

Danny Carroll Apology for Campaign Mailing

Received by email November 22, 2004

A recent "open letter" addressed to me was printed in the November 15th edition of the Grinnell Herald Register and asked for a response. I would like to offer the following as a reply to that letter.

In the recent election the Democratic Party made a determined effort to register college students to vote. They did so because more often than not those voters will register as Democrats and vote accordingly. It has been their practice both locally and throughout the state for many years. This year was different in that Iowa was a battleground state in the Presidential campaign. Students were encouraged to vote in Iowa, instead of their "hometown", where their vote would carry greater weight in the Bush/Kerry contest. In addition the Democrats targeted two local races, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to defeat Senator Neal Schuerer and myself. The local Democratic Party also arranged for two satellite voting locations on the college campus one on October 5th and another on October 30th. This combined with an aggressive absentee voting effort was designed to convert those registrations to actual votes on Election Day. It was a logical political strategy on the part of the Democrats and one can hardly blame them for working hard to carry out the plan.

In response to this political effort the Republican Party in Iowa distributed a brochure in House District 75 "alerting" Republicans to this tactic being used by the Democrats. Given the effort of the Democrats to take advantage of a rather large block of friendly partisan voters one can hardly blame the Republicans for trying to thwart that effort.

However, the brochure in question was inaccurate in the way it portrayed Grinnell College Students. The mailing indicated that "1,000 east-coast liberal kids" would be voting. That is not accurate. There are not 1,000 students from the east-coast attending Grinnell College. In addition, of those who do attend Grinnell not all are "liberal" in their political philosophy. Furthermore the mailing said "They're not from here. They won't stay here. But they're voting here". Technically those are true statements. Most Grinnell College students have hometowns somewhere other than House District 75 or Iowa. As the letter stated only about 10% of the Grinnell College students are from Iowa. Also, most Grinnell College students will leave Iowa after graduation. SCIPE (Student Campaign for Increased Political Engagement) found the statements offensive and felt like they were meant to exclude "student residents" from the democratic process. If I were in their position I might feel the same way.

I would like to publicly apologize for the inaccurate statements in the brochure. Although I did not see the mailing prior to its distribution I should have and will try to do better in the future. Having been the victim of repeated distortions, exaggerations and outright lies in the form of political brochures I can sympathize with those who find themselves in similar circumstances.

In order for me to do my best in serving the people of House District 75 in the 81st General Assembly I need to put this election behind me. It was one of the most disturbing experiences in my political experience and I don't think we should dwell on it any more. As I said in the interview with the paper "The election is over. This was an unpleasant experience for all involved. Let's put it behind us and move on".

Danny Carroll
State Representative House District 75