

The Leader endorses Massa for Congress

THE ISSUE | Our endorsement for the 29th Congressional seat.
OUR OPINION | The ideas put forward by Democrat Eric Massa, along with his intense dedication, make him the best choice to serve in Washington.

Just like in their first encounter two years ago, the outcome of the race between U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr. and Democrat Eric Massa should be close.

Kuhl held off the political newcomer, 51 percent to 49 percent, in 2006, and Massa has been working hard ever since to win over enough voters to put him over the top.

We think Massa deserves to come out ahead in the rematch, and *The Leader* endorses him to be the next representative of the 29th Congressional District.

We are backing Massa, a retired Navy commander, former Corning Inc. employee and cancer survivor, based on his economic and foreign policy views, which differ greatly from those of Kuhl.

Kuhl has had a long and distinguished career in politics, serving 24 years as a state representative and four years in Congress. In his current position, he's succeeded in bringing millions of dollars to the district for a wide variety of projects and programs.

However, Kuhl tethered himself to the Bush policies, both foreign and domestic, that are greatly responsible for the condition the country is in today. Although Kuhl and many other Republicans have tried to distance themselves from President Bush in recent months, there's no erasing the years of staunch loyalty to a failed agenda.

As for Massa, he subscribes to the economic plan offered by Barack Obama and other Democrats to give a break to middle-class working Americans. Tax cuts to those earning less than \$250,000 sounds refreshing, and returning the wealthy to levels established back in the Clinton administration seems fair.

That contrasts with Kuhl's economic plan, which looks to make permanent President Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy.

The old "trickle-down" economics Bush and Kuhl support won't help working-class residents as much as the "bubble-up" approach advocated by Massa and Obama.

There's also a clear difference in how each candidate views the \$850 billion bailout for Wall Street. Massa thought it was a mistake – not in principal – but because it didn't contain enough safeguards to protect taxpayers' money. Kuhl first voted against the bailout and then flipped and voted for it after \$150 billion was added for pork and tax credits.

Only time will tell if the bailout will work, but credit Massa for being a bit more cautious than most – including many Democrats – who were willing to throw money at the problem with only a limited number of safeguards.

Revisiting some of our trade agreements is something Massa supports, which could help restore jobs and improve the economy. Citing labor statistics, Massa said New York has lost 50,000 jobs overseas as a result of the trade agreements supported by Kuhl.

Remarkably, Kuhl denies

there has been any negative impact or job loss as a result of the nation's trade agreements.

To help solve the nation's energy crisis, Kuhl has touted the party line of "drill here, drill now, pay less." Specifically, that means dramatic expansion of offshore drilling and opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to exploration. It also means doing more with shale, coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind and other forms of alternative energy to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

Massa has a more conservative approach, which holds the oil companies accountable. While he supports alternative energy, he doesn't believe America should simply expose all of its resources with disregard for future needs.

Massa believes oil companies should either drill on the millions of acres they now lease, or give them up. Also, Americans should not be subsidizing Big Oil, which posts billions of dollars in profits while the public pays exorbitant prices at the pump. Instead, Big Oil should be forced to pay royalties that can help pay for developing new energy sources and relieve our national debt.

Kuhl, on the other hand, believes Big Oil should have the run of the place and not be required to pay its fair share. We believe that's a sellout.

As for the Iraq War, Massa looks to bring our troops home, while Kuhl continues to abdicate that decision to the generals on the ground. It's true Kuhl was not in Congress when the war began, but he consistently voted to provide a blank check for the war while opposing any timetables for troop withdrawal. Now, Iraq itself is urging our troops to leave.

Drawing from his extensive military background, Massa has opposed the war's premise and strategies that have kept American troops there for six long years. Massa, along with most Americans, feels the negative and hurtful impact the war has had on families, the military, the economy, the national debt and our standing as a global power, which will take years, if not decades, to repair.

Lastly, we like Massa's fiery personality. He's intense – maybe a little too intense at times – but that's not necessarily a bad trait at a time when so much change is needed in Washington.

Kuhl, on the other hand, has grown insular, changing his town hall format and avoiding some public appearances and debates while preferring to operate under more controlled settings. He's also become deeply partisan as demonstrated by his comment that the Democratic majority wants the American public to suffer and hurt.

