

D.C. Health Head Quits, Hospital Issue Returns

by Lynne Speed

Dr. Ivan Walks, Washington, D.C. Health Department Director and a front-man for the financial oligarchy's shutdown of the capital's only public hospital, resigned unexpectedly on Feb. 28. Astute political observers have asked whether Walks' resignation involves the erupting scandal around the nexus of corruption centered on all-around-the-town political operative Donna Brazile. Brazile, the former chief of staff for D.C.'s Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, and chief of staff of Al Gore's Election Committee in 2000, was a sometime Gore go-between to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), and is now McCain's campaign finance reform lobbyist.

Democratic 2004 Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, whose forces led the mobilization to save D.C. General Hospital last year in an international fight for the principle of the general welfare, had pointed to this scandal only days before Walks abruptly quit. LaRouche said, "Donna Brazile's lurid relationship to Sen. John McCain, is the key-stone of an arch of corruption embracing all of the interests, including Mayor Tony Williams and Eleanor Holmes Norton, who colluded in a patently corrupt operation to shut down and loot the remains of the only public general hospital of the nation's capital. Whether the Arizona money involved in that swindle was directly associated with McCain or not, McCain's association with Brazile, Norton, and Williams is a feature of the scandal which could, potentially, bring down not only McCain, but McCain's crony Lieberman."

Brazile, a long-standing enemy of LaRouche, opposed the Presidential candidate's 1992 campaign to bring down the statue of Ku Klux Klan leader Albert Pike that stands in Washington's Judiciary Square. In 1996, Brazile personally deployed—unsuccessfully—to keep LaRouche's name off the D.C. Democratic primary ballot. As a top Gore operative in the 2000 campaign, she not only continued her activity against LaRouche, but played a key role in cancelling the South Carolina Democratic primary, clearing the way for a large cross-over vote in that state's Republican primary, giving McCain the necessary margin to beat Bush.

The LaRouche-led mobilization of 2001, which focussed on stopping Enron and energy deregulation, and the paradigmatic case of D.C. General Hospital, catalyzed hundreds of citizens to lobby their Congressmen and state officials in Washington and local offices. It threatened to create, among Congressional leadership and state officials, a "reverse paradigm-shift," back toward the Franklin Delano Roosevelt tra-

dition of the Democratic Party. On May 30, 2001, Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) publicly signed the LaRouche petition, "It's Time To Draw the Line: Saving D.C. General Is a Matter of International Importance." Five other Congressmen had previously signed the petition and Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) had held a briefing on the "National Public Hospital Safety-Net Crisis," which featured LaRouche national spokeswoman Debra Hanania Freeman.

On June 1, 2001, Daschle and McCain met in Arizona; that same day Daschle faxed a request that his name be removed from the petition supporting D.C. General Hospital. The pattern of evidence indicates that a dirty deal was struck to "stay away from LaRouche." Congressional commitments made to the general welfare principle were abandoned; once that resistance was betrayed, D.C. General was promptly closed down by the Financial Control Board overriding the City Council, which had unanimously voted *twice* to keep D.C. General open. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) later acknowledged this at a Nov. 14 Congressional briefing on health care, insisting, "A lot of people shied away from that because the LaRouche organization was at the forefront, of trying to help us understand what was going on. We should all apologize. And I do now. I apologize because, you're right."

Now it has come to light that Mayor Williams' re-election campaign has received 20% of its contributions, since last July, from an Arizona company: Doctors Community Healthcare Corporation (DCHC), its employees, and affiliates. Paul Tufts, its CEO, also recently made a \$500,000 donation, the largest in its history, to the University of the District of Columbia. Tufts was also the sole out-of-area contributor to Eleanor Holmes Norton's 2000 election campaign.

DCHC is the for-profit outfit which took over and dismantled D.C. General, as the result of illegal shenanigans and manipulations involving second- and third-tier players Norton, Williams, and the Congressionally mandated Financial Control Board, against the wishes of the medical community, the citizens, and the D.C. City Council. DCHC and its partner, National Century Financial Enterprises (NCFE), also headquartered in McCain's Arizona, are currently facing lawsuits for racketeering, embezzlement and fraud involving hospital takeovers in four separate jurisdictions.

Fourth-tier flunkey Ivan Walks, who became noted for his arrant disregard for both Washington City Council members and the general public at hearings on the hospital, played an important role in shutting it down. In late October, two postal workers died on Dr. Walks' watch, and with his false assurances, of inhalation anthrax, and at least 75 other individuals have died of trauma and disease; these deaths may have been caused by their inability to obtain timely and adequate medical care after D.C. General was closed.

Walks' resignation is an indicator of what LaRouche calls the "Boys from Brazile" scandal, which may have more in store for Norton, McCain, Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), and others around the Democratic Leadership Council.