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PORTER RE-STATES DIFFERENCES WITH ENGLISH

In a press release issued today, Dr. Steven Porter, Democratic candidate for Congress in the 3rd district of Pennsylvania, re-stated the differences between his opponent, incumbent conservative Republican Phil English, and himself on the key issues of the 2006 campaign.

“In view of both the primary election, in which I got 49.33% of the combined Democratic and Republican vote, and yesterday’s editorial in the Erie Times-News that characterized the 3rd district congressional race as a real contest,” Porter began, “I think it important to re-state the differences I have with Mr. English on the critical issues of this election.

“On Iraq, I have been against the war from the outset. Bush & Co. never demonstrated that Iraq was an imminent threat to the USA, that it possessed WMDs, or that it was in league with the 9/11 terrorists. Had I been in Congress, I would have refused to turn over to the President the constitutional power to wage war. In the present deplorable circumstances, I favor setting a definite, reasonable timetable for the Iraqis to assume responsibility for the defense of their nation and the redeployment of American forces to a safe perimeter like Kuwait where they would be out of harm’s way yet ready to return quickly if needed. Mr. English has never opposed any aspect of Bush’s war and has been an unquestioning advocate of Bush’s bankrupt “stay the course” policy.

“On the issue of our economy, I have opposed NAFTA, CAFTA, and those WTO standards responsible for the outsourcing of American jobs and the erosion of America’s middle class. I advocate a revitalization of our manufacturing base through a combination of public works and defense-related projects. I would support a ‘currency manipulation tariff’ which would prevent China (and any other nation) from undercutting American businesses as a result of unfair currency manipulation. I would insist on *quid pro quo* trade agreements and upon fair wage and environmental standards in nations with whom we trade. Mr. English cast the deciding vote for CAFTA, voted to continue the provisions of the WTO, and even voted several times to extend Most Favored Nation Status for China. In addition, he has supported tax incentives for American corporations that make profits from outsourced jobs.

“On health care, I have supported a single-payer, national health care system and the passage of HR 676, the Conyers bill which would enact the Physician’s National Health Plan into law. Mr. English supports the current ‘market-driven’ system which in my opinion is a fiasco.

“On the issue of Social Security and pensions, I favor strengthening Social Security by removing the earnings cap, and I would support the passage of a portable pension law. Mr. English, to my knowledge, has not even articulated a position on Social Security .

“On the energy crisis, I have long advocated reforms such as mandated higher mpg auto standards, hybrid cars, alternative-fuel vehicles, and the development of wind, solar, bio and tidal energy, clean coal gasification, and safe nuclear energy. I introduced my plans for a Great Lakes Wind Farm and high-speed rail connections between Buffalo, Erie, Cleveland, Youngstown, and Pittsburgh in the last campaign. Mr. English commented that a wind farm would be too expensive and has not to my knowledge articulated a comprehensive energy platform.

“On immigration reform, I have presented a complete program beginning with securing our borders, registering all alien workers, increasing the minimum wage, exacting penalties upon employers who illegally hire illegal workers, and giving an opportunity for legal workers and US citizens to fill jobs being done by illegals before allowing any ‘guest worker’ to hold them. Again, to the best of my knowledge, Mr. English has yet to articulate a stance on this issue.

“On the issue of taxes, I have long favored the repeal of tax breaks to the wealthiest 2% of Americans, especially at a time of war and massive deficit spending. This irresponsible policy on the part of the Bush Administration has led to record deficits and raised the national debt to over \$8 trillion. Mr. English has voted for every element of the Bush tax program. In fact, he cast the deciding vote for the extension of the tax breaks in the so-called ‘budget reconciliation bill’ that gave those breaks to the wealthy at the expense of the poor, the old, and affordable higher education.

“On the matter of integrity in Washington, I have publicly pledged never to take trips financed by private lobbying groups, never to take corporate PAC money, and never to lie to the voters of the 3rd district. Mr. English ranks 16th among the most recent 600 members of Congress for taking paid trips, has accepted Abramoff and DeLay PAC money, is funded principally by business PACs, and has consistently broken his word to the voters. He promised in 1995 to abide by a 6-term limit; he said in 2000 that he would allow us to import cheaper prescription drugs from Canada; and he told labor that he would vote against CAFTA. He is now campaigning for a 7th term; he voted twice to prohibit cheaper Canadian drug imports; and he cast the deciding vote for CAFTA. I have also called for Congressional investigations into the possibility that the Bush Administration has broken the law. Mr. English has consistently voted against such inquiries.

“There is much to choose between my positions and those of Mr. English,” Porter concluded. “I believe that Mr. English represents the entirety of the Bush agenda both domestically and in terms of foreign policy. By contrast, I think that my positions represent a positive change for the 3rd Congressional District and for the nation as a whole.”

Dr. Porter’s comprehensive platform is attached to this press release so that it can be disseminated to the public.