

the yankee radical

(617) 354-5078

August 2006

DSA NEW MEMBERS COOKOUT

WHAT: DISCUSSION & BARBEQUE

WHEN: SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 3:30 PM

WHERE: 24 BRIDGE ST, NEWTON

Boston DSA will be holding a new and prospective members meeting and social gathering on Sunday, August 27, at the home of David Knuttunen and Susan Davidoff. DSA members Harris Gruman (Director of Massachusetts Neighbor to Neighbor) and Andi Mullin (AFSCME Council 93 Legislative Agent, and former Mass NOW President) will lead an open discussion on "How much Socialism can be injected into real world politics?"

While the main purpose of the event is to meet new and prospective members, and

introduce them to Democratic Socialists of America, all DSA members and their friends and families are welcome.

The discussion meeting will begin promptly at 4:00 pm. Feel free to arrive anytime after 3:30. The meeting will be followed by a barbeque, beginning around 5:00 to 5:30 (if the weather is inclement, we will cook indoors). Please RSVP by August 25 to (617) 558-5853 or by email at david@knutdav.com, so we can figure out how much food to buy.

DIRECTIONS TO 24 BRIDGE ST., NEWTON

From Watertown Square (Mt. Auburn St. at Main St.), cross the river and take an immediate right, then take the right fork

(California St.). Follow California to Bridge St., and take a left. Park on Traverse St. (your first left from Bridge). From the Mass Pike, get off at the Newton/Watertown exit and head west, parallel to the Pike, on Washington St. Turn right on Adams, right again on Watertown St. (at Dunkin Donuts), and take the next left, which is Bridge.

The closest bus stop is #59 at the corner of Adams and Watertown Streets. Walk back one block from Adams to Bridge, then walk down Bridge. It is also possible to walk from Watertown Sq. (#71 or any of the busses that stop at Watertown Yard). We may be able to give limited rides from Watertown Square. Call or email to arrange.

Election Endorsements

WHEN: WED, AUGUST 16, 7:30 PM

**WHERE: HARVEST FOOD CO-OP
(COMMUNITY ROOM),**

581 MASS. AVE., CAMBRIDGE

T: RED LINE, CENTRAL SQ STOP

The August members meeting of Boston Democratic Socialists of America will decide our stance on some important upcoming political contests. To help clarify our views on the Governor's race, we've invited progressive supporters of each of the three Democratic candidates and Grace Ross of the Green-Rainbow Party to debate who can best advance our programs and values this election year. ACORN and SEIU 1199 have been invited to explain their support for Deval Patrick and Tom Reilly respectively; John Laughlin of Painters District

Council 35 will make the case for Chris Gabrieli. After brief presentations followed by Q&A, DSA members will vote on who, if anyone, to support.

We will also decide whether to endorse the "Ballot Freedom" referendum, a proposal to legalize "fusion", or "cross-endorsement voting" in MA. Boston DSA leadership has generally seen past attempts to organize 3rd parties of the left as a well-meaning waste of time and resources, if not a clever scheme to elect Republicans, usually based on a misunderstanding of U.S. election law. Some of our longtime members and friends feel this proposal resolves the "spoiler" problem of past 3rd party efforts; some do not.

And we'll review the Auditor's race, which features IUE-CWA 201 operative

and DSA member Rand Wilson challenging the veteran incumbent, former Middleweight contender Joe DeNucci (54-15-4). Rand is running under the "Working Families" political designation in support of the Ballot Freedom initiative.

Members have the right to propose additional endorsements of candidates or ballot questions, but should remember the trade-off between involvement in more campaigns and effectiveness in any one of them; also that DSA does its state legislative endorsements through the Mass Electoral Alliance.

All endorsements are by two-thirds of members voting. Before the 7:30 members meeting the Boston DSA Exec Board will meet from 6:45 to 7:15

News from DSA

A Report from DSA's National Office

SUPPORT THE KUCINICH RESOLUTION

With the toll of the dead and injured on all sides mounting daily in Lebanon and Israel and our government going through the diplomatic motions as President Bush puts his faith in yet another military solution, effective action can be hard to agree on, especially given the rhetorical overkill that often accompanies any action that touches the region.

The current humanitarian crisis could escalate into catastrophe if an immediate cease-fire is not achieved. Already in the first days of attacks and reprisals, reports say that 29 or more Israeli civilians were killed, numerous others injured and thousands have been forced to leave their homes. In Lebanon, more than 250 civilians are reported killed, countless others injured, and some 500,000 displaced or seeking refuge in other countries. After 15 years of brutal civil war, the people of Lebanon had devoted 16 years to reconstruction and peacebuilding. What has taken a score of years to build up is being torn down in a matter of days. The killing and destruction must be stopped now.

One concrete thing that every one of us can do is urge our member of Congress to sign on as a co-sponsor to H.Con.Res.450, introduced by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), which calls upon the United States to pursue an "immediate cessation of violence" and "multi-party negotiations with no preconditions." If your representative has already co-sponsored this resolution, please call to

thank him or her. Congressional Switchboard: 202-224-3121

MEXICAN ELECTIONS (excerpts)

DSA participated in the observer delegation from the Socialist International to the Mexican elections in early July. DSA National Director Frank Llewellyn led the delegation, which included Skip Roberts (Washington, DC), Daniel Reynolds (Miami) and Michael Lettieri (Washington, DC). Michael Lettieri also represented the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA). We participated in this delegation because of the extraordinary importance that political developments in Mexico hold for the United States and because of DSA's very close relationship with the PRD—the only significant party representing genuine social democratic change in Mexico.

The media is downplaying charges of fraud, while commentators, following the line of the conservative PAN and the corrupt PRI, suggest that Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the PRD presidential candidate, was endangering Mexican democracy and its institutions by mobilizing massive demonstrations in support of his demand for a vote-by-vote recount. This follows the campaign theme of both the PRI and the PAN, which maliciously and inaccurately suggested that López Obrador was a dangerous radical and authoritarian political leader. Fraud has a long history in Mexican elections, and it would not be the first time that the PRD was robbed. It is now widely acknowledged in Mexico that in 1988 the

PRD candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, lost the presidential election as a consequence of massive fraud.

There were indeed problems with this election. Felipe Calderón's so-called "margin of victory" was cut in half between the preliminary and final counts, and there are questions about whether all of the votes were counted and about collusion between political leaders of the PAN and the PRI in some states to throw the election to Calderón when it became clear that the PRI candidate, Roberto Madrazo, would finish a distant third...

In an election so close (the margin was .58% of the vote), many factors could lead to the result, including political mistakes, random instances of fraud, or worse. Mexican democracy and its institutions are better served by a recount than by institutional and political intransigence. Instead of trying to bury Mexican democracy, as the right charges, López Obrador and the demonstrators are really acting to save it...

While whoever ultimately gains the presidency can hardly claim a mandate, the PRD has established itself as Mexico's second party in the legislature and in the contest for the presidency, and it has done so without yet being a truly national party. In the 2003 mid-term elections, the PRD got less than 10% of the vote in many states. If the PRD is able to better organize in those states thus gaining a larger share of the vote, they will be in a much stronger position next time out...

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

This issue of the YR is targeted to DSA members, in compliance with our understanding of Federal election law. Which means all you non-member YR "free riders" probably won't see it. And due to our shrinking bank balance, we may be forced to also restrict some future issues to members. Of course there is a way to ensure your Yankee Radical fix, come what may—join DSA!

Enclosed are membership dues (\$50 sustainer, \$15 limited income).

My address has changed

Please send me more information about DSA.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Union/School _____ E-mail _____

Boston DSA * P.O. Box 51356 * Boston, MA 02205

SAVE THE DATE !

SUNDAY SEPT. 24, 2006 4-6 PM

Boston DSA HONORS

HARRIS GRUMAN

Director of Massachusetts
NEIGHBOR-to-NEIGHBOR

To benefit the work of **Mass Alliance**—DETAILS NEXT ISSUE

For more information please call
Susan or David at 617 527-1313.



\$8 Minimum Wage Bill Rolls Romney

By Carl Nilsson

A statewide campaign, led by Neighbor-to-Neighbor Massachusetts (N2N-MA), was successful in persuading both the House and Senate to pass legislation increasing the state minimum wage to \$8.00/hour, then override Governor Romney's veto. This victory will give Massachusetts the highest minimum wage in the country and will benefit over 300,000 workers.

We were able to accomplish this despite significant opposition from House leadership. Speaker DiMasi pushed for an increase of only one

dollar, a raise that would have helped 100,000 fewer workers. In the final days leading up to the House vote, N2N-MA organized a rally on the State House steps, flooded the offices of legislators with thousands of calls, and organized a "floor team" of supportive legislators to organize our campaign inside the building. DSA members attended the rally and volunteered for the phonebanks, generating numerous calls to House legislators. In particular, Barry Hart was a key volunteer and a 'one-man calling machine'. Our rally was attended by over 150 people, including many minimum wage workers.

Because of this outpouring of grassroots pressure, the campaign was able to hold the line on a larger minimum wage increase despite strong opposition from House leadership. Our support among rank-and-file House members was so strong that the Speaker was forced to offer the increase to \$8.00.

We were defeated on one item—our attempt to index the minimum wage to the cost of living. Maybe next time we can pick up where we left off.

Carl Nilsson is Campaigns Director of Massachusetts Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

FIGHT THE FARE INCREASE!



By Khalida Smalls

In April of 2006 the MBTA announced its proposal to raise fares for the third time in six years. Bus fares would go from 90 cents to \$1.65 (\$1.25 with new fare card, *Charlie*) and train fares from \$1.25 to \$2.25 (or \$1.70 cents with *Charlie*). This is a substantial increase and comes with no promise of increased or improved service. This money is needed to "maintain the current system" according to the MBTA's General Manager Daniel Grabuskas. Riders are frustrated and shocked at the proposal. They want to know what we are paying more for.

After years of "rider participation", filing complaints and fare increases, the T has done little for low income communities in general and communities of color in particular. The things that have changed are the things riders, advocates, and the community has actively pushed for (i.e. new boxy CNG buses).

The T Riders Union opposes this proposed fare increase. Some riders will be unable to afford it, but no rider

should be required to pay more for the same poor-quality inner city bus service.

Fares need to be equitable and affordable. This cycle of fare increases has to stop! The impacts of any fare hike will be greater in communities of color and low income. Many riders are dependent on the T and have no other choice. The T needs to secure adequate funding without additional increases, and to that end, the State Legislature has a responsibility to provide the MBTA with the additional funding it needs to run a first-class transit system. Forward. Funding is not working. The State put this Forward Funding structure in place in 2000 and the MBTA has been in financial trouble since.

Make AFC (automated fare collection) work! The MBTA must effectively distribute *CharlieCards* to the public so that we can access the benefits like discounted bus to subway transfers. Regardless of language or mobility, cards and information should be accessible, not just on the website.

Our experience with the Silver Line scares us because the pilot program has not worked—make it work on our buses!

Riders Unite! Together we've been successful...

- Join the T Riders Union. Come to our meetings to help educate and organize other riders. Call us for upcoming events, 617) 442-3343 x229.
- Sign our anti-fare hike petition. Continue to file your complaints with the MBTA. Don't let them off the hook.
- Call your legislators to encourage them to take a stand and fund public transit (debt relief!). Remember this year we elect a new Governor—does your candidate care about public transit? Make sure they here from you too!

Khalida Smalls is Program Director for Alternatives for Community & Environment and a founder of the T Riders Union.

Our State House Picks!

The candidates for the Massachusetts legislature listed below have been endorsed by the Mass Electoral Alliance, a coalition of unions, civil rights, environmental and community groups, including Boston DSA. These campaigns are priorities for the September 19 Democratic primary; our future issues will contain additional endorsements for November. Profiles compiled by Georgia Hollister, Alliance Political Director.

State House of Representatives

Willie Mae Allen (Democrat)



Open Seat, 6th Suffolk
Contact Info: 617-298-6711;
wmallen66@msn.com
Campaign Manager:
 Cheryl Crawford (302)
 750-8804

Opponents: William Celester (Democrat)
Key Issues: Willie Mae is running to fill the seat that will be vacated by Rep. Owens-Hicks. She will continue Owens-Hicks' advocacy for vulnerable children and families, while also asserting her stance on the importance of equal marriage rights. In particular, Willie Mae plans on working for better schools and an increase in teachers' salaries, economic development to provide jobs for our families, and wider access to healthcare. Willie Mae is a longtime neighborhood activist and veteran member of the Democratic State Committee.

Steve D'Amico (Democrat)



Open Seat, 4th Bristol
Contact Info: 546
 Arcade Avenue
 Seekonk, Ma 02771
 Tel: (508) 336-9192
Campaign Manager:
 Chris Mulligan
Website:
www.sdamico.com

Opponents: John Whelan (Democrat), Nicolas Bernier (Democrat), Robert Marquis (Democrat), Brian Langevin (Republican), Steve Hewitt (Republican)

Key Issues: Steve is a lifelong organizer and community activist with groups such as Mass Fair Share, and is running to replace the conservative Representative

Phil Travis. He believes that government should be open and accountable to its constituents. Steve is running on a platform of strengthening schools, providing affordable healthcare, environmental justice, and making sure that cities and towns have enough state aid to provide essential services to their citizens.

Patrick Driscoll (Democrat)



Open Seat, 6th
 Worcester
Contact Info: (508)
 765-6505;
info@patrickdriscoll.org
Campaign Manager:
 Nate Hinchey
Website:
www.electdriscoll.org

Opponents: Karen Spiewak (Democrat), Joann Powell (Democrat), Scott Lazo (Democrat), Geraldo Alicea (Democrat), Robert Chernisky (Republican), David Singer (Republican)

Key Issues: Patrick is the only progressive candidate in the 5-way Democratic Primary. A recent graduate of Boston College Law School, Patrick is strongly committed to educational funding, increased local aid, social services and developing alternative energy sources. He is also very passionate about healthcare and believes that healthcare should not be a privilege of the wealthy. He is pro-choice and supports equal marriage, which would be a complete turnaround from the previous Representative, Mark Carron.

Claire Naughton (Democrat)



Open Seat, 1st Bristol
Contact Info: (508)-339-9800;
campaign@clairenaughton.com
Website:
www.clairenaughton.com

Opponents: Paul Feeney (Democrat), Matt Donovan (Democrat), Jay Barrows (Republican)

Key Issues: As a former schoolteacher, Claire values education, and thus one of her top priorities is improving education. To this end, she seeks to secure resources to ensure that children learn in small classes from qualified teachers. Healthcare is another one of Claire's priorities; she thinks that every citizen deserves affordable, accessible medical treatment. Furthermore, it is important to Claire to increase local aid to better fund our police and fire departments, schools, and other local services. Finally, Claire is a supporter of individual rights—she supports a woman's right to choose and the expansion of marriage rights.

Melissa Murgo (Democrat)



Challenger, 16th
 Worcester
Contact Info: 179
 Delmont Avenue,
 Worcester, Ma
 01604
Website:
www.melissamurgo.net

Opponent: Rep. John Fresolo (Democrat)

Key Issues: Melissa first ran for this seat in 2004 and lost by only a few hundred votes. In the 2006 campaign, Melissa is focusing on three major issues that are of concern to Worcester's working families. She has prioritized securing quality, affordable healthcare for her constituents, particularly seniors because of the high costs of prescription drugs. She is dedicated to bringing additional aid for education to the district. And Melissa is committed to the economic development of Worcester; she aims to bring more jobs to her district.

Mark Falzone (Democrat)

Contact Info: 76
Hammersmith
Drive, Saugus, Ma
01906

Campaign

Manager: Jenna
Wilson (781) 231-
8041

Website:
www.falzone.org

Incumbent, 9th Essex District

Opponent: Sean Grant (Democrat)

Key Issues: Rep. Falzone currently serves on the House Committee of Ways and Means. Education is his highest priority, and he has successfully supported increases in K-12 school aid, as well as major new funding initiatives for our state's higher education system and the new Dept. of Early Childhood Education. Also, Rep. Falzone was a leader in getting the School Building Assistance Program back on sound financial footing for significant state aid to build new schools and renovations.. Additionally, Rep. Falzone has been an avid supporter of improving healthcare coverage, particularly for seniors, and he

has been successful at working to increase local aid in the district.

State Senate

Chris Hodkins (Democrat)

Berkshire, Hampshire,
Frankline Senate District

Contact Info: (413) 997-
9000

Website:
www.chrishodgkins.com

Opponents: Benjamin Downing (Democrat), Helen Sharron (Democrat), Margaret Johnson Ware (Democrat)

Key Issues: As a State Rep, Chris was an anti-Finneran leader. He stood up for his core progressive values and was able to get money in the budget for the things his district needed. Christ will be a strong advocate for universal healthcare, economic justice, as well as equal marriage and choice in the State Senate.

Dianne Wilkerson (Democrat)

Incumbent, 2nd
Suffolk

Contact Info: State
House, Room 312c,
Boston Ma 02133;
(617) 722-1673

Website:
www.diannewilkerson.com

Opponent: Samiyah Diaz (Republican),
Sonia Chang-Diaz (Democrat)

Key Issues: Senator Wilkerson considers fairness, equality, and justice to be the hallmarks of her legislative career. She sponsored the bill that added sexual orientation to the list of protected classes for students in Massachusetts public schools, sponsored the Domestic Partners legislation since 1992, and has waged battle against the attempt to place discrimination in the Massachusetts Constitution. She has also continually voted in support of enhancing accessibility of healthcare and expanding resources given to education.



Letters

BALLOT FREEDOM—YES!

Dear Editor,

John Maher raised several concerns regarding the Massachusetts Ballot Freedom initiative in the last *Yankee Radical* (www.massballotfreedom.com). Should the measure pass in November, it would give political parties the right to form ballot coalitions, making it possible for voters to unite behind a smaller party's platform but cast their vote in coalition with a major party's candidate. This "open ballot" approach would give voters—regardless of their political affiliation—a chance to vote their values, while avoiding wasting their vote on a candidate who can't win.

Maher argues that defections by progressives to a new party would drain voters from close races in Democratic primaries where there is a clear progressive candidate who merits support. He worries that voters will register with the new party, losing their eligibility to

vote in the Democratic primary. But Maher confuses the merits of changing the election law to allow parties to cross-endorse with the intention of some unions and community groups to begin building a new Working Families party to take advantage of the reform. They are separate issues. The Ballot Freedom reform by itself does not siphon voters away from Democratic Primaries—only existing (or imagined) alternative parties run the risk of doing that.

Currently parties like the Greens or Libertarians make their own decisions about where to field candidates in each election cycle. Ballot Freedom would only expand their options, allowing them to make cross-endorsements in some races instead of choosing to run their own candidates.

However the new Working Families party would not seek to register large numbers of people in the party, but rather work with our allies to mobilize un-enrolled independents and disaffected Democrats to vote for candidates who best reflect our party's platform in the Democratic primary.

Undoubtedly, some progressive voters will leave the Democratic Party to register with this more working class (and action-oriented) political formation. But in close primary races that feature a progressive worth supporting, our party would encourage members in that district to un-enroll (it can easily be done by mail) in time for the primary.

This November we have a unique opportunity to change politics in Massachusetts. With the passage of Ballot Freedom, the Working Families party can

(Continued on page 6)

Yankee Radical

P.O. Box 51356
Boston, MA 02205
Phone: 617-354-5078

e-mail:
yankeeradical@dsaboston.org

Speakers' Bureau:
speakers@dsaboston.org

Web:<http://dsaboston.org>

Editor: M. Pattberg

Asst. Editor: A. Costello

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS MOBILIZE FOR SANDERS RACE

by David O. Knuttunen

Democratic Socialists of America's position on electoral politics is to support progressive candidates who can actually win elections. In practice, this often means backing candidates who are less progressive than DSA members might like, and refusing to dedicate scarce resources to candidates with excellent politics who seem to be tilting at windmills; DSA does not believe in "spoiler" campaigns. As rational and principled as this policy is, it sometimes leaves members holding their nose when they pull the lever.

Which is what makes some DSA members characterize Bernie Sanders' campaign for the U.S. Senate as "a breath of fresh air". In Sanders, who has served 8 terms as Vermont's only Congressman, DSA members believe they have found a candidate who not only has a good chance to win, but has politics so close to DSA's own that he openly describes himself as a Democratic Socialist. So it is no surprise that DSA's National Convention, in November 2005, voted to make support

for Bernie Sanders a priority for the organization.

DSA's staff and leadership responded to the Convention vote by forming a Political Action Committee (the Democratic Socialists of America, Inc. PAC), which then launched a project to hold house parties across the country to raise money for the Sanders Campaign. The events are organized by DSA activist volunteers, who pay the associated costs out of their own pockets—all proceeds go directly to the Sanders Campaign.

The list of house party locales reminds one of the words of "Joe Hill": "from San Diego on up to Maine..." To date, the DSA PAC campaign has resulted in events in Boston, Atlanta, Detroit, Central Ohio, Portland ME and Boulder CO. Events are being planned for San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento, Central Indiana, Washington DC, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York City, and Springfield MA, with a few more under discussion. Over \$28,000 has been raised for the Sanders Campaign so far. DSA PAC expects that the campaign will eventually generate

well over \$50,000 – not bad for a tiny little organization, and a campaign run almost entirely with volunteer effort. Even more important than the fundraising, though, in the eyes of many DSAers, is the opportunity for political education. The house parties give DSA volunteers the opportunity to expose people to DSA and political ideas that Bernie Sanders and DSA both hold.

With his Senate campaign, and with the nationwide support that has been generated, DSA volunteers believe they are showing that the United States may not be as exceptional as many have held, that—as in the rest of the world, including Western Europe, Latin America and even Canada—Democratic Socialist politics can be successful in the USA if, like Bernie Sanders, you do it right.

David Knuttunen is a member of DSA's National Political Committee and a former Chair of the Boston local.

(continued from page 5)

use an "inside-outside" strategy, and forge a principled partnership with Democrats (or candidates from any other party) who support our platform while incrementally building independent political strength.

Sincerely,

Rand Wilson
Somerville

NEW YORK REPORT

To the Editor,

Recently I've had a few conversations with some NY State DSA folks about the Working Families Party there, which might be of interest locally as we try to assess the upcoming "Ballot Freedom" Referendum. All were involved with, and generally support, the WFP in NY, but the consensus seems to

be that fusion and the WFP model offer us (the broad left) nothing in MA. It may or may not hurt, but at best it offers little or nothing over the present Democratic primary strategy. Essentially, they are saying the WFP was a good thing in NY because they already had fusion, AND they had the Liberal Party, which was having a very destructive effect on progressive political efforts. The WFP was needed to counter the Liberals, and in fact has (virtually?) destroyed the Liberal Party. In MA, however, we have an effective strategy for electing progressives through Democratic Party primaries.

