



The Banner



Newsletter of the South Chicagoland Young Democrats

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From The President

Dear Friends,

Since our last newsletter, we have been hard at work on the upcoming primary elections in March. We have met with Rep. George Scully and Congressional candidate John Pavich. We have been working on our endorsements as well.

With elections coming up, I've decided now would be a good time to talk about being a young democrat. Why should one want to be a young democrat? Well, in this country, until you're 18, you have little to no say as to what happens, and I don't agree with that at all. George Bush's new budget plan cut education by 28.9% from last year. At seventeen years old, that affects me directly. That is financial aid that my friends and I won't receive; that is classes dropped because schools won't be able to afford them anymore. Is it right to just stand by and not speak up about the issues affecting young people throughout the country?

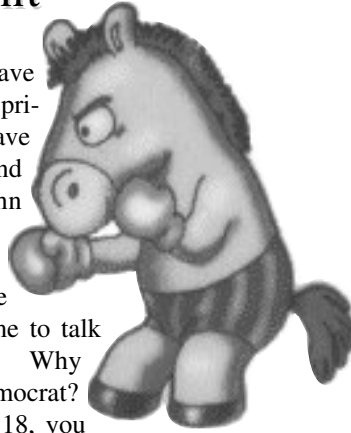
The answer is NO!!! Bush is the most protested president and I am proud to be one of those protesters. The only thing is that many young people aren't joining in the protest. It is true that a lot of young people don't vote. Even P. Diddy's Vote Or Die campaign went bankrupt. This needs to end. Too many issues today affect the youth, and we have very little say. For example, oil. At the rate we are using it, in 20 to 40 years, oil will be gone. Who does this affect more? The 60 year old conservative congressman who owns stock in an oil company and doesn't want to see alternative energy sources, or the seventeen year old kid going broke because of gas prices, who will soon live in a world of crisis when the energy source this country is addicted to has been depleted?

So I say, GET INVOLVED. We may not be old enough to vote, but you're never too young to join an organization to help out. The ACLU, NAACP, Military Free Zone, Underground Action Alliance, and yours truly, the South Chicagoland Young Democrats. Because as the Anti-Flag song goes, "When you silence our youth, you silence the truth."

Peace, Love, Unity

Ryan Locke

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Members meet with Il. Democratic Congressional nominee, 11th District, John Pavich. Ross B., Josh D., Ryan L., Nicole W., Melissa L., David S., John Pavich, Mike K., Megan W., Steve M., Gary K., and Luke C.

Bipartisanship: Means to an Ethical End

By Ross Brazzale

With an election on the horizon this March, the vital Presidential election less than a mere 2 years away, and Democratic power on a national level in shambles, what are Democrats to do?

"Obama is teaming with Lugar, the Indiana Republican on weapons proliferation; Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) in an op-ed piece on Sudanese genocide; Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fl.) on immigration and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) on keeping tabs on out-of-control Hurricane Katrina spending" says a January Sun Times article.

Despite the ethical and democratic appeal of this cooperation, Obama's bipartisan voting "is a growing concern of some of his liberal and progressive base," especially when concerning his gradual withdrawal stance on the war in Iraq.

However, he is by no means alone in the Democratic Party on this hot issue.

"America has a big job to do now. We must set reasonable goals to finish what we started and successfully turn over Iraqi security to Iraqis," said New York Senator Hillary Clinton for a November 29th CBS News article. Though Clinton's voting regarding the War in Iraq has drawn fire from many Democrats, she is still considered by many to be a contender for the 2008 Democratic presidential primary.

However, as our Constitutional rights and freedoms begin to falter at the hands of a Republican majority Congress, a world of surveillance because of the "War on Terror," and now the recently appointed and highly conservative Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, powerful Democrats like Clinton and Obama are

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Ryan Locke...President

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still a loud and driving force for progressives around the country.

Clinton, though labeled as a "hawkish" Democrat, is still fighting for our right to privacy, even as the Bush Administration tries to eliminate it under the guise of the War on Terror.

"Obviously, I support tracking down terrorists. I think that's our obligation. But I think it can be done in a lawful way," the New York Democrat said. While the National Security Administration and the White House may receive unilateral surveillance ability from the primarily Republican Congress, Clinton still stands for her Progressive, Democratic, and most importantly, American ideals.

