

**DMI GENERATES
THE IDEAS THAT FUEL
CHANGE IN AMERICA**

“If you want to say that I was
a drum major,

say that I was a drum major
for justice;

say that I was a drum major
for peace;

say that I was a drum major
for righteousness.

And all of the other shallow
things will not matter...

I just want to leave a
committed life behind.”

**Dr. Martin Luther King,
Ebenezer Baptist Church,
February 4, 1968**

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From our Chairman, Ambassador Andrew Young



In 2005 we witnessed the passing of quiet heroes amidst
the loud cries for their work to continue.

Rosa Parks, Constance Baker Motley, Shirley Chisholm
and Ossie Davis left behind a legacy of fighting to fulfill
the promise of America.

These leaders showed that movements don't have to be loud to work. Rosa Parks
was a quiet woman, a patient woman. She changed the South without violence,
without anger, without ever raising her voice.

The Drum Major Institute operates in the legacy of these quiet heroes. We are
slowly, patiently laying the groundwork for today's progressive movement. Our
tools are ideas, research and conversations. Through them we lay out a vision for a
world in which economic justice *is* a moral value.

The movement for social change will come from many—from the Hip Hop
community organizing voters to the progressive caucus in Congress to the lawyers
representing the indigent to the reporters investigating the powerful.

As you can see from this report, DMI is doing its part to win the battle of ideas at
the next frontier of the civil rights movement.

The White House's preoccupation with oil has left their conservative
movement out of intellectual gas.

**In that vacuum is an opportunity to think boldly
and creatively** about how to make our people healthier,
our communities stronger, our American Dream
a reality for even more Americans.

The Drum Major Institute's mission
is to **provide the ideas that fuel
the progressive movement.**

In 2005, we engaged some of our nation's most prominent thinkers and leaders,
including Andy Stern, Harry Belafonte, Arianna Huffington, Rev. Dr. James Forbes,
Rep. Hilda Solis, Rep. Jerry Nadler and Katrina vanden Heuvel.

We launched a new Web site and the DMIBlog, which attracted over a million people from
across the country and included on-the-ground perspectives on political and labor struggles
and insightful discussions of the policies and social realities that impact our lives.

Through our Marketplace of Ideas series, we showcased four of our nation's most
successful policymakers: people who have expanded the labor movement, reduced
violent crime, promoted environmental justice and driven down the cost of insurance.

Our second annual “Middle Class 2004: How Congress Voted” graded members of
Congress on whether they voted to strengthen and expand the middle class. Our
scorecard was used by unions in their local campaigns, covered throughout the country
from the *Washington Post* to the *Indiana Pharos-Tribune* and distributed by
Congressional leadership to their members to let them know we were watching.

We launched our Fellows program, bringing the thoughts of five grassroots leaders working
every day in New York's diverse communities to the conversation about public policy.

DMI advanced the conversation about engaging young people in Social Security reform
in the media and in forums throughout the country.

We released a ground-breaking policy paper evaluating the nation's immigration policy in
the context of America's middle-class squeeze; we published a controversial demographic
analysis of New York's most heavily policed schools; and we brought the press and the
people together to talk about the media and New York City's 2005 elections.

**Impact begins with ideas—the most natural resource of them all.
Please join us for a look back at what DMI thought about in 2005.**

Fulfilling the Promise of the American Dream Research & Reports

Owning your home, sending your
children to college,
feeling secure about your retirement
after a lifetime of
hard work—that's the
**American
Dream.**

But for the vast
majority of us, it's **growing out of reach.**

DMI uses the lens of today's middle-class squeeze to call for good jobs, affordable education and health care, a strong labor movement, progressive immigration policy—things that not only strengthen the middle class but enable low-income families to work their way up the ladder of opportunity.

We focus on holding policymakers accountable, and we explain the issues at stake in ways that make sense not just to politicians, but to the working people whose lives these issues affect.

In 2005, we fought to strengthen the American Dream through our annual report card, *Middle Class 2004: How Congress Voted*, our pioneering “Principles for an Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class: A Primer for Policymakers and Advocates” and our work to engage the voice of young people in the debate over Social Security reform.

