



December 2015

Staten Island Democratic Association

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www.sidems.org

At our Next Meeting:



- **Statements by Candidates for Executive Committee**
- **Statements by Prospective delegates for the Democratic National Convention**
- **Public Financing of Campaigns Position Paper**
- **Tom D'Angora from the Hillary for America Grassroots Team**



Tuesday, December 15, 2015, 8:00 P.M.

Charlie Brown's Steakhouse, 1001 Goethals Road North



Editorial Policy

Items for publication must be submitted to the newsletter no later than the last Friday of the month before the meeting. Please send items to: cmaxbauer@yahoo.com.

Unless explicitly stated, the views herein are those of the authors and not of S.I.D.A.

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“I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical.”

- Thomas Jefferson
1787

S.I.D.A. Executive Committee

President	Joann Olbrich	Member at-Large	Rosemary Palladino
Vice President	Susan Chew	Ex Officio	Michelle Akyempong
Executive Secretary.....	Mark Herman	Ex Officio	Dennis Brown
Corresponding &		Ex Officio	Gary Carsel
Recording Secretary	Marie Dwyer	Ex Officio	Paul Cinquemani
Treasurer.....	Bonita Rothman	Ex Officio	Belinda Dixon
Social Secretary	Roy Moskowitz	Ex Officio	Rosemarie Mangano
Member at-Large	Carl Chew	Ex Officio	John Mastellone
Member at-Large	Bobby Digi	Ex Officio	Richard McMahon
Member at-Large	Bryan Ellicott	Ex Officio	John Sollazzo
Member at-Large	Mary Kain	Ex Officio	Tom Shcherbenko

S.I.D.A. President's Statement

December 2015

As we prepare to work for the election of a Democratic President in 2016, the tactics of the Republican candidates for the Republican nomination have demonstrated just how essential it is that no one of them gets anywhere near the White House.

The increasingly incendiary and bigoted statements by many of the Republican candidates for Congress have been both alarming and repulsive. Their irrational, xenophobic attacks on Mexicans, immigrants in general, Muslims, and now "Syrian refugees" are nothing new in American history. They bring to mind the shameful rise of the Know Nothing Party, in the 1840's and 1850's. The immigration to the United States of large numbers of Irish and German Catholics caused alarm in some Americans who feared that these new immigrants were followers of the Pope, and would destroy this country.

The Know Nothing Party did not last long, but now we see the rise of the "Know Less Than the Know Nothings" – the perversion of the present day Republican Party into one that relies on hate, prejudice, bigotry, and xenophobia, as well as ignorance and denial of basic scientific fact. Those vying for the Republicans' presidential nomination have been shameless in their recitals of outright lies during their debates and appearances. They have not backed down from these tactics, even after their calumnies against Planned Parenthood incited someone to commit murder in a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado. While the diatribes of Donald Trump have risen to levels of hate and fascism that have brought to mind such past horrors as Joseph McCarthy, George Wallace, and even Hitler, the rest of the field of Republican candidates have been slow to criticize him, as their own tactics differ from his only in degree. Is there any one of them that has not maligned and demonized such scapegoats as poor people, "illegal immigrants," refugees?

We do not all agree on which Democrat would be the best choice for the nomination for president, however I hope that we can agree that we all must join in supporting whichever Democrat wins the nomination. We need to do whatever it takes to elect a Democrat as president, and let the Republicans join their Know Nothing predecessors in the dustbin of history.

- Joann Olbrich



Nominating Committee Report

S.I.D.A. Nominating Committee Report 2015

The following candidates for S.I.D.A. officer and At-large Members of the Executive Committee were nominated by the Nominating Committee:

President

Joann Olbrich

Vice President

Bobby Digi

Executive Secretary

Dennis Brown

Social Secretary

Bryan Ellicott

**Recording &
Corresponding Secretary**

Marie Dwyer

Treasurer

Bonnie Rothman

Member At-large

(in alphabetical order by last name, five to be elected)

Carl Chew

Susan Chew

Robert Holst

Jill Latman

Roy Moskowitz

Clara Ogburn

Sharon Santana

Charlotte Mentzer Sharma

PetitionS to run for S.I.D.A. Office

Rich Florentino submitted sufficient signatures to run for the office of Executive Secretary. Petitions to run as a candidate might be submitted until the end of the December 15, 2015 meeting.