Amid fears regarding the conservative and liberty-restricting history of Alito, Obama called for serious action from the Democratic Party. "We need to recognize, because Judge Alito will be confirmed, that, if we're going to oppose a nominee that we've got to persuade the American people that, in fact, their values are at stake."

Obama, who voted against Bush's Supreme Court nominee, feels that in order for Democrats to protect the basic rights and freedoms of Americans, actions like filibustering are not the answer.

"We need to start winning elections" said Obama for a recent Chicago Tribune article.

However, until the 2006 and all-important 2008 election arrive, "We need to put aside partisan politics, work together and get this problem solved," says Obama.

Hillary Clinton: Call to Youth

By Nicole Williams

On Saturday, December 3, 2005 Roosevelt University, in Chicago Illinois, hosted the American Democracy Institute. This event was for youth to encourage their participation in political issues. The day was full of various speakers and entertainers. However the keynote speaker was Hilary Rodham Clinton, currently a U.S. Senator in New York. Her speech revolved around the youth, "...who are the heart and soul of American progress." She spoke about young people being looked down upon in the community because they don't vote in numbers like adults do. One way to solve this, she said, is to fix the electoral system so that every vote counts. Another topic that she addressed was the big issue of the war in Iraq. The major question that every one seemed to ask was, should we pull out of the war or risk our lives to fight for America? On December 15, the government was to hold elections in Iraq, and Senator Clinton felt that if this election went successfully then the troops may be able to come home. Senator Clinton also stressed the environmental issues of global warming, the need to conserve energy, and to replenish the environment in ways such as planting trees. In general some of her messages were to never give up, stand up for your values, and work out different problems with determination. She stated that our country runs on the energy of young people, and that the youth must be committed and be a part of the American journey. Hillary Clinton is a strong political figure for the U.S., and there is much speculation that she may run in the next presidential election. Hillary's call for youth to take an active role really stands out as being an important determinant in the future.

A word from the man on the streets....

By Luke Coughlan

What's up with this administration? What is our government coming to? I have a dream. I hope that one day I can turn on the television without viewing a head-shot of the man blown away by a shotgun-wielding vice president (bad pun entirely intended). I wish that the men the American people elected to run our proud nation were men of character, men who make careful and assured calculations before sending thousands to their deaths in a war based upon fabricated evidence of "weapons of mass destruction." That still irritates me to this day.

Forgive me if I come off a little brash, but the man did go to war over bogus information, right? He did say there were "weapons of mass destruction" (those words give me headaches) in Iraq, did he not? I myself thought that such powerful means of death and havoc-wreaking would be hard to miss, so how could he be wrong? I picture massive missiles, several stories tall, with giant skulls and crossbones prominent along the shaft. What in the world could possibly be mistaken for that? An abnormally sized, tattooed banana, perhaps? Maybe an industrial-sized set of throwing darts Hussein got for a birthday (I hear the man played a mean game of darts).

Well, we went to war. Who needs the United Nations? We had a few allies, some good luck wishes. And, as it turns out, there weren't any weapons. I'll repeat that for all you Bush fans. There weren't any "weapons of mass destruction." Not even one, you ask? Nope. Not even one. Guess what? There weren't any abnormally-sized bananas, either. And Saddam apparently did not receive an industrial-sized set of throwing darts for his birthday. I'm not very emotional, but the very thought of it makes me want to cry. It should make any American who ever believed in our system want to cry too. I know that no apology can undo it. No amount of heart-felt apologies or reparations can bring back those soldiers who so honorably and selflessly gave the ultimate sacrifice to our great nation. No teary-eyed regrets will ever ease the shattering pain felt by American mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives, husbands, or children of those we've lost in the war.

Apparently, Mr. President knew that too. He took some heat, but claimed that he didn't want to show weakness. He said that to pull out too fast would be a sign of weakness and would give strength to the enemy. What the good president fails to acknowledge is that if he hadn't lied, there wouldn't have been a war. If there hadn't been a war, then there wouldn't be nearly as many enemies to worry about, and there wouldn't be anything to apologize for, anyways. If there hadn't have been a war, then those soldiers would still be alive. They might, as you're reading this, be giving their daughter a kiss, or playing catch with their son, or sitting in front of a fire with their wife/husband. Mr. President has claimed

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to be "pro-life." How can one who claims to put so much stock in human life have so little respect for it? Forget a public apology, the man should be on his knees begging forgiveness. I would be. How can he sleep at night? How can he even live with himself? Clinton nearly went to the guillotine for getting oral from a secretary and lying about it. I'm not justifying that in the least, nor am I saying he shouldn't have gone through what he did. He made a huge mistake and deserved the consequences. He did apologize, though. Consider our current president. He also made a huge mistake. He also lied. He declared war under false pretenses. Thousands are dead. Thousands more are wounded. Several were taken hostage, some were killed while in captivity. Several others are currently being held hostage, and some of them will be killed. Who's to know how many innocent people were tortured and are currently being tortured. Men, women, and children are dying as we speak because of the hostilities in the Middle East. Mr. President's lucky he's not having sex with a secretary or he'd be in real trouble.

What irritates me most is the fact that he's going to get off free. He won't suffer any punishment for his unspeakable offense. Mr. President got a scolding from the media and his political adversaries. I've been handcuffed for driving too fast. People have been arrested for being black. Others have been strip-searched at airports for wearing a turban. All I'm asking is, "What's up with that?" We're still at war. Civilians are still being kidnapped, tortured, and killed. Our soldiers are still dying. Their families are still crying. I'm still indescribably irritated. My message is this: do something about it. I typed an article. You can do the same. You can join our cause. We meet every week. If you're too busy for a big commitment, then send letters here or there to politicians, people who are supposed to represent you in the House or in Congress. Whatever you do, for heaven's sake, vote. Put people in power who value our soldiers' lives, people with decency. Elect people who will bring our troops home, safe. You'll have my thanks.

JOIN THE SOUTH CHICAGOLAND YOUNG DEMOCRATS

*The official high school youth arm of the
Young Democrats of Illinois!
Panera Bread in Matteson, IL
NW Corner of Rt. 30 & Cicero,
Thursdays,
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.*



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The fate of Social Security

By Michael Kean

One of the most pressing issues in American politics today is the fate of social security. All sides, both Democrats and Republicans agree that something must be done to save Social Security from going bankrupt but the question is what should be done. The George Bush Republicans seem to think that the best answer is privatization but what are all of the baby boomers supposed to do now if their money in Social Security were given to them to invest on their own. It is too late for this option, as they would have no time to invest the money properly, which the Democrats in Congress knew when they vetoed Bush's proposed bill. However, no one has come forward with a new plan of action. Democrats must unite behind a plan of action before Social Security is lost forever and American citizens are left with nothing to retire on.

With this intention in mind, I set forward some possible plans of attack. Most importantly, when FDR created Social Security, he intended for it to act solely as a mandatory retirement fund for the American people. Since then, however, the government has seen fit to use this money for other things, such as disability and unemployment. While these are necessary expenses for the government, they should not be coming from Social Security but rather from the government itself through programs such as the welfare system. Cut these expenses and there will be more money available for senior citizens. Second, every American citizen is required to pay into Social Security but we all pay the same percentage of each paycheck with a cut off point of how much can be paid. Under these rules, the top class of American society pays less of each paycheck than the lower classes. I say that this is wrong and that the government should create a graduated Social Security tax, much like the graduated income tax that has been in existence since the early 20th century. In addition, the cap on how much money that each person must pay should be removed. In this way, the amount of money paid into Social Security would increase drastically. The last step would be to make all government employees that qualify to receive a government pension ineligible to receive Social Security as they are already receiving money from the government for their retirement.

On a different path, if privatization is the course that we must follow, than it should be done gradually, with members of the newest generations paying into both Social Security and their own personal pensions that they can invest in whatever way they see fit. In that way, all people would be taken care of. The old would still receive from Social Security while the young would be creating their own plans through personal investment.

These preceding ideas are simply possible solutions to the problems surrounding Social Security. The real necessity is that the Democratic Party unites behind one plan with solely the thought of the well-being of the American people.