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TINKLENBERG

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Press Release

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Tinklenberg vows to “stay the course” in race for Congress in Minnesota’s sixth district

Anoka – Former United Methodist minister and Minnesota Commissioner of Transportation under Governor Jesse Ventura, Elwyn Tinklenberg, said today that in spite of Patty Wetterling’s decision to enter the race, he will “stay the course” in the race for congress in Minnesota’s sixth district because “I am the candidate best suited to win in this district and win is exactly what we will to do.”

Tinklenberg, first announced his campaign last June after he had assurances from Wetterling that she would not run. “She gave me her word and has very publicly reinforced her pledge not to run many times since. I’m not sure how she sells this to the voters.”

Many prominent DFLers and, including Congressmen Jim Oberstar and Colin Peterson have announced support for Tinklenberg, and many more have supported his campaign with contributions from their political action committees. (PAC list attached)

Last week the polling firm of Cooper & Secrest released a poll showing Tinklenberg to be competitive with the Republican candidates even though they are better known in the district. (Poll memo attached)

Also last week Stu Rothenberg of the Washington D.C. based “Rothenberg Political Report” reported Minnesota’s sixth district as one of his “Dangerous Dozen races in the country,” and that “...Tinklenberg gives the Democrats their strongest possible candidate...”

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HEADLINE: WETTERLING A STRONGER SENATE CANDIDATE, SHE SAYS
SHE WON'T RUN FOR 6TH DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL SEAT

BYLINE: Bill Salisbury, Pioneer Press

BODY:

After children's advocate **Patty Wetterling** lost a closely contested congressional race in November, many Democrats are wondering why she is running for the U.S. Senate in 2006 instead of taking another shot at the open 6th District congressional seat.

Wetterling answered that question Tuesday: She believes she can win a statewide race but that she'd lose another election in the Republican-leaning 6th District, which extends from the St. Croix Valley through the northern suburbs to the St. Cloud area.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kennedy, a Republican, defeated her in the district, 54-46 percent, last fall. He's running for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Democratic-Farmer-Laborite Mark Dayton. Wetterling, 55, of St. Joseph is looking for a rematch.

Speaking to Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party elders at a Hemenway Forum luncheon in Oakdale, she said, "I'm not going to run for the 6th District. ~~The numbers show me that ... I will not win.~~"

The numbers are from a poll she commissioned in late February. It showed that, statewide, voters viewed her favorably by a 2-to-1 margin. ~~But in the 6th District,~~ she said, 48 percent had a negative impression of her and 46 percent viewed her positively.

She attributed those high negatives to a "very, very solid orchestrated campaign against me" by Kennedy and the GOP.

Her poll showed she would be a stronger Senate candidate against Kennedy than two other potential Democratic contenders -- Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar, who officially announced her candidacy Sunday, and attorney Mike Ciresi, who has said he's very interested in the race.

"I'm going to go where I think I can have the most impact," Wetterling said. "Why would we not take the most likely candidate to win and put them in this Senate seat?"

She pledged to abide by the DFL endorsement. That means if the party's 2006 convention endorses another candidate, she would not challenge the endorsee in a primary. Klobuchar made a similar vow on Sunday.

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NOTES: MINNESOTA

LOAD-DATE: September 12, 2005

"The Rothenberg Political Report"

Rothenberg's 2006 Dangerous Dozen Open House Seats

By Stuart Rothenberg

For the past few election cycles, I have followed the most vulnerable House open seats as a way of monitoring the two parties' overall prospects for November. This cycle, there are relatively few inherently competitive open seats. But some open seats that would normally be reliably Republican could well see strong competition if the national landscape continues to tilt toward the Democrats.

Of the 12 seats in this initial open-seat list of 2006, only the first four are strong takeover possibilities, with Democrats having three pickup opportunities to the GOP's one.

Iowa's 1st. Rep. Jim Nussle (R) has held this northeastern Iowa seat since 1990. But Nussle's gubernatorial bid gives Democrats a golden opportunity for a takeover. The district, which went for Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) by 7 points in the 2004 presidential race and for Al Gore in 2000, is competitive but Democratic-leaning. Both parties are likely to have strong candidates. The Democrats will nominate either former Iowa Trial Lawyers Association President Bruce Braley or Rick Dickinson, director of the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, while the GOP field includes former state party chairman Brian Kennedy, state Rep. Bill Dix and businessman Mike Whalen. This is probably the best open-seat opportunity in the country for either party.

Colorado's 7th. The gubernatorial bid by Rep. Bob Beauprez (R) gives Democrats another takeover opportunity. They have two excellent candidates, former state Sen. Ed Perlmutter and former state Rep. Peggy Lamm, the ex-sister-in-law of former Colorado Gov. Dick Lamm (D). Rick O'Donnell, executive director of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, ran unsuccessfully for the GOP nomination in 2002 and is the frontrunner for the nod this year. He too is a strong candidate. This district went narrowly for Kerry and Gore, and it is evenly divided between Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated voters. The race is a toss-up, but with a national breeze, the Democrats have a terrific chance for a pickup.

Ohio's 6th. The gubernatorial bid of Rep. Ted Strickland (D) gives the GOP a chance for a pickup in a state where the GOP is beset by problems. State Sen. Charlie Wilson (D) will try to hold the district, while Ohio Speaker Pro-Tem Chuck Blasdel is likely to get the GOP nod. President Bush won the district narrowly in both 2000 and 2004, and Democrats hope that Wilson's conservative views on abortion and guns will neutralize issues that Republicans have used to appeal to swing voters and Democrats in southeast Ohio. Rate it a tossup.

Arizona's 8th. The retirement of Rep. Jim Kolbe (R) gives the Democrats an opportunity in this district, which includes Tucson and southeast Arizona. Bush won it by only 2 points in 2000 and 7 points in 2004. Both parties expect primaries, so the outlook remains uncertain. But expect a competitive race.

Vermont At-Large. Could a Republican succeed Rep. Bernie Sanders (I)? Possibly. Vermont National Guard Adjutant General Martha Rainville faces a primary but begins as the favorite. The Democratic nominee will be state Senate President Peter Welch. GOP chances would improve if the state's left-of-center Progressive Party runs

a candidate. Progressive state Rep. David Zuckerman is weighing a bid, but Sanders wants him to stay out.

Illinois' 6th. Democrats have a shot at the seat of retiring Rep. Henry Hyde (R), but they must endure a primary and overcome a district in which Bush drew 53 percent in each of his presidential races. Unsuccessful '04 nominee Christine Cegelis starts as the Democratic frontrunner, but many party insiders and the state AFL-CIO are backing Illinois Army National Guard Maj. Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq war veteran. The GOP nominee will be state Sen. Peter Roskam, a politically savvy and personable former Capitol Hill aide. Roskam starts out as the favorite, but it could be competitive.

Minnesota's 6th. United Methodist minister and ex-state Transportation Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg gives Democrats their strongest possible candidate in this district being vacated by Rep. Mark Kennedy (R), who's running for Senate. Bush won a comfortable 57 percent victory in 2004. A potentially crowded GOP primary, scheduled for mid-September, has Democrats thinking upset.

California's 50th. Democrats hope a pending special election and a focus on ethics — the seat was held by former Rep. Duke Cunningham (R), who pleaded guilty in a bribery scandal — will make Francine Busby an upset winner. Busby drew less than 40 percent in 2004 against Cunningham. Granted, he was then an entrenched incumbent, but the Democrat will need quite a surge in this strong GOP district.

Wisconsin's 8th. Rep. Mark Green (R) is running for governor, and Democrats could pull an upset. Both parties have primaries, but state Speaker John Gard (R) starts as the favorite. A Democrat held the seat from 1996 to 1998.

Florida's 13th. Rep. Katherine Harris (R) is running for Senate, taking away the Democrats' biggest issue in this GOP district. That this race is even on the list tells you how few competitive open seats there are so far in 2006.

Florida's 9th. Democrats think they have a shot at the seat of retiring Republican Rep. Mike Bilirakis. They could — but probably only if Republicans screw up and a Democratic tsunami develops.

Nevada's 2nd. Bush carried this district twice with 57 percent of the vote. Rep. Jim Gibbons (R) is running for governor. If the Democrats win this district, they will take over the House.

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POLLING ADVISORY

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Alan Secrest

DATE: January 23, 2006

RE: Fresh Poll Data, MN 6th C.D.

VOTER MOOD AND A QUALITY DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE POSITION YET ANOTHER OPEN SEAT WITHIN REACH

A districtwide survey of 505 likely 6th C.D. general election voters on January 4,5,8, 2006, on behalf of Elwyn Tinklenberg for Congress and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, unveils still another open seat *leaning Democratic*.

- ☛ In self-ascribed partisan terms, this congressional district is dead even: 41% Democratic, 40% GOP.
 - ☛ The "Democrat" enjoys a 5-point lead in a generic congressional trial heat (41% to 36%).
 - ☛ By an overwhelming 59% to 33% margin, 6th District voters prefer "a congressperson who will act as a balance to the Bush Administration's policies that are hurting this area and the country" to "a congressperson who will support the programs and policies of President Bush."
 - ☛ The above result is no accident, as a 47% plurality are *personally* critical of Bush, while 60% give him negative job ratings (40% positive).
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- ☛ Indeed, the call for change is palpable as a 52% majority describe America as off on the wrong track, 37% right direction.
- ☛ Fully 71% agree (49% strongly!) that, "From the White House to Congress, Republican scandals and special interests are preventing the government from serving the average person; we need to clean house in Washington."
- ☛ And the Minnesota State Legislature is held in extremely low esteem: 21% positive, 76% negative job ratings...significant because the two leading Republican contenders are incumbent legislators, and this past summer's partial shutdown of state government did not amuse Minnesota voters.
- ☛ It is noteworthy that a 41% plurality of 6th C.D. voters describe themselves as *conservative*, just 29% as liberal.
- ☛ El Tinklenberg leads Phil Krinkie, 29% to 28%, despite the fact that Krinkie is 9 points better known.
- ☛ El Tinklenberg trails Michelle Bachmann by only 3 points, 29% to 32%, despite the fact that Bachmann is *twice* as well known as Tinklenberg. *And among voters who recognize both candidates, Tinklenberg leads, 44% to 28%!*

CONCLUSION

In Elwyn Tinklenberg, retired minister, Mayor and state cabinet officer, Democrats have a candidate who has both executive and legislative experience, who is committed to putting families ahead of special interests, and who is an *excellent ideological fit* for this district. This race richly deserves its targeted status by the Democratic congressional community.

the first ring

a first ring blog from a first ring suburb



1.31.2006

Sizzle or Steak

Patty Wetterling passes up an easy rib-eye for a tough piece of congressional gristle.

Former U.S. Senate candidate Patty Wetterling has formally told Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch she will not be joining his gubernatorial ticket as his running mate. While it's hardly a great shock a candidate running for Senate isn't interested in ending up running for a position best described by John Nance Garner's summation of the vice-presidency being "*not worth a bucket of warm piss,*" it may have been Wetterling's best shot at prolonging her political career.

Increasingly it looks like the DFL's 2004 candidate for the Sixth Congressional District will attempt to be the party's 2006 nominee as well. In doing so, Wetterling must not only contend with a litany of comments and commitments made over the past year, distancing herself from the 6th District campaign but also her backing of the Blue Dog-esque candidacy of former Ventura-era Transportation Commission Elwyn Tinklenberg for the seat. The political contortions the missing children's advocate will have to go through in explaining her senatorial ambitions were prominent from the beginning of her campaign, but the entrance of Tinklenberg adds a dimension unforeseen a year ago when few knew what to make of Wetterling's decision to forgo another congressional bid.

Tinklenberg quickly rallied national Democrats to his side, effectively neutralizing any opposition to his left with his strong resume and solid, but not spectacular, early fundraising numbers. And following Wetterling's withdrawal, Tinklenberg has maintained a clear message that very well may haunt Patty until at least September--- "*I take her at her word [not to run].*" Playing the role of electoral victim, the former Blaine mayor has bemoaned the uprooting of his lifestyle and his family's plans to undertake the uphill campaign in the conservative 6th, demonstrating little intent of abandoning his bid for one of his supporters who has publicly stated she can't win.

The end result may well be a primary as it remains doubtful Tinklenberg will be dissuaded from continuing his campaign simply by Wetterling's entrance or likely endorsement by the District's DFL activists who are substantially more liberal than the 6th at large. Wetterling's move to the left and previous statements will be a cudgel frequently used by her moderate-to-conservative opponent who will likely bet on the moderation of primary voters to keep him competitive. The question is whether those Democrats---nationally and locally---who helped Tinklenberg's newborn candidacy walk before it could run, stick around or pull a dead-beat Dad number. It's a classic

sizzle or steak contrast. Wetterling has the early name ID, gender and back-story to make activists swoon all over again but her poor campaigning skills and rhetorical move to the left probably will relegate her to nothing more than a narrower defeat than two years ago. Tinklenberg isn't sexy, or terribly interesting, but he's a better fit for the District on issues and comes to the table armed with political experience and a puncher's chance at winning.

Had Wetterling chosen Hatch, it certainly would have been a significant step backwards in ambition. But the role of even a losing Lt. Governor candidate would have kept Wetterling in the upcoming 2006 melee without subjecting her to the specter of a career-ending consecutive congressional loss. Running alongside Hatch, Wetterling would have been asked to do very little other than place her name below his. Wetterling's limitations as an actual candidate would not have come into glaring relief in a job confined to mostly reciting the gubernatorial nominee's talking points and waving to crowds, putting her in an excellent position to run as the DFL establishment's Senate candidate against Norm Coleman in 2008.

Instead, 2006 will more likely than not be the last chapter of Patty Wetterling's political obituary.