



An Open Letter To Roger Owen



Candidate for Congress, Texas Congressional District 1

Dear Mr. Owen:

Congratulations on your victory last Tuesday in the Democratic Primary race in Congressional District 1. All of us in the Texas Blogosphere look forward to a good campaign to unseat Rep. Louie Gohmert.

However, as we issue our congratulations to you, we must confess that we have concerns—about your candidacy, about some of your statements, and about some of your beliefs.

As progressives, we have numerous concerns about some of your recent remarks concerning gays and lesbians, especially some of the remarks you have directed at other Democratic candidates in your area¹. We are also very concerned about the fact that you have reportedly renounced your affiliation with at least one county Democratic Party in Congressional District 1 and engaged in name-calling with at least one Democrat Leader²—all of which has been highly publicized in your district. In addition, it is alarming to us that national political press such as “The Hill”³ have, as a result of your unconventional actions, reduced your candidacy to that of “oddball” status.

Please understand that, in writing you this letter, we are hoping that you will understand our position and consider making some modifications in the way in which you conduct your campaign so that we and other Democrats across the state, in your district, and nationally, will have no reservations about supporting your candidacy.

The Democratic Party is the party of the “big tent.” Perhaps there are none who understand this more than those of us in the Blogosphere. Our party welcomes those who are pro-life, pro-choice, gay, straight, Christian, Jewish, athiest, and people of all other religions and races without reservation. What our party does not stand for is intolerance.

We are concerned that, though your rhetoric may appeal to some of the conservative climate in your district, it is out of touch with both mainstream Democratic voters and the party in general.

In the hope that your candidacy may be successful and that it will not alienate any progressives or other Democrats, we must respectfully ask that you please reconsider your recent actions. While we do not support your beliefs, including those you have about gay Democrats and gay Democratic candidates, we respect your right to have those beliefs. However all Democrats—gay, straight, black, white and Latino—are working toward one goal: a better Party and a better Texas.

With those goals in mind, rhetoric and behavior such as yours does not have any place in the Party.

We want very much to be able to support your candidacy in the strongest possible way. However, for those of us in the Blogosphere who truly support the ideals of the Party, that is difficult in the present climate.

We do not seek appologies to those you have offended, though that may be appropriate; we do not seek you to change your beliefs, as that is inappropriate. However, we do ask that you consider the thoughts expressed in this letter more carefully and consider a more tolerant and polite approach to your campaign and your fellow Democrats.

We wish you the best of luck this fall against Louie Gohmert. We are united in the belief that he must be defeated.

Sincerely,

Texas Progressive Democratic Webloggers

[signers listed in alphabetical order]

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(Footnotes)

¹“Congressional forum kicks off new Democratic group,” Jimmy Isaac, *Longview News Journal*, February 21, 2006, URL: http://www.news-journal.com/news/content/news/stories/02212005_stonewall.html

²“Democratic forum turns into shouting match; Gay rights discussion ends with candidate abandoning committee,” Patrina A. Bostic, *Longview News Journal*, February 22, 2006, URL: http://www.news-journal.com/news/content/news/stories/02222006Democrat_candidates.html

³“Oddball candidates in '06 attempt mission impossible,” Kelly McCormack, *The Hill*, March 9, 2006, Online edition, URL: http://www.thehill.com/thehill/export/TheHill/News/Campaign/030906_oddball.html