we realize. Roughly 1,000 miles separated the northern colonies of Massachusetts and New Hampshire from Georgia at a time when the only travel options were by foot, horse or boat. There were no trains, planes or automobiles to bridge the gap that separated the Southern and Northern colonies. As a result, life in this era was overwhelmingly local with few people traveling too far outside their hometowns and with few opportunities to learn about life elsewhere because communication was limited to the printed page or town criers.

In addition, economic, religious, and cultural differences abounded within the northern, middle and southern colonies. Denominational differences between, for example, the Catholics of Pennsylvania and the Puritans of Massachusetts loomed nearly as large then as the differences between Islam and Christianity appear today. Over time, New England focused on shipbuilding, the middle colonies developed communities of craftsmen, merchants and farmers, while the southern colonies remained more rural. Slavery took root early on in the southern and middle colonies. From the Dutch in New York to the convicts sent to settle Georgia, there has always been more at work to divide than unite us as a people than we realize. In spite of these challenges, we came together to defeat the British and stayed together to survive.

Why does this matter now and how does it relate to the COVID crisis? For starters, understanding our history can help us remain hopeful about the future because, it seems to me, that we are mired, once again, in a contemporary reiteration of this age-old rift between the forces of localism and continentalism that has partly consumed us since our founding.

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How then to bring together the states to confront COVID together? During the Trump presidency, we live in an era where our differences are being played up and preyed upon by a toxic brew of nationalism and xenophobia, coupled with staggering income inequality and a broken health care system. Sadly, COVID-19 has played into Trump's us against them mentality as it has spread first in Blue States, and most especially in major metropolitan areas. One has to wonder if his response would have differed had Red States been hit by the pandemic first. Watching governors compete for medical supplies, personal protective equipment, and funds from Congress highlights the division baked into our foundation, and Trump aggravates those fissures, intentionally stomping on our weak points and pitting states against each other. All of which leaves critically ill Americans competing for ventilators.

Lincoln, Wilson, and FDR brought our nation together during grave crises, using their authority to tame federalism's Wild West. They knew it is the Federal Government's responsibility to act on behalf of all the states and all Americans. Trump neither understands how our system works nor cares. He intentionally stokes fears with nationalist rhetoric that makes it okay for so many to focus on our differences rather than on our common humanity. Nationalism is, after all, a nasty and divisive brew.

We need, instead, a period of renewed patriotism, as many Democrats have called for, to bring us together as a people and to remind us that being American means caring about the well-being of all Americans, not just those near to us or those who look like us. We need to learn again the lessons of nationhood, namely that my success depends upon yours, and yours upon mine, and that we are all in this together. During this viral pandemic, the stakes are even higher; my life may depend on your willingness to stay home just as yours likely depends upon mine.

The beauty of federalism is that it allowed the founders to stitch together a nation out of disparate parts. We were colonies before we became a league

of states, and states before we became a nation. The imprint of that division remains with us. It is written into our cultural DNA and formalized in the Constitution. We are in desperate need of leaders who call us to our better angels rather than those who prey upon our deepest weaknesses. In other words, our seams are frayed, and we need leaders, like Gov. Pritzker, dedicated to repairing them rather than pulling them, and us, further apart. Displaying that sensibility, Pritzker said recently, "Mr. President, this isn't about you, it's about the health of the American people. Stop making everything personal. You are the president of all 50 states — not just the ones that voted for you or that have governors who 'treat you right.' It's time you acted like it."

A Large Crowd Turned Out for Voter Contact Training in February

The voter contact training occurred before stay-at-home and social distancing was being recommended in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to maintaining public health and evolving where necessary in this new era of campaigning.

Despite the unseasonably warm, sunny, February Sunday afternoon that offered countless activities, more than 100 people, including Democratic township chairs, precinct committeepeople, and first-time volunteers, attended a training event for effective voter contact at the Sullivan Center in Vernon Hills on February 23. (See some great photos below!) The training was sponsored by Lake Dems, Tenth Dems, Sixth Dems, Fremont Dems, Vernon Dems, and Libertyville Dems.

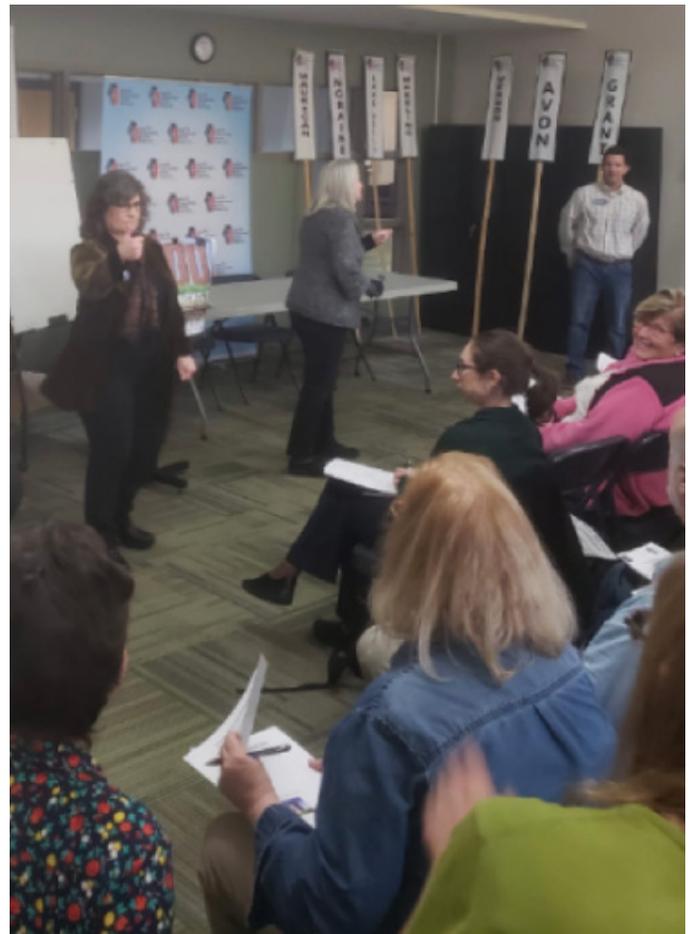


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The training focused on best practices in effective voter contact, door knocking, and persuasion. Lake County Dems Vice-Chairs Lauren Beth Gash (who is Tenth Dems Founding Chair) and Nancy Shepherdson led the presentation. It included tips from State Representative Dan Didech, which were helpful for new and experienced volunteers alike. There also were improvisational door-knocking scenarios led by Tenth Dems Co-Chair Eric Herman to show members of the audience what they might encounter and how to navigate those situations.

Marcia Stanton, Lake County Volunteer Coordinator for Congresswoman Lauren Underwood's campaign, highlighted the significance of the event by recounting how important direct voter contact was to Lauren Underwood's victory over an incumbent Republican congressman in 2018.

This sort of voter contact training is crucial because talking to voters face-to-face remains the single most effective way to persuade voters to support candidates. As Democrats, in this critical election, we have to reach people and connect with them so we can defeat Donald Trump and the Republicans up and down the ballot in 2020.



In Memoriam: Dan Pierce

By Lauren Beth Gash, Tenth Dems Founding
Chair and Vice Chair, Lake County Democrats

It's with a heavy heart that I write about the passing of my dear friend and deeply valued member of the Tenth Dems family, Dan Pierce. Dan was truly an exemplary citizen and public servant. He served 20 years in the state legislature and three terms as Highland Park Mayor. Until his death, Dan served on the North Shore Water Reclamation District, most recently as its president. His community service in so many areas was amazing.

Dan was a mentor to me (and to so many). Writing about this is hard for me. Dan literally drove me to my first Lake County Democrats meeting in the late 1980s. He got me to become deeply involved in working to grow the Democratic infrastructure in Lake County. We worked in those days through Democrats of Southeast Lake County, and then what's now called Moraine Township Democrats (before the 1998 legal name change, Moraine Township was actually called Deerfield Township).

We were a great team. We worked closely over the years on many dozens of campaigns (including his and mine), and he was a great mentor and advisor. Dan spoke at almost every major Tenth Dems event. Dan was brilliant. Not only was he a great conversationalist, he had an incredibly sharp wit and learning. He was just so much fun to be around. For the many decades I knew him, he lit up the room with his stories,

jokes, and kindness. I will miss laughing with him, getting his advice, and organizing with him. It's an intense loss for me, for our Democratic community, and for the world.

A graduate of Harvard Law School, Dan made enormous contributions to the world, whether through legislation, the Sister Cities Foundation, American Legion, Rotary Club, and so much more. His legacy of commitment to making our world a better place was strong. Thank you, Dan! We are grateful for your work and accomplishments.

