

An update from under the Golden Dome

State Representatives David Zuckerman & Christopher Pearson

Rep. Christopher Pearson
House Commerce Committee



On April 11th Chris was sworn in to serve the remainder of Bob Kiss' term in the Vermont House

Dear Neighbor,

It doesn't take long to see how valuable an independent voice is around the state-house. Progressives are needed to question priorities, to push for real reform in health care, wages, energy policy and more. Bills move quickly in Montpelier and we need more consistent voices for working families.

That is what I have tried to do in my short tenure under the golden dome. It's a fascinating experience, and I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the community that has been my home for 15 years.

My introduction to politics came in 1998 when I went to work on Congressman Sanders' re-election campaign. Ever since I have worked in one capacity or another to bring more people into the political process. Families who live paycheck-to-paycheck are the vast majority of our state, but our political priorities fail to reflect this reality. Unless we are successful in getting more people participating and holding leaders accountable, we will not see needed change in our government.

I believe we should move away from the property tax to fund education. I believe we must create an efficient, universal health care system that eliminates premiums and insurance, and instead pays for health care with a broad-based, fair combination of taxes. It is the only way we will save money and cover everyone. I believe we need to invest in small businesses, as they are the most reliable part of Vermont's economy. I believe we deserve a government we can be proud of, knowing that it strives to meet the needs of working families.

I look forward to meeting you in the next few months. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or comments you want to share.

Sincerely,

Rep. Christopher Pearson

Rep. David Zuckerman
Chair, House Agriculture Committee

Dear Neighbor,

It is hard to believe another two years have gone by. It has been a pleasure representing Burlington for these past ten years. While there has been success, it is also frustrating to report that there is a long way to go on many reforms.

Representing this district is a wonderful challenge. We have two of the state's largest institutions (UVM & Fletcher Allen), two of the main entry ways to Burlington, and a wide range of household incomes.

We have finally gotten the long-awaited work on Riverside Avenue underway, and we will keep a watchful eye on UVM as major capital projects move forward. Growing student enrollment creates opportunities and challenges.

I am proud our community generally welcomes the idea of a mental health facility on the hill. But I am also mindful of the concerns of immediate neighbors. We must ensure that it is a public facility and is not turned over to a for-profit entity. This could endanger patients and expose neighbors to the risk of profit motives over safe, quality care.

Many families in the district are struggling to find work that pays a livable wage – this includes health care. Without meaningful reform to how we pay for healthcare we will continue to suffer difficult school budget votes and the individual struggles of our household budgets.

Along with all of these important neighborhood issues I am honored to have been named the Chair of the House Agriculture Committee. In this role I can steer the debate about the future of agriculture in Vermont. This year we moved the FEED (Food Education Every Day) bill and a renewable energy on farms bill, among others. In particular the FEED bill was exciting as it built on the model that Bonnie Acker and others created at the Edmunds school. By bringing students and food service personnel together fresher, local, healthier food is being used in our schools and our youth are getting better connected to their food supply.

Other issues I have focused on include the recent resolution to start the state process for impeachment of the President and Instant Run-off Voting. As long as we continue to have a political system where politicians act like royalty and our voting system works against more choice for voters then sadly, I believe, we will continue to have a society that is losing faith in the very foundation of our political system. I hope in the next few years we will continue to rebuild that faith.

Sincerely,

Rep. David Zuckerman

2005 - 2006: A Few Important Issues...

Health Care - another missed opportunity

It is clear a majority of Vermonters want a complete overhaul of our health care system. The Legislature has studied this issue many times in the last decade and consistently there is one answer that makes the most sense: a universal, single-payer system or self insurance. Sadly there is not the commitment to see it through.

We must address how we pay for services efficiently, covering everyone with quality care. Every other major country in the world has figured this out but here in Vermont we face continued resistance from the Governor and a Legislature that too quickly concedes to the philosophy of maintaining a complicated, private, for-profit health care system.

Until we design a plan that gives everyone quality coverage, that does away with premiums and funds the system with an equitable tax, we will continue to waste money on administration, continue to leave too many Vermonters uncovered and many more poorly covered. Health care coverage shouldn't be dependent on the good graces of employers. We can and must do better.

GMO Liability - Vermont leads the country, again

As the lead proponent of GMO legislation, Rep. Zuckerman is pleased to report that Vermont is on the verge of leading the nation again. The compromise legislation, S.18 makes cross-pollination a nuisance with responsibility resting squarely on the shoulders of GMO seed manufacturers. On the one hand, seed companies retain the right to sue someone who inadvertently received their pollen. On the other hand, they fight against responsibility for that very same genetic material. It is unfortunate the Governor will veto this bill. This is needed protection for all farmers and could put to rest this divisive issue. Looks like it will be fought over again next year.

Instant Runoff Voting - IRV: success in Burlington, fear in Montpelier

Many of us watched the mayor's race with interest because it was the first time any town in the state used the voting method known as IRV. This system assures the majority choice when there are more than two candidates running. Since we know most Vermonters are starved for more choices we think we should have IRV for statewide races.

Many leaders in Montpelier said they were waiting to see how the March election worked in Burlington before considering this important change. Once the March results were in other delay tactics surfaced. In 2002, 56 towns passed resolutions in support of IRV. March voters in Burlington were unified in their support of the new system but in the end the State Senate passed a bill to study how to implement the system. Since the original bill was to take effect in 2008 many felt there was plenty of time to work out the logistics. The Senate stalled for so long the bill may not get through the House unless we go back for a veto session. Disappointing to see so many that claim to support the principle of majority rule play games with this simple and needed reform.



WE'RE EASY TO REACH:

David Zuckerman

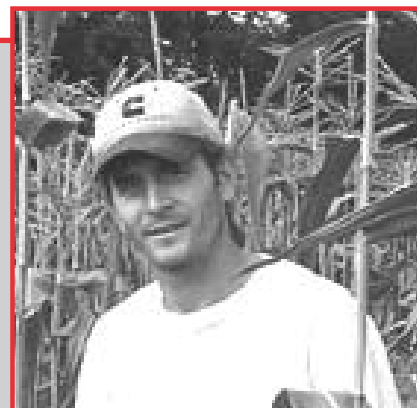
863-2199

dzuckerman@leg.state.vt.us
14 Germain Street, Burlington

Christopher Pearson

324-0862

cpearson@leg.state.vt.us
39 Green Street, Burlington



Please get in touch with questions, comments or suggestions. Hearing from constituents is an important part of the political process so please speak up!

Leadership, Experience & Commitment