

Bernard Schoenburg: 'Regular person' out to 'reclaim Illinois'

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Signs urging people to "reclaim Illinois" are the brainchild of a state employee who lives in Springfield.

He's hoping the signs and banners draw people to an organization he started and would like to see grow. It's also called Reclaim Illinois.

"Basically, in a nutshell, I'm really tired of the way that things are, with the corruption and the way the government's run," said PATRICK BEAIRD, 41, an information technology project manager for the Department of Central Management Services.

"Tainted government affects us all!" says a flier he has handed out at various places. "Be an agent of change," it goes on. "The future is at stake."

Beaird says he has a Republican background, but considers himself an independent.

"Part of what I'm urging people to do to reclaim Illinois is just find out about the person, find out about the candidate regardless of what their party is, and vote for that person ... that's going to support honor and integrity and be a servant leader for Illinois," he said.

Beaird, the married father of two children, ages 9 and 14, has been with the state nearly two decades. He said he decided around the beginning in the year to get involved in this way.

"My kids are old enough to know that government is corrupt," he said. "And they're old enough to know that dad works for state government. So there was a point in time where I'm thinking, 'You know what? Dad needs to stand up for what's right, show his kids that they need to do the same thing in their lives in the future.'"

As part of that process, he called PATRICK COLLINS, the former federal prosecutor who headed a reform commission named by Gov. PAT QUINN.

Beaird ended up testifying before the group.

Beaird said he also was in touch with the Quinn administration, but he became frustrated that problems weren't being handled quickly. He also said he's disappointed at the reform legislation that ultimately was passed.

His Web site, www.reclaimillinois.com, has links to candidate Web sites, videos about the state's history of corruption and a list of goals. While he's critical of many officeholders who haven't used their posts to make things better, Beaird says that Quinn, in particular, has had a chance to make progress on reform, but "has blown it through his lack of meaningful action."

For one thing, Beaird says, Quinn hasn't been decisive about dismissing appointees of former Gov. ROD BLAGOJEVICH.

Quinn campaign spokeswoman BETH AUSTIN responds that Quinn has backed and signed into law some "extraordinary reform measures" in areas like state procurement, restrictions on lobbyists and the "revolving door" between state and private work.

"We believe in grass-roots democracy," Austin said. "And certainly, nobody understands better than Pat Quinn that it is possible to change the world starting with a set of ideals and a handful of yard signs."

Beaird said his state position, which pays \$69,624 annually, was unionized this year.

Beaird has scheduled "brown bag lunch" sessions at the city's Lincoln Library, Seventh Street and Capitol Avenue, from noon to 1 p.m., including one on Tuesday.

He says he wanted to form his own group, not join an existing one, because he wants to be an example to show that "a regular person just deciding to stand up for what's right can make a difference."

Beaird would like to take the group statewide, but he also mentioned that he had a sign up in Quincy for a time, but it's been removed.

Clearly, he's got a lot of enthusiasm. But making it happen? We'll see.

Good numbers for Ryan

Despite his late entry into the race for governor, it appears from one recent poll that former Attorney General JIM RYAN of Elmhurst continues to have good potential voter appeal.

The poll, conducted last Sunday and Monday by Wilson Research Strategies of Washington, D.C., for candidate ADAM ANDRZEJEWSKI of Hinsdale, found in a straight head-to-head poll of the seven Republican candidates that Ryan led with 30 percent.

Next were Andrzejewski and state Sen. BILL BRADY of Bloomington, each with 11 percent; ANDY McKENNA of Chicago with 10 percent; state Sen. KIRK DILLARD of Hinsdale with 7 percent; DuPage County Board Chairman BOB SCHILLERSTROM with 3 percent; and Chicago public relations consultant DAN PROFT with 2 percent. More than a quarter of those polled were undecided.

Andrzejewski's campaign said it appeared Ryan got the high numbers because "they really don't know anyone else in the race." Also noted was that just 10 percent were "definitely Ryan."

The telephone poll, done by live interviewers, was given to 500 likely Republican primary voters.

Perhaps it makes sense that Andrzejewski, unknown statewide before his race, commissioned and released the poll. Once the poll callers told listeners various wonderful things about Andrzejewski's background, his head-to-head number shot to 40 percent.

Reality may not be so kind. Results can be seen at www.adamforillinois.com.

'eNewsletter' launched

More than 21/2 years after he was inaugurated to his first statewide office, but less than six months before he's in a statewide primary for a U.S. Senate seat, state Treasurer ALEXI GIANNOULIAS has started an "eNewsletter" to let people know about programs in his office.

"In honor of Veteran's Day, I dedicated this first issue to the brave men and women who have served in the United State's (sic) Armed Forces," begins a letter from the treasurer to open the e-mail.

The e-mail describes Giannoulas' expansion of a "Citizen Soldier" program to allow low-interest loans for members of the National Guard and military reserves after returning from combat.

Also included is the "2009 Smart Women Smart Money Wrap Up," which details activities during the ninth year the state treasurer's office has conducted conferences for women in various cities. In anticipation of the 10th year's conferences, he challenged attendees to participate in the "debt reduction challenge."

"The Treasurer's Office will help women reach their personal savings goals — whether that's cutting their \$5 a day coffee habits in half or building a three-month emergency savings account," the newsletter states. "Each month the Treasurer's Office will provide you with inspiration and practical financial tips to help you discover the power of your dollars wisely spent and ask you to report your progress."

Also noted: ROBIN KELLY, Giannoulas' chief of staff, has been inducted into Bradley University's Centurion Society, which "honors alumni who have become respected leaders in their field. ..."

It doesn't mention she's running for state treasurer.

There's also a "Did you know?" section, in which we learn that the slogan "Land of Lincoln" was adopted by the General Assembly in 1955, and that the state has a copyright for its exclusive use.

Giannoulas spokesman SCOTT BURNHAM said the letter began now because "community groups and officials outside the office have been asking for information about the Treasurer's Office and details about programs." He said the timing has nothing to do with the coming election, and there is no cost.

People can sign up for the e-mail newsletter at www.treasurer.il.gov.

Up and comer

Yet another dose of good publicity for U.S. Rep. AARON SCHOCK, 28, of Peoria: He's among successful and promising young folks in the 2009 version of the Crain's Chicago Business "40 Under 40" feature.

"Six-pack abs and cannonball shoulders are not the first things that come to mind when one imagines a typical Republican congressman," the publication states.

"Rep. Aaron Schock probably would prefer that voters concentrate on something else, like his lifelong love affair with the free enterprise system."

Although Schock has taken some turns at foreign policy and has been on lots of national TV shows, the piece describes him as "a polite and rather self-effacing guy."

I have never seen him be impolite.

"About those abs?" the piece says. "Getting to the gym every day is a priority for me," he allows. "No PhotoShop involved."

Another honoree is EDMUND SCANLON, 32, of Chicago, who operates a business called Total Attorneys that provides information technology and marketing services to small law firms. He is the son of Ed Scanlon of Oak Park, who is a Democratic candidate for governor.

40 for 20

Just so history doesn't lose sight of this, it should be said that a Jerseyville man, TOM KUNA, who filed as a Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, favors a 20-hour work week but 40 hours pay.

Kuna says the extra wages would be paid for by a surtax on net personal income in excess of a national average of about \$51,700.

Alas, Kuna said he turned in just 406 petition signatures when 5,000 were needed, and an objection to his petitions was filed. He's trying to overturn the objection, but, as they say, it seems an uphill battle. He has a Web site at www.w-e-r-co.com.

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