

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

### Single Payer Health Care Plan

The Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) has made major improvements in how health care is delivered and paid for. But it still leaves insurance companies with too much control of our health and our wallets.

New York can do better. My “New York Health” bill (A.5389-A/S2078-A, sponsored in the Senate by Bill Perkins) will cover everyone, provide better coverage, and save billions by having New York provide publicly-sponsored, single-payer health coverage, like Medicare or Child Health Plus for everyone.

Like other basic services such as education, police, fire protection, and roads, paying for health care should be a public responsibility. We should not be at the mercy of insurance companies and their ever-increasing premiums. Health care should be a basic right, not a privilege or a commodity.

In Medicaid, New York has made great strides to improve health care and reign in costs in the program that serves millions of low-income patients. Now it’s time to help the millions of



by Richard Gottfried  
NYS Assembly District 75

New York residents and businesses that currently have to buy private insurance. The majority of doctors, nurses, and patients prefer a single payer system, as do many small businesses and unions. It would save taxpayers and businesses billions of dollars while improving health care for everyone. Despite the political climate in Washington, states like

New York have a history of recognizing our responsibility to protect the right of health care for all. We can and should do better.

**How it would work:** The New York Health program would provide comprehensive, universal health coverage for every New Yorker and would replace private insurance company coverage.

Patients would have the freedom to choose their health care providers. And patients and their doctors – not insurance companies –

would make health care decisions.

**Comprehensive coverage:** All New Yorkers would be covered for all medically necessary services, including: primary, preventive, specialists, hospital; mental health; reproductive health care; dental; vision; prescription drug; and medical supply costs – more comprehensive than most commercial health plans.

**Paid for fairly:** Instead of individuals and employers paying high premiums, deductibles and co-pays, the coverage would be funded through a graduated tax on payroll and non-payroll taxable income, based on ability to pay. Today, the same premium is paid by a CEO and a receptionist, and a successful company or a small, new business. For most people, it will be a substantial reduction in what they now spend and most people’s take-home pay will go up.

Greater accountability, less waste, better care. We’d be paying for health care – not for

huge insurance company administrative costs and profits, and not paying for the time and paperwork of dealing with insurance companies. Health coverage would be accountable to the people of New York, not to insurance company stockholders.

**A business-friendly solution:** Single payer reduces costs for business – large and small – by eliminating the need for any employer to provide health coverage for its workers. That would make New York dramatically more job-friendly, especially for small businesses, startups and low-margin businesses, while offering better and more secure coverage to every New Yorker.

**The most affordable way to achieve universal coverage:** A report by New York State found that a single-payer plan would have the lowest-cost for providing universal coverage, compared to plans relying on insurance companies and employment-based coverage.

**Support grows:** The New York Health bill has the support of several physician organizations, the NYS Nurses Association, unions, and 85 members of the State Legislature.

You and your health care providers work to keep you healthy. New York Health pays the bill.

*“Today, the same premium is paid by a CEO and a receptionist, and a successful company or a small, new business. For most people, it will be a substantial reduction in what they now spend.”*

## WANTED: Volunteers Needed to Help Get Our Endorsed Candidates Elected!

This fall New York will see an unprecedented turnover of power at City Hall. Come January 2014, a new mayor, public advocate, city comptroller, Manhattan borough president and here in Chelsea, even a new council member, will all take office.

The process for this election will begin shortly with petitioning that will qualify candidates for the Democratic primary on Sept. 10. “Petitioning” begins on June 4 and will last until July 13. CRDC has a

long tradition of being an active and dynamic club gathering hundreds – sometimes thousands – of signatures for its endorsed candidates. This

year will be especially significant since Chelsea’s favorite gal “our own” Christine Quinn, is the leading candidate for Mayor and would become the first woman and lesbian to occupy Gracie Mansion. In addition, we will be petitioning for district leader, judicial delegates and alternates, along with county committee, district attorney, and numerous civil court judge positions.

In the coming days, you will receive information on when and where the Club will be petitioning. If

you wish to be a part of this important and history making process, contact Tom Schuler at [tpschuler@gmail.com](mailto:tpschuler@gmail.com)



# CRDC's March, April, and May Endorsement

*Notes From Our Club's Beloved Meeting Minutes Maker*

It's been a busy spring for the CRDC, as many candidates presented the club with platforms and promises in both campaign speeches and literature.



**John Johnson**  
CRDC,  
Vice President

## March 21st General Meeting

CRDC President Steven Skyles-Mulligan brought the endorsement meeting to order and explained the procedures for the evening including divoting rules and balloting procedures. Well over a hundred members and guests were in attendance.

For the position of District Leader, no additional nominations were received from the floor and incumbents Mary Dorman and Tom Schuler were endorsed.

For the Mayoral race, City Council Speaker **Christine Quinn** spoke to the forum, via cell phone speaker. She focused her comments on tenant rights, affordable housing, environmental justice, immigrant rights, and her NYPD Inspector General proposal, followed by a 10 minute Q&A which focused on post-Sandy rebuilding, prevention, and infrastructure.