Our work this year illustrates our approach: we challenge partisan orthodoxies where possible and create tools that can be used to create fairer and more effective public policy. DMI's scorecard was used by labor unions and advocacy organizations across the country to help weigh the record of incumbent representatives. Our immigration paper, the start of a conversation that will continue in 2006, creates a litmus test that takes the real concerns of working Americans as the starting point for a broader conversation.

Our nation has become one of the very wealthy—and then everyone else. To fight this trend, progressives will have to step out of their comfort zones and into a discussion that respects how people view themselves and their own relationship to the American Dream.

Middle Class 2004: How Congress Voted



Middle Class 2004: How Congress Voted issues each member of Congress, as well as the House and Senate as a whole, a letter grade based on his or her 2004 votes on legislation that would impact the squeezed middle class and the aspirations of low-income Americans who want to work their way up. Congress let them down in 2004. In both the House and the Senate, about half the members passed, half failed and less than a quarter received As. Despite a more lenient grading system than last year's report, Congress did significantly worse overall in 2004. While the vast majority—90 percent—of Senate Republicans received an F, nearly half of Senate Democrats received an A for their support of the middle class. The same partisan pattern was observable in the House, where 99 percent of Republicans failed to support the middle class and slightly fewer than half of Democrats received an A. If Congress continues to vote as it did in 2004, the American Dream will become a relic of the past instead of an inspiration for our future. Yet this dismal trend will not change unless citizens have the information necessary to hold their elected representatives accountable. That's why we made sure *Middle Class 2004* got in the hands of the people who could use it—from labor unions to national advocacy organizations, from the *Washington Post* to Utah's *Deseret News*.

Progressive Immigration Policy and America's Middle Class

The debate over the future of immigration policy in this country is expected to become one of the most pressing policy conversations in the year ahead. That debate can be a positive one that helps us to define our future as a nation or a negative one that draws upon fears and inaccuracies for the purpose of dividing people who should be united in the common cause of preserving access to the American Dream.



The Drum Major Institute argues that immigration policy must be connected to the larger conversation about America's squeezed middle class and those striving to attain a middle-class standard of living. Accordingly, DMI offers a lens through which to evaluate immigration policy that operates from the basic principle that immigration policy is sound only if it also helps to strengthen and expand America's middle class. Our litmus test for

evaluating immigration policy or advocacy agendas by their impact on the middle class is two-fold: 1) Immigration policy should bolster—not undermine—the critical contribution that immigrants make to our economy as workers, entrepreneurs, taxpayers and consumers, and 2) Immigration policy must strengthen the rights of immigrants in the workplace.

On an issue as important as the future of immigrants in America, we cannot allow proposed legislative programs to drive the conversation. Instead, we must articulate core values that speak to the concerns of working Americans from San Diego, California, to Portland, Maine, and allow those principles to determine our legislative and advocacy strategies. DMI's “Principles for an Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class: A Primer for Policymakers and Advocates” is our contribution to this important conversation.

Engaging young people in the conversation about retirement security



The push to privatize Social Security was the right wing's single most important gift to the future of progressive politics. Democrats were highly successful in staving off the elimination of the country's most successful insurance program. But the Drum Major Institute was vigilant throughout the debate to call for a proactive,

and not just reactive, strategy to engage the constituency with the most at stake in this debate: young people.

Today's young Americans, like no generation before, are beginning their working lives in a sea of debt. Faced with skyrocketing education and health insurance costs, many never climb out. Before we can discuss the conditions in which young people today will end their working lives, we must address how they begin them.

In 2005, we brought attention to the importance of using the Social Security debate to involve young people in a broader conversation about their financial futures in the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, *Color Lines* magazine, the *Village Voice* and other publications throughout the country. We created and distributed Social Security 101 fact sheets to college students broadly, visited campuses to start this conversation and participated in events sponsored by The Century Foundation and the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

While the Social Security privatization debate has died down, our commitment to engaging young people in a conversation about their relationship to the American Dream should not.

“The Drum Major Institute's *Middle Class Scorecard* puts Congress on notice that working families are watching them. UNITE-HERE members around the country will be using this scorecard to hold their legislators accountable throughout the year and at Election Time.”

—Bruce Raynor, General President of UNITE-HERE

Highlighting Effective Public Policy: Marketplace of Ideas

DMI calls this series the “marketplace of ideas” for a reason: It’s a marketplace out there, and our goal is to take winning ideas and give them a larger platform.

Through our Marketplace of Ideas events, we provide a microphone to policymakers who have successfully worked for social and economic fairness in our public institutions. For far too long the conservative right has defined the limits of what is “possible” in society and politics. They say it’s not possible to create near-universal health care. Our guest speaker Howard Dean explained why it is. They say it’s not possible to pursue corporate malfeasance. Our guest Eliot Spitzer explained how it is. They say it’s not possible to transform the lives of violent offenders so that they can re-enter society successfully. San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey showed that it is.

And beyond the actual events, all held in New York City, DMI is building a virtual archive of ideas for practical and effective progressive leadership in our public institutions. Accessible online, through video, audio, transcripts and podcasts, the experiences of our featured speakers will inspire better policymaking today and tomorrow.

After all, social change is about more than helping progressive candidates attain positions of power; it’s about enabling them to govern effectively once they get there.

2005 in the Marketplace of Ideas:

Hilda Solis On Tackling Environmental Injustice

“Sometimes I think people think environmental issues... are something so foreign that they can’t be embraced by minorities whose immediate issue is one of survival. Well, yes, you’re right: it is about survival. But it’s also about culture and values... So when I look at legislation that I have introduced in the past as a state legislator, and legislation I am currently working on, I think about the values of families.” —*Congresswoman Hilda Solis (D-CA)*

“The biggest source of pollution for the Long Island Sound that we enjoy is from the combined sewer outfall plants here in New York City. Pollution from power plants in the region, in the Midwest, affects us here in New York State. Pollution doesn’t know artificial municipal boundaries whatsoever.” —*Thomas Suozzi, Nassau County Executive*

“What environmental justice organizations have done over the past ten, fifteen years is changed the debate of what environmentalism really means. It was just simply about conversation—it was about the flora and the fauna. What we did was actually put a physical face to it. This is about people, it’s about public health, and it’s about quality of life.” —*Majora Carter, Executive Director, Sustainable South Bronx*

“If we continue with an electoral perspective in every single district, if we make people accountable for their votes on the environment, that would make a significant difference in what the policy outcome would be.” —*Kevin Parker, New York State Senator*

Andy Stern On Strengthening the Labor Movement

“I look at the labor movement in very economic terms. You can look at it in social terms, moral terms; I look at it in economic terms. The labor movement has been the only anti-poverty program that’s worked, that hasn’t cost the government a dime.” —*Andy Stern, SEIU President*

“In the end, I don’t think labor is going to win this fight if it’s seen as only its fight... There are millions of Americans out there who understand their work isn’t being rewarded or valued who want health care and affordable, dignified retirement. Some of that is best organized not through specific industry actions or mechanistic reforms, but broad and sweeping political and issue campaigns.” —*Katrina vanden Heuvel, Editor, The Nation*

“The number of times I hear Democratic elected officials say, ‘Well, we’re fighting for the things we all believe in,’ ‘We all know what we’re talking about.’ B.S. We don’t all know what we’re talking about. I want to hear them tell me what they believe in. And that element is much more central to winning people over than just strategy.” —*Eric Schneiderman, New York State Senator*

“In the past, American unions tended to think in terms of the workers here, not thinking about, for instance, trying to boycott foreign imports. But I never heard a very clear position dealing with this very complicated human issue. It’s not just about American workers. You’re really talking about other workers, third world workers, being exploited as well.” —*Professor Peter Kwong, Author of Chinatown, New York: Labor and Politics 1930–1950*



Congresswoman Hilda Solis is a pioneer in the movement for environmental justice. In 1994, she became the first Latina to serve in the California State Senate. In 1999, her landmark environmental justice bill was signed into law, mandating that the California Environmental Protection Agency conduct its programs and enforce environmental and health statutes in an equitable manner with regard to race, income and culture.



