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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Heather Ducharme ♦

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## **March General Meeting:**

### **Ranked Choice Voting:**

### **Why, When, and How**

*online, via Zoom*

After years of careful study, New Yorkers in 2019 voted overwhelmingly to adopt Ranked Choice Voting. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) does better at promoting candidates with broad support than a plurality election (the current system), since the winning candidate typically has strong first-choice support and also receives a high number of second and third-place votes.

Join us on Zoom to learn more about how RCV works and what to expect at the polls in June!

## **Thursday, March 11**

Meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. sharp!

*please register in advance at*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcuce6vpjlsHtLUAIX10vu4J1uECTPwVLhR>

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## District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Congratulations to our Endorsed Candidates: **Scott Stringer** (Mayor), **Jumaane Williams** (Public Advocate), **Brian Benjamin** (Comptroller), **Mark Levine** (Borough President), **Alvin Bragg** (District Attorney), **Gale Brewer** (City Council, 6th District), **Dan Cohen** (City Council, 7th District), y nosotros, **Paula Diamond-Roman** and **Curtis Arluck**, (Democratic District Leaders)! And let's not forget our Judicial Delegates and Alternates.

Our petitions are a little delayed due to the compressed political calendar and printer delay, but we expect to be out at our usual spots by the weekend: West Side Market, Absolute Bagels, and the Columbia Farmers Market (Sundays). And in the (only two!) following weekends, we hope to add the Morningside Park Farmers Market (Saturdays) and the Food Town near Morningside Gardens and Grant Houses. Join us, and feel free to suggest other locations. Let us know your availability by emailing [districtleaders@broadwaydemocrats.org](mailto:districtleaders@broadwaydemocrats.org). We will post a more complete schedule later in the week.

### Our Leaders: One Out of Three?

Our new President Joe Biden is off to a fantastic start. In barely a month, he has made great appointments, had great results, and displayed a personal greatness unmatched by Presidents in most of our lifetimes. Sure, it's perhaps mostly that he's not Trump: Kind rather than nasty, truthful rather than lying, honest rather than corrupt, intelligent rather than stupid, interested in helping the people of the country (and the world) rather than himself. But it's more than this. He knows how to achieve his main objectives. He knows how to mobilize people to get results. He's gotten us on track to vaccinate just about everybody who wants to be vaccinated by the time the kids return to (real, physical) school in September. He's on the brink of achieving most of what he wants with the pandemic aid package. It's looking good for finally getting results on infrastructure. He's let the country know that the government of the United States will no longer tolerate racism, or sexism, or homophobia. While still too religious for my personal taste, he's

given us a glimpse that religion, as in the Civil War era with those abolitionist preachers, and in the glory days of Dr. King, can be a force for righteousness and good works.

But then we have Andrew Cuomo and Bill De Blasio. Cuomo's whole selling point was that you might not like him, but he got results, and his bullying style was evenhanded and for the greater good. But it now seems clear that this was not the case if you were a young woman. Then you were subjected to a different kind of bullying. I was quite critical of Senator Gillibrand and others in the AI Franken case for not recognizing any nuance, for denying that just like as with any other bad behavior, some sexual harassment cases are not as serious as others. Punching someone in the nose is not as serious as blowing their brains out. Unwanted flirtatiousness, however unpleasant, is not as serious as rape. But the Governor's behavior seems to have moved from the questionable to the predatory, from one incident to a pattern of harassment. Of course he is entitled to a fair investigation. But it seems more and more likely that this investigation will reveal widespread behavior that is unacceptable in a public official.

Then there's De Blasio. I was actually beginning to like him more. He certainly is doing a better job of managing the pandemic than Trump. He speaks lucidly on most subjects. But he blows with the wind. It is fine to praise the NYPD when its cops show bravery or are unjustly accused. But when there is bad behavior, as in the case of Eric Garner, or the hate-filled spewings of PBA head Patrick Lynch, it must be condemned, and if illegal, punished. His handling of the proposed displacement of the Lucerne Hotel residents has been dreadful. And his comments about the Cuomo sexual harassment accusations would put a 3rd grader to shame. You can just hear him saying, "nyah, nyah, nyah nyah nyah." We expect a lot better than this from our mayors. De Blasio should look to Joe Biden to learn how to behave gracefully while still sticking to your principles.