[Editor's note: All candidates for Executive Committee are invited to submit a 200 word statement for publication in the January 2016 newsletter. Submissions should be made by January 1, 2016, preferably by e-mail, to the editor at cmaxbauer@yahoo.com.]



November 2015 Minutes

General Meeting November 17, 2015

President Olbrich called the meeting to order at 8:06 p.m. Joy Robins made a motion to accept the minutes as printed in the newsletter. The motion carried.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Susan Chew presented highlights from the October 29 Executive Committee meeting.

Executive Secretary's Report

Executive Secretary Mark Herman announced that he will not be running for re-election as Executive Secretary. He mentioned that as a State Committeeman he will still be part of the Executive Committee. Mark said he wants to applaud the fact that Mike McMahon was elected as Staten Island District Attorney.

Mark also mentioned that he takes issue with recent behavior of some club members and doesn't like the fact that some members supported Mike's McMahon's Republican opponent, Joan Illuzzi. He feels we should censure these members. Mark thanked club members for all the time they spent listening to him and said he will be back.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bonnie Rothman announced a closing balance as of November 17 of \$9,261.53. Bonnie mentioned that we need to maintain a monthly balance of \$1,500. We have approximately \$400 to spend each month. She added that members should check the label on their newsletter and if that states 2015, they need to pay dues soon.

Nominating Committee Report

Susan Chew announced the results from the Nominating Committee which were not ready when the November newsletter went to press but will be printed in the December newsletter.

President Olbrich reported that she was not able to get a representative from Hillary Clinton's campaign and she thanked several members including Senator Savino for their help. She thanked Tom Shcherbenko for his help in arranging for the evening's featured guest speaker, George Albro.

Guest Speaker

George Albro, a volunteer from the Bernie Sanders campaign for President, said there has been a tremendous groundswell across the country for Bernie Sanders. Mr. Albro comes from Brooklyn and he has been active in politics for a long time.

He spoke about Senator Sander's background and as well as his stand on several issues. He is in favor of a minimum wage increase to \$15.00, free college education, reinstating a stock transfer tax to fund college education, and a New Deal approach to rebuilding infrastructure to provide jobs.

Mr. Albro also mentioned that Senator Sanders is an honorary member of the Lithographer's Union because he was able to get them a small raise. He voted against the Trans Pacific Partnership and the Iraq War. He urged members to compare Senator Sander's issues with Hillary Clinton's. He added that Senator Sanders has 35% in the National polls.

Mr. Albro said that Bernie's message is win or lose and is more than the campaign. It's a battle for Democracy. After his presentation Mr. Albro took questions from several members regarding Senator Sanders stand on issues, policies and platforms. Mr. Albro said that petitioning for the campaign will start soon and explained the process to be considered for a spot as a delegate for Bernie Sanders.

President Olbrich thanked Mr. Albro for speaking to the members. She also reminded members that they should speak to George Albro if they are interested in becoming a delegate for Bernie Sanders.

Issues Committee

Committee Chair Richard Reichard reported that the Issues Committee met last week to work on Gary Carsel's paper on Public Financing of Campaigns. They will have another meeting and then we will vote on the paper in December. He also mentioned that the committee will also be working on Belinda Dixon's paper on the United Parcel Service.

Old Business

Sally Jones gave a brief update on the Case against Debi Rose's campaign. She mentioned that there will be a fundraiser, "Justice for Rose" on December 11 at The Family Life Center. Sally also mentioned that the next court date will be in March 2016. President Olbrich announced that she will send out an email with information for the December 11 fundraiser.