One Mayoral Candidate, independent progressive **Randy Credico** was present and gave his progressive credentials, agenda and fielded questions from the audience.

Audience attendees were invited to provide pro and con candidate speeches. Several attendees spoke pro and con regarding the candidacy of Christine Quinn.

**CRDC Ballot Results:** overwhelming victory for Christine Quinn, over Bill De Blasio, John Liu, Randy Albanese, and William Thompson.

## April 18th General Meeting

Steven Skyles-Mulligan called the meeting to order at 7:25pm, with over sixty members and guests in attendance.

**Scott Stringer**, Manhattan Borough President and the sole candidate for Comptroller was present and gave a rousing presentation focusing on his 20-year track

record in the State Assembly and Borough President. The thrust of Stringer's presentation was on powers of the office, to insure that NYC pension funds promote greater transparency and better corporate governance by investee corporations, that the Comptroller's fiduciary responsibilities be aggressively pursued and protected. On other issues, Stringer distanced himself from the Mayor and Christine Quinn through his staunch opposition to any expanded development of Chelsea Market, his unequivocal opposition to fracking, and his opposition to 'stop and frisk.'

In what turned out to be the closest race of this season, candidate for Public Advocate, State Senator **Daniel Squadron**, described his activist background prior to and post his 2008 election to State Senate. While a youthful 33, Squadron described his family's history of leadership in community and social issues. Squadron is a strong advocate for affordable housing, public transportation, vulnerable populations, and the future of the city. As Public Advocate, he would use the powers of the office to promote "orphan issues" often overlooked by elected officials. Squadron is a Senate sponsor of the gender recognition legislation and the assault weapons ban.

**Letitia James**, 10 years in the City Council from Brooklyn, former public defender and Assistant District Attorney is also a candidate for Public Advocate. Her well-received speech focused on her accomplishments, her willingness to stand up to the Mayor and the powers that be – a critical attribute and key role for the Public Advocate. James was a leader in the failed fight to halt the Atlantic Yards Projects, fought against the Mayor's term limits extension and is currently fighting the practice of charter schools shedding students that aren't scoring good grades. She is an aggressive advocate for affordable housing, union/labor organizing and LGBT rights. **CRDC Ballot Results:** Scott Stringer was endorsed for Comptroller. Cyrus Vance was



**Christine Quinn**  
celebrates her  
win at CRDC  
Brunch.

endorsed for Manhattan District Attorney. Squadron squeaked by James for Public Advocate and the CRDC Judicial Delegate slate of nominees was endorsed.

## May 16th General Meeting

CRDC President Steven Skyles-Mulligan called the meeting to order at 7:15pm with over 100 members and guests in attendance.

In the most engaging race of the year, the seat of City Council of District 3, **Corey Johnson** summarized his background as being brought up in public housing in a small town, where he declared his sexual orientation as a high school football player. Long resident of 15th St in Chelsea, he has chaired Community Board 4 for the past eight years. Key issues include affordable housing, replacement of St Vincent's with a Level 1 trauma center, opposition to the Chelsea Market and NYU expansions, opposition to the Spectra pipeline, and a ban on hydrofracking. During Q&A, Corey pledged his commitment of all community issues, to oppose new charter schools placement within public schools, a ban on fracking, and more funding for new neighborhood parks.

Running for a second time for City Council District 3, **Yetta Kurland** summarized her background of a long time resident and activist in Chelsea. As a small business owner and Civil rights lawyer, she was an early organizer to save St Vincent's, legal advisor to Occupy Wall Street, opposed extension of term limits and aggressive advocate for

# Meetings at the 9th Ave. Fulton Center



**Daniel Squadron**



**Julie Menin**



**Corey Johnson**



**Rosie Mendez**



**Letitia James**



**Alexander Meadows**



**Jessica Lappin**



**Gale Brewer**



**Yetta Kurland**

greater transparency in City Council operations including campaign financing. During Q&A Yetta described ideas for greater public involvement in Council decision-making including "participatory" budgeting (vis-à-vis the nearly \$1 billion in current public participatory Council expenditures).

Also running, **Alexander Meadows** summarized his background as the first family member to graduate from college, is a member of Community Board 2. He is opposed to a Neighborhood Business Improvement District for the westside for park funding as a disguised tax and opposes the city bicycle rental scheme. During Q&A he indicated that he is a candidate not beholden to any special interests.

For City Council District 2,

which now includes a portion of east Chelsea, incumbent **Rosie Mendez**, spoke of her experience as chair of the public housing committee in the preservation and maintenance of public housing. She was an active organizer for Sandy relief and infrastructure redevelopment. During Q&A, Rosie related her original opposition to the extension of term limits, but is running for a third term as she believes that her agenda has yet to be completed.