*RL*

## District Leader's Report

Paula Diamond Román

When the pandemic has been successfully dealt with and we're on the other side of this horrendous experience, we will have learned a slew of lessons that have nothing to do with virology. There will be a lot of positive lessons around tenacity in the face of hardship and kindness in the face of mandatory distance. There will also be a lot of negative lessons around the disparities in our society that have been highlighted by the pandemic and the lockdown, many of them involving the technological divide.

These technological divides exist between and within states, between and within neighboring communities. In the last election, Democrats in the western states used greater access to broadband as a campaign message, as the pandemic made that lack even more profound. My sister and brother-in-law are teachers at suburban and semi-rural public high schools; my brother-in-law's students using "hot-spots" specially set up in supermarket parking lots, while one of my sister's fellow teachers drove into town every day to park by the local library which had left its Wi-Fi on for public use. In New York City, there have been ongoing conversations about free Wi-Fi in NYCHA housing; so far, I think only one NYCHA housing project has free Wi-Fi.

President Biden and Vice-President Harris have recently given speeches about the disparities in vaccination rates between different groups in our nation. According to the CDC, 15.3% of Americans and 14.3% of New Yorkers have received at least one dose of the vaccine. However, Blacks, Latinx, and Asians have received only 9% of the vaccines each, while they are 16%, 19% and 12% of the population respectively. Some of these differences are due to suspicions based on past abuse of people of color by the medical community but the larger portion of these differences are due to the challenges of making a vaccine appointment. These appointments require reliable Internet access and flexible work schedules. However, this is only one example of the impact of the technological divide.

Last year, community activists and political organizers were happy to see early voting and absentee ballots used in great numbers for socially distanced voting. Unfortunately, after the Primary, it was clear that information about these options was not as available in communities of color, low-income neighborhoods, and among older voters. While our amazing Go Blue 2020 committee took the reins on calls and postcards to get out the vote in other

states, Curtis and I focused on tabling in the district to spread the word about early voting and absentee ballots (with lots of support from club members!) We talked about it in the newsletter and at our Zoom forums but we also donned PPE and used the lowest tech methods we knew to spread the word. Unfortunately, in many areas, information disparities weren't reduced for the General Election either.

This year, New York City begins a new way of voting called Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) where the voter ranks up to five choices for each race, except District Attorney. If you've ever voted in the club, you know we already use Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) which is similar. There are many advantages to RCV, including electing more people of color or religious minority and saving money on very expensive and poorly attended runoffs. You can learn more about the advantages of RCV and how to spread the word at our March 11th forum with Rank The Vote NYC.

However, there is one disadvantage to RCV or, more accurately, to introducing it this year: most people don't know about it and we have a pandemic and lockdown. We must educate our community. Having a Zoom forum about RCV is one step but, again, we're limited by that technological divide. We'll also be tabling; petitioning just started so we'll hit the streets this week. We'll have flyers about RCV and there will be additional trainings. We've been gifted with boxes of personal protective equipment, so volunteers can safely spread the word, not the virus. We're also planning outdoor trainings as soon as it's warm enough and we can arrange for socially distanced safe spaces.

While the confusion and dismay sure to be caused by a strange new ballot may not be as consequential as voter ID laws or closing polling places in neighborhoods of color, it will discourage voting, especially among older voters, voters with limited literacy, and voters whose first language is not English. Let's conquer the technological divide and voter suppression at the same time by using all the technology we have, from Zoom to flyers to conversations with our neighbors. Let's bring New York City into the modern world of voting by using good old-fashioned community organizing!

If you're interested in joining the Broadway Democrats' Racial Justice Committee or in discussing my article, email your comments to [valleygirl109@rocketmail.com](mailto:valleygirl109@rocketmail.com).



## President's Corner

Heather Ducharme

Members and friends,

I want to thank all who attended our endorsement meeting in February. We heard from the candidates for Manhattan Borough President and had a great discussion amongst our members on all of the local office candidates for City Council, Manhattan Borough President, Manhattan District Attorney, Comptroller, Public Advocate and Mayor before our vote. It was definitely a big change for our club to do the endorsement process over Zoom as well as through an electronic voting system, but it went smoothly.

