



VERMONT ALLIANCE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

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2006 ELECTION SUMMARY

The environment was a big winner in the State House elections in 2006. Overall, 97 of the 116 candidates VACV endorsed were elected to office, including 73 in the House and 24 in the Senate. This overall success rate of 84% exceeds VACV's landmark election campaign of 2004, when 75% of our endorsed candidates won.* Here are some highlights:

- 5 of the 6 candidates for whom VACV provided substantial support through its VC-PAC won: Susan Bartlett, Lamoille Senate; Chris Bray, Addison 5; Joan Lenos, Chittenden 5-2; Jim McCullough, Chittenden 2; and Diane Snelling, Chittenden Senate. VACV's support took the form of campaign contributions, advertising, mailings, mobilizing campaign volunteers, and technical assistance.
- VACV's biggest victory was the defeat of Harvey Smith in Addison County's 5th District. The Addison Independent called Chris Bray's 50-vote win "The biggest upset of the evening" in the state elections. Smith was one of VACV's "Dirty Dozen" who, in 4 terms, had accumulated a dismal lifetime Scorecard record of 17%. Bray, a newcomer to electoral politics, is committed to supporting the environment in the State House. He credited VACV's support as an important factor in his win.
- In a major victory, Bob Hartwell won an open Senate seat in Bennington County. VACV backed Hartwell in his losing bid for the House in 2004, and endorsed him in this campaign.
- The environment also won in Rutland County, where VACV-endorsed candidate Bill Carris unseated Wendy Wilton for the Senate. Wilton had a very poor environmental record during her one term in office.
- 88 out of 90 incumbents endorsed by VACV won.
- 24 out of 30 members of the new Senate were endorsed by VACV. Also, the top vote-getter in each of the 13 Senate districts was a VACV-endorsed candidate.

In addition to these campaign activities, VACV's charitable affiliate, the Vermont Conservation Education Fund, conducted a nonpartisan GOTV campaign in Bennington and Rutland Counties, which included mailing "Vote Environment" cards to voters just before Election Day.

These election results are gratifying, but we still have a lot of work to do once the new Biennium starts in January. Less than half of the members of the new House have demonstrated a firm enough commitment to environmental values to have received VACV's endorsement. At the same time, tough new measures will be introduced addressing global warming, cleaning up Lake Champlain, conserving Vermont's working landscapes, and protecting our villages and towns – many of which will face powerful opposition. It will take all of us working together to achieve the results Vermont needs now, and for future generations.

**In 2004, VACV was also instrumental in defeating two powerful House committee chairs, Ruth Towne and Frank Mazur, who were both among VACV's "Dirty Dozen" of the worst environmental legislators.*