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# Hope Inspires High School Authors in Community Connection Writing Competition

by Carol Hillsberg

“Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.” —Jonas Salk

Prompted to explore the theme “hope,” in March students from three high schools in north Lake County created and submitted stories, essays, and poems to the Fifth Annual Community Connection Writing Competition. The culminating event—Awards Night—took place Tuesday, April 14 at the Ramada Inn in Waukegan. Tenth Dems volunteers decorated the meeting room for the evening, and brightly colored renditions of the word “Hope” served

as a cheery backdrop.

Students from Waukegan High School, Christo Rey St. Martin de Porres High School, and Zion Benton High School submitted nearly 300 original works of poetry and prose. Twelve



prizes were awarded, six for poetry and six for prose. In each category, the first-place winner received \$100, second place received \$75, and third place received \$50. In addition, there

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# Tenth News

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MAY 2015 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 12, Edition 5

## Two Iconic Illinois Democrats...

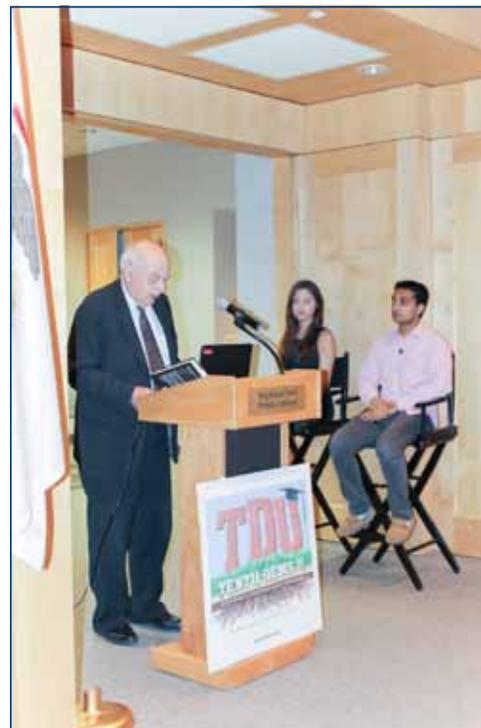
by Mark Rosenberg, M.D.

On Monday evening, April 13, Tenth Dems University presented a program at the Highland Park Public Library featuring former Illinois Senator Adlai Stevenson III. Speaking before a full auditorium, Senator Stevenson recalled his years in the United States Senate as a much less partisan time in which legislators could work together for the benefit of the country. Since leaving the political arena, he helps to lead the Stevenson Center on Democracy in Mettawa, whose mission is to provide forums for the exploration of issues important to the American people.

Sen. Stevenson also talked about sustaining our democracy by engaging young people in civic activities, which is the purpose of the Mikva Challenge. Brian Brady, the Mikva Challenge’s Executive Director, talked about this program—spearheaded by former 10th District Congressman Abner Mikva—and its success in encouraging young people to participate in the political process.

Amanda Loutris, now a Tenth Dems intern, and Pawan Sajjani, both students at Stevenson High School, recounted their experiences as Mikva Challenge participants. The enthusiasm of these youngsters was inspiring, as was a short film showcasing students whose lives have been enriched by the program.

During the Q & A that followed the formal presentation, Tenth Dems volunteer Kiki Richman remarked, “Working on a campaign is a great experience and young people gain valuable skills from that exposure. They learn they can make a difference.”



The Mikva Challenge has reached over 6,000 young people in the city of Chicago and hopes to expand to more suburban schools, including those throughout the 10th District. ■

**More photos from both front page events on pages 4-7 and 10-13.**



**WATCH FOR THE OPENING OF OUR NEW GRAYSLAKE OFFICE ON JUNE 6!**





# Dold and Kirk Vote To Gut Medicare and Other Health and Social Programs, Increase Defense Spending, and Lower Taxes on the Wealthiest Americans

by Ronald Altman

Congress went home for another two-week vacation after the House passed a budget on a 228-199 party-line vote. If enacted, the House budget would gut the past 80 years of social legislation. The Senate passed the same budget with a 52-46 mostly party-line vote (Senators Cruz and Paul didn't think it went far enough).

This reactionary budget did not receive a "yes" vote from a single Democrat in either house of Congress. Both Illinois Senator Mark Kirk and 10th District Congressman Bob Dold voted "yes."

Since the 2010 midterm election results returned the Republicans to power and made John Boehner Speaker, deficit hawks led by Representative Paul Ryan have longed to take a hatchet to Democratic priorities. Until this year, Senator Harry Reid and a Democratic majority in the Senate had stood in the way of their plans. In fact, Congress has been so dysfunctional during the Obama administration that no budget bill has passed both houses since 2008.

But now the Republicans have their majority in both houses of Congress. Although the final Authorization and Appropriation Acts that will outline the severity of the damage remain to be passed, we can be sure that if this budget were enacted, ours would become a radically different country.

Here are just some of the Republican budget priorities:

- **Conversion of Medicare from an Entitlement to a Refundable Tax Credit.** Since passage in 1964, the Medicare Act has provided health insurance to Americans 65 years of age and older. This would change under the Budget Act of 2015. Those under age 56 in 2015 would not ever receive traditional Medicare benefits. Instead, they would receive a fixed refundable tax credit that they could use toward paying for health insurance purchased on the open market.

Dold and Kirk's votes for this budget were votes to destroy Medicare.

- **Conversion of Medicaid to a Block Grant.** Medicaid is a federal-state cooperative program with federal oversight and controls that pays for healthcare for needy aged, blind, and disabled people, as well as pregnant women and children. The 2015 budget bill would convert Medicaid to a federal block grant. A block grant is basically a fixed sum of money that the federal treasury doles out, with little or no oversight. The grantee state then uses the funds to pay for a portion of the costs of a series of programs, at the state's discretion. Any remaining costs are the responsibility of the state, if it wishes to fund them.

Dold and Kirk's votes for this budget were votes to deny healthcare to the poor, especially pregnant women and children.

- **Repeal of the Affordable Care Act.** The budget bill fulfills the Republican dream of repealing Obamacare. It does not include any alternative for the more than 16 million Americans who have obtained health insurance through the Marketplace since 2014; it

only instructs committees to find an alternative.

Without the Affordable Care Act, the more than 16 million enrollees would be thrown into the private health insurance marketplace without any of the current protections of Obamacare, or the subsidies that have made healthcare affordable to families earning less than four times poverty.

This would mark a return to the bad old days when Americans with any preexisting healthcare problem could not afford insurance, policies were subject to annual and lifetime payment limits, and policies often didn't cover the full range of healthcare services.

Dold and Kirk's votes for this budget were votes to deny more than 16 million Americans access to affordable healthcare.

- **Increased Defense Spending and Cuts to Social Spending.** Over the past two years, the budget sequester that ended the 2013 government shutdown has reduced domestic and military spending equally and reduced the budget deficit from \$1.33 trillion to \$486 billion. The Republicans' 2015 Budget Act raises defense spending to levels not seen since 2009. It then provides that spending for wars will be considered "emergency" off-budget spending, uncontrolled by the limitations of the sequester. At the same time, it cuts \$2 trillion over the next 10 years from programs such as CHIP (children's health insurance), food stamps, welfare, public transportation, and agricultural support.

Dold and Kirk's votes for this budget were votes to give priority to funding foreign wars over taking care of domestic needs.

- **Reduction of Tax Revenue.** The 2015 Budget Act eliminates taxation of capital gains and dividends and lowers the maximum individual income tax rate to 35 percent. It also lowers the corporate tax rate to 25 percent and applies that lower rate to both normal C-corporations and so-called pass-through S-corporations. This means that self-employed individuals could lower their tax rate by 10 percent simply by forming a personal service or limited liability corporation.

Dold and Kirk's votes for this budget were votes to reduce the taxes of the wealthiest Americans while offering no relief to wage earners.

A party's budget proposals reflect the party's priorities, and the Republicans' 2015 Budget Act is no exception. None of these priorities should be surprising; they all have been features of the Ryan budget for more than five years now. What's changed is that Ryan's party now controls Congress.

Equally, the votes cast by congressmen and senators reflect the officeholders' priorities. By their support for this regressive, reactionary budget, Bob Dold and Mark Kirk have demonstrated that their priorities are not the priorities of voters in the 10th Congressional District, nor, we hope, of a majority of Illinois voters.

Both stand for reelection in 2016. They must be defeated. ■

# Hope Inspires High School Authors in Community Connection Writing Competition

*continued from page 1*

were three Honorable Mention awards in each category, which also included cash prizes.

The four competition judges, all of whom are professional, published writers, worked diligently to select the best among all the entries. In the interest of fairness, none of the works read by the judges included information about the author. All students' works were identified by a number, with the identification key retained by volunteers who kept it far from the judges—an exercise in blind justice.

This year's panel of judges was headed by Jacqueline Nicole Harris, who has judged this competition in prior years. Jackie is a writer, performance poet, and Shimer College graduate from North Chicago who works from home while trying to get out and give back to her community whenever possible. Her books can be found on Amazon and HYPERLINK "<http://www.createspace.com>" [www.createspace.com](http://www.createspace.com).

The other three judges also brought stellar qualifications to their task. Lois Barr, a professor of Spanish at Lake Forest College, has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize for poetry and fiction. In addition, she is a literacy tutor at the Waukegan Library. Nina Geater, a Waukegan resident, has been writing and performing poetry since middle school. She volunteers with the Waukegan Park District, teaching a poetry class for youth. Heather Juanita Crain, a writer, performance poet, and visual artist, is a member of the Karcher Artspace community in Waukegan. She has mentored poets and hosted poetry open mics in Lake County for over four years, and is currently working on her first book of poems and essays for publication.

In addition, Elizabeth Bloom Albert served as "originality judge." That is, she reviewed all of the submissions to ensure they were original works of the students. Elizabeth is a professional writer whose work has appeared in a number of literary magazines. Notably, Elizabeth counts as one of her greatest achievements the founding of this very writing competition, for which she served as chair in 2011 and 2012.

It was an excellent evening as nearly a dozen student writers, as well as each of the five volunteer judges, read their original works aloud. There were laughs, tears, and smiles, but, most of all, "hope." With the talent and character displayed on Tuesday night, this generation inspired all present with the hope that the future will be bright.

The program began with a welcome by Hon. Mary Ross Cunningham, Lake County Board Member, District 9, who brought Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, Tenth Dems Founding Chair, Democratic State Committeewoman, and Illinois Human Rights Commissioner to the podium to introduce the evening's emcee, Angelo Kyle. In addition to serving as a Pastor at Restoration Ministries, Rev. Kyle works at the Office of Regional Economic Development for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development.



Among his many accomplishments, Rev. Kyle was the first African American Vice-President of the Lake County Forest Preserve.

Rev. Kyle began by explaining how Tenth Dems Community Connection was founded to bring people together, connect them to the resources they need, and demonstrate that, for Democrats, politics is about more than just elections. Exemplifying this conviction, the annual poetry and prose competition offers young people opportunities to show their talents and express themselves. These youngsters are indeed our "hope" for the future.

The evening's program continued with readings of original works of prose and poetry by both the adult judges and some of the high school students who participated in the competition. In addition, Jacqueline Herrera Giron, who recently ran for 9th Ward Alderman in Waukegan, spoke in both Spanish and English about the privileges of participating in our democracy and the preciousness of the right to vote. Toward the end of the evening, Amanda Loutris, a high school student and Tenth Dems intern, described her internship experience and told the Awards Night participants how they could apply for an internship with Tenth Dems.

Among the students who participated in the open mic were Kala Juett, Tamara Sanchez, Sarahy Solano, La'Kendra Mayfield, who won first prize for poetry, Raimondi Tomeni, who won second prize for prose, Rosario Ocampo, who won second prize for poetry, Samantha Bahena, who won first prize for prose, and Jennifer Aguilera, Oswaldo Bahena, and Marjanae Maggett, all of whose prose garnered honorable mentions.

The culmination of the evening was the awards ceremony. In addition to those who read their prize-winning works, Daniel Gomez received third prize for poetry; Luis Pacheco earned third prize for prose; and Gustavo Baca, Lisette Hernandez, and Iris Sanchez received honorable mentions for their poems. All of the awardees' works will be published later this year in a Literary Edition of the Tenth News. ■



