

VERMONT Republican “STRAW POLL” Convention Address

Senator Mark Shepard, Candidate for U.S. House

On May 20, 2006 at the Barre, Vermont Civic Center

Five months ago I entered this race for Congress because I wanted to make a positive difference for Vermonters and for Americans and I believed I could win.

Today, after seeing this race unfold, I feel different.

Today I believe I am the only Republican in this race that can win in November and here is why --

What is a Republican?

We are Republicans because we believe in ideas and policies that we know produce freedom and prosperity.

We know that:

- Limiting the size of government
- Cherishing life
- Punishing criminals instead of piling burdensome laws on law-abiding citizens
- Protecting private property rights
- Lowering taxes ... allowing you to keep more of your hard earned money

are the keys to making our State, our country, and the world a better, safer, happier, and more prosperous place!

That is why *I'm* a **long-standing** Republican. And that is why I have been *fighting* for these ideas **for many years**. And that is why I want to be **your next Congressman!**

Over the past 4 years Vermonters have seen:

- Sales and other taxes increase
- Young adults and young families continue to leave our state for better opportunity elsewhere
- And now we just passed a health care bill where Rep. Connie Houston so aptly stated [in the House Journal], “We have just created the Act 60 of Health Care” [Government control of health care has hit a new high in Vermont, with no sustainable funding, increasing the cost of doing business in Vermont and you can bet that tax increases will follow in the years ahead.]

To be sure having Republicans in the legislature and in the governor’s office has lessened the damage. None-the-less policy is moving in the liberals’ direction – more government control, more taxes and ultimately less consumer choice. But are you really satisfied with our party being the party that merely slows down the liberal agenda? I am not!

The key to growing our party

If our Party is going to thrive, indeed if our Party is going to be relevant *Being A Republican* must move public policy in a better direction and make a positive difference. This is exactly what Ronald Reagan did in 1980 when he dismissed conventional political wisdom and stood up for those time-tested American values. I had the honor of thanking President Reagan in person for his efforts to restore faith in the American way of life and spread freedom across the oceans.

If we want Vermont to be a place of opportunity, then we Republicans must again champion ideas that produce opportunity. In fact as we do otherwise our party becomes less relevant... and getting elected as a Republican becomes more and more difficult.

Just look at what's happened to us in the Vermont House and Senate over the past four years.

Winning as a Republican

Can we win campaigning on Republican ideas? You bet we can! I have won in liberal Bennington County doing just that! ...and it's not complicated **I run as a Republican!**

I offer the voters an honest, refreshing alternative and a compelling *reason* to vote for the Republican candidate. **And guess what? It works! I win!**

Here is what I bring to this race and what I will bring to Congress

- A record second to none in the Senate opposing growing government and fighting against tax increases – Congress needs this.
- I am not a gamble. I have a record.
- My efforts in Vermont have delivered real economic opportunities to Vermonters.
- I know the challenges of running a small business in Vermont.
- I know the challenges of raising a family in Vermont.
- I am a consistent champion of Republican ideas and why they are good for Vermonters.
- My positions are not determined by politics. They stay the same from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month.
- My word is good.
- I bring a record of winning elections in a liberal district.
- For four years I have sat next to our Democratic opponent in Senate Finance. I know him, I know his politics and that is important to winning this race.

I ask you for your vote in the Republican Primary in September and I ask you to join with me. Join with me today! **And lets win!**

Thank you.