For Manhattan Borough President, **Gale Brewer**, spoke of her accomplishments as a 12 year City Council member for the upper westside and her 40 years in public service. Characterized by focus on the issues including her long and successful battle for paid sick leave and zoning, to prevent big box stores. During Q&A

Gale voiced the importance of quality of life issues, and experience to "hit the ground running".

**Julie Menin**, as chair of the lower Manhattan's Community Board, spoke of her successful campaign for three new public schools downtown, and her opposition to over-development. She related her accomplishments in post-9/11 rehabilitation of downtown, as organizer of relief and redevelopment efforts.

In a crowded field of well qualified candidates, **Jessica Lappin** spoke of her progressive agenda and track record as a City Council member for the upper east side. She supports funding for the SAGE LGBT senior center, extension of the Greenwich Village Historic District, is against closing of Old Chelsea post office, and is an advocate for

## CRDC'S 2013 ENDORSED CANDIDATES

- MAYOR  
**Christine Quinn**
- COMPTROLLER  
**Scott Stringer**
- MAHATTAN DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
**Cyrus Vance, Jr.**
- PUBLIC ADVOCATE  
**Daniel Squadron**
- MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
**Julie Menin**
- COUNCIL DISTRICT 3  
**Corey Johnson**
- COUNCIL DISTRICT 2  
**Rosie Mendez**
- DISTRICT LEADERS  
**Mary Dorman**  
**Tom Schuler**

## CRDC JUDICIAL DELEGATES\*

- Paul Groncki**
- Judy Richheimer**
- Muriel Beach**
- Michael Schreiber**
- Donathan Salkaln**
- David Warren**
- Wil Newsome**
- Carol Demech**
- Meryl Stein**
- Evelyn Suarez**
- Francine Hasselkorn**

## ALT. JUDICIAL DELEGATES\*

- Tom Duane**
- Sylvia Di Pietro**
- Steven Skyles-Mulligan**
- Maarten de Kadt**
- Hugh Weinberg**
- Raanan Geberer**
- Patricia Goff**
- Wiley Saichek**
- Scott Melvin**
- Lydia Hummel**
- Jesse Campoamor**

\* Please note: the delegate listing has expanded, as the McMannus Club has chosen this year to team up with the Glaberman Club.

20,000 new public school seats. **CRDC Ballot Results:** Council District 3: Corey Johnson, Council District 2: Rosie Mendez, Manhattan Borough President: Julie Menin

HOUSING ISSUES

# Defining Affordable Housing, Attacks on Affordable Housing, And the Fight Back

There are problems with the way we talk about “affordable” housing. When people in New York City talk about “affordable housing” they rarely ask the crucial question “affordable for whom?” They are usually referring only to rent stabilized/rent control units, Mitchell Lama units or market rate units, as if public housing does not provide affordable units. Worst of all, we have all seemingly accepted the 80/20 formula, developed more than two decades ago, whereby the City government grants developers zoning variances and tax benefits for building luxury developments as long as these new buildings provide a mere 20 percent “affordable” units, which leads us to the first question: “affordable for whom?”



by Karen Smith  
CRDC Member  
& former  
NYS Supreme  
Court Judge

the geographical area where the new housing is being constructed. Included in determining the AMI for New York City is the affluent communities in Westchester County. This anomaly has enabled developers to build so called affordable housing in our own community on 26th and 9th Avenue, where two thousand dollars for a 2 bedroom apartment is considered “affordable.” It would be more accurate to call this housing “income based housing” and to scrap the misleading nomenclature of “affordable housing.” In addition, there is no requirement in the 80/20 formula that the 20 percent affordable units be of the same quality as the luxury 80 percent. Despite these glaring inequities and the absence of any real affordable housing program in the City, many community activists are happy at the prospect of getting these

Community Benefits Agreements with developers, in exchange for giving up some restrictions on unfettered development.

Not only is the 20 percent, being offered, not really affordable for the

## Affordable Housing Defined

“Affordable” Housing is defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in terms of the average median income (“AMI”) in

## Most New ‘Affordable’ Housing Isn’t, ANHD Report Says

By Steven Wishnia

Most of the “affordable” housing built by the Bloomberg administration is too expensive for the majority of New Yorkers, according to a report released last month by the Association for Neighborhood Housing Development.

The report, “Real Affordability,” hails the administration’s New Housing Marketplace Program as an “impressive achievement,” and says it’s likely to meet its goal of creating or preserving 165,000 units. The problem, it says, is that the income levels used to determine affordability are much higher than what New Yorkers actually earn, and the program has produced very little housing for the poorest third of city residents (well over two and a half million people). For example, in Harlem, it defines as “affordable” both a \$531-a-month three-bedroom apartment for a family making \$36,000 a year and a \$1,492 studio for a single person making up to \$97,000.

The program bases its definitions of “low-income,” “moderate-income,” and “middle-income” on percentages of the median household income for the metropolitan area, with rents set at 30 percent of those incomes. “This labeling is misleading and does not reflect the actual income levels of New Yorkers,” the report says. The metropolitan area median income is about \$80,000—but for city residents, it’s slightly below \$50,000, and two-thirds of city households make less than \$75,000.

Of the 124,000 units the NHMP program has produced so far, about half have been aimed at people making around the city median or slightly less. More have been built for households making more than \$100,000—defined as “middle-income”—than for those making less

than \$32,000, who comprise almost a third of the city’s residents.

In fiscal years 2009 to 2011, the NHMP produced more than 38,000 apartments, but only about 3,000 were available to that low-income group. In Chinatown and the Lower East Side, only four of the more than 3,000 units built were; in Central Harlem, 164 out of more than 2,000. In the South Bronx’s six community districts, where the median income is less than \$25,000, less than 500 of the 9,100 apartments produced were affordable to the average household there—barely 5 percent.

*The program has produced very little housing for the poorest third of city residents (2.74 million New Yorkers).*

“A sizable portion of our communities that have long been priced out of market-rate housing are now being priced out of the affordable-housing market as well,” the report says.

“The city should not use taxpayer subsidies to build housing unaffordable to the local community—indeed unaffordable to the majority of New Yorkers overall—and then call it ‘affordable housing,’” the report recommends. “The next administration must address the disparity between the inflated income levels that the city uses to construct deals, and the actual incomes of New York City residents, especially in the communities where this housing is being built. The city will not address its affordable housing crisis if they continue to prioritize subsidized housing too expensive for most New Yorkers.”

*Steven Wishnia is a journalist, novelist, and bass player. He is the author of three books, most recently the novel When the Drumming Stops (Manic D Press). He has edited Tenant/Inquilino, the Metropolitan Council on Housing’s monthly newspaper, since 1995, and has won two New York City Independent Press Association awards for his coverage of housing issues in The Independent.*

population in the communities being affected, as past development projects like the Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn and the Hudson Yards in Manhattan have shown, the number of affordable units which are actually built get greatly reduced over time.

## Latest Attack on Affordable Housing

The most recent attack on income based housing has come from NYCHA and the Bloomberg administration who are proposing to demolish playgrounds, ball fields, parks, senior centers and parking lots of eight public housing projects in Manhattan (5 in the Lower East Side, 2 in East Harlem and 1 on the Upper West Side) to put up 14 luxury developments. While the plan allegedly includes the requirement that all of the developers price 20 percent of the apartments as “affordable,” the “affordable” apartments will be set at 60 percent of AMI, which comes to an excess of \$50,000 yearly income for a family of four.

Not only will the plan take away light and air and much needed park space, playgrounds and a senior program from the NYCHA residents, but the building of 14 new luxury developments, in one swoop, will assure that there are fewer affordable units for moderate and low income families in Manhattan, an already luxury dominated housing market. A leading landlord attorney here in the city, indicated recently that it was only a matter of time before the City found a way to get hold of the NYCHA properties for private luxury development because of their excellent locations, particularly the ones located near or on waterways.

## The Fight

The good news is that groups are fighting back:

- Of the 8 NYCHA projects slated for this luxury development, seven of the eight are opposed to the plan and are actively fighting it.
- This June, a coalition of 75 tenant groups is commencing a campaign aimed at broadening rent protections for all New Yorkers, with an eye toward June 2015 when the rent laws are set to expire.
- A group is working on stopping foreclosures in the outer boroughs.
- Many groups are working on getting new units built for low and moderate income families throughout the five boroughs.
- Some groups are working for better enforcement of tenant protection laws by the state agency empowered to enforce the laws, the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Groups are working to make the Rent Guidelines Board, the group which decides yearly the increases in rent for rent controlled and rent stabilized apartments, more responsive to the economic realities of tenants and less concerned with landlords’ rate of profit, and to change who appoints the members of the Board. Currently the mayor makes all appointments and has consistently appointed far more landlord friendly board members than tenant oriented board members.



NYCHA feels that spots like this, in Baruch Housing, might be fine sites for a luxury condo towers

*“A leading landlord attorney, here in the city, indicated recently that it was only a matter of time before the City found a way to get hold of the NYCHA properties for private luxury development.”*

Republicans which places a cap on rent for persons with HIV which cannot exceed 30 percent of their income.

While much is happening, much more needs to happen. Diverse housing struggles need to be combined into a coordinated demand for decent, safe, income based housing as a human right for all. We have to challenge the dominant narrative around housing in this country which holds to the proposition that the key to achieving “the American Dream” is home ownership. That false promise leaves out renters, the homeless, and public housing tenants, not to mention the hundreds of thousand foreclosed families – foreclosed due to the financial fraud perpetrated on them by the banks and other financial institutions. Wouldn’t it be healthier for everyone if we could frame the discussion around housing as access to equitable housing for all? that assumes that the only way housing can be provided is through private, for-profit ventures.

• A group in the Bronx, has recently taken on a campaign publicizing the inequities in Housing Court where landlords come represented by lawyers and the majority of tenants are unrepresented.

• Immigrant groups are seeking ways to legalize and regulate basement apartments in single family homes in which many of their population resides.

• Groups working with the homeless population are seeking legislation which will require the City to put out statistics each year on vacant units and vacant properties, and some progressive thinkers are advocating that those long term vacant properties be put in a community land trust in which the development of affordable units for low and moderate income families is a mandate.

• A group working with the HIV population is trying to recapture a provision savagely taken away from them last year by the State Senate

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NY State Senator, Brad Hoylman presented the Inaugural State Senator Thomas K. Duane Award to the Bayview Advisory Board Bayview Correctional Facility located at 20th St and 11th Ave. From left: Hon. Betty J. Williams, Brad, Bayview Superintendent Wendy Featherstone, Tom, Tiffany Barfield of the Junior League, Hon. Debra James, and Cecile Scott, Chief of Staff of Senator Holyman's Office.



City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn presented the CRDC Good Neighbors Award to Non-Traditional Employment for Women in Careers in the Skilled Trades, an agency on 20th St. between 7th and 8th Aves. From left, Ashia Lewis (program graduate), NTWEW's Exec. V.P. Kathleen Culhane, State Committeewoman Sylvia Di Pietro, CRDC Pres. Steven Skyles-Mulligan, NTWEW's Pres. Amy Peterson and Christine.



Sadye L. Campoamor (left), member of the Smith family, presents The Esther Smith Award to T. Elzora Cleveland Community Education Activist and Leader



NYS Assembly. Richard N. Gottfried presents the Doris Corrigan Award to Fern Luskin of The Friends of Hopper-Gibbons Underground Railroad Site & Lamartine Place Historic District along 29th St. Btw 8th & 9th Aves

### CRDC Celebrates Chelsea's Best At 2013's Spring Brunch!



by Paul Groncki, Treasurer, CRDC

The CRDC Spring Brunch is one of the political season's most popular events, offering a welcome opportunity to relax and exchange ideas with other progressives and Democratic officeholders from throughout New York City. Equally important, it provides a suitable occasion for us to honor those who have worked alongside us to advance community, progressive causes, and responsive government. The brunch also

comes on the eve of the petitioning season and provides an opportunity for us to meet many of the fine candidates who are running for various government and judicial offices.

Held at El Cid Restaurant at 184 Eighth Avenue on Saturday, May 4th, we were delighted to honor some individuals and organizations who have helped to make our community a better place.

A successful brunch requires the efforts of many. Steven Skyles-Mulligan wrote and designed the sponsor letter, the invite, the program and the certificates for the awardees. Linda Longstreet got envelopes printed and procured our postage. The executive committee all pitched in to help with the mailings. And executive committee members Michael Schreiber, Evelyn Suarez, David Warren, and John Johnson, Francine Haselkorn all lent critical help in setting up the restaurant and managing the sign-in at the door the day of the brunch. We couldn't have done it without all of their help.

As the CRDC is a non-profit organization that advocates the need of reform in, not only our community, but also to our world, we greatly appreciate all of those that contributed in our fundraising event! Thank You!



"Mistress" of ceremonies and State Committeewoman, Sylvia Di Pietro.



District Leaders Mary D. Dorman and Tom Schuler, flank the Hon. Debra James.



**Sponsors to the  
CRDC Spring  
Brunch**

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**Angels (\$1000)**

The Hon. Richard N. Gottfried  
The Hon. Jerrold Nadler

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The Hons. John and  
Donna Sharp

**ECONOMICS & MEDIA**

**Terrorism By Any Other Name**

Corporate terrorism has not been on the media's radar. It should be.

Over the last few weeks our attention has been drawn to the horrible events of the April 15th Boston Marathon. Also front page over the last weeks has been the horrible April 24th building collapse in Bangladesh killing more than 1000 garment workers.

Not getting as much attention – in New York anyway – was the April 17th fertilizer fire and explosion in West Texas where 15 people were killed. Twelve were first responders. An additional 200 people were injured. There was a considerable amount of property damage to local homeowners estimated to be about 100 million dollars. The plant stored large amounts of ammonium nitrate, a volatile chemical used as a fertilizer and used as a primary element in bomb making.

Even after the arrest of Bryce Reed, a volunteer paramedic, for starting the fire that led to the explosion, the Dallas News reported: "Experts say arson and electrical fires are frequent threats for ammonium nitrate warehouses. Sprinklers, they say, can help stop a fire, even an intentional one, from becoming a catastrophe." West Fertilizer's warehouse did not have sprinklers or several other best practices for the storage of this chemical.

But that's not all. During the summer of 2012 the US Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration assessed West Fertilizer Co. \$10,000 for safety violations, including planning the transport of anhydrous ammonia without adequate security and failing to properly label ammonia tanks. The Dallas Morning News was told by plant operators that there were "no" fire or explosive risks. The plant's own emergency planning report states, "The worst possible scenario would be a 10-minute release of ammonia gas that would kill or injure no one." The chemical is so dangerous that the



by *Maarten de Kadt, CRDC, Vice President,*

*"The limited liability protections, given to corporate owners, permit them to murder employees and first responders with impunity – it is an official sanctioning of "corporate terrorism."*

Department of Homeland Security requires notification when there is storage of more than one ton of this chemical. There was no such notification. Unlike Boston and Bangladesh, this plant's operator, in the aftermath of a major explosion, may not be prosecuted even though he did not provide the required reporting and the safe storage of a well-known dangerous substance.

Donald Adair, West Fertilizer's owner, is quoted as saying "my heart is broken with grief for the tragic losses to so many families in our community.... Going forward... [we] are working closely with investigative agencies.... While investigation continues, and out of respect for the investigative process we will limit our comments during the weeks and months ahead." These words were spoken as if he has no personal responsibility. But his responsibility for the safety of the plant is clear and he should be arrested and prosecuted for the killings in West Texas.

Citizens United gives corporations the right to buy elections. The limited liability protections, given to corporate owners, permit them to murder employees and first responders with impunity – it is an official sanctioning of "corporate terrorism." Instead of the state bringing charges on behalf of the community, the burden is placed on individuals who must file law suits to obtain redress for the loss of their loved ones. The probe into this event by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-California), chair of the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee, is necessary but not enough.

Where is the requirement for workplace safety? When do we hold corporate owners responsible for the damage they cause and for their actions? Where is the enforcement of the few safety laws we have? Aren't these crimes against the community as a whole? Aren't corporate owners who save money by knowingly skimping on safety criminals?

West Texas is not different from Boston or Bangladesh.

**CRDC'S LETTERS & RESOLUTIONS**

**CRDC's Letter to President Obama  
Concerning Social Security**

**Dear President Obama:**

The Chelsea Reform Democratic Club, or CRDC, is one of the oldest progressive Democratic clubs in New York City. Many of our members donated money, and more importantly, great amounts of time and energy to your campaigns, and as a club we were thrilled when twice you were elected president of the United States. Therefore it was with great disappointment that we learned of your plan to include in budget discussions the cutting of Social Security benefits. For several reasons we feel that this proposal flies against both common sense and our commonly held principles.

Social Security is very strong, with more than \$1,800,000,000,000 in its trust fund. At our current rate of inflation, its future is secure for at least thirty years. Furthermore, this fund cannot be raided; it is used solely for those insured under Social Security. Therefore, there is no need to consider a new cost of living formula,



*Written and sponsored by Judy Richheimer CRDC, Executive VP*

namely the Chained CPI. And certainly, because share holders in the Social Security insurance plan, i.e., most Americans, are unaware of the full ramifications of Chained CPI, it is politically wrong for you to introduce this formula as a bargaining chip in budget negotiations.

Putting logistics aside, however, please consider the moral implications of cutting benefits to our seniors, the majority of whom rely on Social Security as their primary retirement income. Even under the current COLA plan, many seniors find it very difficult to keep up with inflation and often must choose on a given day between eating and buying lifesaving medications.

But if we moved to the Chained CPI, seniors would be far worse off. According to US News and World Reports, if we employed the chained CPI, a typical 73-year-old retiree would get approximately 2.5 percent less than under the current measure of inflation. And at age 93, this

**Older Americans Have American Dreams Too!**

Talk in Washington of cutting Social Security benefits should be burning at the bit of all those that work and pay into the system. That giant vault of money that I, and other aging Americans have spent a working-lifetime sacrificing to pay into, is about to be raided.

It's alarming that Washington is acting like a magician that spouts jargon while pulling from its sleeve a budget plan resembling a long rope of twisted clashing colored handkerchiefs, all neatly tied together. And it's all happening as quickly as a magician's act. The magician gets his applause and moves on to his next act, which might as well be the sawing in half of an unbelieving citizen from the audience.

Washington's planned raid reminds me of a worker's dispute several years

ago, at a local Chinese restaurant. The dispute escalated into a year long picket line on University Avenue in Greenwich Village. The restaurant owners had been withholding tip money from their workers. Workers that complained, got fired. A revolt ensued and the workers eventually won a court order for restitution of lost income.

Like the owner of a Chinese restaurant grabbing money rightly owed to their workers, Washington is about to grab of our money. No matter how much money they take, the theft will chip away of everyone's paid right to their American Dream. We need to stand up and say, "No!"

Older Americans have American dreams too!

—*Donathan Salkaln*

person would get an average of 7.2 percent less in Social Security payments over his or her lifetime. So instead of taking this course, we should in fact, be devising plans to put more money in the hands of our retirees. And, incidentally, because this income would be spent on consumer goods and services, in the long run this measure would benefit our economy, both on the national and local fronts.

If we do want to look beyond the estimated point of solvency for the Social Security Trust Fund, as well as increase, rather than decrease, benefits, three steps can be taken.

