



November 2016

Staten Island Democratic Association

est. 1961 as Staten Island's reform Democratic Club

www.sidems.org

At our Next Meeting:

- **Steve Harrison**

on Repealing the
Electoral College



- **Presentation of Executive
Committee Candidates**

Tuesday, December 20, 2016, 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.

Chris Bauer, Editor
(917) 576-9248

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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	Clara Ogburn
Vice President	Bobby Digi	Ex Officio.....	Michelle Akyempong
Executive Secretary	Dennis Brown	Ex Officio.....	Gary Carsel
Corresponding & Recording Secretary	Marie Dwyer	Ex Officio.....	Paul Cinquemani
Treasurer	Bonita Rothman	Ex Officio.....	Belinda Dixon
Social Secretary	Bryan Ellicott	Ex Officio.....	John Mancuso
Member at-Large	Carl Chew	Ex Officio.....	Rosemarie Mangano
Member at-Large	Susan Chew	Ex Officio.....	John Mastellone
Member at-Large	Robert Holst	Ex Officio.....	John Sollazzo
Member at-Large	Roy Moskowitz	Ex Officio.....	Tom Shcherbenko

Best wishes to
Oran Brown
from all your friends at
S.I.D.A.!

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

December 2016

My fellow S.I.D.A. members, I write this with great dread for the future. On November 8, 2016, our worst fears became reality, and everything we all have been working for our entire adult lives is in danger of being destroyed. The rights of working people, women, L.G.B.T. people, those with disabilities are in dire danger. The environmental laws that protect our air and water might soon be eliminated, along with the OSHA regulations that protect the health and lives of working people, and the F.D.A. regulations that protect the safety of our food and drugs.

The man who is going to take office in January has sworn to commit acts that violate our Constitution, that violate the Geneva Conventions, that violate international law. He has no respect for our Constitution, other than the gun industry's twisted perversion of the second Amendment.

As each new appointment is announced to the presidential staff and cabinet, they are without exception right wing extremists, racists, homophobes, and misogynists who want to wipe out the rights of ordinary people, while empowering corporations. Those in line for Secretary of Defense and State are determined to start a war with Iran.

With the Republicans in control of Congress, they are determined to get rid of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. This has been their intention ever since the Democrats gave these programs to the American people, and now they have the power to achieve it.

The only thing standing in their way is that they do not have 60 votes in the Senate, so that the Democrats in the Senate can block some of the worst depravity, if they stand firm. We must encourage the Senate Democrats to fight for us, and the integrity of this country. We must fight for what we have achieved over the last century, so that it is not all destroyed.

- Joann Olbrich
President



November 2016 Minutes

General Meeting November 15, 2016 Charlie Brown's Steakhouse

President Olbrich called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Bobby Digi presented highlights from the most recent Executive Committee meeting.

President Olbrich asked members to let her know if they had any ideas for fundraising. She also passed around a get well card for Bryan Ellicott who was recovering from recent surgery.

October Minutes

Susan Chew made a motion to accept the minutes as published in the newsletter. Sharon Santana seconded the motion. The motion carried.

All Dems Holiday Party

President Olbrich reminded members about the All Dems Holiday Party scheduled for Thursday, December 8 and she urged members to pay as early as possible. Price per person is \$55.00 and the flyer is in the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bonnie Rothman provided members with the current Treasurer's Report. Susan Chew made a motion to increase dues for each category by \$5.00. David Jones made a friendly amendment to increase the dues by \$10.00 for each category. Susan accepted the friendly amendment. The motion carried with 18 in favor and 7 opposed. The increase will start in January 2017.

New prices are as follows:

Family	\$25.00
Individual	\$20.00
Senior, Student or unemployed.....	\$15.00

Guest Speaker

Carmen Cogna gave a presentation on the election results, analyzing the swing districts on Staten Island and also spoke about strategies for winning future elections. Mr. Cogna compared the results from the 2008, 2012 and 2016 Presidential elections both nationally and locally. He also spoke about the Electoral College. He also mentioned that fewer people came out to vote for this election than the last time. Mr. Cogna also spoke about how the country has historically alternated between voting for Democratic and Republican Presidents.

He also explained that national security, the economy and social issues at the time influence the way people vote. Mr. Cogna explained that people look at government as the problem not the solution and he added that the Democratic candidate didn't really have a clear message or clear positions on issues.

Mr. Cogna feels that Dems need to work on electing state legislators in the next two years. After his presentation he took questions from several members in attendance.

President Olbrich introduced Richard Reichard, former S.I.D.A. President and candidate for Congress. She gave kudos to Richard for his hard work and said he did us proud!! Richard thanked the many members who helped him during his campaign. He mentioned that he received a lot of positive feedback from many of the 8,000 homes he went out to.

He also mentioned that he is going to use the website he created to try to educate people about what is going on in Washington D.C. Richard feels we have to keep on working hard and that we can change things.

Nominating Committee Report

Susan Chew reported that she co-chaired the Nominating Committee with President Olbrich. She mentioned that the committee met on November 2, and they thoroughly went through the

membership list and considered all members in good standing. She added that the Nominating Committee report is in the October newsletter.

Susan mentioned that members that are not on the committee report and would like to be considered, must submit a petition signed by 15 members in good standing. The petition must be handed to Corresponding and Recording Secretary Marie Dwyer before the end of the December meeting. All candidates running for office, will have the opportunity to speak briefly to the members at the December meeting.. They may also submit a 200 word statement to newsletter editor Chris Bauer by January 1, 2017. His email address is cmaxbauer@yahoo.com. Chris reviewed other rules for the election with the members. The rules also can be found in the September and October newsletters.

New Business

Paul Scublinsky made a motion that the Staten Island Democratic Association urges all elected Democratic State Senators to work together for a Democratic led state senate with Democratic majorities in every senate committee. The motion passed unanimously.

President Olbrich announced that Nancy Meyers and Marion Fontana are co-hosting a fundraiser for Mayor de Blasio on November 19 at 2:00 p.m. It will be held at the home of Marion Fontana, 465 Henderson Avenue.

Executive Secretary's Report

Executive Secretary Dennis Brown gave kudos to Richard Reichard. He said he was very proud of Richard's campaign. He also applauded Carmen Cognetta for his interesting presentation about the election results. Dennis encouraged members to be positive and said "let's win some elections".

Bobby Digi encouraged members to take a journal ad for his benefit concert featuring Melba Moore on November 26 at the St. George Theatre. He explained that people who takes ads will receive complimentary tickets. The benefit is for Youth Empowerment, connecting kids to jobs.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by
Marie Dwyer
Corresponding &
Recording Secretary*



Club dues go up \$10 per category on January 1, 2017, so renew your membership before then at the old rate! See renewal form at the end of this newsletter.

Steve Harrison on the Electoral College

S.I.D.A. member and former Congressional candidate Steve Harrison will speak at our December General Membership Meeting about repealing the Electoral College. He submitted the following statement for publication in the newsletter.

The Electoral College - Undemocratic Now; Undemocratic Always

In 2000 Al Gore lost the presidency but won the popular vote by 540,000 votes. Why? The electoral college system.

This year Hillary lost the presidency but is closing on winning the popular vote by 2.5 million votes. Why? Again because of the electoral college system.

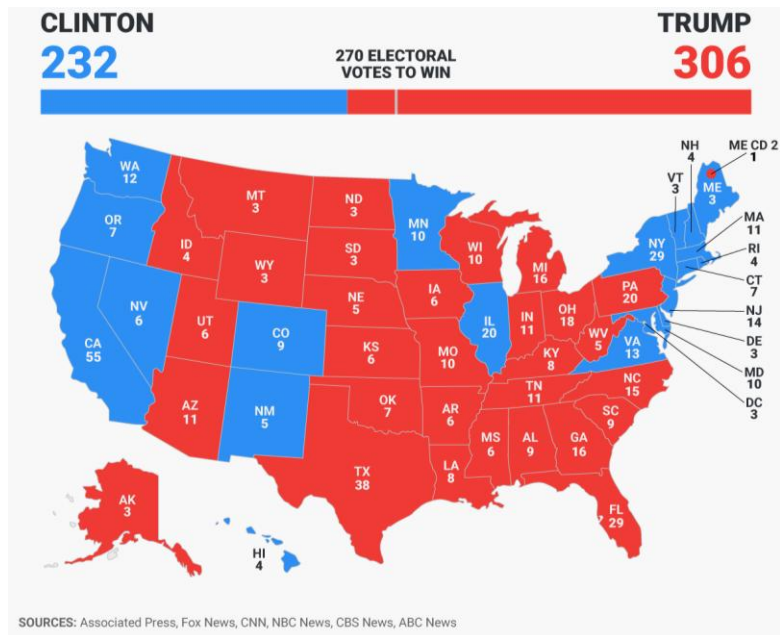
This means that in twelve of the twenty years from 2001 thru 2020 America will have been ruled by a minority president, i.e., a president who was rejected by a majority of Americans.

This anti-democratic system must stop because quite simply - its not democratic. We need a constitutional amendment. So let's start working toward one.

A good explanation of the rationale for the electoral college as adopted by our forefathers is given in Factcheck.org.

In sum, contrary to what many believe, the E.C. was not intended to balance power between populous states and small ones. That problem was brilliantly handled in the constitution by the establishment of a two-chamber congress. Representation in the House is proportionate to the population of each State. Obviously, the smaller states are overwhelmed in the House by the larger ones. But the Constitution mandates only two Senators from each State regardless of size. So Wyoming, with 1 representative in the House, nevertheless has two Senators, the same as California which has 53 representatives. To a degree, this scheme gives the smaller states the ability to veto overarching legislation favored by the larger States but potentially detrimental to the smaller ones. But it also allows the majority of the populace to thwart unpopular actions of a majority of States that represent a minority of the population.

In contrast, the E.C., used to elect a president, has nothing to do with the big state/little state issue. The E.C. is actually rooted in white male elitism and racism. It was actually designed as a check on democracy because the founders - all white men- did not trust the rag-tag population to elect the president. According to Hamilton, the EC was designed to ensure that the president is chosen "by men most capable of analyzing the qualities adapted to" a president. In other words the voice of the populace is, at best, advisory. The E.C. system was only designed to preserve



“the sense of the people” for consideration by the electors. But each elector was free to choose as HE pleased.

Each state chooses how its electors are appointed. Now all but 2, Maine and Nebraska mandate that the candidate with the most votes in that State gets all the electors. But that does not make the electoral votes proportionate among the States because the number of electors in a State is equal to the number of senators plus the number of representatives. So California gets 55 electors (2 senators plus 53 reps) and Alaska gets 3 (2 senators plus 1 rep). But that works out to 1 elector for each 244,000 citizens in Alaska and only 1 for each 735,000 in California. In short, in a presidential election, each Alaskan has three times the voting power of each Californian. Why? Because the number of Senators is constant across the Board, so the larger the State the smaller its voting power in the electoral college. I for one believe my vote should count as much as any other American. After all, if one person one vote means anything it must mean that.

This atrocity must change because it is a sin against democracy. It is an insult to all Americans.

I am aware that a constitutional amendment has been proposed before and rejected. But that’s because the roots of the electoral college have been misunderstood as a search for democratic balance between the States rather than the elitist power grab that it actually was.

I am also aware that of the NPVIC (National Popular Vote Interstate Compact). Wikipedia has a good article on this. This is a legislative effort to “circumvent” the constitution. Each State that joins the pact - 11 so far - agrees to award all its electoral votes to the winner of the NATIONAL popular vote. Currently almost all States award the electoral votes to the winner of the STATE’s popular vote. Once the number of States in the pact reaches a total of 270 electoral votes (they have 165 so far) then it can, theoretically, be guaranteed that the winner of the national popular vote will win the election. Sounds great, right?

Not so fast.

The problem is the NPVIC may be (and I believe it is likely to be) unconstitutional. If it is challenged in the Supreme Court and declared unconstitutional, a lot of effort will have gone for naught. Moreover, even the advocates agree it is intended to circumvent the constitution. Is such a strategy wise as a matter of policy? Does it open the door for other policies to “circumvent” constitutional provisions we cherish, say, freedom of speech, the right to counsel, or the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment? It raises the question. Do we believe in the Constitution or not?

Let’s talk.

- Steve Harrison



QR Codes

S.I.D.A.’s Twitter account:



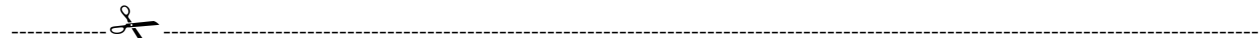
S.I.D.A.’s website:



December 20, 2016	January 17, 2017
General Meeting 8:00p.m. Charlie Brown's Steakhouse 1001 Goethals Road North	Annual Meeting 8:00p.m. Charlie Brown's Steakhouse 1001 Goethals Road North
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Harrison on Repealing the Electoral College • Presentation of Executive Committee Candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cesar Vargas on Sanctuary Cities • Executive Committee Election

It's Time to Join or Renew Your S.I.D.A. Membership!

To become a member, renew membership, or make a donation, call Bonita Rothman at (917) 596-3724, or complete and return the coupon. Voting privileges begin 45 days after joining.



2017 DUES	DONATION
_____ \$15 - Family	_____ \$5
_____ \$10 - Individual	_____ \$50
_____ \$5 - Senior, Student, or Unemployed	_____ \$100
	_____ Other _____

_____ Check (payable to: S.I.D.A.) _____ Cash

I understand SIDA is a Democratic Party club. I (or we, if this is a Family Membership) am (are) at least 17 years of age and an enrolled Democrat, or intend to enroll as a Democrat upon becoming eligible.

Signature _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____ Apt # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Make checks payable to S.I.D.A. and send to: S.I.D.A.
P.O. Box 140371
Staten Island, NY 10314-0371

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