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YES, WE DID! The Obama Record on Women's Issues

By Eleonora di Liscia



In Indiana, a woman attempts suicide by ingesting rat poison after her boyfriend abandons her. She is charged with the murder of her unborn baby.

Republican-controlled states such as Idaho and Virginia work to pass laws requiring a transvaginal ultrasound before a woman can have an abortion. Other states shield doctors who withhold information that might cause a patient to choose an abortion. Tea Partiers fight to defund Planned Parenthood.

The Republican war against women

rages on. In contrast, President Obama and the Democrats have brought change for the better to just about every aspect of a woman's life. Whether it's work place equality, protections against rape and domestic violence, education, or access to healthcare, the President has forged into the future, rather than forcing women back into Medieval times.

COMPREHENSIVE CHANGE: On March 11, 2009, Obama created the

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To Be a Democrat by Ron Levitsky

A few years ago, at the dedication for the Adlai Stevenson Center in Mettawa, former Democratic Senator Adlai Stevenson III joked that during the 1970s the greatest political difference between him and Charles Percy, his Republican colleague, concerned who would obtain the most pork-barrel projects for Illinois. From this tongue-in-cheek comment, the audience sensed what must have been a wonderful camaraderie and mutual respect between two senators who happened to be from different parties.

Today, no one would accuse Congress of cordiality and cooperation. Republicans, pushed further right by the Tea Party and

religious conservatives, have made their number-one agenda item to limit President Obama to a single term. They have fought healthcare reform and funding for the poor while defending tax cuts for the wealthy. They speak of personal freedom while trying to limit the ability of gays to marry or women to access contraception.

Although not as numerous as Democrats, Republicans have crafted political victories by packaging their ideology as both simple and superficially attractive. They oppose big government, entitlements, immigration reform, and the acceptance of global warming as a scientific fact while supporting

patriotism, family values, and greed masked as economic freedom.



Republicans are geniuses at redirecting their constituents' best interests!

Perhaps because we are more numerous and diverse ethnically and racially, Democrats represent a wide array of conflicting ideologies. From Blue Dogs to New Democrats to Liberals to the Democratic Socialists of America, we form such

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To Be a Democrat *(continued from page 1)*

a crowd that at times even our big tent threatens to be torn apart. While some differences may never be resolved, with the November election looming, it's worthwhile to reflect upon why so many of us call ourselves Democrats.

Last year George McGovern published a book entitled *What it Means To Be a Democrat*. McGovern was born into a working class family of Republicans in South Dakota. His father was a Methodist minister, and it was this religious faith, with its "responsibility to show compassion for the homeless, the sick, the vulnerable; for miners and factory workers" that made McGovern sympathetic to FDR's New Deal. In 1952, as a young history professor, he listened on the radio to Adlai Stevenson's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention and was drawn to work for Stevenson's presidential campaign.

Eventually, McGovern became a congressman, Director of the Food for Peace Program, a three-term senator from heavily Republican South Dakota, United Nations Ambassador on World Hunger, and the 1972 Democratic presidential candidate. He courageously tried to end the

Vietnam War, cut the spiraling cost of national defense, stop the nuclear arms race, and expand federal programs to help those most in need.

This last point, using the federal government to help those in need, is often condemned by Republicans as bleeding-heart liberalism. McGovern welcomes that label. Referring to our current economic situation, he states, "Never in modern times have so many people needed a hand so desperately." In the first section of his book, entitled "Compassion," he writes that, "unlike Republicans, we Democrats do not believe in blinding ourselves to the challenges that our fellow citizens may be facing in life, sometimes through no fault of their own." He points out that, besides being altruistic, compassion pays practical dividends. For example, the New Deal programs put people to work, brought electricity to rural areas, and helped restore confidence in our banking system. The post-World War II Marshall Plan was "a national act of compassion" that resulted in a "more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Western Europe." It is that same sense of compassion that prompted

President Obama's healthcare reform.

Regarding the role of the national government, McGovern posits that Democrats share "a common goal of harnessing federal power to serve the public interest." Rather than being a radical idea, this traditional view of government was advocated by political leaders long before Franklin Roosevelt. Henry Clay, Abraham Lincoln's hero, supported this idea in the early 1800s. McGovern reminds us that in 1929 and 2008 it was the lack of government regulation, not too much oversight, that contributed to both the Great Depression and the Great Recession. "FDR was successful not because of how much he spent but because he was able to direct the government's power to serve the people—and he had a clear sense of what defined the nation's best interests," McGovern writes. And the best interest was the common good, not merely the corporate good.

Citing the New Deal, the War on Poverty, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, the National School Lunch Program, and the Patient Protection and Affordable

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—The idea that we're all in it together, and I'm my brother's keeper and sister's keeper—that's a value."

— Barack Obama

To Be a Democrat *(continued from page 2)*

Care Act, McGovern states, “I can think of no federal initiative now celebrated by both Democrats and Republicans that began as a conservative program launched over Democratic opposition.”

One aspect of federal spending McGovern agrees has gotten far too large is the defense budget. Ironically, Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush added a total of nearly \$9 trillion to the national debt through a combination of tax cuts and military spending. McGovern cites Admiral Michael Mullen, former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who warns that our growing national debt is the greatest threat to our national security. The Republican fixation on the boogeyman—whether Joe McCarthy’s bogus lists of Communists in our government, Reagan’s description of the Soviet Union as the Evil Empire, or G. W. Bush’s view of Saddam Hussein as another Hitler—has resulted in a bloated American military budget equal to that of the rest of the entire world. Yet, it was another Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, who in 1960 warned of the dangers of a growing “military-industrial complex.”

Instead of this type of war-mongering, McGovern urges us to turn our discourse and resources to find commonsense solutions to our nation’s most pressing problems. Ignoring President Carter’s warnings in the 1970s, our thirst for oil has led to two wars with Iraq. We need to invest in alternative energy sources. As a result of the escalation of Nixon’s War on Drugs, the United States incarcerates the most people of any nation. Drug laws shouldn’t punish addicts but encourage treatment. Regarding immigration, the federal government needs to create a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who contribute about 10 percent to the Social Security surplus—money they will never collect. The government should also invest more heavily in education—from preschool Head Start to affordable college loans.

Gearing up for his re-election campaign, President Obama seems to be taking McGovern’s words to heart. As Robert Borosage notes in his recent article, “Dems Draw Line with Right in 2012 Election,” Obama is articulating clear contrasts

between the two parties. In a speech to the United Auto Workers, he condemned the Republican “you are on your own’ philosophy that says we should just leave everybody to fend for themselves; let the most powerful do whatever they please.” He continued, “I keep hearing these same folks talk about values all the time. You want to talk about values? Hard work—that’s a value. Looking out for one another—that’s a value. The idea that we’re all in it together, and I’m my brother’s keeper and sister’s keeper—that’s a value.”

Obama concluded, “And restoring the values that made this country great: hard work and fair play, the chance to make it if you really try, the responsibility to reach back and help somebody else make it too—not just you. That’s who we are. That’s what we believe in.”

George McGovern concludes his book with a religious fervor worthy of his upbringing. Like President Obama, he urges us to do what we as a party have always done best—“to raise people up.”

As we embark together on the 2012 campaign, let us remember
What it Means To Be a Democrat

— it’s all generalized — the left-of-center people are more concerned with humans and human beings and human concerns; to the care of humans, not the care and worry about property rights.

— George Carlin

Democrats Are Smart Enough to Listen to Differing Opinions and Then Decide for Themselves

Professor Stone Provokes Thought at Tenth Dems University Event

By Sharon Sanders

Professor Geoffrey Stone of the University of Chicago Law School is a highly respected constitutional law professor and a former provost and dean of the law school. At an April 5 event jointly sponsored by Tenth Dems University, Move to Amend, and other progressive organizations, Prof. Stone explained the meaning and the history of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision regarding corporate funding of political action committees (PACs). He also offered his thoughts about the wisdom of trying to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn the decision. Prof. Stone suggested that such a constitutional amendment could open up a can of worms and lead to unintended consequences and perhaps more disastrous amendments in the future.