1. Lift the cap on Social Security taxation. Once workers earn more than \$ 113,700 for the year, they stop contributing to the Social Security fund on earnings over that amount, while the rest of us continue to pay our share. If top earners paid their fair share of Social Security taxes, we would go far in making Social Security solvent for the rest of the 21st century and improve benefits for our most vulnerable seniors.

2. Raise the minimum wage. When workers earn more, they pay more into the Social Security fund (until they reach the \$113,700 annual cap under our current plan).

3. Reintroduce the job-creating American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Although derided by Republicans, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, this plan created or saved between 1.4 million and 3.3 million American jobs. An increase in our labor force means greater contributions to Social Security.

These proposals are in line with the progressive vision we shared during your two campaigns for the presidency. Please, Mr. President, do not let the narrow and short sighted focus of our Republican opponents influence your thinking in regard to Social Security. We Democrats created this program, arguably the most successful in all U.S. history, and it is up to Democrats with a democratic philosophy to nurture and protect it.

Signed,  
**Steven Skyles-Mulligan**  
President,  
Chelsea Reform Democratic Club

CLIMATE CHANGE

# Climate Change is Now!

REPRINTED FROM CHELSEA NOW

With hurricane season on the horizon, if Chelsea were to be struck by another Sandy-like storm? Would we be better prepared, or would many be trapped with no water or electricity for days on end, and nowhere to go for help?

According to Dr. Daniel Lashof—Harvard and Berkeley educated and director of the Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund’s Climate & Clean Air Program — if Chelsea were to experience a future power failure, all elevator and water service could be restored to public housing’s high-rises, and community centers and schools could be powered to open up as emergency shelters and help centers at a minimal cost.

“There is an opportunity to build resilient solar-powered microgrids into our neighborhood that can isolate themselves from the power grid. If this Community Center had solar power on its roof with battery back-up, it could provide basic electricity for people [to use it as an emergency shelter]. The costs of solar power have come down in huge amounts over the last few years. The technology and economics are there,” said Lashof at Hudson Guild’s Elliott Center while addressing the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club’s February 21 “Climate Change is Now” forum.

“We have dumped unlimited quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for decades by burning coal, oil and natural gas,” Lashof explained. “CO2 traps heat and heat is the fuel that amplifies the extreme weather; not just storms, but heat waves and



by *Donathan Salkaln, CRDC, Vice President*

devastating droughts.”

The NRDC has charted over 3,500 monthly extreme weather records set in 2012 alone for heat, rain and snow. Lashof, who holds a BA in physics and math from Harvard and a doctorate from Berkeley, not only forecasted more storms, but also pointed his finger at fossil-fueled power plants as the biggest culprit. He did note, however, that the auto industry has made giant strides (prodding by the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] and President Obama has led to preparations for carbon and fuel efficiency). Lashof also offered updates and solutions at the individual, city, state and national levels. “As individuals, the choices we make in transportation, using Energy Star appliances, sealing of windows and insulation, they all add up,” he said.

On local and state levels Lashof brought positive reports — hailing the Bloomberg



*Dr. Daniel Lashof speaks to the CRDC's general meeting.*

*“The United States needs to set an example to the world (specifically, China and India) when participating in global climate talks”*

administration for creating “one of the greenest cities in the world. The NRDC is trying to replicate the successful programs that New York City has implemented, in other big cities around the country. On the state level, Governor Cuomo and New York

State is a participant in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a nine state group that sets overall limits on power plant emissions. They recently released plans to reduce the allowed carbon pollution by 40 percent of what the cap used to be.”

It was at the federal level of fighting climate change where Lashof spoke the most passionately, emphasizing that the United States needs to set an example to the world (specifically, China and India) when participating in global climate talks.

“There are over 1,500 U.S. fossil power plants, coal, natural gas and a little of oil. They contribute over 40 percent of carbon pollution,” said Lashof, noting that legislative solutions are hindered by an immovable wall of U.S. Senators who continue to support what industry and jobs they still have in their states.

Environmental groups like the NRDC have chosen, instead, to lobby the existing laws — in particular, the Clean Air Act (a law that was confirmed by the Supreme Court). Their efforts have focused in demanding the EPA uphold its

duty in enforcing the law and, hence, lowering the emissions of fossil-fueled power plants.

Lashof reported progress has been made, as the EPA is currently negotiating eco-friendly and attainable power plant standards on a state-by-state basis. He also expressed his opposition to the proposed Keystone Pipeline. “It will unlock a huge store of fossil fuels in Canada that are dirty and dangerous to produce,” Lashof stated.

After CRDC moderator Judy Richheimer and forum organizer John Johnson opened the floor to questions, CRDC member Leathea Vanadore asked Lashof what she could do to help the cause. Among his suggestions, including attending demonstrations in Washington, was to join the NRDC. “It only costs \$10,” he said. When was the last time you heard that from a doctor?

The Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund is located at 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011. For more info, visit [nrdc.org](http://nrdc.org).

