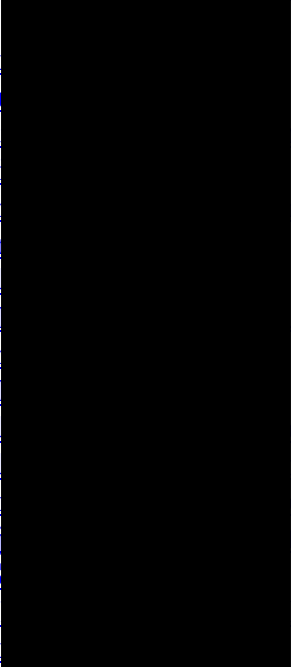


I'll just paste the email in below.

Good luck tomorrow!

Date: Sat, 1 Nov 2008 16:55:57 -0700 (PDT)
From: Sarah ODonnell <sarahodonnay@rocketmail.com>
Subject: Fw: Help us elect these Democrats!
To: sarahodonnay@rocketmail.com
Cc:

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the names and email addresses of the recipients in the 'Cc:' field. Only the email domain parts are visible to the right of the redaction.

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Dear Friends,

Pardon this intrusion - I have never sent a political email in my life, but I just had to make you aware of this situation. Al Franken isn't the only local Democrat who needs our support this election. So does Kevin Staunton, the DFL candidate for Minnesota House. **Polls show Mr. Staunton's campaign is particularly vulnerable this election due to the high number of Democrats who are splitting their votes and supporting Ron Erhardt.** Republican voters however, are not straying and are supporting the very conservative Keith Downey by an high percentage. When you do the math, Keith Downey wins the race if even just 20% of Democrats in the district vote for Ron Erhardt. Ron Erhardt is polling pretty low with the voters sampled, but is unfortunately doing well enough that he could be a spoiler for Staunton if we don't stick together. We simply can't risk Keith Downey winning.

I received the note below from a friend recently articulating why she was supporting Kevin Staunton - I have pasted it below. Again, I hope that I am not offending you by sending this out to my distribution list. But I know that we all want to do our part to get a Democrat finally elected to the Minnesota House. If you agree, please forward this message on to your distribution list. If we all pull together we can turn this around.

Thank you and go Democrats 08!

Why I am voting for Kevin Staunton

I am writing to urge you to join me in voting for my friend, Kevin Staunton, for State Representative in our district. Kevin is a long time Edinan and close friend. Not only is he exceptionally well qualified for the role, but I can personally attest to his integrity, work ethic and intellect. This choice is more important than you might think- this person will help determine things like how and to what level our schools are funded, the

amount of state and property taxes we pay, how we get ourselves out of the current crisis in healthcare spending, and whether or state is a leader in the development of alternative energy sources so we can finally kick our addiction to foreign oil.

I realize you might be tempted to vote for Ron Erhardt. After all, he did the right thing in overriding the governor's veto of the Transportation Act.

You should know though that voting for Ron Erhardt is not a benign act. Over the course of his tenure he has voted lockstep with the House Republicans against school funding on a routine basis (11 times in the past two sessions alone). Ron is nowhere on issues like the development of renewable energy sources. Ron has shown no interest or leadership in tackling the healthcare cost crisis - and if we can't stop this budget category from growing at a 15-18% rate each year there won't be money left over for schools, the environment, and transportation! Ron's transportation leadership is appreciated - but we need education, healthcare and environmental leadership too.

If Democrats split their votes between Kevin Staunton and Ron Erhardt, there is a very real risk that Keith Downey, a conservative Republican, will win Edina. Ron didn't lose his party's endorsement over the Transportation Act veto - he lost it because a highly organized religious right Republican mobilized a huge number of people to take over their caucus. It had very little to do with the Transportation Act. Downey's plan was underway almost two years before that vote. Downey's people are telling supporters that their poll shows that Republicans are not straying - and that the Democrats are splitting that vote. Why would you want to risk losing Edina's seat to a conservative Republican when there is a very viable Democrat in the race?

Let the Republicans show each other how they feel about this takeover of their party. Let them vote for Ron Erhardt and give him more votes than Keith Downey. But please don't sacrifice our best chance in 18 years to win in Edina.

More importantly though, Kevin Staunton is on the right side of the issues Democrats care about most:

School Funding - Kevin supports stable and adequate funding for our public schools so they can focus on excellence and innovation instead of worrying about whether the next levy will pass so they can keep current operating standards. Kevin will never throw school funding under the bus like Ron Erhardt did the last time we faced a budget deficit in 2003. Our schools are central to what makes this state great. They cannot be risked. Kevin is endorsed by Education Minnesota and by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association. Please see a list of recent education funding legislations (and citations) that Ron Erhardt voted again.

Healthcare - Paul Thissen, the Chairman of the Healthcare Committee, has said that Kevin is the only candidate who even remotely understands the complexities driving the healthcare crisis in this state and what it will take to cut costs while not reducing quality or access to those Minnesotans who need it most.

The Environment and Energy - Kevin believes in the development of a green economy to bring more jobs to Minnesota. He supports the development of a renewable energy standard and the creation of alternative energy solutions to help curb our dependence on foreign oil and to lessen pollution. Ron barely qualified for Clean Water Action's endorsement - he raised his score to 80% from 70% this year and they have a policy of endorsing incumbents who meet their minimum. But you should know that every Democrat they are endorsing is close to 100%. Ron is not a better friend to the environment than Kevin.

Choice - Kevin also supports a woman's right to choose. Planned Parenthood and NARAL have endorsed Ron because they have a policy of endorsing any incumbent who fully supports their agenda.

Kevin is also very qualified: 4 years in the Atty General's Office, 11 years as City Attorney for Excelsior, on the Edina Planning Commission. Kevin is endorsed by Amy Klobuchar, Edina Mayor Jim Hovland, Edina

City Council Members Ann Swenson and Joni Bennett. Thousands of Edinans are behind him - see this week's Sun Current page 10B! And more than 97% of his campaign fund came in small amounts from individual voters - not from PACs and special interests like Ron's did.

I hope you are not offended that I sent this - I obviously feel passionately about this race. Mr. Staunton deserves our votes.

Thanks, SK

Ron Erhardt's Poor Record on Education

Ron Erhardt has consistently voted with House Republicans to reduce or deny education funding legislation. Here are some key votes from the last two legislative sessions (2005-08). References to the official record of votes in the House Journal are provided to facilitate verification. There are dozens more votes like this in years prior!

Opposed studying a better way to fund education. This year an amendment was offered to require that a plan be drafted for the state to take over school funding. The goal was to ensure that all schools be adequately funded, so they can provide a quality education to children no matter where they may live. This would allow school operating levies to be repealed and thus property taxes lowered. Erhardt opposed even studying the possibility of doing this. [House Journal, p. 9759]

Opposed additional education funding. This year Erhardt voted against a bill that would have provided an additional \$51 per pupil for every school district, a bill that many other Republicans supported. [House Journal, p. 12133] Fortunately, the funding was ultimately included as part of the omnibus bill, which did pass. Erhardt's campaign literature trumpets his support for the latter while failing to mention that he earlier voted against the education funding bill.

Voted against new school education accountability measures. Erhardt opposed the 2008 E-12 Education Policy bill and its improvements to the education system, which the Governor vetoed. The bill included new accountability and other measurements to the state's school report card so parents can be better informed. [House Journal, p. 11776]

Voted against ending double-digit tuition increases. Erhardt opposed the Higher Education Finance bill that brought an end to double-digit tuition increases as it came back from conference committee. [House Journal, p. 6195] The result was the later passage of a bill that did less to reduce tuition costs for students.

Voted to Continue Minnesota Participation in NCLB. Erhardt cast the deciding vote to defeat a proposal to discontinue the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) effective July 1, 2006 unless the Legislature passed a law during the 2006 Legislative Session establishing that certain waivers or variances from NCLB had been granted by the federal Department of Education. [House Journal, p. 3450] Despite widespread agreement that NCLB is counterproductive and capricious, its repeal failed. Accordingly

even an outstanding school system like the Edina Public Schools finds itself failing to meet the NCLB criteria.

Voted Against a Substantial Increase in Education Funding. Erhardt cast a deciding vote against adding more funding, \$104 per pupil, to the education funding formula. [House Journal, p. 3453]

Voted Against Funding Voluntary All-Day Kindergarten Programs. Erhardt voted against providing funds to school districts who voluntarily wish to implement All-Day Kindergarten. [House Journal, p. 3454]

Voted to Lower Teacher Standards. Erhardt voted for a measure that would create a two-track licensing system for teachers, undercutting a system that insures teacher quality through established professional standards applicable at any school in the state. [House Journal, p. 5772]

Voted to Continue Underfunding Higher Education. In 2005 Erhardt voted for a Higher Education funding bill that not only cut higher education funding by \$57 million, but for the first time in recent history did not fully cover enrollment growth at MnSCU. [House Journal, p. 2824]

Verdict of Professional Educators

With a voting record like this, it's no wonder that both the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and Education Minnesota, which represents Minnesota's public school teachers, declined to endorse Erhardt. Instead they endorsed Kevin Staunton.