

# DAPAC DISPATCH

## Democratic Advancement Political Action Committee

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### Dapacrat Revolution – Biggest Progressive Win for DAPAC, Disaster for Democrats

By: Tom Wallace Lyons

Call it Black Tuesday, that Republican takeover of Congress and governorships on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Arguably it was the defeat of a Democratic party still hobbled by the ghost of Hubert Humphrey. Time now for the Dapacrat Revolution!

How else to exorcise that ghost from 1968, an election year that found people up in arms about the carnage in Vietnam? In 1968 United States President Lyndon Johnson said he would neither seek nor accept his party's presidential nomination.

The subsequent assassination of Robert Kennedy secured the Democratic nomination for Johnson's vice president, Hubert Humphrey, a supporter of Johnson's Vietnam escalation.

Humphrey's Republican rival was the deeply despised Richard Nixon. In his effort to shed the Vietnam albatross, Humphrey said, in so many words, "If you don't elect me, you'll get Nixon."

And so was coined the term, "lesser evilism."

We got Nixon. And we have an emasculated Democratic party whose lesser evilism candidates often seem to stand for little more than public office. Gone are the visionaries like Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. Gone are the visionaries like John Kennedy. Gone until now.

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren has been called silly and frivolous by Pennsylvania's Republican Senator Pat Toomey. She should take that as a compliment in the spirit of Roosevelt

who said of the moneyed interests arrayed against him, "I welcome their hatred."

Roosevelt's vision drove Elizabeth Warren's post-Black Tuesday denunciation before Congress of the special interest strangle hold on Capitol Hill. And Capitol Hill veteran and *HARDBALL* host Chris Matthews labeled Warren's speech the best he had heard in twenty five years.

Warren spoke while the government was held hostage by two thirds of the Republicans and one third of the Democrats. To avert a shutdown, these politicians demanded that Congress pass a budget that harbored legislation drafted by Citigroup Bank.

This legislation guaranteed that the American tax payer would cover future losses incurred by Citigroup speculation. Ultimately passed by both houses, the legislation emasculated those financial reforms put in place after the most recent financial collapse.

Speaking truth to the power of Citigroup owned Democrats and Republicans, Warren said, "The American people didn't elect us to stand up for Citigroup. They elected us to stand up for all the people."

**Stand up for all the people:** Elizabeth Warren has just issued the clarion call for the Dapacrat revolution. Warren personifies the revolution that will be lead by DAPAC Democrats, hence known as Dapacrats.

#### DAPAC principles for progressive Dapacrtic leadership -

- Lower taxes for the 90%. Impose much higher taxes for the 1%.
- Raise the minimum wage and enable people to obtain higher paying, secure jobs.

- Invest in our country to produce the infrastructure that makes better paying jobs possible.
- Implement policies to penalize those countries which undercut our work force through cheap, exploitative labor of adults and children.
- Implement policies to penalize countries whose exploitation of labor is accompanied by pollution of our atmosphere with toxic gasses used to run their factories.
- Educate our children to make the world a better place.
- Free college education for all people.
- Increase Social Security and Medicare to make seniors secure in their belief in the progressive Democratic party.
- Implement a justice system that puts a premium on civil liberties; a system that will, to the extent possible, ensure equality of treatment for the poor and for minorities.
- Ensure that women have complete ownership of their bodies. This means that there can be no law that in *any way* limits the right of a woman to regulate her reproduction. Should a woman choose to terminate her pregnancy, high quality, compassionate medical care should be available.
- Create a more equitable balance of power in race and gender. DAPAC is totally committed to the elevation of women and minorities to positions of leadership.

Some of this may sound like pie in the sky. But DAPAC does not simply promote values. DAPAC has a vast trove of information to ensure that Dapacrats are solidly educated about the issues they support.

Democrats might have won had the party been much more Dapacrat. The public voted for higher minimum wages in three red states. Many conservatives were in trouble in red states where they cut education funding to the bone.

Black Tuesday exit polling shows that voters prefer the Democratic agenda and that they were disillusioned with Obama who has delivered a

recovery which favors the rich. Hence polls demonstrated that 77% of people (the same numbers of people whose incomes declined last year) believe the economy has fared poorly. This year the Congressional Budget Office projects an income decline for 90% of Americans. No wonder the economy was the number one issue for voters.

On a more positive note, Dapacrat Tom Wolf was elected governor of Pennsylvania. Tom Wolf ran on a progressive platform that veered to the left of Obama. He has pledged to restore funding for education and to reinvest in the state's infrastructure. Wolf states that global warming is a reality. He plans to implement environmental improvement in the state's energy industry.

**Very important reason to support DAPAC:** Tom Wolf was not the only winner. Black Tuesday was not a black day for Dapacrats. Along with the election of Tom Wolf, Dapacrats took two Republican held congressional districts. All incumbent Dapacrats were re-elected. The Dapacrat Revolution is underway.

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## Match Donation

One of our longtime supporters has agreed to help us upgrade our computer and database system. With a new database, we will be able to more efficiently accomplish our goals in helping elect progressive Democrats. He has decided to match donations up to \$15 thousand, to cover the \$30 thousand needed. Any donations before January 15th will be matched.

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## Candidate Boot Camp

One of DAPAC's goals is to have a progressive Democrat running a competitive campaign in every election. Many candidates and potential candidates fall short in running a competitive campaign. In the American conception of democracy, we tend to romanticize the "citizen legislator" model, whereby basically anyone can run for office, and everyone already knows how to run for office.

After all, everyone knows how to run for office, right? You put your name out there, give

speeches, the media covers your campaign, you wait for donations to come in from the people, put some ads on television, your message wins over the voters, and you win.

Except that is not how it works at all. Setting aside high-profile presidential candidates, the sad truth is that for most candidates, hardly anyone really cares about your campaign. Most candidates get close to zero coverage from the media. Potential supporters rarely have the time to find out about every candidate they might support. Most voters don't know who their congressman is, let alone who's running against them.

These are all big hurdles to jump if you want to run an effective campaign for office. The problem is that running for office is a little weird, compared to other endeavors. A lot of people who have been successful at other things, such as running a business, find that their experience doesn't apply to running for office. Campaign finance restrictions usually mean that the typical campaign spends less over the course of a year than your average McDonald's franchise spends in a month. Much of a typical successful campaign's effort is not spent on getting a voter to vote for one candidate over another candidate, but getting that voter to vote at all. McDonald's doesn't worry about whether their customers will eat at all, only whether they'll go to Burger King instead.

To compound this, there are many unscrupulous political consultants and vendors who are more concerned with making a buck than with getting anyone elected. They push candidates to spend money on methods that are proven to be largely ineffective (to take a few examples, television advertising, lawn signs, and automated telephone calls). You might think you can look at win-loss records when hiring a consultant, but consultants know that candidates do that, so they tend to take on the shoo-in races and avoid the long-shot races. You almost have to be an expert before you even get started.

To help potential candidates navigate this minefield, we are currently planning on hosting a candidate boot camp early next year, at our office in Philadelphia. At this boot camp, we will teach

candidates the broad outlines of how to strategically plan their campaign. As well, we will explain what pitfalls to avoid, and mistaken assumptions that many people have about campaigning for office. We will also train candidates on tactics: how to raise funds, how to earn media coverage, and how to win votes. With this knowledge and training, candidates will be able to effectively raise money, hire consultants and staff, recruit volunteers, and win elections.

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## **Practical Responses to the Outrage Over Police Killings**

In Ferguson, Missouri, in August, an unarmed black man named Michael Brown was shot to death by police officer Darren Wilson. Shortly afterward, residents of Ferguson began protesting what they saw as one more example of police misconduct. The police, obviously poorly trained for the situation, overreacted to the mostly nonviolent protesters. Rioting and other unrest developed over a period of months.

Eric Garner was arrested on suspicion of selling untaxed cigarettes. During the arrest, he was choked to death, and the entire encounter was videotaped. Separately from those two incidents, on November 22, a twelve year-old boy named Tamir Rice was shot to death by police after brandishing a toy gun.

Unsurprisingly, all these events led to more protests, continuing for weeks. Protests also occurred in several other cities, including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and others, with many of the protests deciding to block traffic on major interstate highways. A common slogan among the protests was “Black Lives Matter”, signifying the widespread belief that police don't value black people's lives as much as white people's lives.

So what does it all mean? What should we do?

First, we should avoid getting caught in the details of specific cases. Unfortunately, sometimes it is justifiable for police to kill someone. In the United States, which is legendary

around the world for its permissive laws on guns, almost anyone might be a threat. Police often have to make split-second decisions, and we must allow some room for mistakes. In these particular three cases, there are differing conclusions that can be made from each of them.