Prof. Stone explained that in *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court essentially overturned the 2003

decision in *McConnell v. Federal Election Commission*, which had held that Congress could restrict campaign contributions, but not personal expenditures, and that corporations are also subject to expenditure limitations. Back in '03, the Court upheld the constitutionality of most of the bipartisan campaign finance reform legislation known as the McCain/Feingold Act. There have been quite a few cases over the years where corporations have increasingly used their power to influence Supreme Court decisions, but in the 1976 decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Court for the first time upheld a person's constitutional right to use unlimited money from his or her own coffers as election expenditures. Thus the rich have a strong advantage over ordinary citizens to run for office or support a political position. The *Citizen's United* Court extended this advantage to corporations.

Stone stated his belief that the current Supreme Court has now made it clear that it would overturn other recent rulings, which makes it an "activist Court." He noted that if the Court overturns any portion of the Affordable Care Act, it would be

essentially rewriting the Commerce Clause, and that would prove its activism.

Professor Stone argued that the best way to make real change in the face of an activist Supreme Court is not to try to amend the Constitution but to push back, organize, scream, and make our voices heard. He pointed out that this is the technique the right wing has used to erode reproductive rights since *Roe v. Wade*. He advised us to make a fuss and make it clear that *Citizens United* is an awful decision, one that is destroying the health of our electoral system. He said we need to lobby to make Congress aware that we are unhappy. He did not think a constitutional amendment is a realistic goal.

These opinions were not what many in the audience wanted to hear. Many, including other attorneys, disagree with Prof. Stone and are persuaded that a constitutional amendment is absolutely the way to go. They also recommend working for publicly financed elections and greater enforcement of regulation by agencies like the SEC, FEC, and FCC, an alternative strategy with which Prof. Stone did not disagree.

Let me reiterate that I was not at all discouraged by Prof. Stone's arguments; in fact, just the opposite occurred. Had Prof. Stone not been so emphatic that we, the people, can make a difference, I would have left feeling very depressed. But Prof. Stone confirmed for me that by advocating for a constitutional amendment we are helping to build a strong base to push back against right-wing activists who have only the interests of the richest one percent at heart. According to Prof.



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Democrats Are Smart Enough to Listen to Differing Opinions and Then Decide for Themselves

Professor Stone Provokes Thought at Tenth Dems University Event

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Stone, if the Republicans get hold of all three branches of government, they will control the Supreme Court for a generation, implementing laws that will perpetuate their control of our country. So, when your friends, relatives, and neighbors ask, "Why bother to vote?" you have the answer.

I also believe that it doesn't hurt to hear from those who are in disagreement with us. We don't have to agree in every particular; the battle is raging over this question and the debate builds a conversation. We in Move to Amend still intend to forge ahead -- making statements, getting resolutions and petitions signed, asking people to oppose *Citizens United* and super PACs' influence on elections. I thought Prof. Stone did a great deal to educate us on the Constitution and the Supreme Court, and I came away more inspired than not.

I've always believed that grassroots movements and coalitions on issues can and will make a difference, something Prof. Stone and I completely agree on. Township and city resolutions are extremely important, because they will send a clear message to our elected officials on November 6: "We voted you in. You work for us. If you don't change your way of doing business, you will be voted out." They will be on the ballot on November 6 in at least six townships and cities statewide.

So join the fight with us. Move to Amend, Tenth Congressional District Democrats, Progressive Democrats of America, Common Cause Illinois, Democracy in Action Chicago, People for the American Way, Free Speech for People, United Republic, and many more progressive organizations are all working together to preserve our democracy.

Jack Altschuler, a Tenth Dems and Move to Amend member, summed it up for me by pointing out that the *Citizens United* ruling basically lets corporate interests "buy" our votes by increasing the amount of potentially misleading advertisement about issues and candidates. In today's rushed world, many who still put an importance on showing up to vote may only be armed with what has been conveniently fed to them via the media and advertisements.

I still believe that information presented by a neighbor or friend at your front door holds more weight than what is casually absorbed, although aggressively provided, through the media. We need to use this opportunity to educate and motivate, which will take much more energy than attending a forum or signing a petition. Are we up to the challenge? I certainly hope so.



YES, WE DID! The Obama Record on Women's Issues

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White House Council on Women and Girls. The Council is intended to coordinate the government response to the challenges facing women and girls and to ensure that agencies account for the impact of their policies on women and girls. To this end, the Council coordinated the first-ever report on the state of women in the United States.

EMPLOYMENT: Upon taking office, Obama and the Democrats immediately enacted the Lilly

Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Prior to enactment, women were limited to filing suit within 180 days after their last discriminatory paycheck, even if they did not learn of the discrimination until much later. To help the two million in-home workers who care for the sick and elderly, the Department of Labor has proposed a rule to guarantee a minimum wage and overtime pay.

In response to the first-ever report on the economic benefits of workplace flexibility, Obama signed the Telework

Enhancement Act, which requires federal agencies to determine employees' eligibility for telework (working from home computers) and to enable telework through interactive training programs and telework managers. The Act will benefit the many women (and men) struggling to juggle families with careers.

The President increased the amount of Small Business Administration funds available to women-owned businesses and opened 10 new Women's Business Centers to train or counsel disadvantaged women. The Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract program aids women-owned businesses in competing for government contracts.

In the military, the Department of Defense announced its plan to drop the "co-location exclusion" which prevented women from taking jobs stationed with ground combat units. The change opens up 13,000 new positions for women soldiers.

EDUCATION: Obama's Race to the Top program gives a competitive edge to plans that remove barriers to girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and math.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Earlier this year, the Obama administration expanded the more than 80-year-old FBI definition of rape to include men and to drop the requirement that a victim must physically resist his or her attacker. The definition now includes victims who could not give consent because they were drunk or drugged. The prior FBI definition was so narrow that the City of Chicago did not report any rapes in 2010 because they did not fall within the guideline. Women's groups had been seeking the change for more than a decade.



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According to Politifact.com, Obama fulfilled campaign promises to fully fund the Violence Against Women Act by increasing funding in his 2010 and 2011 budgets. Obama also kept a promise to appoint a special adviser to coordinate the government's handling of domestic violence issues.

Further, Obama proclaimed October 2011 Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

WAR AND FOREIGN AID: In a December 19, 2011 executive order, Obama established the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The Plan is intended to promote women's participation in preventing and resolving conflicts such as wars and genocide. The Plan calls for maintaining a gender-responsive approach to diplomatic and defense work, strengthening women's rights, leadership and participation in peace processes and conflict prevention, protecting women and children from violence, and responding to the special needs of women and children in war zones.

One of Obama's first acts upon taking office was to overturn the "Mexico City Policy" or "Global Gag Rule," which prevented overseas family-planning clinics from receiving U.S. aid if they offered abortion-related services or counseling, even if those services were funded by nongovernment sources. Ronald Regan introduced the Gag Rule in 1984. Bill Clinton rescinded it in 1993, but George W. Bush revived it in 2001.

WOMEN'S HEALTH: As I write this column with knotted stomach, the fate of the Affordable Care Act hangs in

the balance before the U.S. Supreme Court, which will decide on the constitutionality of this desperately-needed landmark law. The ACA's provisions entitle women to a host of vital services: health insurance plans are required to cover without deductible the cost of well-women visits, screening for gestational diabetes, human papillomavirus testing, counseling for sexually transmitted infections including HIV,



contraception, breastfeeding support, and counseling for domestic violence victims. Employers are required to provide reasonable break times and privacy for mothers to express breast milk. Many health plans will even be required to cover the cost of pregnancy as of 2014.

