



IDCCA  
February  
2016  
Newsletter

Issue #3

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE ASSOCIATION

## IN THIS ISSUE



# President's Message

By: Doug House, President IDCCA  
Chairman, Rock Island County Democratic Party

Growing our party and moving forward

Three short months ago I was elected to lead the IDCCA as its President. Leading this great organization is something that I had been giving serious thought to for some time. Not because I was unhappy with our current or past leadership. We have had excellent past President's and Executive Board's. I wanted to lead this organization because I wanted to take the opportunity to work with excellent County Party Chairmen from all across our great state. I wanted to help build something statewide that would be enduring, sustainable and make our Democratic Party stronger.

Some have said that this organization is viewed as the Chairmen's Brunch and not much more. We know that this organization is much more than that. We know that we have been the difference in many statewide elections. As involved as we have been, we also know we can do more. We must do more because we cannot stand a second term of our

current Governor Bruce Rauner.

Since last November we have been hard at work to build our organization. Here is a brief summary of what our Executive Board has done:

- We developed a statewide 3-year strategy for the IDCCA. This strategy has the support of our party's statewide officials and candidates. The strategy also includes our inclusion in the development of the 2016 & 2018 Coordinated Campaigns.
- I have appointed two great leaders to our Executive Board and promoted two outstanding At-Large Executive Board Members to Vice President positions. We have added Cook County Democratic Party Chairman Joseph Berrios

[Continued on Page 2]

[President's Message](#)—Page 1  
Growing Our Party and Moving Forward

[Thank You from Hillary Clinton](#)—  
Page 2

[Executive Director's Message](#)—  
Page 2

[Minority Outreach](#) — Page 3

[Developing a Winning Strategy to Engage the Press](#) — Page 3

[Illinois Prevailing Wage Law](#) —  
Page 4



## General Membership Meeting

President Doug House has called an IDCCA General Membership Meeting for Saturday February 13th at 11:30am. The meeting will be held at the Illinois Realtors Association in Springfield. The address is 522 S 5th St, Springfield, IL. Lunch will be served at the start of the meeting. An agenda and materials will be sent out to the Chairmen.

The meeting is open to County Chairmen and guests

The Illinois Democratic County Chairman's Association is a state wide, grassroots Democratic political organization. It is made up of the elected Democratic County Chairman in all 102 counties in Illinois. The mission of the IDCCA is to help elect Democrats in each county while continuing to grow the Democratic Party in the State of Illinois. Rock Island County Chairman Doug House is the President of the Illinois Democratic County Chairman's Association.

Paid for by the Illinois Democratic County Chairman's Association. A copy of our report is (or will be) available for purchase from the Illinois State Board of Elections, Springfield IL

[Continued from Page 1]

and Richland County Democratic Party Chairman Brandt Patterson as At – Large Executive Board Members. Chairman Berrios' leadership and vision will help us realize our goal of being a true statewide organization. Chairman Patterson has made outstanding strides in the south-east part of our state. Chairman Patterson has also hit the ground running since being appointed to the Executive Board. He will be heading up our Chairman's Raffle that was championed by Chairman Joe Woods for many years. I have also promoted Hardin County Democratic Party Chairman Dennis Austin and Mason County Democratic Party Chairman Jay Briney to Vice President positions.

- We have hired a new Executive Director Dan Kovats. Dan has the campaign skills and vision to take us to the next level.
- We have created a statewide newsletter to better communicate and train our members. Our newsletter will focus on our vision, our candidates, our issues, new campaigning techniques and about our activities.
- We have also expanded our fundraising activities to include nationally respected advisor Nancy Kohn and her associate Caryn Pavlak.

But there is much more to be done as we move forward in the future. You can expect to hear more about:

- Diversifying our party and the IDCCA by expanding our ranks. This includes adding additional diversity in race, gender, and age to all levels of our organization. I have experience with doing this in Rock Island County. This is how we will be successful statewide and in many local, county, and targeted House and Senate races. We should look to add to our ranks for all positions including Chairman, County Party leadership and Precinct Committeeman.
- Opening up our central committee meetings to be more inviting to others outside our normal committeeman

structures. We are not a secret society and the general public should not feel that we are closed off to them. By being more open and transparent we will insure that all voters feel welcomed into the big tent that is the Democratic Party.

