

CAMPAIGN 2008

Specter endorses Farry

In endorsing state representative candidate Frank Farry, U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter said Farry has the potential to be governor one day.

By CHRIS ENGLISH
STAFF WRITER

While it's fairly rare for the senior U.S. senator from Pennsylvania to make an endorsement in a state representative race, Arlen Specter made an exception Thursday afternoon.

Speaking before a crowd of about 70 people, mostly Republicans, in front of Langhorne Borough Hall, Specter sang the praises of fellow GOP member Frank Farry, who's challenging Democratic incumbent Chris King in the 142nd District. The district includes Langhorne, most of Middletown and most of Lower Southampton.

Farry, 35, is the former assistant township manager in Middletown and chief of the Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company. He has a law degree and a master's degree in Public Policy from Rutgers University, a bachelor's degree in economics from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He works for a local law firm.

"He's a very unusual fellow to be competing for a state representative seat," said Specter, who just came through his latest round of chemotherapy for Hodgkin's disease (cancer of the lymph system).

"When you have that kind of ability and background, you have the potential to get a lot done in government. Frank has the potential to really climb the ladder, maybe become governor one day. The sky is the limit for a man of his background," Specter said.

Farry, a Langhorne resident, said he didn't know Specter.

"He apparently heard about my candidacy and called Mike Fitzpatrick [the former GOP congressman] about how to contact me," Farry said. "The only other time I heard about him making a local endorsement was for [state Sen.] Tommy Tomlinson a few years ago. Arlen Specter is known to be one of the most independent elected officials and when he takes the time to make an appearance and endorsement like this, it's very much appreciated by me and says a lot about the interest in this campaign."

Specter said it's important to bolster Republican strength in the Delaware Valley, which voted Democratic in the last presidential election, and regain Republicans who registered Democratic to vote for Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama in this year's primary election.

"We need to recruit more candidates like Frank Farry," Specter said. "I pick out some candidates to endorse that have the potential to rise, so I decided to show up here today to see what I could do for Frank."

King and his staff were unimpressed.

"Mr. Farry seems content with running the same old campaign you see from the same old typical career politicians. I am proud to be of a different mold," King said in a statement.

"All Sen. Specter basically did was recite Frank's bio," said King's campaign manager, John Murphy, who attended Specter's announcement. "There wasn't anything about where Frank is going on the issues."

"Arlen Specter has voted to give illegal immigrants Social Security, he voted against background checks on gun purchases and voted against bans on human cloning. Frank Farry embracing Specter's endorsement shows that he is in lockstep with those positions and out of touch with the people he wants to represent," the campaign manager said.

Farry denied all those claims, saying he's always worked hard to stay close to the community and would continue to do so as a state representative.

King represents Langhorne, Langhorne Manor, Hulmeville, Penndel, most of Middletown and most of Lower Southampton.

Tomlinson represents Bensalem, Bristol Township, Bristol, Middletown, Langhorne, Langhorne

Manor, Lower Southampton, Penndel, Hulmeville, Northampton, Wrightstown, Ivyland and Warwick.

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U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter said "We need to recruit more candidates like Frank Farry," on Wednesday while endorsing him for state representative.

STEVE GENGLER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER