



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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CLUB MEETING

Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 8:00 pm

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103 Street

Saving Neighborhood Stores

Speakers:

Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President (invited)

Helen Rosenthal, City Council Member, 6th District

Chris Doeblin, Owner, Book Culture

SWEAT: The Fight to Stop Wage Theft

Speakers: **Tosh Anderson & Carlos Rodriguez**

Justice Will Be Served

National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS)

AGENDA

7:45 pm Sign In

8:00 pm Call to Order

District Leader

Speakers:

Gale Brewer (invited) and Helen Rosenthal

Tosh Anderson and Carlos Rodriguez

Questions & Answers

Adjourn

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President's Report

By Lorraine Zamora

Our October club meeting set a high bar: We had three prominent Democrats speaking on progressive issues of both local and national importance.

First up was Mark Levine, city council member for the 7th district, West Side, who brought the good news that there had been a council vote that very day to close the Rikers Island jail complex. Levine also reported on new zoning rules to block the construction of high-rise towers in Morningside Heights, a newly introduced bill to ban the sale of flavored e-cigarettes in the city, and ballot measures to strengthen the Civilian Complaint Review Board to make it more independent.

Next up was Ben Kallos, city council member for the 5th district, East Side. He reported on ballot measures that would increase the budgets of the Civilian Complaint Review Board and the office of the Public Advocate, and codify preferences in awarding city contracts to women—and minority-owned businesses.

Then, on a different but equally strategic note, Basil Smikle, Distinguished Lecturer at CUNY and former Executive Director of the New York Democratic Party, spoke about impeachment and Democratic prospects to retake the Senate in 2020. For Smikle, Democrats need to focus on certain crucial Senate races: defeating Republicans Joni Ernst in Iowa, Cory Gardner in Colorado, Martha McSally in Arizona, and Thom Tillis in North Carolina.

This meeting was emblematic of the many things I enjoy as President of Three Parks: meeting and learning from people in the mainstream of Democratic politics, working with a team of talented and dedicated board members, getting to know the many club members who believe in the democratic process and in promoting and voting for worthy Democratic candidates, and, I must admit, enjoying the pride and respect that come with the title. It's a pleasure to represent the club wherever I go and with whomever I speak.

Likewise, I love welcoming special friends to our monthly club meetings—those who just drop by unannounced to say hello. I am referring to State Senator Robert Jackson, who dropped by at our September club meeting to give an informal update on his recent activities, and to Assembly

Member Danny O'Donnell and Borough President Gale Brewer, who both dropped by at our October meeting, Danny to report on the legislation just passed on the closing of Rikers Island, and Gale to report on the status of empty storefronts along Broadway. Does this happen at other Democratic club meetings? Maybe, but I think not.

Three Parks Independent Democrats is a singular force on the Upper West Side. I keep being told it's the most active political club in the city, and not to diminish the work of other clubs like ours, I believe that is true. I haven't heard of any other club that maintains a storefront to support every Presidential campaign, or that organizes monthly phone banks to "Take Back Congress," nor have I heard of elected officials dropping by frequently at other clubs just to say hello. They know they are welcome at Three Parks, and it warms the heart!

Democratic State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen

The NYS Democratic Committee (NYSDC) met last month on the ides of October at the Huntington Hilton on Long Island. There was a small amount of business, including replacing the late Denny Farrell, who among the many hats he wore was an elected representative to the Democratic National Committee. A few New York Democrats were elected Vice Chairs at-large (Bronx Assembly member Michael Blake and Queens Congress member Grace Meng being two examples), but the State Committee itself elects a dozen members to the DNC, and the immediate past chair of the NYSDC Byron Brown won a lopsided vote to take Farrell's open seat. New chair Jay Jacobs serves on the DNC ex-officio by virtue of the fact that he is chair of the NYSDC. That leaves 11 remaining positions. Let's take a closer look at them, shall we?

Alphabetically, they are: Stuart Appelbaum, Vivian Cook, Jennifer Cunningham, Maria Cuomo Cole, Hazel Dukes, Emily Giske, Carl Heastie, Christine Quinn, Michael Reich, Gerard Sweeney, and Robert Zimmerman. Appelbaum is the head of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union. Cook is an Assembly member from Queens. Cole is Governor Cuomo's SISTER (What?), Cunningham is a political strategist, Hazel Dukes is a civil rights activist and past national president of the NAACP, Giske is a lobbyist, Heastie is the Assembly Speaker, Quinn is former City Council

Speaker and Executive Committee Chair of the NYSDC, Reich is a well-connected lawyer in the Queens political machine (What X2?!?), ditto for Sweeney (What X3?!?), and Robert Zimmerman is a communications professional and really, really rich.

Several thoughts: I get Appelbaum as a major domo labor leader on the DNC, Cunningham as a well-connected lobbyist (she is a partner at SKD Knickerbocker), Dukes as a civil rights activist and legend, Heastie as Speaker, Quinn as ED of the NYSDC, and maybe Zimmerman as a really rich guy (sorta). But why Cook and not Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Majority Leader of the State Senate? Perhaps that will happen in the next round of elections, since Stewart-Cousins was in the minority until last year. Giske also is a lobbyist – she is also so well-connected that perhaps she too gets a pass. Maybe it's the same with the rich guy Zimmerman—someone has to pay for all this stuff. But what in the name of all things holy is Cuomo's SISTER doing on the DNC? What on EARTH did she do to deserve this position? Same for Reich and Sweeney, who are lawyers with their hooks deep in the corrupt Queens machine (you might recall their third musketeer, a former Congressman named Joseph Crowley, beaten in a primary by a young progressive named Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez –yeah, THAT guy). No Latino representation, and

it should also be said that with the exception of Brown, everyone else is from downstate or Long Island, so not very geographically diverse, either.

While I would like to start with a completely NEW SLATE for the DNC in 2020, at a minimum we MUST replace Cole, Reich and Sweeney, the latter being the twins of corruption and insider politics. Progressives have many battles to wage in the years ahead, and our victories in defeating the Independent Democratic Conference and electing a Democratic State Senate are just the beginning. We must work towards a more balanced, and just plain less sleazy slate in 2020. I will keep you posted about our progress.

Join Our Next Phone Bank-Postcard Event to Help Take Back the Senate!

By Chuck Wall

The Three Parks "Take Back Congress" campaign is now in full swing in preparation for next year's elections. This fall, we have already held two phone banks-postcard writing events, and a third is scheduled for December 9. We invite all interested Club members to join us in our ongoing efforts.

The focus of our campaign is the all-important drive to help Democrats regain control of the Senate. Thus we are targeting two races that are crucial

Volunteers at the Oct. 28 phone bank reached out to voters in Kentucky and Maine.



to this effort: the fights to unseat Republican Senators Mitch McConnell in Kentucky and Susan Collins in Maine. For the Kentucky race, we are focusing on issues as a way to influence voters. We are calling and writing postcards to Republican seniors in Kentucky to alert them that McConnell, who has publicly called for cuts to Social Security and Medicare, cannot be trusted to protect their benefits. For the Maine race, by contrast, we are focusing on boosting voter turnout among young Democrats. We are phoning young registered Democrats who might otherwise neglect to vote, and urging them to be sure to come to the polls. In a state that already leans Democratic in presidential races, voter turnout will be key in defeating Sen. Collins.

In all, at our first two events this fall on September 18 and October 28, volunteers have called almost 500 phone numbers, written more than 400 postcards, and logged a number of significant conversations with voters. Reactions from Democrats in Maine have been predictably positive. Kentucky seniors, by contrast, are often unaware of Republicans' threats to their benefits or reluctant to acknowledge them, so alerting them to the issue is worthwhile. Several have requested follow-up information sheets.

We will be scheduling more phone banking and postcard writing events in the coming weeks. Over time we plan to expand our focus to include not just important Senate races, but also Congressional and other local races in New York State. Once the campaigning season starts, we expect to work with campaign organizations in each district to support the eventual Democratic nominee.

So join your fellow TPID club members for upcoming phone banks and postcard-writing events, and help take back Congress! Watch for details in future email blasts, or check the TPID website www.threeparksdems.org. We invite all interested club members to join us, but once you get the email invitation, remember to respond promptly as space may be limited. No computers are needed, but please bring a cellphone. Scripts and training are provided.

**Next Phone Bank and Postcard-Writing Event
Monday, Dec. 9. For details, watch for email
announcements or check the Three Parks website.**

Medicare for All: A Bargain at \$33 Trillion

By Steve Max



Medicare for All has been projected to cost thirty-three trillion dollars. That is a big scary Number. When you see all the zeros (33,000,000,000,000), it's even worse. It's about the size of the

entire U.S. and Chinese economies combined—the top two in the world. Debate hosts constantly ask Bernie Sanders how the United States can possibly afford it. Unfortunately, he has not done the best job of answering that question. (*Editor's Note:* Elizabeth Warren released her healthcare plan too late for our deadline. We will cover it in our next issue.)

Note that thirty-three trillion is the total 10-year cost estimate equaling \$3.3 trillion a year. Is that a lot or a little? It depends on what you compare it to. It's about the size of the economy of India, pretty big. But guess what: the total U.S. spending on health care is now \$3.5 trillion a year. What Bernie is proposing is to spend what we are already spending in a far more effective way. Everyone will be included. Services will cover dental, hearing, vision and prescription drugs. Funds would be provided for retraining insurance company employees. Insurance premiums co-payments and deductibles will be replaced by a progressive income tax. Costs will be greatly reduced for families. But how is all that possible?