Andrew L. Stern is the President of the Service Employees International Union. Since his election to lead SEIU in April 1996, nearly 800,000 workers have united with SEIU, and with 1.8 million members, it has become the fastest-growing union in the country. Stern began his union career in 1973 as a state social service worker and rank-and-file member of SEIU Local 668.



Michael Hennessey, San Francisco’s sheriff for 25 years, has won widespread recognition for his innovative in-custody treatment programs, including Resolve to Stop the Violence (RSVP), which offers treatment for male offenders with violent histories, services to victims and restitution to the community. RSVP, which has reduced recidivism among violent offenders, received the 2004 Innovations in Government Award from the Ash Institute at Harvard University.

“There are very few places, certainly in progressive circles, where we actually honor dialogue, debate, discussion and challenging orthodoxy... So, I want to thank DMI for being one of the places that allows us to have these kinds of conversations.”

—*Andy Stern*
President, Service Employees International Union



Harvey Rosenfield, founder of The Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, authored Proposition 103 and organized the campaign that led to its passage by California voters in 1988, despite over \$80 million spent in opposition (still a record). Making California’s insurance industry the most closely regulated in the nation, Prop. 103 dramatically reduced rates, demonstrating that closely regulating the insurance industry works for working people.

2005 in the Marketplace of Ideas:

Michael Hennessey
On the Power of Restorative Justice

“Theoretically, prisons should serve four goals: punishment, isolation, deterrence, and rehabilitation. In reality, most do a pretty good job at the first two, and fail miserably at deterrence and rehabilitation. In fact, many systems have abandoned the goal of rehabilitation altogether. This is a woefully myopic view... After all, even the most average of prison rehabilitation programs has a better track record than does the typical prison or jail.” —*Michael Hennessey, Sheriff of San Francisco*

“You cannot prison-build your way into public safety.”
— *Charles J. Hynes, King’s County District Attorney*

“Just as it is difficult to talk about America’s addiction to incarceration and not talk about race, it is equally impossible to talk about America’s addiction to incarceration without talking about the mentally ill.”
—*Martin F. Horn, Commissioner of Correction and Probation, City of New York*

“As long as it appears that incarceration and providing prison opportunities and jobs is there, somebody has got to demonstrate that it is more profitable to restore and rehabilitate and to reorient people in a positive way.”
—*Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister of The Riverside Church*

Harvey Rosenfield
On Lowering the Cost of Insurance

“Pocketbook issues trump ideology any day. We used Prop 103 to unite the middle class and the poor, the Reagan voters and the urban core voters... Right now, the debate is all about tax cuts. Why aren’t we talking about cutting people’s insurance premiums? Because next to taxes and your mortgage, insurance premiums are probably the third largest expense most people have in this country.”
—*Harvey Rosenfield, Founder of the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights*

“No industry touches as many different aspects of our economy and individual lives as the insurance industry. It’s an extraordinary industry that stretches across whether children’s playgrounds can open, whether not-for-profits can function and whether you get a car or buy a house. Yet it’s basically a very boring subject. Unless somebody can galvanize the public’s attention and capture the imagination of the public, I think we’re going to have a problem chipping away at these issues.” —*Pete Grannis, New York State Assembly*

“I’m proud to be a trial lawyer. And I’ll say that in any forum, here or anywhere else. Trial lawyers are the last bastions of individual rights in this country. We are virtually alone in protecting individual rights against large corporations and their interests.”
—*Shoshana Bookson, Senior Partner, Shandell, Blitz, Blitz & Bookson, LLP*

“The progressives should want to convince the people who regard themselves as middle-class that their proper political alliance is with low-income people. You both need help against the corporate power and against the upper income people who are hogging all the money in this society. That’s the real political divide. Anything that helps to get to the progressive side of that political divide is a good argument.” —*Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)*

Shifting the national conversation: **DMI’s Urban Agenda**

When’s the last time you heard a presidential candidate talk about cities?

exactly.

