**RASKIN BRINGS MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THE WDC** by Paul Schwartz

For Democrats appalled at the unfit president living in the White House, Congressman Jamie Raskin countered their depression with hope when he addressed the Woman's Democratic Club’s Biennial Meeting on June 19th.

Though acknowledging that we are living in troubling times, Mr. Raskin found reason for optimism in the Constitution and asserted that our democratic ideals will ultimately win out.

Yes, Mr. Raskin admitted, Inauguration Day was upsetting; Trump’s was very likely the only presidential inauguration speech with no mention of the Founders, the Declaration of Independence, or the Constitution. It was the next day, though, when millions around the world joined in the Women’s March, that truly reflected our democracy.

Mr. Raskin grounded his optimism in three Constitutional principles. First, “We the people.” We Americans have no kings; rather, in our constitutional democracy, all power flows from the people. The Constitution readily establishes that we have no kings, no titles, no emoluments. Trump’s presidency is testing that principle by pitting his demand for undivided loyalty to himself and his personal profits against undivided loyalty to the people as envisioned by our founders.

Second, “Separation of church and state.” The Congressman pointed to the 1962 Supreme Court case, *Engel v. Vitale*, prohibiting government imposition of religious prayer in public schools.

Third, “Separation of Powers.” This, Mr. Raskin said, is designed to prevent the “collapse of all power into one.” Congress makes the laws, the Executive Branch executes and implements those laws, and the Judiciary serves as a check on the constitutionality of the actions of the other two branches.

It is from the Constitution and the foresight of our Founding Fathers that Congressman Raskin draws his hope. He is encouraged, for example, by those states that have pledged to support the Paris Climate Accord despite Trump's irresponsible decision to pull out. Their actions reflect the true meaning of federalism.

Congressman Raskin also made clear that, contrary to the position of the President, the press continues to be “the people's best friend,” serving as the eyes and ears of the people.

Asked about the potential for impeachment, Mr. Raskin warned that Congressional Republicans will need to feel the “albatross around their necks” before they become “patriots over partisans.” He also mentioned the 25th Amendment, under which he has introduced legislation to establish a body to assess the president’s fitness for office. Asked about health care, he speculated that a single payer health care system – “Medicare for all’ – may not be out of reach.

Responding to a question about the lessons of 2016, Mr. Raskin emphasized that there is no substitute for effective grassroots organizing. He cautioned, however, that we must do a better job of getting our message across. It is inconceivable, he said, that we Democrats allowed Trump to portray himself as the candidate for the working class. His Cabinet proves the opposite: the candidate who railed against Wall Street and Goldman Sachs filled his Cabinet with men from Wall Street and Goldman Sachs. The Democrats own the populist message; now we have to make sure that our message gets out.