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In preparation for the upcoming election, the River Cities' Reader asked candidates to respond to the following: "Compare yourself to and contrast yourself with your opponent(s) in terms of your respective positions on the issues you think will be most important during the next term of the office you're seeking. "

We sent this question to more than 70 candidates in contested races on the ballots in Scott and Rock Island counties. More than 30 candidates answered the call, and their responses are included here.

Keep in mind that we asked candidates to be brief, to be specific, to contrast their positions with those of their opponent(s), and to back up their claims. We'll leave it to you to decide how well they followed those guidelines.

This exercise is intended as a supplement to other information voters should consider before casting their ballots.

U.S. Senate, Illinois Seat

Steven Burgauer

Libertarian

<http://www.burgauer2002.com>

<http://pages.prodigy.net/scifi20/liberty.htm>

If you don't know me, my name is Steven Burgauer. I'm from Peoria, and I'm running for the United States Senate.

I'm from the generation that burned their draft cards, that occupied the dean's office in protest, that escaped to Canada to avoid the war.

I'm old enough to remember the old saying from the Nixon-era: If nominated, I will not run. If elected, I will not serve. If indicted, I will not resign.

It made me laugh back in those days. And it still does now.

Candidate Statements for the November 5 Election: Illinois Federal

Written by No Author

Tuesday, 29 October 2002 18:00

For in it was an element of truth: Politicians can't be trusted. They're lousy people, without any honor. Grow up to be anything you want, but never a politician.

Truth is, I never wanted to be a politician. I still don't. What I want is to serve my country. I want to make it stronger. I want to make it healthier. I want to make it be the best that it can be.

Corny words? Perhaps. But never were more honest words spoken.

The America I see is one where no idea is punished, where no risk is stalled, where no work is reduced and no freedom infringed. The America I see has sharply lower taxes. It has a smaller, less intrusive national government. It has accepted choice as a part of education. It has breathed new life into the Second Amendment. It has upheld an individual's right to privacy, from the bedroom to the boardroom.

The America I see doesn't make war unless Congress declares it. It works with whatever governments are in power around the world. It trades freely with whatever countries wish to trade. It promotes the ideals of a republican-style government, and it does so in a non-threatening manner.

The America I see protects the natural rights of people. It enforces private contracts. It ensures property rights. It provides for the national defense.

The America I see is just over the next hill. I can see it clearly along the horizon. The lights are bright, the air clean. Let's go there together, you and me. It's not far. We can make it if we try.

Thank you and God bless.

U.S. House of Representatives, Illinois District 17

Lane Evans Democrat

The clearest difference between my opponent and myself is that I will fight to insure that the interests of average Americans are put before the needs of big business and special interests. My opponent favors the extreme Republican agenda of promoting large corporations at the expense of working families.

A good example of this is NAFTA. I opposed Fast Track because I believe Congress should maintain oversight on trade agreements. I believe that many of the past trade agreements, specifically NAFTA, have helped send manufacturing jobs overseas as we recently witnessed by the closing of Maytag's Galesburg facility. The president and his trade negotiators have shown no interest in preserving our manufacturing base. As a result, we have lost tens of thousands of good-paying jobs to Mexico, China, and Central America.

My opponent wholeheartedly supports NAFTA. And to add insult to injury, he even stated that he didn't think the Maytag closure was related to NAFTA even when the company made it clear

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that it was sending these jobs straight to Mexico. You can be assured that I will continue to fight our misguided trade policies. And I will guarantee to you that I will continue to fight for average Americans so that our government works for Main Street, no Wall Street.