The WFP won't make this strategy work any better, and MAY deflect some progressive activist energy that would otherwise go into it (essentially the Neighbor to Neighbor argument). At

least one DSAer mentioned (anecdotally, and not directly related to the MA discussion) that he was having some problems with some support work he wanted to do for a Dem primary candidate. because he was registered as a WFP voter. So much for the "register Democrat, vote WFP" strategy. Which reinforces my concern that, although fusion and a MA WFP could have some theoretical advantages over our present system, WFP activists and leadership might not be disciplined enough to make it work that way. DSAers in the NY WFP are also VERY unhappy (at least those I talked to) about the Party's endorsement of Hillary Clinton.

David Knuttunen
Newton
(Letters cont. page 6)

DSA Volunteers Host Sanders Fundraiser

By Levi Sanders and Mike Pattberg

Last June 13 almost 50 supporters attended a fundraiser at the Somerville home of Dick and Roberta Bauer to help Congressman Bernie Sanders in his quest to become the next U.S. Senator from Vermont. The reception, organized by local volunteers as part of a national project of the Democratic Socialists of America Political Action Committee, raised almost \$5,700 for the Sanders Campaign. Sponsors of the event included Boston City Councilor Felix Arroyo, State Senator Patricia Jehlen, and State Representatives Anne Paulsen, Carl Sciortino, Alice Wolf and Denise Provost. Denise was also one of the featured speakers, along with Rand Wilson of IUE-CWA 201, and Levi Sanders.

Congressman Sanders has been elected to Vermont's sole seat in the U.S. House of Representatives eight times as an independent candidate and a self-

declared democratic socialist. The speakers noted his fight for a system of national health care for all, and that he was the first member of Congress to take seniors to Canada to highlight how the drug industry rips off Americans with the highest prices in the world. They also recounted how the Congressman helped lead the opposition to privatization of Social Security, Bush's tax giveaways to the rich, and corporate sponsored, wage depressing "free" trade treaties like NAFTA and CAFTA. Not to mention the Iraq war, which he argued and voted against when it counted—before it began!

Rep. Sanders is also a founder of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, an important counterweight to both the Republican leadership and Democratic centrists. Bernie believes that "we, the people" own this country, not the big money interests and wealthy corporate executives.

Bernie Sanders has a formidable opponent in this Senate race—a multi-

millionaire by the name of Richard Tarrant. Although trailing in the polls, Mr Tarrant is on track to spend some \$10 to \$15 million on his campaign, at least five times more than has ever been spent in Vermont before and more per voter than any candidate in American history. This means that Tarrant can spend huge amounts on radio and television ads. Bernie on the other hand at present has received donations from over 5,317 Vermonters, likely the largest number of contributors in Vermont campaign history.

This will be one of the most important United States Senate races of 2006.

Levi Sanders (Congressman Bernie Sanders' son) works at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services and is active with the Sanders for Senate campaign. Mike Pattberg is Chair of Boston DSA and editor of the YR.

Health Care Amendment Shut Down for 2006

By Michael Carr

The proposed Health Care Constitutional Amendment that would ensure every Massachusetts resident access to comprehensive and affordable health care was scheduled to receive its final vote on July 12th when the Legislature reconvened in Constitutional Convention. The Health Care Amendment received its initial approval at the July 2004 ConCon on a 153-41 vote, and only needed 50 votes in this ConCon to get on the November 2006 ballot. But instead of an up or down vote, the ConCon decided 118-76 to send the Amendment to a special committee for further study.

The motion, sponsored by Senator Richard Moore who helped broker the recent Chapter 58 health care reform law, needed 101 votes to pass, and required considerable arm twisting by leadership over a two hour period. Supporters of sending the Amendment to special

committee argued that the Legislature should delay action on the Amendment until Chapter 58 had a chance to work.

Legislators opposed to sending the Amendment to committee argued that affordable, comprehensive and equitably financed health care should be part of the state's constitution and that the Amendment was necessary to make sure the new health reform law is implemented properly. They also argued that the Amendment would be available if additional reforms were needed.

Health Care Heroes of the day included Senators Steve Tolman, Mark Montigny, Marc Pacheco, Pat Jehlen and Representatives Ruth Balser, Deborah Blumer, Alice Wolf, and Jamie Eldridge. Disappointments of the day included the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, Senators Richard Moore, Karen Spilka and Representatives Pat Walrath and Ron Mariano.

There's no question this vote was a setback. But we are confident that if we get a timely report, the special committee will present its findings to the members of the ConCon when it reconvenes on November 9th. The Legislature is under a constitutional duty to vote yes or no on constitutional amendments put before them; we expect they will uphold their duty and vote on the Health Care Amendment. If they do and the Amendment receives 50 votes, it will be placed on the November 2008 ballot.

Michael Carr is campaign manager for the Health Care Amendment Campaign. To contact him call 617-868-1280 or visit www.HealthCareForMass.org

Two Views on Mass Health Reform

Last April the Massachusetts legislature, after prolonged debate (See November YR), passed what was described in some media accounts as “landmark” health care legislation—so called Chapter 58. Some DSA members regard the result as a clear victory; others have strong reservations. Boston DSA continues to support single payer (Canadian-style) health care as an ultimate goal and also incremental reform.

How Victory Was Won

By Harris Gruman

On April 4, 2006—thanks to a vigorous grassroots campaign and broad coalition effort—the State Legislature passed sweeping health care reform.

This legislation will have a highly positive impact on low-income people across the state:

- ✓ MassHealth recipients will again receive dental and eyeglass coverage, a benefit cut by the Legislature in 2001;
- ✓ MassHealth will be expanded to cover children up to 300% of poverty;
- ✓ Single adults up to 100% of poverty will be eligible for MassHealth equivalent coverage and dental care;
- ✓ Adults between 100-300% of poverty will be eligible for sliding-scale, no-deductible private insurance plans;
- ✓ Documented immigrants will have equal access to the same affordable coverage available to citizens; and
- ✓ Businesses that refuse to offer coverage to their workers will have to contribute to the cost of expanded health care through a first-in-the-nation \$295 per employee fee.

2004: It Starts with N2N-MA Members' Demands

In January of 2004, Neighbor to Neighbor's low-income membership chose restoring health benefits for low-income working families two-to-one over all other issues on our annual survey. Our members were responding to a double assault on their health care safety net at the state and national level. In 2001, state budget cuts resulted in the elimination of dental and eyeglass coverage for over 500,000 low-income adults. Meanwhile,

federal attacks on Medicaid were restricting benefits for documented immigrants. This outcry made restoring benefits to MassHealth (the state Medicaid program) our top legislative priority.

2005: Grassroots Organizing

We knew we needed a broader movement to win extensive health care coverage for low-income people. Health Care For All, the leading policy advocates for health care in the state, built a broad coalition of community groups, unions, and health care providers to work for expanded health care coverage. N2N-MA and our sister organization, the Coalition for Social Justice, were asked to join the campaign as the voice of low-income communities across the state, and quickly became leaders of the grassroots legislative campaign. That spring, our coordinated call-ins and delegation visits with legislators in targeted urban districts built broad legislative support for our demands. The Affordable Care Today (ACT!) Campaign had become a player in the fight to win sweeping health care reform. And, on November 4th, we helped pass a bill in the House of Representatives with a veto-proof margin. But it wasn't over yet. . . .

2006: Showdown with the Corporate Lobby and the Bush Administration

The business lobby fought to defeat our payroll tax on employers who refuse to cover their employees. N2N-MA ran a high-visibility media campaign to expose the use of public-funded health care by large corporations like McDonalds, Wal-Mart and Friendly's. N2N-MA volunteers picketed their restaurants and stores, from Fitchburg to Lynn, and from Springfield to Salem. We presented them with bills for the millions of dollars in taxpayer money they use, and called for the

passage of the employer assessment in the final health care bill. Our rallies and press coverage demonstrated broad public support for holding employers responsible for the health coverage of their workers. This organizing helped the Speaker hold firm in the face of corporate lobbying and attacks from the Governor, and laid the groundwork for winning a first-ever employer assessment.

In the final days of February, the Bush Administration appeared on the scene to announce that they wouldn't accept the Medicaid expansions in the bill. House Speaker DiMasi stood firm, but Senate President Travaglini instead proposed an individual mandate without any expansions of affordable care. The Senate unanimously passed the bill. The next day, N2N-MA and GBIO had a “day of rage” at the State House, filling every Senator's office with constituents. By the end of the week, the Senate President announced that he had shredded his bill and would continue negotiating with the House Speaker, and . . .

On April 4th, the Legislature passed an historic health care bill with veto-proof margins.

Now N2N-MA and our allies are mobilizing for the next phase of progressive health care reform. We still need to guarantee access to subsidized plans for all struggling working people, affordable health care coverage for all Massachusetts residents, and progressive funding through employer responsibility!

Harris Gruman is Director of Massachusetts Neighbor to Neighbor

What Real Healthcare Reform Might Look Like

By Marguerite Rosenthal.

The lack of healthcare coverage, and its consequences for inadequate or non-existent health care for too many of our state's residents, has been receiving considerable attention in Massachusetts. Here are the facts: according to the respected Kaiser Family Foundation, 11% of our state's population—715,000 people—were uninsured in 2004. Over 120,000 were children, including nearly 38,000 living in poverty and thus eligible for MassHealth, our name for Medicaid. Our elected state officials have taken notice of this significant and growing problem. And last April our State legislature, after much debate and negotiation, passed a health care bill widely hailed as an innovative, even "trailblazing" reform. But this legislation doesn't cover the health care needs of our entire population, nor does it look to reduce the ever-rising contributions, co-pays or deductibles that the insured (present and future) must pay.

Unfortunately, it relies on exactly what ails our American system of paying for health care: private health insurance plans for those not old enough to qualify for Medicare or not poor enough to qualify for MassHealth.

Relying on employer mandates to shore up a rickety patchwork system of private insurance plans seems to make sense to some. But does it? The respected economist and NY Times columnist, Paul Krugman, has recently written that employer-provided health insurance is becoming obsolete because it is expensive and wasteful, and it puts employers at a

competitive disadvantage. For instance, one General Motors plant recently moved across the border from Michigan to Canada in order to avoid paying health insurance for its employees. And why did GM move to Canada? Because Canada, has a universal health care system that costs less and delivers more. And if they're a headache for GM, many fear employer mandates can bankrupt some small businesses altogether.

Every industrialized country except the United States has some form of universal health care system that guarantees health care for everyone and is heavily, if not totally, supported by its government. In some countries, England for instance, health personnel are employees of the government. For over 100 years, Germany has had a universal compulsory health insurance system that is run by non-profit sickness funds, supplemented by government contributions. Canada's single-payer system—the one most appropriate for the United States because it allows for consumer choice—relies on taxes to pay doctors in private and group practices and other medical personnel as well as to support its hospitals.

The U.S. stands alone for our high percentage of the uninsured (16% or almost 46 million people) while, at the same time, we spend a considerably larger percentage of our GDP on health care. And the results? Not only do we have much higher per person costs, but we also suffer lower life expectancies and higher rates of infant deaths, and this national embarrassment is getting only worse. For those without insurance, little preventive health care is provided, resulting in costly emergency care when care is provided at all. At fault, according to many studies, is

the private health insurance business and what it entails: enormous duplications and waste in administrative costs resulting from submitting and processing claims; settling disputes among insurance companies; advertising; and, of course, paying insurance executives very high salaries. According to one academic study, \$94 billion is expended each year nationally on administrative expenses that we would not have with a Canadian-style single payer system.

Most YR readers will be familiar with the confusion and disappointment resulting from the new, privatized Medicare prescription drug plan. And many who have health insurance will also have had frustrating experiences with insurance denials and rising deductions and co-pays. Some will have lost their health insurance altogether.