And over analyzing these cases misses the larger problem that motivates the protesters. The deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice are not, in and of themselves, the best examples of the problem. In each case it is arguable whether the police did anything wrong. But they are merely the straw that broke the camel's back.

There are a number of problems. First, many police, due to poor training or poor management, are over escalating, and using disproportionate force. Attorney General Eric Holder has actually been a leader in combating this problem. The Justice Department under Holder has gotten a number of police departments to modify their policies and training so that they reduce their use of force. We should continue and expand this.

Second, many jurisdictions are using law enforcement more as a method of revenue generation or even building racial “fences” than as a method of maintaining order and upholding the law. There are already laws on the books against this, however they are not being enforced. In Missouri, state law stipulates that a local government may not derive more than 30% of its revenue from traffic tickets. A recent study found that more than a dozen cities in St. Louis County, including Ferguson, routinely exceeded that. In more than one city, revenue from traffic tickets made up more than 70% of the budget.

Third, we too often have incomplete or false information about what actually happened in a police encounter. One step that some police departments are taking is to supply police officers with body cameras. Every police officer should have one. It will protect both the civilians and the police, by helping everyone to ascertain the truth.

Altogether, these prescriptions will not solve all the problems. But it is important that we reduce our mistrust. We must face our problems not with the goal of blame, but with the determination to solve them.

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## How to Pick Up 8 US House Seats in One Election

We are moving ahead on our Pennsylvania Plan. Believe it or not, the election in November 2015, less than a year away, will determine which party controls 8 US House seats almost a decade away. Democrats failed to plan ahead and bring their “A” game to the redistricting fight for this decade, and it resulted in a Republican map of the United States and their gerrymandered control of the US house of Representative.

Pennsylvania has the most Republican-friendly congressional district map in the country. While Pennsylvania voted for Obama over Romney, 52% to 47%, the House delegation from Pennsylvania has a lopsided 13 Republicans, to just 5 Democrats, or 72% to 28%. But we can reverse that, and make it the most Democratic-friendly congressional map in the country. With a map designed to elect Democrats, we could have 13 Democrats and 5 Republicans – a difference of 8 seats. That is more than a quarter of the seats Democrats need to regain control of the House of Representatives, in just one state.

Each state has a difference process for redistricting. There is a complicated process, but it suffices to say that if Democrats win the three seats on the state Supreme Court up for election next year in 2015, we will control redistricting. These three seats are elected concurrently statewide, in a state that hasn't gone Republican for President since 1988. This will be the most efficient way to flip 8 House seats to Democrats we will likely see in our lifetimes.

We are already working on a plan to win those three seats. We have a mathematician from Drexel University in Philadelphia helping us to develop our plan. We have set a target for the number of extra Democratic votes we need to turn out, and we're optimizing our field plan so that we can do so in the most cost-effective manner. This involves using election statistics to develop an “infrequent voter map” of the entire state of Pennsylvania. Using that map, we can find Democratic voters who don't usually vote in off-year elections, and motivate them to do so in 2015. We are still refining our plan and our

budget, but our initial estimate is that it will take \$3 to 5 million to win the election in Pennsylvania in 2015.

In the last redistricting, Republicans planned ahead to take control of redistricting in many states, and we lost out before we knew what hit us. It's time to hit back, and show them that we can win on our own turf.

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## Impartial Judiciary In Peril

By: Tom Wallace Lyons

The preservation of an impartial federal judiciary is a priority for which DAPAC will fight on two fronts. DAPAC will inform its members about the right wing/conservative attempt to select ideologue judges partial to the conservative/right wing agenda. DAPAC will also demand that Dapacrat senatorial candidates pledge to fight for an impartial judiciary.

To understand the problem, we have to take a brief look at the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which brought about what conservatives call a "liberal bias" in the federal judiciary. There were two components to this liberal bias. One was judicial expansion of constitutional protection for individuals. The other was the expansion of rights for criminal defendants based upon constitutional and other legal principles.

There is always a conflict between the needs of the state and the rights of individual citizens. To protect the rights of citizens from state power, our constitution harbors a Bill of Rights. These rights are basically a set of prohibitions which prevent the state from actions that could effect the freedom and well being of private citizens. While these rights already existed, they were given life courtesy judicial enforcement when citizens petitioned the courts in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Now let us look at the conservative/liberal divide when it comes to rights of citizens versus power of the state. Conservatives tend to favor a limited view of citizen rights. Liberals take an expansive view. The term "liberal bias" was coined by conservatives to condemn the expansive interpretation citizen rights recognized by the courts.

Conservatives are definitely right about a liberal bias. The question is where this bias is located. Arguably the bias resides in the Bill of Rights and in legal tradition. Conservatives, however, locate the bias in liberal judges.

DAPAC wants to fight the largely successful conservative effort to carefully cherry pick conservative judges hostile to the liberal bias. Conservatives and religious right organizations have arguably had much more influence than liberals over judicial selection.

This is because conservatives have apparently lobbied the judicial nomination issue much more vigorously than liberals. It is as if liberals just don't get it.

To understand the conservative impact, it is only necessary to peruse the first few pages of *Strange Justice – The Selling of Clarence Thomas* by Jane Mayer and Jill Abramson. Reagan conservatives were disenchanted with Bush after his Supreme Court nomination of David Souter who was too independent for the conservative agenda. Bush's chief of staff, John Sununu, mollified them: "The next one," he promised, would be a true conservative. They had his word" (*STRANGE JUSTICE*, p. #13).

Clarence Thomas was nominated to fill the so called black seat which became vacant upon the resignation of Thurgood Marshall, the great civil rights advocate. So Bush replaced Marshall with a man who was the antithesis of everything for which Marshall stood.

In a *PLAYBOY* (January, 1995) profile called *The Accidental Jurist*, Lincoln Caplan profiles Thomas as an angry black man. Explaining the Thomas nomination, Caplan writes about the choice of Thomas whom he calls "The conservatives great black hope": "The fact was that no other black federal judge in the country subscribed to the views of the New Right, the Reaganite coterie that assumed political power in the eighties" (*PLAYBOY*, page #142.).

Caplan's profile goes into Thomas's apparent self hatred as a black. In conclusion he writes (*PLAYBOY*, Page #184), "The story of the self-hating black man is not new in American life, but

*it has rarely had a protagonist whose anger has been so costly to so many other blacks.”*

George H.W. Bush’s courtship of the right through nomination of Clarence Thomas did not secure his re-election. But, in the end, Thomas proved to be a good investment since he cast one of the Supreme Court votes that put George W. Bush into office. And George W. Bush has turned the Supreme Court into the conservative/pro business bastion that it is today. Clarence Thomas has been a real conservative triumph.

When it comes to liberal bias, conservatives and liberals may be hopelessly divided. How to resolve the problem? We can’t attempt an answer to this question until we consider the role of the Senate in the selection of federal judges. The president nominates a judicial candidate. But the nomination cannot be confirmed without the “advice and consent” of the Senate. It is a long standing tradition for the Senate to defer to the president.

When it comes to judicial selection, DAPAC believes the Senate should assume its constitutionally mandated, coequal role with the president. But what if there are no judicial candidates who enjoy the trust of both sides of the aisle? If this is the case, there may be a serious problem with our Senate. Or maybe the problem resides with the candidate pool. Or maybe there is a serious problem with both. DAPAC does not know how this problem can be solved. But recognition of the problem is a necessary first step and a Dapacrat priority. Given the seriousness of this issue, it may be taken up in future newsletters.

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## Cuba

President Obama recently announced the resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba, and the loosening of some of the rules around the Cuban trade embargo. This was part of an

agreement to exchange prisoners. This was a long-overdue policy change. Cuba has a terrible record on human rights, but it is no worse than a number of other countries we trade with (for example, China) or even ally with (Saudi Arabia). As Cuba is our closest neighbor after Canada and Mexico, we should take every opportunity we can to break down the walls that divide us, and hopefully encourage them to make some much-needed political and economic reforms.

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## In Office

Representative **Chris Van Hollen** flew to Cuba as part of the delegation that received American Alan Gross, who was released from prison in Cuba as part of a prisoner exchange. Gross is a constituent of Representative Van Hollen's, and volunteered for his first campaign for Congress back in 2002.

Senator **Jeff Merkley** announced that he will be pushing legislation to protect the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. The legislation proposed by Merkley would be the first comprehensive national non-discrimination bill introduced in four decades.

The Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act successfully passed through both houses of Congress, and awaits President Obama's signature. The act, sponsored by Senator **Martin Heinrich** and Representative **Michelle Lujan Grisham**, protects 45,000 acres of wilderness in New Mexico.

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