We think it's time to move past that kind of counterproductive rhetoric. We think Massa, as a member of the majority, will work hard in the best interests of both the district and the country.

ARTIST'S VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fired for my belief: Vote Ordway

TO THE EDITOR | I was hired as a deputy in February 2000 for the Navigation Division of the Steuben County Sheriff's Office.

The last 8 years, I worked Keuka Lake, Loon Lake, as well as all small surrounding lakes within Steuben County. I have truly enjoyed my position with the sheriff's department for the last eight years and hoped to continue for many more years to come. During my tour I have been complimented many times by Sheriff Tweddell, Undersheriff Cole and Chief Deputy Ordway for a job well done.

This last summer, I was notified by Undersheriff Cole that my services were no longer needed for summer of 2008. I was singled out for political reasons for my support of Joel Ordway.

I felt the coverage on Keuka Lake, as well as all lakes of Steuben County, suffered greatly because of this election.

I encourage you to vote for Joel Ordway on Nov. 4.

Paul W. Stevens
Arkport

Tweddell should resign from post

TO THE EDITOR | We are outraged that Joel Ordway was "turned in" in regards to violating the Hatch Act. As the Hatch Act is interpreted, it is very obvious that our current sheriff violated the Hatch Act when he ran for office. As someone who believes that all rules should be enforced equally and not selectively, we are calling for the resignation of Sheriff Tweddell. We are very hopeful that the press can do a Freedom of Information inquiry and find out exactly who turned in Ordway. Joel has done nothing but dedicate his career to the residents of Steuben County and now, because of some coward, Joel has to resign when he is only nine months from retirement eligibility. I'm hoping that all residents of this county are upset as we are come out and help us elect Joel as our next sheriff of Steuben County.

Andy & Lynette
Murphy
Canisteo

Merry Christmas to Tiny Tim

TO THE EDITOR | There are three things I've learned in this year's Steuben County Sheriff's race:

1) Joel Ordway is a decent family man.

2) Sheriff is spelled with one 'r' and two 'f's.
3) His opponents unfairly accused him of violating the Hatch Act.

Only his opponent could benefit by calling the feds on violating the Hatch Act. They are the only ones to gain by it. Joel was only doing his job. If Ordway is guilty of the Hatch act, so is the sheriff, undersheriff, legislators, county clerk, and every county elected official that knows the grant-writing process. Should they resign also, or is there a double standard?

Now Joel Ordway has to resign and lose his family's income and health insurance. Cheap actions like this are not needed in Steuben County politics. It's a sad commentary on our society today. "Merry Christmas, Tiny Tim."

Michael Gabrielli
Hammondsport

Fear-mongering must stop

TO THE EDITOR | "One of the questions constantly asked about Barack Obama is this: 'Is he a Muslim?' The correct answer is 'no – he is a dedicated Christian.' However, the really right answer is: What difference does it make? Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in America? The answer is no, that is not America."

– Colin Powell, in his endorsement of Barack Obama for president

I cherish Colin Powell's vision and efforts to help us truly understand religious freedom in America. There are those in this presidential campaign who do not want to discuss the issues facing our country but, instead, only want to use every e-mail, every interview and every conversation as an opportunity to plant seeds of fear in the hearts of the American people. The times are scary enough without people adding false claims to the political process.

God is not Muslim or Christian or Jewish or Hindu. The Creator of the Universe is not Democrat or Republican. America's freedom of religion includes not favoring one religion over another so that all are free to worship as called by God.

These are very difficult times and the more we make decisions based on some kind of fear, the smaller, more narrow and more fearful our lives will become. Thank you Colin Powell for helping us keep our eyes open to the true meaning of religious freedom in America.

Gary McCaslin
Corning

Conservative women count too

TO THE EDITOR | It is very sad that people who say that women who don't share the ideas of NOW are not representative of American women.

Conservative American women have just and valid views, and need to be treated justly, and not made fun of if they don't agree with liberal women.

Americans need to be careful, if anyone has views contrary to groups like NOW, or contrary to Obama's platform – look out, you'll be attacked like Sarah Palin or Joe the Plumber.

Be careful of any group that targets people like Joe the Plumber and Sarah Palin. It's too bad the Democrats don't go after Barney Frank, Chris Dodd, some of the ACORN execs who took millions from ACORN's funds, and the thousands of ACORN voter registration workers who may very well have instances in their pasts that could be considered far worse than anything Joe the Plumber has been accused of doing.

I guess it's time I grouped all the Democrats under one label – as I've been getting e-mails of Republicans all grouped under one label. But on second thought, I won't stoop to that level. And say peace and all good to all the people of goodwill on both sides.

Gloria House
Corning

Wars, pipelines: Not God's will

TO THE EDITOR | I would like the members of our present government and all the presidential candidates, especially those who continually cite God, to remember that God created everything. Therefore, it cannot be God's will when some of his creatures damage or destroy others. Torture, human rights abuses, killings, bombings, invasions or wars, they cannot be God's will. Hiroshima, the Holocaust, 9/11, Guantanamo, the invasion of Iraq, and so many other similar crimes, were not God's will. As for the Alaska pipeline ... is it going to improve God's creation?

Catherine Caneau
Corning

ELECTION LETTERS

The deadline for election letters is Oct. 27. These letters will be run no later than Nov. 2.

Is anyone else tired of all this election drama?

I know I'm not alone in saying I'll be glad when Nov. 5 rolls around.

That's the day after Election Day, which means no more political attack ads on TV.

Getting sick and tired of that crap? The Eric Massa vs. Randy Kuhl ads are the worst and seem endless.

CITY BEAT

If you notice, they tend to say the same thing. Each one accuses the other of having bad judgment, being out of

touch and eager to ruin nearly everything that is good.

"He'll raise taxes." "Jobs will be lost." "He'll put us all in the poor house." And so on, and so on.

In my household, we've tuned them out or turned them off for some time now. We can't take any more and with nine days until the election, expect the attack ads to intensify.

...

Speaking of Randy Kuhl, he missed his lunch up in Watkins Glen the other day.

He was the only invited candidate who didn't show up for a Thursday luncheon put on by the Schuyler County League of Women Voters. (Wouldn't want to risk being heckled by a busload of unruly league members, I guess).

Instead, Kuhl was in Centerway Square showcasing an endorsement from a vets group. (No chance of heckling there).

One thing you can say about Randy's campaign, he's played it safe. No debates before live audiences and appearances where the environment is largely controlled. In doing so, Randy minimized his exposure to awkward questions, snickering and side comments.

His opponent, Eric Massa, has been far less cautious with a willingness to take on all comers, including the League of Women Voters in both Schuyler and Steuben counties. (How utterly reckless).

Will Randy's prevent defense pay off? Is it possible to win a campaign by avoiding voters?

The Chemung County Council of Women and Chemung County League of Women Voters are hosting a tea at 2 p.m. today at Elmira Notre Dame for the candidates and it'll be interesting to see if Randy shows or he stays with his no-risk strategy.

...

Enforcement of the federal Hatch Act has forced Undersheriff Dave Cole and Chief Deputy Joel Ordway to resign their position so they can remain candidates for sheriff. It should also lead to another change in the sheriff's department.

The job of applying for federal grants should be moved out of the sheriff's office to another county department. That's what triggered the federal probe in the first place and all precautions should be taken to avoid such a mess happening again.

However, it would be difficult for the sheriff's department to totally avoid conflict, given how that act is being interpreted. At the very least the sheriff's office would have to be consulted about grant applications with the consequences clearly understood by those involved.

If those federal grants weren't so important to providing public safety, I'd say forget them altogether.

■ Jbe Dunning is managing editor for *The Leader*. He can be reached at jdunning@the-leader.com or 936-4651, Ext. 362.

LETTERS POLICY | THE LEADER

■ Letters should be typed or neatly printed.

■ Letters must be kept to a maximum of 250 words. Letters longer than that will not be considered.

■ Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. No letters will be published unless verified with the author in person or by

telephone.

■ Letters may be edited for space considerations.

■ The publication of any letter is at the discretion of the editor.

■ All letters become the property of *The Leader* and cannot be returned to sender.

E-mail your letters to jdunning@the-leader.com.