Americans are frequently told that we don't approve of publicly supported and administered programs. Actual opinion polls refute this assertion--single payer plans invariably are supported by two-thirds of the public—and most Americans are grateful for the Medicare system and for Medicaid, the largest payer of nursing home costs. Sure, no one wants higher taxes, but health insurance premiums and co-pays are really taxes paid to corporations and, again, these taxes would be no higher, and indeed, perhaps lower, than the current payments. It's high time for us—ideally our country, but we could start here in Massachusetts first—to join the rest of the industrialized world by establishing a health system that cares for us all.

Marguerite Rosenthal teaches at Salem State College in the School of Social Work.

(continued Letters, from page 6)

South American Left

Dear Editor,

I was in Bolivia when Evo Morales became that nation's first President of indigenous ancestry. It didn't take him long to fulfill one of the campaign promises of his Movement Towards Socialism party (M.A.S.), nationalizing Bolivia's natural gas industry.

What's behind this movement? Self interest. Most Bolivians would rather be

part owners of their oil and gas resources, if they have a choice. And they have a choice, thanks to the grass-roots democratic institutions they and their South American neighbors have been building for the last twenty years.

With the exception of Columbia, South America is at peace. Both fascist military dictatorships and revolutionary communist movements have disappeared, and people fight with ballots, not bullets. So far, political parties of socialist, social

democratic, populist and left of center orientation have taken power in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela and maybe Peru. At least in South America, prospects for the democratic left look bright indeed.

Christy Lanzl
Box 1048
Boston, MA, 02117-1048

East Timor: A Lesson Not Learned

By Tom Gallagher

Chega, the recently completed final report of East Timor's Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, will probably attract little notice in the US and it's hard to say whether it's the Timorese or we in America who will be the worse off for that. The potential benefit for East Timor if Americans were to take the document seriously is clear—the tiny half-island nation off the north coast of Australia might hope to receive justice for what it has suffered, rather than just the charity of wealthier nations on which it now depends. Less obvious is what Americans stand to gain—an understanding of just how far off the mark mainstream political discussion of the legitimate role of the world's only remaining super power really is. A single sentence from *Chega* (Portuguese for "enough"), a massive 2,500 page account, says it all: "In response to the massive violations that occurred in Timor-Leste (East Timor's official name) in September 1999, President Clinton threw the considerable influence of the United States behind efforts to press the Indonesian Government to accept the deployment of an international force in the territory, demonstrating the considerable leverage that it could have exerted earlier had the will been there."

The "massive violations" referred to were the killings of more than 1,000 Timorese and the burning down of virtually every structure in the country following its vote for independence from Indonesia. The United States' "considerable influence" stemmed from the fact that it supplied the bulk of Indonesia's weapons, as it had done throughout the entire occupation of the former Portuguese colony which the report estimates cost anywhere from 83,000 to 182,000 Timorese lives out of a population of 600,000-700,000. The prompt effectiveness of a U.S. government actually motivated to end the carnage after the 1999 plebiscite

demonstrated what some had argued all along—that as a junior military partner, Indonesia could never have invaded East Timor in 1975 without tacit U.S. approval.

Five Presidents occupied the White House during the Indonesian occupation: Republicans Ford, Reagan, and Bush; and Democrats Carter and Clinton. For twenty-four years none of them opted to utilize America's "considerable leverage," despite repeated UN condemnations of the invasion and occupation. Meanwhile, the US carried out numerous military actions around the world that were generally justified as attempts to protect the rights or prevent the massacre of innocent people by countries whose weapons we had not supplied.

Of course, a thirty-year-old Cold War era invasion may strike some as just so much ancient history, but then it seems fair to say that a significant factor in the consistency of American foreign policy has been the belief of the American people that it is not continuous at all—that yesterday's mistakes have little bearing on what we do today. As Alexis de Tocqueville put it in *Democracy in America*, "In America, no one bothers about what was done before his time." But in this case we can find a dramatic reminder of the continuity of American foreign policy from Cold War to the War on Terrorism—in the person of Paul Wolfowitz. The neo-conservative Wolfowitz, now president of the World Bank, served as Under Secretary of Defense at the start of the Iraq War and a lot of people who might have known better took him at face value when he argued that the war was all about democratizing the Middle East.

Wolfowitz, however, displayed no such overriding concern for democracy in East Timor when he served as Ambassador to Indonesia from 1986-1988, nor as assistant secretary of state

for East Asian and Pacific affairs from 1982-1986. In 1997, he told a congressional committee that talk of East Timor's independence was "destructive," a view he maintained into the year of the independence vote. A year later, then UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, generally considered the prime architect of Clinton Administration East Timor policy, cited Wolfowitz's thinking as a good example of "the degree to which there are still common themes between the parties," the common theme here apparently being the necessity of shelving lofty ideas about democracy to placate a military ally.

Chega demonstrates the truth of the exact opposite point of view, although its impact will be severely dampened unless East Timor's President Xanana Gusmão orders it distributed widely, something he has yet to do, presumably out of deference to the sensitivities of nations that looked the other way when Indonesia invaded, but upon whose financial assistance East Timor now relies. The Timorese, of course, know what happened to them, but relatively few Americans understand that in 1999 their government acted effectively to end the suffering of East Timor because it finally lived up to a principle that ought to be the cornerstone of our foreign policy—it required that one of our allies live up to the ideals we demand of our enemies.

Former Boston DSA Chair and Allston State Rep. Tom Gallagher was a United Nations Election Officer in Lospalos, East Timor during the 1999 plebiscite. This review was written before the recent outbreak of violence; the East Timor Action Network is advocating extended UN intervention there (www.etan.org).

Rebuttal: Must Unions Bureaucratize to Organize?

The commentary below is a response to a piece in the last YR on the 2005 split in the labor movement, itself a response to a discussion on that issue in our September 2005 issue. This is our final contribution to the “Split” debate—it is no longer an idea or looming development, but for better or worse, reality.

By Herman Benson

In his comments on the split in labor, Don Taylor allows his admirable hopes to overwhelm any sense of reality. His disenchantment with Sweeney and the AFL-CIO seems rooted in his feelings about the cold war, rigid anti-communism, business unionism, and other evils of a “nakedly aggressive monopoly capitalism.” But it is an illusion to dream that a new labor coalition of the Teamsters under Hoffa, the Carpenters, the Laborers, and the Food Workers will deliver something closer to his heart’s desire. He imagines it; they haven’t even made the promise. In these times, when there is so little to cheer about, some radicals grasp at straws. The danger is that, in a desperate search for reassuring signs, they are being taken in by a new ideology of super-centralized bureaucratic labor unionism. Small example: Don Taylor now sees that “building power” is more important than “workers’ ability to change unions.” An unfortunate dichotomy! The way to build real union power and political power is to allow workers to form or even to switch to join unions that they respect because they feel that the union belongs to them. Some of the Change to Win unions, he writes, do “have spotted histories” on issues of union democracy. His reply is that such criticism comes “from many unions whose record on internal democracy is far worse.” I hope that, even without a deep-stuff discussion, readers of *The Yankee Radical*, and even Taylor himself, will feel uncomfortable with such consoling comments.

Don Taylor sees important similarities between the transformation of the labor movement by the CIO and the changes touted by proponents of the Change to Win, who argue that unions must be “restructured.” Each must concentrate upon its “core” industry. No more all-embracing unions with their disparate memberships. But that’s for talk not for

action. It will never happen and, in any event, restructuring is irrelevant to the problems faced by unions in mass production—steel, auto, rubber, etc—or by unions in the airlines, and in government. The prototypes of disparate unionism are the SEIU itself and the Teamsters, two Change to Win unions that show no signs of stripping down to lean, core concentration.

Taylor regrets that there are thirteen unions in public services. The chief “core” unions in government are AFSCME, among local public employees; and the American Federation of Government Employees among federal employees. Does the Laborers Union (Change to Win) propose to force its 50,000 members who are federal employees into the AFGE? Do the SEIU and the Teamsters propose to force their big public employee sectors into AFSCME? Taylor writes that he works for a big union of state employees, one which he obviously feels is a great union. Does he suggest that they be forced out of the SEIU and into AFSCME, the “core” union?

The exaggerated virtues of “restructuring are another myth to console hopeful radicals.

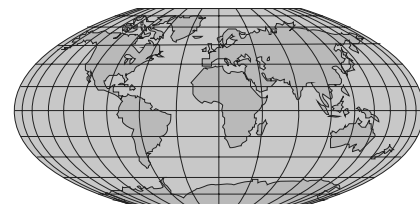
The chief contribution of the SEIU ideologists, and the unions which tail along, is their emphasis on organizing low-paid workers: the minorities, the immigrants, the women—especially in the service industries—and raising their standard of living. Most Change to Win unions are especially sensitive to the needs and to the possibilities because minority and immigrant workers already make up a substantial part of their membership. And they are largely immune to the pressures of global capitalism and low-wage imports. In this concentration on a growing but neglected sector of our working class, Change to Win unions are not alone. They are joined by other, AFL-CIO unions, like the American Federation of Teachers in its drive to organize child-care workers. Their aspiration is shared by religious leaders,

social workers, community organizers, and some political leaders whose support is evident in campaigns for the rights of Wal-Mart workers and for immigration reform.

What is distinctive about Change to Win is its explicit avowal of the need to systematically bureaucratize the labor movement in order to organize the unorganized. It’s not that other unions are more democratic. It’s simply that C to W elevates its conception into a frank declaration, erects it into an ideology, and puts it arbitrarily into practice. Restructuring in reality has meant reorganizing unions into big units dominated by a centralized officialdom in which membership control is reduced to a bare minimum. Bureaucratic centralization, not core concentration, is the key.

Because of its concentration on the underpaid and overexploited, CtoW has won the hearts of many radicals, civil rights campaigners, and labor activists. It would be disappointing if, in that concentration, they forget the need to defend democracy in unions as they campaign for a measure of democracy in industry.

Herman Benson is founder of the Association for Union Democracy, chronicled in his recent memoir Rebels, Reformers and Racketeers. He has also been a participant in the labor and socialist movements since the 1930s and a leading activist in several of DSA’s predecessor organizations. This exchange with Don Taylor has been reprinted in the AUD newsletter (www.uniondemocracy.org)



Boston DSA Calendar

Wednesday, August 16

Boston DSA Election Endorsements
7:30 PM, Harvard Food Coop, 581 Mass Ave.,
Central Square, Cambridge

Sunday, August 27

Boston DSA Cookout and Discussion (4:00 PM)
24 Bridge St., Newton

Sunday, September 24

Boston DSA honors Harris Grumman, 4-6:00 PM, at a benefit for Mass Alliance
Details next issue

<i>DSA New Members Cookout</i>	<i>page 1</i>
<i>Election Endorsements</i>	<i>page 1</i>
<i>News from DSA</i>	<i>page 2</i>
<i>\$8 Minimum Wage</i>	<i>page 3</i>
<i>Fight the Fare Increase!</i>	<i>page 3</i>
<i>Our State House Picks</i>	<i>page 4</i>
<i>Letters</i>	<i>page 5</i>
<i>Democratic Socialists</i>	
<i>Mobilize for Sanders Race</i>	<i>pages 6-7</i>
<i>Health Care Amendment Shut</i>	
<i>Down for 2006</i>	<i>page 7</i>
<i>Two Views on Health Reform</i>	<i>page 8</i>
<i>East Timor</i>	<i>page 10</i>
<i>Herman Benson Responds</i>	<i>page 11</i>

INSIDE

The yankee radical
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P.O. Box 51356
Boston, MA 02205