
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

MARCH GENERAL MEETING:

**A conversation with our
Congressional Representatives**

JERROLD NADLER

and

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT

**Thursday, March 17
On Zoom**

**Club Business 7:30 pm
Forum 8:00 pm**

register at

tinyurl.com/March-17-Forum

for more information, email DistrictLeaders@BroadwayDemocrats.org

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Volume 47, Issue 3

March 2022

President's Corner

Joe Nunley

Peace and Survival

The war in Ukraine has the attention of the entire world and certainly the deep concern of peace activists everywhere. Huge demonstrations to end this war have occurred everywhere and even in Russia where peaceful demonstrators have come out in 50 cities – and have been beaten up by Russia security agents and imprisoned. We know of 7,000 such arrests as of this writing.

The people and the planet face two existential threats right now, either of which, unchecked, will destroy not only the human species but all life everywhere. The first is the climate crisis; the second is the nuclear war crisis. Every other concern we have and should have is secondary in importance to these two subjects. Most of the world is aware of this but there are still millions who need to be awakened.

As we experience a war between Russia (a nuclear power) and Ukraine (backed by a nuclear Power, the United States), we should be quite concerned that most of the meaningful arms control agreements that we had in place have been eliminated by George W. Bush and Donald Trump. These include the INF Treaty, the ABM Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty.

Let's go back and look at the history a little bit. In the 1960s the global nuclear arsenal had 20,000 warheads. By the late 1970s at least six countries possessed nearly 50,000 nuclear weapons among them. What followed was a number of international agreements which sought to reduce this arsenal and employ safety measures to reduce the likelihood of an actual nuclear conflict. There was the Non-Proliferation Treaty which became effective in 1970, and a series of U.S.-Soviet agreements beginning with the SALT treaty in 1972. These agreements cut the total number of nuclear weapons by 75%.

Intermediate-range missiles are extremely dangerous because the warning time for an attack is almost non-existent. Such missiles launched as a first strike can eliminate the ability of the targeted nation to retaliate. The INF Treaty addressed this. It was negotiated by Ronald Reagan and the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. It was signed

in 1987. Intermediate-range missiles have a range of 310 to 3,400 miles. This treaty removed most of those, to the relief of our NATO allies.

Donald Trump withdrew from this agreement in 2019. When Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, was asked why, he explained that the United States wanted to build an entirely new supply of intermediate-range nuclear missiles and the INF Treaty would not allow it. He wanted to deploy them in Asia to contain China. China warned Asian nations that if they hosted these weapons *they* would be targeted.

We are now in a cold war with China, and there's a hot war between Russia and Ukraine. Encircling Russia and China with nuclear weapons seems like a bad idea.

The ABM Treaty signed in 1972 was considered a "cornerstone of strategic stability." The treaty limited anti-ballistic missile systems. Basically, each side could put 100 ABM launchers around its capitol and 100 around another site. In 1974 it was changed to one site. The Soviet Union chose to defend Moscow and the U.S. chose to defend its ICBM emplacements near Grand Falls, North Dakota.

The theory behind the ABM Treaty was mutual assured destruction. Each of the superpowers was supposedly deterred by the knowledge that a nuclear attack would be followed by nuclear retaliation, and that both nations would be destroyed.

George W. Bush withdrew from this agreement in 2002. As part of the hysteria after 9/11 he claimed that the treaty prevented the U.S. from developing defenses against possible terrorist or "rogue state" ballistic missile attacks. Thirty House Democrats led by Dennis Kucinich of Ohio expressed strong opposition to the impending withdrawal and sued Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, saying that it was their duty to obtain the concurrence of two thirds of the Senate and the majority of both houses to terminate the treaty. Unfortunately, the Constitution does not explicitly address treaty withdrawal, and the suit was dismissed.

The Treaty on Open Skies was signed by George H.W. Bush in 1992. It allowed unarmed surveillance flights over the entire territory of its 34

signatory nations. The treaty was designed to enhance mutual confidence by any nation, no matter what its size, by allowing it to gather information about military forces and activities of other nations.

Donald Trump officially withdrew the U.S. from this agreement on November 22, 2020. Russia formally withdrew in December 2021.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) was signed on July 31, 1991 by President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The treaty limited the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and nuclear warheads each country could possess. When fully implemented, the treaty eliminated about 80 per cent of all strategic nuclear weapons then in existence. Then began negotiations and passage of the New START Treaty.

Donald Trump was preparing to exit the New START Treaty, the one remaining treaty with Russia. New START limited the U.S. and Russia to 1,550 deployed nuclear missiles each. It expired in February 2021. Fortunately, we had a new president, Joe Biden, who renewed it. Elections do count.

I was listening to Colonel Lawrence Wilkinson on the radio the other day. He was an aide to Colin Powell. He said that there was no such thing as a limited nuclear war. He reminisced on the nuclear war that almost happened between India and Pakistan in 1987. He and his team went and talked with both sides, and he was staggered by their ignorance. Both nations thought that they could attack the other country first and wipe them out without being retaliated against. He believes that we really need to move to a ban of nuclear weapons and that the world has been “lucky” so far. He said, “We’re really fighting a movement within the government to revitalize nuclear weapons as an accessible weapon.”

Two trillion dollars have now been earmarked to create new nuclear weapons over the next ten years. There’s no reason whatsoever that we should be building new nuclear weapons. Let’s remember, we’ve already spent trillions of dollars on nuclear weapons that we can never, ever use. We’re moving in the wrong direction. After this war between Russia and Ukraine is over (God willing), we have to get back to even more serious negotiations regarding arms control and towards an eventual ban on all nuclear weapons everywhere.

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.

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District Leader’s Report

Curtis Arluck

Ukraine and the Threat to Our World

Others have written more cogently and movingly. But we all need to say what’s on our minds. We know that we are all under attack. Here in the U.S., it’s our democracy. In Ukraine, it’s people’s very lives as well as their institutions and their sovereignty. In Eastern Europe, it’s both, though not—yet—as menacingly as in Ukraine.

I join with freedom- and-truth-loving people around the world in praising Ukrainian President Zelensky. Through his words and his deeds, he has inspired and rallied the world. If I can say one thing that maybe hasn’t been said enough, it’s this: as bad as things are, and maybe they’ll get worse before they get better, we should thank whatever God(s) there be that we have Joe Biden and not Donald Trump in the White House. One is on the side of righteousness and freedom-loving people everywhere; the other of despots and fascist mobs. One strives to find the light. The other plunges us into hatred and darkness. No matter what we think, elections are not always so clearly about good vs. evil. This November and especially in 2024, they are.

Petitioning Began March 1 ...

... and runs until the first week in April. Many of our outstanding local elected officials, including Congress Member Jerry Nadler, have opposition, though our own Assembly Member Danny O’Donnell apparently does not. Nevertheless, all the locals need to get signatures to get on the ballot. This year, we also have elections for Democratic County Committee. If you’re a registered Democrat in the 69th AD, you’re eligible to run with us. Join us, by responding to the emails we’ve sent, or by emailing districtleaders@BroadwayDemocrats.org. Locally and globally, we need you!

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State Committeeman Report

Daniel Marks Cohen

The NY State Democratic Committee (NYSDC) held its convention at the Times Square Sheraton on February 16 and 17, to nominate candidates for statewide office. The outcome was not a surprise, as going into the convention there was overwhelming support for the incumbent Governor, Kathy Hochul, and no primary challengers – at the time – to the rest of the statewide slate of Brian Benjamin for Lt. Governor, Tom DeNapoli for State Comptroller, and Tish James for Attorney General. The two announced challengers for Governor, Congressman Tom Suozzi and NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, both failed to get the necessary 25% of the weighted vote in the convention to receive automatic ballot placement, and will have to collect signatures statewide to get on the ballot for the Democratic primary in June.

The convention was otherwise a pretty long-winded affair, with just about every possible candidate and elected official getting their two minutes in the sun, including Mayor Adams, who despite the misgivings of many Downstaters, spoke well and was in turn well-received. It's hard to imagine any Mayor of NYC in the past 30 years being as positively accepted in the state party, perhaps because 20 of the last 30 have been Republicans, and then De Blasio had worn out his welcome almost as soon as he was elected. Adams may not have had everyone in the room in agreement with him, but there was widespread respect for him in the office of Mayor.

Also, it's interesting to note that with Governor Hochul (a white woman), State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (a Black woman), and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (a Black man), New York has now come a LONG way from three (white) men in a room deciding state policy. It was remarkable, and the situation was very different relatively recently. Between that and the array of speakers from across the wide range of diversity in every way imaginable, the projection was of a party that represents New York in all its multicultural and

multiethnic glory. It was a long day, for sure, but it was also a proud one.

As I noted in previous columns, I did not expect to see the 69th AD lines change very much, and they did not. In fact, only about 3 Eds were changed, smoothing out some awkward lines on Morningside Drive, and trading a block or two on the southern border.



From Steering Committee Members:

Peter Flom

Souls and Bellies: Why I am a Progressive

Most people worry about their own bellies and other peoples' souls, when we all ought to worry about our own souls and other peoples' bellies.

Rabbi Israel Salanter

To me, this is the essence of progressivism: your soul is not my business but your belly may be. Conservatives tend to believe that the government should be concerned with your soul but not your belly, while progressives believe that the government should be concerned with your belly, but not your soul.

Bellies

But why is this a function of government? Why not rely on individual charity?

When most people lived in small towns or villages, everyone knew their neighbors. People knew who was hungry and who was not. Even so, charity often failed. Sometimes, as in times of famine, no one in the local community had enough to share and everyone starved. Other times the hungry person was a member of some group that was stigmatized. In different places, different groups were stigmatized, but there were usually some groups that were.

Today, with more and more people living in huge cities, many people do not know their neighbors. If someone is hungry, we may not know; and if someone is begging, we do not know if that begging is legitimate. There certainly are organized charities that attempt to ameliorate some of this problem, but they have too few resources and are not always able to reach everyone. There is a food pantry near where I live in New York City, and I donate to them. But they can't reach all the hungry people; and they can't provide other necessities of life such as shelter or clothing, and they aren't open every day.

The only organization large enough to organize efforts to feed and shelter the poor is the

government. Therefore, I support government efforts to do so, and I am willing to pay taxes to enable the government to do so. I go further: Not only do I think no one should be hungry or homeless, I think people should have the opportunity to be educated, and so I support public education and am willing to pay taxes to do that.

And further, I am concerned about pollution because I take a broad view of “belly”. I think it includes lungs. Air pollution harms people’s lungs, so it is a legitimate concern of mine and of my government’s.

Souls

On the other hand, I do not think your soul is my business, much less the government’s business. If what you are doing does me no harm, nor harms others, then it is not and should not be the government’s business. As Thomas Jefferson said:

It does me no harm for my neighbor to believe in many gods or no god. It neither robs my pocket nor breaks my leg.

This applies equally well, I think, to such issues as gay marriage. It does me no harm. Some people will claim that it is morally wrong, that it is forbidden by the Bible or the Koran. That may be; I will not argue that point (although certainly some will). But it does me no harm. It neither robs my pocket nor breaks my leg. It may (or may not) be about your soul, but it is not about my soul; thus, it is not my concern (beyond cases where I know the people involved, in which case I wish them happiness), or that of my government.

The quote from Salanter with which I started does not cover the whole of the differences between conservatives and progressives, but it is a very good start.



Susan Crawford

EMS, Your Sirens Are Driving Me Crazy!

It’s 3 a.m. From 20 to 30 blocks away I start to hear it: the higher-than-high-pitched shriek of an ambulance siren. As it comes closer, I soon have to clamp two fingers into my ears to save them from the worst of the piercing sound the truck emits until it has passed on below my windows. That part alone can take up to two minutes. If I’m lucky, that’s the only siren I’ll hear that night.

At 3 p.m., on the other hand, the same shriek can come at intervals of five to ten minutes. Deducting the two-minute ear clamp for each one, I can lose up

to 20 minutes per hour of work throughout the afternoon.

What gives? Sirens were not always this loud. I know because I’ve lived at the same emergency intersection of Amsterdam and 110th St. for decades.

Before Mount Sinai took over St. Luke’s Hospital several years ago, EMS drivers would cut their (mercifully quieter) sirens as they got to 110th St. Presumably that was because they were near their destination, plus perhaps in deference to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, its school and the hospital itself at 113th. Two years ago I joined up with like-minded sufferers to see if anything could be done. Invoking a hope, we named our group “Sirenicity.” We started by talking with local electeds who, for the most part, directed us to our local Community Board.

“Built Into the Truck”

At the same time, I started talking to ambulance drivers. Why were their sirens so loud compared to years past; could anything be done about them? “They’re aware of the problem,” one driver of a Mount Sinai ambulance told me of his dispatchers. “But it’s built into the truck. We can’t do anything about it.” Retrofit maybe?

As “Sirenicity” began to convene meetings with our Community Board and to do more research, it emerged that there actually were alternative sirens built into the trucks, but they were equally loud. The shrieking pitch of the siren most commonly used was apparently arrived at as a way to counter another recent development: cars so well sound-proofed that it took a shrieking pitch to pierce the driver’s ears, if at all. I can attest to this since, under the same conditions, I often only know when an emergency vehicle is behind me when I see its lights flashing in the rear view mirror.

So what is the point of these sirens if the only people who hear them are everyone but drivers? They’re part of the emergency vehicle ecosystem, was all we could glean.

As a result of Sirenicity’s meetings via the Community Board, Mount Sinai was prompted to change its EMS routes enough to bypass Morningside Gardens, further north along Amsterdam’s shrieking corridor, and where many of our members live. However, that essentially doubled the cacophony at my intersection since the ambulances were now turning down 110th and continuing to shriek east until they reach whatever avenue they now use to go further north.

Throughout our efforts, we were aware of a broadband alternative in which only drivers ahead of emergency vehicles are alerted. But, but ... back to the ecosystem. A Community Board member explained that the city was unlikely to approve them since they would not work for pedestrians who are blind or partially deaf. They would continue to need the sirens to alert them.

Okay, but still, do they have to be this loud? Do they have to be on all the time, even coming up an empty Amsterdam Ave. at 3 a.m.? Evidently not.

The evidence can be found in a publication from the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS): Lights and Siren Use by Emergency Medical Services (EMS): Above All Do No Harm, found deep on page 4 of one of my Google "dives" for this article. And yes, I actually read it. You don't have to, but please urge your electeds to do so.

Lights and Sirens

Dr. Douglas F. Kupas, the study's author, did a meta-analysis of research going back decades, which continually found that use of lights and sirens (L&S as he calls it) contributes an average of less than two minutes increase in ambulance arrival time. Rather than using L&S to try to speed up the vehicle, he suggests the EMS practitioners' time would be better spent radioing ahead to the hospital with the patient's condition so the staff can be prepared.

Regulations for siren use vary by state and locality. For the most part, they stipulate that if an EMS vehicle's lights are flashing, then the siren needs to be on too. The main purpose of both, Kupas notes, is to alert nearby vehicles that the ambulance is claiming the right of way to get through traffic. Most accidents involving ambulances occur at intersections. It turns out that drivers coming into an intersection that crosses into the ambulance's path cannot hear the siren until it is about 80 feet away. Meanwhile, it takes a vehicle driving at 45 mph 180 feet to come to a full stop, which explains the high crash rate with ambulances at intersections.

Kupas recommends, for instance, that EMS drivers come to a full stop at intersections where they don't have the light, and not proceed until making eye contact with drivers perpendicular to the ambulance to make sure they have stopped. His study ends with more than 10 pages of recommendations for states, cities, towns, rural areas, and EMS operators, many in the interest of minimizing reliance on lights and sirens for safely conveying patients to hospitals.

It turns out that concern about accidents is a primary reason EMS drivers keep their sirens running. But the concern is not just out of driver diligence; after all, they are even more affected by the sound of sirens than we are. I had noticed that FDNY ambulances use sirens more intermittently, and mentioned this to another Mount Sinai driver.

"Well, if FDNY drivers get into an accident, they're covered by insurance through the city," he explained. "If we get into an accident without our sirens on, we're personally liable." So there you have it. Our ears, nervous systems, sleep, conversation and concentration are all being shattered over ... liability insurance ... for a practice that, given decades of research, does not even improve outcomes.



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Meika Mustrangi

Update on the Elder Parole and Fair and Timely Parole bills: Legislative Progress

The New York State Legislature convened on January 5 and is currently in the middle of budget negotiations. The NYS budget must be approved by April 1, the first day of the 2022-23 Fiscal Year. The legislature is also considering the many bills carried over from last year as well as those introduced this year.

Our club adopted a resolution supporting the Elder Parole bill (S15A/A8855) and the Fair and Timely Parole bill (S7514/A4231A). We hope that both bills will be passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Hochul in 2022.

The Elder Parole bill already has 28 sponsors in the Senate and 62 sponsors in the Assembly. The Fair and Timely Parole bill also has 28 sponsors in

the Senate and has 65 sponsors in the Assembly. Bills are passed with a simple majority vote in both chambers. With a number of other Senators and Assembly Members having committed to vote in favor of both bills, they already have majority support in both chambers.

We strongly hope that both bills will be brought to a vote before the end of the 2022 legislative session on June 2. This is the fifth year that these bills have been introduced and it would be very disappointing to see them die in committee again.

What the bills will do

The Elder Parole bill tackles the problem of our growing elderly prison population, even though we have successfully reduced our overall prison population. We believe that individuals 55 or older who have already served at least 15 years of their sentences should be given a chance to appear before the Parole Board and make their case for release. Many elders in prison are serving excessive sentences (e.g. 25 to life, 50 to life) and it's a well-known fact that recidivism significantly declines with age. The Elder Parole is not a get-out-of-prison-free card; it only allows older individuals who have already served their time a *chance* to plead their case with the Parole Board.

The Fair and Timely Parole bill will correct the focus of parole hearings from the severity of the crime, which already informed the individual's sentence and which they cannot change, to the parole seeker's achievements, rehabilitation, and plans for reentry – as required by law. This will make parole hearings a true evaluation of the individual's readiness to return to society. This is not a free get-out-of-prison ticket; it affects only those who can show that they have rehabilitated themselves. We are worse off when we don't recognize when people have transformed themselves and don't encourage rehabilitation. Families and communities pay a high price when we keep people incarcerated for no good reason other than pure vengeance. New Yorkers are better than that!

The next time you run into Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell, State Senator Cordell Cleare, or State Senator Robert Jackson around the neighborhood, don't forget to thank them for supporting the Elder Parole and the Fair and Timely Parole bills and pushing for them to be brought to a vote.

Take action to support these bills

Join us in volunteering to get these bills passed and signed into law.

- Get campaign updates directly from the Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) Campaign at: <https://rappcampaign.com/our-work/current-campaigns/>.
- Sign up for the next monthly Advocacy Day on Zoom, happening next Wednesday, March 9 at: <https://bit.ly/ParoleJusticeMarch9>.
- Join us to knock on doors on Saturday, March 12 from 12 to 3pm, asking constituents of legislators who have not yet co-sponsored the bills to sign postcards expressing their support for the bills. These postcards will later be delivered to those legislators.

If you have questions, please contact me at meika@centerforcommonground.org.

meika

We Want to Hear What *You* Have to Say!



**Email submissions to the editor
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palmonrode@gmail.com.**

**Please note that we will consider all
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meika

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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 2022

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