Our thoughts, as a community in mourning, are with Dan's wife of 39 years, Rhoda, an active Moraine Township Democratic precinct committeeperson, his sons Andrew, Anthony, and Theodore, his stepsons Eric and Peter, his many grandchildren, and all those who loved him.

A memorial service celebrating his life has been postponed and will be rescheduled once larger gatherings are permitted again. Donations in memory of Dan can be made to two charities, The Highland Park Community Foundation and The Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood.



Thomas Maillard Named 10th District Democratic State Central Committeeman— Replaces Hon. Daniel Pierce

Thomas Maillard was named 10th District Democratic State Central Committeeman by a committee of local party officials. Maillard, a resident of Mundelein, is Director of Government Operations for the City of Waukegan. He is also the National Committeeman for the Young Democrats of Illinois, serving as the national representative of Illinois Democrats under the age of 36 to the Young Democrats of America. He also recently co-founded the Lake County chapter of Young Democrats of Illinois.



Maillard has worked on a variety of national, state and local campaigns as a campaign manager, field director, fundraiser, senior advisor, voter registration coordinator, data analyst, communications director, door-knocker, and phone-banker. He has been an active Tenth Dems volunteer and served as Tenth Dems' political director in 2015. Maillard can often be found around the district helping with candidates and events.

On the State Central Committee, Maillard will replace Hon. Daniel Pierce, President of the North

Shore Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, former state representative and mayor of Highland Park, who passed away in February. He will join 10th District Democratic State Central Committeewoman Lauren Beth Gash on the leadership committee of the Democratic Party of Illinois. He will help fill vacancies in candidacies for statewide office and other organizing duties in the 10th Congressional District.

“We must first and foremost recognize the late Honorable Dan Pierce and the sad news of his passing,” said Maillard after his appointment. “As I offer my deepest condolences to his family, I am humbled by the shadow of his accomplishments and I am honored to follow his decades of leadership. I am grateful to represent my family and neighbors here in the 10th Congressional District in my new role as State Central Committeeman.”

“With the Illinois primary now past, we must unite and prepare for the fall election, where we will elect a Democratic President to restore honor and leadership to the White House, reelect Senator Dick Durbin and Congressman Brad Schneider, pass the Fair Tax to help bring equity to the broken Illinois tax system, and grow upon the many Democratic gains here in Lake and northern Cook County.”

Terry Link, Chair of the Lake County Democrats, said, “I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished in Lake County, turning it from deep red to blue over the past several decades. I’ve worked with Thomas

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for many years now, and I know how hard he'll work to keep and build on our gains."

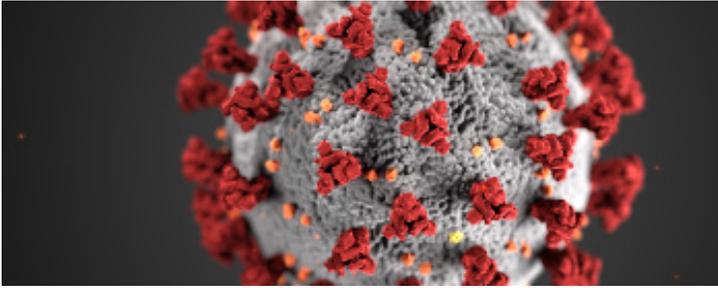
The Democratic State Central Committee is made up of 36 committeepeople – a Committeewoman and a Committeeman from each congressional district. Lauren Beth Gash, the 10th District State Central Committeewoman, welcomed Maillard to the post. "We've been working to build the Democratic infrastructure in the 10th Congressional District at the county, township and precinct level. That's critical to retaining our Democratic officeholders and winning elections. Thomas Maillard shares our Democratic values and has already made significant contributions toward our successes. I'm so glad that he will be joining us in his new role."

The 10th Congressional District covers most of Lake County and parts of northern Cook County.



Failure in the White House: Trump and His COVID-19 Response

By Dr. Laurence D. Schiller



I think there is nothing in the political world that irritates me more than hearing a voter say, “My vote doesn’t matter because both parties and all politicians are the same.” Perhaps the second most irritating thing is politicians who continue to lie outright to the public when the facts not only contradict them but are literally staring them in the face. Tim Schneider, for example, chairman of the Illinois GOP, in an email on March 23rd, praised “the Trump Administration’s steadfast leadership and transparent, whole-of-government approach to mitigate the spread of coronavirus,” continuing that Trump’s response was “unprecedented, comprehensive, and aggressive.” After picking my chin up off the floor at that bold-faced lie, my response is “really?” In what alternate reality is this administration’s response anything but chaotic? I doubt Schneider would have an answer to such a direct fact-based question. In fact, it is precisely Trump’s incompetent and dangerous “response” to the pandemic that can clearly answer the voter’s statement above. A precise recitation of the facts surrounding Trump and his party’s clear failure to act in a decisive and timely way during this COVID-19 crisis as opposed to the fine work of Democratic leaders all over the country, such as Governors Inslee (Washington), Pritzker (Illinois), and Cuomo (New York), would show the enormous difference between the party of the 1% and our party, which works for the benefit of all Americans.

As I write this in late March, the pandemic in the U.S. is spiraling out of control and overwhelming our hospital and emergency care facilities. Worse, since we are so far behind in testing, the actual number of cases is most likely 2 or 3 times higher than what we are being told. Trump, of course, did not cause this virus but his abject failure as a leader was illuminated clearly the moment he was warned by experts that the COVID-19 virus could become severe very quickly, and he chose to ignore them. Instead of decisively responding to the impending crisis, he told Americans that not only was there nothing to worry about (there are just 5 cases and next week we will have zero!!) but, unbelievably, he called it fake news and a “Democratic Media Hoax.” We already know how he has hollowed out the government of experts on anything – because, as he tells us, he is smarter than everyone else, so he doesn’t need them. So it should not surprise any of us that the cold reality is that he wasted 6 weeks of precious time in denial when the government could have been preparing for this emergency. People have died as a result. He should have invoked the Defense Production Act in January and started producing ventilators, protective equipment, and testing kits, all of which we are now desperately short, but he didn’t. By mid-January we already knew what the nature of this disease was, but Trump kept telling us that it was all under control. So, people traveled to Mardi Gras and spring break, and now it is spreading all over the country because the people at the top refused to acknowledge the severity of the situation. Now, he claims he knew it was going to be a pandemic all along. Since the time in mid-March when he was finally forced to acknowledge the reality of the outbreak, Trump has continued to appear to give wrong, unscientific, and outright dangerous advice during press conferences and on Twitter, which has to be corrected by Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and others. And, if that were not bad enough, petty and mean as Trump always is, he attacks anyone who dares criticize his

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lack of action, such as a number of Democratic governors who are just trying to do their job.

Moreover, Trump still refuses to have the federal government step up because he has been told that “this would be socialism.” Truly, Trump’s response reminds me of Herbert Hoover, who, when confronted by the Depression, was philosophically opposed to using the government to help because that was the party line of the GOP. As a result, the Depression was much worse by 1932 than it might have been had Hoover not spent three years refusing to mobilize the government to help Americans. The GOP has not changed much since that time. Remember how bad Moscow Mitch McConnell’s original stimulus bill was for average Americans, favoring big bailouts for corporations and little for working folks. Several GOP senators even tried to strip unemployment payments that might exceed what poorly paid workers earned before losing their jobs because, obviously, all poor people (read people of color) are lazy and four months of overpayment would encourage them not to go back to work. We’ve all heard that song before. What we need now is Franklin D. Roosevelt, not Hoover.

Unfortunately, rather than the decisive leader we need, we have a ditherer as president who changes his mind more often than he changes his socks. One day he criticizes Governor Cuomo for demanding 30,000 ventilators, the next he orders General Motors to start making them. What we need is for the Federal government to acknowledge that we are in a real crisis and act to counter it. Not only do we need medical supplies to be manufactured, but we need testing kits so that we can figure out who has the disease and counter it with strict measures. The Federal government needs to take control instead of having 50 states and the Federal government all competing with each other for supplies and applying different standards to control the outbreak. Mobilize the military immediately. Deploy all their medical personnel and supplies to the areas that need it the most. Put the Seabees and engineers to work building hospital bed space. Help the National Guard where necessary.

