

October 26, 2008

Dear Editor:

As a soldier currently stationed in Iraq, on my 3rd tour of duty here, my purpose for serving, among other reasons, is to help spread democracy to this former Dictator-lead country. Part of spreading that democracy includes the right to vote. The voter turn out in the first Iraqi election was beyond all expectations. Iraqi citizens walked for miles, through war torn streets, despite threats of reprisals, just to get to the polls in order to exercise their newly given right; the right to vote. Why is it that the Iraqis took their right and opportunity to vote so seriously, while voters and legislators in the United States are so cavalier about it?

As a veteran, having the honor to have served my country, with great pride for more than 24 years, that question weighs heavy on my mind, and the mind of other fellow veterans. I know this because as the Commander of VFW Post 7554 (Douglas, Ma), fellow veterans and I pondered the question of why our right to vote had been taken away from us, by the decision made by a few state representatives, including Representative Paul Kujawski, on our behalf.

The upcoming election will be the first general election in our district since Representative Paul Kujawski took a vote to kill the proposed Marriage Amendment, which would have defined marriage in Massachusetts as being between ***“one man and one woman”***. Less than one year earlier at the previous Constitutional Convention, Representative Kujawski voted to support the amendment. However, for reasons unknown to me and other constituents, Paul flipped along with other representatives, and at the second Constitutional Convention, Representative Kujawski changed his vote to 'nay' and the Marriage Amendment was defeated by a slim margin, **denying** you and me, the voters of Massachusetts, a chance voice our opinions through a vote.

As a soldier who is fighting for democracy and defending the right of people from a completely foreign nation to vote, nothing is more disturbing to me, than to see the Voice of Democracy taken away by legislators who are supposed to represent us. Mr. Kujawski and I spoke in length on this issue, and his response to me was “Ron, after hearing the plight of people personally affected by this issue, I had to make a difficult decision.” I reminded Mr. Kujawski that upon making that decision, he and other representatives not only took away my right to vote, but also put the needs of the few before the rights of all of us, the right to vote. More than 170,000 people (nearly three times the required number) signed the petition to request the Marriage Amendment.

Regardless of how one feels about this particular issue, this was an insult to the petitioners, the voters, and most importantly the brave men and women, present and past, who put their lives on the line to protect our very right to vote.

Please join me in supporting Uxbridge Selectman Kevin Kuros for State Representative in his race against Paul Kujawski. Kevin - who has vowed never to block a ballot initiative - has my vote and my strongest personal endorsement.

Sincerely,

Ronald Tetreau, SFC, US Army
VFW Post 7554
Commander