



GRANITE STATE
CONSERVATION VOTERS ALLIANCE

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SENATOR MORSE'S CONSERVATION CLAIM QUESTIONED

Concord, NH... The Granite State Conservation Voters Alliance today questioned statements made by Senator Chuck Morse recently in an Editorial Board interview which appeared in an August 26th article in *Foster's Daily Democrat*. Senator Morse is running for the open Executive Council District 3 seat.

In the Foster's article, Morse claims that he has been "successful in providing a long-term funding mechanism for the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, which has had a significant impact across the state, including the Seacoast."

"In all the excitement running up to next week's Primary, Senator Morse must have forgotten what his voting record is," said Jim O'Brien, Executive Director of the Granite State Conservation Voters Alliance. "If Senator Morse has found a long-term funding mechanism for LCHIP as he claims, he shouldn't be keeping it a secret."

"The fact is that Senator Morse voted against LCHIP funding on the floor of the Senate twice this past session. He voted against Senator Clark's amendment to fund the program at \$1.25 million (which failed 11-12), and was only one of five to vote against Senator Barnes' amendment to give a modest \$250,000 to LCHIP. Senator Morse's rhetoric does not match his voting record."

"Chuck Morse has done nothing to provide the needed funding for the LCHIP Program," continued O'Brien. "Representing one of the fastest growing regions of the state, we would think Senator Morse would support the need to protect open space and NH's historical character. The fact is that Senator Morse, when given the opportunity, has continually voted against funding for LCHIP."

Copy of the August 26th Foster's daily Democrat article attached.

The Granite State Conservation Voters Alliance is a bi-partisan, statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting New Hampshire's environment by making it a priority for our elected leaders. GSCVA was established with the advice and encouragement of many of New Hampshire's conservation leaders to perform a critical role – hold state legislators accountable for their votes and inform the public about key environmental issues under debate by the legislature. For more information, please visit www.VoteConservation.org

Saturday, August 26, 2006

Morse cites political experience in Executive Council bid

By MICHAEL GOOT

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Editor's note: This is one in a series of editorial board interviews with candidates running in the Sept. 12 state primary.

PORTSMOUTH — State Sen. Chuck Morse believes his experiences at various levels of government — selectman, state representative and state senator — have given him the tools needed to serve on the Executive Council, now that 20-year veteran Ruth Griffin has decided not to seek re-election.

"I believe in the Executive Council being a watchdog in government. I think the Executive Council is about experience in helping people cut through red tape," the Salem Republican said during an editorial board interview with Foster's Daily Democrat on Thursday.

Morse said his time in public office has taught him where to go and who to talk to in order to get things done. It has also taught him how to listen to people's needs, something he promises to do whether he is helping a constituent in Salem or along the Seacoast of District 3.

Morse has spent the last eight years in the Senate where he is chairman of the Finance Committee, vice chairman of the Transportation and Interstate Cooperation Committee and a member of the Capital Budget Committee.

Morse believes this has given him a good foundation for moving to the Executive Council. As chairman of the Finance Committee, Morse said he first had to do his homework. He researched how past chairmen had done the job. He then developed a style that brought people together to solve problems.

Among those was balancing the state budget. Morse said he worked with commissioners of each department to see what they could live without rather than trying to dictate to them.

Morse considers transportation another one of his strong suits, citing his work on the I-93 expansion project.

Morse said his work to bond the project helped save the state money and strengthened the state's 10-year highway plan. In addition to the financial end of the project, Morse said he was able to help work through the permitting and environmental issues to keep the project on track.

When asked about highway issues in the Seacoast, Morse explained that there are similarities between his work on I-93 and the Little Bay Bridges linking Newington and Dover.

There, bonding was also needed, to ensure the project would be funded, said Morse. But, as with I-93, much work will be needed throughout the permitting process to ensure Seacoast gridlock will be addressed.

Morse also noted that his financial efforts in the area of transportation helped avoid having the state's transportation bonds downgraded by Wall Street.

Another area in which Morse said he has been successful is providing a long-term funding mechanism for the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, which has had a significant impact across the state, including the Seacoast.

On the issue of openness in government, Morse was asked about the perception that there is a lot of horse trading over nominees before their names are brought before the council for approval.

An example was Gov. Lynch's current efforts to get three of the five current councilors to support his choice of Tom Burrack to replace retiring Department of Environmental Services Commissioner Michael Nolin.

Morse said he does not believe in backroom deals. Government should be subject to open debate.

"We do that in the Senate and House. I don't see any difference in the Executive Branch," he said.

"I'm very open. I'm very honest. I don't think you're going to change me," he added.

If elected, Morse said he would thoroughly scrutinize the governor's nominations and even go into the nominee's towns to talk to people familiar with them.

Another nomination Morse might have to vote on is a Department of Health and Human Services commissioner, a position currently held by John Stephen.

Stephen and the governor have butted heads, most recently over financial issues.

Morse said he supports Stephen's efforts to reform the agency and shore up its welfare rules to avoid losing federal funds.

"We shouldn't have that kind of welfare system where there are no checks and balances," he said.

Morse also said the state has to look at the number of people without insurance showing up at hospitals for outpatient services, which increases medical costs.

Morse noted he is in favor of the expansion of Sunapee Mountain ski area, another issue over which he and Lynch disagree. Morse indicated that, while the issue hasn't been fully researched, it would be worth taking a look at leasing out Cannon Mountain ski area, in much the way as Sunapee. Morse noted this might provide a revenue stream to help fund the state's financially beleaguered Fish and Game Department.

In addition to serving in the Senate, Morse has been in business for 18 years as owner of Freshwater Farms Nursery and Garden Center in Atkinson.

He is also active in organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, where he chaired capital

campaign and building committees. He has also done volunteer work for a nursing home and adult day care.