Mobilize the Federal Emergency Management Agency to do its job and distribute federal stocks of masks and other necessary goods to the states and cities. And most importantly, use the state of emergency to coordinate a national stay-at-home policy, instead of having some states doing it and others not. This must be a coordinated effort or it will not work. These actions need to be instituted NOW. Delays cost lives. We can do this. Did you know that less than two weeks after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, automakers were already retooling to make tanks? They were still cutting open the Oklahoma looking for survivors, and we were mobilizing. Trump has the power to put these policies into place, but so far, he has refused to use his power in any coordinated way because he is weak and afraid to make a real decision unless it benefits him in some fashion. He doesn’t want to have something go wrong and be criticized for it because he can’t stand that. Weak, as I said, and no leader in any sense. The free market cannot get this done in a crisis such as this, and we have no chance to return to a normal economy if major hospitals are overflowing and people are afraid to go back to work.

So, my answer to the person who thinks that both parties are the same? Look at what Trump has done versus what he could be doing. Look at what Democratic governors are doing and imagine how much better things would be if the power of the federal government were mobilized. Democrats believe in government to solve things; Republicans still cling to the anti-government philosophy of Ronald Reagan and Herbert Hoover, and look where we are. The ultimate solution, of course, is to vote out the party that can’t and replace it with the party that can: Democrats!



A High School Senior Runs to be a Delegate

By Victor Shi

There is no doubt that 2020 is the most critical election of our lifetime. We have a president who took the United States to the brink of war with Iran. We have a president who can't properly manage a public health crisis. And worst of all, we have a president who might get reelected, unless high school and college students engage in the political process. Facing the frightening possibility of Donald Trump getting reelected motivated me, even though I'm still in high school, to immerse myself in the 2020 Democratic race.

With rallies, town halls, community-wide events, and debates taking place daily during the early stages of the 2020 Democratic presidential primary campaign, Americans witnessed candidates vigorously make an effort to attract as many supporters as possible. Through my work for Congressman Brad Schneider, I knew that the perspective and activism of high school and college students were paramount to affecting positive change.

Luckily with the presence of the 2020 Democratic race and my work as a fellow for Joe Biden, I quickly learned that a nominee must win a majority of their party's delegates in order to officially become the party's nominee—and many of these delegates are recognized elected officials and esteemed party leaders. But then, after attending an Illinois Democratic Party information session in September, I discovered that many convention delegates are simply energetic supporters without fancy titles, and even included some teenagers. As a 17-year-old who will turn 18 by Election Day, I immediately launched the process to become a delegate for Vice President Joe Biden.

From the information session, I understood the difficulty and tedious nature of becoming a delegate for a presidential candidate. It starts with



making contact with your preferred campaign and demonstrating a strong interest in supporting that candidate. Just to qualify as a prospective delegate, I gathered petition signatures for Joe Biden for President and met with Biden campaign officials from Illinois to talk about how my values and aspirations aligned with Vice President Biden's vision for America.

Weeks later, in December, I received the incredible news from Sheila Nix, the Illinois State Chair for Biden's campaign, that the campaign had approved me as one of five Biden delegates in the 10th Congressional District.

I was ecstatic because, for me, it affirmed that the Biden campaign was acknowledging the voice of youth and the energy and vision we can bring to politics in this country. But I knew their decision also came with a commitment to work to support the campaign and a need for my team of delegates to secure at least 500 signatures on petitions to get our names officially listed on the March 17 Primary Election ballot.

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To help with my part of this commitment, I began collecting and distributing nominating petitions for possible candidates. I recruited some of my classmates at Stevenson High School to help me collect signatures from students, family members, and neighbors who were registered voters. Using the simple skills from canvassing and phone banking, my classmates and I gathered more than 200 signatures from 10th District voters in the biting December weather at many locations, including train stations, neighborhoods, outside grocery stores, and even inside malls.

Days after presidential campaigns in Illinois officially filed delegate petitions, the Illinois State Board of Elections officially listed my name on the ballot. With a fight born out of a hope for a better future, I interacted with voters and attended community events such as Tenth Dems' Mock Straw Poll and Caucus at Stevenson High School. Several campaigns were represented and had an opportunity to speak to the participants before voting occurred. I stood in front of the audience and made the case for Joe Biden, which is something not everyone has a chance to do. Not only did I rally support for Joe Biden at various events, but I also campaigned for myself as a high school delegate.