S.I.D.A. member and State Committeemen, Gary Carsel spoke about his resolution regarding the Independent Democratic Caucus (IDC). He said he put out a timeline and suggests that S.I.D.A. accept the proposal for the IDC to rejoin the Democratic Caucus.

Joy Robins made a motion to reconsider Peter Killen's original motion from September which was to table discussion about Gary's proposal until Senator Savino can come to speak to the club. Peter seconded the motion. The motion failed with 7 in favor, 20 opposed and 2 abstentions.

Jeff Stonehill made a motion to vote on Gary's resolution as printed on page 10 of the November newsletter. Sally Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried. 22 In favor, 7 Opposed and 4 abstentions.

New Business

Tom Shcherbenko reported that the South Shore Democratic club annual luncheon is on January 10, 2016, and they are honoring Bobby Digi. He made a motion to purchase one full page ad in the club's journal for \$150. Maria Vella seconded the motion. The motion carried. Bryan agreed to design the ad. Gary Carsel made a motion to purchase one ticket for President Olbrich to attend the luncheon. The motion carried.

President Olbrich suggested selling S.I.D.A. T-shirts as a fundraiser for the club. Bonnie suggested President Olbrich get a sample.

Rich Florentino announced that he wants to run for Executive Secretary by petition. He gave his petition with 20 signatures to the Corresponding and Recording Secretary, Marie Dwyer.

Rich also spoke briefly to club members about his decision to support the Republican Candidate for Staten Island District Attorney, Joan Illuzzi. In response to Rich's decision, Vice President Susan Chew read a prepared statement. Susan took over as chair for the meeting so that President Olbrich could speak about this matter.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Marie Dwyer
Corresponding &
Recording Secretary



Letters

We in S.I.D.A. like to make our views known. The following are some of the letters written by S.I.D.A. members that have appeared in print. Unless otherwise indicated, all letters were in the Staten Island Advance and/or posted on the Advance's website www.silive.com. Unless explicitly stated, the views herein are those of the authors and are not the views of S.I.D.A.

On-line November 12, 2015

Don't Ignore Mayor's 22 Months of Achievements

Reading City Hall reporter Anna Sanders' remarks about Mayor de Blasio [November 6] had me wondering: Which Staten Island is she writing about?

I know lots more Staten Islanders who are concerned about their children's education, paid sick leave, traffic accidents and increasing rents than with deer or potholes. Our mayor has been fighting for those thousands of people since Day 1 and they are much better off now than under the previous two administrations.

And no matter how one might feel about the way he contained it, we all appreciate that our borough was spared the tragedies that plagued Los Angeles, Baltimore and Ferguson after the death of Eric Garner. Staten Island was a model to our country in how to react to those situations and much of that is thanks to Mayor de Blasio.

No one ever expected any mayor to wave a magic wand and make drug addiction disappear or make the North Shore rail line reappear, but to ignore 22 months of achievements that improved the lives of the majority of our borough's residents seems a little misguided.

- Tom Shcherbenko

On-line November 20, 2015

Printed December 2, 2015

Mount Manresa Story is an Epic Tragedy

Mount Manresa is an unbelievable story of epic proportions, starting with Borough President Molinaro leading a growth management task force that "overlooked" Mount Manresa, leaving the zoning R3-2 (perfect for townhouses). It is also mind boggling the Jesuits fundraised for the "next 100 years" in 2010, while planning to sell Mount Manresa.

Most incredible was Michael Savo's 2012 statement, "We are sensitive to the beauty of the site [Mount Manresa].... Our goal is to ensure the property is handled in the most respectful,

sensitive and sensible way." Take a drive down Fingerboard Road and see the evil destruction the Savo Family has wrought on Staten Island, removing all signs of life at Mount Manresa.

Everyone knew the historic Mount Manresa buildings contained asbestos. Somehow, Savo Brothers, self-certified architect Calvanico and certified asbestos investigator Santoro were able to obtain demolition permits by submitting false documents. Thousands of residents were exposed to deadly asbestos. It's inconceivable the District Attorney only charged the Santoros with this crime.

