

CAMPAIGNING ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FROM A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW PERSPECTIVE AND THE SECULAR MEDIA COVERAGE AND REACTION

~ Excerpts from interviews with Vermont's media ~

SHEPARD FOR CONGRESS (2006, VERMONT)
Mark Shepard, Vermont State Senator (2003-2006)

Vermont Woman Magazine September 2006

Who is the Guy from Bennington County?

Many Vermonters are encountering Shepard for the first time, since this is his first campaign for a statewide office. And they're finding that he isn't shy about stating his opinions, or why he's a better choice than his opponents in both parties. ... [Shepard] said. "I am very passionate that politics is about making life better and government [allowing] more opportunities."

Choice and Gender

Although many candidates in statewide races do not support access to abortion, Shepard is the only one who doesn't shy away from calling himself pro-life; his honesty was as refreshing as his positions were disturbing.

"I think that the young women in the world need to be protected. In 1970, the world was different. The technology is so advanced now," he said. "We had two miscarriages before we had children and those two miscarriages were children to us. It's hard to intellectually make a case of it." When asked to elaborate on the idea of 'protecting young women' in a follow-up interview, Shepard specified parental notification and also added that, "Probably 50 percent of people aborted are women, so I'm protecting those women, too."

Conclusion

Shepard's plain-speaking and unabashed conservative credentials face a tough fight in the primary against Rainville, whose candidacy is supported by leaders of the state and national Republican parties. But if the rank-and-file do choose Shepard, then the general election will see some very interesting debates indeed.

Associated Press By David Gram February 21, 2006

MONTPELIER — Mark Shepard didn't set out to challenge the Republican establishment. It just seemed to work out that way when he first ran for the state Senate and now with his bid for the U.S. House.

"I don't think it serves anybody," Shepard said of the conservative label. "I think what's better to do is talk about what people stand for, talk about the issues, and who they are as people."

On [abortion], Shepard said simply, "I am pro-life." And even on that score, he questioned whether that makes him a conservative. "I think every human has huge worth. I would be anti-slavery as well," he said. "Maybe it is a liberal point of view."

Hold On – We're About To Be Assaulted!

Kurt Staudter, Columnist | August 3, 2006
*(Very strong supporter of self-avowed socialist
U. S. Senator Bernie Sanders)*

Published in the Springfield Reporter and the Vermont Standard

I'd be totally cynical about the upcoming political season, but check this out: Last week I did an interview with U.S. House candidate Senator Mark Shepard, Republican from Bennington County, and I was treated to a Vermont politician truly in the tradition of Aiken, Flanders and Jeffords. ... Now while Mark and I live at opposite ends of the political spectrum, the hour-long interview for SAPA-TV turned out to be one of the most enjoyable interviews I've ever done, and continued long after we turned off the cameras.

Here we have a native born Vermonter, raised in Hartland, with a proven record of fighting for property rights, keeping public lands open to sportsmen, controlling the size of government, lowering taxes, and on and on and on. His common sense positions on the issues, his passion to improve the lives of his fellow Vermonters, and the humility which he brings to his public service, are those same qualities that led both Rs and Ds to keep sending Jim Jeffords to Washington. Mark is no party hack, but a pragmatic family man and entrepreneur, running a shoe leather campaign in the finest Vermont tradition. If I were a Republican...

Addison Independent Editorial

(One of the more liberal Vermont newspapers)

June 14, 2006

Shepard's fresh approach to the issues makes his campaign interesting, at the very least. Whether he stands a chance against the well-financed campaign of Rainville, the GOP's anointed darling, is yet to be seen. But we suspect Shepard will find a few converts along the way with his brand of common-sense populism and a style that is unafraid to stir the pot and rankle some feathers. Add his honest approach to politics, and an old-style campaign that is refreshing and endearing, and you have the makings of a bona fide candidate. Whatever you've heard about Shepard's candidacy on the periphery of political news, his characterization as a candidate not of the middle has been greatly exaggerated. He has a few issues on which he's rowing his own boat, but on many others he's a mainstreamer trying to bring some sense to entrenched party policies and politics that cause problems with no hope for answers.

Interview on WCAX-TV's "You can Quote Me"

Hosted by Marselis Parsons and Anson Tebbetts

January 2006

Host Marselis Parsons (MP): "Are you pro-choice or pro-life?"

Mark Shepard: Pro-life.

(MP pauses, likely did not expect such a straightforward response to this question.)

MP: Isn't that a mark against you in a state that is — overwhelmingly pro-choice?

Shepard: "Well, you know, it's interesting, that discussion, and it's very, a very emotional discussion, difficult for a lot of folks and, anybody. But, you know, that is a discussion that is changing and it is, I know from my own experience why, I believe why, some of that is happening.... We have four children. We had two miscarriages before we had any of our children.

And those miscarriages were something real to us, they were our children. And I look at my children and I have to say, you know, can I say one of them shouldn't have been here? and I have to be able to say that to myself, to be able to come to that, and that's what's happening.

Shepard: You know, we saw [holds up his fingers two inches apart] Isaac, about two inches tall, pedaling like a bicycle in an ultrasound when he was, you know, just very young inside his mom. Those are the issues that we're grappling with as a nation, but I think that issue is changing, just in the sense of people and our understanding of things. A lot has changed since the 70's.... And so, I think, primarily, I think as a candidate I'll be honest with people and tell them where I am.

MP: Well, you made the choice for your family. Shouldn't I be allowed, or my wife and I be allowed to make the choice for our family?

Shepard: Well, you are asking me to say that it's, that it's okay, that your children are less important than mine, perhaps. And I just can't come to that. It's just a personal feeling, you know, when I've seen that, experienced that young life growing inside the womb and (been) excited about it, how do I just say that it's okay to end that. You know, there's certainly problems. There's things we need to deal with. We need to help folks that are in a situation like that. There's a lot of people that want to adopt. There's a lot of solutions. Is that [abortion] the best solution? I just can't come to terms where I could say that without saying that it would have to be okay for my children, and that's just something I'm unable to do."

Interview for Vermont Daily Briefing Blog

by Philip Baruth

April 13, 2006

VDB: I would go back to your earlier statements, about liberty. It seems to me that a Libertarian would say, Who I marry or what I do in my house, in my domicile, is my own business and government regulation at that point is not just unnecessary, it's threatening.

You talked about the moving target — and you said you would only regulate it if impacted other people. So why is there a need to regulate in that area?

Shepard: Making gay marriage is regulating it. Not having gay marriage is not regulating

...
But as far as the government having some purpose . . . the basis of marriage shifts. It's shifted from having some purpose around reproduction and raising children that you biologically produce — and of course there are exceptions, but laws should be made in the norm, not in the exceptions. Except in the case of civil rights.

So that's what marriage is fundamentally about. And we have a huge breakdown there, you're talking about huge costs. So I think it's important to have marriage be about that. If you move it to being about how much you love, well, government has no way of detecting how much somebody loves somebody, number one. Number two, where do you draw the line? How can you make any defense against any type of group marriage, if you go that way? Polygamy, or whatever else?

If you use the logic that it's consenting adults who love and care for each other, you can make no distinction between those things. And you open up the gates for anything. Is that where we want to go?

VDB: I don't have a problem in my own mind limiting marriage to two people.

Shepard: But why? What's your rationale?

VDB: I guess I'm thinking about each person making a lifelong commitment to another person, an exclusive commitment.

Shepard: Suppose three people do that? Where's the rationale?

VDB: So the way you see it there's no difference between polygamy and same-sex marriage?

Shepard: This is what you've reframed marriage to be, people that are saying they want to be committed together, and that they love each other. That's the basis.

VDB: But what's the matter with that [polygamy, etc.]?