Now, soon after the Illinois Primary, if the results from March 17 are certified, I will be able to attend the 2020 Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee as an official party delegate and proudly cast a nominating vote from the convention floor. While the process of becoming a delegate has been time-consuming and work-intensive during my senior year of high school, I have learned to be a more effective advocate for Vice President Biden and the importance of listening, speaking, and resilience.

With months until the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Convention in Milwaukee, I can't predict the results, but I can personally testify to the value of the youth voice in the political arena. And I urge all youth in the 10th Congressional District and across the United States to get involved in the political process—regardless of whether you

are a delegate or simply by encouraging your friends to vote. It is crucial that youth have a voice and that we participate actively in the national conversation in 2020.

Schneider Urges Creation of “Supply Chain Czar” to Oversee Federal Response Medical Equipment Shortages Caused by COVID-19

Recently, Illinois 10th District Congressman Brad Schneider urged the creation of a singular emergency COVID-19 medical supply chain authority, or “supply chain czar,” to oversee and coordinate federal efforts surrounding the production, acquisition, and national distribution of medical equipment in response to the coronavirus epidemic.



In a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Energy & Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone, Schneider requested they include language creating this position in any future congressional legislation addressing the crisis.

In the letter, Schneider highlighted the lack of critical equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators in Illinois and across the country.

Schneider writes that the scarcity and lack of central coordinating authority have created a desperate situation where states “compete with each other to meet demand thus driving up prices, as well as subjecting hospitals to price-gouging tactics from suppliers looking to profit off the pandemic. Manufacturers are similarly left to decide between competing orders with minimal direction, possible fraudulent orders, and limited ability to increase production.”

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“I urge you to immediately remedy this situation by legislating a “supply chain czar” with statutory authority to oversee the manufacturing and distribution of ventilators, PPE, and other critical supplies,” writes Schneider.

Full letter text:

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Pallone,

I want to thank you for your ongoing efforts to stem the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), ensure testing and care for our most vulnerable citizens, and provide economic relief to businesses crippled by the outbreak. As you consider legislative priorities in any upcoming stimulus packages to address the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge you to include the creation of a singular emergency COVID-19 medical supply chain authority (i.e., “supply chain czar”). This authority should establish centralized responsibility to direct and oversee both the production or acquisition and national distribution of medical equipment critical to COVID-19 response.

Our hospitals and providers continue to suffer from a lack of critical equipment, namely ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPE), resulting in substandard care, unsafe work conditions, and increasingly critical staffing shortages. A scarcity of supplies has left states to compete with each other to meet demand thus driving up prices, as well as subjecting hospitals to price-gouging tactics from suppliers looking to profit off the pandemic. Manufacturers are similarly left to decide between competing orders with minimal direction, possible fraudulent orders, and limited ability to increase production.

I urge you to immediately remedy this situation by legislating a “supply chain czar” with statutory authority to oversee the manufacturing and distribution of ventilators, PPE, and other critical supplies. Such authorities could include, but are not limited to the ability to:

Survey states and hospitals to determine need of

critical supplies;

Monitor the ongoing production and capacity of supplies;

Mandate production under the Defense Production Act (DPA) of both components and finished product of supplies;

Become the central purchaser of all critical supplies on behalf of states and the federal government;

Distribute supplies based on need at the discretion of the czar;

Report supply gaps and daily progress made in closing the gaps.

Thank you again for your rapid response to this ongoing pandemic. I appreciate your timely and close consideration of this urgent matter.

Tenth Dems Volunteer of the Month: Colleen Jenn

By Mark DeBofsky



Colleen Jenn has lived in the Tenth District for 20 years. She became active with Tenth Dems after canvassing for Congressman Brad Schneider in 2016 and making over 500 calls a week for Governor Pritzker’s campaign in 2018.

More recently, Colleen attended an event held at Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering’s home in August 2019, where she assisted in welcoming attendees and signing up volunteers. Doing so moved her to become a more active volunteer for Tenth Dems, and she has helped out regularly since then.

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Colleen has embraced Tenth Dems' belief that Democrats should work at a grassroots level throughout our area; as a new Precinct Committeeperson in Moraine Township, Colleen embodies that effort. She not only takes her duties seriously, she is always ready to volunteer for more work. Before the March primary, Colleen not only took care of her own precinct, she also walked door-to-door with reluctant newcomers until they felt comfortable walking on their own; bundled candidate literature for other canvassers; made phone calls and organized phone banks. No volunteer task is too big or small for Colleen, and when the question, "Who is willing to . . .?" is posed to a group of Tenth Dems volunteers, her hand almost always shoots up. Whether she's organizing buttons in the office or bringing supplies to an event, Colleen is ready to help get the job done.

Like many, Colleen was spurred into action by Donald Trump's 2016 election; she knew she had to be "part of the solution" rather than "part of the problem." She refused to "be complacent and will not be complicit in the current political climate."

As a retiree and having the time available to share with Tenth Dems, Colleen enjoys the organization's teamwork. She remains motivated by the friends she's met through Tenth Dems along with her "disdain for Donald Trump." She said her motto is "Together always and this [Donald Trump] too shall pass."

Colleen said she appreciates the help and support she's received from other volunteers, along with the camaraderie and friendship she has formed with Lauren Beth Gash, Eric Herman, Paula DeBofsky, Barbara Altman and others and says that everyone she has met through Tenth Dems "makes her feel good about who she is and what she is."

Her goal for the upcoming election is to support democracy and elect more Democrats – locally and nationally. Colleen is willing to work for whomever needs help – where the greatest need is, that's where she'll go. Colleen has been a staunch supporter of likely nominee Joe Biden since May 2019. Overall,

Colleen wants the 2020 election to turn the negativity of Hillary Clinton's loss in 2016 into a positive outcome in 2020.



Spotlight on State Rep. Bob Morgan

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Illinois has taken several steps to mitigate the spread of this disease. Governor Pritzker, in conjunction with the scientists at the Illinois Department of Public Health, has enacted several executive orders to encourage people to adopt social distancing practices, to help protect our health care workers from the disease spread, and to provide economic support to people and businesses who are being hurt by the ongoing disease spread.



In March, Rep. Bob Morgan (D-Deerfield) held a Facebook Live event to go over the most recent developments at the state level, including discussing the Governor's shelter-in-place rules, the latest on our health care system's preparation for new COVID-19 cases, and how we will know that our efforts to stop the spread are working. Additionally, Rep. Morgan discussed several new resources available online, including the new Illinois state coronavirus website, coronavirus.illinois.gov. Finally, Rep. Morgan addressed potential aid that is available for those

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economically affected by COVID-19, including the expansion of unemployment benefits, the availability for Federal Small Business Disaster Loans, and upcoming tax relief efforts.

Rep. Morgan will also communicate with constituents about small businesses and unemployment relief programs that are new or changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone is welcome to join and ask a question either during a Facebook Live session, or in advance via email at info@repbobmorgan.com with “Facebook Live” in the subject line. Rep. Morgan can be found online at www.repbobmorgan.com, on Facebook at [facebook.com/repbobmorgan](https://www.facebook.com/repbobmorgan) and on Twitter @RepBobMorgan.

It's Wild Out There

By Hon. Debra Shore, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner



Disclaimer: Before heading out, please check to find out which trails and parks are open, although many of us can encounter nature simply by walking in our neighborhoods.

First, you hear the sound – guttural, otherworldly, ancient. Not a caw or a cluck. What is it? Then, gazing up – oh, oh, there! High overhead, graceful, legs trailing. Sandhill cranes. Circling once over the meadow, then flying on, migrating from their winter homes to summer places in the north. It is spring.

As attenuated as our lives have become, I write to you today with an invitation and a plea: Get outside!

It's going to be sunny and warmer in days to come. Let's plan a field trip to get some fresh air, to stretch our legs and find some reprieve from electronics and wired connectedness. We are directed to stay at home, yet isn't our home Planet Earth? Isn't it also the habitats we share with so many other animals and plants? In these times of stress and close quarters, what better way to seek solace and delight than in exploring nature close to home.

Here's something you may not know: the crescent of protected natural areas stretching from southeastern Wisconsin through the Indiana Dunes harbors the greatest concentration of threatened and endangered plant and animal species in the Midwest. As you travel west and south from Chicago, you enter corn and soybean land: essential for our sustenance, sure, but depauperate of biological diversity. Remarkably, it's the metropolitan area—not the surrounding farmland—that harbors the world's best remaining assemblage of our true and original Midwest “wilderness”: the tallgrass prairies and oak woodlands, the savannas and marshes.

