

1996 31st Congressional District Election Profiles

BRUCE MacBAIN

I have been fortunate enough to live the American Dream. To me, the American Dream is not about getting rich; it's about feeling secure in our lives. This security allows us to believe that our hard work will be rewarded without fear that the rug will be pulled out from under us.

I went to a great public school, and was able to use the Student Loan Program to attend college. I've been blessed with good health and good health insurance. My family is generally long-lived, and my grandparents were able to use pensions, savings, and Medicare to enjoy their retirement and live their last year in dignity.

My parents have just retired, and I'm hoping they will be able to feel secure and enjoy their retirement. My wife Shelly and I have a 20-month-old son Zachary and a 6-week-old daughter Taylor, and I'm hoping they will be able to enjoy their lives with the same security I've had.

I share with you this background because I think it gives voters a glimpse of how I would vote in Congress. We are living in a time when people are less secure. Government has a role in helping us regain security.

We need to know that we will have access to health care. Republican cuts to Medicare and Medicaid have only added to our fears that hospitalization and nursing home care may bankrupt us when we are older. And we still have 40 million Americans with no health insurance.

With the system the insurance companies have set up, 14.4% of health insurance costs are administrative. With the government-run Medicare program, only 2.1% of costs are administrative. We need to pass a national health insurance plan that guarantees universal access to quality health insurance.

We are also feeling less secure about our environment. Republican cuts to the environment have only added to our fears that our children will live in a world with



Bruce MacBain

dirty water and dirty air. The Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act need to be strongly enforced, and the Environment Protection Agency needs to have the power to enforce these acts.

Lastly, we are feeling less secure about our education system. Republican cuts to education have only added to our fears that we are falling behind other countries. We are concerned that our children may not be graduating with the skills necessary to compete in this global economy. We worry that we may not be able to pay for a college education.

As someone who has felt security in his life and is in the process of living the American Dream, I know what is possible in America. I know what we should be doing to make us believe that our hard work will allow us to get ahead. Attaining this feeling of security for everyone will be the dominating factor in my votes in Congress.

AMO HOUGHTON

If I am fortunate enough to win another term in Congress, I would like to see our agenda for the 31st District continue on two tracks:

1] We will continue our focus on re-seeding the economy of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes region to create new jobs. This is our Number One job.

2] We will re-energize the fight to balance the federal budget through spending control, preserve Medicare for our children, and push for tax incentives to encourage more investment in our business sector.

To revitalize our local economy, we need investment and top people. For that, among other things, we need to make sure our education system produces graduates whose skills match the requirements of our employers. And we need the best communications links to the rest of the world, so our area can compete effectively in a global market -- a market which conducts business at the lightning speed of computers.

There are a variety of ways our office has tried to assist economic development in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes -- the first is simply to be available to anyone needing help.

Another is a cross-county development agency in Bath called Working Together 2000 which we started in 1992. People across the district use WT 2000 to share what works, what's best in important areas like tourism, main street renewal, new technology, coordination of higher education and health care assets.

We've held district-wide seminars on tourism, on exporting opportunities for local businesses, and congressional field hearings on excessive regulations and federal tax issues.

We've worked with both Gov. Cuomo and Gov. Pataki to improve the business climate. New York State, despite some very recent positive moves, is still a tough state



Amo Houghton

to do business in.

On trade matters, we continue to follow a straightforward strategy for the 31st: prospect, promote and follow up. Result -- more jobs. Local business owners have joined me on a successful trade mission to Mexico. Several came back from that trip with new orders for goods made in our District. We've organized another trip this fall to Argentina and Chili, the next big trading partners.

When we develop modern telecommunications, the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Region I've got to believe will offer the best of both worlds: exciting jobs in a wonderful place for families to live.

There will be constraints, however. One involves the shift of power in our country. For years, Washington political power balanced on a Northeast-Midwest axis. But today, the population center of our country - and its political power - is gradually moving South and Southwest. That means that those of us who represent this part of the country have to work harder to get our message heard, to make sure that programs important to our region remain strong.

there are other issues for us to tackle, but the most important, I really think, is BELIEF in our region.

We can do almost anything if we believe in ourselves, put forward a positive face not only to our neighbors but to the rest of the world.

In our office in Washington I have a sign. It says, "New York's 31st District -- the most exciting piece of real estate anywhere." I believe it, always have.

Retired Teachers Meet

- By Helen Carlson

The Ithaca Area unit of retired teachers co-hosted last month's annual meeting of the Southern Zone of the New York State Retired Teachers Association with a luncheon at the Holiday Inn that featured three guest speakers.

Retired Lansing teachers active in the unit include President Helen Carlson, 1st Vice-President Hoelen Howland, Secretary Elaine Buchanan, Treasurer Ruth Juracka and Hospitality chairperson Carolyn Longhouse. George Stevens had been 2nd Vice President until his time was taken with his teaching duties at SUNY-Cortland.

The meeting began with a welcome from Ithaca Mayor Alan Cohen. Harry Felder, the retired Teachers' Association representative on the New York State Teachers Retirement System Board spoke about his role in protecting retired teachers' pensions.

Gary Buchner, past president of the Ithaca area unit, introduced paleobiologist John Chiment to the assembled members. Chiment, who also serves as Dean of Freshmen at Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences, presented an interesting and humorous narrative about the fossils of the Finger Lakes region.

Members of the meeting's planning committee were Ethel Beck, Gary Buchner, Helen Carlson, Helen Engst, Eve Firra, Ruth Juracka, Lola Anne Lutomske, Catherine Miller, Peg Mills, Elaine Nelson, Eunice Proserpi and Barbara Schwartz. Firra and Lutomske thanked Pyramid Mall management and merchants for giving each person a tote containing small gifts and discount coupons. Floral centerpieces for the 16 tables were sent by David Barr of Advest.

Everyone enjoyed the meeting and left Ithaca in a happy frame of mind.

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