

Steck Announcement Speech

As you know, I am here to announce my candidacy for Representative in Congress from New York's 21st District. It is a great honor to have so many of you supporting me for this position, which was so ably filled by our great Congressman Mike McNulty for so many years. Let's have a round of applause for Mike and the job he's done.

Recognize dignitaries in attendance. Thank them for their friendship and support.

I stand here as a true representative of the grassroots of the Democratic Party. I worked tirelessly at the grassroots level for 20 years to build our Party in the Town of Colonie. This was a tough job. For years, we labored in obscurity, suffering under Republican domination.

In 1999, I was elected to the Albany County Legislature from a District that never before had elected a Democrat. At that time, I was the only Democratic County Legislator in Colonie; now, in 2008, at the start of my third term, we will have 5 County Legislators. We elected our first Assemblyman Bob Reilly in 2004. But success at the Town level remained elusive and appeared to be only a distant possibility, until

finally in 2007, we had a breakthrough. And what a breakthrough it was, sweeping the Democrats into power for the first time since the creation of the Town in 1895. Thank our candidates again.

We would not have accomplished our goals in Colonie without hard work and without standing up for the values of the Democratic Party and for working people. People are tired of the same old, same old policies at the national level. They do not want complacency. They want hard work.

From grassroots to global issues, they want someone who stands up and fights for them and their families. I have a record of hard work and standing up, both in my political life and in my life as a lawyer. And that is why I believe I will do an excellent job if elected to serve as your Congressman.

Let me outline some priorities for you.

First, we need to end this war in Iraq immediately. But it is not enough just to end this ill-conceived war. We need to end the same old, same old approach to foreign policy that led us to disaster in Vietnam and again in Iraq.

Second, we need to re-focus our attention on the economic security of our nation. We need to adopt one fundamental health insurance program that covers every American, allows every American to select his or her own doctor, and does away with the multiple layers of costly bureaucracy that HMOs, health insurers, and a patchwork quilt of government programs have imposed upon patients and doctors. We need to safeguard and enhance the private pension rights of employees so that they do not have to rely solely or predominantly on social security in retirement. And we need to recognize that Americans are working longer and longer hours, sometimes in several jobs, just to maintain the same economic position. We need policies to reduce the stress this causes in family life.

Third, we need to continue to have top-notch constituent service in this District. For example, it is essential to maximize federal aid to help our Upstate cities recover from recent adverse economic trends. And that cannot happen if we are wasting our money on foolish foreign adventures. The total cost of the war to date paid by taxpayers in this District is \$1.3 billion.

I believe a grassroots Democrat is the best person to accomplish these goals. You cannot have success at the grassroots level unless you respect all your constituents and attempt to respond to their needs to the best of your ability. The purpose of government is to make life a little easier for us all. And, while the solutions to problems are not always readily found, I can certainly make the commitment that my work ethic in this regard is, and will be, second to none. This will be true in this campaign. And it will also be true, from *grassroots to global issues*, if I am elected to serve you in the United States Congress. Thank you.