



April 2011

## Staten Island Democratic Association

*est. 1961 as Staten Island's reform Democratic Club*

*www.sidems.org*

At our Next Meeting:



- Assemblyman Matthew Titone  
on Medical Malpractice Insurance

Tuesday, April 19, 2011, 8:00 P.M.,

**Karl's Klipper**, 40 Bay Street, 718-720442

**NEW MEETING LOCATION!!**

See page 2.



## 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](mailto: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

**\*\*\* MEETING LOCATION! \*\*\***

**We are back at**



**40 Bay Street  
Staten Island, NY 10301  
718-720442**

## S.I.D.A. President's Message

April 2011

Since my election, on January 18, 2011, as President of S.I.D.A., I have had the privilege of writing a President's Message for this monthly newsletter twice. In each of my first two messages, I have reported on a strategy that S.I.D.A. – in its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year – can employ to effect progressive political change on Staten Island, in New York City, in New York State and in the nation as well.

I have proposed committees and chairpersonships for all of our Officers and Executive Board members. And that is working very well by all reports. I have emphasized political action strategy and asked our most recent President, Richard Reichard, to chair that committee to assist all the other committees in bringing our issues to the public. I have asked Roy Moskowitz to head up Publicity and Public Relations to assist in getting the word out and publicizing our efforts as an association of activists reaching out to the general public. All of our officers and committee chairs, whose names are listed in this monthly newsletter, have been doing a remarkable job and I am grateful for their energy and enthusiasm as we move toward our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration being prepared and planned so ably by our Social Secretary, Liz Price and her dedicated team of volunteers. Clean Water, Membership, LGBT and Civil Rights, Issues, Constitution Revision, Legal and Labor Relations committees are all vital and generating activity and involvement which will lead to informing the general public that Democrats have been and continue to be fighters for all the people, not just for the 1% of the people in our country who take in nearly a quarter of our nation's income and control over 40% of our nation's wealth.

I have been excited by the challenges we will face in retaining the few Democratic office holders that currently represent Staten Island, and as we look forward to our next two election cycles, I hope that we will retain the presidency, regain our congressional seat, and pick up additional legislative seats. Of course we still have to look forward to a District Attorney's race which may be extremely challenging as there do not seem to be any candidates coming forth yet.

We have to educate the Staten Island public so that they will not continue to vote against their own self interests in the face of Right-wing ideology, e.g. Americans for Prosperity, the organization funded by the Koch brothers, notorious corporate, anti-union billionaires; Conservative talk radio; and fear mongering which has already led to regressive economic and social policies. According to the United Steelworkers, "The conservative attack on workers in Wisconsin is far from isolated... This is a nation-wide campaign by billionaires and country-club conservatives, to terminate workers' rights, giving unfettered power to corporations. Middle-class workers, whether Republican or Democrat, know they must repel this assault on their right to collectively bargain or be reduced to insecurity and poverty." As Chris McMillen, Council Coordinator for NY District 13 (MoveOn.org), put it recently, "the right wing is on the attack: slashing public services, eliminating workers' rights and destroying jobs. Their excuse? [America is broke] and yet big corporations and the wealthy are raking it in, and continue to get tax break after tax break. Something doesn't add up."

These circumstances lead to inequality which (according to an article by Joseph Stiglitz in the recent issue of *Vanity Fair*) "distorts our society in every conceivable way." Stiglitz goes on to say, "In recent weeks, we have watched people taking to the streets by the millions to protest political, economic, and social conditions in the oppressive societies they inhabit. Governments have been toppled in Egypt and Tunisia. Protests have erupted in Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain. The ruling families elsewhere in the region look on nervously from their air-conditioned penthouses – will they be next? They are right to worry. These are societies where a minuscule fraction of the population – less than one percent – controls the lion's share of the wealth; where wealth is a main determinant of power; where entrenched corruption of one sort or another is a way of life; and where the wealthiest often stand actively in the way of policies that would improve life for people in general. As we gaze out at the popular fervor in the streets, one question to ask ourselves is this: When will it come to America? In important ways, our own country has become one of these distant, troubled places...the top one percent have the best houses, the best educations, the best doctors, and the best lifestyles, but there is one thing that money doesn't seem to have bought: an understanding that their fate is bound up with how the other ninety-nine percent live. Throughout history, this is something that the top one percent eventually do learn. Too late."

And then I think about our own Staten Island where recently Robert Scamardella, in an attempt to become the next GOP chairman, raised an estimated \$66,000 from nearly 1,000 supporters at a fundraiser. He said that he wants to, "revitalize the Republican party." He also was quoted as follows, "I have never understood why it is considered greedy to want to keep the money you have earned, but not greedy to want to take someone else's money." According to the Staten Island *Advance* of March 28, 2011, he espoused, "the Republican credo of less

debt, collective sacrifice and more freedoms.” Scamardella went on to say, “ We demonize those who produce, subsidize those who refuse to produce, and canonize those who complain.”