DMI advances a progressive agenda for today’s urban America—a subject too often ignored, despite the fact that 80 percent of Americans live in cities of some size or shape.

We provide fresh perspectives on economic development, education and environmental justice. Through the work of our Fellows, we advocate for a policy agenda to bring the American Dream to more urban dwellers, from those learning English who still want to be involved with their children’s education to making higher education available to welfare participants so they can truly move from dependence to independence.

Through our Marketplace of Ideas, we showcase policymakers developing successful solutions to urban challenges.

We have studied how changing demographics affect urban democracy. In past years, we have critiqued the media’s efforts to engage regular citizens to understand the decisions made by their representatives. This year, we explored the media’s role in engaging the public in a discussion of real issues in the 2005 New York City elections, a function they often abdicated in favor of covering the campaign as a horserace for political insiders.

Our research aims to help officials make fairer and more effective public policy. This year, we released

a profile of schools targeted by New York City’s “Impact Schools” safety initiative. We found that, as a group, the Impact Schools were more overcrowded than the average city high school, were far larger than most city high schools, received less funding per student for direct services, had more students over-age for their grades and served a student body that was disproportionately comprised of poor and black students. Armed with this information, policymakers can get to the root causes of the school safety problem.

DMI is committed to exploring the issues that unite cities and their suburban neighbors. Environmental justice is a perfect example. Bad air doesn’t know when it’s left the boundaries of the big city. That’s why we engaged the Nassau County Executive in our June Marketplace of Ideas event with Rep. Hilda Solis on environmental justice.

There is a reason that cities are so absent from the national radar screen: many would prefer it. The challenges of cities—regardless of their size—are the challenges of America. They reside at the intersections between race, class and geography. These aren’t always pretty things to talk about. But no Americans are more important than others, and strong cities are critical to the health of our nation.

Bringing the Grassroots to the Forefront: The DMI Fellows

What does the founder of a community-based credit union in Brooklyn have to say about **economic development policy**? What does a director of a leadership training organization for students on public assistance have to say about **higher education policy**?

The answer:
everything.

For far too long we've left the conversation about public policy to those who reside in Ivory Towers. The Drum Major Institute Fellows Program seeks to change the conversation about public policy by changing who participates in it. We launched our Fellows program this year to cultivate the voices of our most talented up-and-coming progressives organizing in the communities of New York City—real people with real experiences who offer something to the progressive movement that it so desperately needs: **credibility**.

We work with the DMI Fellows to bring their ideas to the media, local and national, and, in the process, raise their public profiles. We actively circulate their writings to policymakers and influencers. As importantly, we enable the Fellows to satisfy their itch to weigh in on policy without leaving the

communities of New York City bereft of their leadership.

In just a year, we have gotten the ideas of our Fellows into the conversation. We have published their op-eds in outlets, including *The New York Times*, *New York Newsday*, *Daily News*, *New York Amsterdam News*, *TomPaine.com*, *El Diario*, *Gotham Gazette*, *AM New York* and the *New York Sun*. We know it's working when the policymakers we take on are forced to respond and when organizers and activists use our research as tools in their advocacy and action.

With a combination of their talent and experience and our rigorous research support, communications training and aggressive dissemination and placement of their work, DMI aims to change the face of discussion about public policy.

