



## ***THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS***

Cathedral Station ♦ P.O. Box 1316 ♦ New York, N.Y. 10025 ♦ (212) 866-6378

Website: ThreeParksDems.org ♦ Email: ThreeParksDems@aol.com

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Bob Botfeld  
Cynthia Doty

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## **MARCH 10, 2010**

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS: CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE? Susan Lerner, Executive Director, Common Cause/New York; THE CENSUS IS COMING—WHAT IT MEANS FOR US; CANDIDATES FORUM—Assembly, State Comptroller, U.S. Senate (Jonathan Tasini confirmed), Congress

DATE: Wednesday, MARCH 10, 2010

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: American Youth Hostels  
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street

ROOM: Chapel

### **AGENDA**

**7:45 PM Sign-in**  
**8 PM Call to Order**

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. CANDIDATES FORUM
3. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM
4. THE CENSUS
5. Nominations for Judicial Delegates
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

### **CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, March 24, 2010**  
**Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, April 14, 2010**  
**Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, April 28, 2010**  
**Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2010**  
**Three Parks 35th Anniversary Benefit**  
Place: Meridiana Restaurant, B'way at 105/106<sup>th</sup> Sts.

## President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

As we go to print, Governor Paterson has announced he will not run for re-election. Several members have written to express how sad it has been for the administration to go from such great hope to where things seem to stand now—and if all that's been reported is true, to find once again misogyny, intimidation, and dissembling at the highest levels of government. As stalwart members of the grassroots, however, we must continue to fight the good fight to elect progressive Democrats, advocate for economic and social justice, and look to the future to achieve our goals. Onwards and upwards!

Last month's meeting was a great success, despite a record snowfall and howling winds. Our heartiest thanks go out to veterans Michael Kim and Chris Vongsawat for their excellent presentations on war and prospects for peace and to the more than 80 members and guests who braved the elements to participate in the panel's Q&A. Congratulations to the newly elected TPID Board of Directors.

This month's meeting will cover a variety of topics. Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause/New York, will speak to us about hopes for campaign finance reform at the local and national level following the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. This case held that corporations can spend unlimited funds on political advertising in elections. The membership will also hear about the critical importance of the upcoming census. We hope to have as many candidates for Assembly, State Comptroller, U.S. Senate and Congress as can make it. As noted in the agenda, nominations for judicial delegates will also be entertained, with a vote to be held at the April meeting. Be sure to arrive promptly so you don't miss a thing!

Please mark your calendars now for the Three Parks 35th Anniversary Benefit on Sunday, May 2nd, from 3 to 6 p.m. at Meridiana Restaurant. In honor of this milestone occasion, we are offering a special member rate of \$35. (Invitations will be mailed in late March.) We also plan to publish a journal commemorating the club's three and a half decades of activism in the community and

beyond. Please respond to the sponsor letter, send in your journal ads, and join us on May 2nd!

## Veterans Speak Out on War and Peace on February 10

By Tim Walsh

As we go about our business on the Upper West Side, veterans are walking and working among us: the cop on the beat, the mail deliverer on the block, even the hustler bumming quarters on Broadway. They go through their daily routines efficiently, not drawing attention to themselves and to the sacrifices they've made for our country. How rarely do we hear their voices! On Wednesday, February 10, members of the Three Parks Independent Democratic Club had an unusual opportunity to meet two veterans of our latest wars and to hear their accounts of life at war and homecoming,

Michael Kim has served in three branches of the United States military: Marines, Coast Guard, and Army. He is a recent veteran of the war in Iraq, where he served as an Army civic affairs specialist. A licensed psychotherapist, Mike continues to serve, now as a counselor at the Brooklyn Vet Center.

Christopher Vongsawat was deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 as a First Lieutenant in the New York National Guard, serving as a military advisor to the Afghan National Army. This past December, he was honorably discharged as a Conscientious Objector, ending nearly eleven years of service in the US Army. Chris is now an avid member of the anti-war movement, speaking out against war and the occupation of Afghanistan.

Each veteran spoke of his experiences while deployed in a war zone. Among other anecdotes, Mike described the obstacles he encountered when trying to assist a five-year-old girl in getting needed medical attention, available only outside of Iraq. Chris referred to the growing awareness he developed, while in-country, of the presence of international corporations in the war-making process, and of how this involvement of profit-making corporations in the development of war policy leads to failure, not "victory."

In referring to his experiences upon return to the States, Mike stressed his work with other veterans, in helping them to adjust to the change

from military to civilian life. He mentioned the need to look more closely at the experience of trauma, and its long-term effects upon ex-servicemen and women. Diagnosis and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may help in understanding and responding to trauma, but much more needs to be done. Mike is actively engaged at the Brooklyn Vet Center in finding alternative means of treating trauma (such as acupuncture therapy and the use of writing groups and art exhibits) among the veterans with whom he works.

The veterans' stories and remarks prompted several thoughtful responses by Three Parks members. One attendee asked if the Obama Administration has improved services for veterans. Mike replied that the Administration's appointments to leadership positions at the Veterans Administration were positive, but it was premature to assess their success in bringing about significant changes in education and health services for veterans. Another member asked how the club could become more involved in advocating for adequate services for our veterans. Chris suggested that members educate themselves to the overarching concern of warmaking as a corporate endeavor, rather than a patriotic one. Mike volunteered that the club might want to take a closer look at trauma, and its long-lasting effects on the young men and women who fight this country's wars.

## **Dangerous Gas Drilling**

By Merle McEldowney

Drilling for natural gas by hydraulic fracturing is still a threat. The State's egregiously faulty environmental impact statement (that denies any contamination from gas drilling) is still in effect. Upstate there are rumors that permits for drilling may be issued as early as this summer.

Groups statewide are sending letters and petitions to the Governor to urge him not to let this happen. There needs to be a new environmental impact statement that fully addresses the impact of gas drilling. There are online petitions on numerous Web sites; please go to [ThreeParksDems.org](http://ThreeParksDems.org) to find a list of lobbying groups and sign as many petitions as possible.

Last weekend, in two hours of tabling, Three Parks sent out 90 letters to the Governor. We need to continue to pressure our federal

legislators as well. The FRAC (Fracturing Responsibility and Chemicals Act) bill is still stuck in committee. This bill gives the federal Environmental Protection Agency jurisdiction over such drilling, which it does not currently have. Three Parks members are making calls and writing letters to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressman Rangel to get it out. The bills are S.1215 and HR. 2766 respectively. The federal agency said on December 30 that it has "serious reservations" about whether proposed gas drilling in the New York City watershed is consistent with high-quality water supply to the city's 9 million residents. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg called for a ban on drilling, saying the city should not risk the purity of its renowned water supply, and that the consequences of allowing fracturing could be "severe."

There are small, hopeful things happening around New York State. The town of Putney prohibited a drilling company from building a tank to hold contaminated water near Lake Kayuka. The county has refused permission from drillers to build a water treatment plant. In February, the Onondaga County legislature – which includes the city of Syracuse – voted to ban hydraulic fracturing on county-owned land until impacts are studied.

What we are learning is that it is only a few people who stand to make a lot of money from selling mineral rights to their land. Many others are mobilized to protect their beautiful land and drinkable water. Join us today and write to Governor Paterson and our Senators and Members of Congress. There are links to letters and petitions at [ThreeParksDems.org](http://ThreeParksDems.org).

## **Census Count More Important Than Ever to New York**

By Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

**Census Day is April 1<sup>st</sup>!**  
**It's in your hands! 10 minutes for 10 questions**

Census data is so important – **it's how federal aid is targeted for highways and transit, education, health care, and housing.** If you ignore the census form, it will affect your neighborhood and all of New York for the next ten years.

In a typical year, \$335 billion in Federal dollars for the top ten Federal programs are Federal assistance to localities – and last year, under the "stimulus," over \$478 billion, or 84% of Federal aid, was sent out. That's the news from a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study that Delaware Senator Tom Carper and I requested. So if you multiply the typical \$335 billion by ten, well over three trillion dollars will be allocated in the next decade using population reports from this year's census! Here's how the top ten programs break down:

\$214.0 billion: Medicaid

\$37.4 billion: Highway planning and construction

\$17.0 billion: Temporary Aid for Needy Families

**\$15.6 billion: Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers**

\$13.9 billion: Local Education Title 1 Grants

\$11.0 billion: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B

\$8.2 billion: Federal Transit Formula Grants

\$6.9 billion: Head Start

\$6.0 billion: Community Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

\$4.9 billion: Community Development Block Grants and Neighborhood Stabilization

**Also, the census is how government can identify important trends and legislate to meet our needs.** More women with children in the workforce? Then we need more real childcare programs. Longer commutes? Better mass transit and transportation resources.

To view the GAO report, "Formula Grants: Funding for the Largest Federal Assistance Programs Is Based on Census-related Data and Other Factors," visit <http://maloney.house.gov/documents/govreform/census/GAOFormulaGrantsd10263.pdf>

## District Leader Report

By Bob Botfeld

### Paterson, Gas Drilling, Gillibrand, Attorney General, and the 31<sup>st</sup> State Senate Race

A few hours ago, just before I sat down to write this column on Friday, February 26, Governor Paterson announced that he would not run for re-election. His wise decision is a welcome announcement for the prospects of the Democratic party in this year's upcoming state elections. His perceived poor performance and low poll numbers threatened to bring down the

Democratic state senate majority as well as probably losing the 2010 gubernatorial race to the Republican candidate.