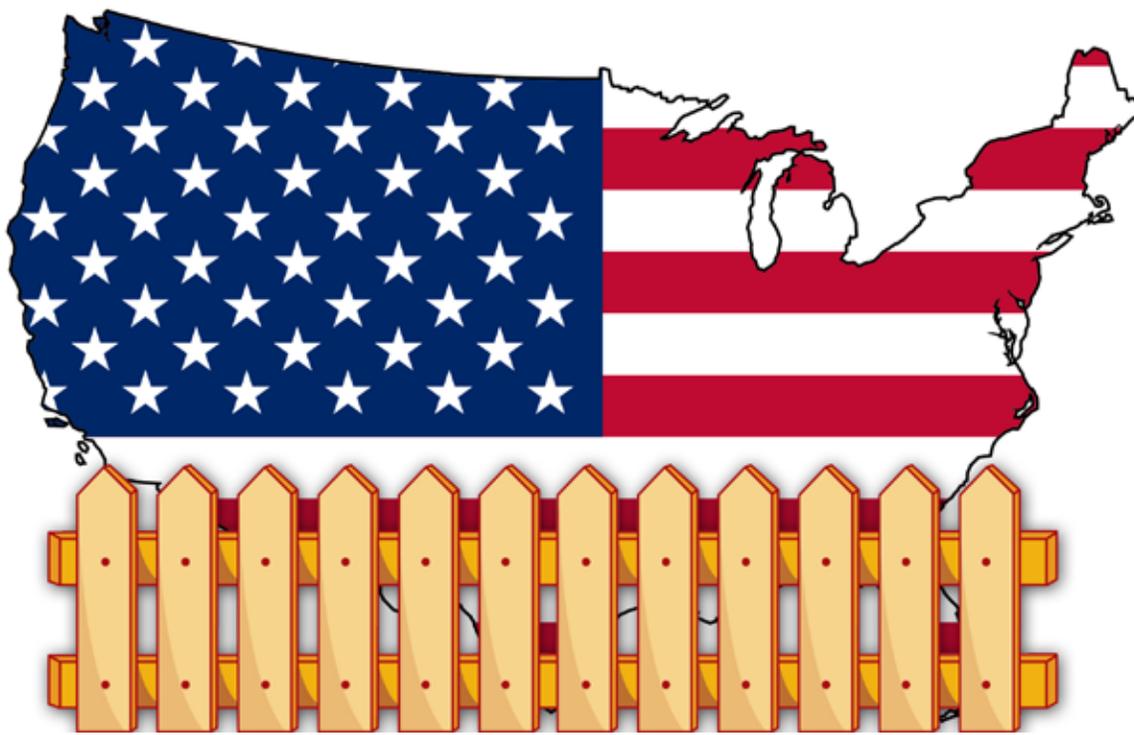
# It's all about hope! Scenes from our 5th Annual Awards Night...











## Why Our Restrictive Immigration Policy is Just Plain Wrong

by Barbara Altman

My strong opposition to the American policy that radically limits immigration has always been based on a combination of historical fact and my view of right and wrong. After all, unless we're full-blooded members of an indigenous tribe, every one of us can trace our ancestry to a land outside the borders of the United States. With the exception of those whose ancestors came here involuntarily as part of the slave trade, we can all find someone in our family tree who came to America looking for a better life. Given these historical facts, who are we to tell the current crop of foreigners looking for a better life that they can't come to "our country"? It may strike you as naïve, but I long for us to live by the words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty and "lift the lamp beside the golden door."

Generally, when I try to support these views with policy arguments, I can come up with only anecdotal evidence. Look at all the immigrants who contributed to the ascendancy of this nation in the 20th century, I say – Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi. Madeleine Albright, I.M. Pei, George Balanchine – the list is endless. And why, I've always asked, do we bring foreign students to the United States to study at our colleges and universities, only to make it impossible for them to remain in this country and apply that education to improving our nation? Finally, I reason that, excepting those with nefarious intent, immigrants tend to be the cream of the society they've fled. That is, it's the very people who have the courage and the grit to risk everything to leave the familiar and travel to a foreign land where they may not even understand the language who have the most to offer their adopted country.

So imagine my delight to read the economic argument that supports my open-border bias in *The New York Times Magazine* for March 29.

According to economist Adam Davidson, writing in his weekly

"On Money" column, those who oppose open borders in the belief that immigrants take jobs that otherwise would go to workers already in the United States have got it not just wrong, but actually backwards. Jobs, Davidson explains, are not a "lump," and employment is not a zero sum game. Every new worker in the United States, just by being employed, stimulates the creation of additional jobs—jobs for the people who rent her an apartment, who check him out at the grocery store, who sell her a car and gas to run it, who teach his children...well, you get the idea. Davidson says that it's a fact that population growth stimulates economic growth and that, therefore, whether the population grows because birthrates increase or because of immigration, the result is essentially the same. Certainly, it stands to reason that if one of those foreign students we allow to remain in the United States starts the next technically innovative business, she will create innumerable new jobs for those of us already residing in this country.

