

State Party Conventions: Setting the Stage

Albany insiders are buzzing with rumors and excitement over the State Political Conventions and the slate of candidates that has emerged. From May 25th through May 27th, State Democrats met in Rye, New York to nominate their candidates for the 2010 elections. The following week on June 1st through 3rd, the GOP met in New York City to pick their own candidates. The fanfare of these conventions was accompanied by a brief one day Conservative Party convention on May 28th, held at the same location in New York City where the Republicans convened just a few days later.

The Democratic convention held few surprises, with current Attorney General Andrew Cuomo announced to be the party's gubernatorial candidate. A day after announcing his candidacy for Governor of the State of New York, Mr. Cuomo laid out his 250 page plan for reinventing New York titled *The New NY Agenda: A Plan for Action*. Andrew Cuomo has chosen Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy as his running mate, with the party's confirmation. The Cuomo campaign has said that as Lieutenant Governor Duffy will be charged with up-state development and streamlining government, two of Duffy's priorities in Rochester.

Current US Senators Schumer and Gillibrand will be running for reelection with the Democrats' endorsement.

Democrats voted to have five candidates for State Attorney General compete in a primary election, rather than endorse a favorite at the convention. Richard Brodsky, Assemblyman for the 92nd District; Sean Coffey, a former Assistant

U.S. Attorney and retired Navy captain; Eric Dinallo, a former Superintendent of Insurance for New York State; Kathleen Rice, District Attorney of Nassau County; and Eric Schneiderman, State Senator representing the 31st District will face off on September 14th. The winner of this primary race will take on Dan Donovan, the current District Attorney of Staten Island and the Republican Party's candidate for Attorney General in November.

Republicans officially designated former Congressman Rick Lazio as their gubernatorial candidate. The New York Conservative Party endorsed Mr. Lazio as well. Conservative Party Chairman Mike Long stated that "no Republican candidate has won statewide office in New York without also running on the Conservative line since 1974." This endorsement was a boost for Mr. Lazio. Chautauqua County Executive Gregory Edwards, the preferred running mate of Rick Lazio, has been chosen by the Republican party as the Lieutenant Governor candidate.

Bruce Blakeman got the official nod at the GOP Convention to run against Kirsten Gillibrand, but David Malpass earned enough support to run against Blakeman in a September 14th Republican primary. A third candidate, former Congressman Joe DioGuardi, did not get enough votes for a spot in the primary. However, DioGuardi received the Conservative Party nomination and will petition to get on the Republican ticket. Mr. Blakeman is a former Long Island lawmaker, and Mr. Malpass is a former chief economist.

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**A Note
from the
Director Kyle Stewart**



The YMCA's focus on children and families makes us an important player in these public policy issue areas. All candidates for Statewide office must recognize that a platform of safety, education and health and wellness for kids and families is not only essential to our future but to their success in government. Everyday,

YMCAs show why we are the premier organization to serve these essential needs and deliver important community programs. One example is our Annual Healthy Kids Day events throughout the State. We are and will continue to be an integral component to provide kids and their families with the tools to succeed.



Gang and Gun Violence Prevention Forum at the Yonkers YMCA

On Sunday, April 25th the Yonkers YMCA hosted a productive roundtable discussion with US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. They were joined by other Federal, State and County government officials, City Council Members and more than two dozen civic leaders, clergy members, community-based organization leaders, law enforcement officers and health and education professionals, on violent crime prevention through youth development and anti-gang initiatives in the City of Yonkers.

The discussion focused on innovative ways of working together to address the increasing levels of violent crimes in the area, and there was an exchange of information on current funding opportunities and resources that are available, as well as proposals for developing and strengthening illegal gun and gang violence prevention strategies. The 19 shootings in the City of Yonkers in the month of April alone provide more than ample evidence that these problems continue to escalate and require new solutions.

Senator Gillibrand cited the ready availability and relative affordability of heroin, which make it a key issue for law enforcement agencies. She touted anti-gang measures that increase funding for law enforcement and create target areas for high intensity gang activity.

Last April, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins announced funding she secured from the New York State Senate initiative, "Operation SNUG," establishing a front-line anti-gun and gang violence prevention effort in the communities hit hardest across the State. The \$4 million program will allow groups to create innovative programs that steer at-risk New Yorkers away from the culture of gangs and illegal drugs. As a result, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins secured \$250,000 of funding for community outreach groups in the City of Yonkers for the resources necessary to keep our children safe and our streets secure.



State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at the Yonkers YMCA roundtable discussion on gun and gang violence prevention initiatives

"The leadership being provided from your respective offices in securing funding for gang prevention and intervention through the Promise Act and the SNUG Initiative will allow communities to make inroads into

stemming the growth of gang activity in our community and providing safe and positive options for those who feel that gang affiliation is their only hope and safety net. We must improve our schools and expand education and vocational opportunities. This is the only way that we can break the "cradle to prison pipeline" a path that far too many of our young men and increasingly young women are traveling," said Shawyn Patterson-Howard, Executive Director of the Yonkers Family YMCA and partner on this tremendous safety and prevention initiative.

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YMCA Urges Congress to Increase Funding for Afterschool Programs

The YMCA offered testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Appropriations to call for increased funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, currently the only federal funding source dedicated to afterschool programs. Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers allow grantees, including many YMCAs, to establish and expand centers that offer significant extended learning opportunities, such as before- and afterschool programs, for children and youth. Chris Francis, CEO of the YMCA of the Northwoods in Rhinelander, Wis., testified before the subcommittee, chaired by Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.) who also chairs the important House Committee of Appropriations.

Healthy CHOICES Act Introduced in U.S. Congress

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) introduced the Healthy CHOICES Act, bipartisan legislation to fight obesity, at a news conference in front of the Capitol building steps on Wednesday, May 5. Y-USA's Audrey Haynes joined Rep. Kind and representatives of other supporters to praise provisions in the legislation that fight chronic diseases, promote physical activity and increase access to healthy food.

There are several provisions in the Healthy CHOICES Act important to the Y. First, the *Play Every Day Act*, which Mr. Kind has included in the bill, will help kids achieve the recommended 60 minutes of play each day by providing community coalitions with the resources to build environments rich in support of physical activity. The

legislation increases the funding authorized for the *Physical Education for Progress Act, or PEP* - the only federal funding available to schools and afterschool sites for physical education and activity. YMCAs across the country have built strong partnerships with local school districts, and have been able to increase the physical activity levels of children in their care during the after school hours thanks to PEP funding.

Many of the nation's children are facing what some have described as a "nature deficit disorder." Studies have shown that kids spend 55 hours a week in front of a screen, and still many more children have lost a connection to safe, outdoor places to play and experience nature. The *Moving Outdoors in Nature Act*, included in the Healthy Choices Act, will help states and statewide coalitions build plans to ensure every child can experience the outdoors.

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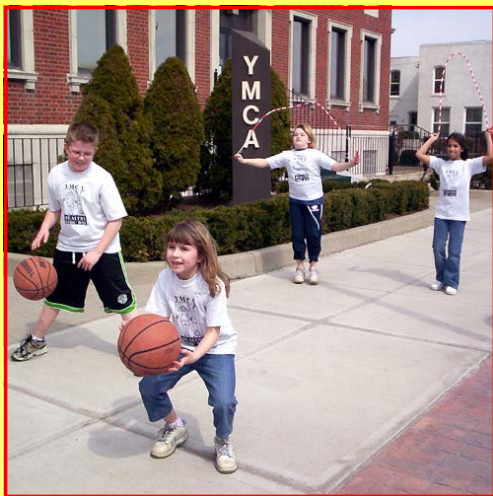
The GOP also set itself up for another US Senate primary, pitting its Tea Party-favored designee Gary Berntsen against consultant Jay Townsend in the fight to take on Senator Schumer in November. Time will tell if Republicans have the appetite and capacity for more than one internal battle.

It is possible that a candidate could petition to get him or herself onto a primary ballot for any position. Most candi-

date messages, regardless of party affiliation, seem be fixed on becoming the Albany 'out'sider; creating jobs and changing the way the State operates. Republicans strive to unseat Democrats and Democrats strive to hold on, pointing to past successes, no matter how long ago.

The slogans will quickly become as well known as the candidates and New Yorkers will be inundated with advertisements. Stay tuned as the YMCAs of New York State follows the races and keeps you informed of the impact that these important races will have on State public policy.

Congratulations to our YMCAs around the State that participated in YMCA Healthy Kids Day, the nation's largest health day for children!



The State of Health at the YMCA

The YMCAs of New York State recently launched a partnership with the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Health Foundation to implement the New York State YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program (NYS Y-DPP) Research Initiative. Ten YMCAs across the State are participating in the first phase of this initiative, utilizing an Indiana University model to implement group-based diabetes prevention programs. We hope that this program will lead to more chronic disease prevention initiatives operated at YMCAs. The YMCAs of New York State is also working with coalitions to support legislation focused on: obesity prevention/healthy living; complete streets planning and increased physical activity in schools.

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