

Welcome

Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice (NWCPJ) is a group of residents in Illinois' 3rd Congressional District who came together in opposition to war and occupation in Iraq, Afghanistan and their disastrous consequences. We also work to support justice and environmental sustainability in communities large and small.

~~~~~

Bring the Illinois National Guard Home! It's the law. Sign our petition asking Governor Pat Quinn to act now [HERE!](#) Download a petition and take it to everyone you know. Click [HERE](#) for a pdf copy of our petition to the Governor that you may pass along to friends, family and neighbors.

~~~~~

Now more than ever, since the US has committed 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan with almost a trillion spent on wars since 2001, billions more to come and no end in sight, we need to understand the effects of war on those we send to fight.

NWCPJ is proud to present the first full length showing of the film *The Good Soldier* in Riverside on January 23, 2010.

"....both hard to watch and hard to turn away from, and I know I'll never look at the words 'collateral damage' in the same way again. Really powerful stuff." -- The Onion.

Music by JJ Grey and Mofro, CSNY, Nine Inch Nails, Big Bill Broonzy, Edwin Starr, Carly Comando, Muslimgauze, and Jimmie Lunceford. <http://thegoodsoldier.com>

On November 4, 2008, residents in Berwyn (and Riverside for #2) Township voted in favor of the following Questions of Public policy:

1. Shall our representatives in Congress hold current and former public officials, and private contractors accountable for war crimes, including torture and unprovoked aggression, in connection with the Iraq war?
2. Shall our elected officials in Illinois take steps to phase out nuclear power in the state, replacing it with renewable sources such as wind and solar?

Join NWCPJ for Iraq Moratorium each third Friday of the month to protest the ongoing Iraq War and Occupation. The Iraq Moratorium is a national movement occurring on the THIRD FRIDAY of every month beginning Friday September 21 until the war ends.

Sign up at the website and join with millions to:

- Wear & distribute black ribbons and armbands
- Buy no gas on that day
- Pressure politicians and the media
- Hold vigils, pickets, rallies, and teach-ins
- Hold special religious services
- Coordinate events in music, art, and culture
- Host film showings, talks, educational events
- Organize student actions: Teach-ins, school closings, etc.

-

For more information or events in your area contact The Iraq Moratorium.

Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice placed the following question on the Berwyn Township Ballot for the election held February 5, 2008: "Shall our representatives in Congress pursue all available means to limit military funding in Iraq to only that which is required to bring all U.S. troops home safely?"

This referendum question passed by 77%.

No Expulsions for Morton West High School Antiwar Students!!

NWCPJ thanks all those who signed petitions, wrote letters, made calls and attended the rallies and meetings to support the Morton West High School students who were threatened with expulsion after staging a sit-in to protest the Iraq War on November 1, 2007.

More than two hundred students participated in the All Saints Day anti-war protest through the course of the day. Our next jobs will be to clear the records of the students involved and to get counter-recruiters into the campus on a regular basis.

Thanks also to Students for a Democratic Society for their petition for individuals: <http://www.petitiononline.com/mortonw/> and for Student, community, civil liberties, human rights and labor organizations: <http://cccsds.wordpress.com/>

In order to have an organization placed on the petition, please contact [cbrenz \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:cbrenz@gmail.com) ASAP.

Here's the story: Dozens of Berwyn High School Students Faced Expulsion After Antiwar Sit-In on November 1. The school cafeteria event served in part as a counterpoint in the school setting to military recruiters on campus, who routinely visit the high school multiple times each week seeking to enlist young people into military service. More than two hundred students participated in the All Saints Day anti-war protest through the course of the day.

Students complied with a school administrator's request to move the action outside the cafeteria after initially being assured that the only disciplinary action they would face was citation for cutting classes. But administrators subsequently threatened expulsion, including for students who joined the sit-in later in the day. Administrators have since issued formal notices to dozens of student that they will be expelled from the school, suspended many more, and threatened to bring criminal charges against students age 17 and older who participated in the anti-war action.

School administrators also put the school on lockdown briefly during the All Saints Day protest. That action stands in stark contrast to administrators' response to a

report of a student with a gun on campus last month. In that incident, administrators chose not to lock down the school.