Also, according to Davidson, an influx of workers at the low end of the wage scale makes the economy work more efficiently. He gives examples using the construction industry, arguing that everyone is better off if the skilled craftsmen on the job aren't also the workers hauling and sweeping. Haulers and sweepers can be paid less per hour than skilled workers, and employing them will free up the higher-earning skilled workers to focus on the tasks that demand their skills.

So my wish is that we stop expending political energy on thinking of ways to stop immigration and start focusing on the best way to open up our country to immigrants—while weeding out criminals and anyone else intending us harm, of course. It turns out that not only would such a policy constitute a return to fundamental American ideals, but it would also be good economics. ■



## Ted Cruz Believes He's the New Galileo

By Steven Gan

I'll be honest with you. I was a little shocked when Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) announced in March that he was throwing his hat into the ring for the presidency. I mean, come on now.... Here's a person who loves to be so outrageously provocative in everything he says and does that outside of his large cadre of radical followers he's often viewed as a carnival barker, a wacko bird, and completely off the wall, even by some of the more rational members of his own party. I thought perhaps he might have said to himself, "Do I really have a chance to pull off a national campaign?"

I guess I was wrong. When you're completely out of touch with the rest of America, as I believe Cruz is, right or wrong, you do what you want to do without flinching. There were two things that Cruz recently said that made me want to just shake my head until it rolled off my shoulders.

On March 24th, in an interview with *The Texas Tribune*, Cruz compared what he termed "global warming alarmists" to flat-Earthers, analogizing himself to Galileo Galilei, one of the fathers of modern science. "Those who believe the Earth's climate is changing as a result of human activity are comparable to those who once believed the planet was flat," Cruz said.

I can't begin to wrap my head around Cruz's analogy. Galileo was persecuted for asserting his rational conclusion, based upon scientific observations, that the planets revolve around the sun (and not the Earth as the Church taught). And Cruz asserts that as one of the minority who do not accept that human activities are impacting climate change, he is being "persecuted" for his "beliefs"?

First of all, science is not a matter of beliefs; it is a body of knowledge. Except for a very few fringe individuals, scientists worldwide have clearly stated that today's endless burning of fossil fuels and the spewing of pollution into our atmosphere has, at a minimum, contributed to climate change. Yet, despite today's rapidly melting glaciers and polar regions, warming sea temperatures, increased droughts, and more intense hurricanes, poor Senator Cruz insists that these climatic phenomena have nothing to do with us humans.

In any event, I see no evidence to support Cruz's claim that, like

Galileo, he is being "persecuted" for his contrarian beliefs. To be persecuted is to be ostracized from society, emotionally (and even physically) abused, perhaps imprisoned, and maybe even made to pay with one's life. Then there's Ted Cruz, a United States Senator and declared candidate for President of the United States. So just how is he being persecuted for not "believing" that man's activities are contributing to climate change?

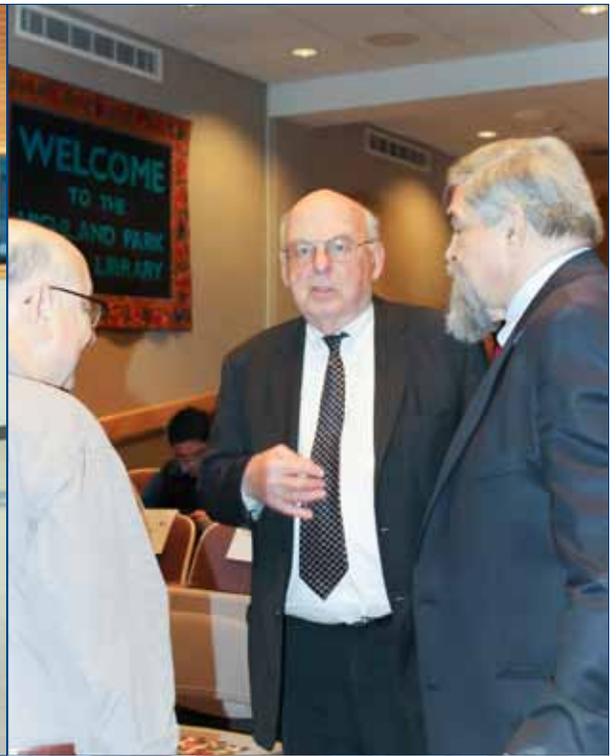
Really. How pathetic that Cruz has to depict himself as a victim in order to appeal to the ignorant who blindly follow and support his irrational thinking on climate change and other issues.