Last year, the federal government spent \$1.1 trillion on health care, about a third of what Medicare for All will cost annually. The Congressional Budget Office projects that under current law, this will rise to \$2.3 trillion by 2029. Long term projections are always iffy, but clearly the already-large share of the cost of Medicare for All that would come from existing federal programs, Medicare, Medicaid, children's health (CHIP), and Veterans Administration spending will increase dramatically over time. These plans will be rolled into the one national plan, or more specifically, Medicare will be

progressively opened to younger people.

As for the rest of the cost, the Sanders bill doesn't include details. He and Congress will have to supply them when the time comes. We do know that beyond what the government is already doing, another \$2.6 trillion of annual health care spending is paid by private insurance premiums. The idea is to convert private insurance spending by corporations and individuals into public spending.

Sanders did post a memorandum outlining several options including:

Creating a 4 percent income-based premium paid by employees, exempting the first \$29,000 in income for a family of four.

Imposing a 7.5 percent income-based premium paid by employers, exempting the first \$2 million in payroll to protect small businesses.

Reducing costs will also play a major role in paying for the plan. In the current system, in addition to trying to collect fees from individual patients, every medical provider must deal with hundreds of different insurance and employer plans, each with its own forms, rules, coverage, co-payments and deductibles. According to *Health Affairs*, for every ten doctors, seven additional people are employed trying to get the doctors paid. Additional people are employed by insurance companies to find ways not to pay.

According to *The New England Journal of Medicine*, administrative costs in the United States are \$1,059 per capita. In the Single Payer (i.e., Medicare for All) Canadian system, administrative costs are \$307 per capita. With Medicare for All, there will be one set of rules for everyone, and one agency to handle billing.

The United States now spends twice as much on health care as the average of all the other industrial countries. Yet we rank 28th in life expectancy—right down there with Turkey. We rank 55th in infant mortality—just between Gibraltar and Serbia. With Medicare for All, we can bring down costs, pay less and live healthier lives.

Mark Your Calendar

► **Town Hall on the New York Health Act**
Toward an equitable healthcare system:
Tuesday, November 12, 6:30–8:30 pm
YM & YHA of Washington Heights and Inwood
55 Nagle Avenue—the A train to 190th Street

► **Tell Gov. Cuomo to sign SWEAT**

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 12:30 pm
633 Third Ave. (40 to 41 streets)

Join workers from across the City calling on the governor to sign legislation stopping wage theft.

► **Debate Watch Party**

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 8:00–11:00 pm
E's bar 2888 Broadway at 112th Street
Join Three Parks Independent Democrats and Broadway Democrats at our joint watch party for the next Democratic Presidential Candidate debate! This event is Free and open to the public.

► **Take Back the Senate Phone Bank & Postcard Writing**

Monday, December 9, 6:30–8:30 pm
West 110th St. Location

For details, watch for email announcements or check the Three Parks website.



Three Parks at the Broadway St. Fair

On October 20, Three Parks members handed out ballot proposal literature, early voting information sheets, and voter registration forms to friends and neighbors.



Admission is FREE

Plan to come and enjoy the fun, festivities and food with other club members and their families.

Please bring a main dish for four to six people—meat, fish, vegetable, potato/ pasta/rice, or dessert—for the buffet. Three

**Parks also will collect cash or checks made out to
West Side Campaign Against Hunger.**

Please RSVP at our website, threeparksdems.org.

Three Parks Independent Democrats

2020 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member _____ Renewal _____

Membership Category—Check One

Individual (\$25) _____

Family—two adults in the same household (\$40) _____

Low Income (\$15) _____ Low Income Family (\$20) _____

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

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (Cell) _____

Email _____

Check here _____ if you prefer to receive the newsletter **solely** by email.

Please pay your dues with a check, money order or via PayPal.

Please make out all checks to

Three Parks Independent Democrats

Mail to: Three Parks Independent Democrats

Cathedral Station, P.O. Box 1316, New York, NY 10025

Attn: Treasurer

Three Parks Independent Democrats
Cathedral Station P. O. Box 1316
New York, NY 10025

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2019

Saving Neighborhood Stores

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Manhattan Borough President (invited)

Helen Rosenthal, City Council, 6th Dist.

Chris Doeblin, Owner, Book Culture

**SWEAT: The Fight to Stop
Wage Theft**

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National Mobilization Against

Sweatshops (NMASS)

Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, November 20, 6:30 pm

Note early start time

Three Parks Board Meeting

Sunday, December 8, 5:00—8:00 pm

Three Parks Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 18, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 8, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Club Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting