

Could NYC Business Benefit From a Single Payer Health Care Plan? You Bet It Could!

We're being told that times are really tough for most states except, perhaps, North Dakota. Imagine then, if New York State had an advantage that few other states have. An advantage that would attract businesses small and large to New York State. An advantage that could stimulate the state economy by creating jobs for New Yorkers. Impossible, you say, how could that happen in these challenging economic times? After all, experts and pundits tell us that times are going to be tough for at least the next decade.

In New York State, however, this scenario could happen if the state legislature would pass and Governor Cuomo would sign the Health Care for All New Yorkers Bill, A.7860/S.5425. This bill was proposed by our State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried and State Senator Tom Duane and it provides single-payer health coverage for all New Yorkers.

Usually, we look at single payer health care from the perspective of the covered individuals. Another way to look at it is from the perspective of business. For most companies, providing health care for employees is expensive and cuts into the bottom line. It is a cost that can rise out of control. Cuts to benefits can cause major disruptions for employees, should employers decide they can't afford increased



by Carla Nordstrom, Member, CRDC

It surprises me that business moguls haven't caught onto the benefits of health care being provided by the state.



A.7860/S.5425 Health Care Bill proposed by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (left) and State Senator Tom Duane

costs. Large corporations face this problem, as do small companies, that don't hire employees because they can't afford health insurance.

It surprises me that business moguls haven't caught onto the benefits of health care being provided by the state. It should be a no brainer and might be embraced if this argument were offered.

Vermont has already created a single payer health care plan for its citizens. New York with its larger tax base and population, would probably get even more bang for its buck, if it were to do the same.

New York State has the infrastructure to support all types of businesses. There is the abandoned GM plant in Sleepy Hollow that has sat empty since 1996. There are other large industrial spaces along the Hudson River and the Erie Canal that have been shut down for years. In New York City, empty storefronts and office buildings, where start-ups could set up shop, are plentiful. The possibilities are endless if our state would set this train in motion. By being the second state to provide its citizens with health care, New York would be in the position to attract businesses from all over the country.

Passing this bill would be a major boon for New York State lawmakers. It would put them back into the business of legislating, instead of bickering. As for Governor Cuomo, if he got behind single payer health care and pushed it through, I suspect he would be the most popular governor in the country.

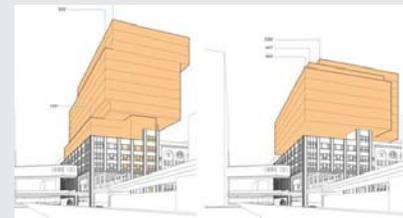
Stop & Frisk Forum / January 19th

CRDC will be hosting a Community Forum on the 'Stop and Frisk' Tactics of the NYPD, and how it effects the lives of those growing up in the heart of our Chelsea neighborhood. It will be held on Thursday, January 19th at the Hudson Guild Elliott Center, 441 West 26th Street (btw 9th & 10th Aves.) Participants include Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer.



FLY ON THE WALL Chelsea Market's Jamestown Meets With 'Save Chelsea'

Jamestown Developers hosted a special meeting with 'Save Chelsea' on January 10th at the New Dream Hotel on West 16th Street, where they presented a toned down plan of their expansion of the Landmark Chelsea Market. How did 'Save Chelsea' respond? A collective "NO!"



Jamestown revised plan on left, both are like slabs of cheese

As Robert Trentlyon said: "The new plan has the same square footage as the former plan. Jamestown just reshuffled it, and it still violates the zoning laws."

Trentlyon continued, "Chelsea has always been open to the development. Our empty warehouses are now filled with business and jobs, and yes, we've even eased height restrictions toward projects along the Highline. There will be many new highrises along there in the future. But we have to draw the line."

Trentlyon's line might be drawn in the shadowed sand, but property tax payers should still have the say in how our neighborhood's developed, not politicians, nor developers. — DS



Mary Dorman was one of two District Leaders recognized by County Leader Keith Wright at the annual county cocktail party (Tom Schuler received a similar recognition last year). Behind the scenes Mary and Tom work hard to build relationships for us across New York County. Way to go! — SSM

COMMENT ON ECONOMICS

We Learn From OSW

Occupy Wall Street (OWS) has given us a new catchphrase: “We are the 99%!” Even the New York Times is using it matter-of-factly, to indicate that group of people who cannot afford luxury expenditures, for tourists who will spend \$60,000 for a few hour dive to the bottom of the sea, but who are the 99%? And on the other hand who is the 1%?

There are differing estimates, so the exact demarcation point between the 99% and the 1% is only approximate. However, the divide between the 99% and the 1% is somewhere in the range of \$300,000–\$500,000 income a year. And as this is a continuum, the differences between those just below and just above the demarcation point, require a closer examination.

A comfortable family consisting of a teacher and a policeman, earning in the range of \$150,000 a year is clearly in the 99%. These folks are not power holders or society’s decision makers. One study reporting on working-class income, meaning people who produce physical goods and necessary services to be used by the rest of us who do not produce goods or services, reports that 63% of the population is in this group. But even some of these folks are earning ‘comfortable’ incomes.

And, there are people in the 1% who formerly were earning more than \$300,000-\$500,000 a year, who are now unemployed, reaching the expiration of their unemployment insurance, and whose houses have been foreclosed. These people are now in dire straits. And they are people who were never seriously in the upper echelons of the power structure in the United States. They were powerful people in their companies to be sure, but their power did not extend much beyond their own place of work.

Of course, the 99% also contains the unemployed, the underemployed, the homeless, and the increasing numbers of families becoming poor enough to newly qualify for free school lunches for their



by Maarten
de Kadt,
Vice
President,
CRDC

kids. The 99% includes the very poor with no discretionary income and those with considerable discretionary income. It is a very diverse group of income earners having a complex relation in the production of goods and services in the United States. They have in common an inability to control the major decisions made by the government-industrial complex. On the other hand, not all of the 1% have that

ability.

The question becomes: What part of the 1% are the folks with control over decision-making in this country? Probably not more than 10% of the 1% are in that position. So we should really be talking about the super elite—the 0.1% (around 311,000 people). The New York Times reports “that 43% of the super elite are executives at nonfinancial companies, 18% are in finance and another 12% are lawyers or in real estate.” The rest are scattered around. And while we are playing with numbers we must remember that serious decision makers and controllers, such as the Michael Bloomborgs and Bill Gates are among the top 10 income making individuals (never mind the top 0.1%). This small percent of the population—the super elite, the power holders, the 0.1%—are the ones the rest of us must pay attention to.

OWS has changed the national conversation. They have helped us understand that this is indeed a class divided society. They’ve helped us understand that powerful people make decisions to aggrandize their own positions and wealth. Despite mistakes made by all, banks have been bailed out, while homeowners have been foreclosed. Those in the 0.1% have helped themselves, while the social position of the 99% has been increasingly weakened. Previous elections have been won based on

the mistaken belief, a belief economist Paul Krugman describes as having faith in “the confidence fairy,” that providing additional income to the already wealthy, would create jobs. Those jobs did not materialize. Jobs can be created only if money is spent on projects that

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create jobs. Hopefully the next election will replace politicians believing in “the confidence fairy” with those intent on spending money, to improve our infrastructure, thereby actually create jobs. It’s not the 0.1% that needs government help. Let’s start by helping folks at the bottom of the 99% and work our way up.

Our increased insight in the divided nature of our economy, is thanks to OWS, for their invocation of the stark divide between the 99% and the 1%.

RESOLUTION UPDATE**CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS / SEA GATE, MARCH 2010**

This past December 16th, after hearing testimony from scientists, professors, politicians, and community activists, the New York City Council promised to take a more comprehensive look at the ramifications of global warming, on the city’s extensive waterfront. James Gennaro, Chairman of the City Council Oversight Hearing of the Environmental Protection Committee, has pledged to begin a study on storm surge barriers that will include help of the Army Corps of Engineers. Among the many to speak were State Senator Tom Duane and Assemblymember Richard Gottfried, and our club’s own Robert Trentlyon, all of whom ad-

Lots of Holiday Cheer at CRDC Party

There was no call of order nor banging of gavels at the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club's annual holiday party this past December 3rd. It was more like cranial mayhem, with an overflow of engaging fun, as members, electeds, friends and family celebrated together as no other proactive

and opinionated group of Chelseaites could have. CRDC clubbers brought food, drink, decor and comradery to the Elliot Center and made this one of the most warm and delicious of all seasonal events.

-Donathan Salkaln



2011 Resolutions And Letters

2011 was a year of percolating controversy that swept our community, city, and country. The Chelsea Reform Democratic Club was very busy addressing the many issues of which our members felt were important. This included resolutions and letters that opposed the illegal expansion of the Chelsea Market, the support and improvement

of rent laws, the support of early voting, the support of early primaries, the support of OWS, and the support of a tour bus guide union which was to be terminated in lieu of tape recordings. Below are two of the resolutions. All resolutions and letters can be found in its entirety on our website crdcnyc.org.

IN SUPPORT OF OCCUPY WALL STREET

WHEREAS, Occupy Wall Street has grown into a national and international movement for economic, political, and social reform; and

WHEREAS, the movement has attracted thousands of participants to Zuccotti Park and to venues throughout the country to protest the state of the economy, the great economic disparity that exists between the very wealthy and the other 99% of Americans, and the greed, corruption, and lack of accountability on Wall Street and in the financial sector that have contributed to the great recession; and

WHEREAS, the concentration of wealth by the top 1% of the population is greater than at any time since the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court decision in the "Citizens United" case has further corrupted the democratic process by allowing corporations to legally contribute unlimited funds to political candidates; and

WHEREAS, the Republican Party has blocked all recent attempts by President Obama and the Democratic Party to implement economic relief, stimulus, and jobs programs for the poor and middle class, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club supports Occupy Wall Street and urges our members, our community, the Democratic Party, and our elected officials to actively support the initiatives and goals of the movement.

(November 11, 2011)

LIVING WAGE

WHEREAS, Every year, New York City spends billions of taxpayer dollars to subsidize economic development and create new jobs - funding everything from the Bronx Gateway Mall and Yankee Stadium, to the new Goldman Sachs building and the redevelopment of Coney Island. But too often, the jobs created with these public subsidies pay poverty wages with no benefits - whether it's retail and stockroom jobs at shopping centers, mailroom and security guard jobs in office buildings, or food service jobs at stadiums, and

WHEREAS, By contrast, other cities such as Pittsburgh and Los Angeles require fair wages on many of their subsidized projects. These policies have created good jobs for low-income communities without slowing economic growth. It's time for New York to follow their lead and require fair wage guarantees for all large development projects in the city, and

WHEREAS, The recent struggle for living wage jobs at the Kingsbridge Armory in the Bronx makes clear that New York needs a citywide wage policy for developments that are subsidized by taxpayer dollars. Without action, we face continued growth in working poverty as the city emerges from recession, and

WHEREAS, New Yorkers want and deserve to know that their tax dollar investments will result in living wage jobs for their communities. And developers want and deserve to know with certainty the standards their plans must meet in order to gain City Council approval, and

WHEREAS, The proposed living wage law will do this by requiring that developers who receive major taxpayer-

funded subsidies must pay at least a living wage for the jobs they create. This new law will ensure that as New York's economy recovers, we invest in rebuilding the good jobs that our city needs, and

WHEREAS, The Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act will: (1) Guarantee that workers in large development projects receiving public subsidies are paid at least the New York City Living Wage of \$10.00 an hour; (2) Index the Living Wage to inflation so that it increases every year and keeps pace with the cost of living; (3) Require that employees who do not receive health insurance from their employer receive an additional \$1.50 per hour wage supplement to help them purchase their own health insurance; and (4) Apply the living wage guarantee to all workers at a subsidized development project, regardless of whether they are employed directly by the developer or by the project's tenants or on-site service contractors; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring living wages for the city's low-wage workforce is critical for fighting poverty and rebuilding New York's middle class. Other cities that have begun to guarantee living wages on publicly subsidized development projects have found that such safeguards have not slowed growth or prevented projects from moving forward, and

WHEREAS, It's time that New Yorkers enjoy the benefits of living wage jobs from economic development that is subsidized with their taxpayer dollars, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club urges the New York City Council to pass the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act as soon as possible.

(November 4, 2010)

The 'Greeding' Of Our Country's Systems

IT'S TIME TO STOP AND FRISK THE OTHER GUYS

The poor have never had lobbyists to protect them, so society's watchdogs have policed every system that helps the poor. As a by-product, today's Social Security, Food Stamps, Housing, Welfare, and Senior Programs are the best systems working toward their intended use. It is time for the watchdogs to turn their attention to policing the systems that aren't working. And the poor has finally got a big time lobbyist to back it up: 'Occupy Wall Street' represents a new and very angry, poor.

After millions of jobs went overseas and others were eliminated by the Internet, the reservoir of our country's money dried up. Millions of us are now sliding down the reservoir's shoreline into poverty. And while most Americans work for an honest buck and pay an honest tax, what many of us are now seeing are the greedy ones all around us. When the reservoir of money is dry, greed has nowhere to hide. It's like that car that shoots past your car, and then cuts into your exit lane far down the road, only to be followed by another car, and then another. They're so exposed, and yet they get away with it. It's easy to blame the wealthiest one percent of our country, but many of us see an epidemic of widespread 'greeding' of our systems.

Corporate System: Executives of failing public companies receiving fat bonuses and golden parachutes? Other companies,



by Donathan Salkaln, CRDC Vice President

as big as GE and Bank of America, somehow sidestepping taxes? Headquarters moved off-shore? The IRS letting the rich pay a less of a percentage than the poor? A minimum wage that keeps the poor, poor. Systems running amok!

Banking System: Bankers making tons of money on toxic mortgage loans given to people with no money or assets. Just as the watchdogs got money back in

Wall Street's Madoff Ponzi Scheme (stealing from the rich gets results), the money bet in derivatives against the poor, should be returned to the system.

Charity System: Crooked politicians with their own charities, enriching themselves and their family and friends, is a system flaw and opens our eyes to other phoney charities. Close to home, many 9-11 charities are now under investigation. More oversight needs to be done to make sure that the country's 1.2 million charities are not used as family cash cows living in tax shelters but actually give to the needed.

Autonomous Public Agencies: When you hear about Port Authority toll collectors making over \$100,000 a year and bridge and tunnel police making over \$220,000 a year, you know the system is flawed all the way to the top. If you think a few 'greeders'

don't add up to too much money, think about the 800 MTA Long Island Rail Road Workers who paid corrupt doctors in awarding workers disability claims of a potential billion dollars.

Municipal Unions: Double dipping is now popular, with workers collecting pensions and salary. Others are using and buying overtime so their last three year's salaries, which is the basis of the pension's pay-out, is astronomically larger than the system's design. Municipalities across our country are headed for bankruptcy.

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Health Care, The Captive Customer:

Just as sport stadiums charge \$10 beers and fifty bucks for parking or the cable only offers bundled channels we'll never watch, the health care system also

charges whatever it desires and gives us medical procedures and drugs that we don't need. The Health Care System will bury this country in debt.

Whistle Blowers: There should be protection for whistle blowers. A recent NYPD Officer is fighting for his job after exposing the NYC's ticket scandal, in which tens of thousands of dollars were denied in our city's coffers. Rewards, recognition, and protection should be provided to whistle blowers by our elected officials in order to set our systems in order.

Voting: Instead of making it easier to vote, states are enacting stricter voter ID requirements and eliminating early voter periods creating roadblocks for the poor to vote. It's easy to see why — it took 69 million votes to elect Obama and there are now 44 million Americans on Food Stamps. Republicans don't want the poor to vote.

We have great systems with foundations built with sweat and perseverance of those before us. We need to begin policing all our systems, not just those of the poor.

vocated the need for a storm barriers to protect particularly vulnerable areas such as Chelsea from the predicted rise of sea levels and hurricanes of any category.

December 16th,
City Council Hearing



PO Box 1120
Old Chelsea Station
New York City, NY 10113-1120

Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 19

Program on **'Stop and Frisk,'**

Panelists include Manhattan Borough



President Scott Stringer.

Also nominations for club offices.

Elliot Center, 441 West 26th Street,
(between 9th & 10th Avenues).

February 16

Political Town Hall with

County Leader **Keith Wright,**

Club Officer & Exec elections

Elliot Center, 441 West 26th Street,
(between 9th & 10th Avenues)

Executive Committee Meetings:

February 2nd, March 1st, April 5th

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www.crdcnyc.org

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