

THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Bulletin #34

August 2018

Message from the DRC Chair

Dear Members of the DRC,

We are all asking ourselves; what can we do to help reverse the undemocratic and dangerous leadership nationally? Everyone's response is to gain control of Congress. That's why we will be introducing a three step GOTV program called -- **Neighbor to Neighbor** where our board members will be taking on an ambitious outreach to each of the DRC counties. As you read the details in this bulletin, this outreach will be pivotal and designed for our membership to target voters who do not normally vote in off-year elections. More on this below in the Communications report.

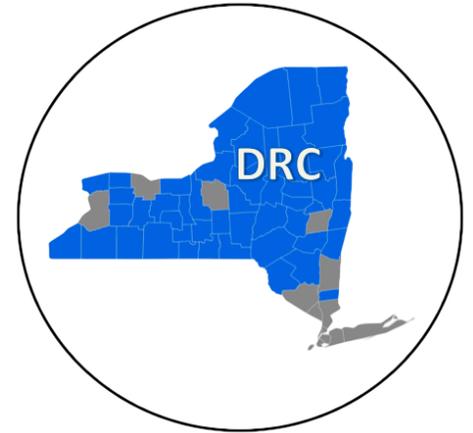
You will also see details from a resolution from the DRC Political Committee, led by Tim Perfetti, to push our state government to adopt laws for improved ballot access.

We held an Attorney General forum recently that took place in Batavia (Genesee Co.) on August 27th. Rural issues including; the opioid epidemic, agriculture, immigration policies, healthcare, voter access, senior citizens, the environment and other bread and butter issues that affect the lives of rural New Yorkers were put forward by Board members as well as attendees. It was a huge opportunity for our membership to hear directly from the candidates before the September 13 primary election.

Mark your calendars for next year's Conference which is scheduled to take place on April 12th and 13th. We are planning an exciting Presidential Straw Poll in an ever changing national political scene.

November is three short months away. Let's do this together!

Irene



www.nysdrc.org

Visit and join our Facebook page at

**Democratic Rural Conference of
New York State**

2019 Conference



TBA (Venue subject to change)
April 12th and 13th
Schenectady, NY

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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

The DRC Board met via phone conference on May 12, 2018 and on August 4, 2018 in Syracuse at 10:00 AM at Tony's Restaurant. Discussed at both of the Board meetings was the prospect and organization of a forum with all of the Democratic candidates for Attorney General. This has now been approved by the Board and has been set to take place:

Monday August 27th at 7:00 PM

Genesee Community College

Conable Technology Center, Room 102

Batavia, NY 14020

NY State thruway, Exit 48

Resistance Report

All of the many activists groups continue to work hand in hand with our DRC Counties, now helping with voter outreach as we move closer to the all-important November election. Post card writing campaigns are under way for many of our congressional candidates. Examples of this in Livingston, Genesee and Wyoming Counties consist of kitchen table get-togethers with the purpose of creating artistic, colorful, hand written, persuadable notes to non-affiliate and minor party voters to sway them to support our candidate in the 27th CD. In many of our congressional districts we need to persuade the blanks, non-affiliates, and we also have to try and persuade Republicans to vote for our candidates. The activist groups – Huddle, Indivisible, Moms Demand, etc. have provided the boots on the ground that our organizations need as we get closer to the Blue Wave on November 6th. We have not seen activism wane, to the contrary, it is now ramping up as the Midterm grows closer. Please share with us your Resistance Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit / Finance - Mark Alquist

Bank account balance as of August 2, 2018 – \$37,759.67

The DRC Board voted to allocate \$600.00 to each DRC County to help with your Midterm expenses.

County Allocations will not be paid if dues are not paid. Please send 2018 DRC dues to Mark --

\$10.00 payable to the DRC c/o Mark H. Alquist, 4046 Wayne Street Williamson, NY 14589

Communications Committee – Judith Hunter

With each passing day the urgency of this November's election increases. We've all heard about a coming "Blue Wave," or even a "Blue Tsunami," but we know it's not going to be that simple. We can't just sit back and assume good things will happen; we have to **make** them happen.

Unfortunately, New York has a dismal record when it comes to voter turnout, especially in off-year elections. In 2014, only 34% of eligible voters showed up at the polls, and we lost a lot of races we needed to win. We simply have to do better this year motivating those Democrats who seem to think only presidential elections are really important.

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The Board of the DRC has devised a plan to help you get those infrequent voting Democrats to the polls this year: the Neighbor to Neighbor program. Board members are willing to come to each county and attend a function or a meeting to explain the plan. Please expect to hear from one of us soon to arrange a good time to visit. What we ask county chairs to do is to get lists of registered Democrats who vote infrequently from their Election Commissioners. Then be ready to assign 10 names to each of your committee members, hopefully from their own neighborhoods. Our presentations will be brief (10 minutes or so), setting out our plan of 3 voter contacts to each infrequent Democrat.

A pilot project has shown that this will increase voter turnout significantly. And you'll be able to tell after the election what the effects may have been in your county. Obviously, better turnout will help Democratic candidates across the ticket, but it's also a win for your county committee. You'll be increasing your visibility among voters who probably have no idea there even is a county Democratic Committee. That should help you in the future. As always, check frequently with the DRC facebook page and the DRC website for updates and news you can use.

Conference Committee – Jane Dodds

The DRC Board is in the early planning stages for the 2019 Conference tentatively to take place at The Mohawk Harbor Landing Hotel and Conference Center in Schenectady. Please stay tuned as these plans are subject to change. Watch the DRC website for updates. You can also follow the DRC Facebook Page (Democratic Rural Conference of New York State) for updated information.

Political Committee – Tim Perfetti

Tim continues to work on a DRC Resolution on voter participation, which includes language encouraging our state legislature and Governor Cuomo to pass into law the following components of a comprehensive voter participation bill;

- 10 Days early voting
- No excuse absentee
- Uniform hours for voting across the state
- Same day registration

Issues Committee – Peter Bujanow

After sending out an "Issues Survey", specifically how the DRC can help bring these key issues to the forefront, the top 3 issues identified by respondents are in order;

1. Jobs
2. The Opioid Crisis
3. Healthcare

Peter has some ideas on how the DRC can shed light on these three key issues to our membership. Beginning with "jobs" it was voted on and approved that Peter would organize for the DRC to sponsor Regional Jobs and Economic Development forums across the DRC regions.

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Youth Outreach and Retention – Diane Lechner

Young Democrats are organizing and on the move throughout our counties. The New York State Democratic Committee stepped up youth outreach with the launch of its Organizing Academy (<https://act.nydems.org/organizing-academy/>) and Unity Fellowships for the summer and fall (<https://act.nydems.org/nydemsfellows/>). Already, young organizers are on the ground in rural counties, making important connections with non-affiliated activist groups. In June, the New York State Young Democrats held their annual Awards Gala in Troy, NY. It was a well-attended event and two outstanding young Democrats hailing from DRC counties were honored: Mildred España-Philips (Yates County), Alumni of the Year and Brian Garcia (Broome County), Rookie of the Year, both received awards. Paolo Cremidis, Chair of the Young Democrats Rural Caucus, accepted the “Caucus of the Year” award in recognition of the work his caucus has done to organize upstate, rural counties. Youth Outreach and Recruitment Chair, Diane Lechner, was there on behalf of the DRC to lend support for the tremendous work young Democrats are doing throughout upstate New York.

DRC Board Services

Speakers Bureau

The following DRC members are available as speakers at DRC County Events: Irene Stein, Bill Wood, Judith Hunter.

Mentoring Services

The DRC Executive Committee has many experienced County Chairs. We are available to mentor and provide support to new County Chairs

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