

**TENAFLY**

## GROUP HOSTS ACLU LEADER

*Civil liberties advocate praises local actions*

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 CORRESPONDENT

Bergen Indivisible for Democracy (BID) hosted ACLU-NJ Legal Director Ed Barocas at its meeting on Wednesday, April 19, at the Tenafly Municipal Center. BID is an all-volunteer group that was formed in January following the Women’s March in Washington, inspired by its principles and dedicated to preserving democratic values.

Tenafly resident Lori Sackler, founder and president of BID, introduced Barocas to the packed audience.

“BID is honored to host such a distinguished speaker at a critical time for our country where a lot of what we used to take for granted is being challenged,” Sackler said.

Barocas oversees the ACLU-NJ’s legal program and manages cases that involve civil liberties including free speech, religious freedom, equal protection, privacy, reproductive freedom and due process of law.

Barocas commented that he has “seen a resilience to fight back that I’ve not seen in the 16 years I’ve been with the ACLU.”

New Jersey membership in

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the ACLU jumped from under 15,000 to over 40,000 following the presidential election and the immigration ban. The extra membership funds have allowed the organization to hire more attor-

neys who provided free legal counsel at Newark Airport when arriving visa holders and others were detained. Crowds of demonstrators at the airport were motivated to show their support since they were “personally offended, if not personally affected” by the

actions taking place.

Barocas congratulated Tenafly’s Board of Education for passing a resolution that gives the borough’s school age children the right to attend school no matter the immigration status of their parents or families. District staff must not ask about immigration status or share information with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) unless a court order or subpoena exists.

The board emphasized the need “to ensure the safety of our children,” he said.

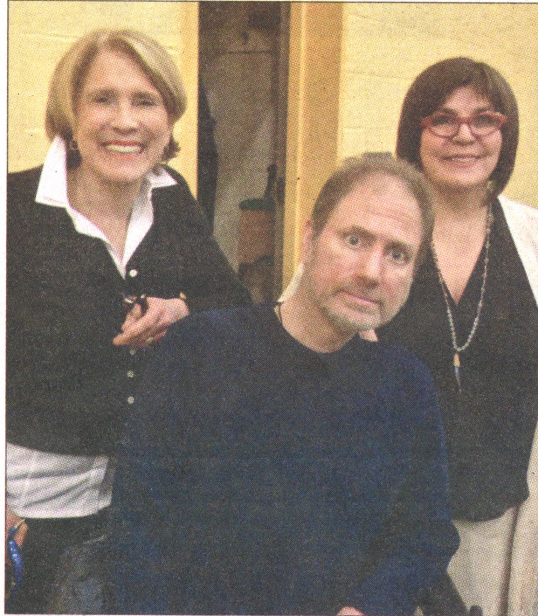
The Tenafly council is considering a similar resolution to create a “welcoming community” for all residents.

Romi Azulay, a 17-year-old junior at Tenafly High School, is a member of the Young Democrats Club there along with 75 other members. As he listened to Barocas and took notes to share with his fellow club members, he emphasized the need to engage young people. Voter registration is a top priority, as well as developing a bridge between youth and seniors in the community.

After a spirited question and answer session, Sackler encouraged everyone to stay involved and maintain their energy for as long as it takes to protect our rights and freedoms as Americans.

BID’s next meeting is at 7:30 p.m. on May 17 at the McCandless Room in Tenafly’s Municipal Center, 100 Riveredge Road. For further information, visit [www.bergenindivisiblefordemocracy.org](http://www.bergenindivisiblefordemocracy.org) and [www.aclu-nj.org](http://www.aclu-nj.org).

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Bergen Indivisible for Democracy founder Lori Sackler and public relations head Alex Spyridaki join guest speaker Ed Barocas who oversees the ACLU-NJ’s legal program.