Judge Minardo's ruling that Borough President Oddo must issue house numbers before a full investigation is completed, is just another unbelievable chapter in this tragic story. Thanks to the Borough President for doing the right thing for Staten Island.

The Committee to Save Mount Manresa is committed to stopping disreputable builders like the Savo Brothers from destroying our Island. Unbearable traffic, sewers flooding, overcrowded schools and lack emergency services are the results of silence. Join us in changing "business as usual" on Staten Island. Learn more at www.savemanresa.org.

- Barbara Sanchez

The following letter appeared in the New York Daily News.

On-line November 22, 2015

Printed November 22, 2015

Goose, Meet Gander

Staten Island: Rep. Dan Donovan wants to stop Syrian refugees from entering the USA. Has he forgotten that refugees from the troubles in Ireland faced exactly the same discrimination? Does anyone doubt that some IRA members may have entered our country?

- Tom Shcherbenko

On-line November 24, 2015

Printed December 3, 2015

Ruling on Mount Manresa House Numbers Must Not Stand

The recent court decision forcing the Borough President to issue house numbers for 250 proposed townhouses at Mount Manresa should not be allowed to stand.

The Savo Bros. claimed, per NYC Charter/Administrative Code 3-505, that issuance of "house numbers" by the BP is "non-discretionary." However, the text therein only discusses the proper display of house numbers "assigned by" the BP but includes nothing about their issuance being "non-discretionary." Therefore, Oddo responsible to all Staten Islanders, could legitimately withhold the numbers until remaining concerns about the project were addressed.

This ruling just further entrenches the unwritten law that a developer's desire to recoup their investment must receive utmost consideration – overriding 10,000 signatures on petitions and nearly every elected official in opposition and giving zero consideration to the priceless value of anything else (such as ancient trees or community well-being).

A ruling here against Savo, would have been a win for the foundation of our fading democracy: consent of the governed, which includes the public governed by/subject to private economic decisions. Such a ruling would have required strong convictions, but it would have, for once, strengthened the rights of average citizens against the economic aristocracy.

- Rich Florentino



Congressman Donovan Votes

S.I.D.A. member Richard Reichard has been compiling the voting record of Congressman Donovan. For votes from May 12 through October 27, 2015, please see the November 2015 newsletter.

Congressman Donovan Votes Since October 27, 2015

On **November 18, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted “yea” on the Portfolio Lending & Mortgage Access Act H.R. 1210 (roll call vote 636). H.R. 1210 weakens the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Ability-to-Repay standards for mortgage loans. These standards are designed to protect consumers against the kind of toxic and exploitative mortgage loans which helped cause the financial crisis and led to massive consumer losses, and should not be weakened. The bill would allow all depository institutions, regardless of size, that originate or hold a loan in portfolio to receive a legal safe harbor, even if the loans present safety and soundness concerns and contain terms and features that are abusive and harmful to consumers.

On **November 18, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted “yea” on the Reforming CFPB Indirect Auto Financing Guidance Act, H.R. 1737 (roll call vote 637). H.R. 1737 weakens the ability of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to address discrimination against minority borrowers in auto financing.

On **December 1, 2015**, during the second day of the World Climate Change Summit in PARIS, Congressman Donovan voted twice (roll call votes 650 & 651) to block EPA regulations to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The first vote was to block cutting emissions by 32% from current power plants and the second vote was to block setting limits on greenhouse gas emissions from newly built power plants.

On **December 2, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted “nay” on the Beyer amendment to the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, H.R. 8 (roll call vote 659). This amendment would have prevented rolling back the goal set in 2007 for new Federal buildings to have net-zero energy usage by 2030.

On **December 2, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted “nay” on the Schakowsky amendment to the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, H.R. 8 (roll call vote 660). This amendment would have preserved an existing consumer right to pursue breach of warranty claims against product manufacturers that inaccurately claim Energy Star compliance. A “nay” vote was a vote to give manufacturers’ immunity.

On **December 2, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted “nay” on the Tonko amendment to the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, H.R. 8 (roll call vote 661). The amendment would have removed wording from the Act that required that the government expedite approval of gas pipelines. A “nay” vote is a vote to expedite.

On **December 2, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted ‘yea’ on the Barton amendment to the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, H.R. 8 (roll call vote 664). The amendment would lift the ban on the export of U.S. crude oil that has been in place since the 1970s oil crisis.

On **December 3, 2015**, Congressman Donovan voted “nay” on the Pallone amendment to the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, H.R. 8 (roll call vote 670). The amendment would have required the Energy Information Administration to analyze and issue a

report on the Act's carbon impacts before the provisions of the Act could be implemented. A "nay" vote is a vote against addressing global warming.

On December 3, 2015, Congressman Donovan voted 'yea' on the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, H.R. 8 (roll call vote 672). The Act undermines and stifles already successful initiatives designed to modernize the Nation's energy infrastructure and increase our energy efficiency.



Executive Committee Statement

The Executive Committee at its December 3 meeting discussed some things about the club that it felt should be clarified to the membership and decided to have the following printed in the newsletter.

The Staten Island Democratic Association (S.I.D.A.) is a private, partisan, Democratic club, with a charter from the New York State Democratic Party. Our Governance is by the Staten Island Democratic Association Constitution, that can be found on our website <http://www.sidems.org/constitution.html>, and by Robert's Rules of Order, as per our Constitution: "Article XIII Order - Parliamentary Procedure shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (revised) in the absence of any contrary provisions in this constitution."

An example of how we apply Robert's Rules of Order can be found in the following rules on amendments to motions. Robert's Rules on friendly amendments: "The term 'friendly amendment' is often used to describe an amendment offered by someone who is in sympathy with the purposes of the main motion, in the belief that the amendment will either improve the statement or effect of the main motion, presumably to the satisfaction of its maker, or will increase the chances of the main motion's adoption. Regardless of whether or not the maker of the main motion 'accepts' the amendment, it must be opened to debate and voted on formally (unless adopted by unanimous consent) and is handled under the same rules as amendments generally." [page 162, Robert's Rules 11th Edition]

Robert's Rules on amendments: "The subsidiary motion *to Amend*:

1. a) *When applied to a main motion*: It takes precedence over the main motion and over the subsidiary motion *to Postpone Indefinitely*. It yields to all subsidiary motions other than *Postpone Indefinitely* and *Amend*, and it also yields to a motion *to Amend* that is applied to it; and it yields to all privileged motions and all applicable incidental motions.

b) *When applied to other than a main motion*: it takes precedence over the motion that it proposes to amend. It yields to any privileged or subsidiary motion (other than *Amend*) to which the motion that it proposes to amend would yield, and it also yields to motions *to Amend*, *to Limit or Extend Limits of Debate*, or for the *Previous Question* that are applied to it; and it yields to all applicable incidental motions." [pages 131-132, Robert's Rules 11th Edition]



Public Financing of Campaigns Position Paper

The Issues Committee is chaired by Richard Reichard. Committee member Gary Carsel authored the following position paper on public financing of campaigns. It will be discussed and voted on at the December 15 General Membership Meeting.

Public Financing of Campaigns

When you are running for public office the gauge of how serious a campaign you have going is based upon how much money you have to spend. As success begets success in most enterprises, so in politics money begets money. Where does the money come from which rules the political roost and, more importantly, where should it come from?

New York State and federal figures overwhelmingly point to fewer and fewer people accounting for more and more of the campaign contributions. The small wealthy percentage of those who donate to political campaigns are being driven by narrow self-interests and access to power, rather than by any shared ideology.

Politicians, wary of offending wealthy well-connected donors, write legislation with deductions, tax credits or regulations benefiting the donors. All the credits and protections for the donors lead to less revenue for government, increased borrowing to cover costs and/or higher taxes for ordinary citizens.

On the citizens' morale side, the increasing control of the political process by the well-connected results in a loss of faith in government which increasingly becomes synonymous with the interests of the affluent. When people become disillusioned and consequently decline to vote, a vicious cycle unfolds.

Politicians who wish to do public good find themselves hindered by the necessity to raise buckets full of money. Time best spent on drafting legislation, developing legislative expertise or talking to constituents must take a back seat to fundraising needs. Challengers also find their time dominated by the need to fundraise.

In the end, we are talking about a system that is not good for democracy: regarding who is elected, and ultimately, in the governing of America. So what, if anything, is being done to right the scales? The answer for New York State and the federal government is: "Not much."

On the New York State level we have a public financing law hastily patched together in 2014 which was greeted with almost universal condemnation. The New York State legislation not only put the highly inept New York State Board of Elections in charge of the public financing program, the legislation also required the state comptroller to both receive funds for his campaign, as well as disburse public financing money. On the federal level we have the antiquated Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, which following a steady decline in participation, both Romney and Obama opted out of in the 2012 presidential campaign.

Further, in many public financing strongholds such as Maine and Arizona, participation in public financing programs is undergoing a steady decline. With the need for some sort of public financing of campaigns, why the pushback?

The principal reason for the failure of campaign finance reform is that politicians fear empowering more candidates, and involving more people in the political process jeopardizes their own political careers. Consequently, we get the appealing, but false, argument that public financing of elections is too expensive.

The cost to taxpayers of legislation which favors wealthy donors aside, public financing of campaigns need not be an additional tax burden. In Connecticut they got creative: their campaign financing program is funded primarily from the proceeds of abandoned property and unclaimed assets. There is no reason New York State could not be creative concerning revenue sources.

There is also a related, but equally specious argument that public financing of elections is an inappropriate use of taxpayer dollars. The truth is that public financing of elections is a very appropriate use of taxpayer dollars given that the job of government is to promote the best interests of the community. Non-competitive elections are undemocratic and serve no one's best interests, except for special interests and the incumbents who continue to receive their salary while campaigning and who also distribute publicly-funded mailers promoting themselves.

In addition to politicians opposing public financing of campaigns, there are the corporations which feel their money affords them an advantage. The corporations have found a friend in a Supreme Court which has attacked public financing of campaigns in a series of decisions, the frequently criticized Citizens United being the best known.

Despite the gloom concerning public financing there remain bright spots. The Supreme Court reluctantly acknowledged in the *McCutcheon* decision that "preventing corruption or its appearance is a legitimate objective." Also, about half the states and a number of American cities (including New York City), have made a serious attempt at public financing of campaigns which have yielded meaningful public financing options. These options may be divided into those which provide donor-centered support and those options which provide candidate-centered support.

Under the donor-centered options public money flows directly to the donor through a tax credit/deduction/refund or a voucher. Donor-centered programs allow the donor to donate to a candidate or a political party.

The candidate-centered option allows funds to go directly to candidates with the private money being matched by the public financing program money. New York City, a number of states, as well as presidential elections use a campaign finance system in which matching funds go directly to the candidates.

Both the donor-centered systems and the candidate-centered matching funds system diminish the corrupting influence that wealthy donors have on politics, and to a greater or lesser degree increase the involvement of the voter in the political process. Therefore, either system's adoption would be beneficial to the State of New York or the federal government. What is unconscionable is not taking any action on public financing of elections.

The Staten Island Democratic Association is a Democratic club of Staten Island, and as such supports the ideals of the Democratic Party, among which are the sanctity of every citizen and every vote. We further believe democracy is best served when the power rests in the wisdom of the many, and not in the self-interests of the few. We therefore are calling upon our elected officials to join with us in supporting meaningful federal and state legislation whose goal is to create a more democratic society through public financing of political campaigns.



