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Hightower Keynotes Event Celebrating Progress Toward Overturning *Citizens United*

On Sunday, July 21, Tenth Dems and other members of a coalition of activist organizations working to overturn the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United* and push for campaign finance reform held an educational celebration at the Embassy Suites O'Hare. Sharon Sanders, a past winner of the Tenth Dems Volunteer of the Year award, was one of the event's main organizers. Tenth Dems Chair Lauren Beth Gash served as emcee.



*The incomparable
 Jim Hightower*

To start the program, an overflow crowd of more than 250 people was treated to live music. Then two young people, a winner of the Tenth Dems Poetry and Prose contest and an Envision Scholar from Waukegan High School, read their original compositions. For the final opening entertainment, Tony Fiorentino and two other actors performed an excerpt from a political satire by Fiorentino.

The afternoon's featured guest, the fabulous Jim Hightower, spoke to the crowd about the problems we face and the need for all of us to get involved in the political process.

And the reason for the celebration? The coalition's successful attempt in Springfield to pass a nonbinding bipartisan resolution asking

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Tenth News

www.tenthdems.org

SEPTEMBER 2013 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 10, Edition 9

Summer Goings-On at Tenth Dems' Community Connection Office

By Carolyn Rivers

As the vegetables ripen in Community Connection's section of the community garden just down the block on North Genesee Street, Tenth Dems can report on ComCon's busy final few weeks of summer.

Tenth Dems makes Community Connection's space available to community groups that need a comfortable space in which to gather. Illinois Unites for Marriage, a coalition formed to champion equal rights for LGBT people in Illinois, took advantage of this opportunity in August. The coalition held a meeting in the Community Connection office to plan strategy for enacting legislation in Illinois that would allow for same-sex marriage.

Also in August, Community Connection participated in both the Eighth Annual North Chicago Community Days and, on August 17, the summer's second ArtWauk. Community Days is a three-day celebration presented by the City of North Chicago, North Chicago School District 187, and the Foss Park District. The event theme this year was "Celebrating Diversity," and included everything from speeches about "Uniting for Peace" to sports tournaments, a huge "Kids Zone," a variety of food vendors, and virtually every style of music from Gospel to Rhythm and Blues. Cars lined the streets of North Chicago for miles and packed all of the parking lots within walking distance. One of our volunteers had a chance to mingle with Waukegan Township Supervisor Patricia Jones as



well as Dr. Donna King, President of the Foss Park District Board of Commissioners. Most recently, Dr. King was awarded the Humanitarian Patriot Award by the Rotary Club of North Chicago for being an "example of extraordinary commitment in the area of humanitarian support for the United States Armed Forces' veterans

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Mark Kirk Helps Derail Appropriations Bill Aimed at Creating Jobs and Improving Public Safety

Just before heading into the August recess, Republicans in both chambers of Congress scuttled funding bills aimed at repairing the nation's crumbling infrastructure, improving public transportation, and creating jobs.

On August 1, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell succeeded in derailing the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. Forty-three Republican Senators—including Illinois' Mark Kirk and five others who voted to advance the bill out of committee in late July—voted against it, preventing supporters from achieving the 60 votes needed to invoke cloture. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine), the top Republican on the panel that wrote the bill, was the only Republican to vote for it.

Illinois' Democratic Senator and Majority Whip, Dick Durbin—who, true to form, voted for the bill—praised Collins as a “profile in courage.” In contrast, he described McConnell as “looking over his shoulder... for Rand Paul, the libertarians, the most extreme conservatives.” He added: “You saw one profile in courage looking forward to lead this country ... and the rest of them slinking back into the shadows. (<http://www.politico.com/story/2013/08/senate-thud-mitch-mcconnell-susan-collins-95076.html#ixzz2cKzm9QFK>.)

Asked if McConnell's upcoming primary fight with a Tea Party challenger might explain his determination to kill the transportation appropriations bill, Collins told *Politico*, “I can't speculate on why. All I can tell you is he has never worked harder against a member of his own party than he did against me today.”

The Senate's failure to pass a transportation funding bill comes just days after Republican leaders pulled a more austere transportation funding bill off the House floor, recognizing they did not have enough votes to pass it. Not only Democrats, but also moderate Republicans, opposed the measure because of its steep cuts to housing programs, community development, and passenger rail. A major point of contention was a \$468 million cut in Amtrak funding. “For the Northeast, this was a big issue,” said Pennsylvania Republican Charlie Dent.



Senate Republicans, on the other hand, opposed that chamber's transportation funding bill because it increased spending above current sequestration levels. “I'd remind my colleagues that we've got a \$16 trillion debt; that we're spending hundreds of billions of dollars a year that we don't have,” McConnell said on the Senate floor. “This is how you get Greece. This is how you get Detroit.”

The \$54 billion Senate bill would have increased spending by \$2.3 billion more than fiscal 2013-enacted levels and \$2.4 billion more than the Obama administration requested. Much of the additional spending was for infrastructure projects. The bill provided \$550 million in infrastructure project funds, known as TIGER grants—an increase of \$51 million over the pre-sequester fiscal 2013 level—and \$500 million for repairing structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges and crucial highway corridors. With these proposed expenditures, the measure offered significant potential to increase public safety while also creating jobs.

“I can't understand why Republican leadership over here would twist arms to derail a bipartisan bill that creates jobs all over America,” Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said after the vote.

Of course, this is hardly the first—and, unfortunately, certainly not the last—time Republicans in Congress, with the reliable help of Mark Kirk, will vote against the health, safety, and economic prospects of the American public in furtherance of an ideology that scorns most nonmilitary federal expenditures. ■

Democrats at the Illinois State Fair

Tenth Dems was represented at Democrats Day at the Illinois State Fair in August. The group, which included (left to right) Michelle Patino, Andrea Cho, Kate Murray, and Stephen Ark, attended events with statewide elected officials and 2014 candidates.



Democrats also were well-represented at this year's Lake County Fair in Gurnee.

The Top 10 Reasons to Reelect Brad Schneider

By Steve Sheffey

After more than three decades, we are finally represented by a Democrat: Brad Schneider. Brad has only been in office for about nine months, but he's already compiled an impressive record. Here are the top 10 reasons (so far) to reelect Brad:

- Brad is a cosponsor of the Voting Empowerment Act of 2013.
- Brad is a leader on LGBT issues. He was the first congressman to issue a statement in support of the Supreme Court's declaration that DOMA is unconstitutional. His predecessor, Republican Robert Dold, opposes same-sex marriage.
- Brad opposed higher interest rates for student loans.
- Brad helped introduce the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which prohibits employers from firing, refusing to hire, or discriminating against an employee based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Dold opposes ENDA.
- Brad cosponsored and voted for the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. He also cosponsored the Paycheck Fairness Act that helps uncover gender pay discrimination.
- Brad is a strong advocate for gun safety. He cosponsored the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act, which would finally make gun trafficking a federal crime. He backed the President's plan to close the gun show loophole, extending basic background checks to all retail gun sales; to enact a new Assault Weapons Ban, which will take deadly military-style weapons off the

streets; to outlaw the sale of high-capacity magazines that accommodate dozens of rounds of ammunition; and to enhance the national system of background checks, combining information from all 50 states.

- Brad is a strong friend of the environment and spoke out against cuts to critical Great Lakes restoration funding. Dold received an "F" from the Sierra Club.
- Brad is pro-choice. He strongly opposed HR 1797, which would ban nearly all abortions after 20 weeks. Dold voted for the bill known in the pro-choice community as the "Let Women Die Act" because that's what it would do. Dold is not pro-choice.
- Brad serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where he already is an acknowledged leader on U.S.-Israel relations and is working hard to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.
- Brad serves on the House Small Business Committee, where he introduced the bipartisan American Manufacturing Efficiency and Retraining Investment Collaboration Achievement (AMERICA) Works Act to help build a skilled American workforce.

The contrast between Brad and Dold could not be much starker. On every issue where they disagree, Brad is on our side. Dold doesn't even live in the district, and we don't need to search outside our district when we've got a person who lives right here in the 10th making such a positive difference for us in Congress.

These issues are too important to risk giving our vote back to Dold and, in effect, to John Boehner. Shortly before Dold left office, *The New York Times* identified him as one of Boehner's "loyal soldiers." Let's commit ourselves now to doing all we can to reelect Brad Schneider to Congress. ■

Hightower Keynotes Event *continued from page 1*

Congress to overturn *Citizens United* made Illinois the 14th state to have passed such a resolution.

The total number of states passing such a resolution already has risen to 16. Now, we must all work together to force Washington to hear our collective voices and take it to the next level—returning this country to the people, not the global corporatists. ■

Below left: Tony Fiorentino and friends perform an excerpt from his satirical play. Below right: Jim Hightower picks winning raffle tickets out of his 10-gallon hat.



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and returning warriors." She is the author of *The Application of Holistic Life Coaching to MST (Military Sexual Trauma)*, a book that provides information to help both military personnel and average Americans fight alongside anyone who has experienced a form of



Groups supporting Democratic values meet at Community Connection

own Tenth Dems. Through Community Connection, a group of Tenth Dems volunteers conducts a twice-monthly Job Interview Workshop as part of the Township's Infinity & Beyond program.

Tenth Dems also supports Envision Scholars. On August 5, we participated in College Application Boot Camp. This week-long project paired college-bound Waukegan High School students with volunteer mentors who could help them revise and improve the personal statement essays required for college applications. ■

molestation, rape, or other sexual trauma.

ArtWauk provides folks with the opportunity to stroll through downtown Waukegan on a Saturday evening and enjoy the city's restaurants, artists, and other amenities. Once again (see *Tenth News*, August 2013, p. 12), Community Connection joined ArtWauk by opening its doors to passersby and inviting them in to share light refreshments and learn about what Tenth Dems is doing throughout the northern part of the 10th Congressional District. Several people volunteered to help Community Connection with its many projects, and ad hoc meetings on issues important to Democrats occurred throughout the evening. In addition, like-minded non-profit groups seized the opportunity to pass out their own literature to those who stopped in.

Through Community Connection, Tenth Dems also sends volunteers out into the local community, and on July 27, Waukegan Township Supervisor Patricia Jones honored volunteers who give back to the community, including several of our



L to r, Barbara Altman, Joe Dubaniewicz, Laura Tomsky. Not pictured, Vicki Bailyn, Alan Miller, Ilya Sheyman.

Waukegan Township Supervisor and Staff Serve Brunch to Honor Volunteers' Service

By Barbara Altman

On July 27, Waukegan Township Supervisor Patricia Jones and her staff hosted a brunch at the Waukegan Yacht Club to honor the dozens of volunteers who assist with the operation of key Township programs. Among the volunteers recognized by the Township were the Tenth Dems who conduct a twice-monthly Job Interview Workshop as part of the Township's Infinity & Beyond Program. Infinity & Beyond is designed to help ex-offenders and other chronically unemployed individuals reenter the job market.

Township department directors functioned as the wait staff for the delicious brunch of coffee, lemonade, salad, chicken, pancakes, scrambled eggs, and sausage, as a way to show their appreciation for the volunteers. Following the meal, four department directors described their programs and presented Certificates of Appreciation to their volunteers.

Dulce "Candy" Ortiz, Waukegan Township Special Projects Manager, specifically acknowledged Tenth Dems' responsibility for creating and staffing the Job Interview Workshop. Conceived through Community Connection, this twice-monthly workshop is designed to help ensure that, once called for an interview, job-seekers are prepared to answer difficult questions while avoiding the common mistakes that can make a bad impression on a prospective employer. ■



National Service for Undocumented Immigrants: A Personal Perspective

By Steven Gan

I was speaking with an immigration lawyer the other day. His clients include many undocumented immigrants. Although most are from Mexico and Central America, my friend's clientele includes a hodge-podge of foreigner-would-be-clients from every corner of the world.

It seems that despite all of our economic and political problems, the American Dream, or at least the dream of the American Dream, is still alive for many people and their families who risk quite a bit in coming here illegally.

During the course of our conversation we talked about whether a mandatory military service would help to resolve so much of the illegal immigration problem, in which an estimated 11 million people are living here precariously and vulnerably. I asked my friend why not just try to "clean up" this illegal immigration problem by requiring those seeking legal status to serve in our military. He explained that my perspective of the problem was just much too simple.

For example, would mandatory military service be appropriate for an undocumented farm laborer in his 50s, or even 60s, who doesn't speak a lick of English? I saw his point. But I responded that even one family member who is required to serve in the military could bring that entire family out of the shadows and onto the road to becoming an integrated part of American society. In other words, the middle-aged undocumented farm laborer might have children who are also undocumented working alongside him. Wouldn't they be appropriate candidates for mandatory military service?

"Keep talking," my friend said.

"What do I know? I'm only a middle-aged constructive, productive, tax-paying citizen of our society who has been living a quiet and peaceful existence in suburban America for many years," I said. With that qualifier, I continued to "talk off the top of my head" for the next hour, sounding out why I feel mandatory military service, or some variation on this theme, could be beneficial to the undocumented and to our nation.

When we think of the words "military service," we conjure up an image of troops fighting abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan and also doing nation-building activities in those countries. Unfortunately, even after 10 and 11 years in Iraq and Afghanistan respectively, with everything we've tried to do and with the hundreds of billions of dollars (some say trillions of dollars) spent, there are still dozens of people killed every day in those countries and the long-term stability in the region remains quite precarious. The sad reality is that even after we are expected to officially leave in 2014, dozens will continue to be harmed, maimed, and killed.



Now, this essay is not about whether or not through all of our efforts there has been any long-term good in Iraq or Afghanistan. It is about where we might be able to put our priorities if we had forces that could "nation-build" in our own country.

From my perspective, I feel very strongly that some force like our military should be used right back here in this great and problematic country of ours doing some basic nation-building of our own.

We have heard over and over about how so many dozens of young people are being killed by gangs every month in Chicago alone. And it's not just Chicago that has all this gang crime and violence—I mean

it's right here in my own little neck of the woods, Lake County, where there are over 60 gangs that are very busy perpetrating their own local brand of terrorism.

Although there are plenty of legal, constitutional, and political reasons why we cannot deploy our military domestically, I'd still love to see some forces working alongside our strained and overworked members of law enforcement to fight violent crime throughout our major metropolitan areas.

Truly, it's wonderful that our military in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with thousands of construction firms, have built roads, bridges, sewer systems, hospitals, schools, and other facilities to help the people in other countries lead a better life. However, when we've seen major U.S. bridges collapse, Hurricane Sandy completely wash away thousands of homes and businesses in New Jersey and New York, and tornadoes in Oklahoma and endless forest fires in the Southwest destroy property and lives, I think it's painfully obvious we need more people here rebuilding the U.S. infrastructure—regardless of whether it's in disrepair, damaged, or destroyed.

So with an estimated 11 million undocumented people in this country, maybe there are one million or so who might properly qualify for some sort of mandatory military-like service. Wouldn't that be a big help toward correcting some of the monumental social, infrastructural, and environmental problems we have here?

And in addition to integrating into the constructive, productive, and taxpaying fold of American society relatively quickly a large number of enthusiastic and patriotic Americans-to-be, this plan could harness a force that, in every sense of the word, would proudly serve, protect, and defend this great country as well. ■

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

By Mark Rosenberg, M.D.

and What National Polling Tells Us About the Likely Effects of Implementation



Since enactment of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, there have been multiple polls of the American people, most of which are divided between supporters and opponents. After voting for the 49th time to repeal this legislation, popularly known as Obamacare, at a cost of about \$50 million, the Republicans in Congress have demonstrated once again how out of step with the American people they are.

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act's expansion of Medicaid eligibility and statewide insurance exchanges begins October 1, when citizens can register for health insurance plans. Coverage will take effect January 1, 2014.

According to Hart Research Associates polling reports in August 2013, only 36 percent of all voters say they would prefer Obamacare to be repealed, whereas a 40 percent plurality would prefer to leave the law as is (15 percent) or make just minor changes (25 percent). Another 18 percent of voters support making major changes in the ACA. And although a 67 percent majority of likely Republican voters want to repeal Obamacare, that still leaves one-third of the GOP that does not want to repeal the law.

Voters Do Not Want Repeal of Obamacare

When a pollster presents the choice in the 2014 election as between "a Democrat who favors fixing and improving Obamacare rather than repealing it altogether" and "a Republican who

wants to totally repeal Obamacare," voters favor the Democratic candidate (51 percent) over the Republican candidate (36 percent). This is not only a majority in favor of the hypothetical Democratic candidate; it is a 15 point margin for the Democratic position. Voters who are undecided in a trial heat between generic Democrats and Republicans prefer an anti-repeal Democrat to a pro-repeal Republican by 10 percentage points (40 percent to 30 percent); and 14 percent of Republican voters in the generic trial heat say they favor the anti-repeal Democrat when the election is framed around candidates' positions on Obamacare.

Democrats' Strength is to Oppose Putting Insurance Companies Back in Charge

The fact that the Republicans' desired repeal of Obamacare would put insurance companies back in charge of healthcare and allow them to refuse coverage based on preexisting conditions drives opposition to repeal among voters, particularly women and seniors.

While those polled express uncertainty about how the implementation of the Affordable Care Act will affect them as it is rolled out, approval of the specific benefits that are offered and opposition to a return of the insurance companies determining eligibility are strong. This is particularly so in suburban and rural districts.

Moreover, despite the Republican-generated political uproar over the Obama administration's delaying for one year imposition of penalties on large companies that do not furnish health insurance to their employees, it is important to recognize that this particular provision of the Affordable Care Act impacts only about six percent of employees, i.e., those working for the small minority of large companies that do not already include health insurance in their benefits packages.

The next few months may provide an interesting preview of the 2014 midterm election campaign. The history of the implementation of Medicare Part D is instructive: as the plan was introduced the opposition decreased within a few months of the law's taking effect. A similar pattern may well occur as we witness the implementation of Obamacare in the next few months. ■

The next ArtWauk is on September 21, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. To volunteer to help out call 847-266-VOTE (8683).

Tenth Dems needs: laptops, functioning printers (with ink), bookcases, flip charts, and other office supplies. If you can help, email contributions@tenthdems.org



**Interns Power Move
Into New Office Space**

Illinois Independent Redistricting Amendment Proposed for November 2014 Ballot

By Kathy Ryg

Illinois government is in terrible shape, plagued by high levels of corruption and too many decisions based on political paranoia and/or self-interest. Legislators are failing to respond to the needs of everyday citizens, which only worsens voter cynicism. One recent Paul Simon Institute study showed that 77 percent of Illinoisans believe government corruption is widespread, and the National Conference on Citizenship reports that only 15 percent of us feel that our state government does the right thing most of the time.

Now is the time for voters to raise their voices and demand fair, honest, effective Illinois government. I firmly believe the first major step on the road to fundamental change in Illinois is to establish an independent process for drawing legislative maps. That is why Yes for Independent Maps (www.IndependentMaps.org) is working to place a redistricting ballot measure on the November 2014 ballot.

The Illinois Independent Redistricting Amendment would establish an 11-member Independent Redistricting Commission to draw state legislative maps. The amendment would not affect Illinois's congressional districts or local maps.

The new process builds on the most effective, fair redistricting systems now working in other states, adapted to the legal requirements of Illinois.

Under the proposed amendment, the independent Commission would draw district boundaries using the following criteria:

- Districts that are contiguous, substantially equal in population, and in compliance with federal laws
- Districts that are not drawn to dilute or diminish the ability of a racial or language minority community to elect the candidates of its choice
- Districts with boundaries that respect the geographic integrity of cities, towns, and other units of local government
- Districts with boundaries that respect the geographic integrity of communities sharing common social and economic interests
- Districts that are not drawn to purposefully or significantly discriminate against or favor any political party or group, or in consideration of the residence of any person

The Commission would hold public hearings throughout the state both before and after it releases its draft maps. The process would be extraordinarily transparent: All Commission records and communications between Commissioners would be open for public inspection, and all Commission meetings would be open to the public and publicly noticed at least two days ahead of time.

In order to approve any plan, seven of the Commission's eleven

members must vote for it—including at least two Democrats, two Republicans, and two unaffiliated members. No legislative action would be needed once the Commission approves a map.

Commission members would be selected through the following five-step process:

- **Application**—Any interested Illinois citizen can apply to be a member of the Commission.
- **Qualification**—A nonpartisan Applicant Review Panel, appointed by the Auditor General, would eliminate applicants who have conflicts of interest, such as lobbyists and public officials. The Panel would select the 100 most qualified applicants on the basis of analytical skills, impartiality, fairness, and diversity.
- **Removal**—In a process similar to jury selection, the four top legislative leaders may each “strike” up to five applicants from the applicant pool.
- **Selection**—Commissioners would be selected by lottery to create a group of two Democrats, two Republicans, and three unaffiliated with either party, all proportionally representing Illinois' five Supreme Court districts.
- **Appointment**—The four top legislative leaders would each appoint one commissioner from the remaining pool, to ensure that the Commission reflects Illinois's diverse demographics and geography.

The Illinois Independent Redistricting Amendment was written with input from voters across the state. The drafters paid close attention to the needs and desires of average citizens, as well as the counsel of legal and policy experts, and the successful redistricting reforms in California in 2008 and Florida in 2010.

In the coming days, weeks, and months, it is essential that campaign supporters get out on the street to collect signatures. It is the single most important thing anyone can do to help play a part in reforming Illinois. Go to IndependentMaps.org and sign up to help. The campaign will send you petitions and instructions. All Illinois registered voters are eligible to sign and add their voice to this important effort. Every signature helps us move closer to the goal of fair maps.

This amendment will bring independence to a broken, unfair, and secret process that allows politicians to control what their districts look like. Rather than letting elected officials choose their voters, voters need to be back in charge. Visit IndependentMaps.org to sign up to help by collecting petition signatures, scheduling a presentation, and/or making a financial contribution to ensure the success of Yes for Independent Maps. ■

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