SUPREME COURT

# Musings of Justice Scalia

With so much important news this year, it’s easy to have missed the report\* of Justice Scalia, at a college, reiterating his stance that ‘voting is an ‘entitlement.’ Back in February, at a hearing of the Supreme Court, Justice Scalia presented an



by *Francine Haselkorn, CRDC, Executive Committee Member*

argument against Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. The section requires states or localities, that have historically discriminated against minority voters, to get government approval in changing electoral procedures. The case that he’s drumming up support for the court to hear, comes from a county in Alabama with a population that is 85 percent white.

I wish I could have been in the Supreme Court February 28th to hear the gasping sounds and see the astounded faces when Justice Scalia called voting an ‘entitlement’. He fully knows that voting is not only one’s civic duty, but also a constitutionally given right, and despite his knowing this and the history of the voting rights act and voting in our country — he constructed a fictitious world using lies as his bricksand used the mortar from his exalted and honored position he holds as a justice.

Does Scalia believe that people will believe anything he says? Why does he ignore the fact that Section 5 of the Voter Rights Act has bent over backwards in giving another voting bloc, our County’s Military every opportunity to vote (and rightfully so). Does he feel that he has a ‘constituency’ that looks to his leading the brigade in making it more difficult for minorities to vote? Do his lies become truths because he has uttered them? Does the man still see himself as religious and upright?

What fear does he hold about the nature of our present society? His own Italian roots experienced a big douse of discrimination? Wikipedia on late 19th-20th century Italian immigration says. “In United States, and other English-speaking countries to which they immigrated, such as Canada and Australia, the later Italian immigrants were often viewed as perpetual foreigners in a lower class, restricted to blue collar jobs. Their Catholicism, frequent lack of formal education and competition with earlier immigrants for lower paying jobs accounted for much of this prejudice. Ethnocentric chauvinism exhibited by the earlier Northern European settlers toward the Italian immigrants were also major factors, this being especially true in the South.” \*\*

How would he react if some ethnic epithets were hurled at him.? I think he would start to scream. It’s just not good enough to be a lawyer from a good law school to be a Supreme Court Justice. But we are stuck with him, his vapidity, and his lies.

\* WSJ, 4/16 ‘Scalia Calls Voting Act A ‘Racial Preferment’.

\*\* The Fifteenth Amendment (Amendment XV) to the United States Constitution prohibits each government in the United States from denying a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's "race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (for example, slavery). It was ratified on February 3, 1870.

## Reflections of Ocean Surge in England: CRDC’s Visit to London’s Gates

I was fortunate to visit the Thames River Barrier in April. Four Trentlyons, Betty, Jason, Jessica and I, were the visiting party and Martin Earlam, Chief Engineer of the Thames River Barrier, was our guide for a two hour tour. The Barrier was created in response to a natural disaster. In 1953 there was a severe flooding in the Thames Estuary, resulting in the drowning deaths of over 300 people. Twenty years later, after the study of multiple possibilities, the Thames River Barriers at Woolwich Reach, east



*Robert Trentlyon, Founding member of CRDC*

of Central London, were commenced. It took eight years to build the 10 barriers across the river. During that same period, the banks of the river were raised substantially. The cost of building the barriers was shared: the national government paid 75% and Greater London paid 25%.

I asked Martin what the cost benefit/risk factor was. He said that it was \$1 billion cost benefit with a risk factor of \$164 billion. When I asked Martin whether there were other barriers of a similar nature, he said that both South Korea and Germany have used the same design of Rising Sector Gate for water control. Parliament has also passed a law providing sea walls can be raised whenever there is the need. There is now a 100 year plan. Calculations have been made to estimate how high the water level will rise in a set period. The British engineers will build to the needed height which is expected to be needed around 2050. As for the Thames Barriers currently in place, every fortnight a different barrier is examined to make sure it is working properly. Quick simultaneous examination of all ten barriers is done monthly with a thorough test done annually.



*Betty, Jessica, and Bob Trentlyon (a man of many hats) at the Thames River Barrier*

London got its storm surge barriers in 1983. New York City is now thirty years behind London and our prob-

lem is infinitely greater and our population is much more in harms way. We have to act now!



*Climate change spawns questions from CRDC's members.*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 20, 2013, 7-10 pm:

### **LGBT Rights: The Supreme Court, Marriage -- and Beyond**

Journalist Andy Humm will explore the current state of civil rights for gays, lesbians and transgendered people. Elliott Center (Hudson Guild), 441 West 26th St,

Thursday, July 18th, 7-10 pm

### **A Park or Affordable Housing: What's Best?**

Proponents for a 20th St park-plus-children's playground near sixth avenue face off against activist for affordable housing. Elliott Center (Hudson Guild), 441 West 26th St.

Sunday, September 8th

### **CRDC Barbecue**

The Frying Pan, Pier 66A, (West Side Highway and 26th St).

Tuesday, September 10th

### **Primary Elections**

**CRDC Exec Meetings:**, June 6, July 11th

Meet the Candidates on Our WebSite!  
[www.crdcnyc.org](http://www.crdcnyc.org)

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