This is where S.I.D.A. as a progressive, informed and activist club has to assist our Democratic party and draw the battle lines to re-educate the general public. We need to help our citizens understand that it is a wealthy elite that has been waging class warfare and winning it to the detriment of most Americans. We have to re-establish true democracy in America, and work—through local organizing as well as the internet and the public media—to develop the kind of democratic dialogue that will enable more Americans to learn what is happening and why, so that they can be empowered to defend the tenets of our democracy and restore the American dream (in its best and most noble sense) that is being stripped away and so continually threatened today.

We’ve got a great deal of work to do. It’s not going to be easy and we need all hands on deck to weather the storm that this country is in. We’ll not only complain but also work to keep Staten Island and all American families free of the injustice of corporate and millionaire tax evasion in the face of the Republicans’ and Tea Party’s budget-slashing attacks on working families.

Dennis Brown  
President 

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## Assemblyman Matthew Titone

*A guest speaker at our April 19 General Meeting will be Assemblyman Matthew Titone, who will speak on medical malpractice reform, specifically against the proposed \$250,000 cap on pain and suffering awards. Some of the best arguments against the cap were made by Ralph Nader on his website Nader.org, and rather than reinvent the wheel, Assemblyman Titone asked that we reprint the article in preparation for his appearance before the club.*

Friday, March 4, 2011

### **Selling Out Injured Baby Rights**

**N**ew York State's Governor Andrew Cuomo will be judged harshly by history if he doesn't reverse his position supporting limiting the legal rights of brain damaged babies. Imagine a life-time \$250,000 cap on pain and suffering and families having to endure a burdensome and humiliating struggle to get medical bills paid as they arise from an insurance funded entity.

Governor Cuomo is hiding behind the recommendations of his Medicaid Redesign Team, which has more than a sprinkling of hospital and industry lobbyists, and which was the stalking horse for this heartless proposal.

Why you might ask would Andrew Cuomo, the son of Mario Cuomo, a man widely regarded as a champion of the underdog, advance such a mean-spirited and wrong-headed measure?

The short answer: political expediency. Credible observers say Governor Cuomo needs to give the health insurance industry a financial benefit in exchange for the health insurance industry not economically punishing hospitals workers. And to top it off with a touch that would make Machiavelli proud, the Governor placed this initiative in his budget proposal. This means that for the New York State Assembly and Senate to vote against this draconian measure used to seal a political deal, the legislators would have to vote down the entire state budget.

It is shameful that the Governor would use his creativity and intellect to help the health industry at the expense of helpless babies who are victims of medical malpractice.

Many in the health care and insurance industry seem to regard the civil justice system as a nuisance that threatens to destroy our economy and way of life. In reality, America’s civil justice system plays an indispensable role. When the rights of injured consumers are vindicated in court, our society benefits in countless ways: compensating victims and their families for shattering losses (with the cost borne by the wrongdoers rather than taxpayers); preventing future injuries by deterring dangerous health care and other practices, spurring safety innovation; and educating the public to risks associated with certain products and services. These legal rights provide society with its moral and ethical fiber by defining appropriate norms of conduct.

Governor Cuomo needs to review the facts on medical malpractice. First he should know that supporters of tort "reform" invoke one myth after another: a litigation explosion, juries automatically ruling in favor of plaintiffs and routinely awarding punitive damages, an economy shattered by these awards. Each of these notions is demonstrably false. Only a tiny percentage of persons injured bring lawsuits, and an even tinier percentage of those who do receive large verdicts. Limiting victims' rights is an anti-democratic solution to a trumped-up problem.

Second, a driving force behind this dishonest campaign is the insurance industry. Whenever, over the years, insurers face low interest rates and declining stock investments, they start the drumbeat against justice for victims. They’ve made a particular cause against liabilities for medical malpractice. Instead of demanding disciplinary action

against incompetent physicians, urging medical associations to police their own ranks, the insurance industry lobbies state and federal legislatures to curtail victims' rights and remedies in courts of law. At the insurance industry's behest, their physician policyholders have joined the call.

Why do physicians allow themselves to be tools of insurance companies that gouge them especially when they are not among the incompetent few who account for most malpractice claims (five percent of doctors are involved in roughly 50 percent of malpractice payouts)? One answer is that insurance companies frighten physicians with false data suggesting that malpractice suits run amok. A persuasive case can be made that there are far too few malpractice suits. The 1999 Institute of Medicine study estimated that gross malpractice in hospitals alone takes up to 98,000 American lives a year and causes hundreds of thousands of serious injuries. Yet various studies show that roughly 90% of people harmed by medical malpractice do not even file suit.

If you total the entire amount of premiums physicians pay in a year for their malpractice insurance and divide it evenly by all the physicians practicing in the United States, the average annual premium is less than \$10,000 per doctor. Very manageable. So why are some doctors paying \$50,000 or \$100,000 a year to their malpractice insurers? Because the profit hungry companies have learned to over-classify their risk pools, thereby charging exorbitant amounts to specific specialists like obstetricians and orthopedic surgeons. In addition, because insurers fail to surcharge the few incompetent physicians in these specialties, the competent specialists pay for more than they should.

There is another benefit to the insurance industry from this kind of over-classification. When obstetricians are gouged, they protest loudly, threaten not to deliver babies, and sometimes actually go on strike. This makes great television -- crying babies and physicians in their garb blaming lawyers -- and deflects blame from the insurers, who laugh their way to the bank. In recent years, their profits have soared.

Neither organized medicine nor the insurance companies go after bad doctors. The AMA's web site does not report any data about incompetent or crooked physicians, and the insurance companies have shown little interest in loss prevention. Instead, both physicians' and insurers' lobbies fund and press legislators to enact laws that politicize the courts, tie the hands of judges and juries, and make it harder for innocent people or children to receive just compensation for their tragic suffering.

Isn't it time to focus on malpractice prevention instead of trying to hamstring hundreds of thousands of Americans harmed by their doctors' negligence? Are malpractice awards the national crisis physicians and insurers suggest? In fact, the entire medical malpractice insurance industry payout to victims in verdicts and settlements is about \$5 billion a year (substantially less than the amount our country spends on dog food). Isn't it time to focus on malpractice prevention instead of trying to restrict the rights of hundreds of thousands of Americans harmed by their doctors' negligence?

We need to ask whether proposed reforms level the playing field or tilt an already un-level field even further by making it more difficult for wrongfully injured citizens to receive justice from the perpetrators of their harms.

The tort reform movement amounts to a perverse rewriting of history. Tort law produced decades of slow but steady progress in state after state respecting the physical integrity of human beings against harm by recognizing that even the weak and defenseless deserve justice. Instead of seeing this evolution as a source of national pride, a coalition of insurance companies, corporate defense lobbies, and craven politicians depict it as an accountability that must be stripped.

If this campaign succeeds, the results are sadly predictable. Tort reform means less deterrence, which means more injuries, more uncompensated victims, and tremendous overall costs transferred to society.

Send the governor a letter and remind him an important part of being a leader is defending the defenseless. His address is:

The Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo  
of New York State  
York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

- Ralph Nader 

## Minutes

### **General Meeting March 15, 2011**

President Dennis Brown called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. Loretta Prisco advised of a correction to be made to February's General minutes: On Page 19 of the March newsletter the sentence should read, "Loretta explained that any member could research an issue and then prepare a draft." Peter Killen also advised of a correction. Also on page 19, the sentence should read, "He asked members to invite people they think will be appropriate to join the club." The Recording Secretary made note of the changes.

#### **First Guest Speaker**

Joe Delaney of the Bread of Life Food Drive is a retired Director with the firm of Deloitte & Touché USA, LLP. He discussed the history of The Bread of Life Food Drive (BOLD). He directs the local Bread of Life Food Drive for the University of Notre Dame Alumni Club. Mr. Delaney pointed out that BOLD has been in existence since 1992 and that this year the club is in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of conducting the drive. They collect food from various schools on Staten Island and pack it at Msgr. Farrell High School. They distribute the food to many not-for-profit organizations on Staten Island. Mr. Delaney said that many organizations help to sort and pack the food. He asked S.I.D.A. members to come to Msgr Farrell HS on April 9<sup>th</sup> to help out. He also thanked people that brought food to the meeting.

#### **Reporter's Round Table**

President Brown announced that we would be having a Reporter's Round table and that Loretta Prisco will be the moderator. He mentioned that he would give each reporter an opportunity to introduce him or herself. The reporters participating are Wayne Barrett, Erik Engquist and Tom Wrobeski.

#### **Wayne Barrett**

Mr. Barrett currently writes for Newsweek and The Daily Beast. Mr. Barrett said he wants to bring good news coverage to Staten Island. He said that he thinks it is a good time to be a Democrat on Staten Island. He thinks there are many conservative labor people here. He also mentioned that Staten Island played a pivotal role in changing politics in 1993. He said that when you combine current Gov. Andrew Cuomo with labor politics, it makes it a good day in politics on Staten Island.

#### **Erik Enquist**

Mr. Enquist feels that Governor Andrew Cuomo is not governing like his father, former Governor Mario Cuomo. Mr. Enquist mentioned that he covers NYC & NYS politics. He said he grew up in Brooklyn and he covered Brooklyn neighborhood news. He wrote a blog. He now heads Crain's political coverage. He mentioned that there is a perception that reporters are manipulated by corporations and advertisers. He said that he thinks reporters write what is interesting to them and to others.

#### **Tom Wrobeski**

Mr. Wrobeski is a political editor for the Staten Island Advance and he has covered Staten Island politics and Borough Hall since 1988. He said that The S.I.D.A. are the true believers of the Democratic Party. He mentioned that newspapers are on the decline. He thinks that people still want information but he doesn't know how it will be delivered.

President Brown acknowledged John Sollazzo, Vice Chair of the SI Democratic Party. Mr. Sollazzo said that we need to take this time to re-organize the party. He mentioned that there are a lot of people out of work and labor people are reaching out. He also said that the Voter Registration list is primarily Republican.

Loretta Prisco, executive committee member and moderator for the Round table, read something written by Walter Cronkite. Loretta had prepared questions for the reporters and each one had a chance to answer. After their interesting and informative discussion, Loretta opened the floor to allow members to ask the reporters questions.

After the presentation, Loretta thanked the three reporters for their candid and thorough responses. President Brown added that he is deeply grateful that they embraced us with their time and talents. He also thanked Loretta Prisco for moderating and recognizing Roy Moskowitz for arranging to get the reporters for the meeting.

### **Vice President's Report**

Vice President John Lavelle presented highlights from the last Executive Committee meeting held on February 23, 2011.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Tom Shcherbenko reported that the current balance is \$5,622.79. He recently collected \$270 in dues and received \$50 in contributions. He also reviewed other income and expenses during the past month.

### **Social Secretary's Report**

Social Secretary Liz Price mentioned that the Annual Mark Herman picnic is scheduled for July 17<sup>th</sup> at Ft. Wadsworth. She also mentioned that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Planning Committee had another meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> and discussed honorees and other details.

### **LGBT Committee**

Committee Chair Rosemary Palladino spoke about events that transpired during the recent Staten Island St. Patrick's Day Parade.

### **Political Action Strategy Committee**

Committee Chair Richard Reichard announced that there is a health Care rally scheduled on March 23<sup>rd</sup> outside Congressman Grimm's office. He also mentioned that he needs eight volunteers to help give out flyers on the Manhattan side of the Staten Island Ferry on March 22 from 3:30 – 7:00 p.m. Richard said that they will only give out the literature if he can get at least eight volunteers to help.

### **Motion #1**

Richard made a motion that S.I.D.A. allocate \$100 for health care reform literature to be distributed at the ferry terminal in March. The motion passed.

### **Motion #2**

Richard said since April is the environmental month he wants to give out some literature the week before Passover and Easter. He made a motion that S.I.D.A. allocate \$100 for clean environment equals good health literature to be distributed at the ferry terminal in April. President Brown said that we can approve this motion at the next Executive committee meeting.

### **Motion # 3**

A motion was made to send a letter to Congressman Grimm, copying the *Advance*, requesting that Congressman Grimm vote against and remove his name as a co-sponsor of Road Map for America's Energy Future Bill, HR 909 because it promotes nuclear energy as safe and expedites the approval and licensing of new nuclear power plants. The motion passed.

Vice President John Lavelle announced that S.I.D.A. plans to hold a memorial service for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire to be held on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at Staten Island Borough Hall, St. George. He mentioned that the fire was important in the labor movement because a lot of legislation came out of that event.

### **Membership Committee**

Chair Peter Killen asked if anyone in the room was not a member of S.I.D.A.? One person said that they were not a member and Peter gave the person an application to join the club. Peter reminded members that if they have any friends or family that are a good fit for the club to encourage them to join. He also said to see him for applications.

President Brown acknowledged that Rosemarie Magnano Cavanaugh, President of the South Shore Democratic Club, And Gary Lane, President of the Democratic Organization of Richmond County, were in attendance.

### **New Business**

Joann Olbrich mentioned that many S.I.D.A. members attended the recent Staten Island St Patrick's Parade. She mentioned that someone from the Hibernians was harassing S.I.D.A. members and telling them to remove gay banners or else have them removed from the parade.

Gary mentioned that the North Shore Dems Dinner is scheduled for April 14<sup>th</sup> and made a motion that S.I.D.A. purchase one ticket and a full-page ad. The motion carried.

Peter Killen reported that he and his wife Pat Killen, on behalf of New Yorkers for Clean Water, went to testify against hydro fracturing at a city council meeting on March 1, 2011.

Mark Herman spoke about former S.I.D.A. member Dan Davis, who recently passed away. He mentioned that a memorial service has been scheduled on April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Unitarian Church.

Richard Reichard reminded members about the Health Care Reform rally on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2:00 p.m. to be held outside Congressman Grimm's office, New Dorp.

Fran Brown thanked everyone for all their support, and good wishes for Dennis who is recovering from surgery. President Dennis Brown also thanked everyone for their support after his recent surgery.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 pm

*Respectfully submitted,  
Marie Dwyer  
Corresponding &  
Recording Secretary* ✍

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## Flashback

*We keep our history alive by reprinting articles from past newsletters, minutes from past meetings, or other items of interest from the past. If you have items that might be appropriate for the Flashback column, please call Joy Robins at (718) 816-4128. Here are some photos from 2001, courtesy of Ralph Dickar.*



County Chair and Assemblyman John W. Lavelle,  
Larry Hanley, Borough President candidate Jay O'Donovan  
& Vita O'Donovan



City Council Candidate, 51<sup>st</sup> District,  
Janey Moran & John W. Lavelle



Back when we met at the Cargo Café  
Chris Bauer, Jean & Oran Brown, John Bostrom, Janele Hyer-Spencer,  
Doug Spencer, Gene & Loretta Prisco, Nick Popolo, unknwn, unknown,  
Debi Rose



Unkown, Stevie Lacy-Pendleton, Joann Olbrich, Joy Robins

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## 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](http://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 March 9, 2011

Printed March 9, 2011

### **Why Does City Allow Properties without Sidewalks?**

**T**he Advance's article blaming school bus service cuts for the young man who was the victim of a hit-and-run accident recently misses a more important health and safety issue on Staten Island — the lack of sidewalks.

Though responsibility ultimately rests with the driver of the vehicle, this incident could have happened in July when school was out. So, I must wonder why you and our elected officials continue to ignore this serious issue.

The city Department of Transportation Web site clearly states: "New York City law requires property-owners to, at their own cost, install, construct, reconstruct, repave and repair the sidewalk adjacent to their properties . . . in accordance with DOT specifications."

Why then would some property-owners not be required to have sidewalks? Are there exemptions for certain areas? Why would there be a double standard?

We are a city of a half million people, not the cozy hamlet of yore many of us remember; the desire to live a bucolic lifestyle should not come before the health and safety of our children or seniors.

Every year, you report on the city's campaign to ticket homeowners with faulty sidewalks. Well, the administration and the Advance should start this new campaign — installing sidewalks.

- John Lavelle

On-line March 10, 2011

Printed March 15, 2011

### **10 Compelling Reasons Not to Repeal Health-Care Reform**

On March 23, 2010, after six months of debate in Congress, President Obama signed the health-care reform legislation into law. On Jan. 19, 2011 Congressman Michael Grimm voted to repeal it.

Here are 10 reasons why repealing health-care reform is bad for families, seniors and the federal deficit:

The health-care reform legislation:

- Allows children, up to the age of 26, to be covered under their parents' health insurance;
- Prohibits health-care plans from putting life-time dollar limits on medical coverage;
- Prohibits health-care plans from rescinding coverage;
- Prohibits health-care plans from refusing to provide coverage due to a pre-existing condition;
- Grants tax credits to small businesses that provide health care to their employees;
- Requires large employers to provide their employees with health-care coverage or vouchers to help them buy their own health-care coverage;
- Provides subsidies to individuals and families to help them buy health-care coverage;
- Extends Medicare's solvency from 2017 to 2029;
- Eliminates the "doughnut" hole in the Medicare drug plan;
- And, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, reduces the federal deficit by \$143 billion by 2019.

The membership of the Staten Island Democratic Association opposes any effort to repeal the health-care reform legislation.

- Mark Herman

*[The writer is executive secretary of the Staten Island Democratic Association.]*

On-line March 14, 2011

Printed March 20, 2011

### **Cutting Jobs Only Leads to Less Revenue Down the Line**

Republicans across the country are doing what they do best: protecting the top 1 percent with 38 percent of the wealth and then setting the rest of us against each other fighting for the crumbs. They insisted on extending the Bush tax cuts for the 1 percent, thereby increasing the deficit.

Then in the name of "fiscal austerity" (LOL), they are demanding draconian cuts to jobs and services for the poor and middle class.

The simplistic mantra of the Tea Party and Republicans of "cut, cut" is no solution for the problems facing our nation. When you cut jobs, you have to consider all the ancillary repercussions: Less tax revenue; fewer people buying things; fewer people eating out; which reverberates down through the economy. It means more people getting food stamps, welfare and unemployment benefits.

We are becoming a Third World country, with the same inequities of wealth as the Middle East kingdoms. Why should we care? Because aside from the humane issues, aside from the Judeo/Christian values we profess, unequal societies are unstable societies.

Let's get real. How are we going to create jobs for all the people who want to work? Where is the plan for our children, for our future?

- Susan Rappaport

On-line March 21, 2011

Printed March 21, 2011

### **Grimm Persists in Voting to Put American Lives at Risk**

On Feb. 18, Congressman Michael Grimm voted to prohibit the use of federal funds to be used to enforce the requirement that licensed firearms retailers report multiple purchases of semi-automatic rifles by the same individual within five consecutive business days.

Two of these assault weapons, which were purchased from a licensed firearms retailer in Arizona, were recently linked to the killing of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.

On Feb. 19 he voted to prohibit the use of federal funds to run the new Safer Products web site, [www.saferproducts.gov](http://www.saferproducts.gov). This web site allows people to share information about injuries and death caused by everyday products such as cribs, high chairs, and space heaters.

Nikki Johns, who lost her infant son in a faulty crib, said, "If I had known there had been children killed in drop-sides, it would have swayed me against them."

Also on Feb. 19, he voted to reduce funding for the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii, which would result in reduced staffing and the closing of the Center one month per year.

Every one of these votes by Congressman Grimm will put the lives of Americans at risk. Is that how you want your representative in Congress to vote?

- Richard Reichard

On-line March 20, 2011

Printed March 201, 2011

### **Grimm's Voting Record Only Promotes Abortion**

I am disappointed by Congressman Michael Grimm's support for House bill HR3 and budget bill HR1. Grimm says he is "pro-life;" however, his vote for HR1 demonstrates that he is pro-abortion and pro-death! Grimm voted to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, that provides mammograms, pap smears, HIV testing and other vital services for those in need, family planning services and access to contraception.

Eliminating those services guarantees more unwanted pregnancies and abortions! Making abortion difficult or illegal will not eliminate abortion. Before Roe vs. Wade legalized abortion, women with money went to Bermuda or Canada, poor women used knitting needles; plenty of them died as a result!

Grimm voted to slash funding for programs like WIC, that provides nutrition for poor infants, children and pregnant women, and the fetuses inside them.

Slashing funds for Head Start and low cost day care for poor working women guarantees that more women would choose abortion, because they would not have affordable daycare. It is fiscally irresponsible to cut Head Start.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that every dollar spent on Head Start saves many dollars on such things as special education, repeating grades, and the criminal justice system.

- Joann Olbrich

On-line March 27, 2011

Printed March 27, 2011

### **Grimm's Energy Bill Would Expedite Plans for Nuke Plants**

This letter was sent to Congressman Michael Grimm:

On March 3, you became a co-sponsor of the Road Map for America's Energy Future bill, HR 909.

The Road Map for America's Energy Future bill will put in place an expedited process for approving and licensing new nuclear power plants.

Given the recent catastrophe in Japan where the "fail-safes" and "back-up" systems failed to prevent the release of radiation into the environment, it would be reckless to put in place a system that would expedite the construction of new nuclear power plants in the United States.

The membership of the Staten Island Democratic Association therefore asks that you remove your name as a co-sponsor of the Road Map for America's Energy Future bill and that you vote against the bill if it comes up for a vote.

- Dennis Brown

*[The writer is president of the Staten Island Democratic Association.]*

On-line April 10, 2011,

Printed April 10, 2011,

### **Would Anti-Union Republicans Weaken Child Labor Laws?**

Child labor laws protect our children from abuses in the workplace, allowing teen-agers to work a maximum number of hours each week, assuring that their jobs do not interfere with school or homework, while allowing them to help their families financially and show work experience on resumes.

And, our minor children are not permitted to work — unlike in countries where children, some only six years of age — labor under conditions that cause irreparable damage to their health and cause death.

Now, Republicans in Maine want to destroy the protections that unions have brought to our minor children by eliminating the maximum number of hours they can work.

Are we going to regress to the days when children worked with no protection from harmful working conditions and hours that negatively impacted their health?

Do we want our children working unregulated hours so that they are not prepared for school after working long hours the night before with no time to prepare for the school day ahead?

Our children must be protected, and the campaign to weaken unions by preventing bargaining for wages and working conditions which leads to legislation to protect them will turn this country back 100 years and harm our children.

- Carlton Chew ☞

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## **April Meeting back at Karl's Klipper 40 Bay Street**

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### **View from the First Row**

#### **I Returned to the Same School and Came Out Thinking “What was it that I ate, drank or smoked?”**

I summoned the courage to return to the school where I heard a recording of Fleming's “*O mio babbino caro*” – I always was a glutton for punishment. I closed my ears so that I wouldn't imagine anything strange, but mistakenly kept my eyes open. I walked by the first bulletin board and saw children's artistic reaction to Edvard Munch's “The Scream.” I cleaned my glasses – but they were still there.

Tacked onto the next bulletin board were children's collage interpretations of sunsets done in striking variations of orange with a variety of objects cut out of black paper pasted on the background. I took my glasses off – still there - frightening! Had I waltzed into the Twilight Zone? Something in my orange juice? Why was I being tortured with mirages?

Where I got the strength to go further – I have no idea. A bulletin board that boasted quotations from famous people on peace with comments on the meaning of peace. Oh, no! Political propaganda in a public school. Could it get any worse?

I will try one more and if it doesn't get better - then I am outta here! Two monsters and two smiling (smiling in a public school?) characters adorned the bulletin board with the words “Bully” and “Buddy”. Children's quotes on what a bully does and what can we expect from a buddy. I rubbed my eyes – nope, still there.

I know it can't be true. Music? Art? Emotional literacy? Not in NYC public schools under Bloomberg! A principal nearing retirement with a very senior staff? On my next visit, I will be sure to go stone cold sober! ☞

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## Grimm View of Women's Health

*The Staten Island Women's Political Caucus sent a letter to Grimm concerning his vote to strip all funding from Planned Parenthood. This letter was printed in the Staten Island Advance as well. Here is that letter below:*

**T**he Staten Island Women's Political Caucus strongly disagrees with your recent vote on HR 1, which effectively strips Staten Island women of access to vital health services, low-cost child care and nutrition programs.

Your vote to eliminate from the budget bill all Title X funds for Planned Parenthood - in addition to defunding other important programs that primarily serve women - is most troubling.

If the Pence amendment decimating Planned Parenthood is allowed to stand in the final bill, Island women will be robbed of access to cancer screenings, HIV testing, birth control and other life-saving services.

While we understand your opposition to abortion as the justification for your vote, we are puzzled by that position because of the longstanding ban on using federal funds for abortion.

You courageously joined with fellow Rep. Peter King in calling for the reinstatement of Homeland Security and fuel heating assistance funds, saying the lives of your constituents would be at risk if these funds are lost.

We believe the lives and the *quality* of life of these same constituents - the women of your district - are equally at risk if these cuts go forward.

*[The writer, Neale Steiniger, is president of the Staten Island Women's Political Caucus.]*

*Here is the response the Staten Island Women's Political Caucus received from Grimm:*

Dear Neale,

Thank you for contacting me regarding Title X funding as it pertains to the Continuing Resolution(C R) for the remainder of FY 2011. It's good to hear from you.

As you know, Representative Mike Pence (N-6) introduced an Amendment that would prevent Planned Parenthood Federation of American and its affiliates from receiving federal funding. You may be interested to know that this Amendment passed on the House by a vote of 240-185 on February 18, 2011.

Regardless of where people fall on the ideological line, most Americans show widespread opposition to any federal funding of institutions facing extensive legal trouble. Planned Parenthood is currently facing 107 criminal charges, 23 felony charges, all while they have been reported for abusing the laws requiring mandatory reporting of rape and abuse, along with instructing young women to lie about their age to get an abortion without parental consent.

Given our unstable fiscal climate, the federal government must be careful as to where to allocate taxpayer dollars. I understand that these health centers provide men's and women's primary health care services. While it is important to maintain access to these beneficial services, I do not believe that any taxpayer dollars should be going to institutions that provide abortion services.

I invite you to follow me on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/repmichaelgrimm](http://www.facebook.com/repmichaelgrimm), and Twitter @repmichaelgrimm. Should you have further comments or questions please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,  
Michael G. Grimm  
Member of Congress

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You are invited to the  
**Eighth Annual  
Lathrope Voorspuy  
Memorial Scholarship Fund  
Awards Brunch**

This year at our fundraising brunch we are awarding our scholarship to an outstanding Staten Islander:



**Tricia Ryan**

**Come celebrate with us!**  
**Sunday May 15, 2011, 11 AM to 2 PM**  
at the Colonnade Diner, 2001 Hylan Blvd.

Suggested donation \$50 per person by May 1,  
\$55 later and at the door.

**The mission of the Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund is to encourage grass-roots activism by underwriting students in selected programs that train for community organization or for political candidacies.**

Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund Brunch

I/we will be coming \_\_\_\_\_

I can't come, but here's a contribution \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please make out checks to "LVMSF" and send with the form below to:

LVMSF  
PO Box 140371  
Staten Island, NY 10314-0371.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (O) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions are tax-deductible pursuant to IRC 501(c)(3). Thank you!

For more information call  
Patricia "Anne" Taylor, President: 917-602-4735

## Health Care Rally



March 23, 2011

### **S.I.D.A. Health Care Rally in front of Congressman Grimm's Office**

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## Political Action Strategy Committee

Members,

First I would like to thank those who have volunteered to hand out literature at the ferry terminal and who have appeared at the SIDA sponsored events.

The first few months of 2011 we have concentrated on Congressman Grimm and Washington politics. Now it is time to expand our focus to include State politics. While I have taken responsibility to follow Congressman Grimm's votes, positions and comments, I need help in order to cover State politics.

I am asking members to step forward and take responsibility for following the State Assembly and State Senate, and the Staten Island Republican members of both legislative bodies.

Most of the work can be done in the comfort of your own home using your PC.

This being the non-election year for the State Assembly and Senate, SIDA needs to fill the void that during the election year would be filled by one of our candidates.

If interested please email me back and indicate whether you have a preference, the Assembly or the Senate.

If we want to take back the Island, it will take effort by our membership. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank You,

Richard Reichard  
Chair, S.I.D.A. Political Action Strategy Committee  
(Richard can be reached at [IslandDems@aol.com](mailto:IslandDems@aol.com))



## Bulletin Board

 

**You're Invited**  
**“The Affordable Care Act and You”**  
an educational forum to be held  
**Tuesday April 19**  
**7:00PM**  
**Wagner College**  
**Spiro Hall-Room 2**

Featuring  
**Tim Foley**  
Health Policy Co-ordinator Greater NYC for Change,  
**Listen as he outlines the new Health Care law's**  
**benefits.**  
**You have questions -We have answers.**

  
Health care  
Is there a cure?

For more information contact [stateniland4change@hotmail.co](mailto:stateniland4change@hotmail.co)  
Cosponsored by Staten Island for Change and Wagner College

 

**Bulletin Board Policy**

Items posted on the Bulletin Board are done so at the request of an S.I.D.A. member and are for informational purposes only. A posting on the Bulletin Board does not imply endorsement by S.I.D.A.



### **UNICEF Needs Funds to Help the Children of Japan**

Members of the Club may be interested in sending in a donation to UNICEF to help children affected by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plant radiation issues.

As you may know, the people of Japan have been supporting UNICEF since 1955. They have been among the top donors for emergency programs around the world, and donate to their regular programs as well. Today is their time of need.

Due to the unprecedented nature of the epic disaster and its impact on children, resources are going to be critical in helping provide for the very unique needs of children. These may include health, development and protection and other needs that may have been compromised or disrupted in the wake of the recent catastrophe. UNICEF will ensure that children's education is uninterrupted and that they receive psychological support to recover from the events they have experienced.

Perhaps individual club members can help in this humanitarian effort in the following ways:

- For more information or to make a tax deductible contribution, please contact the U.S. Fund for UNICEF:

Website: [www.unicefusa.org/japan](http://www.unicefusa.org/japan)

- Text: JAPAN to 864233 to donate \$10
- Toll free telephone: 1 800 for KIDS (1 8000 367 5437)
- Mail donation to:  
US Fund for UNICEF  
125 Maiden Lane  
New York, NY 10038.
- An official UNICEF mail-in donation form (tax exempt) will be available at the next club meeting as well, and will be distributed for your use.

Thank you, in the name of the thousands of children who will be helped by UNICEF.

- Myra Leckey

<b>April 19, 2011</b> <b>General Meeting</b> <b>Karl's Klipper, 40 Bay Street</b> • Assemblyman Matthew Titone on medical malpractice insurance	<b>May 17, 2011</b> <b>General Meeting</b> <b>Site TBD</b> • TBA
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**It's Time to Join or Renew Your S.I.D.A. Membership!**

To become a member, renew membership, or make a donation, call Tom Shcherbenko at (718) 420-0252, or complete and return the coupon. Voting privileges begin 45 days after joining.

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<b>2011</b>	<b>DUES</b>	<b>DONATION</b>	
_____	\$15 - Family	_____	\$5
_____	\$10 - Individual	_____	\$50
_____	\$5 - Senior, Student, Unemployed	_____	\$100
		_____	Other _____

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

**S.I.D.A. Executive Committee**

President.....Dennis Brown	Member at-Large.. Rosemary Palladino
Vice President ..... John F. Lavelle	Member at-Large.....Loretta Prisco
Executive Secretary..... Mark Herman	Ex Officio.....Belinda Dixon
Corresponding & Recording Secretary ..... Marie Dwyer	Ex Officio.....Gary Carsel
Treasurer ..... Tom Shcherbenko	Ex Officio..... Joann Olbrich
Social Secretary..... Liz Price	Ex Officio..... Nick Popolo
Member at-Large..... Susan Chew	Ex Officio..... Richard Reichard
Member at-Large..... Peter Killen	Ex Officio..... John Sollazzo
Member at-Large..... Roy Moskowitz	Ex Officio..... Mark Zink

**MEETING LOCATION CHANGED!!**

**See page 2.**