

DRUM MAJOR INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

What about the name? It draws upon Dr. King's frequent invocations of the "drum major instinct," the call to selflessly lead others. Originally called the Drum Major Foundation, DMI was founded by Harry Wachtel, lawyer and advisor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the turbulent years of the civil rights movement.



**DMI GENERATES
THE IDEAS THAT FUEL
THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT**

Who we are

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank generating the ideas that fuel the progressive movement.

What we do

We work to get the sharpest ideas and most effective tools into the hands of those advocating on the frontlines for progressive economic and political change.

How we do it

We do think tank business differently. Our work is defined not by geography or issue niche but by approach.



NJ Governor Jon S. Corzine, NY State Department of Labor Commissioner M. Patricia Smith & The New York Women's Foundation President Ana L. Oliveira, *Marketplace of Ideas*

DMI's 2008 In Review

In this historic year of change and unprecedented challenges, DMI was at the forefront of advancing ideas on the issues that were central to the national debate. We drove new ideas into the public discourse, and offered innovative tools that enhanced the work of our partners on the frontlines.

Strengthening and expanding America's middle class

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy has advocated for policies to strengthen and expand America's middle class for the last eight years. In a year in which elections were being run on the middle-class squeeze, DMI seized the opportunity to make a case for a progressive middle-class agenda.

Keeping a pulse on the middle class As politicians and pundits fell over themselves to speak on behalf of the middle class and their concerns during the 2008 election cycle, DMI asked these families to speak for themselves. In a first-of-its-kind poll of self-identified middle class voters, DMI found evidence of a deep information divide between the middle class and their representatives in Congress. A majority of middle-class adults—whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or independents—believe that progressive policies represent good ideas for the country: they support a universal national health insurance plan, requiring employers to provide paid family and medical leave, making it easier for employees to join labor unions and allowing bankruptcy judges to change mortgage payments to keep homes out of foreclosure. But the majority in our first annual survey on the Middle Class and Public Policy did not know how their own members voted on these issues. Our findings reinforced the need for tools to better educate the public about what policies can improve the quality of their lives.

I don't think I've ever seen a site that so compellingly presents such essential information about new and pending legislation. —Tech President, a popular online news site, on TheMiddleClass.org

Holding Congress accountable In a year in which there was real hunger to understand what Congress was doing for the middle class, DMI enabled thousands of citizens to learn about legislation of significance to the current and aspiring middle class and find out how their members voted on each bill. We launched TheMiddleClass.org to provide analysis on selected legislation voted on by Congress, incorporating video and interactive elements to provide clear explanations of what each bill means to current and aspiring middle-class Americans. Each member of Congress has a score throughout the year that is updated as they take votes. The quarter of a million people who visited our site were able to share what they found by adding a widget to their blog or homepage; linking directly to a legislator's page or a piece of legislation or issue area; running the RSS feed on their site; merging the DMI scorecard with their own data set; or using our email tool to send specific pages to people.

In March, we released our official 2007 Congressional middle-class scorecard during an event on the Hill, attracting 20 members of Congress who received A's and coverage in national press.

"I used the statistics and some of the work being done by the Institute to talk about...the main reason I was running for Congress." —Rep. Tim Walz, US Congressman D-MN, elected in 2006

Focusing on the issues that matter Hours after the President's State of the Union Address, DMI delivered a hard-hitting analysis on the core domestic issues that every American cares about. We found that President Bush kept breathing life into the same worn out ideology that has repeatedly failed America's current and aspiring middle class: keeping the banking industry free of regulation even though corporate recklessness and lack of government oversight created the subprime mortgage mess and urging Congress to make his failed tax cuts for the wealthy permanent. DMI's critique, which hit thousands of inboxes by 3am, was used in the following hours and days to shape the debate on the President's agenda. We took our analysis to radio and print media around the country; our partners shared the report with thousands of their members and constituents; and our extensive audience of elected officials, political bloggers, union organizers and community advocates used our critique to inform their response to the President's domestic agenda.

The DMI Approach

SHARED VALUES:

We know that everyone wants to be able to send their children to good schools, live in safe neighborhoods, work decent jobs and access affordable health care. That is why we talk about strengthening and expanding the middle class—it's a framework that emphasizes the common interests of all of us striving to achieve and sustain the American Dream.

IF IT ISN'T READ, IT WASN'T WRITTEN:

We don't issue reports to see our name in print. We view our research as a tool, and measure our success based on how these tools are used by our constituents.

THINK TANK MEETS NETROOTS:

We unite the intellectual power of think tanks with the viral networking power of the netroots to disseminate our ideas and messages. We prioritize the net as an ideal platform on which to shape the public conversation and inform the direction of public policy.

THE FRONTLINES:

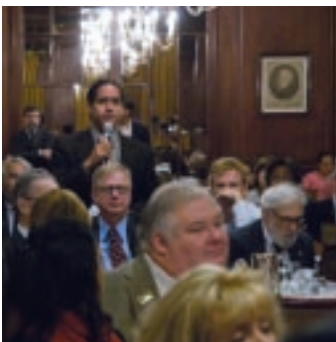
Our work is in service of those on the frontlines: activists, advocates, and current and aspiring policymakers. Our strategic collaborations are an integral part of what we do and are why we are ahead of the curve: we know what's happening on the ground before it enters the popular consciousness.



New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, *Marketplace of Ideas*



DMI Scholars, 2008 Summer Institute Opening Reception



Marketplace of Ideas: Improving Job and Air Quality at our Nation's Ports



New York City Council Speaker, Christine Quinn



Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, 2008 Annual Benefit

DMI continued to inform the debate on immigration policy. In 2006, before the issue catapulted to the forefront of the national conversation, DMI crafted a fresh framework for understanding how progressive immigration policy is in the best interest of the current and aspiring middle class in America. This year we shared our framework widely: through Spanish-language op-eds in *El Diario*; on discussions about how immigration policy figured in the presidential race; in a DMI immigration briefing book that was distributed to members of Congress and staffers; in the blogosphere, including a series on the DMIBlog dedicated to immigration issues; and on TheMiddleClass.org where we provided analysis on key immigration legislation like the DREAM Act. We also embarked on an exciting partnership with Long Island Wins, a public information campaign to influence the conversation about immigration at ground zero of the debate.

Defining an urban agenda

More than 80% of Americans live in cities and their surrounding metro areas, with urban areas driving up to 90% of our economy. And yet, there was little conversation about metropolitan America in the presidential campaign. So DMI got to work. We went online and on the road with *The Nation* magazine to ask America's mayors directly for their thoughts on the progressive urban policy agenda that the next president should embrace. Twenty-five mayors later, from Scranton, PA to Los Angeles, CA we know what steps the new Administration must take to unleash the potential of urban areas, from establishing an urban policy czar in the White House to refunding the Community Development Block Grant program and investing in the nation's transit infrastructure.

We drove this agenda on the project's unique website MayorTV.com, featuring video interviews with the mayors, on DMI's YouTube channel, on Huffington Post, throughout the blogosphere, and in the mainstream press, including coverage in *The Politico*, *The Nation*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Seattle Times*, *The Denver Post*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Gotham Gazette*, and *Metro New York*.

But cities aren't just looking at the federal government for ideas and leadership; in fact, our cities are often at the cutting edge of policy innovation. Yet, we were told too often by our partners in the field that they simply did not have access to the progressive policies being pioneered in other cities. So DMI developed the Progressive Urban Model Policies Project (PUMP), which provides analysis of ideas working in cities to address our most pressing challenges – affordable housing, economic development, environmental sustainability – to our partners on the frontlines.

The perspective that matters

During this year of unprecedented economic turmoil, DMI's Senior Fellow in Economic Justice, Mark Winston Griffith, emerged as a passionate voice for low-income communities disproportionately affected by the financial crisis. He led the charge to combat the misinformation gaining traction in the media by keeping a vigilant eye on their coverage of the home mortgage crisis, and worked closely with economic justice organizations and coalitions to further their corporate accountability campaigns. His frequent appearances in the media, from highlighting critical components missing from the Congressional bail-out for low-income communities on Grit-TV to a stirring defense of homeowners in need of mortgage assistance on Huffington Post, contributed to thinking about this crisis through an economic justice lens.

