

REPUBLICAN MAIN STREET PARTNERSHIP

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Maryland

Representative Wayne Gilchrest had a strongly contested primary but unfortunately was unable to withstand another candidate from the Eastern Shore who was largely self-financed, and the eventual winner -- a State Senator who had the strong backing of the Club for Growth. Also defeated in the Maryland congressional primaries was a long-time Democrat from the Washington, DC suburbs, Rep. Albert Wynn.

In his post-election speech, Gilchrest said that he had “worked for good government, good policy and we have worked for people around the world. The Baltimore Sun attributed his loss to heavy negative advertising, saying Gilchrest was “branded a liberal in a district where that label amounts to a scarlet letter, [and that] Gilchrest was targeted in a withering series of negative television commercials and direct-mail fliers that jammed the mailboxes of district voters for months. Some voters stuck with him despite the attacks, but others were persuaded that he doesn't truly represent the district.

The Maryland primary results may be an indication that the “change” message being sent by voters will be present at both the National and local level in the months to come. Increased turnout also appears to be evidence of strong voter discontent with the status quo.

New York

In New York's 29th Congressional District, **Representative Randy Kuhl** continues to face strong opposition from his 2006 opponent, Eric Massa. Massa has the cash on hand advantage: \$414,603 to Kuhl's \$362,513, and has been helped by fundraisers hosted by House Majority Leader Stenny Hoyer and Caucus Chair Rahm Emanuel.

Rep. Kuhl continues an active presence in his district. Addressing the Lincoln Day dinner in Hornell, he stressed the need for Congress to put aside partisanship and work together with President Bush to solve the Nation's problems. He cited the economy and our dependence on foreign oil as key problems that needed government attention. Kuhl talked about providing incentives for small business to grow. He said small business makes up over 90 percent of the region's economy. “That's where the real job creation has to be in the small businesses across America but especially in this region.”

Pennsylvania

Democrats are gearing up for another effort to defeat **Representative Jim Gerlach**, who survived a close race in 2006. Gerlach has won by one percent or less in his last two elections.

At least three Democrats will vie in the upcoming Pennsylvania primary for the opportunity to face Gerlach. All are criticizing Gerlach for being too close to President Bush. Gerlach is fighting back, even before knowing his opponent, by citing his independent voting record. "That's been the Democrats' strategy in the last three cycles, and it hasn't worked," Gerlach said. "I'm one of the most independent members of the House. It's clear that the Democrats are grasping at straws."

As evidence of his independence, Gerlach cited his vote in favor of a bill that would fund stem cell research and his vote to override the president's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

In announcing his bid for reelection, Gerlach promised to run a strong campaign. "We have a lot of work cut out for us," the Republican said, adding that he expected another "spirited campaign" from Democrats for the seat.

Maine

Senator Susan Collins faces Rep. Tom Allen in what many political commentators say could be very close race. Maine political observers say the race between Collins and Allen is the most important, hotly-contested race in the recent history of the state of Maine.

National groups such as Moveon.org are providing large amounts of money to Allen, but Collins won the fundraising battle in 2007 -- \$4.5 million to \$3 million. Already, the closely watched contest between Collins and Allen is on pace to be the most expensive Senate race in Maine history.

Maine political science professor Sandy Maisel notes that a large portion of the contributions are coming from partisan sources out of state because the race has been seen as possibly controlling the balance of power in the Senate. Ever since Lincoln Chafee, a moderate Republican from Rhode Island, lost his Senate seat in 2006, when Democrats regained control of both houses of Congress, Collins' seat also has been viewed as vulnerable, he said. "The Republicans desperately need to defend every seat they can. The biggest indicator of incumbent spending is challenger spending."

Collins' staff are making the case that Allen's Moveon.org support is a strong contrast to the Senator's strong record as a moderate willing to work across party lines to craft effective solutions.

Oregon

Senator Gordon Smith is clearly vulnerable as he sits in an increasingly Democratic state in what seems to be shaping up as a good Democratic year.

A political blog in the Washington Post lists the Oregon Senate race as one of the top ten closest for 2008. They indicate that national Democrats keep touting state House Speaker Jeff Merkley as an all-star candidate. But they note that there continues to be little evidence of Merkley's potential prowess with his fundraising in the final three months of 2007, \$563,000 raised, \$516,000 in the bank, which they call "solid but not overwhelming." And, attorney Steve Novick continues to raise enough money to ensure he will run a serious primary campaign against Merkley.

Local political commentators predict the race will be close, but say Smith has a model for how to run a strong re-election campaign despite weaknesses at the top of the ticket. In 1992, then-Senator Bob Packwood, R-Ore., turned back a strong challenge from a Democratic congressman, Les AuCoin, despite the fact that President George Bush had surrendered Oregon to Democrat Bill Clinton.

Virginia

Representative Tom Davis recently announced that he will not seek election to another term in Congress. Davis received strong praise from many, with the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call saying he was "a relatively rare moderate success story. Davis was able to serve in leadership with distinction and ascend to a committee chairmanship, all the while holding an increasingly marginal suburban district with relative ease."

Roll Call noted the other retirements in the ranks of centrists and cited the fact that most moderate Republicans reside in swing districts, so they have to raise money constantly and fight to stay alive every two years. And, Roll Call noted, they regularly encounter primary challenges from conservatives, sometimes backed by well-funded groups like the Club for Growth.

Davis' House seat could be in jeopardy for the Republicans, as the Northern Virginia suburbs have been trending to the left and several strong Democratic candidates are already raising funds.