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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Mary Peppito ◆

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## The ABCs of Housing: Affordability, Benefits & Compassion

Thursday, April 17, 2025

6:45pm Sign-in  
7:00 pm Club Business  
7:30pm Forum

Affordable housing has clearly become one of the most critical issues facing New Yorkers across the city. Locally, it increasingly impacts neighborhood diversity, stability, and quality of life. Please join us for a discussion featuring State Senator Cordell Cleare, City Councilman Sean Abreu, and other community leaders to discuss various dimensions of the housing crisis and explore ways of addressing it. Speakers will make brief presentations, followed by a question and answer session. **This meeting is hybrid.**

register at [bit.ly/2025Apr17Forum](https://bit.ly/2025Apr17Forum)



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**Bank Street College**  
**610 West 112th Street**  
**(Between Broadway and Riverside Drive)**  
For more info email [bwaydemsdistrictleaders@gmail.com](mailto:bwaydemsdistrictleaders@gmail.com)

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Volume 50, Issue 3

April 2025

## Broadway Democrats Showed Up!





## Hands OFF!

Shelby Drescher and Diane Bondareff

This past Saturday members of the Broadway Democrats were among the more than 100,000 New Yorkers gathered in the heart of Manhattan for the Hands OFF! mobilization. Our march down 5th Avenue was a powerful, peaceful display of unity, with huge crowds advocating for critical issues affecting our country and its people.

The atmosphere was electric, filled with enthusiasm and a shared commitment to making our voices heard. Our heart-shaped signs were designed for Brooklyn Indivisible by Julie Peppito, the sister of our club's president, Mary Peppito, each identifying important federal programs and rights that the Trump administration is gutting. Unfortunately, we never caught up with Julie and the Brooklyn contingent; you may have seen pictures of them, they were featured prominently in the media!

NYC was just one of 1,300 events across the country. See photo slideshows at [tinyurl.com/HandsOFFUSAToday](https://tinyurl.com/HandsOFFUSAToday) and [tinyurl.com/HandsOFFCommonDreams](https://tinyurl.com/HandsOFFCommonDreams).

I hope that our actions will inspire and give strength to the politicians, judges, federal employees, and citizens who are so bravely resisting authoritarianism and that they cause a flicker (or more) of doubt to seep into the minds of those who choose to kowtow to this corrupt administration.

As we continue to stand together, it's essential to stay engaged and informed about the issues that matter most. We encourage everyone to participate in future events and discussions to ensure that our voices are not only heard but also actioned to save this democracy!

Stay tuned for updates on upcoming events and initiatives.

## President's Corner

Mary Peppito

**WTF is happening to our democratic safeguards? Voting rights, election security are under threat, as Trump seems serious about an illegal third term.**

Among the GOP's many recent attacks on our democracy, a few rise to full-on "dumpster fire" status — they are not only anti-democratic but will also further weaken our democracy or worse. The House's reintroduction of the "SAVE Act," the president's recent Executive Order (EO) on Elections, and cuts to cybersecurity protections for elections will all have dramatic and detrimental effects on voter participation and fundamental election security.

**House Republicans have reintroduced the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act,** which would require all voters to prove U.S. citizenship in person when registering or updating registration — using documents like a passport or birth certificate. According to Common Cause and the Brennan Center, these barriers could strip millions of eligible Americans of the right to vote, **especially the 146 million without passports and the 69 million women whose birth certificates don't match their married names.**

Trump's Executive Order on Elections — ironically titled "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections" — was issued on March 25, 2025. On April 1, the president doubled down with a sweeping (and likely illegal) order that would essentially impose the SAVE ACT without even waiting for congressional action.

Despite the US Constitution deferring election processes to the States, this EO would strip the states of that authority and force them to turn over all of OUR registered voter information to Elon Musk's shady new tech firm, "DOGE." The EO alleges that the U.S. has failed "to enforce basic and necessary election protections" and threatens to pull federal funding from states where election officials don't comply. It also calls on states to work with federal agencies to share voter lists and prosecute "election crimes" which is a deeply dangerous overreach. Like the "SAVE" Act, Trump's EO would require voters to show proof that they are U.S. citizens before they can register for federal elections, but also requires that only mail or absentee ballots received by Election Day can be counted, and sets new rules for voting equipment excluding bar codes and QR codes and prohibits

non-U.S. citizens from being able to donate in certain elections.

The unconstitutional Executive Order also requires that the Defense Department change the overseas voter registration form to require proof of citizenship — a hardship for the military and those that may not have access to their birth documents that have a maiden name on them.

**To fight back, New York joined 18 other states in a lawsuit** against Trump's EO forcing the states to succumb to these voter suppression tactics. State officials, including New York Attorney General Letitia James, say the order breaks the law and hurts New Yorkers. "Donald Trump's attempt to control our elections, intimidate voters, and limit Americans' right to vote is unconstitutional, undemocratic, and frankly, un-American," said James in a recent statement.

According to James and the other attorneys general, Trump's unconstitutional executive order ignores the federal National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act. The lawsuit notes that only state governments and Congress govern elections and asks the federal court in Massachusetts to declare the order void, permanently block it, stop its enforcement, and award the states their legal fees.

**Trump recently gutted cybersecurity protections** for our elections. Additionally, the recent firing of the head of the National Security Agency was only the latest move that has eroded the country's fortifications against cyberattacks, especially those targeting elections.

The Trump administration cut election security funds and now officials fear future elections may be "less secure." In early March, more than \$10 million in funding was cut from two critical cybersecurity intelligence-sharing programs that helped detect and deter cyberattacks and that alerted state and local governments about them. One program was dedicated to election security, and the other to broader government assets, including electrical grids.

Finally, Republicans falsely claim "election insecurity" to delay calling for elections for vacated congressional seats. Case in point: after weeks of saying he would not hold a special election, Texas Gov. Gregg Abbot announced only today that he would hold an election for the congressional seat vacated March 5th by death of a democratic congress-member in Harris County, but he will not fill the seat until November. It is an improvement over his previous stance that he refused to hold an election at all, but delaying the election until the

midterms instead of during the remainder of the current term helps the tiny 3 seat republican majority could be taken advantage of should Democrats fill this seat.

Democracy is at stake and we need to fight back at every level. We are at a tipping point and need to safeguard protections to democracy.



## Communities Not Cages:

### *The Urgent Need for Sentencing Reform in New York*

Eli Northrup

New York's criminal legal system has been shaped by decades of racist and draconian sentencing laws that have devastated Black and brown communities. From the Rockefeller Drug Laws of the 1970s to mandatory minimums and habitual offender enhancements, harsh sentencing policies have fueled mass incarceration and racial disparities at every level of the system.

Today, more than 30,000 people are incarcerated in New York State prisons. Black New Yorkers represent 15% of the population but nearly 50% of those imprisoned. In Manhattan, Black people are jailed at rates 29.5 times higher than white people. These numbers are not coincidences—they are the result of laws and policies designed to punish, not rehabilitate.

Over the years, our attitudes about sentencing have changed, but our laws have not. It's time we addressed these injustices.

The *Communities Not Cages* campaign is a bold, statewide effort to overhaul New York's sentencing laws and replace punishment-driven policies with those that center fairness, redemption, and rehabilitation. The campaign is built around three transformative pieces of legislation:

1. **The Marvin Mayfield Act** (S1209 Myrie / A1297 Meeks): This bill would eliminate mandatory minimum sentences and restore judicial discretion, so that judges—not prosecutors—decide sentences based on the facts of each individual case.
2. **The Second Look Act** (S158 – Salazar / A1283 – Walker): After serving 10 years, incarcerated people could apply for resentencing. This bill would let judges reexamine long sentences in light of a

person's growth, rehabilitation, and changes in the law.

3. **The Earned Time Act** (S342 – Cooney / A1085 – Kelles): This act would expand access to good time and merit time credits, allowing incarcerated people to reduce their sentences through education, vocational training, and good behavior—making prisons safer and easing reentry into our communities.

These common-sense reforms are supported by hundreds of civil rights, labor, legal, and community organizations—including The Bronx Defenders, where I've worked as a public defender and policy advocate for over a decade. I've seen firsthand how these unjust laws break up families, coerce plea deals, and trap people in cycles of incarceration.

As residents of the Upper West Side and Morningside Heights—communities that care deeply about equity and justice—we have a critical role to play in demanding change. I hope you'll join me in advocating for the passage of these important pieces of legislation. To support the campaign and learn more, please visit our website at <https://www.communitiesnotcagesny.org/>.

On Monday, May 13, we will be traveling to Albany for an advocacy day where we'll rally with advocates from across the state, hold a press conference, and meet with lawmakers to push for the passage of these vital bills. Please join us if you are able—no prior experience needed and transportation will be provided. You can RSVP at: <https://secure.everyaction.com/3NLdTWS27ke0id6K5VMNMw2>

Let's fight for a New York that believes in second chances, real safety, and communities—not cages.



**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.



**Broadway  
Democrats**

# **2025 SPRING FLING**

**Sunday, April 27th  
3:00pm to 6:00pm**

**The Ellington  
2745 Broadway  
(corner of West 105th Street)**

**Presenting**

**The Excellence in Democracy Award  
The Late Hon. Laura Friedman**

**&**

**The Ida and Jesse Frankel  
Community Service Award**

**Rise & Resist**

**For more information,  
[BwayDemsFundraiser@gmail.com](mailto:BwayDemsFundraiser@gmail.com)**

# Make a 2025 Fundraiser Contribution to The Broadway Democratic Club

**Benefactor \$500**

**Patron \$350**

**Sponsor \$200**

(Above contribution levels are all listed in our invitation and program; must contact us by April 15 to be listed)

(Contribution levels below are not listed in our invitation and program)

**Guest \$175**

**Dues-paid Member \$50**

**Dues-paid Senior or Student Member \$35**

Choose your contribution level and mail your check to:

**BROADWAY DEMOCRATS**

**P.O. Box 1099**

**Cathedral Station**

**New York, NY 10025**

Or contribute online, at

**<https://www.broadwaydemocrats.org/fundraiser-2025.html>**

## More from the Hands OFF! march:



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

## April 2025

FIRST  
CLASS

P.O. Box 1099  
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