On an issue very important to Three Parkers and which should be important for all New Yorkers, stopping gas drilling in the NYC watershed and western New York, Governor Paterson had not been helpful. Questioned by this writer at a Democratic meeting a few weeks ago, Paterson said that he did not feel that the evidence had yet shown that the drilling was damaging to the environment. In his speech to the group of Democratic leaders, Paterson said that he would stop the drilling – 'if' it was shown to be harmful. To Paterson's apparent surprise, the room burst into applause when he said that he would stop the drilling – before adding the 'if' part. Credit should be given to our current Borough President, Scott Stringer, for making the need for "Kill the Drill" so widely known.

At this same meeting, Kirsten Gillibrand presented her case for her election to complete her term in the Senate. She was very intelligent, detailed and quick in fielding questions on a range of issues. She defended the proposed health care plan as an initial step towards a more complete health care package. On gas drilling, she is one of the co-sponsors of the bill in the Senate to return gas drilling to the control of the EPA. During the Bush years, oversight of gas drilling was exempted from the Clean Water Act. On a less positive note, Gillibrand was admonished by a number of Manhattan leaders (including me) for ignoring their invitations to visit their clubs or districts. It appears that Gillibrand or her advisors believe that she should continue the previous policy of Senator Clinton of avoiding visiting the liberal Manhattan Democratic clubs.

Paterson's decision not to run for governor starts the domino effect for the open races for governor, attorney general, and most importantly for us, our own 31<sup>st</sup> State Senate seat currently held by Eric Schneiderman. Schneiderman has all but announced that he would run for Attorney General if Cuomo ran for governor. Eric's likely competition will include Assemblyman Richard Brodsky of Westchester; current Nassau County District Attorney, Kathleen Rice; former Insurance Department head, Eric Dinallo; attorney Sean Coffee; and 2006 AG candidate, Denise O'Donnell, who resigned today as Deputy Public Safety Director under Paterson in protest to the

state police's possible involvement in covering up the domestic abuse case against Paterson's aide.

Assuming Eric runs for Attorney General, the two candidates who have been talking about running for his seat are Mark Levine and Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat. Adriano Espaillat has represented the 72nd District covering Inwood, Washington Heights, and Marble Hill since 1996. Mark Levine is a district leader in Washington Heights, a founder of the new Democratic club, and the Barack Obama club. He became well known in upper Manhattan after founding a credit union that helps low-income neighborhood residents obtain credit.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

From Congressman Charles B. Rangel

### **Rangel: Thousands of Dollars May Be Available to New Yorkers through the Earned Income Tax Credit**

NEW YORK - Congressman Charles B. Rangel, City Council members Inez E. Dickens, Robert Jackson, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Ydanis Rodriguez, and New York Assemblymen Adriano Espaillat, Danny O'Donnell, and Keith LT Wright were among the several elected leaders that urged New Yorkers not to let a moment go by without claiming every single tax benefit that their hard work had entitled them to on their 2009 taxes – especially the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Sponsored by Congressman Rangel and passed in 1975 on a bipartisan basis, the EITC is the federal government's largest benefits program for working families and one of the nation's most powerful anti-poverty programs.

"It's hard to believe, but each year, millions of Americans – an estimated 5-7 million nationwide and close to 20,000 in Northern Manhattan alone – miss out on getting money that they are entitled to," said Rangel, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and Dean of the New York Congressional delegation.

### **A Much-Needed Well-Earned Boost to Hardworking Taxpayers**

Rangel noted that many people will qualify for EITC for the first time this year because of both the expanded eligibility brought forth by last year's American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and

personal circumstances (a decline in income, change in marital status or the birth of a child). So, Rangel encouraged anyone who earned \$48,279 or less from wages, self-employment or farming in 2009 to see if they qualify either by going to his House Web site at <http://rangel.house.gov> or visiting one of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites scattered throughout the 15th Congressional District and across the city.

Inez E. Dickens, the newly appointed Assistant Deputy Majority Leader of the City Council, said that there was no reason for New Yorkers not to claim what they are entitled to receive.

"This not a hand out, it is a HAND UP. You work hard, you have earned this tax credit so don't lose this opportunity to help yourself, your family, and your loved ones."

"The EITC is a valuable resource for working families, especially during these tough economic times," said Assemblyman Keith LT Wright. "For many, it provides the financial breathing room they need to make ends meet"

Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat said, "I join the Congressman Rangel in his effort to spread the word about the EITC and available free tax preparation services. A champion of the disadvantaged and working class families, Congressman Rangel continues to provide strong leadership for all the community he represents." "EITC! It sounds like a high school cheer – and it really is something to cheer about!" said City Councilmember Robert Jackson. "I'm proud to join Congressman Rangel in getting the word out about this helpful program."

City Council member Melissa Mark-Viverito urged moderate wage earners to file and not pass up the opportunity to claim this important benefit. "Unfortunately, too many of our constituents are not aware of this vital benefit. I applaud Congressman Rangel in providing this opportunity to continue in our efforts to educate our constituency in finding some tax relief through this credit.

Assemblyman O'Donnell agreed, "Thousands of New Yorkers may not even be aware that they qualify for these credits which can be claimed simply by filing a tax return. I encourage individuals and families to utilize the Volunteer

Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program sites to prepare and e-file taxes **free of charge** and to link to other financial programs and benefits."

"Its not just free money, it's your money," reiterated Rangel. "All you have to do now is just claim it."

## Club Elects Board of Directors

Members elected the following members to the board of directors at the meeting on February 10:

### Officers:

President: Daniele Gerard  
1st Vice President: Judy Wood  
2nd Vice President: Theresa Canter  
Treasurer: Ellen Flax  
Membership Secretary: Lynn Max  
Corresponding Secretary: Lauren Williams  
Recording Secretary: Bruce Markens

### Members at Large:

Jock Davenport	Ernestine Gallagher
Louisa Gilbert	Elizabeth Kellner
Erl Kimmich	Marie Lunn
Mary Ann Marks	Dorothy Mehler
Merle McEldowney	Corine Pettey
Milivoy Samurovich	Ray Schwartz
Deborah Thomas	Ken Tulloch
Tim Walsh	

## Condolences

Condolences to former State Senator Franz Leichter on the recent passing of his wife.

Condolences are extended to Three Parks member Gail Leinwall on the death of her father.

Condolences are extended to Judy Charles on the passing of her husband Fred Charles. Both are former Board and club members.

## Key States Poll Supports Medicare for All

Steve Max, Chair, Health Care Committee

While right-wing critics and the media claim that health care legislation is losing popular support because of its radical big government programs, a new poll of 600 likely 2010 voters in eight key states shows wide support for a Medicare for All (single payer) plan such as the one advocated by

Three Parks. The same respondents said that they opposed the present Senate bill by margins between 53% and 60%, depending on the state.

**To read the poll, copy and paste this address into your browser:**

[http://act.boldprogressives.org/cms/sign/poll\\_national\\_20100220/%3C/p%3E%3Cp%3E](http://act.boldprogressives.org/cms/sign/poll_national_20100220/%3C/p%3E%3Cp%3E)

QUESTION: Would you favor or oppose the national government's offering everyone the choice of buying into a government administered health insurance plan – something like the Medicare coverage that people 65 and older get – that would compete with private health insurance plans?

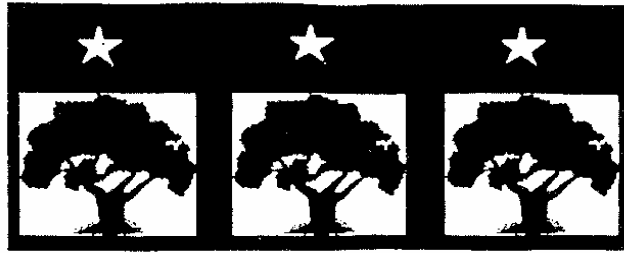
<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
<b>NEVADA (Reid)</b>		
56%	38%	6%
<b>ILLINOIS (Durbin, Burris)</b>		
68%	26%	6%
<b>WASHINGTON (Murray, Cantwell)</b>		
65%	28%	7%
<b>MISSOURI (McCaskill)</b>		
57%	35%	8%
<b>VIRGINIA (Webb, Warner)</b>		
61%	32%	7%
<b>IOWA (Harkin)</b>		
62%	31%	7%
<b>MINNESOTA (Klobuchar, Franken)</b>		
62%	33%	5%
<b>COLORADO (Udall, Bennet)</b>		
58%	36%	6%

Margin of error +/- 4%

## OPEN POSITION

*THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS  
HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE  
Free Food*

An important part of every club meeting is the welcoming refreshments provided to members and visitors. The club pays for these refreshments but we need volunteers to help set up for the meeting. The Hospitality Committee enables a few club members to rotate/share helping the club and their fellow members in this activity. If you think you can help, send a message on the Web site at [ThreeParksDems.org](http://ThreeParksDems.org) or speak to Lynn at the next meeting.



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Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316 • New York, NY 10025 (212) 866-6378

Please pay your 2010 dues by filling out the form below and bringing it to the next meeting  
or by mailing it with your check to:

***Three Parks Independent Democrats***  
***Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316***  
***New York, N.Y. 10025***  
***Attn: Treasurer***

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## **2010 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

***New Member*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Renewal*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Category -- Check One**

Individual (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Family -- two adults in the same household (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_

Student/Senior Citizen/Low Income (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Low Income Family (18) \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Patron (\$100) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Check here if you prefer to receive the newsletter via email.**

**Please make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2010"**

*Three Parks Independent Democrats*  
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316  
New York, N.Y. 10025

**NEXT MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2010  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM  
THE CENSUS  
CANDIDATES FORUM**



## **The Future of Manhattan Valley: A Community Visioning Event**

Presented by Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell  
and Co-Sponsored with Columbus-Amsterdam  
BID, Pratt Institute, and Municipal Art Society

Assembly Member O'Donnell is convening a community conversation and needs your input! Discuss Manhattan Valley, its many strengths, and what improvements you'd like to see. The goal is to get a clear picture of what we can all do together to make this vibrant community even stronger.

Community members of all ages are welcome. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbors! Youth are encouraged to participate—all perspectives are important! Spanish translation services will be provided. Children are welcome.

Time and Location:

Saturday, March 6 from 3:00–5:00 PM

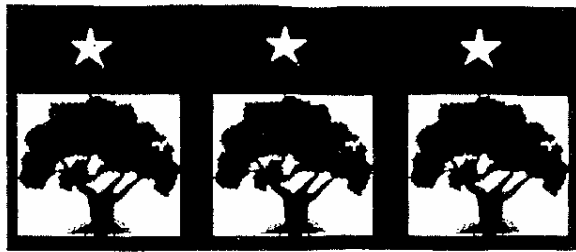
(Doors open at 2:45 PM)

Red Oak Apartments; 135 W 106th Street

(bet. Amsterdam and Columbus Aves)

Please RSVP to 212-866-3970.

**Note to newsletter readers: On  
January 25th, Three Parks sent the  
letter on the next page to President  
Obama following the Massachusetts  
election of Scott Brown to fill Ted  
Kennedy's Senate seat.**



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Daniele Gerard	Bob Botfeld & Cynthia Doty	Lynn Thomas

January 25, 2010

Hon. Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: After Massachusetts—a progressive agenda for jobs, against foreclosures, and beyond

Dear Mr. President:

We do not believe the Massachusetts election was a repudiation of your policies or that the Administration will not fight for the people. The Republicans, however, are dominating the airwaves with spin that this is so.

We urge you to seize every opportunity not to placate the Republicans but to stand up for the ideals you campaigned on. This past year has demonstrated that moving to the center will neither garner Republican partners nor mobilize the Democratic base (or independents). The most bipartisan policy—the Wall Street bailout engineered by the Bush Administration—is by far the least popular.

One of Americans' most serious concerns is that money rents both parties. A continued overemphasis on bipartisan cooperation will lead the public to believe that more backroom deals are being made, not fewer. The only response to this fear is for Democrats to be actively, visibly and assertively pushing for jobs and preventing foreclosures, making it clear that we will keep fighting until we dig our way out of the hole that conservatives dug for us. It is urgent that Democrats step forward and present alternatives to the trickle down nostrums of free market conservatives.

We can win in November 2010 if it is more than a referendum on your policies. You must make clear starting now that the midterm elections offer a clear choice of direction for this country. Especially in the face of Thursday's Supreme Court decision, we urge you to counsel the DSCC and the DCCC to establish rapid attack and response advertising and marketing teams to deal forcefully with the histrionic pseudo-patriotism at which the Republicans (and big business) excel and with which we will be inundated come next summer.

The country benefits if your administration and Democrats keep pushing to create jobs and build a new economy—and so will candidates next fall. Republicans will no doubt oppose these initiatives. And that will help make the election a fight worth having.

Sincerely,

Daniele Gerard, President

Cynthia Doty, District Leader

P.S. In 2008, from the Democratic Victory Storefront on Manhattan's Upper West Side, Three Parks registered 6,438 voters, made 35,783 phone calls for you and other Democratic candidates, and sent more than 1,000 volunteers to Pennsylvania and six vans and cars of volunteers to Ohio to campaign on your behalf.

Copies VIA EMAIL to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressmen Rangel and Nadler