In the mid-1990s, the leading conservation scientists, advocates and volunteers in the Chicago region, seeking to do more to protect and restore biological diversity here, established a regional alliance of public and private groups to work together toward that goal. They called themselves – and the nature they sought to protect – Chicago Wilderness.

The alliance has grown to more than 200 member organizations and the natural areas cover more than 545,000 acres in portions of four states. (The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District has been a member of Chicago Wilderness since its early days. Some of the MWRD's land, such as Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve, now owned by the Forest Preserve District of Will County, is home to federally endangered species, such as the Hine's emerald dragonfly, leafy prairie clover, and lakeside daisy.)

For almost 10 years, from 1997 until January 2007, I edited a quarterly magazine that emerged from the alliance called Chicago WILDERNESS. Each issue

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contains a center section called “Into the Wild” that serves as a guide to different natural areas throughout the greater Chicago metro area with maps, suggestions of things to do and see, and what to look for in each season. Some of the information is undoubtedly outdated and you should certainly check to see if some parks are closed temporarily, but these places still await your visit, still harbor marvelous communities of plants and animals, and remain nature’s discovery zones for your wonder and pleasure. (Public health advisory: please check yourselves for ticks after your visit. Some species like to stick with us!)

Why am I urging you to get out? In a recent op-ed titled “The Beautiful World Besides the Broken One,” Margaret Renkl wrote,

“Here is the alternate world we need right now, one that exists far beyond the impulse to scroll and scroll. The bluebird bringing pine straw to the nest box she has chosen in a sunny spot of the yard, like the chickadee bringing moss to the nest box under the trees, is doing her work with the urgency of the ages. She has no care for me at all. Even her watchful mate ignores me as I pull weeds in the flower bed beside our driveway.

“The natural world’s perfect indifference has always been the best cure for my own anxieties. Every living thing — every bird and mammal and reptile and amphibian, every tree and shrub and flower and moss — is pursuing its own urgent purpose, a purpose that sets my own worries in a larger context.”

This is your assignment, then: Find an open meadow at the edge of a wooded area in some of our forest preserves. Go at dusk, dress warmly, and wait. Disregard the chorus frogs’ insistent calls. You are listening for the raspy peent ... peent ... peent of the American woodcock. Males will ascend high into the sky, then fall precipitously in a dramatic whirring mating flight. Wait for it! Again it comes... peent ... peent ... peent.

Nature presses on, with urgency, vibrancy, and hope for a new generation. Dear readers, so shall we.

What is it Like to be on the Front Lines of Coronavirus?

By Mark Rosenberg, MD

While most of us have been isolating ourselves at home, among the real heroes of this pandemic are the many health professionals who put themselves in harm’s way to care for those who are sick. We cannot thank them enough for being there for us. To work in an intensive care unit or emergency department is difficult enough with its fast pace and quick decision-making, a career that requires a very strong and resilient constitution. When you add to that the very real threat of a potentially life-threatening infection to both the caregiver and his/her family, that creates a whole new challenge. And that is a challenge now faced by all who work in hospitals as well as first responders.

Among the challenges that the health community faces is the unknown. None of us confronts this pandemic with any degree of certainty, from the infectious disease specialist to the epidemiologist, and certainly not the policy makers guiding decision-making. This is a situation of known unknowns. Known because we now have a picture of the coronavirus and its cellular makeup. Unknown because, despite the apparent waning of the epidemic in China, we have little idea of what the next few months may bring, both here and throughout the world.

While apparently a coronavirus infection results in some level of immunity, we do not yet know whether that immunity protects from future infections or whether the antibodies produced by our own immune system may be used to develop a vaccine or drugs that may fight future infections. All of which makes planning for the future challenging at best. We simply don’t yet know when people can safely resume social interaction or when travel will be safe again. That makes it difficult to run a business, much less an economy.

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In the face of such uncertainty, we would all be wise to turn to trusted sources, ones that we have relied on in the past for the answers and reassurance that we deserve. And buckle up—this will likely be a long ride until life returns to some degree of normalcy. Keep in mind, your health and the health of your family depend on you AND everyone else doing the right thing. Your risk rises with exposure and decreases with isolation.

The proof is in the real-life experiments that we have witnessed. On a cruise ship, a floating coronavirus incubator, the virus spreads rapidly. In places such as Taiwan and Singapore, strict isolation kept infection rates low. The best outcome is nothing happening; that happens when people stay home. You do not want to be on the front lines of this pandemic.



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