

## About Us

### What We Want

Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice adopted this Petition to our Congressional Representatives at its February 11, 2006 meeting: "We call upon our elected Congressional leaders to represent the will of the majority of Americans by supporting or sponsoring legislation which will end all U.S. military involvement in Iraq with all deliberate speed."

NWCP later expressed opposition to the prospect of a possible attack on Iran and adopted the phrase "No More War" for its button design.

### Accomplishments and Activities of NWCPJ

- Challenged Rep. Dan Lipinski's Iraq War position at townhalls and candidate forums from December 2005 up to the Illinois primary election in March of 2006.
- Held the first ever Peace Rally in Riverside on the third anniversary of the Iraq War and occupation, March 18. Later NWCPJ, as a member of the M18 coalition, joined thousands of others in an anti-war rally and march in Chicago.
- Joined the Anti-War Majority coalition calling on elected official to respect the will of the majority of American to end the war and occupation in Iraq.
- Began a petition campaign aimed at Rep. Dan Lipinski to show that 3rd District voters oppose the war and occupation.
- Organized the first "Vote for Peace" contingent at the 38th Annual Houby Parade on Cermak Road in Cicero and Berwyn October 1 to increase voter awareness of the election's peace question and put the peace movement in the mainstream. Judging from the loads of support we received from the crowds and the outcome of the election, we did just that. Our favorite chant from the parade: Whose war? Their war. Whose profits? Their profits. Whose children? Our children. Whose taxes? Our taxes.

### NWCPJ Petition to Lipinski [nwcpj\\_petition](#)

- Joined the Illinois Coalition for Peace and Justice, attending its founding meeting in Champaign IL April 1 2006.

### NWCPJ Puts Iraq War Question on Riverside and Berwyn Township Ballots

- On April 11th, 2006, Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice (NWCPJ) and other advocates of peace fanned out in various communities to take a once-a-year opportunity to "seize the day". Leaning on Illinois township Statute, 60 ILCS 1/30-205, residents attended their annual township meetings and made motions to add a ballot question for voters to

answer at the next scheduled election.

- In Illinois, the next election will be held in November '06. According to the Illinois statute: Township meetings, Article 31: " By a vote of the majority of electors present at a town meeting, the electors may authorize that an advisory question of public policy be placed on the ballot at the next regularly scheduled election in the township. The township board shall certify the question to the proper election officials, who shall submit the question in accordance with the general election law (60 ILCS 1/30-205) "

- In Riverside, the ballot question read: "Shall the United States Government immediately begin an orderly and rapid withdrawal of all of its military personnel from Iraq, beginning with the National Guard and Reserves?" Riverside Township passed the question by a 14-3 vote. Berwyn Township passed a similar ballot question on the war in Iraq by a vote of 27-0.

#### NWCPJ's Other Actions for Peace

- Recognizing the role of the Israel Palestinian conflict in exacerbating violence and destabilization in the Middle East, NWCPJ endorsed and participated in the Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine's Walk for a Just Peace May 7 in Oak Park.

- NWCPJ held a rally at Hines Veterans Hospital June 29, 2006 to greet the Voices for Creative Non-Violence Walk for Justice and Peace, a 300 mile odyssey throughout Illinois in which Walkers sought to highlight the need to end the occupation of Iraq while spotlighting the needs for justice that unites us all.

- NWCPJ formed a peace contingent in the Riverside Fourth of July parade, a first ever showing that elicited overwhelmingly positive responses from the holiday crowd to show the desire for peace has "gone main street!"

#### Genesis of NWCPJ

We began as Riverside Brookfield Peace Group in August of 2005 at a Riverside kitchen, when two neighbors were trying to get a message through to Congressman Dan Lipinski about their desire for peace. They considered that having a local peace group to facilitate efforts might gain them some leverage with the Congressman's staff, called a friend and a new area peace group was born.

NWCPJ members came together from interconnected threads:

- In September 2005, during a weekend of national demonstrations in Washington DC, three residents from Berwyn and Stickney met while lobbying for peace at the offices of Congressman Dan Lipinski.

- In October 2005, several area residents held a candlelight vigil organized through the internet by MoveOn. Their names were noted in the Suburban Life.

- In December 2005, anti-war residents met at a town meeting in Brookfield. The resulting article in the Riverside Brookfield Landmark brought inquiries regarding a new peace group.

- A later meeting that month with Rep. Dan Lipinski's Chief of Staff solidified the resolve of petitioners. Peacemakers in the 3rd Congressional District will remain silent no longer.

## First Meeting

The first organizing meeting took place January 7, 2006 at the Blue Parrot Cafe in Riverside where over 20 participants voted to change its name to Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice (NWCPJ) and to challenge Dan Lipinski's "stay the course" position regarding the war on Iraq.