

# Grassroots Efforts Mean Victory, Industry Learns

The 2004 congressional race in North Carolina's 10th District will be remembered as a textbook account of grassroots politics.

Some 30,000 votes were cast in the runoff. N.C. Rep. Patrick McHenry emerged the winner with a margin of only 86 votes.

McHenry employed a corps of college and high school students who went door-to-door throughout the district. Each carried a DVD with a personal message from McHenry. Suddenly, his yard signs sprouted everywhere. By less than 100 votes, the 28-year old McHenry defeated a veteran sheriff.

So it's true. Every vote does count.

With the 2004 elections just weeks away, the hosiery companies--notably those in North Carolina--will be on the front lines of grassroots politics. The positions of candidates running for U.S. House and Senate seats will be communicated to all manufacturers. It will be up to the management of the companies to get the information out to employees before they go to the polls on November 2.

There is the feeling that employees will be voting on the future of their jobs.

Erskine Bowles, seeking the Senate seat vacated by John Edwards, has insisted from the start he wants every trade agreement examined with a fine tooth comb. Before any agreement is signed, Bowles insisted, the U.S. Commerce Department should present a detailed impact report which would be used in negotiations.

Keep trade agreements free from baggage imposed by the State Department, Bowles insists.

His opponent, U.S. Rep. Richard Burr, voted for legislation giving the President fast-track trade negotiating authority. Shortly afterwards, he told a delegation of hosiery executives in Washington that he is supporting open-door trade agreements for a global marketplace.

But today, Rep. Burr is singing a different song in his TV commercials, using words like "fair trade" and "level playing field" and touting his concern for the loss of jobs to Asia. It is a different message from that heard by hosiery executives two years ago.

A survey sent to all N.C. congressional candidates in June from the Governmental Affairs Council brought identical responses, including those from Bowles and Burr.

All said they would: (1) support con-

tinuing quotas on Chinese imports; (2) Oppose the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA); (3) oppose trade agreements that grant duty-free access to goods that fail to use U.S. or signatory country fibers or finishing; (4) would oppose reducing U.S. textiles and apparel tariffs through the World Trade Organization and (5) support expanding the Berry Amendment and other "Buy American" purchasing requirements for the U.S. military and other governmental agencies.

In late August, Paul Fogleman, hosiery industry lobbyist, and Dan St. Louis, director of the Hosiery Technology Center, met with U.S. Rep. Brad Miller whose district includes hosiery companies in Burlington and Greensboro. Miller reiterated his support for the industry.



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