The District has said they will issue final decisions on appeals of the suspensions, on Tuesday, however, they say the orders of expulsion still stand. The District 201 School Board is scheduled to meet at 7PM at Morton East High School on Wednesday evening.

Morton West High School parents are planning a press conference for Tuesday morning, where they will read a letter to the school superintendent demanding complete amnesty for the students, and then parents and students will take questions from the press before delivering the letter to the School District 201 office. You can also read more about the event here:

[<http://chicago.indymedia.org/newswire/display/80059/index.php>]

Oct. 27, NWCPJ and others took part in the Stop the War Now! Chicago Regional Mobilization Against War and Occupation in Iraq. More than 100,000 marched in the 11 regional and scores of local demonstrations throughout the country. Full details and pictures are available at oct27.org and at oct27chicago.org.

A Concert for Peace, on Sept. 8, was fabulously successful and a lot of fun. NWCPJ thanks all those who helped in this effort: the artists and performers who donated their time and all the volunteers from Unity Temple and Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice.

The Vote was "Yes" for Peace November 7, 2006! Illinois voters took the opportunity to vote yes for withdrawal from Iraq.

Election results of Townships:

- Berwyn-yes 71%
- Riverside-Yes 61%
- Oak Park-Yes 76%
- DeKalb-yes 58%
- Geneva-Yes 52%
- Aurora-Yes 58%

- Downers Grove-Yes 55%
- Champaign-Yes 58%
- Cunningham (Urbana) -Yes 65%
- Capital (Springfield) -Yes 59%

Election results of Counties:

- Cook Co.- Yes 73%
- Whiteside- Yes 59%

NWCPJ's message to Rep. Dan Lipinski: After repeated requests, our Congressman finally published his Iraq position on January 10. This, our reply, dated January 22, 2007 was delivered to his offices during the lobbying efforts tied to the national protests of the Iraq war. The complete letter follows.

Dear Rep. Lipinski: Thank you for your letter dated January 10, 2007 in which you put forth your beliefs and concerns regarding the continued War and Occupation of Iraq. In your November meeting with us, Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice (NWCPJ), you had promised such a statement.

We acknowledge that your statement represents some progress, as far as we are concerned, in your position in that you now support a redeployment of troops from Iraq beginning sometime this year. We share your concerns regarding regional stability and for preventing the spread of terrorism. We encourage your efforts to obtain more accountability from the administration regarding the conduct of Iraq operations.

However, we ask that you go further in meeting our requests and the mandate of your constituents as expressed by their passage of the referendum for "immediate withdrawal" of troops in the November election.

Our requests, which accord with the overwhelming majority of voters in the District (71%), ask:

That you publicly support a withdrawal of American troops and personnel beginning in January 2007.

To this end, we request that you vote against the upcoming \$100 billion appropriations bill for the Iraq war. This bill will not affect the troops on the ground in 2007, but is meant to fund future years of the war. The war will not end until the appropriations do.

That you publicly oppose any increase in US troop levels.

We also request that you vote against any emergency appropriations relating to such an escalation.

That you support investigations into the corruption surrounding the war including price gouging and fraud perpetrated by private contractors, the "fixing" of intelligence to make a case for war and bringing those responsible for torture to justice.

To this end we urge you, again, to initiate legislation to repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006 which negates the principle of Habeas Corpus and absolves torturers and criminals from prosecution under the Geneva Conventions.

That you help to commit resources for the rebuilding of infrastructure that the US has destroyed and oppose the construction and maintenance of permanent US military bases in the country.

As to the balance of your statement on the situation in Iraq, we applaud your concern for international involvement in solving the grievous problems stemming from our invasion and occupation and your wish to help set up a peace conference and get the US talking with Syria and Iran.

We also have concern that Iraqis gain control of their own resources. Without oil revenue, Iraq will not have the capital resources to return to any semblance of stability.

Thank you for your time and interest. Our members look forward to meeting with you in your Washington office and I with some neighbors and friends with your staff in Chicago on January 29 to discuss this response in person.

Peace, Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice