

Nominating Speech for Peggy Reeves

Paul Burnham

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It gives me great pleasure to nominate our good friend Peggy Reeves, as our Democratic Party's candidate for the 143rd Connecticut House District.

Now two and a half years ago John Kalamarides and I met with Peggy for a late afternoon coffee. Our agenda, unknown to her, was to persuade her to run for the 143rd. I must say that I had some misgivings about our mission. Here we had one of the best-liked Democrats in Wilton, who had filled her role as our Registrar of Voters for more than a decade with extraordinary efficiency, dedication and distinction, and now here we were asking her to resign from that job, and engage in an all-consuming nearly year-long very public very uphill struggle against the Wilton Republican monolith for the purpose of finding alternate employment, the new job promising a horrendous commute, longer hours than most full time jobs, pay at about a fifth of minimum wage - and with the added bonus of the potential of relentless, pointed and public criticism from those she would be doing her best to work on behalf of. Much to my surprise and I suppose somewhat to my personal dismay because I felt this might well jeopardize a friendship of long standing, she accepted John's and my suggestion. And, as they say, the rest is history.

Peggy asked me to put her name in nomination tonight because she thinks I have known her longer than any other delegate. Well, maybe so in a sense. But the Peggy that John and I thought we knew when we shared those cups of coffee is not the same woman whom all of us have come to know over the last two years. We didn't know then that Peggy is an extraordinarily hard and determined campaigner. I thought 500 doors was a lot to knock on, when I ran 6 years ago - she bested my accomplishment by a factor of ten. We have since discovered that she is self-effacing only when she wants to be. We have discovered that she can grasp complex issues and find solutions to the most intractable of problems. We have discovered that she is a leader. We have discovered that she is an independent thinker. We have discovered that she is a natural public speaker. We have discovered that she possesses the skills necessary to work AS A PEER with some of the worst type-A personalities in Connecticut, and that she has their respect. We have marveled at the long, hard and effective hours she puts in for us in Hartford. We could not be better served.

We in the 143rd have, in addition, discovered for the first time in a long time, if ever, the benefits of being represented by someone who, as a Democrat, is a member of the majority party - just as one example Peggy was instrumental in the efforts to turn Connecticut's estate tax from being one of the most punitive in the nation to being one of the least. This in a legislature where many Democratic representatives have almost no constituents who can expect their estates to be subject to any tax - and yet Peggy was somehow able to get these representatives to understand how important this issue was to us, her constituents, and to the State in general. We need you Peggy.

Peggy has deep roots in Wilton--and through her husband Bob, in Norwalk as well. We know that she understands our priorities, our hopes for ourselves and our families, our fears. She is one of us. She is there for us, not for herself.

This time around John and I had no arm twisting to do. How fortunate all of us are! Peggy has earned another two years and much more. She deserves every bit of effort each of us can give to her candidacy. Thank you, Peggy.