

THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Bulletin #36

February 2020

Message from the DRC Chair

Dear Friends,

Please plan to join us in Liverpool on April 17-18 for 2020 Vision! The presidential straw poll should be especially exciting, and all conference registrants will be able to vote. See the details below, and feel free to contact me with any questions.

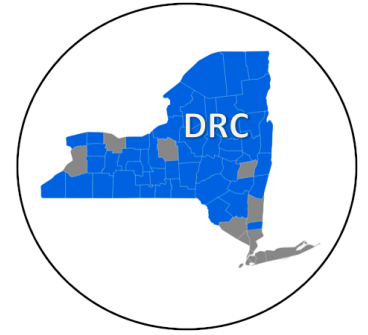
In other news, several DRC officers/Board Members and two additional county chairs went to Albany in late January to lobby for DRC priorities: improving broadband access in rural New York and getting relief on signature requirements for our nominating petitions. We had uniformly positive and supportive meetings with Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins, and several other State Senators and Assembly Members. With unified Democratic control of the Legislature, we need to build and strengthen our relationships there. We plan to lobby each January going forward. We were warned that getting the petition signature requirement lowered by 25% would probably not be supported by downstate Assembly members, who don't understand how difficult it is to circulate petitions in winter weather in rural counties, where voters are few and far between. But we continue to push (the one-year reduction passed last year wasn't finalized until well into the petition window). So any calls you can make to Albany could help. Please ask for support for S7326, being carried by Senator Rachel May, and A9703, being carried by Assembly member Billy Jones. We are also resending the letter from DRC members to Senate and Assembly members.

In October I testified before the Public Campaign Financing Commission hearing in Buffalo. My testimony emphasized that rural counties are generally not as wealthy as suburban ones, so a one-size-fits-all approach would disadvantage candidates in rural New York. Fortunately, that view prevailed in the final Commission plan, which sets lower fundraising thresholds for candidates to get matching funds in counties with lower incomes. I also spoke to how important it was in local elections to retain the option of creating independent (small-i) ballot lines, which will be unaffected by the new plan.

Please keep the DRC in mind when you're planning events for this coming spring and summer. I have spoken at 3 counties' dinners in the last few months (Wyoming, Cattaraugus, and Yates), and I will be happy to give brief remarks about the DRC in as many other counties as I can. There are other Officers and Board Members who would also be willing to speak.

Feel free to contact me about issues pertaining to the DRC or Rural New York. You can email me at Judith.hunter@gmail.com or call me at 585-615-2986. See you in Liverpool!

Judith Hunter, Chair
Democratic Rural Conference of New York



www.nysdrc.org

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Facebook page at

**Democratic Rural
Conference of New York
State**

2020 Conference



**Liverpool Holiday Inn
April 17th and 18th
Liverpool, NY
Exit 37**

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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO

The DRC Board met in Cortland on February 8th. We discussed reports from several committees, summarized below, and finalized planning for the April conference.

We also unanimously passed this resolution:

The Officers and Board of the Democratic Rural Conference of New York State wish to remember the service and dedication of Joseph Pickreign, Jr., on the occasion of his passing. We are grateful for his years of dedication to Democrats in Franklin County and throughout the North Country, as well as his long service as a Board Member of the DRC. We send our condolences to his family and friends. His obituary appears at <https://fortunekeoughfuneralhome.com/book-of-memories/4087859/Pickreign-Joseph/index.php>

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit / Finance – Frank Puglisi

Net bank account balance as of December 5, 2019 – \$9,599.49

2020 dues of \$20.00 for members (County Chairs and State Committee members) and \$10 for Associate members (any registered Democrat living in New York State) can be mailed payable to the DRC

c/o Frank Puglisi
7627 S. Grove Rd.
Franklinville, NY 14737

By-Laws Committee – Darlene Baker

The committee is researching two areas: proxies for the State Committee Meeting, and remote participation in board meetings.

Issues Committee – Donna Schick

The issues committee has presented several topics of concern to rural NYS counties and ways to explore various plans of action: health care, the economy, education, agriculture, environment/climate change, women's issues, labor issues, infrastructure, political and criminal justice. The economy, agriculture, and criminal justice are all involved in the pending legalization of recreational marijuana in New York. The following statement was approved by the DRC Board on 2/8/20:

"The officers and board of the Democratic Rural Conference of New York State look forward to the passage of marijuana legalization. We urge that all efforts be made to ensure that legalization benefits small family farms and the economy of rural New York. We further urge that the revenues associated with legalization be used to address healthcare needs, for state budget deficit reduction, and for services for communities that have been negatively affected by inequitable enforcement practices in the past."

Political Committee – Tim Perfetti

1) Board members Judith Hunter, Tim Perfetti, Bill Thickstun and County Chairs Jon Hall (Jefferson) and Arlene Feldmeier (Herkimer) attended two Albany lobby days in January. We addressed two main issues: making last year's petition signature reduction permanent, and improving rural

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broadband. We also asked for better communication with our members when legislation is passed, so that we have messaging to combat opposition talking points.

In the Assembly we met with Bill Magnarelli, Al Stirpe, Barbara Lifton, Carrie Woerner, Donna Lupardo, Billy Jones, and the Speaker's Chief Counsel Howard Varges. On the Senate side we spoke with James Skofuis, Pete Harckham, and Rachel May. Judith Hunter also had a private meeting with Andrea Stewart Cousins, and the group sat down with Lt Governor Kathy Hochul.

On the signature requirement we found members in both chambers to carry the bill, Billy Jones and Rachel May. Everyone was willing to try and move this along but was candid in telling us that it would meet with resistance from downstate members who are worried about primary challenges. Assembly member Carrie Woerner is taking the lead on rural broadband and working to educate other members about the flawed reporting that identifies a census district as built out if even one household in the district has broadband access. All members we spoke to are keenly aware that this is a foundational issue for rural NY, affecting business growth, public education, telemedicine, and other many areas.

We plan to make this lobby day effort an annual event. Please let us know what issues you'd like us to focus on next year.

2) The board continues to seek out attorneys who would be willing to serve on the Legal Service Bureau.

3) We are working on assembling a group that would travel to individual counties or do regional training on political how-to: building committees, recruiting candidates, running campaigns, fundraising, and get-out-the-vote work.

Communications and Outreach – Bill Thickstun

Communication with the membership has suffered over the past year partly from turnover, some of it unexpected, involving multiple board positions. We are committed to resuming this bulletin after a hiatus of over a year and welcome feedback from members at any time.

All mass email senders are experiencing trouble getting through multiple layers of spam filtering. We know this has been an issue for the DRC. If you haven't been getting frequent messages from us in recent months, please check your spam filter. Most retain messages for only 30 days. Once multiple messages from a particular source have landed in your spam folder and you haven't taken action to flag them as emails you want to receive, your email provider's system may stop letting them get even as far as your spam filter. If you suspect that's happened, let us know and we will work with you on the problem.

You can confirm that you're on our email list by contacting Bill Thickstun (wthickstun@gmail.com) or John Hurley (jfhurley@rochester.rr.com). Please let us know as soon as possible if you have a new state committee member in your county, or a new County Chair. Don't assume somebody else will tell us! The state committee lists are often even more out of date than ours.

Liaison to Women's Groups - Donna Schick

Members from the New York State Federation of Democratic Women attended the Suffrage Centennial Celebration in Auburn, NY on January 18th participating in the Feminist Marketplace. On March 2nd, Eleanor's Legacy will hold an event in Albany at the Cornerstone at the Plaza. Another event is planned in New York City at the Yale Club on June 8th. Members from the NYSFDW are planning to attend the event in Albany. If you are interested, please contact Brette McSweeney at Eleanor's Legacy (brette@eleanorslegacy.com).

Members from the NYSFDW will be traveling to Washington, DC to attend the National Federation of Democratic Women's annual "Women In Blue" lobby day event on March 26th. If you are

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interested in joining us, please contact NYSFDW Secretary Donna Schick (donnaschick@yahoo.com) or NYSFDW President Diane Lecher (mmelechner@yahoo.com) for car pool and room sharing information. To register, go to the NFDW website or the NYSFDW Facebook page. On May 12th, the NYSFDW is planning a Lobby Day in Albany. Please contact Donna Schick or Diane Lechner if you are interested in joining us. We look forward to lobbying for passage of the ERA into the NYS Constitution. The Democratic Women of Sullivan County will hold their annual fundraiser "Spring Fling" – *Hat's Off to the Ladies* brunch on May 31st in Bloomingburg, NY at the Eagle's Nest. See the DWSC Facebook page for more information. Contact Donna Schick if you want to attend. Don't forget your hat!

The National Federation of Democratic Women will hold their annual convention from June 10-14 in Lawrence, Kansas (Oread Hotel) – see NFDW web page for details. If you have information you would like to share about your local women's group, please e-mail donnaschick@yahoo.com.

Program Book – Jeanne Crane, Lorie Longhany, James Sacco

In the next few weeks' you will be inundated with requests to get your county committee ads turned in for the 2020 Program Book to drcprogrambook@gmail.com. We look forward to working with you to achieve our objectives to highlight – each DRC county, elected officials, candidates, labor unions, businesses and in turn to bring in revenue that supports the DRC and all of our efforts. We ask for your support in helping make the 2020 book a success.

Conference Committee – Jane Dodds

DRC 2020 VISION! Join us in Liverpool, April 17-18 2020, for our annual conference! Sessions start earlier on Friday afternoon, with a "Listening Session" with party and elected leaders, and Regional Caucuses to elect four new Regional Vice Chairs to the expanded Board of Directors. Friday night will provide opportunities to meet & greet New York's elected Democrats. On Saturday, we'll discuss the new Resolution process, with input from Regional Caucuses, and our traditional Networking by Congressional Districts. Saturday will conclude with a Presidential Straw Poll..... who's your candidate? Join us for another lively look at the year ahead with 2020 VISION!

Link to registration: <https://drcny.z2systems.com/np/clients/drcny/eventRegistration.jsp?event=15&>

You can reserve your room at a special DRC rate (\$119) at the Holiday Inn, 441 Electronics Parkway, Liverpool 13088, by phone at 315-457-1122, using the conference code DRC (or identify yourself as attending the Democratic Rural Conference).

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DRC Board Services

Mentoring Services

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Judith Hunter, Chair

Tim Perfetti, Vice Chair, Political Committee

Frank Puglisi, Treasurer, Audit and Finance Chair

John Hurley, Secretary

Darlene Baker, Parliamentarian

Ted Young, Board Member

Lorie Longhany, Board Member, Program Book

William Thickstun, Communications & Outreach, Bulletin

Jeanne Crane, Board Member and Program Book

Donna Schick, Women's Liason, Board Member

Leslie Berliant, Issues Committee, Board Member

James Sacco, Labor Liason, Program Book

Dan Sneizek, Board member

Michael Lausell, Underrepresented Groups

Lindsay Burriss, Youth Liaison

Judith.hunter@gmail.com

jimothyperfetti@gmail.com

fvp9900@gmail.com

jfhurley@rochester.rr.com

dbaker1017@gmail.com

tyoung28@rochester.rr.com

lorie.longhany@gmail.com

wthickstun@gmail.com

jeannecrane01@localnet.com

donnaschick@yahoo.com

berliantleslie@gmail.com

jasacco0520@gmail.com

desneizek@yahoo.com

michaellausell@aol.com

lindsayburriss@yahoo.com

Prepared and Formatted by Bill Thickstun

Judith Hunter and Lorie Longhany, Editors