- Filling vacant precinct committeeman positions to bring in new energy and enthusiasm for our party.
- Train committeemen in their responsibilities of voter registration and canvassing their neighborhoods. We need to communicate more about our candidates and what is at stake in the coming elections.
- Train Chairman to work in concert together to strengthen a multi county candidate chances of winning Congressional, State House, State Senate or Judicial races. This includes executing the statewide Coordinated Campaign, organize canvases and GOTV -Get Out The Vote efforts.
- Implement a field plan of support staff for chairman in highly targeted areas.

This is where we have come in a short time as well as where we plan to go. As you can see, there is much more to do! Please embrace our sense of urgency because it infuses our organization with energy. The time for action is now and we cannot afford to be complacent any longer!

Doug House  
President

---

## Thank You From Hillary Clinton

Dear Friends,

Thank you, my fellow Illinoisans, for endorsing my candidacy for president. As a native of the Land of Lincoln, I know how important this grassroots organization has been in offering the leadership and resources necessary to be thoughtful and successful in both state and national elections, and I so appreciate your support in this campaign.

I'm running for president to make our country work for every Illinoisan and, indeed, every American - for the struggling, the striving, and the successful. As you and I well know, this election is about whether our country keeps moving toward opportunity and prosperity for

all or whether our hard - won gains get stripped away. I believe in an America where no matter who you are or where you come from, you should have an equal shot at success. That's the America we love, and that's the America we're fighting for.

Thank you for your faith in my leadership and agenda for change. I'm working hard to earn every possible vote, and am grateful to have you by my side in the fight ahead; together, we can forge a future where we don't leave anyone out, or anyone behind. Onward!  
With warm regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

---

## Executive Director's Message

By Dan Kovats, Executive Director IDCCA

Chairmen,

We all know that importance of communicating in politics. The ability for everyone to be on the same page is vital when it comes down to crunch time in an election. Communications is also vital in building up a County Party and the IDCCA. That is why I have been sending out as much information as possible to each of the Chairmen about any information regarding the IDCCA. That is why we are in the process of revamping our website.

My goal is to be able to provide resources to each of the County Chairmen so that they can continue to build stronger County Parties.

It is a work in progress but I would encourage each of you to visit our webpage at [www.ildcca.org](http://www.ildcca.org). Our website will include information like media resources (video training and press releases), monthly newsletter, the 2016 Democratic Ticket (broken down county by county) and information regarding the upcoming 2016 Chairmen's Brunch. We also have a comprehensive event calendar for everyone to access.

If your county has a meeting or fundraiser for any candidate, please email me about it and I will get it posted.

[Continued Next Page]

[Continued from Page 2]

Communication is also vital when it comes to carrying our message in each of our counties. We need to engage our local media and not be afraid of them. Later in this newsletter we have an entire section devoted to communications with the media. Each County Chairman should have a media contact list and we should be inviting the media, even smaller newspapers, to our County Party meetings. After our meetings we should be engaging the media about local issues and the fight each of us is in against Governor Rauner. We should also be encouraging our candidates to speak with the media. Even 20-year County Board Members should have a good relationship and be ready to talk to the media. We should have Letters to the Editor ready to go on various issues and we should have Precinct Committeeman willing to submit them.

You might want to know why we would want to open ourselves up to the media and their questions? You might be concerned about the infamous "gotcha" question that reporters can be known for. We need to get past this apprehension in order for us to deliver our message. I have believed for some time that nationally, as a Democratic Party, we have done a poor job with our message.

To many times we are willing to let the Republicans say flat out lies about our issues or candidates. To many times we have believed that we don't need to respond to these lies and we let the Republicans get away with saying them. This needs to change immediately.

We need to start taking the fight to Governor Rauner. In the next couple of months each of the County Chairmen will be receiving talking points from the IDCCA and from Organized Labor. These will be talking points that we will want each of you and each of your candidates to start using. One of the best ways for us to use these talking points is when you are talking to the media. Free media exposure is one of the best ways for us to reach voters and to get our message out. This will also help us respond to the lies from the Rauner Administration. It will also show that we are standing united as a Democratic Party and standing

united with Organized Labor.

