

## **Special VID Membership Meeting, August 14, 2014**

Tony opened by introducing William Strickland, former President of the VID. Mr. Strickland said he had been absent lately, but had followed VID closely. He had been President for four terms. He felt very honored--he was enthralled with the VID and what it stands for. He said it was what made New York a great city to live in.

Tony then announced a candlelight vigil with the Jim Owles Club at Governor Cuomo's house on September 6. This was to protest the Governor's refusal to issue any clemencies in four years. Alan Roskoff was to help in organizing the event. A \$13 fee to charter the bus was requested but not mandatory. He asked if anyone would make the commitment to go. Three people volunteered--Jim Fouratt, Frieda Bradlow and Lew Deterla.

Ed Yutkowitz reminded everyone that Kate Linker was hosting a phone bank every Wednesday at her loft on west 17 Street.

Next, Tony asked for members to speak for or against reconsideration of Kathy Hochul's endorsement by the VID. Many members spoke, some against reconsideration even though they personally did not want to vote for her. Many of these people felt that taking back an endorsement would hurt the Club. Others felt a mistake had been made and correcting it would be the only thing to do. Tony himself felt it was not a good precedent.

After a very animated discussion, a vote was taken--16 for and 11 against.

Now Timothy Wu spoke. He said he was from the democratic wing of the Democratic party and always aligned himself with the progressive position. He also said he had a different idea of the office of Lieutenant Governor. He wanted it to be transformed to an advocate position independent of the Governor.

He said he was the son of two immigrants, from Taiwan and England. He worked for Justice Breyer, especially in the field of anti-trust law. He is currently a Professor at NYU Law School.

He said there were two fields at least where the LG could make a difference: immigration and giant mergers. Massachusetts and Utah welcome immigrants, and he feels New York should be on the right side of this debate. Every human being deserves respect and papers do not define who you are.

In the case of giant mergers, he feels State government is far too lenient, and he brought up the example of Comcast attempting to take over Time Warner. He said this was not in the public interest and must be blocked by the state. It would mean \$50 more per year for most users.

Tim fielded some questions about his experience and stated he had worked in private industry, the federal government, academia, and the Supreme Court. He was the chair of a media reform organization and he understood constitutional law. He was critical of the Governor in taking too much money out of public schools and not investing enough in infrastructure. He said the Governor should be more interested in improving day to day issues for every person. He declined to speak about Spectra because he didn't know enough. He talked about upstate New York once being wealthy because of big businesses like IBM, General Electric, Kodak and Xerox but something went wrong. He said he was not opposed to the Triboro amendment because it gives the public sector more leverage--that workers need to be united. And he talked about his history with "net neutrality" which has been an issue for ten years.

Now it was time for Keen Berger to speak for Kathy Hochul. She said Kathy knew how to increase jobs and wages--that she has a reputation and has done amazing things on this issue. She was for workers versus big corporations, against big oil, for small businesses and for taxing people making a half million or more per year. Kathy was for marriage equality ten years ago, she was pro-choice. She was not anti-immigrant--her grandfather was an immigrant. She was a staffer for Moynihan and helped draft a law that made seven million undocumented people citizens. She did oppose Spitzer's plan to supply undocumented's with driver's licenses because she was near Canada and there were fears that terrorists would possibly cross the border.

Keen said Kathy opposed Spitzer because she is not anyone's lackey--she has a history of having her own convictions. She has an NRA endorsement because everybody is a member upstate, but she is in favor of the SAFE Act. Keen said the NRA wants to take back their endorsement. People are polarized and she's the kind of person who can reach out and get people to act in a non-political way.

Then a question was asked about how Cuomo would allow the LG to act independently re fracking, the Mooreland Commission, charter schools, etc. Keen replied she's a strong person with strong convictions--that if we endorse Teachout and Hochul it shows we are thinking--that Hochul would be better than Wu. One member accused Hochul of being a shill in forming the "Woman's Party"--she was being manipulated.

Now a discussion ensued regarding Hochul's true merits and again, the wisdom of withdrawing an endorsement. There were also doubts about the LG's ability to be independent of the Governor.

In the end, Timothy Wu was endorsed by 19 votes, Kathy Hochul got 10.

The meeting was adjourned.