Although the mandate to provide no-cost birth control has encountered controversy, particularly from Roman Catholic leaders, the National Abortion Rights Action League

praised the President for standing up for women's healthcare. The President has also refused to allow Republicans to defund Planned Parenthood in the Federal budget. In 2014, the Affordable Care Act will prevent insurance companies from denying coverage or raising premiums based on gender or pre-existing conditions, including pregnancy.

Author's Note: The benefits of the Affordable Care Act and its possible repeal by activist right-wing Supreme Court judges underscore the overwhelming importance of re-electing President Obama and ensuring that enough Democrats go to Washington with him.

This means working hard to elect Brad Schneider and unseat Robert Dold, so that we can pass legislation to replace the Affordable Care Act should it become necessary. The only hope of changing the composition of the Supreme Court that brought us Citizens United is to re-elect Barack Obama. One conservative justice's retirement is all it takes to turn a 5-4 regressive court into a 5-4 progressive court, but only if Obama takes the oath of office next January.

"I don't want everybody to vote. Elections are not won by a majority of the people. They never have been from the beginning of our country and they are not now. As a matter of fact, our [far right conservative] leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down."

That was said by Paul Weyrich. He died in 2008, but his absolutist attitude and his vision of a right-wing Christian America run by the wealthy and forced upon everyone else lives on. You can find it prominently applied through the efforts of at least 22 Republican state legislatures working diligently right now to prevent poor people, the elderly, and minorities from voting.

You might be fooled by the names of some patriotic-sounding organizations, like The Heritage Foundation, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and the Free Congress Foundation, all of which Weyrich co-founded. You'll only find them patriotic, though, if you are a rich person who likes to dominate and control other people and for whom greed is a key personal value.

The people at these organizations are fighting to create an America that is like that of the Gilded Age, a time in America when the wealthy had all the advantages and everyone else suffered. Over the past 30 years the far righties have done a very good job of incrementally moving America in that direction. They have managed to bring us laws that have made sure that our largest, most profitable industries continue to get billions of dollars in tax breaks, even as our small businesses and middle class families deal with recession and economic despair but still pay their taxes. They have helped to engineer the removal of protections of the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the food you eat; and they have abandoned the anti-trust regulations that would otherwise protect us from the pirates who are too big to fail.

Worst of all, they have been a driving force in making sure that much of our Congress is bought and paid for by big money interests, all to the detriment of 99 percent of Americans. Their purchase guarantees no reforms of their freedom-robbing ways and a one-way ticket to subsistence living for you. They have institutionalized that big money influence through

legislation and through the democracy-destroying *Citizens United* case decided by five radical Supreme Court justices.

The Paul Weyrich protégés at ALEC are hard at work engineering an authoritarian feudal system for the benefit of only the richest, run by people who allow no room for your differing opinion and who do not care about your suffering. And they might get their way because the far-right conservative "leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down." If that happens, they will win and you will lose, and you will not like what happens. It will be chilling, like a horror movie made real.

Yet, at least for now, the future is still in our hands and we can make this an America for all of us. It's that "liberty and justice for all" part of the Pledge of Allegiance, and there really is only one way to stop the Weyrich big-money madness and set America back on track.

On November 6, 2012, you get to decide the future we'll create for you, your children, and your grandchildren. All you have to do is show up and vote.

Put it on your calendar right now!



The Supreme Court and the Health Law Cases—“It Ain’t Over ‘Til It’s Over”

by Miles J. Zaremski

By the time you read this article, more than a month will have elapsed since the nine justices of our Supreme Court heard oral arguments over three days in what will be looked back upon as historic cases of a generation. The Court will be deciding whether or not the federal healthcare act signed into law in March 2010 — the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) — is constitutional. As many commentators and columnists there are who are paid to comment, as many pundits there are who pontificate, and as many scholars there are who analyze every word of every question and every statement made by each of the justices, so there has been an equal number of opinions. What is the voting public to think or believe, including those members of the Tenth Congressional District Democrats who subscribe to this newsletter?

The best way to characterize what took place at the end of March over those three days and to capture it in sort of a “retrospectroscope” are the words of the famous New York Yankee, Hall-of-Fame catcher Yogi Berra: “It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.” Despite what any columnist, writer, pundit, or scholar has said after listening to the oral arguments, the justices’ words, demeanor, and verbalization of ideas do not necessarily signal how the Supreme Court will decide the issues – which it will do no later than the close of its current term on June 30. Given the monumental importance of the issues, what happened during oral

argument will be followed up by many further discussions and debate among the justices, and there will even be attempts by one justice to convince another to change his thinking. Because the four “liberal” justices (Ginsburg, Breyer, Sotomayor, and Kagan) seemed convinced that ACA should be the law of the land, all their camp needs to do is to peel off one from the other side. The most likely candidates may be Justice Kennedy or Chief Justice Roberts.

There were four issues before the Court: (1) whether or not an 1867 law, the Anti-Injunction Act, that precludes challenging a tax in a federal court

until after it is due and paid, applies; (2) whether the individual mandate (called the “minimum coverage” provision) that requires every person to buy a health policy of insurance or else suffer a money penalty exceeds Congress’ authority under the Commerce Clause of our Constitution; (3) whether, if this mandate is found to be unconstitutional, all or any part of the remaining portions of ACA could remain (this is called the “severability” issue); and (4) whether the provisions concerning the expansion of Medicaid are unconstitutional because they coerce the states’ participation in them in return for the federal government’s

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The Supreme Court and the Health Law Cases—“It Ain’t Over ‘Til It’s Over”

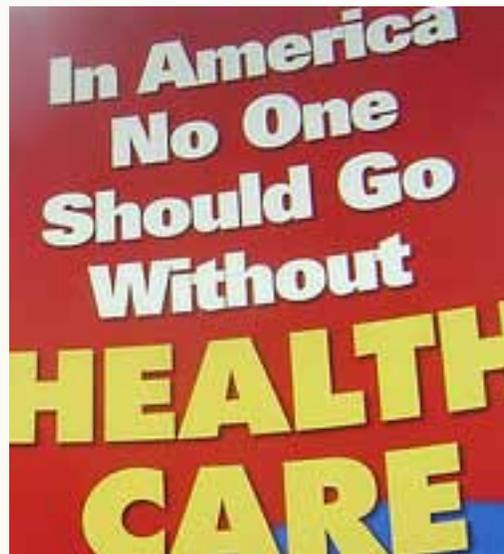
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4-16-12 (<http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/102685/conservative-defense-obamacare-affordable-care-health>). The justices should know that Congress has the authority to regulate both the healthcare market and the insurance market due to their respective impact on interstate commerce. So it is not a question of regulation of a market here; it must be only the method of regulation to which the conservative justices might object.

Those opposing the mandate invoke individual liberty, claiming, “Obamacare’ is the opposite of freedom. Under Obamacare, the government, not the individual, has freedom.” (Santorum, “My plan offers a better way than ObamaRomney Care,” *USA Today*, 4-2-12, p.9A) Why force folks to buy insurance when they do not wish to do so, or do not wish to do so until the need arises, like on the way to the hospital in an ambulance?

But the insurance model does not, and cannot, work this way. Using the broccoli example, as noted economist and Nobel laureate, Paul Krugman, has written, “When people choose not to buy broccoli, they don’t make broccoli unavailable to those who want it. But when people don’t buy health insurance until they get sick -- which is what happens in the absence of a mandate -- the resulting worsening of the risk pool makes insurance more expensive, and often

unaffordable for those who remain.” (“Broccoli and Bad Faith,” *NY Times*, 3-29-12) An auto dealer is not forced to give a car to every person who needs it so that those of us able to afford one then have to pay for others’ cars as well. And, government doesn’t force people into the healthcare market; from birth we all are in it, like it or not.



As an alternative to the mandate, could Congress tax citizens to pay for healthcare? There doesn’t seem to be any serious question that taxing citizens to pay for government-furnished healthcare is constitutional. Think about Medicare, for example. As quoted in Krugman’s piece, Charles Fried, a former Solicitor General under Ronald Reagan, has said, “I’ve never understood why regulating by making people go buy something is somehow more intrusive than regulating by making them pay taxes and then giving it to them.”

So where are we left on the mandate? If the Supreme Court finds the mandate unconstitutional, what then? Well, taxes could be substituted, as mentioned previously, but that is pure fantasy given the political

climate in Congress, even though mandates already exist in the form of payroll tax dollars used to fund Social Security and Medicare. Justice Ginsburg likened our Social Security system to a government old-age annuity that everyone is forced to purchase. “It just seems very strange to me that there’s no question we can have a Social Security system [despite] all the people who say [of the ACA’s ‘individual mandate’]: ‘I’m being forced to pay for something I don’t want.’” And then there was Justice Kennedy, who wondered about Congress having the ability to create a Medicare-type system for the uninsured without any private market intervention.

Social Security and Medicare are not the only existing mandates. There are the federal laws that prohibit group health plans from setting lower or lifetime dollar limits for mental health benefits (1996 Mental Health Parity Act), and those that mandate that health plans offer maternity coverage to pay for at least a 48-hour hospital stay following normal deliveries and 96 hours following a Caesarean section (1996 Newborns’ and Mothers’ Health Protection Act).

What is thus left if the Supreme Court fails to find the mandate constitutional is that millions more than the 50 million or so Americans now uninsured will find themselves unable to access and afford our healthcare system. What an incredible travesty of social policy this would present if it were to become reality.

III. Severability

If the mandate is tossed out, what



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parts, if any, of the ACA would remain? The two most closely-aligned provisions to the mandate within the ACA are the guaranteed issue and community rating sections. To reiterate, these provisions bar discrimination in healthcare insurance based on such factors as age and gender; call for benefits such as coverage for pre-existing conditions, and certain required medical services; require that children be permitted to remain on their parents’ policies until age 26; and prohibit lifetime caps on coverage. Without the mandate, it is unlikely that the insurance industry could still afford guaranteed issue and community rating. In that sense, all three of these provisions of the ACA are integrally-linked. If one falls, they all probably will.

Less certain are the other provisions within this massive act, and it is doubtful that the Court will have any inclination to say exactly what stays and what goes -- that is a determination generally left to the legislative branch of government. Another option would be to throw out the entire ACA, as Justice Scalia seemed predisposed to do with his observation that the mandate is the heart of the legislation and that, without it, nothing could stand. The liberal bloc chose to see it otherwise, since the ACA includes many provisions that are unrelated to the mandate. Besides guaranteed issue and community rating, additional



provisions in the ACA include: (1) increased coverage of preventive services; (2) birth control coverage; (3) restrictions on lifetime and annual limits; (4) coverage for children with pre-existing conditions; (5) pre-existing condition insurance plan; (6) no health plan barriers for ob-gyn services; (7) access to out-of-network emergency room services; (8) right to appeal health insurance plan decisions; (9) consumer assistance program; (10) more value for the insurance dollar (80/20 rule); (11) no insurance cancellations for honest mistakes; (12) expanded Medicare coverage (prescription drugs); (13) Indian Health Improvement Act reauthorized; (14) tanning salon tax; and (15) expanded coverage for young adults on their parents’ plans. Hall, K., “Affordable Care Act Repeal Would Have Immediate Consequences,” *Huffington Post* (posted 04/03/2012 (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/03/affordable-care-act-repeal_n_1400009.html)).

The right thing to do is find the mandate constitutional as a proper exercise of Congress’ authority under the Commerce Clause, thus

eliminating any need to address severability. There are enough safeguards in place to protect individual liberties from unwarranted intrusions by the government under the Commerce Clause.

IV. Medicaid Provisions

The final issue is whether the ACA’s expansion of the Medicaid program is impermissible under the Constitution since states are coerced into participating by accepting federal funds. Several of the conservative justices seemed attracted to this proposition. Justice Sotomayor was astounded, asking how a state could claim to be coerced into voluntarily participating in an expanded Medicaid when it is given a boatload of money by the federal government in return for complying with the terms of the program? Under the ACA, from 2014-2016, the federal government will pick up 100 percent of the states’ additional Medicaid costs, scaling down to 90 percent in 2020 and thereafter. Justice Sotomayor posited that the argument that the Medicaid provisions were unconstitutional

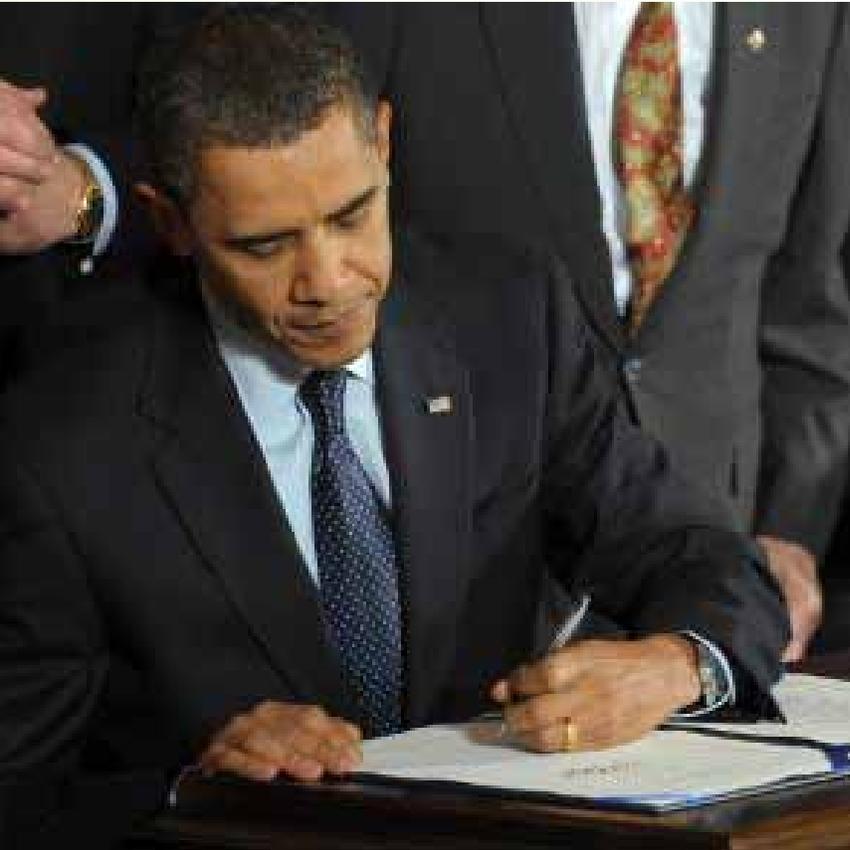


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APPROVED

MAR 23 2010

A handwritten signature of Barack Obama in black ink on a light-colored background.

suggested that the larger any federal program is the less power the federal government has to control the quid pro quo for the money it is providing.

The Medicaid expansion should be upheld.

