

Long time no rant! Happy New Year to all!

This is for those of you in Wisconsin, especially those of you in the Milwaukee area: We would love to have you drop in at our house, Tuesday January 31st, between 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. to meet and show support for State Senate candidate Donovan Riley. Read on for a full explanation...

An article by Louis Fortis in the Shepherd-Express caught my eye this week. In "Will the Democrats Win Control of the State Senate?" he examines the several races statewide in which the Democrats do, indeed, have a chance of unseating Republican incumbents (read the article here: http://www.shepherd-express.com/1_19_06/newsandviews.htm). I thought that this was especially good timing, as I had just finished arranging for B and I to host a "Meet the Candidate" coffee for Donovan Riley, who is challenging incumbent Democratic State Senator Jeff Plale in November's election for the 7th district seat.

The 7th Senate district includes Milwaukee's east side, Bay View, Cudahy, St. Francis, South Milwaukee, and Oak Creek. Plale, in 2003, ran under the banner of the Democratic party to replace Richard A. Grobschmidt, defeating Joel Brennan and Edwin Thaves in the process. Since then he has voted with the Republican majority and against his own constituents on many important issues including the environment (only a 50% friendly voting record), voter ID, concealed carry, Women's choice, stem cell research and more.

But enough about Plale, let's talk about Donovan Riley, the challenger. "Riley is a lawyer and expert on health law. He's a former vice president at the Medical College of Wisconsin, an associate vice chancellor for public affairs at UW-Milwaukee, budget analyst for higher education at the Wisconsin Department of Administration, and a researcher for the Wisconsin Taxpayer Alliance." as the Shepherd-Express noted in a December 29, 2005 article reporting on Riley's entrance to the race:

http://www.shepherd-express.com/12_29_05/newsandviews.htm

This is a winnable race, as these numbers suggest:

http://www.eyeonwisconsin.com/blog_archives/2006/1/10/1634387.html

What can you do to help? Please drop by our house, and meet Donovan Riley on Tuesday, January 31st, between 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. We will be hosting a little get together to help people learn more about Donovan and his candidacy. Tea and coffee, wine and cheese, snacks etc. will be available, as will the candidate who will be glad to answer your questions and discuss the issues. Of course you may show your support by making a donation to his campaign as well.

I think it is critically important that liberals, progressives, independents and like-minded moderates look to state and county races in the near future to try to correct the imbalance in Wisconsin's state house. We have sent Democrats to the US Senate and the Governor's mansion, voted for John Kerry in 2004 and Al Gore in 2000 - heck we voted Democratic in the last 5 Presidential elections! Why then are the Republicans in control of both houses of our state legislature (and redistricting decisions)? A lot has to do with rural vs. urban, out-state vs. Milwaukee and a lot has to do with the Republican party's embrace of the far-right, cultural conservative, "God Guns and Gays" agenda.

With the Governor's race tightening up, it becomes even more important that we make every effort to reverse the tide and recapture the majority in the State Senate and Assembly. As WisPolitics.com recently reported:

The first independent poll of 2006 in the race for governor shows Congressman Mark Green and incumbent Governor Jim Doyle in a statistical tie. The results maintain a consistent theme of good polling news for Green's campaign for governor.

The survey, the latest in the Zogby/Wall Street Journal tracking polls, was conducted from January 6-12. It shows Green trailing Doyle 47.7% to 45.7% - within the poll's 3.5% margin of error. Doyle leads Green's primary opponent 47.1% to 43.5% in the same survey.

<http://www.wispolitics.com/index.iml?Article=53019>

If Doyle loses, the far-right agenda — anti-marriage, ubiquitous concealed weapons, anti-choice, anti-voter — will likely come to pass. Referring to incumbent Jeff Plale, Donovan Riley said “The incumbent is oddly disconnected on several major issues and he consistently votes to override the governor’s vetoes.” Without the Governor’s vetoes, we would now have concealed carry and several other bad laws - so it is important not just to send more Democrats to Madison, but to send Democrats who will vote like Democrats.

But back to the Shepherd article. Fortis highlights other important races in our own backyard. Among them, Wauwatosa Alderman Jim Sullivan’s attempt to unseat far-right crackpot Tom Reynolds in the 5th Senate district. Jim has a good chance here, and could use whatever help you might be able to offer. Contact me if you want to get involved, and I will put you in touch with the right people, or check out his web site at: <http://www.sullivanforsenate.com> We hope to see you here January 31st, and hope that you jump in to support the efforts of Democrats to take back Wisconsin!