

## **STATE SENATE CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENT SPEECH**

June 9, 2011

Good Day. My name is Paul LeVota. I would like to thank you for joining me as I share some important news with this community. Today I'm officially launching my campaign for State Senate to represent you - the people of Eastern Jackson County.

Since 2003, we have been admirably and effectively served by our State Senator Victor Callahan. Due to term-limits, he will be leaving this position at the end of 2012. This is a loss for our community because I believe we need strong public officials, now more than ever.

But, the election for a new senator is about a year away. Now is the time to talk about who best can fill this important position.

I am running for this office because we need a strong Democratic State Senator that will stand up for common sense accountability.

I know that I am the right person at the right time to do this job. My past experience as the House Democratic Leader, my commitment to the people of this community, and my profound belief that public officials should be held accountable to who they serve lead me to seek this position.

I learned a great deal during my time in Jefferson City. I have seen when our legislature has worked and when it has not worked. And I think it is clear that the legislature needs to improve. It has become a profit

center for special interest run by a Republican super majority who seems to have forgotten about the middle class.

It can work again when your state government deals with issues using a common sense approach. Issues are too compartmentalized in the Capitol. We need leaders to understand that we only build our state by understanding that problems are interrelated.

For example, over the past decade in public service I have championed the cause of public education, a strong system that builds our state. Of course you have heard many politicians say they support public education in our state, but unfortunately we are going the wrong way. Lack of proper support for our schools immediately hurts our kids but it also hurts our ability to build a state that has quality people ready to create new industry and jobs.

We know that strong schools in a strong community can create more jobs. We have modeled this fact right here in our district. Your state government should be accountable to understand that issues like public education and jobs are interrelated.

As state senator I will remember that we need good roads, schools, and services to help businesses create jobs. We need a balanced approach to our budget to provide this support. The senate is the place in state government to stand up against short sighted, politically motivated legislation that may grab a headline but harms our future.

Businesses cannot grow jobs when there aren't qualified workers available. We cannot train workers when we continually make a college education unaffordable for Missouri families.

Businesses cannot grow jobs when roads and other infrastructure are crumbling around them. We cannot improve transportation when we continually ignoring funding needs of our state.

Business cannot grow jobs when we continually and foolishly waste our money on tax credits for huge corporations.

From my experience I know that the Senate is the place in state government to focus on discussion, reasoning and judgment; where issues are weighed and examined with a different type of scrutiny. Remember in the House of Representatives there are 163 members but in the State Senate there are only 34 Senators. More than ever we need a strong DEMOCRATIC state senator that can make our state government accountable to common sense solutions that build the middle class, instead of special interest. And I know that I am the right person to do just that.

It is crucial that our next state senator has real knowledge, strong persistence and the right temperament to be successful. I have shown the willingness to compromise across party lines to accomplish a goal; along with the strength to "give them hell" the way only a Democrat from Independence can.

When you look across the country, we have a specific and deliberative attack on labor and a total disregard for the great work that

labor has done in protecting workers from poor working conditions and big business exploitation, enforcing the fair ideal of collective bargaining, and in representing people to achieve fair wages for their work. With this attack on labor, it is more important than ever to have a senator that truly believes in the labor movement and is eager to fight for labor's goals.

In my political career I have always been dedicated to the values and beliefs of the men and women of labor and in turn, labor has always been very supportive of me. I want to thank all of my friends in labor for their continued support and ask for their help in this campaign because I can't do it without you!

I am proud of my service to this community, but there is still much work to be done. As your Senator I will also focus on government ethic measures, such as campaign reform and increased sunshine law measures. These measures will bring even more accountability in our state.

During my time in the legislature I aggressively worked to increase constituent outreach through community meetings and social media because being in touch with voters is imperative to being successful. And just briefly, to tell you about the 11th District, it is a very diverse district. It encompasses the majority of the City of Independence where I have spent my entire life but also includes Raytown, Sugar Creek, parts of Kansas City.

So I might find that the folks that live in Kansas City and those in more conservative area may have different issues, but I will be the Senator that can respond to the diversity of this district. As your State Senator, I

will always be looking for new ways to communicate because that's how problems are solved. We must believe in each other. We must all be accountable to this idea.

Running for a State Senatorial seat is a large undertaking. It will take a lot of time, energy and money to run a successful campaign. I understand this and I'm here to say that I am campaigning to win.

Over the next 13 months the people of this district will have the opportunity to look at the commitment, experience, and solutions I will bring to this position. And I am confident that they will agree that I am the best person to stand up for them as Missouri State Senator.

I have been involved with politics in this community since I first won a position on the Jackson County Democratic Committee 25 years ago. During these years I have learned that there are many who oppose common sense accountability in our government and that these opponents will do anything to stop our efforts.

Detractors should be aware that this campaign will be prepared to stop any negative tactics by clearly communicating the truth to the voters of Eastern Jackson County.

I know that with all of help, we can build on our past success and win this election. This campaign will be THE example of true perseverance in bringing common sense accountability to our state.

Thank you for your time and thank you again for standing with me. And don't forget, Vote LeVota!