

# Greater Chicago Caucus

Greater Together

October 2007

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*"We all have ability.  
The difference is  
how we use it."*

**-- Stevie Wonder**

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## Greetings from the Greater Chicago Caucus!

As the Greater Chicago Caucus gears up for election season, we want to make sure you, the voter, have the most up-to-date information regarding news and events. Thus, we've created the GCC E-News letter! Twice a month you'll receive candidate information, organizational news, issue updates and upcoming events.

To offer feedback and information, contact Connie Baker, [bakerce@aol.com](mailto:bakerce@aol.com)

## Message from the Board

Greetings! The past few months have been very active for the Greater Chicago Caucus. We co-sponsored Camp Wellstone in DuPage County, sponsored members to go the Presidential Debate in Chicago, hired a full-time organizer, opened an office space downtown (which you are all welcome to stop by!), started hosting interviews with Congressional candidates and began organizing regional GCC meetings.

Our work is just gearing up and we hope we can count on your continued support and participation. There are many ways to get involved...track issues, plan events, outreach to others, interviewing candidates and even helping candidates collect signatures. By working together, we can create change.

- - Christine Cegelis

## Staff Profile

The Greater Chicago Caucus is expanding! Julie Heun was hired in July as a full-time organizer. Julie made the move from Appleton, Wisconsin where she was a community organizer for Working Families Win, a project of Americans for Democratic Action. Heun also has previous political and issue-based organizing experience in Iowa, Massachusetts, Missouri and Washington D.C. Julie can be reached at 312-401-4321 or [julie@greaterchicago.org](mailto:julie@greaterchicago.org).

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## Training Opportunity!

*Join the GCC as we begin a series of political discussions and trainings to learn more about the political process and how individuals can make a difference!*

### **What:** Political Activism: How to Start

A discussion and training about the early process of a political campaign and how individuals can make a huge difference with even a little bit of time. Also learn about various levels of elected office and the responsibilities of each representative.

### **Where:** GCC Office

(25 E. Washington St., Suite 800, Chicago, IL.)

### **When:** Saturday, October 20

9 to 11 a.m.

### **Costs:** Free. RSVP requested.

RSVP to Julie at [julie@greaterchicago.org](mailto:julie@greaterchicago.org) or 312-401-4321.

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## Membership News

- Office Space: The GCC has a new home! We just opened an office space at 25 East Washington, Suite 800, Chicago. Feel free to stop in, and stay posted for our open house coming soon.
- It's all about the website! If you have not done so already, check out [www.greaterchicago.org](http://www.greaterchicago.org). GCC members can post articles, blogs and upcoming events. Registration is available online. \*Important – for current members, you should have received an email with your login information. Once you receive it, you can go in and change your password. Once you are registered, you'll be able to explore and check out additional resources we have posted for members only! If you have any questions, please contact Julie.
- And, it's all about getting involved! The GCC was established help individuals get involved in the political process, hold our elected officials accountable and track important issues. In order to do it all...WE NEED YOUR HELP! Join one of the working committees on our website or contact Julie to sign up.
  - Committees Include: Campaign Training, Candidate Info, Event Planning, Executive, Fundraising, Issue Tracking, Membership, Outreach and Resources.

## Issue Update – Public Education Reform

By – Laurel Bault, GCC Education Specialist

### **State of Illinois: Funding Reform**

On August 15<sup>th</sup> the Illinois General Assembly passed a 12-month budget that provided an increase in school funding that will increase the per student spending per child per year by \$400. Unfortunately for our children, teachers, property tax payers, this increase is still just a band-aid that did not address a long-term, sustainable solution to funding education. The state of Illinois is still holding the local property tax payer with the bulk of school funding costs and Illinois will continue to rank near or at the bottom in our support of schools in the nation. And more importantly, because of this over reliance on the local property tax, the spending gap between lower income areas and the more affluent communities in Illinois will continue to support the large achievement gap between students living in the lower income communities and their more affluent peers.

We all need to express our disappointment that our lawmakers again failed to fix this flawed system. Poll after poll showed that the Illinois voters are willing to pay more in income taxes to invest in our most important asset, our children, and organizations as diverse as Voices for Illinois Children and the Illinois Farm Bureau have called on the General Assembly to solve this problem once and for all. The problem will not go away and neither will the battle for change. A+ Illinois, the campaign for reform is in the process of planning the next phase of the fight. Please stay tuned to action alerts and [www.aplusillinois.org](http://www.aplusillinois.org) as it will again take all of us to create the change so desperately needed.

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## Issue Update – Education, cont.

### No Child Left Behind Reauthorization

As our children head back to the classroom, Congress heads back to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which in its current version is known as the No Child Left Behind Legislation. The House education committee plans to move its plan quickly, having scheduled a hearing for September 10 with hopes to pass a bill by the end of the month, but already over 100 bills to amend the law have been introduced.

The most agreed upon addition would be the authorization for all states to use a “growth model” method to track progress. Implemented correctly, a growth model assessment system would look at a student’s progress over the course of the school year, not just a snap shot of one week when standardized tests are given, and also use a variety of methods for measuring achievement gains. The National Education Association is pleased that this plan contains the use of growth models and multiple measures, but is concerned that the plan actually imposes more unfunded mandates. We must remain watchful and vocal about this process as it moves forward.

Laurel Bault works for A+ Illinois and can be reached at [laurelbault@sbcglobal.net](mailto:laurelbault@sbcglobal.net) and 847-666-7664.

## Upcoming Events

| <b>Event</b>                                    | <b>Date</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Live Community Forum on Immigration             | October 2   |
| Candidate Interview with Mark Pera- 3rd CD      | October 3   |
| Membership Committee Meeting                    | October 8   |
| Political Activism: How to Start - GCC Training | October 20  |
| Mass Mobilization Rally – Chicago               | October 27  |

Additional details for each event can be found at [www.greaterchicago.org](http://www.greaterchicago.org), under the Get Involved section.

| OCTOBER 2007 |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
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### Greater Chicago Caucus...Greater Together!

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