

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Last week, I announced that I would be a candidate for the State Senate representing Franklin County and Alburgh.

I am running because Vermont is in a financial crisis and, with my experience as Vermont's State Auditor, I believe I can help. For example, Vermont's economy is in recession. There are job losses, exploding property taxes and out-of-control Medicare spending. Gasoline and heating oil prices are at their highest costs in history.

Outlining the problem is easy. Devising practical solutions is a lot harder.

I certainly don't claim to know all of the answers.

But we have to start somewhere. I start with a framework – a set of core ideas and principles. Here are a few of my core beliefs:

- I strongly believe that taxpayers rather than government know best how to use their hard-earned money. Vermont has the highest tax burden in the nation. We need to lower it.
- I believe that government should be lean and efficient. The State of Vermont is now Vermont's largest employer. Government represents more than one in six jobs. We need to change that.
- An expanded and growing economy is essential for financial health. We need more high paying private sector jobs. Legislation and economic policy needs to promote that end. We need to remove regulatory barriers that impede creating sound economic growth.
- Property taxes should not drive those on fixed incomes out of their homes. We cannot continue to permit education costs to increase while enrollment falls. We should explore increasing other revenue sources, while at the same time decreasing property taxes, so that the total tax burden does not rise. In the long term, we should focus on the cost side of the ledger and not accept the argument that nothing can be done to control cost.
- Vermont's environment must be protected. But we must also recognize that average Vermonters are part of that environment. Their needs and opinions must be taken into account. Permitting must be made clear, transparent, timely and certain. That after 20 years we still do not have a decision in the Wal-Mart case is almost criminal.
- We must help our fellow citizens in time of need. The current energy crisis is one of those times. Of course, the cost of heating oil and gasoline is a function of global markets and Federal policy. However, there are practical things that we as a state can do to help.

As the campaign cycle unfolds, I intend to outline specific measures that I will champion in each of these areas, and more.

But before I talk, I want to listen. The job of a state senator is to represent the voters. That's why I want to hear from as many of you as possible. I've already started visiting every town and village to hear the concerns and the ideas of as many voters as I can. I'm going to continue doing this until Election Day and throughout my term if you see fit to send me back to Montpelier. If you've got any

thoughts or ideas, feel free to call me at home (868-2300) or on my cell phone (309-8220). My email address is [Randy@RandyBrock.com](mailto:Randy@RandyBrock.com). Let's start solving these problems together.

Randy Brock