
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Joe Nunley ◆

Broadway Democrats Holiday Party Dec. 11, 2022!



Thanks to our *wonderful* hosts at Ortomare Ristorante, 994 Columbus Ave. (at 109)

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Happy Holidays!

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Election Wrap up: More Victories Than Defeats, But What About New York?

I'm writing this still in the glow of Senator Raphael Warnock's victory, which capped a Senate campaign in which for the first time since FDR an incumbent President lost *no* incumbent Senators, and the Democrats gained full majority control. What a great Senator—and candidate—is Raphael Warnock! Personable, detail oriented, visionary, calm and relaxed—but with a belly full of fire. He voted with Biden and the Democrats on every important issue, but was also not afraid to work across the aisle on issues like drug pricing and combating opioid addiction. He will be an important national voice for many years to come. And a word of praise for Stacy Abrams: without her vision and organizing abilities, Warnock's victories, especially in 2020, wouldn't have been possible.

Good News Locally... All of our incumbents were resoundingly re-elected. There was virtually no Republican trend here: Biden got 92% in our district,

Hochul 91%. As I wrote in my report to our Steering Committee: This month's General Election was the first time in quite a while where our local efforts were very important. We've always tried to make sure that elections here run as smoothly as possible, but this year we also knew that we needed to produce high turnout numbers to offset what was happening outside of Manhattan and similar parts of Brooklyn and Queens. We succeeded pretty well: turnout in our district declined only modestly from the very big numbers of 2018, when Trump was the hated President and people wanted to do something, even if it meant voting for a ticket headed by Cuomo. It was much higher than in 2014, when Obama was still President and everybody was complacent. However, there were significant variations, with turnout declining the least in Morningside Heights and most in Grant Houses.

We did some campaigning on the streets and at our big poll sites, the former Citibank storefront for Early and PS 165 for Election Day voting. But the main thing we did was put up Hall Cards in virtually every building in our district, reminding people when and where to vote. I would like to thank all the club members who helped with this. First and foremost,

Luis Román, who zipped through the many buildings of Manhattan Valley with me, on what was fortunately a warm, beautiful day. And: Joan Levine, Meika Mustrangi, Dave Robinson, Peter Flom, Susan Crawford, Maxine Phillips, Richard Siegel, Noah Kaufman, Belina Anderson, Deborah Thomas (from Three Parks), Joe Nunley, Laura Mandel, Pat Almonrode and Dan Zweig. Thank you all!

...**But Not so Statewide.** So why did Hochul do so badly, taking down four winnable Congressional Democrats seats with her? (Though note that the one place where the results weren't that bad was State Senate, where the Democrats lost only one seat net. This was because even the Special Master's lines were far better than the grossly undemocratic Republican lines of 2012, something that the media never complained about. Democrats gained three seats just by the honest drawing of the lines, only to lose four in the elections themselves.)

I think there were four reasons for this disappointing result, in rough order of importance:

- 1) **Hochul ran a technically bad campaign.** Her managers were a Colorado company that knew little about NY. She still outspent Zeldin two-to-one, but wasted it on ineffective TV ads. There was no field operation, and only at the end did she spend enough time in NYC, where her votes were.
- 2) **Bad media coverage, made worse by mismanagement of the media by the Hochul campaign.** Zeldin was the most right-wing NY gubernatorial candidate in more than a hundred years. He supported the demands of the insurrectionists; he gloried in the Dobbs decision outlawing a woman's right to choose. The media barely mentioned this; all they talked about was crime. And the Hochul campaign, not knowing much about New York, didn't know what to do about it.
- 3) **Crime, crime, crime.** This issue didn't work well anywhere else. Why was it so potent in NY, even though crime is not up that much here, is not up at all relative to other places, including Republican-run ones, and is much lower than it was under Pataki and Giuliani? I'm not really sure. This time I don't blame the Governor and other NY Democratic candidates, and I believe that the way the Republicans and the media lied and distorted around the bail reform issue was positively evil. But I do think that especially the more liberal Democrats had a bit of a tin ear on this issue. Crime is up, especially on the

subways, people are scared. Talking about systemic racism does not help. Talking about attacking the root causes such as poverty, lack of opportunity, the way we treat people with mental disorders, the opioid epidemic, is important, but it doesn't explain the spike in crime, nor offer any immediate solutions. We must stick to our principles in opposing dangerous Republican demagoguery, but we also must offer people some immediate help, and hope. A lot more needs to be said, and more importantly done, here.

- 4) **Jay Jacobs. The Chair of the State Democratic Party is ineffective and must go.** In his tenure there has been no building of party election machinery, few GOTV efforts, no working with the grassroots, generally younger and more progressive organizers who are the majority of political activists in this and many other states. Jacobs needlessly picked fights with more progressive elements within the party; contrast this with the one winning NY Congressional Democrat in a swing district, Pat Ryan, who enthusiastically welcomed the progressive activists into his districts even though he did not himself run on especially progressive themes. I have nothing good to say about Jacobs, but I do think he has become a bit of a pinata for frustrated Democrats to take all their grievances out on. Even Warnock, with one of the best grassroots organizations in history, won by only three points. Ultimately issues, and how candidates and their campaigns handle them, matter more.

On to 2023, and 2024!



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contact *Barbara Trelstad*, btrelstad@gmail.com
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Addressing Mental Health Issues

Vice President Richard A. Siegel

Mayor Adams has created a new policy that would greatly expand the NYPD's ability to forcibly take people to the hospital due to mental health concerns. While we all agree that there needs to be a comprehensive solution to the mental health crisis in New York, his initiative is the wrong solution. The *NY Post* and *The City* have published several articles on this issue. This article credits both for much of the information below.

The Mayor wants to expand the use of involuntary confinement in situations where it is believed an individual is having a mental health crisis. The mayor believes that anyone not domiciled or in the shelter system, is potentially a candidate for this involuntary removal. As written in *The City*:

This is laying the groundwork that just being on the street, just living on the street, being unhoused — that could be interpreted as not taking care of your basic human needs. Therefore being unhoused is being criminalized and setting up hundreds, thousands more opportunities to say that someone is potentially going to harm themselves,”

NYPD officers are the last professionals who should have the authority to assess the mental health of an individual. The current law (9.58) requires that mental health professionals receive specific, extensive training before they are certified to have this ability. Most of the individuals with this competence and certification are social workers, psychologists and MDs. They are trained in engagement, de-escalation and evaluation — all skills developed over many years of work and education.

The skill set of most police officers is not conducive to this work. As a result, many of these attempts to take someone against their will can result in a confrontation, in conflict and in harm. The unintended consequence is to further criminalize mental health problems. This was best said in *The City*, when describing the lawsuit asking for a temporary restraining order:

“At the heart of Plaintiffs’ Application is the City’s use of police officers with little to no expertise in dealing with individuals with mental disabilities who will be required to determine whether an individual should be forcefully — often violently — detained against their will.”

The comprehensive solution that is needed requires many changes to the mental health policy in NY State.

First: the state needs to undo a Cuomo policy that pushed psych facilities to discharge people within 12 days. His Medicaid policy cut funding for stays, starting on day 13. We need to trust the professional on the inpatient unit and allow them the time to treat and stabilize individuals. No facility is milking the system by delaying a discharge.

Second: the state needs to expand the availability of supportive housing — and streamline the application and acceptance process. Many folks can benefit from housing that has mental health and substance use services embedded. Currently, too few people can access the services that enhance their ability to cope with problems. Many ask to leave the hospital instead of waiting months to find a residence that will allow them to move in.

Finally, the state needs to open more long term beds. The psychiatrist who is the ‘gatekeeper’ for entrance to the state system in Manhattan is notorious for blocking most transfers. Of course—these facilities must be re-created to be therapeutic (we all remember *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*). There are some folks that really need long term care at this level to address their illness. Acute care hospitals are for time-limited intervention — not months’ long treatment.

This author hopes that the mayor and the governor will *create a task force* to re-design mental health care in NY State. Simply taking people to a Psych ER without addressing the significant gaps in the continuum of care is short sighted and harmful to people in need. It may get people out of the train stations and off the street for a brief period, but it is not the way to provide effective, compassionate care.



Committeeman’s Report

Daniel Marks Cohen

Jay Jacobs Must Go!

Jay Jacobs tenure as NYS Democratic Committee chairman isn’t the only reason Democrats performed poorly in NYS this year, and he may not even be the main reason, but it is one of the issues that we, as NYS Democrats, can control, and I have urged him to resign. If he does not, I have signed a petition with over 1,000 other party leaders and elected officials calling on Governor Hochul to replace him as chairman. I am

hoping that this petition, which has been reported in the mainstream press, will pressure Jacobs to resign or Hochul to take action.

Over the summer, it was widely believed that Jacobs was re-elected chair because the Governor didn't want to have the potential distraction of replacing the leadership – “switching boats midstream” in the middle of an election year – but now that she has won Hochul is saying she wants Jacobs to stay on, and that is madness.

This year there was a lack of a robust coordinated campaign, the strategy whereby campaign resources such as money, lit and volunteers are collected and then allocated across vulnerable areas or regions of the state. Hochul instead ran a bit of a “Rose Garden strategy” attempting to remain above the fray until late in the Fall when Zeldin began to surge and her campaign kicked into gear, but anyone could have seen from miles away months ago that many legislative seats and all four house seats in Long Island were in play and that there were more vulnerable congressional seats in upstate NY, so there was a need for early and sustained coordinated messaging to get the Democratic vote out.

It goes back further than that, of course, to the disastrous redistricting commission, which was a huge overreach and left us vulnerable to judicial intervention that changed several winnable districts into overwhelming Republican ones and was a gigantic misstep by the party. Either Jacobs allowed this to happen with his consent, or he was powerless and ignored. Either option is unacceptable and he should be replaced.

Instead, Jacobs spends time arguing that Progressives are the problem, when they have led to a recent resurgence in political involvement, most demonstrably with the defeat of the so-called Independent Democratic Conference (“IDC”) that caucused with the GOP minority in the state legislature and blocked impactful legislation for years from being passed. The IDC was not just tolerated, it was quietly encouraged by the state party, and Jacobs must accept some blame for that as well.

Jacobs has now repeatedly lost local, state and federal elections in Nassau County, where he is also chairman, if he cannot even keep his backyard in order, why should we expect anything more for the rest of the state?

It is long past time for Jay Jacobs to go.



Got Blood?

Susan Crawford

If you're reading this article, then of course you have blood. But do you need all of it at all times? Except in rare circumstances, the answer is no. So do you donate some of it from time to time? If so, congratulations! If not, why not? Afraid of needles? Hate the sight of blood? Beyond the initial quick prick of insertion, the needles cause no pain. And if you hate the sight of blood, you can just turn your head.

After all, the only source of blood for those needing it is blood from people who donate it. I didn't think much about donating when I was younger unless whatever job I had was setting up a blood drive. Later on, when the synagogue we belong to begin to sponsor drives, I began to donate more regularly. It was the usual pint of blood until one of the technicians explained that someone with my profile – over 110 lbs (as are most adults) and with a high iron count – can donate double red cells. This entails having the blood drawn, the red cells separated, and the white cells returned. It takes slightly longer, but then the wait time before the next donation is also longer – to allow the red cell count to build up – so it means donating half as often as I could otherwise. For me, that would be four months or so at a minimum rather than every two. Most regular donors show up once or twice a year.

Donors with rare blood profiles can be encouraged to show up more often. One friend did so every 57 days for years. My blood type is O-negative, which is considered rare, but which is also the “universal donor.” Watchers of “E.R.” and other hospital shows hear it called for whenever an accident victim arrives bleeding profusely and there was no time to check blood type.

Another important subtype of donation are platelets. The process of collecting these is similar to that of the double red cells in that the platelets are removed and the blood -- in this case both the red and white cells -- is returned to the body. Fellow Broadway Democrat Dan Zweig, who is a platelet donor, explains further:

There is always a great need for platelet donations. Their shelf life is shorter than regular blood – just five days. On the other hand, unlike regular blood donations, you can donate platelets as often as once every eight days, and up to 24 times in a 12-month period. The process takes longer than a regular blood donation, from two to three hours, so bring a book! The time is well-spent, though, providing a much more efficient source of platelets. A single donation of platelets can yield several

transfusable units, whereas it takes about five whole blood donations to make up a single transfusable unit of platelets.

When donating blood or platelets, each time you receive a free wellness check, which includes blood pressure, pulse, temperature and hemoglobin (Hb).

What conditions that could make you ineligible to be a donor? You will not be eligible to donate blood or platelets if you: have tested positive for hepatitis B or hepatitis C, lived with or had sexual contact in the past 12 months with anyone who has hepatitis B or symptomatic hepatitis C. An intake survey also screens for other possible health complications.

To prepare for a donation, drink lots of fluids over the prior 24 hours. This makes your veins puffy and phlebotomy easier. For platelet donors, you will be in a chair for about 2 hours, so avoid liquids in the hour or so immediately prior to your donation time.

To help keep the blood bank supplied, the New York Blood Center contacts donors as soon as they are again eligible to donate. To get the process started, sign up with the center at nybc.org so you will know when and where blood drives are being held. For residents of the Broadway Democrats area, conveniently located blood drives are being sponsored at the Synod House of the Cathedral House of St. John the Divine.

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Disability is an issue. Why isn't it on politicians' websites?

Peter Flom

At a recent forum that I organized, Broadway Democrats heard about disability as an issue in politics. I decided to see if it was an issue on campaign websites of Democrats, both across the country and locally. So, I tried to find the campaign websites for Democrats running for US Senate, and for NY Governor, and our representatives in the US House, the New York Senate and the New York Assembly. For each site, I tried to find an "issues" or

"priorities" page and searched for anything on disabilities. I did not have time to do a really thorough search and any errors are mine. But what I found was not encouraging.

Of all of the Democratic candidates for US Senate that I could find websites for (a few had already taken down their sites), only three had anything:

- Tammy Duckworth (IL) is, herself, disabled (if you didn't know, she uses a wheelchair). Her page mentions that she has fought for legislation, but is not very specific.
- Peter Welch (VT), includes it as an issue and mentions supporting "American Rescue Plan increases in funding for home and community based services for individuals with disabilities, including behavioral health support."
- Maggie Hassan (NH) mentions that her son has CP and has disability as an issue. She notes supporting the same ARP increase as Welch, that she passed anti-discrimination laws as Governor of NH, and that "She is [pushing for legislation](#) to strengthen protections for students experiencing disabilities from sexual assault on college campuses. Senator Hassan is also fighting to expand in-home care and support services for seniors and individuals who experience disabilities and to make transportation, housing, and voting more accessible. She is leading efforts to enact tax incentives that would encourage employers to hire more individuals who experience disabilities in order to help build a stronger and more inclusive economy." The link goes to support for the SECURE act, and is about getting more rights for disabled college students who are victims of violence. This bill was introduced in the 117th session of the House, but I couldn't find more about it.

Of those who represent us:

- Gov. Kathy Hochul, Rep. Adriano Espaillat, State Sens. Cordell Cleare and Robert Jackson and Assembly Member O'Donnell have nothing on disability on their campaign websites.
- Rep Jerry Nadler does have it as an issue, and mentions supporting 22 disability-related bills; see jerry nadler.com/issues/disability-rights/

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New York State Senator Uses Texas Anti-Abortion Law as Inspiration for Climate Bill

New York State Senator Zellnor Myrie has introduced a bill that is meant to hold polluters accountable for “climate negligence.” Taking a cue from a Texas law that allows individuals to take legal action against anyone “aiding and abetting” access to abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, Myrie’s SB 9612 “would allow any New Yorker to sue fossil fuel companies for civil damages related to harms caused by greenhouse gas emissions,” according to a press release.

One important difference: Myrie’s bill does *not* have a “bounty” provision like the Texas law does. As currently written, the bill does not specify how any damages recovered would be distributed.

“The effects of climate change in New York—especially in communities like mine—are undeniable,” Myrie said. “We are quickly running out of time to reverse this climate emergency, and my legislation gives ordinary New Yorkers a chance to hold bad actors in the fossil fuel industry accountable for decades of negligence and denial.”

“My message to the fossil fuel industry is simple: you will be held accountable for the damage you cause to New York’s environment.” Myrie added.

The bill would allow frontline communities and individuals to sue those endangering their health and safety as well as contributing to climate change. It also allows for suits against fossil-fuel related false advertising and deceptive practices.

The bill is currently in committee and is awaiting sponsorship from an Assembly member.

h/t to DailyKos.com: <https://tinyurl.com/Myrie-bill>.

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The Broadway Democrats Newsletter

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P.O. Box 1099
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell
District Leaders:
Curtis Arluck,
Paula Diamond Román
President: Joe Nunley
Newsletter Editor: Pat Almonrode

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