My background is in field operations and I thoroughly believe that door to door communication is the best. News articles and press releases are just as valuable because they can reach just as many voters. With a strong door to door program and the County Chairman / candidates staying on message with the media, we can directly start to challenge the lies that the Rauner Administration is throwing at us.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Kovats  
Executive Director



### Minority Outreach

By Rep. Jehan A. Gordon-Booth, 92nd District,  
Assistant Minority Leader

Based on 2010 census data, ethnic minorities made up over 35% of the population in Illinois. Nothing is more important to the future of Illinois politics than the minority vote.

One thing that is certain about the future of the minority population and that is--its continued growth, is certain. Whoever captures the heart and minds of this ever growing population with sound public policy that impacts their lives will likely be rewarded with political majorities.

Failing to understand the importance of intentional engagement, shared resources and a true desire to actualize the dreams of this population would be at the parties own peril. The traditional modes of communication and media coupled with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Blogs do not allow autonomy from public policy decisions. Parties will be held accountable for their agenda or lack thereof if true inclusion within minority groups does not happen. Again, this ever growing population will be the "must have vote" if you want to win elections in the foreseeable future.

Earlier, I spoke about intentional engagement. Consciously and deliberately connecting with minority groups in order to seek common values, desires and vision for the future is mandatory. This purposeful action will also lead to a better understanding of the needs and wants that are very specific to that minority population. Once there is true understanding, the strategy on how accomplish demographic specific, as well as collective goals will undoubtedly flow.

Shared resources is often a misunderstood concept. Wikipedia says, *Politics involves the making of a common decision for a group of people, that is, a uniform decision applying in the same way to all members of the group. It also involves the use of power by one person to affect the behavior of another person. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance — organized control over a human community, particularly a state. Furthermore, politics is the distribution of power and resources within a given community.* Shared resources speaks to the necessity of basic human engagement that is responsible for strengthening social ties and ensuring that the finite resources that are available will not simply be siphoned off for the group that currently has the upper hand. Shared resources gives real consideration for the "bigger picture" and understands that collectively we will achieve much more together if all entities see and feel the value of that marriage.

Ultimately, the end goal is to have a vision for the future and actualize that vision through the sincere collective effort of the entire coalition. This vision for a better, stronger state for the next generation is the tie that binds and keeps coalitions together through good times and bad.

As a lifelong Democrat, I believe our party is best positioned to capture the minority vote for the foreseeable future, but that demands true, sincere minority outreach. The collective goals of our party requires continued intentional engagement and the true sharing of resources if we are to continue to cohesively move forward. The power of the possibility is exemplified when we do this. I am excited and encouraged when I think about what is possible for the Democratic Party!



### Developing a Winning Strategy to Engage the Press

By Ron Holmes

I'm the kind of guy that sits in the living room and screams at my television or iPad when I see something I don't like. So if you're anything like me, watching cable news or reading certain editorials can be a stressful and fatiguing venture.

I'm sure any head shrink would warn me of two things. First, that televisions and newspapers can't actually hear me. Second, that if I really want to engage an opposing viewpoint, I should do so in a constructive manner.

[Continued Next Page]

[Continued from Page 3]

So that's why I've focused a lot of my professional career on helping people communicate in the political space. Right-wing talking points are only effective in the absence of alternative logic. Now we know, Fox News, the Koch Brothers and the Illinois Policy Institute are platforms for conservative viewpoints. That's why we as Democrats have to work hard at every level to engage in the public dialogue about what our values are and why they are better than the alternative.

So how do we do it? Engaging the press can be hard and let's face it, even the best politicians make a gaffe every now and then. It may be intimidating but the job is a lot easier when you actually believe what you're saying. Just pretend you're debating family at Thanksgiving dinner (minus the profanities) and you'll be just fine.

Here are 3 things your county organization can start doing today to help Democrats effectively communicate our message and in turn win at the ballot box.

First, develop a comprehensive media list and keep it up to date. I've always argued that the foundation of any good communications strategy is a good media list. Think about it. What good is the best press release in the world if it doesn't get in the right hands at the right time? As a local arm of the party, you should know who covers what issues in your area, what's the best way to reach them and what their deadlines are. This is a resource you should be able to share with candidates and statewide officials that are visiting your area.

Second, maintain relationships with reporters. The inbox of a reporter isn't that much different than yours. They're subscribed to the same emails from politicians as you. However, don't expect them to chip in that extra 5, 10 or 20 dollars before that critical fundraising deadline. On top of that, instead of Macy's and Target ads, they're inundated with pitches from people they don't know. So if they don't know who you are, chances are they won't prioritize opening your email. So don't just engage reporters when it's time to send your press release; maintain a relationship that will yield results.

Third, proactively communicate and rebut any opposing view. Democrats aren't simply the party of no. We've got ideas and solutions to problems at every level of government. So get out there and offer a well-informed perspective. Tell why we want to raise the minimum wage, why the quality of your education shouldn't depend on your zip code and why

government should be there for those who need it most. And if you see the opposition saying things that aren't true, call them out. Editors owe the opposing view equal time and space in print. So take advantage.

Otherwise, you're going to go horse screaming at the television or your local newspaper.

Ron Homes is Founding Principal at Ron Holmes Consulting LLC, former Communications Director at Durbin for US Senate, Former Deputy Press Secretary at Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus.



## The Illinois Prevailing Wage law

By Marc Poulos

I am the Executive Director of the Indiana-Illinois-Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting (III FFC), a not-for-profit joint labor/management organization affiliated with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 and its signatory contractors. III FFC was established to support, promote and encourage fair contracting. Our mission is to ensure a level playing field in the public works construction arena for both contractors and workers. As a labor/management organization, balancing the interests of business and labor is a core value of the III FFC. We believe in moderate, responsible public policies that reward work, grow the middle class, and create broad-based prosperity that benefits workers, businesses and taxpayers alike.

The Illinois prevailing wage law sets uniform pay rates for workers employed on public works construction projects. It requires that construction workers be paid no less than the general market wage rates in the community where the work is performed. In every county in Illinois, the prevailing wage is a good, fair wage that allows workers to pursue a decent living standard. The prevailing wage is also good for construction contractors because it establishes uniform wage rates, making their labor costs identical and predictable as they develop their bids and proposals. Prevailing wage is good for taxpayers too because it ensures that we get the highest quality construction from professional, responsible contractors and highly skilled workers who have completed proper construction craft apprenticeship training programs.

Unfortunately, Gov. Rauner and his allies in Springfield have spent months relentlessly attempting to push through extremist plans to repeal the state prevailing wage law or allow

public bodies to opt out of the law at the local level. Gov. Rauner has repeatedly claimed that eliminating prevailing wages will reduce the cost of public works construction projects by 20%. There is no truth to that silly claim. According to the US Census Bureau's Economic Census, labor accounts for 20-25% of the cost of public works construction in Illinois. So it is mathematically impossible to save 20% by cutting labor costs unless you expect construction workers to work for free. Furthermore, numerous objective academic studies have consistently found that states that have repealed their prevailing wage laws realized no cost savings.

Despite the governor's ideological obsession with slashing prevailing wages, there are positive signs elsewhere that both Republicans and Democrats alike understand the value of prevailing wages. Last year, congress passed the first comprehensive multi-year federal transportation funding bill in more than 10 years, and president Obama signed it in December. More than 100 amendments were considered along the way, including one sponsored by a right-wing Iowa congressman to repeal the federal equivalent of the state prevailing wage, known as the Davis-Bacon law. That extremist amendment was defeated soundly. Interestingly, all 18 members of the Illinois congressional delegation - Republican and Democrat, urban and rural, conservative and liberal - voted against it. This bipartisan consensus shows that the entire Illinois congressional delegation understands something that Rauner does not: repealing prevailing wage laws never results in any taxpayer savings but will result in a "race to the bottom" economic model that undermines high-road construction companies, disrespects properly trained and skilled construction workers, and diminishes one of the historic standards that helped give rise to the great American middle class.

For many years, the Democratic County Chairmen's Association has been a trusted partner in the building trades' efforts to protect our workers and contractors in Illinois, and we look forward to a strong continued partnership as we move forward together.

Marc Poulos is the Executive Director of the Indiana-Illinois-Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting. He also serves as Executive Director of the Midwest Operating Engineers Construction Industry Research Fund, The Indiana and Illinois Operators Joint Labor-Management PACs, and a Democratic Precinct Committeeman in Will County.