This weekend we'll begin petitioning for our endorsed candidates. Due to the pandemic, the number of signatures required has been reduced. If you feel safe and comfortable, please come by to sign, help out or to just stop by to say hello! We'll have PPE available for our volunteers so we can be as safe as possible. If you're interested in petitioning, please contact our District Leaders at [districtleaders@broadwaydemocrats.org](mailto:districtleaders@broadwaydemocrats.org).

Our next forum will be education and training on Ranked Choice Voting, so I hope you will be able to join us! We are working on some exciting new things and we will make sure to keep you updated on all things Broadway Democrats.

To learn more about the club or joining us, please email [heatherducharme15@gmail.com](mailto:heatherducharme15@gmail.com)!



## Broadway Democrats Book Club – Next Meeting March 16

Heather Ducharme

For March we'll be reading *Visionary Women: How Rachel Carson, Jane Jacobs, Jane Goodall, and Alice Waters Changed Our World* by Andrea Barnet. This book touches on four women who have greatly shaped the world we live in today.

Our meeting will be Tuesday, March 16th at 7:00 pm, and a link will be sent out through the listserv and posted on our Facebook Group. Please email [heatherducharme15@gmail.com](mailto:heatherducharme15@gmail.com) if you're interested in the book club. All are welcome!



**Disclaimer:** unless otherwise indicated, items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club's commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.

## Save Democracy: End the Filibuster

Mary Peppito / Go Blue

The November 2020 election taught us that we will not have a democracy if we do not protect the right to vote. Since the election, Republican-controlled swing states have steamrolled through an unprecedented number of restrictions to voting rights. In response, we can help protect all Americans' right to vote if Congress passes HR1 and HR4. However, since the GOP is obstructionist, it is likely that the only way to pass voting rights legislation is to eliminate the Senate filibuster.

HR1 will require states to implement policies that expand access to the ballot for Federal elections by: expanding voter registration (enacting automatic and same day voter registration), stopping voter purges, rolling back discriminatory voter ID laws, creating a 15-day minimum nationwide early vote period allowing for national no-excuse absentee voting, restoring the right to vote for people with felony convictions and requiring states to use independent redistricting commissions."

HR4 is another essential tool to fight racial discrimination in voting laws. It would reestablish preclearance, which required states with records of racial discrimination to submit changes in election practices and procedures to the U.S. Department of Justice or the federal court in Washington, D.C. for approval before the changes could take effect.

However, if we don't eliminate the filibuster, Mitch McConnell will easily obstruct passage of these crucial laws. Thus it is vital that we contact our Representatives to ensure that they eliminate the filibuster and pass HR1 and HR4.

- **Sen. Schumer:** 212-486-4430, 631-753-0978, 914-734-1532, 202-224-6542
- **Sen. Gillibrand:** 212-688-6262, 518-431-0120, 631-249-2847, 202-224-4451
- **Rep. Nadler:** 202-255-5635
- **Rep. Espaillat:** 212-663-3900, 202-225-4365

# Register Democrats – Save the World

Go Blue is so excited to be working with [Field Team 6](#) on their upcoming postcard writing campaign to register likely Democratic voters in districts whose representatives supported overturning the Biden/Harris election victory and flip those seats blue! We're targeting traitors in California, Florida, North Carolina, and Texas!

These beautiful postcards were designed by Shepard Fairey, who created the Obama HOPE artwork.



Join us for Field Team 6 Postcard Writing Zoom get-togethers, from **noon to 2 pm** on the following dates. Once you have RSVP'd and let us know which one(s) you will attend, we'll provide the Zoom link (and the postcards!).

**Saturday, March 21**

**Sunday, March 28**

**Saturday, April 3**

RSVP at [broadwaydemsgoblue@gmail.com](mailto:broadwaydemsgoblue@gmail.com),  
and look for an email invitation coming soon!

Send to: The Broadway Democrats, P.O. Box 1099, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025

Special Interests:

E-mail:

Telephone:

Address:

Name: (title, honorifics, and pronouns optional)

To join the Broadway Democrats, please fill out the form below and mail with your check (made out to "Broadway Democrats") to the address at the bottom. Welcome!

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$25; senior dues are \$10.

Membership

# The Broadway Democrats Newsletter – March 2021

FIRST  
CLASS

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

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED