



Congressman Chris Bell to headline May DCYD meeting

*Former Houston representative
is considering a 2006 run
for Texas Governor*

By **R. Kirk McPike**

Former Congressman Chris Bell, who was forced out of Congress by the Republican redistricting scheme and whose ethics complaint started the current spate of troubles besetting Congressman Tom DeLay, will speak to the Dallas County Young Democrats at our May 10 meeting. Congressman Bell is travelling the state while considering a potential run for Texas Governor.

Before being elected to the United States House of Representatives, Chris Bell served for five years as a member of the Houston City Council, where he made his mark on municipal affairs by pushing for ethics reforms, service initiatives and the city's first property tax rate rollback. Bell drafted some of the most comprehensive ethics and campaign reforms ever passed by a city government.

After being elected to the House in 2002, Bell was quickly recognized as a leader in Congress. As a freshman member he was appointed to a senior Whip position within the Democratic caucus.

Always concerned with ethics and honesty in government, Bell stood up to the power brokers in Washington, DC, and ended the seven-year "truce" on ethics investigations in the US House by filing a detailed complaint against Majority Leader Tom DeLay. Discussions of Congressional ethics and DeLay's corruption are on the front pages of papers across the country because of Bell's refusal to ignore Congress's growing problem with ethical lapses.

After growing up in Dallas, Congressman Bell attended the University of Texas in Austin. He earned a law degree from South Texas College of Law in 1992. He has long been actively involved in numerous charitable and community organizations. His potential campaign for governor is driven by the same focus on openness, integrity and ethics that has marked his entire public service career.

In his exploratory campaign for governor, Congressman Bell is stressing what he calls "New Mainstream" issues and



Former Congressman Chris Bell's website is www.chrisbell.com.

positions, including a pledge to help ease the strain of service on Texans in the National Guard, plans to improve Child Protective Services by decreasing the number of cases per social worker, and a proposal to create a bipartisan commission charged with finding real solutions to the state's continuing education problems.

As the only declared Democratic candidate for our state's highest office, Chris Bell could be leading our ticket into the crucial 2006 campaign. The Dallas County Young Democrats are thrilled to have a chance to host the candidate at our May meeting, and we encourage all of our members to attend.

As always, we'll be meeting at 7:00 PM at the Elbow Room, 3010 Gaston Ave. Please arrive early.

The Dallas Young Democrats is an organization open to 14- to 36-year-olds that believe in the Democratic way. The DCYD strives to build a better tomorrow for all Texans and all Americans. Our activities include happy hours, get out the vote drives, volunteering in the community, fund raisers, and volunteering on Democratic candidate campaigns. We also have monthly meetings to discuss current local, state and national politics that affect you.

www.dallasyoungdemocrats.org

DCYDs, members stand out at Austin TYD convention

The large Dallas delegation to the Texas Young Democrats convention did more than just have a great time at the parties, meetings and events — they left a mark on the Texas YDs and won several important elections.

DCYD President David Hardt chaired the platform committee, presiding over several major revisions to the core document that outlines the positions of the Texas Young Democrats.

President Hardt was also reelected to his position as National Committeeman from Texas to the Young Democrats of America. And he wasn't the only DCYD elected to office at the convention. Former President David Wilkins was elected the TYD executive vice president. Wilkins will also be serving on the State Democratic Executive Committee. Former DCYD Executive Director Byron LaMasters was elected vice president of finance. Every candidate supported by the DCYDs won.

Of course, the trip wasn't all votes, campaigns and meeting. There were also a bevy of parties and several great speeches from state and national political leaders. On Friday, DCYD delegates attended a convention pre-party which included an appearance by potential Texas gubernatorial candidate Chris Bell (see page 1 for more on Congressman Bell). On Saturday, convention delegates were given the opportunity to attend a special speech by former Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry.

The DCYDs hosted a party on Saturday night in support of our candidate ticket. Young Democrats from across the state joined us at the Park Plaza Hotel for free food, drinks and a great deal of fun. For more pictures from this great trip, check www.dallasyoungdemocrats.org.



June Meeting in Detroit

The next national meeting of the Young Democrats of America will be held in just a few weeks — June 3 through 5 — in Detroit. Previous trips have been both a great time and a great chance for members to connect with Young

Democrats from around the nation. Those interested in attending the Detroit meeting are highly encouraged to do so. Please contact President David Hardt at democratdave@yahoo.com for more information on this trip.

Cinco de Mayo Parade!

Please join us on **May 7, 2005** for the annual Cinco de Mayo Parade along Jefferson Avenue in Dallas. The DCYDs will be assembling a float to place in the

parade, and hope to turn out a large group. Parades are an excellent way to increase our visibility. Let's show Dallas just how Democratic this town really is!

DCYD ENDORSEMENTS AND POSITIONS FOR THE MAY 7 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Dallas election endorsements approved at April 12 meeting

After a great deal of debate and discussion, the Dallas County Young Democrats determined a slate of endorsed candidates for the May 7, 2005 municipal election. If you have not yet voted in this election, and are an eligible voter in the city of Dallas, we encourage you to cast your ballot for whichever of the following city council candidates is from your district:

Place 1: Elba Garcia

Place 2: Pauline Medrano

Place 3: Ed Oakley

Place 4: Maxine Thornton-Reese

Place 5: Donald W. Hill

Place 6: Steve Salazar

Place 7: Leo Chaney, Jr.

Place 8: James L. Fantroy

Place 11: Danny Harrison

Place 12: Matt Bach

Place 14: Candy Marcum

The DCYDs issued no endorsements for places 9, 10 and 13. We also endorsed **Ann Hubener** and **Pauline Dixon** in their races for the Dallas County School Board.

DCYDs encourage members to oppose "strong mayor" amendment

Key text from the position statement approved by the Dallas County Young Democrats at the April 12, 2005 meeting:

The Dallas County Young Democrats oppose the Blackwood Amendment to the Dallas City Charter, and encourage all of our Dallas-resident members to vote against the proposal on May 7, 2005. While we believe that a stronger hand is needed to guide Dallas into a brighter future, we also believe that this proposal goes too far. While it removes the undemocratic city manager from the scene, it replaces that officer with a mayor whose increased power and broad electoral base will make him or her less in touch with the populace than local council members. Thus, by strengthening the mayor against the council, the proposal might in fact weaken democratic pressures on the city government.

We also take issue with the broad range of powers that the proposal would hand to the mayor. Supporters of the proposal will argue that this would be one of the weakest strong mayors in the nation, but that is not the issue. The issue is whether this mayor is too strong for Dallas. We do not support a city

government that reduces the role of the city council to an effective rubber stamp. Under the proposal, many important offices would be filled by mere mayoral fiat, and the city council's influence on many other municipal matters would wane.

We might be more inclined to support the Blackwood Amendment were there not alternatives on the horizon. The members of the city council have pledged to put together a gentler strong mayor initiative, one which hews more closely to the proposals of a board which examined our city's government in 2003. We hope their proposal will maintain a better balance between the need to expand the powers of the mayor and the necessity of keeping the council strong. The proposal will be made public tomorrow, and political pressure will see to it that the proposal does appear on the November ballot. Voters can rest assured that, even if they vote against the Blackwood Amendment, they are not forever ending Dallas's ability to strengthen the mayor.

And then there's the issue of the sitting mayor. Whether one supports Laura Miller or not, the fact remains that when voters elected her mayor of Dallas, it

was not to serve with the powers that the Blackwood Amendment would provide. To take an elected officer and drastically increase her authority midterm, in a manner not considered by voters during her election, flies in the face of the democracy the Blackwood Amendment supporters claim to hope to foster.

We believe that the city of Dallas needs a strong, democratically responsive government. However, we also believe in maintaining a healthy balance between the mayor and the city council is essential to ensuring that there is a place for all Dallas residents in Dallas's future. While the Blackwood Amendment certainly addresses the first of our concerns, it fails to meet our second qualification. Therefore, we cannot support this particular strong mayor proposal, and we encourage all of our members to join us in voting against the Blackwood Amendment.

To review the other position statements and resolutions passed at the April meeting, please visit the DCYD website. To propose a resolution or position statement, please contact Executive Vice President Jennifer Roberts or Vice President R. Kirk McPike.