

# REPUBLICAN MAIN STREET PARTNERSHIP

Political  
Action  
Committee

## Volume One

Our August PAC newsletter continues to provide you with an update on some of the candidates we will be backing in the coming elections. Thanks again for all of your support!

### *Featured Races – Pennsylvania’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Illinois’ 10<sup>th</sup> District, Wisconsin’s 6<sup>th</sup> District – General Election, 2008*

#### **Pennsylvania**



**Rep. Phil English** faced a tough re-election last year, winning with just 54%, after previous election results that saw him win with as much as 78% of the vote.

Anti-war and anti-incumbent sentiment combined to make Pennsylvania a killing field for Republicans in 2006 (the state lost four Republican congressmen on election night, more than any other state, plus one senator). 2008 is not looking much better for Republicans, including English, who finds himself in the crosshairs of Democrats and liberal activist groups.

Last month, English became the target of a new ad by the liberal activist group Americans Against Escalation in Iraq. It accuses him of acting as a rubber-stamp for administration policy on the Iraq war, a war that it claims could run on for another ten years, in turn necessitating a draft. English is also the target of Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee radio ads blasting him for his position on the war, and he has previously been the target of ads on the subject of Iraq by liberal groups MoveOn.org and Americans United for Change.

It is all somewhat ironic, given that he is one of 40 Republican supporters of a House of Representatives plan to set limits on US engagement in Iraq—something that puts him at odds with the President, and on the same page as other centrist House members on both sides of the aisle.

The plan would create narrowly limited missions for U.S. troops in Iraq, but let President Bush decide when troops should actually leave. Current polling suggests it is the kind of plan that should have popular appeal, but with the onslaught of ads by liberal groups, English may have a hard time explaining it to voters, who in 2008 will have a choice between him, his 2004 and 2006 opponent who plans to run against him again—this time as an independent—and a Democratic contender, most likely Kyle Foust, an Erie County Councilman who plans to emphasize job losses in his campaign.

Expect English to face another tough re-election battle next year—but also look for this savvy political operator to pull off another victory.

### Illinois



**Rep. Mark Kirk** is regarded as one of the brightest young stars of the Republican party, and a man who likes a challenge—which is good, because 2008 looks likely to hand him one.

Kirk's district went to Kerry with 53% of the vote in 2004—one of only a handful of districts nationwide held by Republicans that did—and he won his race last year against lackluster opponent Dan Seals, also with 53%. Moreover, Kirk is also a target of ads by Americans Against Escalation

in Iraq, despite the fact that he was one of a handful of Republicans who spoke out earlier this year about the need to let military commanders appear to be in complete control of the war effort, without meddling from the President.

Next year, Seals looks set to challenge Kirk again, but he will have to make it through a Democratic primary in order to do so. What could be a divisive primary fight, with the Iraq war featuring as a major issue (Seals is adamantly opposed to continued involvement in Iraq, whereas Jay Footlik, his Democratic opponent has been quieter on the issue), should prove advantageous to Kirk.

In 2006, Kirk was ranked by National Journal as one of the most centrist members of the House, and he is the leader of the House's Suburban Caucus—both items that stand him in good stead in his moderate district.

However, unlike some centrists, he is also well-respected by conservatives, who praise his work in voting against 2002's pork-packed Farm Bill, attempting to block funding for the famed Bridge to Nowhere in Alaska, hammering Charlie Rangel for earmarks related to self-congratulating government-supported projects, and working to reform wasteful sugar subsidies. He also has earned kudos in relation to his work with conservative Reps. John Shadegg and Lee Terry to strip members of Congress convicted of felonies of their congressional pensions.

2008 will no doubt be another tough election year for Kirk, but with Republicans of all stripes solidly behind him, and Democrats in his district potentially divided, expect him to stay in the House.

### Wisconsin



**Rep. Tom Petri** is another moderate Republican with cause for concern heading into 2008. Whereas in 2006, he ran unopposed, in 2008, Petri will face Democrat Roger Kittelson. In addition, some conservatives in the district are angling to recruit a primary challenger to run against Petri, though thus far, no candidate has formally stepped forward.

Petri has angered Democrats with his unwillingness to support a timetable for withdrawing troops from Iraq. The war is deeply unpopular in Wisconsin, where as of July, just 17% of voters said they approved of the President's handling of

it—a lower figure than in other “purple” states like Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where the percentage runs at 21%, 20% and 20%, respectively.

Some Democrats are also unhappy with his vote against the 2007 Farm Bill—something that, together with his 94% anti-pork rating from the Club for Growth, and his “A” rating for 2006 from the National Taxpayer’s Union, has endeared him to fiscal conservatives.

Petri’s problem with the Republican base seems to stem predominantly from the defense hawk faction, who disliked his vote expressing opposition to the troop surge earlier this year, although some fiscal conservative purists disagreed with his 2007 votes to increase the minimum wage, and to allow government negotiation of prescription drug prices.

For the time being, Petri looks safe from an attack from his right flank, thanks in large part to his high anti-pork rating from the Club for Growth, with his only real vulnerability coming from his Democratic challenger. While Petri’s lowest take of the vote between 2000 and 2006 was 65%, with anti-war and anti-Republican sentiment building, 2008 may prove to be an uphill battle for him.