Got access?

From defending the rights of Hurricane Ike survivors against insurance companies in the *Houston Chronicle*, to receiving praise from the nationally-read *Feministing.com* for our post on compelled arbitration in a sexual assault case against KBR/Haliburton, DMI's civil justice agenda got Americans to think differently about their basic right to access courts. Our Fellow, Kia Franklin, sharply criticized the policies that are insulating corporations from lawsuits and the court decisions that are weakening civil and consumer protections. This year we released "Election '08: A Pro Civil Justice Presidential Platform" which outlined six key challenges to our civil justice system, like Americans forced into binding mandatory arbitration and denied access to a jury of their peers, along with common-sense solutions that would improve the lives of countless Americans. This agenda and more was discussed and debated daily on our blog TortDeform.Com, the first national clearinghouse for pro-civil justice discussion on the Internet. Thousands of ordinary citizens, lawyers, and advocates visited the blog to learn about and discuss one of the most underreported issues in modern times—our fast-disappearing access to the civil courts. Even as people of all stripes have advocated for tort reform from Congress up to the White House—DMI has been resolute in our commitment to expand access to the courts for regular people.

Making the future theirs

DMI is cultivating the future generation of public policy practitioners who represent the true diversity of this country by offering rigorous training and networking to exceptional young activists from underrepresented communities.

In 2008, we guided our first cohort of DMI Scholars into the public policy field, where they completed policy internships that reflect their broad range of interests, from tackling poverty and reforming juvenile justice to learning the legal aspects of policy work and improving access to resources for immigrants. We also welcomed 14 exceptional young leaders to the 2008 Summer Institute, a rigorous training that offers Scholars the public policy lens, analytical and practical skills, resources and experiences to allow them to understand, navigate, and successfully enter the public policy world.

Ideas that work

The conservative mantra of wanting government small enough to drown in a bathtub, as right-wing strategist Grover Norquist put it, officially drowned itself this year. DMI knows that government can play a positive role in people's lives. That is why we launched the Marketplace of Ideas series in 2002, giving the microphone to progressive policymakers successfully addressing our nation's most critical challenges. This year we brought to market progressive public policies that successfully addressed issues capturing headlines around the country: paid sick leave, paid family leave, improving the quality of air and jobs at the nation's ports, and giving shareholders a 'say on pay.' DMI transcended the rhetoric and heard from practitioners who made solutions a reality. While each event attracted crowds that testify to DMI's role as the premiere progressive gathering place in New York City, thousands more felt the impact of these conversations: highlighted clips were posted to YouTube hours after the event; we created five-minute video summaries that told the story of each policy; we liveblogged; and we disseminated transcripts of our conversations.

Injecting progressive ideas into the national consciousness

From *The New York Times* to Jackson, Mississippi's hometown paper, the *Jackson Free Press*, DMI was a regular presence in the media in 2008. Stop by the DMI library, located at www.drummajorinstitute.org, to browse our op-ed pieces and coverage of our work.

Check out our online resources:

DMIBlog.com—sharp analysis on the latest policy debates written by DMI staff and those on the frontlines

TheMiddleClass.org—interactive tool to hold Congress accountable on how they vote to support the middle class

MayorTV.com—engage in a conversation about our cities and watch mayors discuss the specifics of a national urban agenda

TortDeform.com—confront and transcend the arguments put forth by the tort "reform" movement, working to ensure that all Americans can access the courts.

It is essential for the sustainability of our work that we invest in the generation that will come after us. DMI Scholars facilitates that process: it ensures that future generations of progressives will take up this work, especially those with diverse backgrounds who can bring their unique experience and skills to the table.

—Hon. Eric Garcetti,
President of Los Angeles
City Council

A forum like this is incredibly important. You assume your elected officials know about everything- they don't. As a senior member of the transportation committee, I got a lot of new ideas and new perspectives. It's very valuable to get [these policy ideas] to other policymakers and to the community at large what the issues are and what the possibilities are.

—Congressman Jerrold Nadler,
Panelist, Marketplace of Ideas
event on improving the quality of
air and jobs at the nation's ports

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