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# More Doublespeak from Congressman Bob Dold

Last month this column highlighted a series of mailers containing dubious, if not outright false, statements about Republican Congressman Robert Dold’s support for senior citizens, particularly with respect to Medicare. We showed that while the conservative organizations behind the brochures—the American Action Network (AAN) and RetireSafe—say Dold is working to save Medicare, a cursory glance at the congressman’s voting record reveals the precise opposite. In fact, Dold has voted for legislation that proposed to dismantle the vital government health insurance program for seniors and to replace it with an inadequate voucher system. (“Dold Mailers exemplify Republican Doublespeak at its best,”

<http://www.tenthdems.org/2012/01/january-2012-newsletter-republican-double-speak-and-more/>

Just as last month’s *Tenth News* was going to press, a new Dold mailer arrived in 10th District voters’ mailboxes, this one directly from Congressman Dold. Presented as

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## Who Really Represents the 10th District? by Ronald Altman

On nearly 90 percent of significant recorded House votes, the Illinois 10th Congressional District is represented by Joe Walsh. Yes, that Joe Walsh. The one who in July told President Obama to “quit lying” about the effects of the artificially manufactured crisis on extension of the federal debt limit while playing fast and loose with “the full faith and credit” of the United States. The same Joe Walsh who calls himself a card-carrying member of the Tea Party, who would hamstring the federal government by drastically cutting such essential government services as Medicare and Pell grants.

“Wait just a minute!” you may be thinking. “Joe Walsh represents the 8th District. The 10th District is represented by Robert Dold.” Well, yes. But given Dold’s voting record,

the 10th might just as well have sent Joe Walsh to Congress.

In a careful analysis of 949 recorded votes in the first session of the 112th Congress (January - December 2011), I reviewed the votes of Rep. Walsh and Rep. Dold. Recorded Congressional votes include a hodgepodge of procedural votes, quorum calls, approval of post office namings and other largely ceremonial acts, and votes on substantive legislation. I limited my analysis to votes pertaining to final passage of House bills (excluding amendments). I did this because, in many cases, the House leadership will “release” a member to vote in a manner pleasing to his constituents, only to recall him if the vote is truly significant on final passage. I also excluded votes

where bills passed unanimously, or with only one or two dissenting votes from Congressional crackpots. Of the remaining 318 roll calls for which both Representatives Dold and Walsh recorded votes, they voted the exact same way on 283, a concurrence rate of 89 percent. Even excluding those issues on which House Republicans voted unanimously (and therefore Walsh and Dold’s concurrence was assured,) these two congressmen voted in tandem 75.2 percent of the time.

Rep. Dold presents himself as a social moderate who bucks his party’s rightward swing. But he supported the Ryan Budget. This centerpiece of the far right agenda called for transformation of Medicare into a “payment support” system,

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# Who Really Represents the 10th District?

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essentially a voucher program which would provide seniors with less than 40 percent of medical expenses when the program is implemented in 2022 compared to Medicare's 58 percent. Moreover, by capping the rate of expansion of this "support" to below Medicare projections, Ryan's plan, which, like Walsh, Dold voted for, would have Medicare beneficiaries paying an additional \$8200 yearly by 2030, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The Republican budget does nothing about the underlying problem, rapid expansion of medical costs, other than to suppose that "the market will take care of it." We've all seen what the market has done with medical costs since 1990.

Rep. Dold also voted for the Orwellian-monickered "Repealing the Jobs-Killing Health Care Law" Act that, by repealing the Affordable

Care Act (or, as Dold would have it, "Obamacare"), would reverse this historic effort to control medical costs and extend insurance coverage to more Americans.

Dold additionally agreed with Walsh on the "Neighborhood Stabilization Program Repeal" to defund the Dodd-Frank Act; the "Prohibit Federal Funding of NPR" Act (whose name, surprisingly, accurately describes the legislation); the "FHA Refinance Program Termination" bill to end the program of refinancing FHA mortgages when mortgagees are "under water" (a bill Rep. Dold introduced); the "Energy Tax Prevention" bill to prevent the EPA from enacting regulations controlling the production of greenhouse gases; the "Repeal the Prevention and Public Health Fund" bill to eliminate funding of public health programs; and the "No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion" bill, a bill to eliminate non-existent federal funding of abortion (which is already prohibited by the

Hyde amendment). Fortunately for the country, the majority Democratic Senate has tabled every one of these ill-considered bills.

Rep. Dold may counter this exposé of his record by citing his brave opposition to the "National Standard by which a non-Resident of a State may carry concealed firearms" act. He was one of seven Republicans to vote against final passage. He was even the sole Republican to vote for four amendments to this bill, none of which was adopted. We note, however, that the bill passed by a vote of 272 to 154, making Rep. Dold's recorded opposition merely *pro forma*, a useless legislative, but strongly political statement directed towards his constituents, who overwhelmingly opposed the bill.

Despite all efforts to portray himself as "independent," Rep. Dold is a solidly Republican member of the House in the 112th Congress. In today's political environment, where the minority leader of the Senate has openly articulated the party's chief goal—"for President Obama to be a one-term president"—it is not surprising that Dold, like every other Republican member of the House, has a record less than a hair's width different from that of the most rabid Tea-Party member.