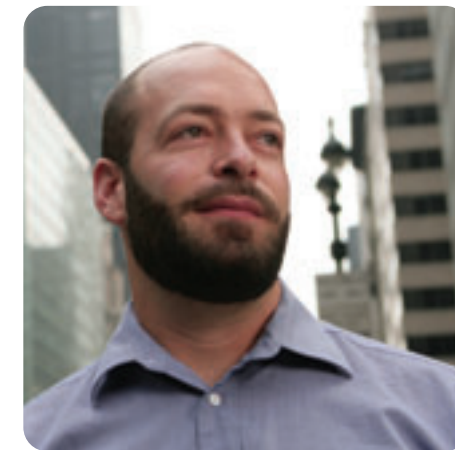
"No Democrat in years has crafted a unifying rationale for domestic policy nearly as sweeping as Bush's emphasis on ownership. [Mark Winston] Griffith hasn't either. But in a recent essay in the online journal *TomPaine.com*, he has made more progress than any liberal yet in conceptualizing an alternative to the ownership society that draws on the Democrats' strongest legacy: its tradition of promoting collective action to expand individual opportunity and strengthen the social safety net."

—Ronald Brownstein, "A Fresh Voice Sees the Downside of Bush's 'Ownership Society.'" *Los Angeles Times*. May 2, 2005

From the pens of three of our DMI Fellows:

Today, one out of every four New York City residents does not speak English. If a recent immigrant mother from Mexico whose young daughter is suffering from a high fever and a hacking cough at two in the morning goes to the emergency room, how could she receive quality medical care without translation or interpretation services? Learning English takes time. These New Yorkers and their families will continue to need health care in the meantime, as will future immigrants.

At the end of the day, language assistance services are just like other pesky health care expenses—like using clean hypodermic needles, changing patients' sheets and requiring professional training for doctors and nurses. They are a necessary component part of quality care.



Andrew Friedman is a lawyer, organizer and well-known advocate of immigrant rights in New York City. As a DMI Fellow, Andrew focuses on issues of language access and immigrant rights.

Andrew Friedman is the founding Co-Director of Make the Road by Walking, a not-for-profit, membership-led organization that organizes Brooklyn and Queens residents to engage in strategic public policy campaigns, promote accountable government and build political power for low-income New Yorkers.

Andrew is a cum laude graduate of the New York University School of Law, where he was an editor of the *Review of Law and Social Change* and a founding member of Students Need to Advocate Responsible Lawyering.

The Community Reinvestment Act has provided the country with a good way to talk about civil rights and financial services, but now we must go a step further. Community advocates and regulators should start by establishing a new generation of pricing and quality standards for both banks and nondepository financial institutions. The government should set up tighter safeguards to prevent banks from charging higher rates and prices in poor communities than in other areas, as well as establish curbs on overseas money transfer fees; standard consumer protections and fee ceilings on stored value cards like prepaid debit cards; universal identification rules, especially for noncitizens; and even requirements for institutions like check cashers to reinvest in areas where they do business.



Mark Winston Griffith is a journalist, community development professional and social justice activist. As a DMI Fellow, Mark focuses on issues of community development and economic opportunity.

Today Mark serves as the Co-Director of the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project, which promotes financial justice in New York's low-income communities and communities of color.

In 2003 Mr. Griffith completed a twelve-year tenure as the founding Executive Director of the Central Brooklyn Partnership and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Central Brooklyn Federal Credit Union, at one time the country's largest Black-owned, community-based financial cooperative.

A study has shown that 88 percent of women receiving welfare who earn a bachelor's degree move permanently from public assistance and out of poverty. Additionally, a 2001 study has shown that those holding bachelor's degrees and receiving temporary assistance for needy families were nearly 30 percent more likely to remain employed after leaving public assistance than high school graduates. Not only do they become productive members of our struggling economy, but they pull their families and communities up with them.

What thinking politician could support anything other than access to education for all, including people receiving welfare? How can we get our education and welfare policies in line with our values and economic realities?



Maureen Lane was in the first graduating class of the Community Leadership Seminar of Welfare Rights Initiative (WRI) at Hunter College in 1995. As a student, she was supported by public assistance. Today, she is the Co-Director of WRI and a DMI Fellow focusing on issues of welfare policy and higher education.

WRI is a grassroots student activist and leadership training organization that mobilizes, empowers and supports women directly affected by welfare policy. In 2000, Maureen spearheaded WRI's successful campaign to pass New York State legislation expanding access to education as a route out of poverty. Maureen has been instrumental in fostering relationships with policy makers, advocates, academics, business and civic leaders to support WRI's mission.

Creating Drum Majors for Justice: The DMI Network

If a paper isn't read,
it wasn't written...

If progressives speak in ways that no one else can understand,
we haven't communicated.

If there is good work out there that nobody can access, we lose.

If we don't take care of and inspire each other, we run out of fuel for a movement that already faces overwhelming obstacles.

The Drum Major Institute is a firm believer in doing think tank business differently. Unlike the traditional model of a think tank, DMI believes that you don't develop ideas and fresh thinking in isolation. That's why in 2005 we focused even more on facilitating conversations—both real and virtual—

that bring thousands of policymakers, influencers, the press and the people together to share what we know and envision what we want. But we also know that you can't just develop the ideas—you have to develop the messages and messengers to effectively introduce them into the conversation. So DMI ramped up its communications apparatus this year.

Through our Web site, blog, public events and the packing and dissemination of our work, we are challenging what is possible in public policy.

www.drummajorinstitute.org relaunch

Since DMI's goal is to provide the ideas that fuel the progressive movement, we wanted to make it as easy as possible for the constituencies of our work to access it. We created the DMI Library to enable any visitor to sort our content by category, author, publication and media type. Our Marketplace of Ideas events are all available online for viewing, reading and even downloading onto your Ipod. Through this archive, aspiring and current policymakers have a database of best practices right at their fingertips. And the DMI Injustice Index, the real state of the union by the numbers, offers helpful statistics to understand the implications of the choices made by our elected representatives.



www.DMIBlog.com launch

DMIBlog facilitates a substantive conversation about policy that isn't naïve to politics—but isn't driven by it either. DMIBlog has a unique voice, since unlike in traditional media and many blogs, most of our writers are people out there in the trenches fighting for social change. Besides our own Fellows, we invite guest bloggers with interesting perspectives to join us, from Rinku Sen, publisher of Color Lines magazine, to Dan Carol, who created the first Senate Web site in 1984. The DMIBlog provides context for DMI's work—we blog about our op-eds and provide the flavor we couldn't get in the newspaper, and our event speakers take turns as guest bloggers. Our entries are picked up by other blogs and sites, and around and around our ideas go.



"I know the conservative movement very well. And I know that their ambitions don't stop at just winning the White House or controlling Congress. They are aiming for nothing less than redefining the way Americans think about their government and our national priorities. What's more, they're winning.

And the only way we are going to win our country back is if we speak the truth, everywhere and anywhere. The Drum Major Institute is dedicated to telling the truth, no matter how unpopular it is.

We need groups like DMI that take the long view: to help make our candidates smarter, our policymakers more effective, our electorate more informed, and our agenda more resonant."

—Arianna Huffington

When we can, we try to bring together progressives who want to talk about ideas and recharge their batteries without committing to a favorite issue or a political party. Senator Tom Daschle and rising star Andrea Stewart-Cousins reflected on 2004 in politics and policy in January at a standing-room-only event. Harry Belafonte and Arianna Huffington received our Drum Majors for Justice Awards at our 2005 Annual Benefit. With Ambassador Andrew Young and Al Franken presenting the awards, it was a powerful evening of inspiration, humor and a call-to-action.

We have big plans for **2006**, which is shaping up to be among the most important political cycles in recent American history.

Here's a preview:

- DMI is applying our successful middle-class squeeze lens to **focus in on New York State**. We will release a legislative scorecard and a profile of how the American Dream has changed over time in the Empire State, along with ideas about how to unite upstate, the cities and the suburbs in a shared economic agenda.
- We are **expanding our Marketplace of Ideas series**, which highlights successful and innovative policymaking, with even more premiere speakers from across the country. All of the past events are now up on our brand new Web site (www.drummajorinstitute.org), where you can watch them or even listen to them on your iPod.
- We will organize conversations from our newly released "Principles for an Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class: A Primer for Policymakers and Advocates" to assist those interested in **creating a sound immigration policy** that also advances a
- progressive agenda for this country. It is a fresh perspective on a topic with so much potential to divide us.
- We are bringing on a **Milberg Weiss Senior Fellow in civil justice** to take on the well-funded right wing on the issue of "tort reform," a battle it is winning, and to highlight the real solution to the insurance crisis: regulation.
- DMI is assembling experts to talk about how to put the issue of **urban affairs on the national agenda**. We cannot allow another presidential election to go by without a meaningful discussion of the state of America's cities.
- We're **extending the reach of the new DMIBlog**, our voice in the virtual street, our bullhorn for change and discussion and a crucial mechanism for involving people and policymakers in our mission on a daily basis.

A Message From the Executive Director



Dear Friend:

Thank you for all of the support you've given the Drum Major Institute as we have grown.

We find ourselves in an important moment. In many ways, 2005 has been the year of the great unveiling, in which what we have always known has become clearer to the rest of the world. From the unspeakable poverty revealed by Hurricane Katrina to the Libby indictment and the intricately fabricated case for war, this year has been one of revelations—revelations of ugly truths. But these ugly truths present an opportunity for progressives to advance an alternative vision and the ideas to get us there.

DMI has a fresh voice, a focus not just on generating ideas but on getting them out to the people who make and influence public policy. We are national but play an important role in a city that should be the center of the progressive movement but has failed to seize its potential. If there is a change sweeping the land—and a quick look at the headlines from around the country shows there may well be—DMI is ready to generate the ideas that fuel the engines.

Let me speak frankly: DMI needs your support. We raise money the old-fashioned way—through the generosity of individuals who want to see intelligent, practical and well-messaged ideas in the public discourse.

The conservative movement, which has strangled American politics for too long, is facing a moment of crisis. Reveling in low presidential ratings, grand jury indictments and scattered political victories is not enough. DMI is poised to step in and fill this vacuum of ideas, to create the political model for a fairer, better society—to feed the engine of politics with the intellectual fuel it needs, not only to win, but to govern.

But we need your help. Please consider making a donation to DMI today. We promise you it will be the best investment you make this year.

In gratitude,

Andrea Batista Schlesinger

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A Message From DMI Founder Bill Wachtel



I founded the Drum Major Institute in 1999 to carry on the legacy of a lot of good people who precede me.

The Institute was first born in 1961, when it was easier for people trying to do good things to be heard. Andrew Young, our chairman, was recently schooling some of us in the next generation, explaining that when you had German Shepherds barking and snarling at you, and the cameras caught it, America listened. When you had sheriffs like Bull Connor incarcerating you, America listened.

Forty years later, those concerned with social and economic justice have a much more difficult time getting America to listen. That’s why I believe that the Drum Major Institute is so important. We aim to be a woodpecker on the conscience of America.

We raise the question about who constitutes the haves and the have-nots. We raise the questions of whether policymakers are expanding access to the American Dream. We conduct

important research about the state of our world that forces people to pay attention.

But in many ways, our greatest contribution is in the simple act of getting people to talk to each other.

Dr. King would say that if you put people together in a room to talk about a problem, the morally correct answer would emerge. That was the founding principle of our democracy. America’s history teaches us that frank discussion is the very first step towards social change. But too often today, so many good people are silent on the health of our society.

The Drum Major Institute is a think tank that believes the exchange of ideas *is* action and demonstrates by the beat it sets that non-violent social change is *the* way for society to move forward without leaving others behind.

We give a megaphone to great thinkers who also know how to get things done. We bring young people together to hear from our heroes, like Andrew Young and Harry Belafonte. We bring leaders of business together with leaders of labor unions. Whether it is at our events or in the blogosphere, we stimulate dialogue.

The “drum major” instinct that Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. described so often was about the desire to lead. Today, the Drum Major Institute leads not through pronouncements and maneuvering, but by valuing ideas and conversation. It is a legacy that my father, the founder of DMI’s predecessor, the Drum Major Foundation, would be proud of. I know that I am. So please join us as we continue this important work.

**This list includes contributors from November 2004 through November 2005.*