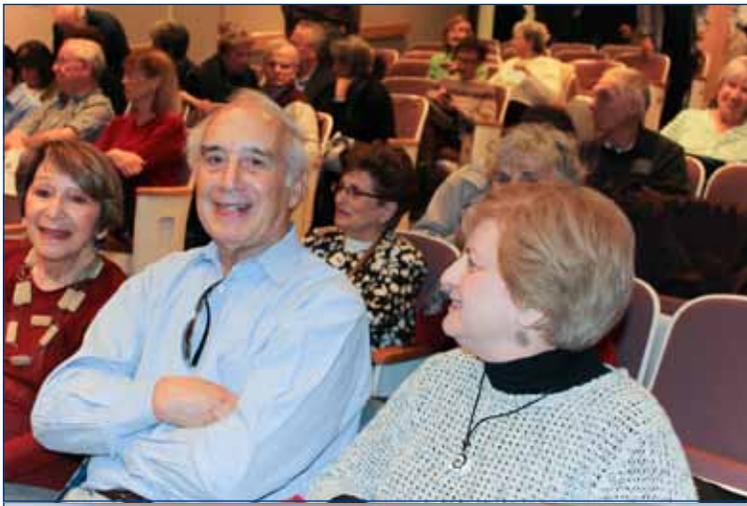
Turning to just one of these other issues, on April 9th without missing a beat, Cruz doubled down on his support for the so-called "religious freedom" laws passed by Republican legislatures in Indiana and Arkansas. By that time, potential GOP nominees Jeb Bush and Rand Paul (who subsequently declared his candidacy) had already attempted to backpedal from supporting such laws, in light of overwhelming public opposition. Unconcerned that such laws are widely seen as sanctioning discrimination, particularly against LGBT individuals, Cruz claimed that such laws are needed because the gay community has launched a "jihad" against Christians.

Yes, "jihad" is the word Cruz used. Accompanied by former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee (who may run again, and who, in my opinion, uses his religious belief system to cloak his animus toward the LGBT community), Cruz told a crowd of homeschooling activists to beware of "the jihad that is being waged right now in Indiana and Arkansas, going after people of faith who respect the biblical teaching that marriage is the union of one man and one woman." By using that loaded word "jihad," Cruz attempted to depict LGBT Americans as the "other" – terrorists who are trying to take over America and defeat people of faith.

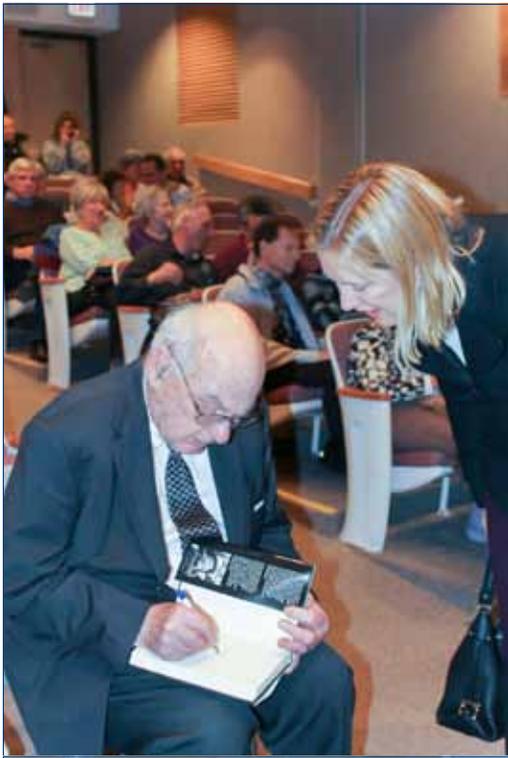
What worries me most about Ted Cruz is that, no matter what outlandish and provocative things he says, he seems to be quite good at pushing all the emotional buttons of the religious right. Persecution by people who understand science? Jihad by people who insist on tolerance? Could this self-proclaimed victim actually end up being a viable candidate for President of the United States? ■

**Our Tenth Dems University event highlighting the Mikva Challenge project and the Stevenson Center on Democracy was a huge success!**











## An Evening with Alan Grayson

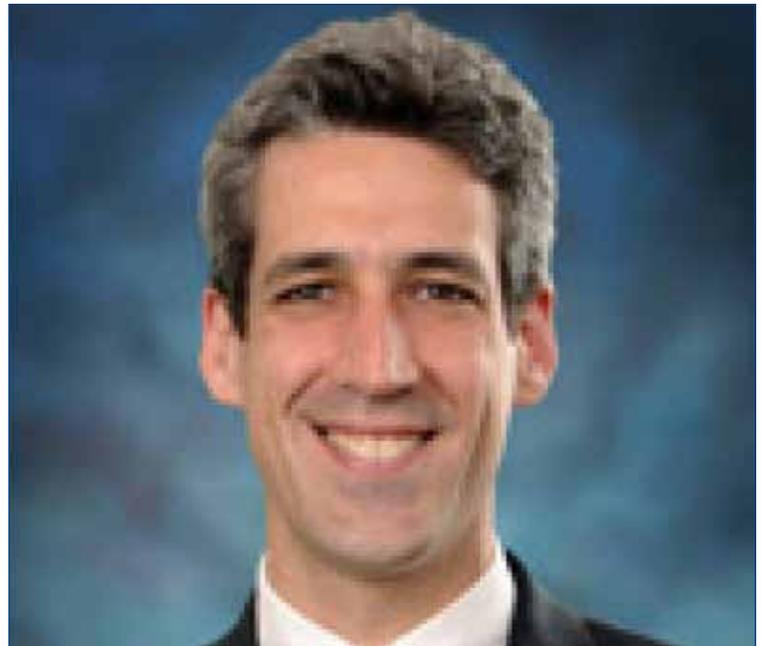
by Adrienne Kirshbaum

On the evening of April 8 at the Northbrook Pinstripes, a capacity crowd was treated to the wit and wisdom of U.S. Representative Alan Grayson. The event was sponsored by The Coalition to Restore Democracy, a nonpartisan association of 25 member groups, each dedicated to improving government. The driving force behind the gathering was that indefatigable activist Sharon Sanders of Northbrook.

Tenth Dems, a member of the Coalition, participated in the event. Our founding chair, Lauren Beth Gash, was called to the podium to introduce Rep. Grayson. In her remarks, she mentioned the several Harvard degrees that the congressman had earned, and the various successful careers he had forged in the private sector before becoming the U.S. Representative from Orlando, Florida.

We all know how broken our government is, and Rep. Grayson didn't try to soften the facts. But he leavened his remarks with humor that made the bitter news easier to swallow. He spoke about the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision and how that unfortunate action has affected the political landscape. He told of how he took finance reform into his own hands and raised a prodigious amount of money by appealing to small donors giving \$200 or less. He urged his audience to get involved and fight to return our country to a place where everyone has a voice. He declared that "money can't vote," and led the audience in an enthusiastic chant of that important truth.

Unlike many political events, "An Evening with Alan Grayson" featured really good food! An impressive small-plates buffet included an array of delicious choices, from crudités to gourmet pizza. At the evening's end, those liberal icons Ben and Jerry provided ice cream cups in some of their most popular flavors so attendees could go home with a good taste in their mouths. ■



## State Senator Daniel Biss, a Pragmatic Advocate for Democratic Values

This session Daniel Biss, State Senator from Evanston, whose 9th District includes communities in the 10th Congressional District, is sponsoring Senate Bill 1564 to amend the Health Care Right of Conscience Act. The changes Biss's bill proposes would ensure that healthcare providers give medically accurate information to their patients, regardless of their own personal religious beliefs.

Sen. Biss explains why such legislation is needed. "Across the country, we're watching state legislatures enact heavy-handed legislation that aims at limiting a woman's right to choose," he says. "Right-wing Republicans have tried those same tricks here in Illinois, but fortunately we've been able to defeat these proposals, allowing women to make the choices that are right for them and their families."

According to Biss, Senate Bill 1564 represents an important opportunity not just to stop awful legislation, but also to affirmatively expand women's rights. The bill would protect not only family-planning decisions, but also such other important, intimate healthcare decisions as end-of-life care directions. Biss believes that everyone "should be free to make those decisions based on medically accurate and comprehensive information," guided by their "own beliefs and not those of doctors or hospital systems." ■

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