

October 25, 2010

Dear High School Government teachers:

To bring you up-to-date, the campaign has continued with minimal publicity as I expected even though I did send out 50 press releases with my candidacy announcement speech that I made at Marshall High School. No one from the press has responded.

I have been excluded from all high profile candidate forums where the media might be in attendance such as the Fairfax County and Springfield Chamber of Commerce forums. I did participate in a high school candidate forum at Oakton High and one is scheduled for tomorrow at Robinson High. I have attended one forum with Gerry and Keith which was October 18th, at a retirement home known as "The Fairfax," in Fort Belvoir. No media has attended any of the forums where I have been invited.

As a government teacher I thought you might be interested to know that there are several interesting articles in today's *The Washington Times* and *The Washington Post* which I have listed below.

There is also an article about the 11th by CNN radio which was published on Friday. I have listed a fifth article which was published by the *SunGazette* in September because it offers an interesting comparison to the others. The list of articles also includes information about three voters guides that are being published. Feel free to share this information with your students and fellow teachers.

I thought you could use the articles in the classroom because they are very relevant to today's politics and they illustrate how the media leads the discussion about candidates, platforms, and elections with the 11th District election serving as an excellent example. The narrow scope of the articles is especially interesting considering that I am a "Not for Sale" independent candidate interested in restoring trust in the government. This is a message that the vast majority of voters can agree on but one that virtually all of the media won't publicize.

I have concluded with a very short analysis.

The articles for review are:

1) *Washington Times* article, "3rd-party candidates could tip tight races. It's a good year for independents'." October 25, 2010.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/oct/24/3rd-party-candidates-could-tip-tight-races/>

2) *Washington Post* article by Ben Pershing, "Election 2010," "On the trail in Virginia," "Northern Virginia, In an insider's bastion, outsider's rhetoric might fall flat."

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Online I can find the photo that accompanies the article, but I cannot find the article online. It is on page A5.

3) *Washington Post* column by Robert J. Samuelson, "Politics has lost its center of balance." October 25, 2010.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/24/AR2010102402217.html>. It is on page A19.

4) *CNN radio* by Bob Constantini, "Virginia voter symbolizes Democrats dilemma." October 22, 2010.

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/10/22/voters.in.middle/>

5) *SunGazette* by Brian Trompeter, "Third-Party, Independent Candidates Not Letting Long Odds Get Them Down."

September 26th, 2010.

<http://www.sungazette.net/articles/2010/09/27/fairfax/news/fe91q.txt>

6) I am aware that voters guides have or are being published by the following media/organizations.

a) *Richmond Times Dispatch*,

<http://hq.thevoterguide.org/v/richmond/c/login!submit.do?code=E4E3RW4G>

b) Northern Virginia League of Women Voters to be distributed by:

i) Manassas Journal Messenger, October 21, 2010

ii) Connection Newspapers, October 21, 2010

http://lww-va.org/files/fairfax_voters_guide.pdf

c) *The Washington Post*, not published with possible publication date of October 28, 2010.

d) *The Bull Run, Manassas, and Old Bridge Observer*. October 21, 2010.

This voters guide is not available online and only available in print.

The interesting aspects of the articles are:

the Washington Times article

1) The *Times* is the first local media organization that has acknowledged the effect independents and third party candidates can have on close elections.

2) The *Times* article is correct because last November I was an independent candidate for Fairfax County School Board, Providence District. My candidacy caused the Republican to win as evidenced by the fact that the district voted for the Democrat Creigh Deeds for Governor over the Republican Bob McDonnell. The Democratic candidate for school board should have prevailed since the district supported the Democratic candidate for Governor. This was the first time a Democratic candidate had lost a Providence District election since 1971.

Washington Post, "Election 2010",

1) Ben Pershing's article is typical for the media in that to date he has not and in this article he does not mention any independent or third party candidates. This article

reinforces the polarizing aspects of the political parties while exclusion of the names of the other candidates helps to maintain the status-quo.

2) The article does not mention that candidates were excluded from participating in the candidates forum for which he based his article. The forum was sponsored by the "Fairfax Committee of 100" and the "Prince William Committee of 100"

Washington Post, "Politics has lost its center of balance."

1) Robert Samuelson discusses the mass discontent and the reasons for the mass discontent.

2) He concludes that the problem is perpetual and that this election is not going to "resolve this stalemate."

3) This article is published on the same day in the same edition and section as Pershing's article that excludes any reference to independent or third party candidates.

CNN radio, "Virginia voter symbolizes Democrats dilemma."

1) National media article about the 11th District.

2) Constantini explains that voters are frustrated.

3) He mentions an organization IndependentVoting.org, that is a proponent of independent voters which comprise 40% of voters nationwide.

4) Neither Constantini nor the President of IndependentVoting.org mention that an independent candidate is on the ballot in an article about the district where there is an independent candidate.

SunGazette, "Third-Party, Independent Candidates Not Letting Long Odds Get Them Down."

1) The only media publication that has acknowledged the presence of independent and third party candidates.

My analysis:

1) Voters cannot depend on the media for complete unbiased information about elections and candidates.

2) Voters need to expend more effort to better educate themselves about elections and candidates.

3) Candidate information is available for voters if they are interested in making the effort to learn about the candidates but they have to determine where to look.

4) Exclusion of independent and third party candidates by the media keeps the discussion polarized and narrow, facilitates maintenance of the status-quo, reinforces the concept that the platforms of independent and third party candidates are not worth considering and diminishes their interest in trying to participate in the discussion and campaigning.

5) *The Washington Post* writer Samuelson represents that the paper recognizes the frustration and concerns of the voters while at the same time professional journalist Pershing writes a narrow article focused on the status-quo.

6) Given the hundreds of voters I have spoken with during the last six months I am sure that my candidacy will have an effect on this election. Having collected 1,500 signatures of registered voters I am more engaged with the voters than the media. I know that many voters are frustrated and looking for an alternative to the status-quo and many of them

agree with my “Not for Sale” platform.

7) The election in the 11th raises the question of whether in what are perceived to be very close elections for the Democrats and the Republicans with a strong true independent such as myself, moderate voters will abandon their typical party candidate and vote for the independent. This shift could occur at the last minute out of frustration that one's party candidate doesn't have enough support from the independents which will create the fear that the other party candidate will win.

Faced with this situation, these voters may realize that if they compromise a little on their usual party choice and align with the independent they might get something that for a little risk could be better than the status-quo.

8) It is sad and unfortunate that even in the most educated congressional district in the nation that we can't figure out how to improve our system of self-government.

Chris DeCarlo