V. Conclusion

The implications of these Supreme Court health law cases are so momentous for the times that one should not write the obituary for the

mandate just yet. Even apart from the epistemic difficulty with having the new benefits and coverage without a mandate on all citizens to pay for them, a beacon of hope exists that ACA will be found constitutional in all respects. Chief Justice Roberts and/or Justice Kennedy hopefully will realize that to find the mandate unconstitutional will destroy the best possible means — even knowing some of its provisions need tweaking and further enhancement — to have millions more Americans than now be able to access and afford healthcare in the United States. After all, if we do not have our health, we have

nothing at all. Healthcare should be a right for all, and the ACA is a start in that direction. Concomitantly, wouldn't Chief Justice Roberts want "his" court to be known more for a balanced approach at decision-making going forward, i.e. affirming ACA as the law of the land, in contrast to the Court's opinions in such cases as *Bush v. Gore* and *Citizens United v. FEC*?

As the title to this piece says,

“It Ain’t Over ‘Til It’s Over”



President Obama and Israel By Steve Sheffey

Between now and November we're going to hear a lot of whoppers about President Obama and Israel. Some will come from supporters of Mitt Romney. Others will come from supporters of Robert Dold in an effort to convince voters that because Brad Schneider supports the President, Brad—despite a life-long commitment to pro-Israel advocacy—is somehow suspect.

Please share and save these facts about President Obama for future reference; they not only address common questions about the President, but they are bound to surface repeatedly in the next seven months.

President Obama backs Israel in international forums. Last September, the Israeli newspaper *Yehidot Aharonot* said of President Obama's U.N. speech, "An American President has never given such a pro-Israel speech at the U.N.," adding, "Not only did Obama adopt all of Israel's claims against recognizing a Palestinian state through the U.N., but he also adopted the basic Israeli narrative." On the cover of its weekend magazine, the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* depicted President Obama as a Zionist Captain

America coming to Israel's defense.

Other groups praising President Obama's speech included AIPAC, the American Jewish Committee, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and the Orthodox Union.

Here in relevant part is what President Obama said last September at the U.N.. Remember that he was not talking to AIPAC or a domestic audience. This is what he told the entire world:

"America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable, and our friendship with Israel is deep and enduring. And so we believe that any lasting peace must acknowledge the very real security concerns that Israel faces every single day. Let's be honest: Israel is surrounded by neighbors that have waged repeated wars against it. Israel's citizens have been killed by rockets fired at their houses and suicide bombs on their buses. Israel's children come of age knowing that throughout the region, other children are taught to hate them. Israel, a small country of less than eight million people, looks out at a world where leaders of much

larger nations threaten to wipe it off of the map. The Jewish people carry the burden of centuries of exile, persecution, and the fresh memory of knowing that six million people were killed simply because of who they were.

"These facts cannot be denied. The Jewish people have forged a successful state in their historic homeland. Israel deserves recognition. It deserves normal relations with its neighbors. And friends of the Palestinians do them no favors by ignoring this truth, just as friends of Israel must recognize the need to pursue a two-state solution with a secure Israel next to an independent Palestine."

President Obama's record on Israel is outstanding. President Obama has called for the removal of Syrian President Assad, ordered the successful assassination of Osama bin-Laden, has done more than any other president to stop Iran's illicit nuclear program, restored Israel's qualitative military edge after years of erosion under the Bush administration, increased security assistance to Israel to record levels, boycotted Durban II and Durban III, has taken U.S.-Israel military

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President Obama and Israel *(continued from page 14)*

and intelligence cooperation to unprecedented levels, cast his only veto in the U.N. against the one-sided anti-Israel Security Council resolution, opposed the Goldstone Report, stood with Israel against the Gaza flotilla, and organized a successful diplomatic crusade against the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Those are all verifiable facts.

But that's not enough for our Republican friends. Maybe this will help:

Only two U.S. Presidents have ever visited Israel during their first term in office: Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. President Obama visited Israel twice prior to becoming president, in 2006 and 2008. George W. Bush did not visit Israel as president until the seventh year of his presidency. Ronald Reagan never visited Israel in his entire life. It would have been nice if Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, Bush I, Bush II, and Obama had visited Israel during their first terms in office, but they didn't. As pro-Israel activists, we should judge President Obama on his record, not on his travel itinerary.

President Obama's position on

Jerusalem reflects long-standing U.S. policy. The United States does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem. I wish we did. You may wish we did. But we don't. It's true that Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act in 1995. But 17 years later, the embassy is not in Jerusalem. Every six months Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama have signed waivers preventing its move. Unlike Obama, Bush promised to move the embassy, but he didn't. Bush affirmatively broke his promise 16 times.

Consequently, the U.S. opposes construction in Jerusalem. President Obama's policies are no different from his predecessors' on this issue.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said on November 9, 2010, "The disagreements with the US over Jerusalem are well-known. They are not new and have continued for 40 years."

The Bush administration opposed construction in Har Homa. On September 12, 2007, *Ha'aretz* reported that the Bush administration's belief that construction in Jerusalem "doesn't help build confidence."

On January 8, 2008 *The Jerusalem Post* reported:

"On the eve of U.S. President George W. Bush's visit to Israel and the region, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice placed the issue of settlement activity in the West Bank and east Jerusalem at center stage, telling *The Jerusalem Post* that 'Har Homa is a settlement the United States has opposed from the very beginning.' Rice, who was accompanying Bush en route to Israel overnight Tuesday, said that 'the United States doesn't make a distinction' between settlement activity in east Jerusalem and the West Bank and that Israel's road map obligations, which include a building freeze, relate to 'settlement activity generally.'"

Sound familiar?

President Obama is polling well among American Jews. On April 3, 2012, *The Forward* reported that President Obama is on track to duplicate his 2008 success with American Jewry. "A new survey of Jews shows 62% plan to vote for the president, roughly similar to where he stood at this time four

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President Obama and Israel *(continued from page 15)*

years ago when he went on to garner nearly 80% of the Jewish vote in November... Even more importantly, just 7% of Jews who voted for Obama in 2008 now prefer a Republican candidate, indicating Obama does not face a significant fracturing of his Jewish base of support." The poll was conducted by Public Religion Research, a nonpartisan organization.

Other polls have found that while President Obama's numbers have slipped among all subgroups, the margin of support for President Obama among American Jews has remained constant relative to the general population. In other words, to the extent American Jews have concerns about the President's performance, they are the same concerns other Americans have and are not driven by Israel.

This is not surprising considering that two separate independent polls, one conducted by the *Jerusalem Post* and one conducted by the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, found that President Obama's popularity is surging in Israel, where the respondents presumably do focus on Israel.

President Obama's relationship with

Israel and Prime Minister Netanyahu should be judged on results, not speculation. Last March, President Obama met with Bibi for the *ninth* time. Seven of those meetings were at the White House and two were at the U.N.. I'm not aware of any head of state that President Obama has spent more time with.

The myth of Obama's snub of Netanyahu was manufactured by those seeking to create a rift between the two leaders.

According to JTA, the Jewish news service, President Obama did not "snub" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in March 2010. Israeli officials have repeatedly confirmed that this is true. (One of the central planks of the "snub" myth is that Obama left Bibi alone to dine with his family; in fact, Michelle and the kids were in New York that evening.) Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador to the United States, has repeatedly said on the record that it never happened:

"Specifically, Oren explained his consistent 'frustration' over the vicious 'snub' rumor that has been circulating since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the

United States in March. Supposedly, President Obama was less than diplomatic with Netanyahu and even refused to have dinner with him -- even forcing him to enter the White House through some back door. But this is absolutely not true. According to Ambassador Oren, who was present the entire time, the meeting followed the protocol of a non-state visit; no pomp, no media, and no photos. President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu worked 'closely and positively' during the meeting until late at night, with the prime minister and his team being granted the unusual privilege of staying on in the White House to work after the president retired. Later, when Netanyahu asked if the president could return to hear new ideas, he gladly did; and the two parted on good terms. It was not until the following morning that Israeli officials read that the visit was described as a 'snub,' and they were shocked.

"The 'snub' claims are an invention of the media and they are being used by partisans, along with other rumors and outright lies, to damage President Obama without any regard for the truth. As Ambassador Oren said to us and has said before,

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President Obama and Israel *(continued from page 16)*

those who use support for Israel as a partisan weapon or seek to inject partisanship into the issue of support for Israel threaten the critical U.S.-Israel relationship, by threatening the essential need for bipartisan support for the U.S.-Israel relationship."

President Obama will prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

President Obama has imposed the toughest sanctions on Iran ever, and he keeps ratcheting up the pressure. President Obama's opposition to legislation that would limit his options is based not on disagreement about the efficacy of sanctions or the need to stop Iran, but on the Executive Branch's natural and longstanding discomfort with having its hands tied by Congress (hence the waiver provision in the Jerusalem Embassy Act mentioned above). In other words, "it was executive prerogative, stupid."

Martin Indyk of the Brookings Institution recently wrote that President Obama's critics are ignoring

"the significant progress Obama has made in organizing an international coalition against Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, including the passage of a U.N. Security Council resolution imposing harsh sanctions

on Iran. As the Iranian regime's defiance continues in the face of what Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei himself has described as 'crippling' sanctions, Obama has toughened his rhetoric, too, declaring that he will not allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons.

"And while he has emphasized that 'all options are on the table,' he has actually taken one off the table: containment. That means Obama's approach is binary — either Iran gives up its nuclear weapons aspirations through negotiations, or the United States will probably use preventive force to destroy its nuclear capabilities. That's hardly capitulation."

President Obama's position on the 1967 lines is nothing more than a reiteration of long-standing U.S. and Israeli policy. Of the six living former IDF chiefs of staff, all but one favors a Palestinian state based on the 1967 lines. Of the six living former Shin Bet chiefs, all but one (who hasn't spoken publicly) favor a Palestinian state based on the 1967 lines. All four living ex-Mossad chiefs who have spoken on the subject favor a Palestinian state based on the 1967 lines. I don't

know about you, but I consider the IDF, the Shin Bet, and the Mossad pro-Israel organizations.

Mitchell Bard is the Executive Director of AICE and the Jewish Virtual Library. His "Myths & Facts" are relied upon by pro-Israel activists across the political spectrum. On June 27, 2011 Bard said that that President Obama "actually restated Israel's longstanding policy on [U.N. Resolution] 242."

Former Prime Minister and former Mayor of Jerusalem Ehud Olmert said on May 27, 2011, "President Obama changed nothing and said nothing new in his speeches last week. He expressed the simple truth that has no alternative. The whole world, and certainly Western countries, ranging from Australia through Canada, Europe and all U.S. administrations in the last generation — with no exceptions — unequivocally support the resolution of our conflict with the Palestinians on the basis of the 1967 borders with territorial swaps."

President Obama's comments were substantively identical to what President George W. Bush said in 2008: "I believe that any peace

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President Obama and Israel *(continued from page 17)*

agreement between them will require mutually agreed adjustments to the armistice lines of 1949 to reflect current realities and to ensure that the Palestinian state is viable and contiguous."

Bush did not utter the magic words "1967 lines," but the 1949 armistice lines *are* the 1967 lines. Bush did not utter the magic words "land swaps," but that's what "mutually agreed adjustments" are. The only real difference is that Bush's political opponents did not jump down his throat for stating the obvious.

The Washington Post reported on May 22, 2011 that:

"Israeli commentators pointed out Sunday that the 1967 lines have for years been considered the basis for any future border between Israel and a Palestinian state, noting that Obama had mentioned land swaps that could leave large settlements inside Israel, as Netanyahu has demanded."

'What did Obama say?' wrote Ofer Shelah, a columnist in the *Maariv* newspaper. 'That any agreement with the Palestinians, if and when it is signed, must be based on the 1967 lines with border adjustments. Is there any Israeli or Palestinian who doesn't

know that this is what will happen? It's the only game in town.'

"Dov Weisglass, who was chief of staff to then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said in a radio interview that 'anyone here deluding himself...that the drawing of the new map will be based on any reference point other than the 1967 boundaries is simply disconnected from reality.'"

Weisglass is right. What other lines could be the reference point? The US-Canadian border? The Palestinian state will not be on the moon. It will be on most of the West Bank, which is defined by the 1967 lines; hence the need to negotiate a border different from the 1967 lines to reflect demographic realities and security considerations.

President Obama's open microphone comments to Russian President Medvedev were nothing surprising.

Some in our community are fearful that if President Obama is re-elected, he will be free to implement the secret Kenyan Marxist Socialist Muslim agenda he's been so careful to keep under wraps. The rest of us understand that when he told Medvedev that he would have more flexibility after the election, he was simply reflecting the reality that it's

hard to make progress on anything with an election looming.

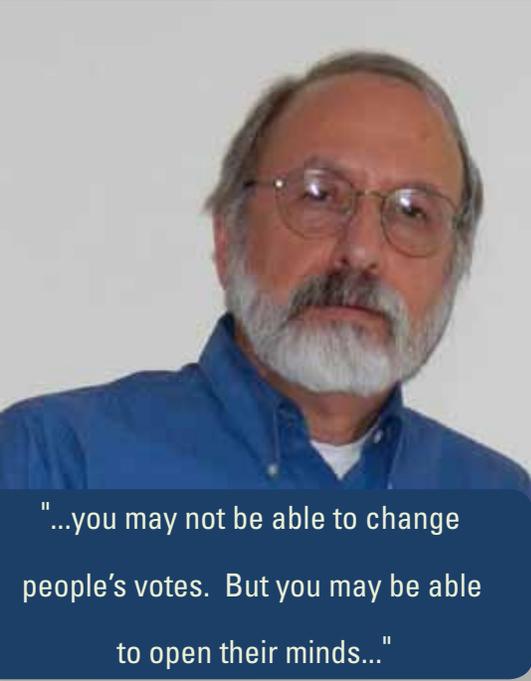
And when all else fails, the President's critics cite either the Emergency Committee for Israel (ECI) or the Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC), both of which are generously funded by Sheldon Adelson, the poster-boy for campaign finance reform who contributed millions of dollars to Newt Gingrich's failed presidential bid. Adelson also funds *Israel Hayom*, a free right-wing newspaper published in Israel to give an air of legitimacy to Adelson's right-wing views.

The ECI does not advocate for Israel. It advocates for Republican candidates and should be called "The Emergency Committee to Deceptively Scare Jews into Voting Republican."

Demonstrably false stories propagated by the RJC include the airbase at Azerbaijan myth, deliberately and dramatically misrepresenting joint U.S.-Israel missile defense assistance to Israel under President Obama, contradicting the Israeli government on missile defense exercises, contradicting Michael Oren and labeling his words "BS," and pushing a story about visas for Israeli nuclear scientists that was debunked by the Israeli embassy.

The Politics of Engagement: Jack Strom

By Eleonora di Liscia



"...you may not be able to change people's votes. But you may be able to open their minds..."

If there is one thing Tenth Dems volunteer Jack Strom has learned as a systems designer, it is how to dig deeper. And in politics, this ability has served him well.

"Part of my work in systems design is more like a project manager, and as a project manager, the most important thing is to define the problem. So to really define the problem, we have to talk to people in depth. They might say they need a report of defects; and when you talk to them, what they really need is data about the defects," explained Strom.

From this experience, Strom has learned not to accept the first thing someone tells him, whether he's canvassing or talking to friends.

"The first thing that comes out of their mouths might be a campaign slogan, and I might have to dig deeper. If we only talk to people who agree with us, we're not going to explore other motivations," he said. "When I canvass, it's not always easy, but you

are going to be challenged, and your position is going to become stronger. When you talk to people who don't hold your position, you're better able to understand your own position."

For example, Strom recalls a conversation with a libertarian friend who opposed public financing of healthcare or even health inspections. Strom pointed out that if you don't have enough inspectors, a restaurant business can sell spoiled meat. This hurts not only the people who eat the meat, but also the other restaurants who don't sell spoiled meat, since people will then stay home. The loss to the economy would outweigh the cost of the inspector.

"If I had not been challenged by my libertarian friend, I might not have thought all that through," he said. "We need to talk to people on all sides of the political spectrum, and they need to talk to us. Too many people on both sides of the aisle are not talking to the other side, and when that happens, research shows that people's views become more extreme."

Strom agrees that you may not be able to change people's votes. But you may be able to open their minds to questions and plant facts they are not aware of. For example, Strom again cites his libertarian friend who said that government should stay out of everything.

"I say does that mean we should do away with the food inspectors. And he says no, we need a limited amount of government protection in certain circumstances. I think you can open up that individual to other possibilities," said Strom. "Sometimes when the facts don't attack their self-concept, people are willing to admit their mistakes."

Strom joined Tenth Dems after volunteering for Melissa Bean. He met Lauren Beth Gash at an event and agreed to do for Tenth Dems what he'd done for Bean -- manage the database. Tenth Dems originally had one database for volunteers, one for donors, and one on an officer's smartphone. Strom converted all three to the current system. In addition, Strom helps out with other activities, such as setting up for events and collating questions for candidate forums.

Strom became politically active because, "I'd rather be part of the solution than part of the problem or just complaining about the problem. If you are just complaining about the problem, you are part of the problem," he said.

Originally from New York, Strom got a history degree from the University of Florida in 1974. He worked a spectrum of jobs ranging from taxi driver to waiter to substitute teacher. As a newspaper photographer, he sold a photo essay on the working poor to the *Christian Science Monitor*, and while still in college covered student riots for the school paper. Then he decided to switch to computers, obtaining his M.B.A. from Georgia State University in 1984. "In that day and age, they were hiring anyone who could spell 'IBM,'" he said.

Strom later took a sabbatical and earned a B.S. in biology from the University of Arizona. He worked culturing cells and creating simulations until the project money ran out, and he returned to computer systems data base design around 1998. Strom is now a consultant and sole proprietor of his firm, Data Voyager.

The Community Connection Corner by Vicki Bailyn

--because politics should be about more than just elections, it should be about people working together to build stronger communities.



The Tenth Dems's first Community Connection office opened at 118 N. Genesee Street in Waukegan in December 2010. "ComCon" is guided by the principle that politics should be about more than just elections; it should be about people working together to build stronger communities. I think of this office as the most fundamental and meaningful kind of "Get-Out-the-Vote" effort: We set an example for what it means to be a Democrat. Our actions embody our values.

What do we do?

We're all about connections. We reach out and recognize good efforts already underway in the local communities, and we connect where we can bring value (our Job Interview Workshop, for example). We develop new projects within Tenth Dems itself, or with partners, that connect us to the community and its needs and dreams (our Teachers' Wish Lists and Poetry/Prose contest, for example). We have a volunteer-created database that helps connect people to the services they need, including services that already exist such as legal, food, health, and educational.

Our monthly Community Connection Corner feature will update you on key projects. We'll also reach out to you as volunteers who can help our efforts succeed. We'll reach out to you as donors of the goods and funds that are necessary to support our projects. We look forward to your involvement on all levels.

Here are highlights of our ongoing projects:

- The Voter Project - The project's goal is to increase voter turnout in the area.

A ComCon office was transformed into ELECTION CENTRAL 2012. A new window display provides election information and invites passersby in to learn more.

Training sessions produced over 50 new Deputy Registrars (DRs) for voter registration. Before the primary elections, new DRs participated in voter registration activities at the North Chicago Library and local high schools. We're planning additional post-primary voter registration opportunities.

- A Second Teachers' Wish List has been fulfilled! Books and classroom supplies were delivered to Mr. Geise's 5th grade classroom at Clearview Elementary in Waukegan. What joy! We're working on a third teacher's list. Can't do it without your help!

- Entries in the First Annual Poetry/Prose contest have been published in a special literary supplement to the *Tenth News*. Entries for the Second Annual Poetry/Prose contest are being judged. The second Poetry/Prose slam will take place in mid-May.

- Bi-Weekly Job Interview Training by ComCon volunteers continues as part of Waukegan Township's Anti-Recidivism/back-to-work.

- The ComCon Waukegan office is frequently used for local Obama campaign, activities including phone banking.

FEATURED PROJECT: TEACHERS' WISH LISTS

School budgets are so very tight. How do teachers provide their kids with the books they really want to read? And what about the classroom supplies that get used up in a flash? Nettie Mojarro (she and Jerry own Jerry's Tacos next door to the Waukegan ComCon office) first dreamed about helping teachers. She *connected* Community Connection with the Waukegan Public Library, which joined together to fulfill the wish lists of Waukegan elementary school teachers. Thanks to donations of money, books, and supplies from Tenth Dems donors and from Jerry's customers, we have fulfilled the lists of two fifth grade teachers—delivering a wagonload of gift-wrapped goodies to Ms. Cabrera's classroom in February, and to Mr. Geise's in March.

The United Way of Lake County has created a moving video highlighting the very real lifetime impact that missed educational opportunities have on the children of Lake County. Please take a few minutes to view *Statisticks* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aNJMFzFEYk&feature=channel_video_title&noredirect=1) Lots more kids, lots more teachers, lots of need. Please help. We have cash donation boxes at various locations within the 10th District, including at the Moraine Township Democratic Organization's office and Jerry's Tacos. Or mail a check made out to Tenth Dems, with

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MAY ISSUE

The Community Connection Corner *(continued from page 20)*



“Teachers’ Lists” on the memo line to **Tenth Congressional District Democrats**, P.O. Box 523, Deerfield, Illinois 60015. Call 847-266-VOTE (8683) for more information.

How else can I help?

- Voter Project Volunteers needed Join planning/working team for voter registration events.
- Your ideas and help are needed to contact religious institutions, schools, like-minded organizations,

supermarkets, farmers markets, and other entities we haven’t even thought of yet — to set up events.

- Be a liaison to the Deputy Registrars: Help complete a list of active DRs, contact DRs to staff registration events, etc.
- Join the team -There's lots of work to be done,and new ideas keep cropping up all the time.
- Teachers’ Wish List Support/ Donations.
- Can you help us develop a web page on the Tenth Dems web site?

- Volunteer in the ComCon office to help drop-ins find their voter information and do other office tasks.
- Bring us your ideas of new initiatives to consider.

And, our thanks to you:
For donating to our Teacher’s Wish List project at the Holiday Membership Party in December, and the MTDO Meet and Greet in February. You helped us fulfill lists one and two.

Thanks also:
To DRs who staffed our voter registration events;
For clothing donations to job hunters;
For caring!



Polarities Help Us Avoid Our Fears and Get What We Want

By Neesa Sweet

We've just been through a hard-fought primary in the 10th District. And while, for us, fights between Democrats are, to some extent, fights between friends who share a similar vision of the country, we are preparing for a general election against opponents who describe their ideal United States in very different terms.

It is very easy when ringing doorbells or making phone calls to be passionate about what, to us, seems logical and true. And there is no doubt that we are in an urgent and crucial conflict over two visions of America and that we are fighting hard to maintain progressive values. There is, however, a truth that comes to us from the wisdom traditions and major religions: if we can't see the truth in the other, then we actually create the future we are most afraid of.

A friend and teacher of mine, Barry Johnson, explains this through a way of thinking he calls Polarity Management, or PM. I believe that politicians and those working in government might do well to take a look at PM as a useful framing tool, whether a person is engaged in direct negotiations on an issue or talking about candidates in the field.

Polarities are values that come in pairs. They seem like opposites; but they are different from pure opposites because, in a polarity, focusing for too long on one pole, to the neglect of the other, actually leads to the other. We see the result of this in American history as over the past 236 years we have seen the mood of the country swing from left to right to left and back again. It works like breathing—breathe in too long and you have to breathe out, and breathe out too long and you have to breathe in. In polarities you don't choose x OR y. You choose x AND y. And by doing

so you actually get more of what you want.

Barry Johnson has designed a graphic way of looking at polarities -- a polarity map -- that allows us to look at the upsides and the downsides of polarity pairs as well as the often emotional path people and groups take vacillating between them (shown on p. 23). Further, he's devised a mechanism that can help people get "the best of both" most of the time instead of spending too much time in the downside of either. He starts with a general model that becomes concrete and real with specific content.

The model goes like this: When you focus too long on the upside of one side of a polarity to the neglect of the other, that focus causes the downside to emerge. People and groups, finding themselves in that downside, usually want to go directly to the upside of the other pole, hence the vacillation. If, instead, you take a look at the downside of the other pole and the upside of the pole you're about to leave, you will create a healthy, well-managed flow between the poles that minimizes the time in the downsides and gets that "best of both."

A look at a pair that usually plays a role in politics – tradition and innovation — will help make these abstractions more concrete. In many ways, this is an underlying force at play in specific stances and issues, such as whether one identifies as progressive or conservative; how one sees the role of government; and attitudes towards women, taxes, healthcare, and education.

From the point of view of creating a thriving United States, if we look at tradition, the upsides, or advantages, might include historical continuity, core values such as democracy, and the protection of stability. The

upsides of innovation might include developing better ways to use resources, new technical possibilities, and the excitement that comes from the new. The downside of tradition, on the other hand, can include missed scientific, diplomatic and other opportunities; emotional and cultural stagnation; and rigidity; while the downsides of innovation can include a degree of chaos, wasted resources, and a lack of clear moral identity.

Progressives might tend to see the downside of the tradition pole more often than they see the upside, while conservatives might see the downsides of innovation, especially in the government arena. (Remember attacks on government grants?) A progressive talking to a conservative or independent, however, might do well to talk about the values of tradition, such as historical continuity, democracy, and stability to keep the person they're talking to from looking immediately at the downside of innovation — which the conservative or independent may deeply fear — almost immediately.

On specific issues, it might mean conversations like this:

Women's Issues: If someone only sees the downside of what they see as new roles for women in the workplace or improving women's healthcare (innovation); they might want to go straight to traditional women's roles in the family (upside of tradition). Help them see that focusing only on tradition might mean missed opportunities for the family and acknowledge that new roles can sometimes seem uncertain.

Education: If someone only sees the downside of a progressive education policy, seeing, for example, Pell grants or better pay for teachers as rewarding the undeserving; then point

Polarities Help Us Avoid Our Fears and Get What We Want

(continued from page 20)

out how we need every mind we have to compete in the future and avoid missed opportunities.

Tax Policy: If someone only sees the downside of a progressive tax structure because they feel it wastes the efforts of the “job creators,” then point to the historical value to democracy and stability of a thriving middle class. Note the missed opportunities for the country if the middle class has limited opportunity to rise to the top.

Other polarities have been identified with implications for politics and government, such as collaboration AND competition, candor AND diplomacy, leadership AND

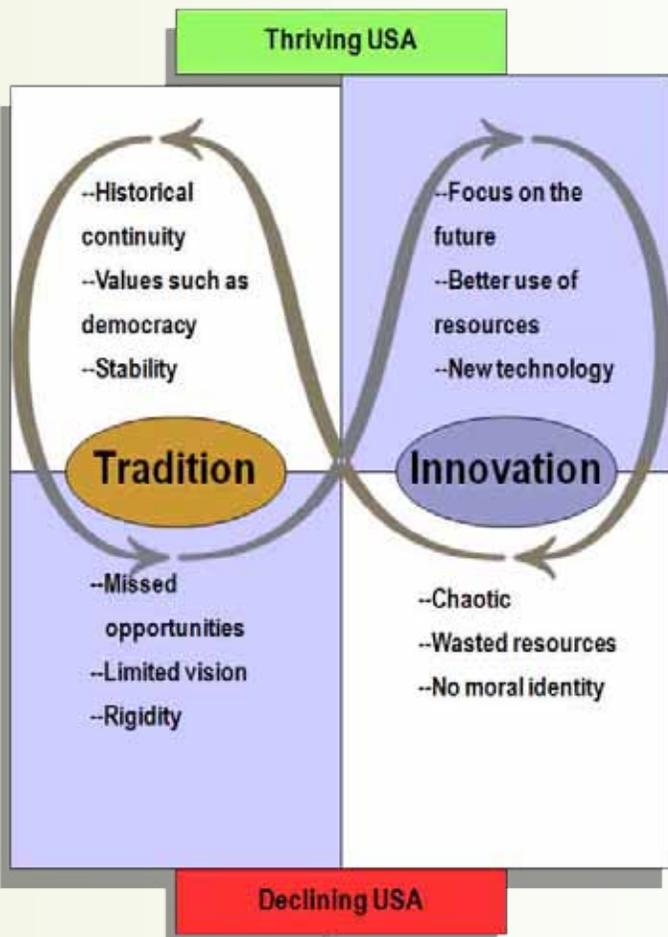
management, courage AND caution, self interest AND community interest, and optimism AND realism.

I have found mapping out polarities to be valuable in a variety of business and coaching situations. While I realize that, politically, we are often up against people who are stuck on their pole and simply don't want to talk (as might be expected, progressives are often better able to see polarities—that is to see the truth in the other--than conservatives), I believe there is value in bringing polarity consciousness into the deeper conversation whenever we can. While many people won't enter that conversation, some will. And I do know that if we don't try to change our current conversation, we will be in conflict forever.

So what I'm encouraging is to ask the question: What polarities are at play here and how can I help a person who sees only the downside of the “other” to see all four quadrants?

What this means in the field is that if you acknowledge the upside of the other pole and the downsides of both, and THEN talk about the upside you believe in, you may find better rapport and a more receptive audience.

There is something about laying this out and making it visible that helps people get past their entrenched views and blind spots. Without this perspective, people and groups pay too much attention to one pole to the neglect of the other. What is actually created, then, is the downside of the pole they most fear.



“Polarity management provides a framework for creating a dialogue with people whose world view sharply differs from our own”

*Polarity Map copyright Barry Johnson, Polarity Management Associates

Polarities are examined by being laid out on a “polarity map”. At the top of the map is what you want—at the bottom is what you want to avoid. The map has four quadrants—the upside and downside of each pole. Each quadrant contains descriptions of what the mapmaker sees as those upsides and downsides. Linking the four quadrants is an “infinity loop” showing the path taken through each. Traveling through the downsides is natural and necessary. In a well-managed polarity, however, downside visits will be brief with most time spent in the upsides.



Learn what we can do about a Lake County's failed criminal justice system

Attend the panel discussion

And Justice for All: Can We Fix Our Criminal Justice System?

on **Tuesday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m.**

at the **North Shore Unitarian Church, 2100 Half Day Road, Deerfield**

Register at **TenthDemsU.org.**

Event co-sponsored by Tenth Dems University and Common Cause.

Let's Talk Politics



Avon Township Democrats and Tenth Dems are hosting a discussion and all Democrats are invited. Come talk about the issues that are important to you in open forum. Let your voice be heard or just listen to what others have to say. **FREE** soft drinks for everyone!! Preregistration is not required, but it ensures you a seat at the table.

on **Saturday, May 12, 2012 at 2:30 – 4:30 pm**

at **Abel's Pizza & Mexican Food, 125 Center St., Grayslake**

Register at **TenthDemsU.org**

or call 847-266-VOTE (8683).

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