



Candidates, elected officials pledge to support Second Amendment

By Lee Williams

A bipartisan group of more than two-dozen lawmakers and challengers told a crowd of ardent Second Amendment supporters they will protect their right to keep and bear arms, at the 2010 Delaware State Sportsmen's Association (DSSA) election year candidate forum and Second Amendment rally.

The DSSA event, which was held Sunday afternoon at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover, and drew more than 600 people, was co-hosted by the National Rifle Association.

Rep. Bill Carson, D-Smyrna, described the NRA as the "premier organization in the country at protecting gun rights."

"I believe the NRA, sportsmen's clubs and the General Assembly need to work together," Carson said.

"I'd like to thank President Obama for bringing us all here today," said Republican State Auditor of Accounts R. Thomas Wagner, who said he received an "A" rating from the NRA only because as Auditor he cannot vote on legislation, a requirement for an "A+" grade.

Ron Smith, a Republican challenger for the 31st District and former House attorney, remarked at the large turnout.

"You clearly have a message to send," Smith said.

"November 2010 is a long way away, but the showing in this room is outstanding," said Rep. Tom Kovach, R-Brandywine Hundred South.

Dover Mayor Carleton E. Carey, Sr. admitted he severed his ties with an anti-gun mayors' group after receiving calls, e-mails and letters from many of the NRA and DSSA members in the audience.

"I sent a letter of resignation to that group because I believe in the Second Amendment," Casey said. "I still have my weapons and I want to retain my weapons."

Ron Poliquin, a Republican challenger for the 31st District, promised to "stand by the Second Amendment."

"My mother is an immigrant from Korea, and I remember watching the LA riots, watching the Korean grocery store owners defending their property and defending their way of life," Poliquin said. "That's why this is important. That's why I pledge to you I will have the political courage to fight for these beliefs."

Sen. Brian Bushweller, D-Dover Central, said of the “basic issue” of the Second Amendment, “I agree with the NRA 100-percent.”

While he does not agree with every gun-rights issue, Bushweller pledged he would be accessible to discuss the instances where his views differ.

“The first 10 Amendments are not there to guarantee the rights of government,” Bushweller said.

Rep. Robert Walls, D-Milford, said, “A lot of people don’t know the difference between a shotgun and a pistol, but they’re the ones that want to condemn our rights and take them away. We need to do whatever we have to do to continue our Second Amendment rights.”

Guest speaker Dave Butz, a 16-year NFL veteran and NRA Board Member, said, “I am not a politician and I can’t vote in this state, so you can trust me.”

“The only way you have a strong First Amendment and are able to get out and say what you want, is to have a strong Second Amendment,” Butz said.

Sen. Joe Booth, R-Georgetown, said he was one of the state lawmakers who signed an amicus brief supporting the NRA’s position on the *McDonald v. City of Chicago* gun-rights case.

“I am one of the 21 who signed the brief,” Booth said. “I think you should be asking questions of those who didn’t.”

Dover attorney John Sigler, a CRI Board Member and immediate past-president of the NRA, pointed out that 58 U.S. Senators signed an amicus brief for the Chicago case, a majority of House members signed a similar amicus brief, and 38 state attorneys general signed on with their support.

“However neither Delaware senator signed on, nor did our congressman or our attorney general,” Sigler said.

During their five-minute presentations, most of the candidates focused their comments on the Second Amendment. Taxes, however, were also discussed.

“It’s our money! It’s our money!” Sen. Colin Bonini, R-Dover South, yelled – a chant that the crowd soon joined.

“Delaware spends over \$30,000 for every taxpaying household,” Bonini said. “Delaware does not have a revenue problem. Delaware has a *spending* problem. That’s why I’m running for state treasurer.”

Contact investigative reporter Lee Williams at (302) 242-9272 or lee@caesarrodney.org

The Caesar Rodney Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-partisan research and educational organization and is committed to being a catalyst for improved performance, accountability, and efficiency in Delaware government.

© Copyright Jan.11, 2010 by the Caesar Rodney Institute