## The Doppelgänger Gang That Haunts Congress

*"The trust of the innocent is the liar's most useful tool."*

—Stephen King

# More Doublespeak from Congressman Bob Dold

(continued from page 1)

an ordinary communication from a legislator to his constituents, and thus prepared and mailed at taxpayer expense, the colorful 8" x 8-1/2" trifold brochure looks a lot like a campaign advertisement. Between photos of Dold out and about in the community—walking the beaches with environmentally-conscious voters and meeting with business leaders and workers—the text informs us that Dold is working to “bring good-paying jobs to the 10th District; protect Medicare and Social Security; strengthen education; protect the environment; reduce debt by eliminating fraud and corruption; speaking up for human rights; and improving our quality of life.”

Notably absent from the text, however, is solid evidence to support any of these claims. Nowhere in the six-page trifold brochure document does Dold furnish even a hint about what he claims to be doing to protect Medicare and Social Security. But the brochure does say this: “[Dold] is committed to working across the aisle to preserve Medicare and Social

Security so that future generations will receive the care they expect and deserve, while ensuring that those 55 and older will see no changes.”

Those in the know will recognize the code in that last phrase: What Dold is really saying to us is that he’s okay with changes to Medicare and Social Security for Americans under age 55—as proposed in the Ryan Budget. This means that Dold actually is not committed to, in his own words, “working across the aisle to preserve Medicare and Social Security for future generations.”

Of course, we already knew this. Dold never reaches across the aisle, except when he’s released by his party’s leaders—and only for the sake of appearances. This is evidenced by his voting record, which closely mirrors that of 8th District Congressman Joe Walsh—a self-professed card-carrying Tea Party member (see “Who Really Represents the 10th District?” on page 1). And, with his vote on the Ryan Budget bill, Dold months ago demonstrated his full

support of the conservative agenda to dismantle the nation’s retirement and health insurance programs for seniors.

The most recent mailer from Dold also provides no specifics about how he purportedly is working to improve our quality of life. And, the mailer carefully fails to disclose that Dold voted to defund the Dodd-Frank Act—a law designed to increase consumer protections and enforce stricter oversight over the Wall Street firms that caused the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. To add insult to injury, Dold financed the printing and mailing of this naked bit of self-promotion with taxpayer funds—your money and mine.

Next month we’ll take a closer look at what Dold says he is doing to spur the economy, create jobs, strengthen education, protect the environment, and stand up for human rights. Until then, we continue to urge you to check the congressman’s claims against his actual voting record, which you can find here:

<http://www.votesmart.org/candidate/key-votes/116548/robert-dold>



 Note the detachable portion of Dold’s colorful mailer that can be returned to the Congressman, at the respondent’s own expense. Perhaps Dold intended this portion of the pamphlet to justify a taxpayer-funded mailing that otherwise is devoted entirely to self-promotion. However, he solicits no real opinions. Asking only for “issues of concern,” Dold shows no interest in the nature of a constituent’s concerns. If someone checks off “Taxes,” for example, what has Dold learned that he could use to represent him or her in the U.S. House? Does this voter

favor lower taxes? Higher taxes? A flat tax? A value-added tax? If a constituent checks “Energy,” is that a plea for more drilling in the Gulf? Fracking? Government investment in renewable energy? And, omitted altogether from the list of issues are such areas of national concern as access to healthcare, man-made climate change, corporate money in politics, protection of reproductive rights, repairing our crumbling infrastructure, and anything whatsoever having to do with foreign policy.

**Your Opinion Matters, or Does It?**

# Not Very Brave New World

by Jack Altschuler



During one of the Republican primary season debates, Wolf Blitzer posed a question to the candidates about healthcare. He imagined a young fellow who was significantly ailing and was in the emergency room of a hospital where the doctors determined that he would die if not treated immediately. Blitzer further said to imagine that his hypothetical subject was without financial means and did not have healthcare insurance. His question was about what the hospital staff should do.

After a couple of beats, someone in the audience shouted, "Let him die." There were cheers from others in the audience. And every one of the Republicans running to be the party's nominee for the office of President of the United States went silent. Not a single one of them stood up to the hate or chastised the meanness of the shouted comment. Not one had the spine to display compassion for a

fellow human being.

The Republican candidates displayed that same kind of spinelessness at another debate when a gay serviceman was shown on video with a question about gays serving openly in the military. Audience members booed him and once again these would-be leaders were silent. Be clear that this soldier was a man who put his life on the line every day to protect those very same candidates and audience members; yet the candidates displayed neither spine nor compassion for him or for others like him.

Those yelling the loudest today are the far right radicals, and they are not conservative. They are not even defenders of the Constitution. They are short-sighted and close-minded bullies masquerading as Bible-thumping Christians. America is suffering through an aggravated case of absolutist minds, and it is killing our democracy.

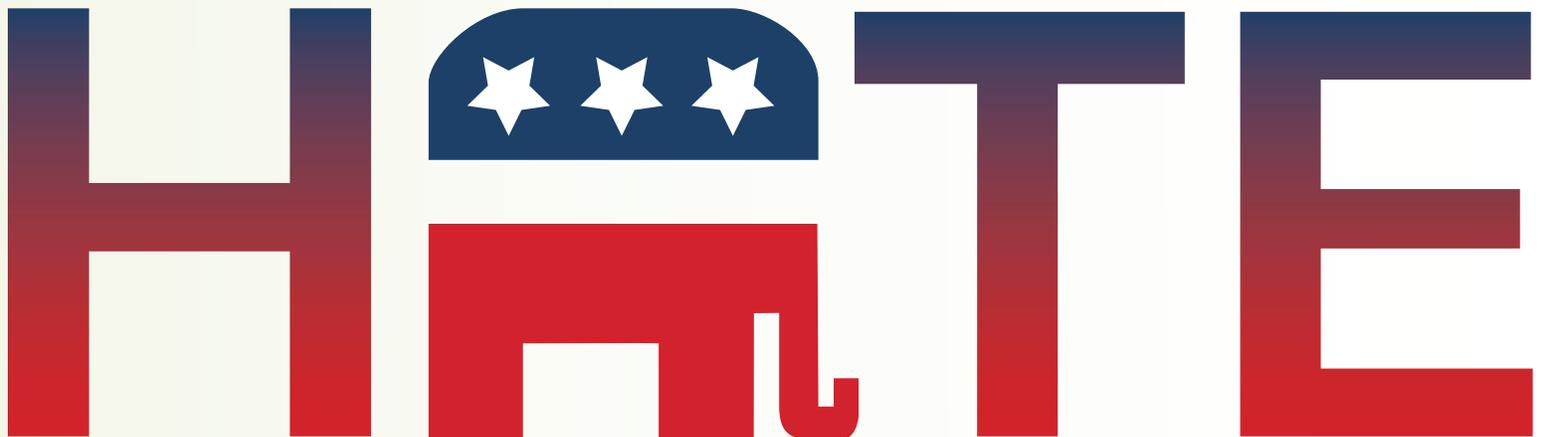
In the early part of the last century, one of the hateful signs hung on the doors of some companies read, "No Irish need apply." There were signs all over the Jim Crow south that read, "Whites only." And for decades and perhaps centuries there was and, in some places there still is, a "gentlemen's agreement" to exclude



Jews. That's rapidly metastasizing to include Muslims. It's more complicated than this, but at root it is a discrimination against anything that is not "us."

We are seeing a willful brain numbing that says that anything that is not just like "us" is wrong, unpatriotic, godless, and evil. How odd that is in a country that draws its strength from its diversity. We've always had that schizophrenic duality, but now the hateful side, the Mr. Hyde personality, is dominating the landscape in a razed-earth war against everyone and everything that is not just like him. Worse, those who would be leaders are spineless against Mr. Hyde's voice of hate and exclusion.

This is America, so the haters have the right to their hate, and the candidates have the right to their cowardice. The key question is this: How long will you tolerate the hate?



# Impartiality of Tenth Dems a Primary Concern

by Paul Kelly, Tenth Dems Communications Director

Since 2004, Tenth Dems has been working to spark change through a grassroots effort. In that time, it has brought thousands of people into the political process by providing them the means to get involved—by holding rallies, getting news and information out to voters, or conducting Tenth Dems University classes.

And as has been the practice of the organization, Tenth Dems is not making an endorsement in the Democratic primary race for the 10th Congressional District in 2012.

“We take the position that we prefer a primary in this race,” said Lauren Beth Gash, Chair of Tenth Dems. “Primaries can serve to sharpen the campaign messages, develop effective organizations, and allow the candidates the opportunity to talk with voters. Each of the candidates who is vying for the nomination is terrific and would be an improvement over the incumbent.”

The concept of the direct primary—with ballots that are distributed and regulated by the states—is a progressive idea. Expanding democracy was part of the progressive push to achieve the goal of good government. Starting in the early to middle part of the 20th century, voters were given the opportunity to decide whom to put on the general election ballot rather than have political operatives in “smoke-filled rooms” deciding the nominees. In fact, the term “smoke-filled room” came from the nomination of a Republican who is widely considered to be one of the worst presidents in history. While he was a bumbling and ineffective leader, members of his administration by and large gave away huge amounts of the country’s petroleum reserve to Big Oil, themselves profiting in the process. (While you might have had another,

more contemporary name in mind, that president was Warren G. Harding.)

Of course, primaries result in tough, spirited debates. At the end of the day, once the primary election is decided, however, Democrats share the same values.

In the same way that spirited people staff campaigns, passionate volunteers are the lifeblood of Tenth Dems. For many years, for many campaigns, Tenth Dems volunteers

need energetic people to fulfill our mission. It is important to note that since the beginning of the group, our volunteers have been able to serve in campaign roles while also working on activities that help all Democrats. And since the beginning, after the primary is over, participants from competing campaigns have come together to work on getting Democrats elected in the general election.

Coming together to help Democrats is our purpose. Our mission statement reads: “Tenth Dems is a grassroots



have worked to staff speaker events, connect with constituents through our newsletter and other outreach channels, administer office support, mobilize neighborhood canvassing, register voters, and work get-out-the-vote phone banks.

Many of our volunteers are also active participants in the various campaigns for the candidates of their choosing. Tenth Dems is a volunteer-run, grassroots organization, and we

organization that is dedicated to electing Democrats at all levels of government in the 10th Congressional District in the state of Illinois. That includes the local, state, and national levels of government.” And, as a keynote speaker at our annual meeting in 2009, Gov. Howard Dean, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said: “Tenth Dems is one of the most impressive grassroots groups...anywhere in the country.”

# Evil and Stupid

by Ron Levitsky

The man was arrested, blindfolded, handcuffed, and pushed onto a truck. He tried to reason with the guards. "They have made a mistake about my name. You called me 'Mustafa Ali Othman.' My name is Mustafa Ali Noman!" The guard replied, "Same difference." He was tortured—"I was bleeding and crying at once. The kicks continued to rain on me where I was lying." And the guards mocked his religion. "Shut up, you and your lot of jackasses, your Khomeini and Da'wa [preaching of Islam] and Prophet Muhammad and God!"

Another man arrested, blindfolded, and handcuffed reported having hot liquid poured over his head, electric shock treatments, and a lit cigarette stubbed out on his wrist. His religion was mocked. Qu'rans were thrown onto the floor during interrogations or into plastic buckets that served as toilets.

The first prisoner was the protagonist of Iraqi author Mahmoud Saeed's semi-autobiographical novel, *Saddam City*, about life in Saddam Hussein's prison gulag. The second was Jumah Abdel Latif al-Dossary, a prisoner later released from Guantanamo Bay. If the two characters seem interchangeable, perhaps you are

as concerned as I that January marked the tenth anniversary of the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the United States needed a place to hold and question suspected terrorists. According to Jonathan Hansen, author of *Guantanamo: An American History*, Guantanamo Bay was chosen because the Bush administration did not consider it to be under U.S. sovereign law, therefore offering military personnel legal immunity from charges of mistreating prisoners. In addition, the military had total control over access to the base.

Initially, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that the military would, "for the most part, treat [detainees] in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the Geneva Conventions." However, at about the same time, the Department of Defense inquired of the army what techniques the Chinese, North Koreans, and North Vietnamese had used in their attempts to break down American POWs. In August of 2002, Deputy Assistant Attorney General John Woo wrote the so-called "Torture Memo" to protect those in the Bush administration from possible prosecution under the War

Crimes Act. According to Woo, torture was defined as only "extreme acts," such as those resulting in death or organ failure or mental pain leading to long-term suffering. In addition, any interrogation technique the president

as commander-in-chief ordered as necessary could not be considered torture.

But detainees were tortured. In *Chain of Command, The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*, Seymour Hersh reports that, in late 2002, F.B.I. agents at Guantanamo complained to their superiors that military guards slapped prisoners and stripped and poured cold water over them, inducing hypothermia. Mahvish Rukhsana Khan (*My Guantanamo Diary*), an Afghan-American interpreter who made over 30 trips to Guantanamo, heard numerous detainee complaints of beatings, extended sleep and/or sunlight deprivation, and exposure to screeching sirens and the cold. Some prisoners were forced to strip in front of female soldiers or interrogators (in violation of Islamic rules of modesty) who touched the detainees inappropriately and humiliated them.

That such ill treatment horrifies liberal non-governmental organizations is a given. Amnesty International has long called for the closing of Guantanamo detention camp, calling its tenth year an "anniversary of shame." The American Civil Liberties Union also has campaigned hard against the camp, arguing that, in the past, prisoners accused of terrorism have been tried successfully in U.S. civilian courts. And the Center for Victims of Torture warns that our government's recent use of torture at Guantanamo has actually imperiled our national security, in part by jeopardizing the cooperation of our allies and leading resentful victims and their families into the very terrorism we seek to combat.

What is not as well known is how much protest against the Bush administration's Guantanamo policy

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**FEBRUARY ISSUE**

## UNITE AGAINST TORTURE



# Evil and Stupid

(continued from page 6)

came from within the government. Jonathan Hansen reports that both Navy JAG Donald Guter and Army JAG Tomas Rutig questioned abandoning the Geneva Convention. William H. Taft IV, Secretary of State Colin Powell's legal advisor, warned Woo about this same point. Naval General Counsel Alberto Mora said, "If you make this exception, the whole Constitution crumbles. It's a transformative issue."

In 2004, Hersh reports, the F.B.I. was so concerned about the brutal methods being used that it instructed its agents not to be present at interrogation sessions. Otherwise, agents' testimony could be compromised at future trials.

The F.B.I. was also concerned that the new "enhanced interrogation" techniques conceived by the Bush administration were not just brutal but also ineffective. According to Hansen, F.B.I. traditional interrogation methods included "using conventional rapport-building techniques," which actually worked, for example, in eliciting important information from the "20th hijacker," Mohammed al-Qahtani. However, later when American soldiers used enhanced methods on al-Qahtani, such as 24-hour interrogations and numerous humiliations, he was "broken down" but gave no additional information.

The Army Field Manual disapproved of torture not only on moral and legal grounds but also because it didn't work. As one Pentagon advisor stated, "It's evil, but it's also stupid." Besides condoning torture, until 2004 the Bush administration denied detainees at Guantanamo the right of *habeas corpus*. Again, putting aside moral and legal questions, a great many detainees were innocent. Hersh mentions one C.I.A. analyst who, after interviewing over 30 detainees, came to believe that at least half didn't belong there. As

Hersh states, "The wrong people were being questioned in the wrong way." As an interpreter who spoke with many detainees, Mahvish Rukhsana Khan also believed that the majority was innocent. According to Amnesty International, only five percent of the detainees were captured through U.S. intelligence. Khan referred to Department of Defense documents indicating that 86 percent of the detainees were seized in Pakistan. It was common practice for Pakistani authorities to sell prisoners to the U.S. for bounties our government was offering. Many other prisoners were victims of personal or tribal feuds.

In 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that detainees held in Guantanamo Bay had the right to challenge their detention in court. In response, the Bush administration created Combatant Status Review Tribunals (CSRTs), consisting of three-judge panels responsible for reviewing cases. During these proceedings, detainees were not allowed legal counsel—only military advisors—and had no right to review any evidence used against them. Khan noted that if a detainee were cleared of one set of charges, the military would present another set of charges, to keep him incarcerated.

In 2009 President Obama stated, "So the record is clear: rather than keeping us safer, the prison at Guantanamo has weakened American national security." At that time, he signed an executive order to close the Guantanamo detainee camp within a year. However, it still remains.

Recently, despite misgivings, President Obama signed a new National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The act permits the indefinite military detention of terror suspects—including U.S. citizens, placing them outside civilian law. President Obama has stated that this will not apply to Americans. In the case of suspected foreign terrorists,



he noted there might be times when "law enforcement provides the best method of incapacitating a terrorist threat."

The President also opposes a provision in the new NDAA that continues a ban against using government funds to transfer Guantanamo detainees to the United States. He stated, "For decades, Republican and Democratic administrations have successfully prosecuted hundreds of terrorists in Federal court. Those prosecutions are a legitimate, effective, and powerful tool in our efforts to protect the Nation."

More than one hundred years ago, Joseph Conrad wrote *Heart of Darkness*, in which a man who epitomized western civilization went deep into Africa to civilize the natives. Instead, he became a savage, his change symbolized by a fortress surrounded by stakes topped with human skulls. Let us stop making a similar mistake and eliminate the symbol of our cruelty and stupidity.

Close Guantanamo.

# Emergency

How has a simple and quite healthy vegetable become the center of political debate and now reached the highest court in the land, the U.S. Supreme Court? A vegetable high in nutrients such as vitamin C, dietary fiber, and a number of anti-cancer properties, broccoli has had its own political history.

In a well-known televised exchange, President George H. W. Bush said, "I do not like broccoli. And I haven't liked it since I was a little kid. And I'm President of the United States, and I'm not going to eat any more broccoli."

Among the arguments of opponents of the constitutionality of the mandate in the Affordable Care Act [ACA] is the complaint that if Congress can force us to buy health insurance, it can force us to buy anything. The threat posited is that Congress might require us to buy broccoli in order to be healthier.

As the U.S. Supreme Court nears a decision on the constitutionality of the mandate to buy health insurance, one of the key tests of the constitutional complaint against the requirement is that Congress's ability to regulate commerce has never been understood to require Americans to buy insurance or anything else. Yet, we all are required to contribute to Medicare, among other things. That mandate is conditioned on the purchase of health insurance as tied to a commercial activity, having a job.

During her confirmation hearing in the U.S. Senate, Supreme Court

nominee Elena Kagan was asked by Sen. Thomas Coburn (R-Okla) whether the government has the right to micromanage Americans' diets. He asked whether Americans can be mandated to eat three vegetables and three fruits every day, whether that requirement would violate the commerce clause. In response, Kagan stated that it "sounds like a dumb law," but whether or not it is a dumb law, the courts would be senseless to strike down laws that they think are senseless just because they're senseless. She indicated that while laws that regulate non-economic activity are beyond the scope of Congress, deference should be given to Congress to regulate matters that affect interstate commerce.

There are numerous provisions in the ACA that are clearly contained within the commerce clause, including requirements for providing preventive care, specific coverage of well-child care, and immunizations as well as restrictions on premiums paid to health insurers. The necessity for a mandate to purchase health insurance is based on a number of factors. Without a mandate, individuals might wait until they become ill to purchase insurance. Premiums would rise, and the health insurance market would collapse.

Variations of that theme occur daily with uninsured patients overwhelming emergency rooms. The consequence is that the costs of treating the uninsured are borne by hospitals which, in turn, raise rates to recover

costs. Those costs then are borne by the insured. Following the passage of state health reform, a more equitable distribution of costs has been demonstrated in Massachusetts where approximately 98 percent are covered by insurance.

As the conservatives argue that ACA should be repealed, it is ironic to note that when health reform was being debated in 1993 during the Clinton administration, a proposal supported by 16 Republican senators included the individual mandate.

We will leave it to Congress to decide whether to pass legislation requiring Americans to eat broccoli, but the healthcare legislation being considered by the Supreme Court does not require Americans to utilize healthcare, but only to purchase insurance.



# Can Dold Stand Up to Romney?

by Steve Sheffey

Robert Dold (R-Kenilworth) endorsed Mitt Romney for president. Mark Kirk endorsed Romney, too. What are the odds?



Ron Paul continues to finish well in the Republican primaries, although by the time this article goes to print the GOP race could effectively be over. As bad as all the Republican candidates are, Ron Paul is in a class by himself. He's anti-Israel, he does not believe the U.S. should have fought Hitler in World War II, and he allowed his newsletters to disseminate racist views in his name for years. Yet, Mitt Romney said that he would vote for Ron Paul over Barack Obama.

Ron Paul called Israel's actions in Gaza "an atrocious massacre" and went on Arab TV to criticize U.S. support for Israel, calling for the U.S. to end its special relationship with Israel. And Mitt Romney said that he would vote for Ron Paul over Barack Obama.

Ron Paul is a serious candidate. In what kind of party would someone so out of step with our values have a serious chance of winning? Only one party. The Republican Party.

And Mitt Romney said that he would vote for Ron Paul over Barack Obama.

The question about whether Romney would support Paul against the President specifically referenced Ron Paul's anti-Israel views, and Romney still said he'd vote for Ron Paul over

Barack Obama. As Andy Borowitz recently pointed out, there's nothing wrong with Mitt Romney that being an entirely different person wouldn't fix.

At one of the Republican debates, Romney also agreed with Rick Perry that the foreign aid budget should be zeroed out. Let's be clear. Romney did not say he'd cut foreign aid to Israel to zero or that he'd cut the foreign aid budget to zero. The problem is that Romney either did know or was afraid to remind his Republican constituency that foreign aid to Israel does not start at zero. According to the Ten-Year Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel, the United States will provide Israel with \$30 billion in military aid by 2018. That means aid to Israel starts at \$3 billion, not zero.

It's easy to be pro-Israel in front of Jewish audiences. The test is what a candidate says to general audiences. Romney didn't stand up for Israel in front of Republican voters. He missed a golden opportunity to set the record straight on foreign aid in general and aid to Israel in particular, all for fear of offending the xenophobes in the Republican Party.

It gets worse. Romney had the perfect opportunity to clarify his stance on foreign aid to Israel when he spoke to the Republican Jewish Coalition shortly after agreeing that foreign aid should be zeroed out. Instead, he avoided the subject.

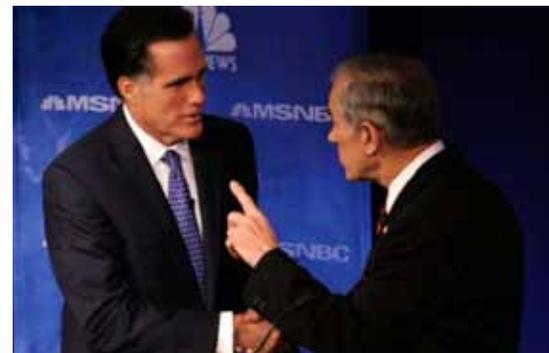
According to JTA (the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, a definitive source for American Jewish community news and opinion), a Democratic Hill staffer who agreed to speak only on background said, "It's clear that Romney and Gingrich made the strategic decision to not mention the foreign aid package to Israel. For a serious presidential candidate to come out in any address to the

Jewish community—especially to RJC's top supporters—and not give the strongest level of support for Israel's aid is mind-boggling."

Contrast Romney's leadership deficit with the courage of President Obama, who stood up at the United Nations, not exactly a friendly audience for Israel, and delivered what Yehidot Aharonot called the most pro-Israel speech ever delivered by any American president.

And where is Bob Dold? Dold tells us he's an independent, but why doesn't he have the courage to represent our district and tell Romney no, that in the 10th District, we would vote for Barack Obama over an anti-Israel candidate like Ron Paul, including those of us who might disagree with President Obama on other issues? Why doesn't Dold have the courage to say that Romney was wrong, that we in the pro-Israel community support the foreign aid budget in general and the MOU with Israel in particular?

Perhaps Dold disagrees with Ron Paul or Mitt Romney on these issues. But if he's afraid to speak up, we need to replace him with someone who will speak for us, even at the risk of offending Republican leadership.



## Vigils Against Violence Held in 10th District by Lee Goodman

Too long for a bumper sticker:  
*Guns don't kill people – frightened, angry, careless, sick, foolish, or hopeless people with guns kill and maim themselves, friends, family, strangers, cops, and, of course, children, sometimes intentionally and sometimes by accident.*

A year after U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords was shot, vigils to highlight the problem of violence were held all over the U.S. Two were held in the 10th District. At a vigil at Am Shalom in Glencoe, the movie "The Interrupters" was shown. It tells the story of people who are trying to eliminate the gang-related shootings that plague certain Chicago neighborhoods.

At the vigil at St. Norbert Catholic Church in Northbrook, Rev. John Berg of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

talked about having to dodge bullets while doing ministry at a housing project in Chicago. Rev. Lee Gaede of St. Giles Episcopal Church told of working with domestic violence victims. The ones who were beaten survived; two of those who were shot didn't. Rev. Mike Nevling of Village Presbyterian Church told of a shooting at a convenience store in a small town where he used to live. Everyone knew the victim—and the shooter, and everyone shared in the shock of the tragedy.

Rabbi Sidney Helbraun of Temple Beth-El said the Talmud teaches that he who saves one person saves the world, and he who kills one person destroys the world. Imam Adnan Balihodzic of the Islamic Cultural Center said the Koran contained the identical message. Father Bob Heinz led the audience in the reading of

the names of some of the violence victims from the Chicago area. We didn't have nearly enough time to read the names of the hundreds who had died from violence in the past year.



*Fr. Bob Heinz leads vigil at St. Norbert Catholic Church in Northbrook*

## SAVE THE DATES

**Saturday, February 25, 2012**  
Candidate Debate Sponsored by  
Tenth Dems and WCPT  
Chicago's Progressive Talk Radio  
Location: Hyatt Regency, Deerfield  
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Sunday, March 4, 2012**  
Tenth Dems District-Wide Convention  
Location: To be announced  
Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
(doors open at 1:30 p.m.)

Tenth Dems is pleased to host our next signature candidate debate with Dick Kay of WCPT Chicago's Progressive Talk Radio. It will take place on February 25, 2012, the Saturday before early voting begins.

Come to the Tenth Dems district-wide convention and help make a positive impact in Illinois' 10th Congressional District. You'll be part of an enthusiastic group (500-plus attended our first convention in 2008) who will hear from candidates running for election at all levels of government from all parts of the district. The event is free and open to the public; however, only Tenth Dems members may vote in our straw poll.

# THE ROOTS of DEMOCRACY: SANDRA SCHIRMANG

by Eleonora di Liscia

Belying her patrician good looks and spacious Northbrook home, Sandra Schirmang has never forgotten her working class roots and the sacrifices her mother made so she could get ahead.

"I've been a Democrat forever. I can remember when I was a kid. My stepfather was a truck driver, and I remember my mother saying, 'Republicans are for the rich people, and Democrats are for the working man,'" Sandra said.

Sandra was born in Chicago and grew up on the Near North Side. Her father was a Chicago police officer who died when she was 12. Her stepfather drove a truck. The family moved to River Grove and later to Franklin Park.

"I grew up in a blue collar neighborhood until we moved to the suburbs; then we were middle class. It gave me an understanding of people who have to work really hard to make ends meet. They don't have the perks of business lunches or frequent flyer miles that sort of make up the American Dream," she said.

Widowed early, Sandra's grandmother had been a maid. Sandra's mother worked at three jobs to put Sandra through Elmhurst College and support her young son. As a part-time police matron, Sandra's mother had

to attend to woman arrestees. At times, she would work until 2 a.m. at the police station, then go to her main secretarial job by 8 a.m. She also worked part time in a hospital emergency admitting room.

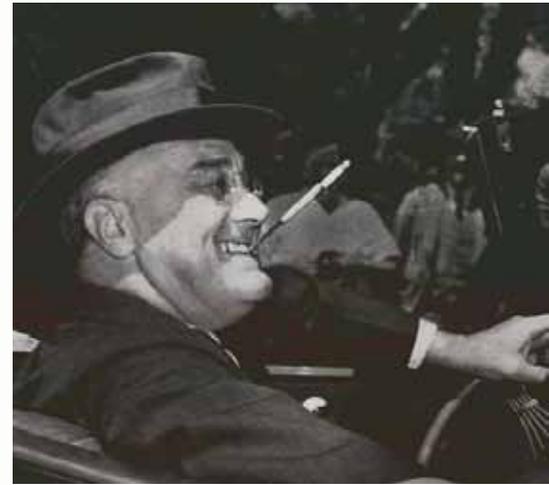
Sandra worked her way through college as a bank teller. After graduating, she worked for a bank and then several food manufacturers. While working, she obtained her M.B.A. from De Paul.

Although she has always voted, Sandra first became politically involved when Barack Obama ran for president. "I guess I'm one of those folks that Obama activated," she said. "I think it was realizing that we were on the wrong track, that people were hurting, and there wasn't a lot of concern. The whole healthcare discussion has been a huge concern of mine as well as the composition of the Supreme Court."

In 2008, Sandra spotted a notice in the paper about a Tenth Dems event. She signed up for a canvassing trip to Wisconsin and attended a meeting at Sharon Sanders' home "which dealt with how we can challenge the Republicans with all of their money. The answer is to have a strong organization and keep reaching out to other concerned people," she said.

After meeting more Tenth Dems members, Sandra hosted a few organizational events at her home and eventually helped run last June's 2011 banquet with keynote speaker Mark Begich. For the September Volunteer Appreciation night, Sandra helped obtain items for the silent auction and at the checkout table.

"I called people to make donations for the silent auction; and, for the most part, people were willing to do that. It was a little easier than I expected.



*"I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people."*

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt

It's rewarding, but it's still challenging in this environment because small businesses don't have a lot in order to give a lot," she said.

Sandra is particularly concerned about the trend in voter suppression issues. "There was a news blurb the other day about a 93-year-old woman in Nebraska. She had worked for the state all her life, but her employee ID is no longer legal for voting purposes. Because she was born at home, she was unable to locate a birth certificate necessary to get the new ID! We keep hearing these stories by progressive news people, but for every one we hear about, what I question is how many we don't hear about, that don't rise to being a unique story. We all need to be very concerned about this dangerous trend."

Currently, Sandra assists Tenth Dems with bookkeeping activities and plans to stay very active during this election year.



Sandra Schirmang with Mark Begich (D-Alaska) at a June 2011 Tenth Dems banquet.

**YES, WE DID!**

## **THE TRUTH ABOUT GITMO, DETENTION, AND CIVIL LIBERTY**

by Eleonora di Liscia



Imagine you are the new fire chief in town. You come in with promises to reverse the prior chief's dreadful record of charred ruins. You train your staff and order state-of-the-art equipment. Then you get the alarm that a house is on fire.

You dispatch your squad of rescue vehicles, but everywhere they turn, some road hog is blocking their way. The few vehicles that make it through discover that the city council has turned off their water supply. Still, you manage to pull out the family pets and a few other valuables.

This scenario is more than a little like President Obama and the reversal of the Bush administration's policies on torture, detention, and Guantanamo. Obama has come under fire for breaking his promise to close Gitmo and for recently signing off on indefinite detention. But the reality is much more complex. Progress has been made on a variety of civil liberty fronts.

**GITMO:** President Obama has made several attempts to close Gitmo. The oath of office was barely uttered when he issued an Executive Order to close the base. And then the fear set in. Where were the detainees going to go? Would we be safe? Not in my backyard!

President Obama planned to bring detainees to the U.S., or at least bring them to trial in federal court (as opposed to military tribunals favored by Republicans), but these moves were stymied. Some critics blamed Obama for not pushing hard enough while being distracted with healthcare reform. Eventually, Congress blocked money to close the base, transfer detainees to the U.S. or any other country, or even allow prosecution in federal courts.

*continued on page 13*

**FEBRUARY ISSUE**

# YES, WE DID!

## THE TRUTH ABOUT GITMO, DETENTION, AND CIVIL LIBERTY

*(continued from page 12)*

But President Obama has demonstrated that when he can't get what he wants, he does what he can. A second Executive Order in March 2011 outlined at least some due process protections for indefinite detainees. The detention must meet the standard of being "necessary to protect against a significant threat to the security of the United States" and has to be periodically reviewed in a hearing. The detainee is entitled to present evidence and to have an advocate provided by the government.

Under President Obama, the number of detainees at Gitmo has shrunk. He has not confined new detainees, nor has he added new detention centers.

By contrast, Republican presidential hopefuls Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney say they would expand Gitmo (Mitt thinks it should actually be doubled), and Rick Santorum thinks Gitmo is essential.

**INDEFINITE DETENTION:** In December 2011, the President came under fire for signing a bill that authorized indefinite detention. One must remember, however, that these decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Given a choice between authorizing indefinite detention or not, Obama would undoubtedly end the practice. However, that was not the choice before him when he signed the bill. The indefinite detention provision was part of a 500-page National Defense Authorization Act, a defense appropriations bill. To veto the bill would have caused military families to go without a paycheck as well as creating other hardships for them and national security.

So the President signed.

The fact that indefinite detention was even attached to the essential defense appropriation underscores the need to unseat Congressional Republicans like Robert Dold and reinstall a Democratic Speaker of the House.

Faced with this dilemma, President Obama did what he could and issued a signing statement. His December 31, 2011 signing statement outlines how he intends to interpret the law. The President set out the ways in which the bill overexpands executive branch authority and undermines national security. He affirmed that he would not authorize indefinite military detention without trial. Critics say the signing statement does not go far enough, but a President Romney, or any other Republican, would not only have signed the bill but also would have expanded indefinite detention.

### THE ACLU 2012 CANDIDATE REPORT CARD:

While the American Civil Liberties Union is tepid on the President's performance overall, its 2012 candidate report card gave him a relatively high score. The report card evaluated candidates on humane immigration policy, closing Guantanamo Bay, indefinite detention, Gay and Lesbian marriage and military policies, ending torture, ending surveillance, and reproductive choice. Each of 7 categories had a four "torch" value. While Obama only scored 13 out of 28, remember that even university exams are graded on a curve. Gingrich earned a whopping two torches total, while Romney and Santorum earned 0s in every category. True, Ron Paul outscored Obama. But it might be hard to enjoy those extra liberties while suffocating in smog after President Paul abolishes the EPA.

President Obama received at least three torches each for his policy on gays in the military, gay marriage, reproductive choice, and ending torture. For torture, Obama rescinded Bush's legal justifications for torture and abolished CIA secret prisons. There are no reports of extraordinary rendition (sending detainees to other countries to be tortured) or torture on his watch.

Most refreshingly, the Obama administration plainly declares that waterboarding is torture. While President Bush did eventually discontinue its use, former Vice President Cheney still adamantly defends it. And what about Newt, Mitt, and Rick? Well, they all support "enhanced interrogation techniques."

### YES WE CAN



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