

Van Grack, Morella are Gay rights supporters

by Kristina Campbell
and Sue Fox

Efforts by the *Blade* to survey candidates for Maryland's U.S. Senate seat and three suburban U.S. House districts yielded few responses.

Only five of 30 candidates for four Congressional seats responded to the survey and follow-up calls in August; all but one pledged support for Gay civil rights issues.

U.S. Rep. Connie Morella (R-Md.) from Maryland's 8th District sent a

lengthy response, detailing her consistent and proactive support for Gay, AIDS, and cancer issues in the House of Representatives. One of her challengers, Democrat Steven Van Grack, also responded, describing his pro-Gay work as Rockville's mayor in the 1980s. Van Grack made news then by appointing Peri Jude Kadecic to the Rockville Human Rights Commission.



Connie Morella and Steven Van Grack both are strong Gay rights proponents.

U.S. Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) sent a letter highlighting his work on Gay and AIDS issues in the Senate. He cited his cosponsorship of the current Employment Non-Discrimination Act and his vote against the Helms amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That amendment prohibits funding for public schools that present homosexuality in a positive light. It was included in the Senate version of the bill passed earlier this session; a conference committee will determine if the language becomes law.

Robert Bates, a Democratic challenger to Rep. Albert Wynn (D-Md.) in District 4, said he supports Gay rights measures.

"I am opposed to discrimination against Gays or anyone else for any non-merit reason," he wrote.

Wynn has been a consistent supporter of Gay civil rights in Congress, but did not respond to the *Blade*.

Fifth Congressional District candidate Harold Glynn Dial also responded. He is challenging Rep. Stony Hoyer (D-Md.), another consistent friend of the Gay community. Dial did not answer the *Blade's* questions; instead he sent campaign literature that describes him as a "Biblicist." On the issue of Gays, his literature says, "Don't tell and I sure won't ask." ▼

by Doug Hincava