

The Challenge: Are You Willing to Work for What You Believe In?

From Vivian Houghton

The Vivian Houghton campaign for Attorney General is not a token crusade against the status quo. If my campaign coworkers and I merely wanted to do something token, we could hire a sky-writer to emblazon the Saturday morning firmament with “Save the Environment!” or “Create Jobs, Not War!” and do nothing else.

But as is true for many of you, for us in the campaign, political activism isn't about satisfying ourselves with symbolic gestures that have little significance to people outside the Green Party. Our goal is to run a daring, well-planned, people-rousing campaign that swells the number of Delawareans willing to take on the two-party system in the State. By the time this campaign is over, we want state Democrats and Republicans to be gun-shy. We want them frightened of the Green Party's appeal and worried about other Green and independent candidates in the future. In this sense, we are running a campaign of historical significance. We plan to establish the party as the voice of the disaffected, a voice that will play a key role in fueling an ongoing multi-year assault on Delaware's political status quo.

Of course, this is easier said than done. So, how, does the campaign turn its “wants” into reality?

First, we must stick by our principles. One reason such a large percent of the public doesn't vote, or votes unenthusiastically, is because they correctly view the major parties as lacking in vision and principles. Therefore, as an emerging force, the Green Party can't expect to win disaffected voters' support if we start compromising away our beliefs in the same way that Democrats and Republicans do.

As the Green Party candidate for Attorney General, I plan to transform this understanding into a hard-fought, issues-based campaign that gains strength and momentum by telling people at the grassroots level the truth about a wide range of issues that affect Delaware's daily life. Such issues include the anti-people consequences of the state's of pro-corporate laws, how racism continues to contaminate the state, the need to investigate DNREC's failure to fulfill its duties, lack of pay equity and other crucial problems.

The Republican and Democratic Party candidates better not get on a stage with me in the belief that they can get away with ignoring the issues. I plan, with your help, to talk about issues from one end of the state to another until I'm so hoarse I can barely talk. Only through such a group effort can we prove to non-Greens that we are serious about taking on the powers that be.

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Second, we must be aggressive in connecting the issues. People aren't stupid. Laid-off General Motors workers at the Boxwood Road plant here in Delaware were told by the company and some union leaders that unless they support the GM's fight against environmentally conscious fuel efficiency laws, they would never get their jobs back.

But these workers know that over half the jobs at Boxwood Road have been lost during the last 15 years and that this had nothing to do with the passage of environmentally conscious laws. Instead, these job losses were brought about by the company's willingness to lay off some people while adding work to other people's jobs. The job losses are also traceable to the company's relocation of jobs to low-income countries where it is easier for FM to exploit workers because of lack of labor laws.

If the Green Party wants to reach out to these workers and thousands like them in the state, we must realize that their worries about job losses are just as important as many Green members concerns about the environment. This means we must link the issues together. My campaign will do this.

In fact, making such links is a very Green thing to do. After all, in Delaware it is impossible not to notice that the same corporate mindset, which promotes do-nothing DNREC as a "reliable" pro-environmental force, also promotes downsizing, job losses and the increase in the number of Delaware's temp workers (most of whom work without benefits) as good for the economy.

Look at the poultry industry as an example of this mindset in action. It simultaneously degrades state land, state waterways, and migrant workers, thereby creating a perfect model of how big an appetite for wrecking havoc a pampered industry can develop.

Third, we must work together as a group, creating a prototype for democratic movement building in the state. If we are to be an effective alternative political force, the campaign must be open to input from all corners, yet also practical enough to build a methodical organization. People want to feel that their presence and ideas are respected, but they also want to know that the campaign is committed to efficiency, without which people can't adapt their campaign work to babysitter schedules, getting up in the morning for work, etc.

The Houghton campaign already is, and will continue to be, characterized by a democratic people-first spirit. But as I've told you before, the effort to make the campaign as powerful a state presence as it can become required your assistance. Precisely because this is not a token campaign but is instead a serious effort at political insurgency, I need you to get involved. Politics is the art of action; inaction will get us no place.

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Give the campaign a call. I look forward to talking with you.

Vivian Houghton

Attorney General Candidate

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**P.S. If you are interested in volunteering, you may call
Frieda Berryhill, the Campaign's Volunteer Coordinator at 994-1342
or sign-up online by clicking the Volunteer
tab on the Houghton Home Page.**

<http://www.vivianhoughton.com/vivian>

posted: April 6, 2002

Phyllis Gourdin